

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/52299>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**University of Warwick**

***Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies***

**Terence Gould**

24 June 2005 / 2 January 2006

**Words – 79,584**

**PhD Thesis**

Filename e:ThesisCombinedDoubleSpaced

*(As submitted 1 July 2005, and revised following Viva)*

**A historical study of the political and religious influences  
on the Alsatian language theatre**

-----

**“ ’s isch nonit alles fütti ”**

**(Germain Muller, in Malou Schneider. ed. 1988, 8)**

-----

© Terence Gould, 2005.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my study supervisor, Dr John Gilmore, for his availability and his meticulous care in dealing with any problems, large or small, which may have arisen during the course of this study.

Also, my wife Pamela, whose support, forbearance and practical assistance in detailed checking of the text has been an essential ingredient in the preparation of this thesis.

Those who welcomed me and shared their knowledge and wisdom with me in Alsace include all those mentioned in Section 7.1, (Alsatian citizens and others, interviewed and cited). In particular, and in alphabetical order, to be mentioned are Raymond Bitsch, Pierre Kretz, Marcel Lindershaus, Aline Martin, Prof. Raymond Matzen, Joseph Schmittbiel, Roger Siffer, Marcel Spegt, Paul Sutter and Raymond Weissenburger.

<b>Index</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	9
<b>1 Methodology</b>	11
1.1 The object of this thesis	11
1.2 Where are you coming from ?	12
1.3 Ethical considerations	12
In carrying out the research	12
Using data and evidence gathered	14
1.4 Why me ?	15
1.5 Why does this subject matter ?	16
1.6 The problem of finding reliable information	17
Documentary evidence from archives	20
1.7 The breadth of this study	21
Comparisons with parallel cases	21
Completeness	22
1.8 Access	23
To practitioners of the performing arts	23
To the required knowledge	23
To documents	23
To literature related to the performing arts in Alsace	24
To the speakers of the language	25
To the research techniques	25
To the plays	26
1.9 The advantages	27
1.10 Working definitions	27
1.11 The translations	28
1.12 The main themes	29
1.13 Glossary	30a
1.14 Map of Alsace	30b



<b>2</b>	<b>Political history and culture of the region</b>	<b>31</b>
2.1	The geographical region of Alsace	31
	Regional identity – a working definition	32
	Lorraine	35
2.2	The political history of Alsace	35
	Until 1870	35
	From 1871 to 1918	41
	The Inter-war Years	43
	Autonomist and Separatist movements	46
	The Second World War	48
	From 1945	51
	Strasbourg as the Focus of Europe	55
	Alsace in Recent Decades	57
2.3	The influence of religion upon Alsace	58
	Catholic and Protestant	58
	Judaism	61
	Islam and others	63
2.4	Understanding the culture of Alsace	63
	A working definition of Community	68
	Artistic culture and folk culture	68
	Artistic culture	69
	Folk culture	69
	Elements of a working definition of Alsatian culture	70
<b>3</b>	<b>The history and present political situation of the language</b>	<b>74</b>
3.1	Alsatian – a language or a dialect ?	74
	A working definition	82
	Why does it matter ?	89
3.2	Alsatian versus French	94

	Code switching ?	96
3.3	Regional languages in the UK	99
3.4	The survival of the Alsatian language	102
	What right does a language have to survive ?	102
	Why do languages flourish or die ?	103
	Tests of a language's viability	106
	Why has Alsatian fared so badly ?	109
3.5	What the French Government says, and what it does, about Regional Languages	113
3.6	Alsatian language teaching and pressure groups	123
3.7	The printed media	126
<b>4</b>	<b>The politics of the Alsatian language theatre</b>	127
4.1	A working definition of 'The performing arts'	127
4.2	Theatre	127
4.3	Political Theatre	128
	A working definition of 'Theatre'	129
	A working definition of 'Political'	131
	A working definition of 'Political theatre'	135
	Political theatre in Alsace	135
4.4	The history of the theatre in Alsace	136
	From earliest times until 1800	136
	The Alsatian Theatre Movement from 1800 to 1900	140
	Patriotism in the theatre in Alsace from 1871 to 1918	144
	Working definitions of <i>Dialekt Theater</i> and <i>Alsatian Language Theatre</i>	145
	Dialekt Theater of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	148
	Between the two world wars	155
	The theatre in Alsace in World War Two	164
	The situation in the north of Alsace	172

	The dramatic political monologue	177
	Theatre performances	179
	Cabaret in World War Two	182
	The situation in the south of Alsace	183
	Theatre performances	186
	After World War Two	188
	Dialekt Theater	188
	Patriotic theatre	190
	Alsatian Miracle Plays	192
4.5	The influence of the Church on the theatre in Alsace	193
4.6	Into the twenty-first century	201
	Theatre	201
	Racism	204
	Present day politics and the National Front	204
	Racism in village theatre productions	205
	Joining in the conspiracy	207
	Cabaret	208
	The cabaret <i>D'Choucrouterie</i> in Strasbourg	209
	Jewish theatre	211
	Art- and Folk-songs	211
	Conteurs – Oral poetry and story telling	212
	Cinema	214
	Television	216
	Radio	218
4.7	Government support for the performing arts	218
<b>5</b>	<b>Analysis of five Alsatian plays</b>	<b>221</b>
5.1	<i>Der Pfingstmontag</i>	222
	Language	223
	Political influences	225

	Religious influences	227
	The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre	227
5.2	<i>So sinn mr halt !</i>	228
	Language	229
	Political influences	230
	Religious influences	232
	The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre	232
5.3	<i>Gabrielle</i>	232
	Language	233
	Political influences	235
	Religious influences	236
	The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre	236
5.4	<i>Kàrfridaa</i>	236
	Language	237
	Political influences	238
	Religious influences	238
	The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre	239
5.5	<i>D'Antigonn</i>	240
	Language	241
	Political influences	243
	Religious influences	243
	The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre	243
5.6	Comments	244
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	245
6.1	An overview of the Alsatian language theatre	245
6.2	Political and religious influences on the Alsatian language theatre	247
6.3	The culture and the theatre are out-of-step	249
6.4	Racism in the theatre in Alsace	252
6.5	What if there had been no political or religious influences on the Alsatian language theatre ?	255

6.6	Ways in which ‘Alsatian-ness’ is dealt with in the theatre	256
6.7	The political agenda of the Alsatian language theatre	257
6.8	Prospects for the future of the Alsatian language theatre	260
<b>Appendix One –</b>	Local dialects of Alsatian	264
<b>Appendix Two -</b>	Synopsis of each play analysed in Section 5	269
<b>7</b>	<b>Works consulted, performances seen, persons interviewed</b>	<b>274</b>
7.1	Primary Sources	
	Plays studied or consulted or cited, but not seen in performance	
	Plays seen in performance	
	Alsatian citizens and others, interviewed and cited	
7.2	Secondary Sources	
	Bibliography	
	Websites consulted	
	(See also footnotes in text)	

---

## Foreword

My home is in England, where I am married and have a house. At first it appeared possible to carry out the study by spending periods of up to one month in Alsace. However, my wife insisted that we go to live in Alsace for the period required. After a great deal of time and effort our house was let to tenants for an indefinite period. After three visits to Alsace we found an apartment in Haguenau, which is a stronghold of the regional language and culture, and is situated 20 miles north of the regional capital, Strasbourg, and where I had lived previously.

Being retired, the availability of time is not a problem. The investigation into the possibility of this subject as suitable for study started in November 2001, with three short investigative trips. We then moved to Alsace in October 2002, for eighteen months, returning in March 2004. A further period of one month in Strasbourg followed in October 2004. Money, however, is always a limiting factor. The period abroad was financed by the rent from my house in England, which was fortunately greater than the rent of our apartment in France.

Having lived in Alsace for one year, from 1955 to 56, I have some experience of the region, dating from fifty years ago. This experience is bound to be limited. It is also dated, which may in itself be an advantage, in enabling comparisons with present day situations. At that time I was a recent graduate in politics, and came as an English Assistant in a French lycée in Haguenau, a small town in the northern half of Alsace. In addition to studying French at the university in Strasbourg, and to provide additional income I worked as a bus and tram conductor in the city, all as mentioned previously, above.

Recent statistics show that the town of Haguenau has the second largest percentage of Alsatian language speakers in the whole of the region, being 81%, as against Sélestat with 83% (1997 Survey by INSEE<sup>1</sup>, quoted in Schimpf 1998, 76).

It was very pleasing to discover that a colleague, Paul Adolf, who was a student teacher at Haguenau in those days is now one of the acknowledged authorities on the language, having obtained two doctorates at Strasbourg, and having published a monumental dictionary. I interviewed him during my November 2001 visit, and have consulted him further as this study developed.

Concerning the performing arts, I have had experience of the professional theatre in London, as an actor, producer and musician. Furthermore I have in the past performed as a guitarist and folksinger in most cities in the UK, and have given frequent concert tours abroad, in continental Europe, Scandinavia, the USA and Africa. I have also worked on both radio and television in the UK and abroad. This experience was one factor in leading me to choose this particular subject.

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques.

# **1 Methodology**

## **1.1 The object of this thesis**

The object of this thesis is to produce an academically rigorous historical study of the political and religious influences on the Alsatian language theatre. To achieve this end, four research targets were established, designed to produce Conclusions, the evidence of research being listed in the Bibliography. The research targets were each to express a part of the study, being:

- Political history and culture of the region.
- History and present political situation of the language.
- History and politics of the theatre in the language.
- Influence of the Church in the theatre in Alsace.

Additionally, the thesis includes an analysis five Alsatian plays which I feel embody the spirit of the theatre in the language, as evidence of my assertions in meeting the research targets.

In expressing the results of the study the main body of the thesis is not divided strictly into four sections, each to represent one of the research targets. The outcomes of the research blend into each other. For instance the Church is treated as a political organisation, in the widest sense of the term. Therefore its mention in titles of separate sections of the thesis may not be as frequent as its importance in the overall outcome.

Each element is interrelated, and each has exerted an influence over the other three. Also drawn upon are the related fields of national and regional politics, censorship and the politics of the theatre, law, psychology, history, the European Union, dialectology, sociology, code-switching, geography, economics, education policy, the different policies of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and pressure groups, all as related to both France and Germany.



## **1.2 Where are you coming from ?**

Before setting out on a research project it may be useful to consider why one is so concerned about this particular subject that one intends to spend a considerable amount of time and effort in its pursuit.

The commitments which have underlain my present research project have been a generally liberal set of beliefs, which provoke sympathy for the linguistic under-dog, added to the experience of living and working in Alsace, both as an assistant language teacher, and as a bus and tram conductor, as detailed above, in the Foreword, in a period when the language was in a much healthier state than today, plus experience of many years of public appearances in the performing arts in many countries, and now having the time to commit to the activities involved, plus the pleasure of meeting so many interesting people – have all contributed to a genuine interest in the theme of my research.

## **1.3 Ethical considerations**

### **In carrying out the research**

A further matter of importance in this particular project is the ethical relationship between the researcher and his subject or subjects.

A historical study of the performing arts involves partly research into the material performed, playbills, programmes, histories of the medium concerned, critical reviews of performances and biographies of performers, etc. But the endpoint of any history is the present day, and my approach to living practitioners in Alsace has been uniformly welcomed by the people concerned, whether academic, literary, journalistic or theatrical.

There have been several elements in my ethical consideration of how to approach the people concerned as subjects of my study. These include:

- the problem of how to access people and situations that are important to me, unless I personally become involved in the activities concerned,
- the fact that it would simply be deceitful to pretend that I was only interested in discussing the performing arts, with no intention of using my observations,
- the fact that permission, either explicit or tacit, must be obtained from the subject, while realising that excessive formality can stifle communication,
- the knowledge that one can alter things simply by studying them,
- the fact that people may behave differently if they know that I am observing them,
- the invitations which I have received, to take part in proposing new works for performance, and translating and possibly performing in those works,
- the possibility that my own personal interest in languages and in the performing arts could alter the course of those arts in a region which is quite small, and where one person's activities can have an unexpectedly large effect.

On the earlier points made above it seemed legitimate to be completely open about my objectives, and to adopt the approach of participant observation, which is common in sociological research. Once accepted as an active feature in the group or environment, life would continue to flow fairly normally in spite of the presence of this domesticated Englishman, which has indeed been the case.

On the last point made above, I have been quite firm in the knowledge that the theatre and other performing arts are so secure in the Alsatian language, that even the most vigorous intervention by myself would hardly affect the course of its history. My own productive input would be seen as a possibly interesting but ephemeral intervention by an incomer who has the advantage of being both non-French and non-German.

With this latter point in mind I have accepted invitations to participate, and to propose works for adaptation and production in Alsace. Examples are, my translation into French

for further rendering into Alsatian of both *Roots* by Arnold Wesker, and *Hobson's Choice*, by Harold Brighouse, and my translation into English of the Alsatian version of *Antigone*, by Joseph Schmittbiel.

Sensitivity when interviewing is necessary also in considering what roles the interviewer and the interviewee play. The interviewee tends to consider that he owns the information and the unstructured conversation, and he looks upon the interviewer as a concerned mother, whereas the interviewer tends to consider that he owns the information and the conversation, and he tends to act like a controlling father.<sup>2</sup> The interviewer who manages to overcome this handicap may elicit information which is more frank and informative.

### **Using data and evidence gathered**

It has to be obvious that evidence quoted and points of view cited must be properly referenced, and that the unjustified pretence of knowledge is totally unethical in research.

In my own case, being seventy years of age in 2003, and being able to personally remember events as far back as 1939, and occasionally earlier, there are matters which fall within my own experience which could not be claimed as original by a researcher of twenty-two, who has just finished his first degree. Furthermore, my career has been very unusual, in having been professionally involved in many greatly different fields.

For these reasons it has sometimes been the case that assertions which I make are within my own knowledge true, and do not require further reference to legitimise them. Examples of this fall within the period of 1955/56 when living in Alsace, and able to witness things that younger researchers have to validate by reference to other authors.

---

<sup>2</sup> Viewpoint stated in BBC Radio 4 programme on Press Interviews, 3pm. 13 Feb. 2004. Presenter not named.

It was my early decision to write up this thesis as the study progressed. This has had two advantages. Firstly, having written things down in full when the presumed facts were established, it was not necessary to rely upon my own memory not distorting the picture. Secondly, I was not faced with a stack of indexed notes to interpret at a late stage when doubted facts could only be confirmed with difficulty. The one disadvantage of this method has been that facts which have been rediscovered along the way have been written down a second or third time, requiring much sifting to acknowledge or remove multiple repetitions.

#### 1.4 Why me ?

Why should someone such as myself, with little or no prior knowledge of the theatre in Alsatian, be a suitable candidate to carry out research into this field ?

In an interview with playwright/actor/director Pierre Kretz<sup>3</sup> he stated that only an outsider could make an objective study of the theatre in Alsace. Someone starting with a knowledge of the subject would have preconceived opinions and prejudices, and would, in such a profession, have friends and enemies whose existence would bias the avenues of research, and also the findings. This opinion has been confirmed in conversations with other practitioners of Alsatian theatre.

Additionally, my having previously lived in the region, and my prior knowledge of both French and German, combined with my work in the performing arts generally, may be claimed as valid qualifications for this work, although it would be self-deceptive to assume that fluency in High German equals fluency in Alsatian.

Kretz states in *Quand la Choucroute rit* :

---

<sup>3</sup> Private interview. 15 Oct. 2002.

Il est d'ailleurs fort étonnant qu'aucun travail universitaire d'envergure n'ait jamais traité la question. Mais ce manque est en passe d'être comblé par un chercheur ... [sic] britannique, de l'université de Warwick ... Pour ma part je trouve amusant et juste que ce travail soit mené par quelqu'un qui n'est ni Alsacien, ni Allemand, ni Français de l'intérieur. Terry [Gould] est francophone et germanophone et fait d'énorme progrès en alsacien. Il laboure des terres restées vierges à ma connaissance à ce jour, comme par exemple le sort du théâtre dialectal pendant l'occupation nazie. (2003, 138).<sup>4</sup>

Regarding my own knowledge of the Alsatian language, I had a smattering before starting the present study, due to having lived, taught, studied and worked in the region for one year in 1955-56. But during 2002 to 2004 I attended courses in the Department of [Alsatian] Dialectology and doctoral seminars in the German department, both at the University of Strasbourg. I also studied the Alsatian language formally at the first level in the Université Populaire Européenne, but took the examinations in the higher second level, with a result of 19/20, *Mention Très Bien*, in June 2003. Additionally I attended weekly language classes given by the Vice-President of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. Apart from this I exchanged three regular weekly private conversation lessons with different Alsatian citizens. I therefore find little problem in understanding performances of Alsatian language theatre.

### 1.5 Why does this subject matter ?

In *The Guardian Review*, of 4 December 2004, Michael Billington wrote, on page 21, under the sub-title 'British plays can tell all we need to know about who we are today'. I think this applies equally to Alsace or to any nation state. The theatre is an important inroad to the state of mind of the region. He also stated 'At a time of preoccupation with

---

<sup>4</sup> (It is very surprising, I might add, that no substantial academic work has dealt with [the dialectal theatre]. But this deficiency is being more than rectified by a British researcher from the University of Warwick. ... For my part I find it entertaining and justified that this work should be carried out by someone who is neither Alsatian, nor German, nor French from the interior. Terry [Gould] speaks French and German and is making enormous progress in Alsatian. He is ploughing territory which, as far as I know, has not been researched to this day, like, for example, the fate of the Dialekt Theater during the Nazi occupation.)

national identity, many of the clues to a nation's character lie within its drama'. In agreeing, I would substitute 'region' for 'nation', and, if we go along with the popular current ideal of a 'Europe of the regions' we need to value those such as Alsace, which are the building blocks of Europe.

Furthermore, in France politicians and well-wishers talk about the value of the Alsatian culture and language, and they frequently propose doing something to preserve those valuable phenomena. Meanwhile the regional theatre actually gets on with it, and may well be the only credible lifeline which the culture and the language have at present.

## **1.6 The problem of finding reliable information.**

It is noticeable that books on France by English-language authors only give passing mentions of Alsace, as do many French writers, also. But in Alsace itself there is no problem in accessing information about the region both in book form and in personal communication. I had very little difficulty in finding offers of information, but the problem still remained, of whether the sources provided reliable data, and establishing 'the truth' about any situation. Possibly the most vivid example concerns the 1940s. Living memory should be able to provide us with information concerning the second world war in Alsace, and its aftermath. As an example, playwright/director/actor Pierre Kretz is possibly fifty years of age and knowledgeable concerning the theatre, but was not actually alive at the time. My friend and informant Jean Potier was actually there but is not a theatre person. By triangulation with Marcel Spegt, who started acting with the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg in 1945, and others, I have hoped to approximate to the reality of the situation in that period.

Whilst being aware of this problem and its possible solution, one has to acknowledge that as the theatre was so restricted, politicised and even militarised in the Nazi period, sensitivity is required on the part of the researcher in knowing how far one may delve

into painful episodes, past political affiliations, family and community allegiances and even which uniform they wore.

Memory may have been tempered with time. Episodes which were unsatisfactory may have been unwittingly or intentionally ‘improved’. Conversations held across a researcher’s notebook may contain enhancements, particularly when dealing with personalities who have ‘trodded the boards’ in the theatre, and who require their public persona to remain intact. David Lowenthal (1985, 187) claims that ‘No statement about the past can be confirmed by examining the supposed facts.’ He backs this up by quoting (ibid) from Clarence Irving Lewis’s, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, that ‘No theoretically sufficient verification of any past fact can ever be hoped for’.

This may initially sound rather sweeping, until we consider that all reports, whether oral, manuscript or printed, have passed through the filter of social acceptability before being uttered or committed to paper. What seems to us to be the truth appears to me to be that version of events which we are most comfortable to recount or acknowledge at any one time.<sup>5</sup> Truth may therefore alter at a later date. Even ‘unpalatable’ truths to which we yield may be subject to ‘spin’. My own view is supported by Lowenthal (ibid 206-10) on *Revising*.<sup>6</sup>

I rely to a certain extent upon newspaper reports of events, during both German periods in Alsace, and at other times, which were certainly written in the knowledge that the writer is answerable to the editor, the proprietor, the readership, and possibly to a political party. But there are also conflicting written opinions of what actually happened, as in the reporting found in the *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* (SNN) and the *Mülhauser Tagblatt* (MTB), as witnessed by the different political ‘spin’ in their reports of the performance of *Pfingstmontag* in Strasbourg on 4 June 1941. And we still do not know whether the play was actually acted in Alsatian or High German, as discussed in Section 4.4 on page 181, below.

---

<sup>5</sup> I offer here my own definition, while acknowledging those of others. But I realise that there are many more.

<sup>6</sup> See also F.C. Bartlett, *Remembering*, in the Bibliography.

Looking back further, to the reality or myth of Schnokeloch, the so-called proto-typical Alsatian, the *Gazette Hotelière d'Alsace et de Lorraine*<sup>7</sup> confirms Raymond Matzen's view, of the restaurant owner who does not stock all that his clients want, although Friedrich Bergmann, writing nearer the time, in 1872, before Ferdinand Bastian had written his play of the same name, states that Hans was simply a rich man, and everyone was jealous of him because he 'het alles was wir wollen' (has everything that we want) (Bergmann 1872, 15). Bastian, however, in 1903 showed Hans to be a discontented man who goes off at the end of the play, to discover what he really wants (Bastian 1903, 93).

While allowing a certain degree of doubt and scepticism, we can only accept in good faith versions of the past which appear to be offered in good faith. Triangulation may help us to confirm reports, or may throw us into confusion if we are offered a different third version of events from another source. Do we then discard both versions, or make our own judgement as to which rendering may approximate more closely to actual events. Lowenthal (1985, 191) claims, 'What is now known as 'the past' was not what anyone ever experienced as 'the present'. In some respects we know it better than those who lived it.' This may be true, due to the excess of information which we are nowadays invited to share, on most aspects of history.

One might expect people's memory of historic events, or of contact with famous people, to be more reliable than that of mundane everyday transactions. The earliest period of history remembered currently is the period before and during World War Two, which was an important one for the theatre in Alsace. I was six on 3 September 1939, and clearly remember sitting with a family to whom I had been evacuated from London, listening to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain pronouncing the declaration of war. And I have recounted this memory to family and friends. However, I was not living with the family concerned on that day, and was in fact on a long train journey, during which I could not have heard the broadcast.

---

<sup>7</sup> No 8, 1985.



Lavinia Byrne writes that:

The past is a vast and lonely place and sometimes we wander around it ill at ease, lacking landmarks, so we concoct these to suit ourselves. We reconfigure, conflating experiences at whim, reformatting the bits which no longer fit, only allowing certain memories and consigning the rest to some mysterious recycling bin in the sky. (Byrne 2000, 4).

Traudl Junge, Hitler's last personal secretary, recounts, in *Bis zur letzten Stunde* ( Until the Final Hour), that Hitler was a charming man, respectful towards his staff, with a good sense of humour, and apparently not dictating any letters connected with the death of six million Jews (2002, passim). Christobel Bielenberg, who saw the end results of his dictatorship, considered him a dangerous homicidal lunatic (1968, 87). Maybe both were correct in their observations from their own viewpoints.<sup>8</sup>

However, Hitler himself, in his final testament, dictated just before his suicide on 30 April 1945, stated that the Holocaust was necessary, to expunge the capitulation of 1918, which was caused by the Jews, who, as stated in *Mein Kampf*, had caused World War One and the socialist revolution which followed it.<sup>9</sup>

### **Documentary evidence from archives**

Although archives are professionally organised collections of data, the financial limitations placed upon this non-glamorous activity mean that the evidence gleaned from them may be patchy. The archives of the City of Strasbourg and of the Department of the Bas-Rhin, which I have searched extensively, often do not deliver what they promise. Files frequently do not contain what their title suggests, and records from the Second World War are very sparse.

---

<sup>8</sup> See also Section 4.4, page 164, below.

<sup>9</sup> Professor Ian Kershaw of Sheffield University, biographer of Hitler, BBC4 television, in *Hitler's Place in History*, 8.40pm, 30 April 2005.

Official letters from the inter-war period, written eighty years ago, as shown in this thesis, often do not express clearly the exact subject matter. This was presumably so obvious to the writer that clarification would have been superfluous. Examples include whether they were dealing with theatre productions in German or by Germans, which were important points at the time, and which relate closely to this thesis.

## **1.7 The breadth of this study**

I do not feel that it is possible to give a meaningful analysis of the performing arts in Alsatian without looking in detail at many other features of life in the region. Thus the political history, the geography, the economy, the sociology, the psychology, the influence of religion and many other elements contribute to the way the language has been used and has developed, and to the sources, the motivations and the uniqueness of how it is used in the public arena.

However, I do acknowledge that my acquaintance with Alsace lies mainly in the north and in Strasbourg. Each town and village has its own peculiarities and none is truly linguistically ‘typical’. I have tried to emphasise this, but I may have achieved ‘Alsatian-ness’ in having to accept the fact, rather than in trying to compensate for it.

## **Comparisons with parallel cases**

One tool which I have found useful is the commonly used device of comparing the Alsatian situation with that found, not only in Brittany but also in Wales. Neither of these comparisons is entirely valid, each situation being in some ways unique. However, as the Conseil Regional of the Bas-Rhin is itself conducting a comparison with Wales, I feel that such a task cannot be without value.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> As reported in *Land un Sproch*, 2003, No 146, 23-4. and in various sections of this thesis, below.

## Completeness

Any historical study is of necessity incomplete. By definition, a full exposé of my topic over any period of time would take as long to recount as the complete series of events studied had taken to unfurl. Furthermore, no literary research can be complete. Some sources will be overlooked or under- or over-valued in the eyes of other researchers. The problem therefore is not of completeness, but of selectivity. The test of my objectivity and thoroughness may be whether other researchers, who would have chosen other methods and different examples, would have come to similar conclusions. I am fairly confident that their results would have been at least slightly at variance from mine, which is ‘a good thing’, as they say in *1066 and all that* (W.C. Sellar, and R.J. Yeatman, 1930, *passim*).

Particularly problematic is the selectivity exercised in dealing with the twentieth century. Edmond Jung states:

Le premier éditeur auquel nous avons parlé de notre [histoire de la littérature alsacienne] nous a dit: “Soyez prudent pour le XXème siècle ; si vous consacrez trois lignes à X et seulement deux à Y, vous vous ferez de Y et de sa famille des ennemis à mort”. (2001, 76).<sup>11</sup>

I can only claim here to have respected the memories of those who contributed to the theatre of the period, and to have worked with the minimum of personal bias.

---

<sup>11</sup> (The first publisher to whom we spoke about our [history of Alsatian literature] said to us “Be careful regarding the twentieth century; if you devote three lines to X and only two to Y, then Y and his family will be your enemies for life.”)

## **1.8 Access**

### **To practitioners of the performing arts**

It appeared initially that everyone in Alsace was involved in the theatre. My new bank manager, the saleslady at the electrical store, and others, all curious about an Englishman living in Alsace, announced their participation in local theatre groups. Fortunately the performing arts are activities peopled by those who like to express their opinions and give the benefit of their experience to strangers. It has not been a problem gaining access to people, who have mostly been curious as to why an Englishman should want to come and study their regional culture.

### **To the required knowledge**

I was invited to attend courses from doctoral level downwards at the University of Strasbourg III (University Marc Bloch) in the department of dialectology, and having myself been a Principal Lecturer at University College Northampton, was frequently treated as a colleague. Also I attended Alsatian language courses with the previous Director of the Department of Dialectology of that university, as well as with the Vice-Chairman of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin (The Association of Rhineland Theatre Groups), with whom I have also studied the texts of various Alsatian plays .

As these lectures and classes were with the leading authorities on Alsatian matters, whom I sought out, and whose learning and teaching was based upon decades of primary research, I found them invaluable as unfiltered sources of information ‘from the horse’s mouth’, rather than from secondary information found in libraries. My frequent footnotes referring to lectures and language courses give evidence of this.

### **To documents**

The Warwick University library, unsurprisingly, has little documentation on Alsace.

There are many books on France in general, and about Germany, which only make passing references to Alsace, but, in that library there appear to be only two books on the region, the excellent history of Alsace by Phillipe Dollinger (1970), and *Parlons Alsacien*, by Jean-Paul Schimpf and Robert Muller (1998).

The Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNUS) has three million books, including a substantial Alsatian archive, and gives borrowing access to academics. However, although this archive has a large collection of plays, there are none which were written during the period of World War II. The Archives of the Municipality of Strasbourg also allows reading access to its documents, but here again little exists from that period. Even when files are indexed with titles indicating that they contain wartime material, the contents of the files are quite different. For example, File ref 180MW345 *Affaires générales 1940/45* contains one extract of a report from 1940, and all the other contents referred to the period from 1946. A similar situation exists at the Archives Départementales du Bas-Rhin, also in Strasbourg.

There is also an Alsatian archive at the Crédit Mutuel bank in Strasbourg, which I found to be excellent, both in its stock of documents, and in the fact that being a private organisation it was well-staffed and had excellent equipment.

I had access also to the plays listed in the catalogue of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin (1,600 texts), which enabled me to check on the most popular titles, their cast list, their subject matter, the periods in which they were written and to which they refer. These are all matters which may throw light on the motivations of writers, producers, actors and audiences.

### **To the literature related to the performing arts in Alsace**

In Alsace access to literature *about* Alsatian matters is easy. There are many articles and books and learned treatises about the origins, history and envisaged demise of the language. These are normally in French, the language used to render accessible all

activities in Alsace. Access to literature *in* Alsatian is more problematic, partly because, apart from plays, of which there are large numbers, the scholastic or artistic literature in the language is sparse. Partly, also, because that which exists is sometimes difficult to read, for Alsatians as well as for foreigners. This is due either to variations in phonetic rendering of the language, and or due to the variation in the dialects in which it occurs.

### **To the speakers of the language**

In my experience few speakers of Alsatian will speak it unselfconsciously to strangers. They may do so as a favour, as in my local patisserie, or in the restaurant next door to my apartment in Haguenau, but only in order to please me, and in the expectation that the conversation will continue in French after a few initial greetings. Alsatians sometimes use their dialect thinking that, I am obviously not French, so as a foreigner I must be German, which is the closest foreign language to their own. Also, in the market there are Alsatians who simply prefer to speak their mother tongue.

It is difficult as a foreigner to start a conversation in the language. Why would an English person wish to engage someone in Alsatian ? Why would a Frenchman wish to engage a Glaswegian in his own dialect ? Why would a German come to Wales and start talking Welsh ? It could be considered a joke, or someone being ill-advisedly condescending.

However, in the local theatre group, whose rehearsals I attended, I was pleased to find that I was addressed in the language, not simply as an honorary Alsatian, but because that is what they speak to each other. I take this as a compliment.

### **To the research techniques**

My experience of academic research stems mainly from the MA in Applied Translation which I completed in June 2001, before starting my present course at Warwick University. However, I have cooperated in the research performed by my wife at

Cambridge. Also, from my own background as a Principal Lecturer for twelve years, and from my business experience I have learned the need for meticulous effort in finding relevant material and substantiating any claims made.

In carrying out interviews I employed a flexible approach, the aim of which was normally to encourage the interviewee to give information about the relevant theatre group or field of activity. I did not seek numeric data. Although I made notes I did not stick to a rigid list of questions, hoping to allow interesting avenues to open up. Particularly as the period being covered included World War Two, I had to be careful not to delve into sensitive areas. But I sensed in some cases that the last fifty years had allowed the interviewee to develop a protective stance towards that period, which I am sure, in some cases, diverted the conversation away from unwelcome questions. I did not employ questionnaires, but I did confirm interview data in telephone conversations, and I did conduct some interviews by email, where the respondent was not otherwise available.

Furthermore, I have found that the extremely interesting subject in which I am involved has carried me through in my attempts to be thorough and methodical in my approach.

### **To the plays**

With living playwrights and producers of importance I made direct approaches, explaining my purpose, and in all cases I formed good friendships, having given proof of my ability to appreciate their work. In the case of Pierre Kretz, Raymond Weissenburger, Roger Siffer, Joseph Schmittbiel, Marcel and Pierre Spegt, Guy LaFuenta, Raymond Bitsch and Marcel Lindershaus I received open invitations to attend their productions, and to discuss their works in personal interviews. I attended the rehearsals of three very contrasting groups, the Theater Grupp St. Georges in Haguenau, the Birschtewawrik Theater in Strasbourg, and the Lichtenberg theatre group.

I have read other works by living and dead authors, some with the help of Alsatian friends. Also, I have attended performances, as listed in the Bibliography, attempting

always to read the text beforehand. Authors and directors were uniformly obliging in providing texts.

## **1.9 The advantages**

There are some advantages from which I benefit. These include, being an outsider who is not recognised as ‘having an axe to grind’; having a curiosity value, as an Englishman coming to carry out an unusual task; being uniformly welcomed by those inhabiting my subject area; having good library and archive material locally; and my own personal enjoyment and interest in the subject.

The fact that the subject area is one that is considered important by the local practitioners, and that there is little analytical literature on the performing arts in Alsace may also be considered advantages.

## **1.10 Working definitions**

I agree with the philosopher J L Austin, that a good treatment of a topic begins with a taxonomy (Horn 1995, 67), and that many problems are caused by the misapplication of definitions. In sociolinguistics a common problem is that various writers and readers may attribute a variety of meanings to words used. In order to avoid problems such as ‘What is a language, and what is a dialect’ I have adopted the practice of setting out my own working definition of some of the major terms used in my present research. This is simply for clarity, and not out of disrespect for the considerable authority of the many who have gone before. Readers may disagree with my working definitions, as I may also do at a later date, but at least the attempt has been made, to be clear about what I mean in the present case.

One problem invited by preferring to avoid confusion by defining one’s principal terms clearly is that one can over-define, and inhibit the free expression of ideas by



underestimating the ability of readers to deal flexibly with the gist of the concepts discussed.

### **1.11 The translations**

In the thesis all translations are by myself except as noted here. Translations of short citations, and all Alsatian or Spanish citations, are given immediately following the text cited, as are the titles of all works cited. Longer passages in French and German are translated in footnotes. Those citations of foreign origin which are given in English from secondary sources are translations by the secondary author. Where citations are given in a foreign language other than the language of the original text that translation is by the author of the secondary text quoted. The subsequent translation into English is by myself. This is the case in some instances where original German texts from World War Two are not available. In translations which mostly deal with historical descriptions, the past tense is used to render the habitual French historic present, as this latter is a fashion not usual in English.

In the thesis the common practice is followed of using 'he' to indicate cases where either gender may be involved. This is simply to avoid resorting to 's/he' or other ways around the problem, rather than as an indication of the importance of the male. Each language has its own gender problems, Alsatian perhaps bordering on what is offensive to English ears, in referring to a girl as 'es' (it).

I acknowledge the invaluable histories of Alsatian literature and theatre written by Jung, Gall, Schoen, Finck, Cerf and others, and also the political forays by Philipps, Weckmann, Wittmann, and similar worthy authors. Their work is historical and regionally patriotic. My own study concentrates upon the political and religious factors which have influenced, and, in certain ways and in certain periods, dominated the Alsatian language theatre.

There are three modes of expression in the theatre in Alsace, being Alsatian itself, plus French and High German. I deal only with the first of these. However, it is noted in the study that Alsatian includes extensive borrowing from French.

### **1.12 The main themes**

I deal with the performing arts, in the Alsatian language only (except during the period of the Second World War, when the current political situation required the use of High German in many circumstances). I do not deal with the fact that the same authors, actors, producers may also be working in French. Furthermore I do not deal with the wealth of other literature written by the same, and other, authors during the period covered, but not intended for live performance.

In this study I am indebted to, and make frequent reference to, the Alsatian writers mentioned in the previous Section, and many others, who have contributed importantly to the body of knowledge concerning the theatre in Alsace, and to the many playwrights whose work forms the foundation of this thesis.

There are periods in the history of Alsace when my main themes of politics, religion, the language and the theatre combine in a very evident manner, inviting more attention. The ‘busy’ times seem to be periods of stress and transition, such as the Catholic Church using the theatre as a vehicle to attack the Reformation in Alsace, a period for which there are not extensive records, and similarly around the three-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. Also, the rise to adulthood of the first generation to have experienced the results of the German occupation in 1871, the inter-war period, the putting in place of the Nazi regime from 1940 to 43, the almost total absence of evidence of theatre in the final two years of the war, the post-war period from 1945 to 1950, and the changeover from conservative to socialist governments in the 1970s and early 1980s. My attention to what happened in such periods does not indicate that nothing interesting happened in

between, but simply that one has to be selective, and that in some periods records which contribute to my task are more plentiful.

In recent years the expanded influence of the extreme right in Alsatian politics, as shown in the 2002 Presidential elections and the regional elections in 2004, is not a reason for the continued flourishing of Alsatian language theatre, but may be a parallel phenomenon which is equally fed by the fear of local culture disappearing due to the outside influences which crowd in upon the region.

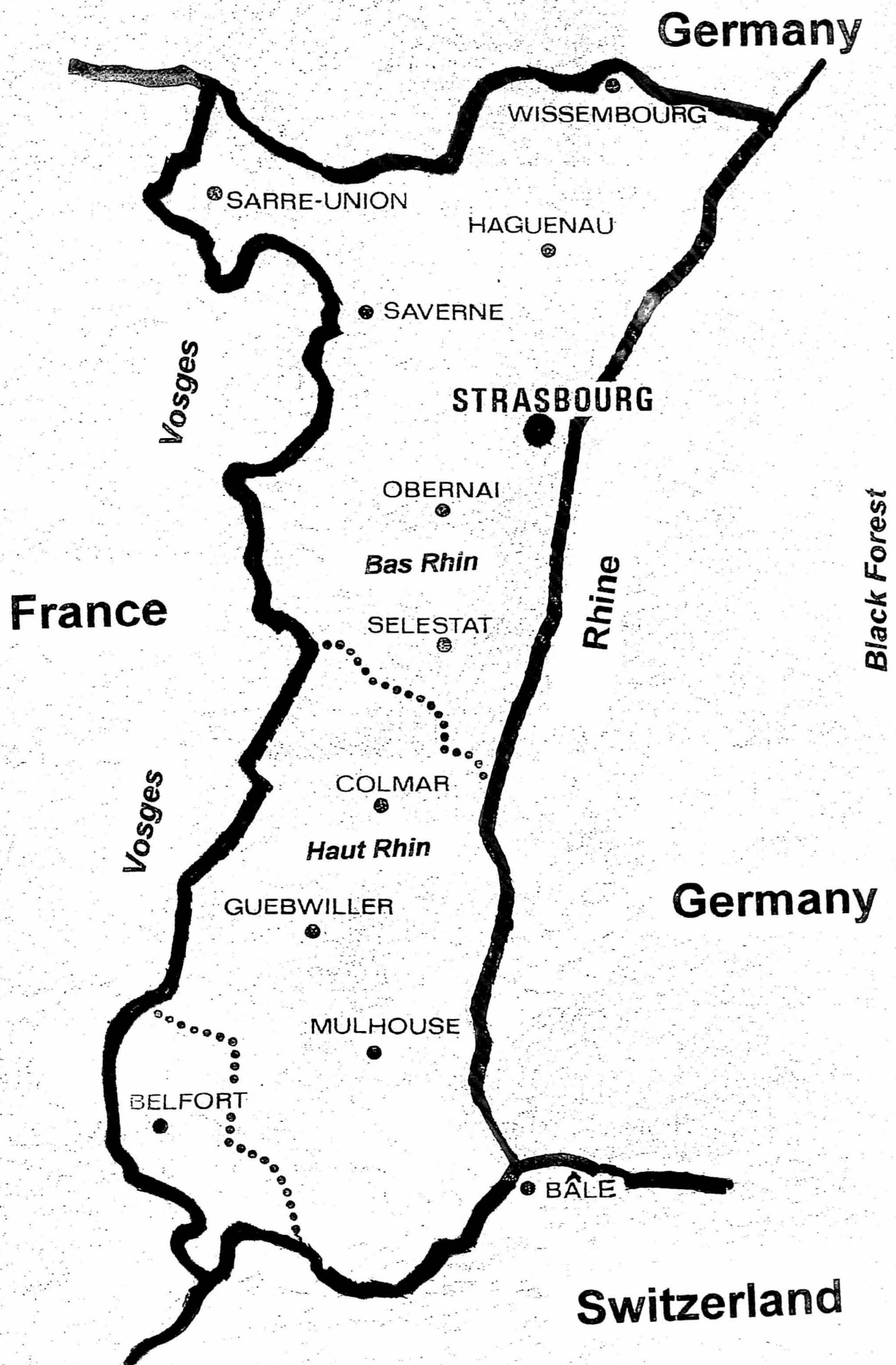
There is, overall, so much raw and previously unanalysed material that my main problem has been how to limit myself to those elements which illustrate my main themes, without ignoring any salient works, but passing over other nuggets which are valuable in themselves, but which would not further my need to draw valid conclusions. However, sampling is a perfectly respectable method of research, and if my samples are simply the most obvious, well-known examples, one may assume that they are also the most influential and possibly the most representative.

As Malou Schneider noted (1988, 8), from a Germain Muller cabaret title, “ ’s isch nonit alles fütli.” (Not all is yet lost), which is an encouraging thought, at what might be considered a late stage in the decline of the language.

# 1.13 Glossary

BNUS	Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg	
Dialekt Theater	Productions broadly within the ‘Alsatian theatre movement’. This does not include all Alsatian language theatre. More fully explained in this thesis.	
<i>DNA</i>	<i>Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace</i>	A Strasbourg-based French language newspaper
Gauleiter		Nazi regional governor
HJ	Hitler Jugend	Hitler Youth
INED	Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques	
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques	
ISERCO	Institut Strasbourgeois d'Etudes et Recherches Commerciales	
KdF	Kraft durch Freude	Strength through Joy
<i>MTB</i>	<i>Mülhauser Tagblatt</i>	Nazi newspaper in Mulhouse
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei	The Nazi party.
OLCA	Office pour la Langue et la Culture d'Alsace	
Opferring Elsass	Junior Nazi party only existing in Alsace	
<i>SNN</i>	<i>Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten</i>	German language, and Nazi, newspaper title
TAC	Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar	Theatre company
TAG	Théâtre Alsacien de Guebwiller	Theatre company
TAH	Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau	Theatre company
TAM	Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse	Theatre company
TAS	Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg	Theatre company

# Alsace



## 2 The political history and culture of the region

### 2.1 The geographical region of Alsace

Alsace lies in the north-eastern corner of France, and consists of two administrative départements, the Haut-Rhin (Upper Rhine) in the south, and the Bas-Rhin (Lower Rhine) in the north, covering about 110 miles (175 km) north to south. It lies between the Rhine on the east, and the Vosges mountains on the west, a width of about forty miles (65 km).

It covers an area of 3,209 sq miles (8,310 sq km), with a population of approximately 1.5 million. It is the third most densely populated region in France, at 467 people per sq mile (180 per sq km), and is reckoned to be the second wealthiest, after Paris. By comparison, Wales occupies an area of 8,032 sq miles (20,800 sq km), which is 2 ½ times as large, and has a population of approximately 2.8 million, almost double, with 349 people per sq mile (134 per sq km).

The Rhine itself was not a permanent barrier in the Middle Ages, and could be crossed at most seasons of the year, in many locations, where it was a swampy area. Only in 1832 did the first steamboat from the North Sea reach as far as Basel with the help of canalisation (Grad 1889, 280). The traditional economic and linguistic frontiers would have been the the Vosges on the west, and the Black Forest mountains, rather than the Rhine, on the east.<sup>12</sup>

The capital of Alsace is Strasbourg, which has a large port on the Rhine. Its name means ‘town of roads’, and it has long been a crossing point of the Rhine and a focus for trade where routes converge. It has acquired greater importance in recent decades as the Council of Europe, set up in Strasbourg in 1949, developed into the European Parliament in 1979.

---

<sup>12</sup> A view supported by Raymond Matzen. Language class 4 Feb. 2003. and Dominique Huck. Lecture Course M LCR 31 E. *Langue et Culture Régionales*. U. Strasbourg. 25 Nov. 2002.

Colmar in the centre, and Mulhouse in the south are the other two large towns in the region.

The southern half of the region, principally the département of the Haut-Rhin, is a tourist area, mainly for the French, Germans and other northern Europeans, with picturesque old villages set among extensive vineyards on the lower slopes of the Vosges. The northern part (the Bas-Rhin) is noticeable for its hops, which supply the local brewing industry, and tobacco. I was told locally that the wine growers are mainly Catholic, and the brewers mainly Protestant – a broad-brush view which would need statistical confirmation.

Apart from the language, the separateness of Alsace is immediately obvious to the outsider, from road signs announcing the fact that towns and villages are twinned, not only with foreign partners, but also with locations within the interior of France itself.

### **Regional Identity – a working definition**

In order to discuss the differences between Alsace and other regions of France, it may be useful at this early stage to discuss what elements establish the separate identity of a group of people.<sup>13</sup> These elements make up the psychological positioning of this group towards neighbouring groups, and also that of the neighbouring groups toward this one.

To do so we need to look for common features that are shared by this group and not by their neighbours. The most obvious feature might be that they live in the same region. Other such features would include the physical geography of the region. If the land is a fertile river valley which is easy to cultivate one might expect the people there to have a

---

<sup>13</sup> Among the main theorists regarding regional identity is Benedict Anderson. See his *Imagined Communities* in the Bibliography. His vision is worldwide. My present case study is a more targeted application of the concepts which he explores. See also Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism*, and *Adam's Navel* in the Bibliography.

different shared outlook from those in a region which is mountainous, or which supports only the marginal farming of tolerant crops or sturdy animals.

Regional toponyms are particularly characteristic in Alsace. Towns and villages have names which reflect the topography, Mittelhausbergen is so called because it is between Oberhausbergen and Niederhausbergen, and it has houses which stand at the foot of a hill. Niederschaeffolsheim has an equally logical derivation, and so on. Even if one does not know the actual village from which a stranger comes, its name enables you to recognise him or her as not being 'from the interior', i.e., being one of us.

The physical position of the region dictates who its political neighbours are. Alsace may be typified by its lying between the Rhine and the Vosges, where the Maginot line was built between 1927 and 1936. Its political neighbours are Germany, the French interior, and, to a lesser extent, Switzerland.

The external threats, which forge group identity, do not here only consist of the possibility of invasion, annexation, and the upheavals of war. They have also included the possibility of losing one's job, for example as a teacher, or local government official, to newcomers 'parachuted in' from Paris or Berlin, during alternating periods of occupation by outsiders. A region whose people have to conform to standards set externally are likely to discover bonds which they were not previously aware of.

Language is an obvious shared experience, particularly when one's upbringing was in an environment where family life was carried on in a language which was despised by one's political neighbours on both sides, and where getting on in the world depended on proficiency in a foreign language, and sometimes upon denying that one is able to speak one's own native tongue. The wife of the ENT surgeon to whose son I gave private English lessons in 1955/56, pretended that she did not speak Alsatian, although she was able to converse in it with her maid. It may be interesting to note here that, as dealt with at greater length in Section 3.4, page 111, below, the decline in the use of Alsatian is linked, among other things, with the emancipation of women.



The dominant religions have also stamped an identity on Alsace, and have influenced the languages spoken in the region. Since World War Two, French was the language of Catholicism, Alsatian was more likely to be known as that of Protestantism. It is noticeable that, as in Northern Ireland, one's religion is in some cases indicated by the spelling of family names. Whereas *Schmidt* is recognised as being historically Protestant, and is more likely to be found in the north of Alsace, *Schmitt* is Catholic and is more common in the south.<sup>14</sup> This would be known only within the region.

The bonding experienced via shared political opinions may also be a regional feature. Alsace is known for its high percentage of votes for LePen in the 2002 presidential elections, and his even greater success in the local elections of 2004. Law and order as proposed by the extreme right may be a very desirable objective for a region with such an unsettled past.

Folklore still features more noticeably in Alsace than in Germany, or in the rest of France, and the festivals which celebrate this, tend to be different from those in neighbouring regions. It is normal in the northern hemisphere, that the darkest days of the year are celebrated with defiant festivals of light. In Alsace, the person who arrives at Christmas is, traditionally, the *Kristkindel*, who is not, as one might expect, the Christ Child. It is St Lucie, the patron saint of light, represented pictorially by a young girl carrying a candle. However, in British Christmas mythology we also welcome a figure other than the Christ Child at Christmas, only in our case it is Father Christmas. The Alsatian equivalent of Father Christmas is the cruel Hans Trapp, a medieval robber baron, who in Christmas mythology accompanies the *Kristkindel* and carries off any badly behaved children in his sack, whilst rewarding the well-behaved with a present.

I would posit, that the above features, with others, contribute to the 'set of expectations' of people within a region. By this I mean that people become aware of what their

---

<sup>14</sup> This finding is supported by Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series at U.Strasbourg 13 May 2003.

differences from surrounding regions are, and how this affects what they can expect from life, what limitations this imposes, and what opportunities it opens up, and upon whom they can rely for mutual support.

## **Lorraine**

The name of Alsace has long been linked, both in France and abroad with its neighbouring province of Lorraine, which consists of five départements, including Moselle. But Lorraine does not have the clear unified identity of Alsace. Its regional language, Francique, is also related to German, but is only spoken in part of the province. Only Moselle was annexed by Germany in 1871 and 1940, and therefore Lorraine has a more fragmented history and culture than its neighbour.

The two are very different in that parts of Lorraine are more industrialized, and Alsace is more agricultural, although modern light industry has obviously developed in both regions in recent years.

## **2.2 The political history of Alsace**

I select now some of what appear to be the most relevant reference points for the present study. Other researchers would emphasise different aspects as being more apposite to their work.

### **Until 1870**

Although my study concerns mainly the period from 1871 to the present day, it is necessary to be aware of the previous influences on the region, particularly in relation to its language usage.

Being on a main fluvial artery, the Rhine, at the convergence of many overland trading routes, and occupying a central position in western Europe, Alsace has inherited the effects of occupations, invasions and annexations since historical records began. The valley of the Rhine in this region is fertile farming country which is very attractive to warlike neighbours.

Pierre Klein, a prolific writer on Alsace, in his *Raisons d'Alsace* (Klein 2001, 18-27), states that the first known inhabitants were Celtic tribes in the eighth century BC. The situation has always remained basically unstable due to frequent invasions until the present day. However, one can indicate, for the purpose of the present study, some general periods of reasonable stability. From 406 until the end of the Thirty Years War, in 1648, Alsace was mainly Germanic. The name of Alsace is stated by Sitzmann to have come from the name of the river *Ale* or *Elle*, now called the *Ill*, plus the suffix *Sass*, being an Old German word for 'inhabitant' (Sitzmann 1878, 9). The political entity of Alsace is stated to have been born with the creation of the Duchy of Alsace as early as 640. The duchy survived until 740, but did not have the boundaries of the present-day Alsace.

Linguistically it is interesting to note that the Frankish king, Clovis, who conquered Strasbourg in 496, and with it much of Alsace, later converted to Christianity, which entailed Latin becoming the language of government (Sitzmann 1878, 15).

After Charlemagne died in 814 his empire, which covered most of modern Austria, Germany, France, the low countries, and half of Italy, went to his son Louis the Pious, who died in 840. The empire was then divided among Charlemagne's three grandsons, Louis, who took the eastern part, Charles, who took the western part, and Lothar, who took the central part, which became Lotharingia, or Lorraine, which included the area of present-day Alsace. In 842 Louis and Charles signed the *Serment de Strasbourg* (the Oath of Strasbourg), written separately in each of their languages, which allied them against Lothar. After Lothar's death, in 870, Alsace became part of the Holy Roman Empire, and stayed so until after the Thirty Years War (Weckmann, 1988, 8).

Charlemagne's empire had prayed in Latin, but after the Reformation, in the sixteenth century the Bas-Rhin (i.e., the northern half of Alsace) became strongly Protestant, and the Germanic language was fortified in the region, as Luther was strongly in favour of preaching in the vernacular. The Haut-Rhin, in the south, was topographically more open to France, and remained predominantly Catholic. The Hapsburgs, who had large properties in this region, were Catholic.<sup>15</sup>

Louis XIV received the property of the Hapsburgs in Alsace under the terms of the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648, which concluded the Thirty Years War. The political climate then changed considerably. Although many of the political entities in Alsace had rendered homage to the German Emperor, they had run their own affairs:

... avec une liberté presque aussi grande que celles des cités grecques ... aucun empereur ne s'étant montré assez fort pour imposer sa volonté aux divers pouvoirs régionaux. (Edmond Jung 2001, 54).<sup>16</sup>

This new ownership of large holdings in the region by France, led to many of the small independent entities accepting the 'protection' of this, the most powerful Continental state. So the remainder of Alsace thus became French almost by default. Strasbourg held out until 1681, and Mulhouse voted to leave Switzerland and become French only in 1798.

The French king did not have a language policy, but he did have a religious policy, which was strictly Catholic, and with Catholicism came Latin for Church ceremonies, and French for the sermons,<sup>17</sup> for, as Françoise Waquet points out, it was considered important by both Catholics and Protestants that the congregation understand the sermon (Waquet 2001, 65). At the time there was no deliberate policy of Frenchification. 'The

---

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Matzen's research findings, stated in Alsatian language lecture series. U. Strasbourg, 4 Feb. 2003.

<sup>16</sup> (...with a freedom almost as extensive as that of the Greek city states ... no Emperor having been strong enough to impose his will upon the various powers in the region.)

<sup>17</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series. Course M LCR 31, E. *Langue et Culture Régionales*, U. Strasbourg. 25 Nov. 2002.

habitual policy of the French in annexed territories was to maintain the traditions and the language of the new subjects as much as possible' (Bister-Broosen 2002, 99). Louis XIV is said to have told his officials whom he sent to the region 'Ne touchez pas aux choses d'Alsace' (Do not alter things in Alsace) (Baas 1972, 14), and according to Jung this applied equally to religion, the Edict of Nantes having been only partially applied in Alsace, which suited the Lutherans, who would have been Germanic speakers (Jung 2001, 54). However, Matzen states that he did send Jesuits to Alsace to rebaptise whole villages as Catholic<sup>18</sup>, which had the practical effect of increasing the usage of the French language. Thus with French administrators installed, that language gradually became more accepted for everyday usage, mainly among the middle and upper classes, and mainly in the towns.

In the eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment, Alsace enjoyed a peaceful period, in which the economy flourished, along with architecture, and to a lesser degree, literature (Scherb 2000, 43).

In 1787 a provincial assembly was set up, but at the time of the French revolution, in 1789, Alsace ceased to be a single region, and was divided into two of the, at that time, 83 alphabetically numbered new départements, the Bas-Rhin (the lower Rhine in the North) and the Haut-Rhin (the upper Rhine in the South). German was then considered to be the language of the enemy, and all regional languages were suppressed, partly because they hindered the rational unity of the country, and partly because they obstructed the spread of the *lumières*.

In 1790 the clergy became state employees. Most of the clergy in Alsace refused to take the required oath of allegiance, and in 1793 the churches were closed, and converted into 'Temples of Enlightenment' (Scherb 2000, 45).

In 1790, the Abbé Grégoire initiated an enquiry, circulated to all the départements regarding the status of regional languages. He let it be known that 'patois' must be wiped

---

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series. 4 Feb. 2003.

out in order to make usage of the French language universal. Dialects impeded political unity. And Barrère, in his speech of the 8<sup>th</sup> Pluviôse in Year Two (27 January 1794) enumerated the main regional languages when he stated:

Nous avons révolutionné le gouvernement, les mœurs, la pensée; révolutionnons aussi la langue: le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton, l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand. La contre-révolution parle italien, le fanatisme parle basque ... (Bec 1963, 84).<sup>19</sup>

The previous situation of Alsace did not fit in with the logic of the French Revolution. Whereas the region had previously developed piecemeal it now had the new national identity of France thrust upon it. Furthermore, the centralisation of power in Paris in all spheres of life increased during that period (Scherb, 2000, 13, 45).

Part of the Jacobin philosophy, which was written into the Constitution of the First Republic, was that France was a 'Republic One and Indivisible'. To suggest anything else was to play into the hands of the Counter-revolutionaries (Gildea 1996, 128) - i.e., the guillotine. The present Republic still has, in Article 2 of its Constitution, the declaration that 'the language of the Republic is French' which is an important stumbling block for regional languages.

The reality of the situation in Alsace was however, not so clear cut, as there were not sufficient teachers of French to ensure that all Alsatians were educated in the language. Also, the Lutheran church considered French to be an immoral language, and as Alsace was a stronghold of the reformation, the Alsatian dialect still had powerful champions in situ.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> (We have revolutionised the government, customs, thought. Let us also revolutionise the language. Federalism and superstition speak Breton, emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German. Counter revolution speaks Italian, fanaticism speaks Basque...)

<sup>20</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 4 Nov. 2002.

Ernest Gellner states that nothing that happened in the history of a nation before 1800 ‘makes the slightest difference to the issues which we face [today]’ (1999, 32).

However, the Jacobin legacy of uniformity in dealing with the individual, and fear of giving privileges to groups or provinces, still lives on in French political thought, and is a serious impediment to campaigners for the recognition of the different status of regions such as Alsace.

Napoleon’s attitude to local dialects was summed up in his words ‘Laissez-les parler leur jargon, pourvu qu’ils sabrent à la française’. (Let them speak their jargon, provided they handle their swords like Frenchmen.) (Scherb 2000,46).

The French National Convention in 1793 had declared war on Britain, and hostilities continued until Wellington defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, apart from a brief interlude during the Peace of Amiens, from 1801 to 1803. It was the first global war, being fought in most of western Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. This war also saw the introduction of the idea of it being a duty of citizens to bear arms, via the *levée en masse* which some regions ignored. Previous wars, apart from the American War of Independence (1775 to 1783), had been fought mainly by the nobility supported by mercenaries and forced conscripts (Russell 1995, 1 and 4).

One influence in spreading the use of French among Alsatians at this period (as it was in every period of military activity) was the use of the language in the army for command in everyday activities, in training and in battle.

There followed a long period in which Alsace was affected by French politics only to the same extent as the rest of the nation. Bernard Vogler tells a story of the French government census in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in which a village council in the Kochelsberg region of Alsace could not understand the rather complicated form to be filled in and returned. In the section on public health, the question ‘Combien de crétins dans la commune ?’ (How many cretins in the commune ?) was misunderstood as ‘Combien de Chrétiens dans la commune ?’ (How many Christians in the commune ?) and the answer

was given as 100%.<sup>21</sup> This rather dubious piece of rural mythology serves to indicate the popular opinion of the penetration of French in the countryside.

But, in 1866 Prussia defeated Austria, altering the balance of power in Europe. It also appeared that a Prussian candidate would become the next king of Spain. The final French emperor, Napoleon III, demanded an assurance from Bismark that this would not happen. Bismark, in a telegram from Ems, refused such a guarantee, and Napoleon declared war in 1870, thinking that Prussia was still, as in 1648, a weak alliance of small city states. In August of that year two significant battles, both in Alsace, at Wissembourg and at Woerth, demonstrated the opposite, leaving the route to Paris open. Napoleon III was captured that September, at Sedan. France was defeated and the Third Republic was instituted (Price 1993).

### **From 1871 to 1918**

In 1871 the Treaty of Frankfurt was signed, under which Alsace was handed to Germany. Alsatians were allowed to leave and emigrate to France and North Africa, which 130,000 of them did. French was discouraged, and was not taught in the schools.

It was only at this period that Berlin, the capital of Prussia, emerged as the political, economic and cultural capital of the whole of Germany. Historically Germany had been an amalgam of small and large independent states, principalities, duchies, Hanseatic and other autonomous entities (Hofmann 1988, 224). Even until the time of Hitler the Germans did not consider themselves to be a single political unit. His rallying cry of ‘Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer’ (One people, one nation, one leader) was a necessary reminder that victory required unity. Even after the Second World War the nation was politically divided and neither side had an effective traditional capital. In the Germany of the 1950s until the 80s, when speaking to someone from East Germany one was

---

<sup>21</sup> Bernard Vogler. Lecture at Interregional Languages Conference, at Ingersheim. 24 Sep. 2003.



constantly told that it was not just *Berlin*, but *Berlin, Hauptstadt der DDR* (Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany experienced a rapid economic development in which Alsace shared, and which helped distract attention from the general discontent after the defeat and occupation which it had suffered (Fischer 1968, 112). Under the forty-eight years of German rule, Strasbourg tripled in size, becoming a major city of culture and commerce.<sup>22</sup> The fact that the new ruling power in 1871 was, unlike France, not a rigidly centralised regime, but a federal empire, also worked in favour of Alsace. Bismark and his successors, unlike Hitler in a later period, respected the special status of the church, as based upon the Concordat which Napoleon had made with the Pope in 1801 (Bentley 1988, 64), although this Concordat was abandoned in France in 1905 while Alsace was German. Some German officers and officials also cultivated the use of the French language in order to integrate better locally with their social counterparts.

The somewhat liberal attitude of the German rulers hardened considerably from 1914, when the loyalty of Alsatian soldiers and the population were in doubt.

In the period of German rule Alsace was firstly a *Reichsland* (a land of the Empire) governed by a *Statthalter* (Lieutenant General) answerable directly to the Kaiser (Les Racines du Futur 2003, 35). A regional government was set up in 1879, and in 1911 Alsace was given a separate, but token, Constitution and a Parliament. In October 1918 Alsace and that part of Lorraine which had been annexed (Moselle) were made into an autonomous federal state, a *Bundesstaat* within the German *Reich*. This latter move was intended to bind Alsace closer to Germany, and to hopefully ensure its retention as part of the post-war *Reich* (Vogler 1995, 213). However, this status was only enjoyed for one month before the armistice, when it was immediately obvious that Alsace would return to France.

---

<sup>22</sup> Raymond Matzen. Lecture on the Matthis Brothers, Alsatian writers, at Haguenau. 11 Mar. 2004.

It is worth noting that when Kaiser Wilhelm II attended a performance of the Alsatian Theatre in Strasbourg in 1911, he made a speech of thanks in Alsatian at a party afterwards ! This indicated approval of the language, and with the limited independence granted to Alsace by Germany, prompted the movements for autonomy and separatism which continued under the restored French rule, in the 1920s, for which several people were tried and imprisoned (Baas 1972, *passim*).

### **The Inter-war Years**

Vogler sums up this period by stating that the French government wanted to Frenchify Alsace, and, under the Third Republic, tried to rule it like one of the colonies overseas. They threw out the baby with the bathwater, the culture with the language.<sup>23</sup>

Under the Treaty of Versailles in 1918, Alsace became French again, and reintegration began. Alsatians were graded, from A to D, according to the degree of German blood in their veins. German residents were expelled, as were any undesirable Alsatians, a total of 120,000 people (Klein 2001, 26). Children were employed to throw horse manure at Germans returning home across the Rhine bridge at Strasbourg.<sup>24</sup>

Any previous privileges enjoyed by Alsace were ignored. Rule was reimposed from Paris and the region was again divided into two administrative départements. The method of governing Alsace went through several changes between the two world wars. In November 1918 a *Commissaire de la République* was installed for each département, reporting directly to an Under-Secretary of State to the Cabinet in Paris. A *Conseil Supérieur d'Alsace et de Lorraine*, was also set up, consisting mainly of non-locals, plus some locals who were hand-chosen. After public discontent was manifest, in 1919 a more locally representative *Conseil Consultatif* under a new *Haut-Commissaire* was set up, which existed until the general election victory in 1924 of a left wing, Jacobin-

---

<sup>23</sup> Bernard Vogler. Lecture at Interregional Languages Conference, at Ingersheim, Alsace. 24 Sept. 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Schmittbiel, playwright, campaigner. Personal interview. 21 Aug. 2003.

orientated, assimilationist government. From then until 1939 the main seat of government for Alsace was in Paris, under the immediate authority of the Prime Minister (Vogler 1995, 217).

The immediate result of this perceived misrule was known as the *Malaise Alsacien* (The unrest in Alsace), a period during which Alsace tried to maintain its laws, which were out of step with the rest of France, some having been inherited from before 1871, and some from its later increasing independence under Germany. The civil service was taken over by functionaries from Paris, who had better terms of service than their Alsatian colleagues. Overnight all administration and schooling were switched to French, which a large part of the population did not understand, having been schooled in German. Furthermore, the situation of the church in Alsace was still founded on the 1801 Concordat between Napoleon and the Pope, and it was a profoundly religious region in which a large part of the population were Protestant. Alsatians wished to retain this difference (Baas 1972, 20). The Catholic church refused to conduct services in French, preferring to continue in Alsatian, or ‘Pfarrer Deutsch’ (Church German), whereas in 1945 they switched immediately to French.<sup>25</sup> The language of Alsatian Lutheran Protestants was always Alsatian or Church German, until the 1950s.<sup>26</sup>

On 17 June 1924 Édouard Herriot, Prime Minister of a newly elected Radical/Socialist government, stated that his government was persuaded that it would faithfully interpret the wishes of those cherished populations which had finally been returned to France by endeavouring to ‘... hâter la venue du jour où seront effacées les dernières différences entre les départements recouvrés et l’ensemble du territoire de la République’.<sup>27</sup> It had been decided to introduce all the legislation of the Republic into Alsace and Lorraine (Baas 1972, 56). But after a lot of protests the religious laws remained unchanged in Alsace.

---

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Vogler. Lecture at Interregional Languages Conference, at Ingersheim. 24 Sep. 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Prof. Matthieu Arnold, Faculty of Protestant Theology, U. Strasbourg. E-mail interview. 10 Nov. 2004.

<sup>27</sup> (... hasten the day when the last differences [in legislation], between the departments recovered, and the whole of the territory of the Republic, have been effaced.)

As Alsace had survived concerted attempts from both the German and the French governments to eliminate its language one is compelled to appreciate the excerpt from a speech of a French deputy to Parliament in Paris in 1921:

N'est il pas extraordinaire qu'un peuple parlant un dialecte germanique, qui a été réuni pendant 50 ans au peuple allemand, qui aurait eu toutes les facilités de langue pour s'assimiler à l'Allemagne au moment ou elle prenait un essor économique extraordinaire, n'y-a-t-il pas, dis-je, quelque chose de merveilleux dans le fait que ce peuple, néanmoins, ait toujours eu la nostalgie de la France ? (Baas 1972, 19).<sup>28</sup>

Vogler states that the 1930s in France were dominated by economic decay and the threat of a new war, to which the country reacted with a pacifist stance (Vogler 1995, 215). This was at a period when Hitler was offering Germany a promise of unity and development after a period when the country had been threatened by possible revolution (ibid, 216), while he was furthermore assuring other European states that his intentions were peaceful. In September 1938 the Munich agreement was signed by Hitler and Chamberlain. On 6 December 1938 the Franco-German Pact was signed in Paris by Ribbentrop and Bonnet, in which Hitler renounced Germany's claim to Alsace and Lorraine. In this both governments solemnly recognised the existing frontiers of the two countries.

With the sinister clarity afforded by hindsight, the 1920's [sic] were lively, optimistic post-war years. As for the 1930's [sic], these were undoubtedly pre-war years, increasingly morose and tormented. Contemporaries were hardly divided in their perceptions. A handful of clairvoyant spirits seem to have been able to see the war approaching from Versailles. More numerous were those who foresaw it in the mid-1930's [sic], when German rearmament took a serious turn,

---

<sup>28</sup> (Is it not extraordinary that a people who speak a Germanic dialect, who have been united with the German nation for 50 years, who would have had all the language facilities for assimilation within Germany at a time when that country experienced an extraordinary economic boom, is it not, I say, something marvelous that this people nevertheless, should still be nostalgic for France ?)

and Hitler started to scorn even the treaties which his country had freely signed. In 1936, whilst German troops reoccupied the Rhineland under the impassive gaze of the French, some citizens considered that France had already started to lose the next war  
(Weber, English edition. 1994, 13).

When the French surrendered in 1940, at Rothondes, Alsace was not mentioned.<sup>29</sup> On 17 July 1940 the local newspaper, the *Dernières Nouvelles de Strasbourg*, using only its German title, the *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* (Strasbourg Latest news), freshly taken over by the Nazis, headlined on page 1, the Gauleiter, Robert Wagner, as stating ‘Es gibt in Zukunft keine elsässische Frage mehr’ (In future there will be no Alsatian problem). The whole inter-war period, surprisingly, lasted for only twenty-one years, which to the Nazis appeared to be just a blip in the course of history.

### **Autonomist and Separatist movements**

Having had a degree of autonomy under Germany it was understandable that feelings of regionalism and separatism flourished in the 1920s. The Autonomist movement sought self-rule within the French Republic, whereas the Separatists wanted complete independence from France. Both were hunted down by the *Police Spéciale*, whose job was to infiltrate and prosecute them as traitors. Such trials continued up until 1940, when a military tribunal condemned one accused to death. The leading investigator Commissaire Antoine Becker, affectionately known as ‘Schisshüss’ Becker (politely, ‘toilet block’ Becker), who escaped to the unoccupied south of France was himself denounced, and died in the Struthof concentration camp in 1943 (Andrés 2003, 183). Strangely, the Municipality of Strasbourg honoured his memory in 2002 by naming a street after him.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. March-April 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Land un Sproch, 142 (2002) 18. Strasbourg: René Schickele-Gesellschaft. See also Section 4.6, page 207, below.

Exiled Alsatians in Germany agitated for the rights of their homeland. The periodical *Elsass-Lothringen Heimatstimmen* (The Voices of Alsace-Lorraine Homeland) was published from Berlin from 1922, including articles on the dialect theatre (1926, 285, 571 and 643). Its publisher was Robert Ernst, an Alsatian who opted for Germany in 1918, and who returned to become mayor of Strasbourg under the Nazis. In 1955 he was sentenced to eight years in prison (Andrés 2003, 187). His self-justification had been published in Berlin, as *Rechenschaftsbericht eines Elsässers* (The Reckoning of an Alsatian), in 1954.

André Traband, mayor of Haguenau from 1971 to 1989, a campaigner for the language and active in the Dialekt Theater, in *Au service de notre patrimoine linguistique* (In the service of our linguistic heritage), recounts the resistance of government at all levels, in the twentieth century, to any attempt to promote Alsatian as the spoken language, or German as the written version (1988, *passim*).<sup>31</sup>

The magazine *Zukunft* (The Future), published from 1925, emphasised Alsatian values such as the possession of land, the language, the status of religion and religious education, and campaigned for administrative posts to include Alsatians with an equal status to those from the interior.

From 1926, the monthly *Die Heimat* (The Homeland), not to be confused with the present-day *D' Heimet* (The Homeland), preached autonomy within the French Republic, based on a Christian attitude towards culture and politics. At the same time another movement, headed by Karl Roos, Paul Schall, René Hauss, and a Strasbourg lawyer named Bickler, were pressing for full independent separation with a Germanic culture, similar to the situation of Luxembourg. Hauss, in World War Two reverted to his name in the German manner, Renatus Hauß, as it had been before 1918, developed a hatred for France, and became the Nazi Kreisleiter (District Leader) for the Haguenau

---

<sup>31</sup> His cousin, René, was secretary of the Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau. (Telephone interview. Michel Traband, grandson of André, at the Archives Municipales de Haguenau. 28 Oct. 2004.)

region of north Alsace. His father, Karl, had been a founder of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg (the TAS, the Alsatian Theatre of Strasbourg).<sup>32</sup>

Although self-determination was popular in the 1920s, the growing threat of German nationalism and expansion in the 1930s meant that it went out of favour.<sup>33</sup> There were however, still extremists, such as Bilger, who set up the *Bauernbund* (League of Country People), based on the values of Family, Work, Homeland and Christianity, and which held anti-semitic demonstrations in Strasbourg. Also, Bickler, who set up the *Elsass-Lothringen Partei* (The Alsace-Lorraine Party). These Victorian values were later echoed in the Vichy government's slogan of 'Travail, Famille, Patrie'.

Today the pressure groups are much less demanding by comparison. These vary from the more outspoken *Rot un Wiss* (Red and White – the colours of the flag of Alsace), which is regarded as a political vehicle, to the village theatre groups, who perform to give pleasure to those who speak the language. It is difficult to recognise some pressure groups which belong to federations that have other names, and some named groups also have publications with different names. Groups also tend to disappear and reappear unexpectedly.

As a result of their flirtation with Vichy, all regionalist movements were discredited after the Liberation in 1945, and some of their leaders featured in trials and executions (Rigoulot 1997, 107).

## **The Second World War**

Pierre Rigoulot relates how in 1939, 400,000 people were evacuated from Strasbourg and the frontier regions, as an offensive was expected from the north-eastern corner of the country, for which the Maginot Line of concrete fortifications had been prepared.

---

<sup>32</sup> Bernard Wittmann. Alsatian writer and campaigner. E-mail interview. 28 Oct. 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg, March/April 2003.

France entered the Second World War in September of that year. But the German offensive went around the Maginot line, and entered France from Belgium. Fighting on French soil lasted only from May to June 1940, when an armistice was signed at Rethondes. Most evacuees returned to Alsace, which was annexed into Germany. Alsatians were once again full citizens of the German (Third) Reich. (Rigoulot 1998).

The main pre-war regional newspaper, the *Dernières Nouvelles de Strasbourg* (Latest News of Strasbourg), was also printed in High German, as the *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten*. It moved to Bordeaux and became the newspaper of the evacuees, until it was banned by the Vichy government. It did not appear from 21 June 1940 until 21 December 1944, when it set up again in Strasbourg, becoming the *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*. Meanwhile, the Nazi government published the daily *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* (SNN), flagged on the front page header as *Amtliche Tageszeitung der NSDAP* (the Official daily newspaper of the Nazi party), and as *Regierungsanzeiger für das Elsass* (Government Information for Alsace). Also appearing were only three other dailies, the *Kurier* (Courier), the *Mülhauser Tagblatt* (MTB, Mulhouse Daily News), and the *Mülhauser Volksblatt* (Mulhouse People's News) (Vogler 1995, 256).

All members of the population were expected to join their relevant Nazi-support organisations, including women, girls and boys, to show their complete devotion to the cause. From August 1942 Alsatian men were conscripted into the German army. These were the *Incorporés de Force* (Compulsory Call-up), or *Malgrés Nous*, those who were enrolled 'in spite of ourselves'. Photographs of family members, taken at that time, show them wearing German uniform.

Lillian Vassberg notes that 'Not unlike revolutionary France, the Third Reich equated national unity with linguistic unity' (Vassberg 1993, 21). Ironically this is still in 2004 the attitude of the French government. So in this respect at least there was little to choose between the two, as was demonstrated in Alsace after 1945.



There was total elimination of the French language. German was the language of education, and English was taught as the first foreign language. The Alsatian language was suppressed in favour of High German. The only greeting permitted was 'Heil Hitler'. 'Bonjour' and other French greetings were punishable by imprisonment. Life under German rule is described by Tomi Ungerer in *Tomi, a Childhood Under the Nazis* (Ungerer, 1998). All school textbooks were replaced by German books on the first day of the annexation. The only concentration camp in France was in Alsace, at the Struthof, near Schirmeck, twenty miles from Strasbourg, hidden in the Vosges mountains, which is preserved today as a national monument. It has all the features of the more infamous sites such as Belsen. At Schirmeck itself was a 're-education' camp for Francophiles who could be 'put back on track' and readmitted to society.

Private life, as such, disappeared. Total orthodoxy was imposed and deviation was considered wilful and therefore required punishment. The concept of being wrong in good faith no longer existed. Heretical thought or behaviour met with zero tolerance.

The Nazi aim in Alsace was to eliminate any cultural memory of a French past. Any visible public inscriptions in French were eliminated, including the Germanising of place names, and even the replacing of gravestones. Statues of French heroes were removed. In all 600 monuments and 300 commemorative plaques were destroyed. French books were collected and burnt. The wearing of the beret was banned. In 1940 a total of approximately 45,000 undesirables and French sympathisers were expelled into France (Vogler 1995, 256).

People with French sounding forenames or family names received notification that they had been allocated a more German-sounding name. The renaming of streets brought occasional incongruities. In Mulhouse, the former *Rue du Sauvage – Wildemann Strass* (Wild Man Street) was renamed *Adolf Hitler Strasse* (Vassberg 1993, 20).

The one and indivisible Jacobin state, ruled from Paris, had been defeated. With the annexation of Alsace and part of Lorraine, and the division of the rest of France into the

occupied territory in the north, and the Vichy regime in the south, opportunities opened up for thoughts of separation, particularly in Brittany and Alsace. Marshall Pétain, the head of government in the south, was in favour of France's ancient provinces. However, German policy was dominated purely by strategic considerations that included firm control, and the absorption of all neighbouring Germanic peoples into the Third Reich (Gildea 1996, 129). The Gauleiter, Robert Wagner, who was a close friend of Hitler since the early 1930s,<sup>34</sup> was appointed to rule the combined *Gau* (administrative region) of Baden and Alsace, i.e., the land of the Rhine valley between the Vosges and the Black Forest. So there was not a separate German 'Land' of Alsace under the Nazis, as there had been under the previous German occupation.

It was intended that the name of 'Alsace' itself would disappear, the name of the *Gau* being the *Oberrhein* (The Upper Rhine). This, combined with the Nazi intention to eradicate the local language, even in everyday conversations, held out little hope for the regional identity under Hitler (Philipps 1986, 234-5), (Vassberg 1993, 21). Alsatians were exhorted to attend free lessons in High German (*Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten*, 15 October 1940). Furthermore, the most recognisable symbol of the region, the Strasbourg Cathedral was taken out of the hands of the Catholic Church and 'raised' to the level of a pan-German architectural monument (Philipps, 1986, 236).

The Nazi party continued publicly to pronounce its belief in final victory, right up to the moment when Alsace was liberated, in the winter of 1944/5.

## From 1945

The Continent was invaded by the Allies on 6 June 1944, and Alsace was liberated in the winter of 1944/45. In 1945, at the Armistice, Alsace became French again, and the reverse process, of *épuration* (cleansing), took place. My colleague, Paul Adolf, a student teacher, in 1956, at the Lycée de Garçons de Hagenau, in the Bas-Rhin, had to

---

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Schmittbiel. Personal interview. 6 Feb. 2004.

obtain a Certificate of Reintegration before he could obtain a government post, i.e., become a teacher. German was once again the language of the enemy. It was in everyone's interest to appear as French as possible. France as a whole went through a difficult period of reunification, and popular images of Frenchness were publicised, such as the photos by Cartier Bresson and the lesser-known Willy Ronis, whose *Boy with bread* (1952) is probably his most recognisable work.

In practical terms, the *épuration* simply compounded the confusion after the armistice. Hirschfeld and Marsh refer to:

... the post-Liberation purge, which the Resistance forces, Communists and Gaullists alike ... organised as a kind of national catharsis, but which in hindsight appears to be a clumsy and grotesque attempt to hide as many skeletons as possible in the national closet ... any overall assessment of the 'E.puration' would have to conclude that it did more harm than good. (Hirschfeld 1989, 261).

If this was done in the name of democracy we could remember a saying attributed to Oscar Wilde, that 'democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people'.<sup>35</sup>

Politically there was a total reversal of the previous situation. Left-wing politics revived, and the autonomist movement disappeared. The departmental and prefectoral system was reimposed, with direct rule from Paris (Vogler 1995, 275).

For foreigners, books such as *France Lives*, undated, but published, in English, in about 1946 in Paris, London and New York, showed not only the devastation of recent years, but also carried advertisements for prestigious French products such as Chanel, Lancôme, Courvoisier and Nina Ricci, interlaced with stories of reconstruction (De Costigliole n.d., passim).

---

<sup>35</sup> Oxford Dictionary of Quotations – see Bibliography.

The purging of German features from Alsace is described in detail in *L'Alsace-Lorraine pendant la Guerre 1939-1945* (Alsace-Lorraine during the war of 1939-1945) by Pierre Rigoulot (1997, 32 – 53). German nationals were ejected with a maximum 30 kg of luggage. The problem remained of how to treat those French citizens who had to a greater or lesser degree cooperated with the enemy. Cooperation had been in fact compulsory, with severe penalties as the option. Trials continued after 1947, when some autonomistes were tried and executed (Mourer and Sturmel in Mulhouse, Joseph Rossé at Nancy) (Rigoulot 1997, 107), although Andres simply states that Rossé ‘mourut en prison’ (died in prison) in 1951 (2003, 179).

Children had been obliged to join either the *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler Youth) or the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (German Girls’ League), and there were equally associations for men and women. The scale of obligatory cooperation was so great that it was usually excused later as ‘passive resistance’. Dr Burger, a member of the Conseil Général of Moselle said at a meeting of his colleagues, in November 1945:

Le pauvre bougre qui a accepté d’entrer dans une organisation nazie pour conserver son gagne-pain pour lui et sa famille, mérite notre clémence. Il n’est que juste que les grands qui furent à la tête soient frappés plus sévèrement que les petits. (Rigoulot 1997, 105).<sup>36</sup>

The problem of passive collaboration under the Nazi regime is illustrated in Section 4.4, page 190, of this thesis, by the play *de nej Fahne* (The New Flag), by Frédéric Lutzing (1946), in which the mayor, a decent type, is trying to satisfy the authorities, save the village from retribution, and ensure that the new swastika flag donated by the Nazi party will be installed as required.

A different kind of organisation had been the *Opferring Elsass* (Circle of Sacrifice, Alsace), a junior Nazi party which existed only in Alsace, of which I found a lapel badge

---

<sup>36</sup> (The poor fellow who agreed to join a Nazi organisation in order to keep his means of feeding himself and his family, is worthy of our clemency. It is only just that those who were the leaders should be hit harder than the little people.)

in the street in Strasbourg in 1956. On asking about it in a café at a tram terminus where I worked there was a strong reaction among the Alsatians towards the matter being raised, especially by a foreigner. The Opferring had been a voluntary organisation, and a stepping stone to higher office.

The Struthof concentration camp was in 1945 used to contain those accused of collaboration. Records show that in Alsace a total of 2,410 were condemned to various sentences by the civil courts. Additionally there were 27 summary executions, and death penalties were imposed by military tribunals, including 11 in Strasbourg. The purge was severe on the railways, and among state employees, of whom 10% lost their jobs. In the Post Office 25% were dismissed, as were 20% of teachers (Rigoulot 1997: 107 – 110).

In June 1944, German troops, as a reprisal for resistance activity, in the village of Oradour sur Glane, in the Limousin, in central France, had locked all the men in the local church and set it on fire. The village was made, and is still, a national monument. In 1953 twenty one men of the SS Division Das Reich, accused as perpetrators of this massacre, were brought to trial before a military court in Bordeaux. It was discovered that 12 of these were Alsatians, who claimed that they had fought for the Germans against their will, among the *Malgrés Nous*. Most of these were sentenced to terms of hard labour. There was an outcry in Alsace. The government feared the revival of the pre-war autonomist movement, in opposition to its policy of anticlericalism and Frenchification. An amnesty was proposed, and, in spite of protests and strikes in the Limousin, it was approved by the National Assembly (Gildea 1996, 63), (Vonau 2003, *passim*).

In 1946 the Constitution of the Fourth Republic of France was proclaimed. The subsequent Constitution of 1958 heralded the present Fifth Republic.

It was written into the Constitutions of the Fourth and Fifth Republics, as it had been in that of the First, that France was a Republic One and Indivisible. That there should be one legislative body, one centralised administration, and one

revolutionary ideology was the orthodoxy of Jacobins, a breed as familiar in France of 1945 as in that of 1793. To suggest anything else was, for Jacobins, to play into the hands of counter-revolutionaries, who at worst wanted to revive the provinces of the Ancien Régime, with their noble-dominated assemblies, at best wanted to free municipal councils and departmental conseils généraux from the grip of prefects, the all-seeing agents of the centralised government. (Gildea 1996, 128 ).

In spite of the uniting of western Europe, and the present-day rapprochement with Germany, sirens, set up before 1939 to warn of air raids or an invasion from Germany, are, in 2004, still tested at noon on the second Wednesday of every month in Alsace.

German could be again taught in schools from 1952, but from 1945 until 1984 the German edition of the daily *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* (DNA), had by law to contain at least 25% French material, including the sports pages, as these appeal to young people, to encourage their Francophilia. As paper was rationed, the government could apply pressure to ensure that this rule was observed.<sup>37</sup>

### **Strasbourg as the focus of Europe**

Robert Gildea in *France since 1945* points out '[France's] attempt to deal with the fear of German resurgence by building the European Community' (Gildea 1996, 56). The two countries have been at the centre of the European movement, with, however, the German 'economic miracle' and the strength of the Deutschmark outstripping the rest of Western Europe's economic recovery, until the advent of the Euro, and the severe recession which started in 2000, and which appears to be acting as a financial leveller.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the numbers of Germans coming to shop, and to buy houses, in Alsace, which has been cheaper than Germany. Being a

---

<sup>37</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture in series on language and culture of Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 4 Nov. 2002.

foreigner living outside Strasbourg one is immediately taken for German. Alsace is now considered as being the second most expensive place to live in France, after Paris, as already noted in Section 2.1, page 31, above.

In 1949 the Council of Europe was installed in Strasbourg. In its first years it was simply a debating chamber, but its influence grew and from 1979 its members have been directly elected by universal suffrage. There was local approval of the raising of the region to international importance, partly, no doubt, due to the employment and money now being brought into the area. But I am not sure whether this has benefited the whole of Alsace or simply Strasbourg and its environs by injecting cash into the economy of that city.

As early as 1956 I remember reading in the *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* about a local movement for integration with Germany. Young people, largely students, demonstrated at the frontier on the Rhine bridge at Strasbourg, and symbolically cut up the frontier barriers. This was not opposed. In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty did away with internal frontiers.

This increase in the international importance of Strasbourg as the focus of Europe may have acted as a threat to the central authority of Paris. The continual delays in connecting the TGV high-speed rail link from Paris to Strasbourg and beyond into Eastern Europe are considered by many in Alsace to be due to the fear in Paris of some of its power being diffused into the regions. In February 2004 the predicted date was 2007, although even this delay was expected to be extended. Furthermore, Alsace is the only region to have been required to finance its high-speed link, whereas other regions have not been required to contribute.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> National Front publicity leaflet for local elections March 2004, and website <http://www.trains-en-voyage.com/actualite/0401.htm>, dated 22 Feb. 2004.

## Alsace in recent decades

Bilingual lessons became permitted in state schools, in 1952, and to date it is permitted to teach one hour a week of German in primary schools. In my interviews in November 2001, with leaders of pressure groups pushing for bilingualism in schools I always asked which two languages were concerned, French and Alsatian, or French and High German. The answer was consistently the latter, Alsatian being reserved for the home and for occasional sentimental visits to the Alsatian theatre. A 1992 survey by ISERCO<sup>39</sup> showed 80% of parents in favour of French-German bilingualism in schools (Trendel 1993, 100). However, I was told, nine years later, by an English lecturer at the teacher training college in Colmar, that the wish of parents is to have English taught as the preferred first foreign language, rather than German.<sup>40</sup> The conversations of parents with teachers, being two-way, may be a more reliable method of obtaining opinions than the one-way posing of questions by questionnaires.

In 1972 the *Établissement Public Régional d'Alsace* was created. Certain reforms in 1982/83 created 'a new institutional architecture', and 1986 the *Conseil Régional d'Alsace* was created in Strasbourg, with universal suffrage. When the Treaty of Maastricht was signed in 1992, the first bilingual French/German classes started in public schools (Klein 2001, 27). Further Constitutional reform in March 2003 has nominally strengthened the independence of the regions (Dreyfus 2004). Perhaps these moves conveyed an impression of independence for the regions, but they brought no significant improvement in the prospects for the regional language in Alsace.

---

<sup>39</sup> Institut Strasbourgeois d'Etudes et Recherches Commerciales.

<sup>40</sup> Andrea Armspach-Young, lecturer at IUFM (University Teacher Training Institute). Personal interview. Colmar, 25 Nov. 2001. The *Fédération des Conseils de Parents d'Elèves* (Federation of Committees of Parents of School Children) stated at their 2005 conference that 58% of parents would prefer English as the first foreign language ([http:// site. voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/droit\\_local.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/droit_local.htm) 24 May 2005.)



## 2.3 The influence of Religion on Alsace

The unusual situation of religion in Alsace is illustrated by each of the three main churches – Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.

### Catholic and Protestant

Alsace was a strongly Catholic region in the period before the Reformation, which spread from Germany and took a firm hold in the early sixteenth century. Discontent with the Church of Rome is given as one of the causes of the *Bundschuh* rebellion of country dwellers in 1491, which was named after the type of clogs they wore, and which was savagely put down. The Reformation made slower progress in the interior of France.<sup>41</sup>

The Protestant, and the Catholic Church in particular, are frequently found preferring to preach in the vernacular, not only in Europe, but in colonies abroad as well. The priests who accompanied the Conquistadors to Peru in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were in conflict with Philip of Spain, who considered that the natives did not know how to speak if they could not speak Spanish. But the Council of Trent, in 1563 ‘encarga a la Corona que vele para que la catequesis sacramental se haga en las lenguas vernaculares’ (charges the king that he make sure that the catechism be taught in the vernacular languages). This was reinforced by the five Councils of Lima, between 1552 and 1601 (Godenzi 1992, 59).

It should not be forgotten that in the same period England experienced riots after the first English language prayer book was published in 1549, three years after the death of Henry VIII, in the reign of Edward VI, his Protestant son. Its main author, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was later burnt at the stake for resisting the return of Catholicism, associated with which was the use of Latin (Williams 1975, 135-6).

---

<sup>41</sup> Insight Guides, Alsace 1999, 34.

In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century France was torn by religious strife. This mainly pitted Calvinist Huguenots against Catholics. It is estimated that four million people lost their lives. Henry of Navarre, himself a Huguenot, became the first Bourbon king of France, as Henry IV in 1589. He is reputed as saying 'Paris is worth a mass', and he converted to Catholicism. In 1598 he issued his Edict of Nantes, in which he proclaimed freedom of worship, which was in fact quite limited (Stankiewicz 1960, *passim*). Louis XIII pronounced a similar edict at Nîmes in July 1629.

The history of religion in Alsace is unusual, (and it has had an important influence on the language). There are still today churches where both Protestant and Catholic services are held. After the absorption of the region by Louis XIV, from 1648, at the end of the Thirty Years War, he obliged the Protestant (mainly Lutheran) churches to share their premises with the Catholics, the latter setting up their altar in the choir, while the Lutherans retained their altar in front of the choir (Hoffet 1973 (1951), 73) (Siat, 1987, 151). Such churches are called Simultaneums, and examples still exist, at St Marie aux Mines, Kolbsheim, Riepertswiller and La Petite Pierre, among others. Services in Protestant churches in Alsace are often still given in both French and Church German, as at Kolbsheim, and at Kurzenhouse, near Haguenau. Church buildings all belong to the state, with various religions being allowed to use them free of charge.

The cathedral in Strasbourg took 200 years to build. It was started as Protestant and finished as a Catholic church, having been taken over by Louis XIV.<sup>42</sup>

In October 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, and required all members of the Calvinist *Religion prétendue Réformée*<sup>43</sup> (the so-called Reformed Church)<sup>44</sup> to cease practising, and either convert or leave the country within two weeks (Robinson 1906).

---

<sup>42</sup> Paul Adolf. Personal interview. 21 Nov. 2001.

<sup>43</sup> "On appelle Le Calvinisme, *La Religion prétendue Réformée*; et ceux qui professent cette Religion, *Les prétendus Réformés*." (*Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, Cinquième Edition, 2 vols. (Paris: L'An VII [VI] de la République [1798]), s.v. "Réformer".

<sup>44</sup> E-mail interview. Mme Annie Noblesse-Rocher, Faculty of Protestant Theology, U. Strasbourg. 4 Nov. 2004.

Article 10 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, which was published at the time of the French Revolution, and dated 1789, states ‘Nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, mêmes religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l’ordre établi par la loi’ (No one shall be persecuted on account of his opinions, including religious views, provided their practice does not disturb the public order established by law).<sup>45</sup> After 1789, when the Church was nationalised, many Alsatian clergy refused to take an oath of allegiance. Alsatian plays, such as *Johann Bochelen, Ein elsässischer Märtyrerpriester* (Johann Bochelen, a martyred Alsatian priest), 1955, and *Glaubensmut* (Steadfast Faith), 1920, refer to this period.

The Concordat between Napoleon and the Pope in 1801 was added to in 1852, cementing the relationship between the State and the three main churches, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. The Ministry of the Interior would pay stipends, expenses and pensions of all clerics. The Breton writer, Fañch Broudic, tells of the ‘crise d’une extrême intensité’ (extremely intense crisis) which developed in France in 1902 between the Church and the State. ‘A son origine, la volonté proclamée par le gouvernement radical ... d’interdire “l’usage abusive du Breton” pour la predication et le catéchisme.’ (Its origin was the proclaimed wish of the radical government ... to forbid the “abusive use of Breton” in preaching and in the catechism) (Broudic 1997, 9). This conflict was no doubt inspired as much by anti-clericalism as by the desire for linguistic unity, but it ended in 1905 in the separation of the French State from the Church.

At that time Alsace was part of Germany, and was thus not affected until the reunification in 1918 entailed attempts to impose the same concept there, which has been successfully resisted up to the present day. (Klein 2001).<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Website < <http://www.justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm> > dated 30 June 2004

<sup>46</sup> Website < <http://alsacemedia.com> > 15 Mar. 2003.

## Judaism

As freedom of worship is guaranteed under the French Constitution, and as clerics, including the Jews, are paid by the State in Alsace, this region has been a favourite place for Jewish settlement. According to Hoffet (Hoffet 1973 (1951), 75) this has made them very patriotic. Before the Second World War an estimated eighty percent of French Jews lived in Alsace and they have played a significant part in the life of the region. But sources do differ over this percentage. In the village of Westhofen the majority of the population at one time were Jewish (ibid, 73.). The regional tourist board now publishes in English as well as in other languages, a detailed twelve-paged brochure solely of Jewish features in Alsace, including cemeteries, synagogues and centres of population, and giving a brief history of the religion in the region (Discovering Alsatian Judaism. 1999, passim).

Their liberty was guaranteed in 1791 under the French Revolution, by the Decree of Emancipation, when they were granted full citizenship, and allowed to follow any profession. Their numbers in France doubled within the next century. As their religion was granted financial support by Napoleon Bonaparte, equally with the others, from the Ministry of the Interior, they have been in a privileged position compared with their European neighbours. Yiddish, being a Germanic language, makes communication easier. Alsace is the closest region in France to Eastern Europe from where many Jews migrated. But there were periods when they were not allowed to follow a profession, and therefore went into financial services, and are remembered today as having dealt in cattle. In towns they lived in ghettos – *Judegasse* (Jews Road), as in Obernai, is quite a common street name. From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century their mainly rural communities fell into decline, due to the exodus towards the towns, North Africa, and America (Discovering Alsatian Judaism, 1999).

During the Second World War Jews in Alsace fared no better than in any other country under the Germans. After 1945, religious instruction, given by rabbis, was reintroduced in state schools for Jewish pupils, as was the case in 1955 in the lycée where I taught.

Strangely, although some Jewish cemeteries were desecrated during World War II. I visited such a cemetery in the village of Gundershoffen, in the north of Alsace, and found that it was in a perfect condition, with gravestones predating 1940. This may have been because it was in an area where non-Jews were forbidden to enter, or possibly due to the disorganised and inconsistent nature of Nazi control.<sup>47</sup>

There is a tradition of Jewish theatre in Alsace, performed in the Yiddish Alsatian dialect, which is said to have been attended only by Jews, and which has been researched, but this does not form part of my present study,<sup>48</sup> except to note that the excellent present-day group, the *Yiddische Mamas et Papas* perform Yiddish music and humour regularly in Alsatian venues, to audiences of all denominations.

Present day attitude to Jews in Alsace may be sensed from two opinions. The President of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin (The Association of Rhineland Theatre Groups), an Alsatian language theatre association, spoke of a Catholic church which had been a synagogue, ‘which is unusual because we do not like to go where Jews have been’<sup>49</sup>. Secondly, a college lecturer stated ‘Jews deal in cattle, which makes them unpopular’.<sup>50</sup> On 31 March 2004, The London *Times*, page 9, showed a photo of a Jew looking at a grave desecrated with a swastika in a Jewish cemetery in Strasbourg-Cronenbourg, in an article by Linda Grant, headlined *France is not anti-semitic now but it's now difficult for a Jew to live there*. Whilst reporting that, due to emigration, French is now the second most familiar foreign language to hear on the streets of Tel Aviv, she also stated that ‘In 20 years there will be no Jews left in France. All the young people are leaving’.

---

<sup>47</sup> See also Section 4.4, page 181, below, on Theatre Performances.

<sup>48</sup> See Stark, Astrid. in Bibliography.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Sutter. President of Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. Personal interview. 7 Nov. 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Dominique Anspach, Alsatian citizen, lecturer at U. Strasbourg. Personal interview. 5 Nov. 2001.

## Islam and others

At the time of writing (May 2004) there are only three officially supported religions in France, and therefore in Alsace; although the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish churches receive state support, no other religion does.

Islam has become important in Alsace in recent decades, due to immigration from former French colonies in North Africa. But linguistically this fact has no contribution to my present study, therefore I shall not deal with the performing arts in Arabic, nor in any other foreign language, although these do exist in Alsace.

As a purely historical note, Alsace was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century also temporarily the home of the Amish people, in centres such as St Marie aux Mines, in the upper valleys of the Vosges, after they were ejected from Switzerland. The Edict of Nantes, which had guaranteed religious freedom, was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685, when they left for the New World and North Africa.

### 2.4 Understanding the Culture of Alsace – towards a working definition

Charles Barber, in *The Story of Language*, deals with polysemy, the fact that words frequently have several meanings. In the present study, I spend time offering several working definitions of different concepts which may serve to reduce doubt as to my intended meaning in many places. He argues that:

... in the course of a piece of reasoning we may be led astray because a key word in our argument is used with different meanings in different places. This often happens in political or moral disputes, where words like *freedom* and *natural* get thrown around in ill-defined or shifting senses. On the other hand, the kind of ‘play’ that polysemy gives to language makes it easier to use: communication

would really be too difficult if, in every utterance we had to practise the strictness of definition demanded by mathematics or by symbolic logic. (Barber 1964, 244).

Even in the use of reasoned demonstration it may be necessary to appeal occasionally for forbearance from the reader in permitting the argument to be carried forward with a certain freedom of expression . Such an appeal may be made in respect of the word ‘culture’.

A quotation ascribed to contemporary Alsatian poet André Weckmann (and no doubt to many others as well) is that ‘if you lose your language you lose your culture’. Another well-known writer, Adrien Finck stated ‘La culture est une lutte constante contre l’oubli’ (Culture is a constant battle against oblivion) (Finck 1990, 6), which sounds fine as a comment, but does not add much that is tangible to the catalogue of definitions. As this study is so closely concerned with Alsace, and as the region has features which make it, if not unique, certainly very unusual, it seems appropriate to offer a working definition of the ‘Culture of Alsace’.

I have found during the course of this work that even those who are accustomed to thinking about culture may define it briefly as consisting of the stock of famous paintings, sculptures, and music, and our access to them, which typify the symbols of cultivated life. This was the approach taken by Kenneth Clark in his work ‘Civilisation’ which concept apparently peaked in the artistic output of the court of Urbino, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century (Clark 1969, 108). However, while such artifacts are available to be included within a definition of ‘culture’, they may be of more value historically. I think of it more as the state of normality which exists in a community, and which is conditioned by its history, its habits and traditions, and its innate knowledge of what we may expect to happen in any everyday situation. Alsace being a region which has undergone enormous changes, any conception of ‘normality’ must have roots which go deep, and must include the capacity to deal, over time, with betrayals, misconceptions, and sudden reversals of normality.

Alsace is certainly a region which is rich in communal mysticism, expressed in the legends of St Odile, Hans Trapp, and others. These have been extensively featured in the miracle plays which were common at Christmas time, and into which the theatre could retreat to lick its wounds in periods when it was looked upon as unpatriotic, as explored by Eve Cerf (1998, *passim*), as explained more fully in Section 4.4, page 155, below. It is unusual for an Alsatian to be unaware of this mythology which certainly has to be taken into account in any proposed definition of the regional culture.

Being a member of a community certainly involves sharing a sense of identity based upon common experiences, and an awareness of what is 'normal' – how you expect the people around you to behave in any set of circumstances. Group identity depends upon a recognition of 'us' and 'them', which in Alsace may involve groups which could be labeled 'Them – 1' (the Germans), 'Them – 2' (the French), and 'Them – 3' (all the others). History has split the Alsatian community in so many directions at different periods that different expectations may be allocated to different but neighbouring alien communities.

The fact that different members of the same families have found themselves fighting in one lifetime in two world wars in opposing uniforms is not an easy feature for the outsider to 'get his head around', but which has to be taken seriously into account when considering a definition of the Alsatian culture.

Another aspect of my general definition is that Culture consists of a set of rules for how people manage their interactions. When you enter a new community you have to learn and act upon a new set of rules. While at school we follow certain rules which permit that community to survive. On going to university we learn new rules. On going to our first workplace we learn new rules, and so on throughout life. This kind of rule-set handling goes on in all societies and presumably has always done so. At times of crisis the rules no longer apply, and this is part of the crisis situation. How did people in the town where I have lived in Alsace behave during the period between their first liberation by the Americans in December 1944, and their second liberation by the same troops a



month later ? During that interim period of German reoccupation there were few normal rules for anything that constitutes civilised life. And as Alsace was officially part of Germany, the inhabitants were, in some cases, at first regarded by their American liberators as the enemy, which required a further confusing adaptation. Once life became more normal again an updated Culture became established, which looked back over several patterns of behaviour and adapted what seemed appropriate from each.

Furthermore, we all use language in order to manage all the necessary ingredients of our culture. But using language in Alsace is rather like walking on quicksand, and its 'misuse' has at certain periods had equally life-threatening results.

Thus, while I recognise many facets of the Culture of Alsace, I would hesitate to attempt to offer an all-inclusive detailed definition. And I think that anyone who attempts a definitive version may find that, like the Bible, it is full of contradictions. I trust that a perception of its core elements will become evident during the reading of this present study, and the recognition of these is part of the working definition which I consider to be essential for anyone who tries to appreciate the theatre in the Alsatian language.

Even the most commonly offered description of the Alsatian character by Alsations is based upon a misunderstanding. *Hans im Schnockeloch* (Hans in the mosquito hole) a historical character, who according to a well-known jingle '... het alles was 'r will. Un was 'r het, des will 'r nit, un was 'r will, des het 'r nit.' (... has everything he wants. And what he has he doesn't want, and what he wants he hasn't got'.)<sup>51</sup> However, according to Professor Raymond Matzen<sup>52</sup>, the jingle refers to an early tourist spot, near Koenigshoffen, commonly called *the mosquito hole*, outside Strasbourg, where the inn-keeper, Hans, seldom stocked the correct range of refreshments, and thus he had what we, *the tourists* did not want, and he did not have what we, *the tourists* did want. This version is confirmed by the *Gazette Hotelière d'Alsace et de Lorraine* (1985, 58). Various parodies of this theme, and a poem by Adolph Stoeber, published in 1877 (Witt, 2003,

---

<sup>51</sup> Hoffet 1951 (1973), 14.

<sup>52</sup> Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series. 4 Feb. 2003, and Lecture 11 Mar. 2004, in Haguenau, on Brothers Matthis.

135), were adapted to music by Ferdinand Bastian in 1903, in his play, *D'r Hans im Schnockeloch*, and the error in understanding is based upon confusing the words *er* (he) and *mer* (we) (Bastian 1903, 81 and 93) - yet another problem brought about by the use of the regional language. A modern spin is put on the legend by Joseph Schmittbiel in his 2005 version *The Hans im Schnockeloch: Mosquito Hole John*, based in the fictional town of Mosquito Hole in Texas.

The commonly accepted form of this tale ('What he has he doesn't want, and what he wants he hasn't got') is, of course, a description of the attitude to life of most people on this earth, and is certainly not unique to Alsace. But it has been told to me so often by so many people that I have come to think that the important feature is that Alsatians want to be thought of like this.

The casual tourist might be tempted to look upon Alsace as a kind of theme park, and to regard its culture as 'the Alsatian experience', which, although superficial, is not an entirely irrelevant observation, in this discussion, although it might satisfy only those on the outside looking in. The play *Peepshow in der Vogese* (Peepshow in the Vosges), translated from Swiss German by cabaretist Roger Siffer, and produced at the *Choucrouterie*, Strasbourg, and on tour in autumn 2003, shows the same problem from the inside looking out. It deals with an Alsatian family which allows its traditional house to be used as a peepshow for tourists wishing to see traditional families doing traditional Alsatian things. The family soon disintegrates under the corrupting influence of phoney Disney-like tourism.

But we do find the Alsace 'peepshow' in some villages, particularly at Christmas, when tourists are invited to peep historically into the homes and lives of Alsatians as they were.<sup>53</sup> There is no invitation, however, to look into the homes of Alsatians as they are now.

---

<sup>53</sup> For example, in the village of Hunspack. Christmas 2003.

## **A working definition of 'Community'**

Before attempting to list those features which evidently contribute towards the culture of the community of Alsace it may be useful to establish a working definition of 'Community'. A community, for my purposes, does not simply mean a group of people who happen to live in close proximity. We belong to many different communities. Any common feature which we possess, or would like to possess, may link us in a community, such features including age, religion, gender, birthplace, membership of interest groups, a common workplace, having served in the same regiment, etc. Even without consciously adhering to an identifiable group, we may still be part of a community of opinion or of emotional involvement, such as the 'silent majority'. Pacifists in different countries, those with vaguely liberal attitudes, readers of similar literature, may all, in a wider sense, be considered as each belonging to various communities.

But we can live in a geographic community, or be located within the bounds of any other type of community without sharing its culture. On Sunday 5 January 2003 my wife and I shared a table in the restaurant *Sept Fontaines* at Drachenbronn with a German couple who had retired to an Alsatian village, but who were not happy, as they were not accepted as part of the community. They did not share the culture.

It is the element of emotional involvement which I believe is the essential link between 'community' and 'culture'. Furthermore, of supreme importance in Alsace is the fact that the group involved shares a common language, and that this group is declining in numbers.

## **Artistic culture and folk culture**

I cannot subscribe to the suggestion of Matthew Arnold that culture is 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold 1960, 6). Such an opinion may bolster the opinion that there is a High Culture which is superior to the ordinary culture in which we

partake on a daily basis. Similarly, the view that there was a golden age of Culture, which has been lost due to the 'standardization and levelling down' (Leavis and Thompson 1933, 3) of our industrialised mass culture, is totally alien to the purpose of the present thesis.

For the present study it is necessary to divide my definition of culture into two, artistic culture and folk culture.

### **Artistic culture**

This is the simpler of the two to define. By artistic culture I mean the body of works in the fields of painting, sculpture, music, literature and the performing arts. Of these the latter are referred to importantly in my work. Such artistic culture obviously is a major point of reference for those rationalising their folk culture.

### **Folk culture**

In proposing my own definition I acknowledge the writings under the general heading of Culturalism, as propounded by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Edward Thompson, and the expression of culture as being 'ordinary'.<sup>54</sup> Clifford Geertz refers to this non-material culture:

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geert 1995, 5).

For my purposes I define folk culture as the influence exerted by our community of emotional involvement, on our propensity to react consistently and uniformly with others,

---

<sup>54</sup> An informative commentary upon the work of Hoggart, Williams and Thompson can be found in Macionis, John J., and Ken Plummer (1998). See Bibliography.

to the situations which life presents. For the purpose of defining the culture of a specific group of people, such as the Alsatians, it is necessary to restrict our broad concept of community, as defined above, in this case, to that represented by those people who historically have lived in or originated from Alsace.

I would propose that culture is not an extra. It is not something which we can opt into or opt out of. It is inherent. We can, however, choose to try to deny our culture, but, once implanted, without our knowledge or consent, it is there for life, and any denial is likely to be accompanied by evidence of inner tensions or lack of 'I'm OK, You're OK', in the parlance of Eric Berne and the practitioners of Transactional Analysis <sup>55</sup> (Watkins 1984, *passim*).

What I refer to as our community of emotional involvement is largely specified by what we are, and by what you are not. For example, stating one's birthplace as being Alsace creates certain reactions of inclusion or exclusion in one's interlocutor.

I feel that our folk culture is very much an expression of our expectations of how those around us will respond to our blend of history, experience, language, habits, instinctive reactions, and to the evidence of our achievements. The prevailing political environment also affects, and is affected by, our folk culture. The inter-war period, studied in Section 4.4, page 155, below, also illustrates the need for communal fantasies which form part of the set of beliefs that contribute towards the culture of a people, and into which a community can withdraw in order to avoid open conflict in troubled times (Rose, 1996, 15 and *passim*).

### **Elements of a working definition of Alsatian culture**

So what are the elements of Alsatian-ness that go together to form a working definition of the culture of the region, and what distinguishes Alsace from elsewhere ? I would propose the following tentative list.

---

<sup>55</sup> Website < <http://www.itaa-net.org/ta/bernehist.htm> >

Among the elements which are obvious to the outsider, we could include long-established symbols such as the silhouette of Strasbourg Cathedral, with one spire incomplete, used in German cinema in the 1940s to hijack the emotions which surround it. It is also the logo of Alsace, used on official and tourist literature. Also, the shape of Alsace on maps resembles the figure '1', and this is used in publicity material in order to propose a favourable image. Among memorabilia which originate in the history of the region must be included the writings and drawings of Hansi (Jean Jacques Waltz), the popular if controversial historian, best known for his *L'Histoire d'Alsace racontée aux petits enfants* (1915). Storks nesting on chimneys feature among the sentiment, favourably with tourists, not so favourably with house owners. The typical architecture of Alsace is also an element, as is the region's gastronomy. At the top end this features, among other things, the symbol of the goose, and the product of its engorged liver, *paté de fois gras*. Near the bottom end come country dishes such as *Becköffe*,<sup>56</sup> which challenges the largest appetites.

There is a great deal of nostalgia for a past, which if re-established today would be entirely unworkable, as it is based upon values which are no longer current. However, it forms part of what Alsatians see as their heritage, and which promotes the re-enactment of old rituals, as 'typical' ceremonies, such as Alsatian weddings and baptisms in regional dress with regional music. At Christmas some village houses exhibit Advent Windows. Village fêtes are often accompanied by a replay of traditional events, all of which is welcome and interesting. But a problem with this custom arises if the culture which one inherits proves to be unsuitable for the age one lives in, which may be the case in Alsace today. This problem may manifest itself most in the gap between the young, who have never experienced the trauma of the Second World War and its aftermath, and the old, who did. There is little evidence that serious attempts are being made to accommodate this divide, which remains problematic.

---

<sup>56</sup> A stew of pork, lamb and beef, with copious vegetables, cooked and served in an earthenware pot.

Events from within living memory are a major element , including two world wars, and all the trauma which they have involved. The post-war situation of the *malgrés nous* in German uniform coping with their own disgrace and the simultaneous lionising of their compatriots who returned to Alsace in French uniforms, as liberating heroes. Photos of family members in two opposing uniforms, and the war memorials which, differently from elsewhere, feature a mother with a dead son on each opposing arm. Interlinked with this is the confusion of the relationship with French and Germans across the traditional frontiers of the Vosges or the Rhine, before, during and after World War Two, and the earlier situation between the two World Wars, when French and German army officers were more closely aligned with each other than they were with the different classes in their own country.<sup>57</sup>

Traditional values in Alsace included the importance of land as the basis of wealth, the family, the church, the importance of crops and animals, the work ethic, and the hierarchy of respect. Regarding this latter point, one does notice in Alsace the tendency to ask permission beforehand, as opposed to the generally accepted *je m'en foutisme* (couldn't care less attitude) ascribed to the French, which I have myself observed in the latter's tendency to act first and ask permission later if found out. I have often felt that Alsatians even need to ask permission of themselves before venturing to speak their own language, especially in public situations, as it has been endowed with a second-class aura. This has also been an encumbrance to grandparents in trying to converse with their own grandchildren, who are products of a school system designed to eliminate the grandparents' vernacular.

The sudden reversals of fate, tangled webs of loyalties and betrayals, as enacted in the post-war *épuration*, with its attempts to justify, veil, or vent revenge for the immediate past, may give some justification to Hoffet's attempted summing-up, in 1951, of the psychology of the region with 'Wie m'rs macht isch's letz' (Whatever we do, it's wrong) (1973 (1951), 14).

---

<sup>57</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 11 April 2003.

Linked to the nostalgia for the past is a mistrust of the new, and the wish to be seen as Hans im Schnockeloch, eternally discontent with his lot, citing his own claim to stubbornness, and mistrusting the 'Hergeloffene' (incomers). As stated above, I would hesitate to propose a finite definition of the culture of Alsace which consisted of more than a summary of the above elements, plus others which Alsatians themselves would insist upon contributing. Furthermore one must take into account the rapidly changing times in which we live, in which the young are escalated into a technological world which has few similarities with the traditional agricultural economy of the region.

Our culture may help to determine how we think, and it may determine how we are predisposed to act, as is demonstrated by audience reactions in Alsatian language theatre, but I would not propose that it ensures conformity of beliefs or actions outside of such group situations. However, I would suggest that it does encourage us towards that type of public behaviour of which our peers would approve.



### 3 The history and present political situation of the language

#### 3.1 Alsatian – a Language or a Dialect ?

Alsatian is the only one of the eight regional languages spoken within the *Hexagone* of France which has been consistently considered since the Revolution as unpatriotic. Furthermore, it has suffered institutionally both from being ‘too German’, and, since the post-war rapprochement with Germany, it has suffered from ‘not being German enough’. High German is taught in Alsatian schools as the first foreign language, while their own tongue, which is not foreign, is largely excluded from the school system. Matzen claims that nobody could say that Alsatian is a simple peasant language (a politically important evaluation, with which I would agree, but which carries value judgement overtones, from which I would disengage myself), and that Alsatian usage marks it quite clearly as being different from High German.<sup>58</sup> It is unfortunate that Alsatian language campaigners still accept a hierarchical system of esteem for vernaculars based upon classifications which include such terms as ‘High’ German at one end, and ‘dialect’, or ‘peasant language’, at the other. This may be because they are, from experience, aware of the terminology which they have to overturn in order to justify their own culture.

However, even in protecting Alsatian from being called a ‘simple peasant language’, Matzen is reinforcing an established value judgement, that of classifying vernaculars into proper languages or something lesser. To a sociologist, or to a linguist, all modes of speech are equally valid. A literary critic might wish to mourn the inability of some vernaculars to express what he feels is required in a certain passage, but that is not my task here. I simply note the tendency of insiders not to be able to shake off the value systems imposed on them by outsiders.

The Alsatian language also falls between two stools, and is by normal definition a code-switcher’s paradise, combining French and Alsatian words in close proximity in everyday phrases, such as ‘Merci vielmols’ (Thank you very much) and ‘Bonjour bisème’ (Good

---

<sup>58</sup> Lecture, on the Brothers Matthis. Haguenau. 11 Mar.2004.

morning everyone). Liliane Vassberg's *Alsatian Acts of Identity* (1993, *passim*) is an excellent study of this phenomenon.

A question which is all too frequently posed is whether the people of Alsace have their own *language* or their own *dialect*. Possibly the most important element in this debate is the historical relationship between Alsatian and the language which has developed into modern-day High German. Douglas Dunn, in the Introduction, entitled *Language and Liberty*, to his book of Scottish verse, quotes 'Max Weinreich's famous aphorism' that 'a language is a dialect with an army and a navy' (Dunn 1992, xvii). Alsace obviously has little independent political or military clout, but the point is still a valid one in respect of the politics of language. Luxembourgish, by contrast, closely related to Alsatian, is the official language in the Grand Duchy, although laws may be written in French, or by local government bodies 'dans une langue autre que la française [et dans ce cas] seule la langue employée ... fait foi' (in a language other than French [and in that case] only the [text in the] language used is valid) (Luxembourg Law dated 24 February 1984, Articles 1 and 2, 'Sur le régime des langues' (Concerning the use of languages in law making)).

These matters require close attention in the present study, as the status of the Alsatian language itself is inseparable from any discussion of the cultural significance of the Alsatian language theatre. Fortunately there are enough reliable authorities upon which we can draw for the present purpose.

Local experts hold firmly that Alsatian is older than High German, which is a normalised version of an amalgam of the various regional dialects spoken at the time when Luther and others wanted to print a Bible to which all people would have access. The local language is one of the Alemanic group, which in itself means 'all men style'.

Chambers and Wilkie, in their *A Short History of the German Language*, state, of the period concerned, that 'German may now be seen, not as an original unity which broke into separate parts, but as a drawing together of separate dialects in the context of a common political and cultural life' (Chambers 1970, 24).

Typical information available via the internet, from [www.Voila.fr/alsacezwei](http://www.Voila.fr/alsacezwei), states that High German, (normalised or standard German), was born and spread with printing and with Martin Luther's Bible. Towards 1525 Alsatian printers stopped using their Alemanic German, as used in the upper Rhine, in favour of the new standard German, which, after having only been a written language became in time a spoken language.

C J Wells, in his *German: a Linguistic History to 1945*, states:

Our transition period begins around 1450, with the earliest German prints, and so overlaps with the end of the Medieval period. At this time, no single regional form of German can claim to be the standard, no literary genre or tradition hold [sic] the monopoly of good taste and style, the inconsistent spelling in printed books reinforces the impression of disorder, and the preoccupation of educated men lies with languages other than their own. Throughout the sixteenth century the early grammarians and orthoepists grope blindly to regulate the language, basing themselves mostly on grammars of Latin rather than the observation of German ... (Wells 1985, 179).

He further specifies that:

The two main developments of German during this period are the emergence and spreading of supra-regional printed forms, and the elaboration of distinct styles in German for literary, everyday, and technical purposes. (Ibid 180).

Regarding the Early New High German period, from 1350 to 1600, Waterman, in his *A History of the German Language* observes, regarding the development of a printed language:

The printers ... tended to exercise a wide freedom of choice [of which dialect to draw upon] based in the final analysis upon their own dialectal preference. As a

result there arose what are known as Druckersprachen. These “printers’ languages” are of considerable importance in the history of standard High German. (Waterman 1966, 128).

Concerning Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), he states:

Previous generations often referred to Luther as the “creator” of the New High German. Though he did not “create” the modern German language, he nevertheless did contribute enormously to its development and refinement as a literary instrument. Furthermore, because his translation of the Bible had such a wide distribution and acceptance, that dialect of German in which it was written did indeed come to serve as the authoritative basis for the modern Hochsprache [High Language]. (Ibid).

Bernard Vogler, in a talk on 24 September 2003, as part of the *13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Regional and Minority Languages and Cultures*, at Ingersheim, stated that Luther created *Schriftdeutsch* (written German), which was neither German nor Alsatian. It was a manipulation of dialects in order to reach a wider public.

Waterman quotes the estimated sales of Luther’s Bible as being ‘... something over one hundred thousand copies during the years 1534 to 1584, an extraordinary figure for that time’ (1996, 130).

Concerning literature written in Alsace during the transition to New High German, Jung states:

L’auteur parle sa langue maternelle, mais, pour trouver la plus vaste diffusion possible, l’adapte à la langue des chancelleries, qui, pétrie par Luther, deviendra l’allemand littéraire. (Jung 2001, 47).<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> (Authors spoke their native language, but, to reach the widest possible audience, [when writing for publication] adapted it to the language of the chancelleries, which, moulded by Luther, would become

Latin exerted a strong influence upon the development of Early New High German, from 1450 to 1600, which accounts for the formality of the grammar in modern High German. Weckmann asserts, furthermore, that:

Mais lorsqu'au cours des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, se formera de façon définitive ce que nous appelons "l'allemand" aujourd'hui, l'Alsace, qui sort de la guerre de Trente ans et qui n'a plus d'écrivains de renom, ne participera plus à cette élaboration. (1988, 18).<sup>60</sup>

In 1872, with Alsace freshly under German domination, Bergmann wrote, condescendingly, that to state that a folk dialect, in this case Alsatian, is not a language, is comparable to stating that even a coarse peasant may not be called a human being (10).

It appears, from all the above evidence, to be true, that Alsatian is not a degraded version of High German, which might have tempted people to class it as a dialect. This type of value judgement is one which I feel should be avoided. However, politicians and other decision-makers may consider it important to establish classifications, and I feel that it is important to be able to argue one's corner, and it can be seen that I am not alone in considering that Alsatian may justifiably be called a language in its own right, which is the course that I have adopted.

In developing this argument, Matzen<sup>61</sup> stated that Alsatian had the same grammatical structure as German, but had dropped the more complex forms, as did English. And, provokingly, Markey, in his article on *Language Expansion, Contraction and Death*, dealing with Creole dialects, states '... trivially enough, grammatical complexity is

---

literary German)

<sup>60</sup> (During the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries what we now call 'German' took on a definitive form, while Alsace, emerging from the Thirty Years War with no outstanding writers, took no part in this development.)

<sup>61</sup> Personal interview. 6 May 2003.

unnecessary for effective communication (or for communication at all)' (Markey 1987, 19. His brackets).

This, however, does little to simplify the complexity of actually dealing with the Alsatian language, as it is spoken and written differently in different parts of the region. The President of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin, told me<sup>62</sup> that he was invited to speak at a meeting of the association, and he chose to speak in the language. After the meeting there were complaints that people from other parts of Alsace could not understand him. This is comparable geographically with people from Buckinghamshire not being able to understand those from Surrey, and their, furthermore, requiring to be addressed in French so that all could understand.

However, some modern written dialects of Alsace can be read by people in the neighbouring German lands of Baden and the Pfalz, as demonstrated by school children of those regions being given copies of *Asterix* and *Tintin* printed in Alsatian to read, by their German language teacher.<sup>63</sup>

In the authoritative dictionary by my ex-colleague, Paul Adolf, page 350, chosen at random, shows a majority of the words having more than one spelling (therefore more than one pronunciation), the word for 'morning' having four versions (Adolf 1996, 350).

Furthermore, as the language has no standard written form, attempts to write it often meet with a lack of comprehension by readers, such as Ruth Kosmann, Jean Potier and Raymond Bitsch, all Alsatians with whom I have studied the language. Nowadays plays in the language, in which the dialogue has to be written in Alsatian, nevertheless have stage directions in French. And although theatre programmes may have the characters and their roles listed in Alsatian, a résumé and all other parts of the programme are in French.

---

<sup>62</sup> Paul Sutter. Personal interview. 7 Nov. 2001.

<sup>63</sup> Britta Trendel, German school teacher, resident in Haguenau. Personal interview. 19 Feb. 2003.

But this was not always the case. Plays such as *D'r nej Fahne* (The New Flag), by Frédéric Lutting, and *D' Brüeder* (The Brothers) by Paul Clemens, both published in 1946 by L Jaggi-Reiss, of Gundersheim, have everything in Alsatian, as do other plays of the period. I am told that French resumés became more common in the 1960s.

Alsatian speakers do often find it hard to recognise spoken words when they are written down in the language. I myself had the problem, when reading a play, *Enfin ... Redde m'r nimm devun* (Well ... Don't let's talk about that any more), in a dual language text, of not recognizing several Alsatian words, then of identifying them in the French text, then translating them into High German, which is closer to Alsatian, after which I could recognise a proper pronunciation and meaning of them in Alsatian.

This, of course, still ignores the problem of people from one region not being able to read the spellings used by those from a neighbouring region. When reading the text of *De Wend spielt mit de Gabinet Dier*<sup>64</sup> (The wind plays with the toilet door) adapted from Micheal Popplewell's *Busy Body*, which played in London with great success, I was told by my language tutor, Raymond Bitsch on 8 January 2003, that it was in the dialect of southern Alsace (Haut-Rhinois), and therefore was difficult for me to read. But the leading actor assured me that it was in the language of his village, Roeschwoog, in the north of Alsace (Bas-Rhinois). One frequently finds individual villages having their own distinctive linguistic characteristics, and titles and texts frequently have to be translated into the very local dialect before being staged.

But I have heard and appreciated the viewpoints of Alsatians who are opposed to the idea of their language being standardised. The well-known poet André Weckmann, on the television channel France 3 Alsace, on 28 February 2004, stated that it was fortunate that the language could be used without controls imposed by an Academy, and that it had not been distorted by consumerism and politics<sup>65</sup>. Proof of the lack of interest in the language by commerce came at the end of the programme, when the advertising was

---

<sup>64</sup> Better known as 's *Paulette von der Vogesestross*. Adapted by Michel Schutz.

<sup>65</sup> *Une poignée d'orties* (A handful of nettles). Director Daniel Coche, Dora Productions.

limited to local products, rather than the usual Coca Cola, and similar international brands advertised between other programmes.

Urban in *Ecrivez Alsacien* (1975, 12) proposes:

‘Une orthographe unifiée – c’est-à-dire lisible et compréhensible par tous les Alsaciens – est un moyen efficace ... de le faire accéder au rang de langue, à la manière de ce qu’on entend par langue bretonne ou langue occitane. Ainsi ne le considérera-t-on pas éternellement comme un vulgaire patois.’<sup>66</sup>

But his proposal is only to standardise how sounds should be written, to show the various ways in which words are already pronounced, not in order to establish a ‘correct’ pronunciation associated with a ‘correct’ orthography. His implied acceptance of hierarchies of vernaculars is unfortunate, but common in Alsace, as is demonstrated in other quotations in this thesis.

This theme was the subject of a one-day symposium on 24 May 2003, at the University Institute of Technology in Colmar, in which a total of two and a half hours of workshops were dedicated to the study of the problem. Participants were invited to fill in a twelve-paged questionnaire on how they normally write certain words and expressions. The day ended with proposals on how each sound should be written. Again, this was simply a discussion on how the various pronunciations can best be expressed on paper. It was not suggested that the grammar or the vocabulary or the pronunciation of the language be standardised. A second symposium at Colmar, led by Professor Albert Hudlett, on 4 October 2003 continued the work, towards producing a complete guide to how to write down all the sounds used in speaking Alsatian.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> (A unified orthography – that is to say, readable and understandable by all Alsations – is an effective way ... of giving [our dialect] the status of a language, in the same way that we mean by the Breton language or the Occitan language. Thus it would not be considered forever as a vulgar patois.)

<sup>67</sup> Reported in *D’Heimet*. 150 (Nov. 2003) 3.



It is very difficult for those not accustomed to working within a university dialectology department to realise how we actually speak, and to represent it meaningfully. And few of us would have recourse to fluency in writing or reading the phonetic alphabet.

### **Language or Dialect – A working definition**

In addition to my argument already stated, in Section 2.4, page 63, above, regarding polysemy, the many definitions which are available of what is a Language and what is a Dialect may each be valuable in its own context, but I am convinced that there is no final definition which is applicable in all situations, even though the theorists who create them may think so.

A definition is, after all, simply the opinion of one person, who may be an expert, and who may be a person in authority. If others agree with the proposed definition, then it becomes accepted until someone at a later date offers what seems to be a more suitable opinion. This latter may then become the accepted definition. An element which I consider essential is that definitions should be available for discussion and revision. I instinctively mistrust definitions proposed on the basis that the version stated, and only that version, is the true and final meaning of the word. If this attitude were valid then philosophy would never have developed beyond the age of banging the rocks together to denote dissent.

In 1985, Pierre Deyon, Rector of the *Académie* of Strasbourg (who is not Alsatian, but from Provence), in the university's *Alsatian Regional Culture and Language Programme*, pronounced as follows -

Il n'existe en effet qu'une seule définition scientifiquement correcte de la langue régionale en Alsace, ce sont les dialectes alsaciens dont l'expression écrite est l'allemand. L'allemand est donc une des langues régionales de France.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> (There exists, in effect, only one scientifically correct definition of the regional language of Alsace,

In this definition Deyon both claims scientific justification for his own definition, and also refutes the scientific method by denying any other possibility. He ignores the fact that definitions are simply opinions which may justifiably be contested by other later opinions. His definition, confusing as it is, has been the subject of much controversy, ranging from its acceptance by writer Adrien Finck, in the words ‘Il faudrait que cette définition reste acquise’, (This definition must be accepted) (Finck 1990, 5), to various states of advanced exasperation by others, such as Matzen.<sup>69</sup> Finck’s own blessing on the definition is given in his work which contains literature written in Alsatian (ibid).

However, the Preface to this same work edited by Adrien Finck, is by the same Pierre Deyon, in which he states that Alsatian is one of the ‘three written forms’ which must be encouraged in the region:

Le bilinguisme lui a legué trois traditions littéraires. Il faut que vivent, que s’épanouissent ces trois modes d’expressions solidaires; que coexistent en Alsace la creation en langue nationale et la creation en langue régionale sous la double forme dialectale et en haut allemand. (ibid, 3).<sup>70</sup>

The politics surrounding the use of Alsatian in the theatre, as will be shown later, require a firm basis for appreciating the value of Alsatian as a present-day functional language. Therefore I feel that it is essential to establish a working definition of ‘dialect’ and ‘language’, for which I claim no universal validity. It is simply a statement of what I mean when I use the terms for the purpose of the present study, and its intention is simply to avoid confusion.

---

which consists of the Alsatian dialects, of which the written expression is German. German is therefore one of the regional languages of France.)

<sup>69</sup> Personal interview. 6 May 2003.

<sup>70</sup> (Bilingualism has bequeathed [Alsace] with three literary traditions. These three interdependent modes of expression must survive and flourish; writing must continue to coexist in Alsace in the national language [French] and writing in the regional language, in the dual form of the dialect [Alsatian] and of high German.)

A language is a means of communicating which needs to be usable to express the concepts which its users need it to express. Languages may be written, oral, visual, tactile, electronic, sensual, or body language. They may also be musical, such as Sol-ré-sol, invented by Jean François Soudré, born in 1787, which was given a medal of honour at the London International Exhibition of 1832. Writing may be on paper, stone, knotted into vicuna thread (Quechua, in Peru), in smoke, by Aldis lamp, siren, or by other means.

If we call Alsatian a dialect it may give the strong impression that it is a lesser form of a more correct language, which the user is too ignorant to master. In an experiment at the Institut Universitaire de Formation de Maîtres (the University Institute for Teacher Training) at Colmar, some students were shown photos of groups of people conversing in various situations, and were asked whether the people in each case were speaking a language or a dialect. Where the setting was rural, the students considered that it must be a dialect. But in city settings it was assumed to be a language.<sup>71</sup>

Before the sixteenth century, until there was a ‘printer’s German’, it was not possible, in my definition, to speak or write ‘in dialect’, a term which presupposes a standard from which one can vary. People simply used the language of the time and region they were in, as argued more fully in Section 3.1, page 74, above.

Also, we have already established that Alsatian pre-dates High German, and it cannot therefore be a degraded form of that language. In spite of its obvious limitations in modern society I prefer to refer to it as a language, even though in doing so I sometimes find myself having to explain my preference to some Alsations, who are accustomed to its being referred to as a poor relative of High German.

On the other hand I would accept the assertion that Alsatian consists of fourteen different dialects, as identified by Matzen (Matzen 2000, 10), but in this case I would use ‘dialect’ as meaning local related usages, rather than as variants from a ‘correct’ form of the

---

<sup>71</sup> Andrea Anspach-Young. Personal interview. 11 Nov. 2001.

language.

In this we can draw upon the authoritative support of André Weckmann, in his *Brève Histoire Linguistique de l'Alsace*:

L'idée que les dialectes seraient des langues dénaturées, corrompues ou encore qu'ils seraient des langues standard mal parlées est totalement erronée.  
(Weckmann, 1988, 20).<sup>72</sup>

Until the onset of 'Printer's German' kick-started the normalisation of that group of Germanic vernaculars in the sixteenth century, it was not possible to think of Alsatian itself as other than a language – one of the alternatives used in the region, each having little precedence over the others. According to Matzen<sup>73</sup> the Alsatian language has basically not changed since the twelfth century, (i.e., predating the printers' new High German).

Germanic was established in Alsace in the fifth century, and Charlemagne in the ninth century made a collection of written poems in the language (Jung 2001, 7). And concerning the writing of Alsatian we should note that the language was written, but since the introduction of High German it became more normal to write in the latter. So, as Alsatian simplified its speech, German became a more precise way of writing (Weckmann 1988, 18). Alsatian, therefore, appears to have been by-passed by the creation of a centralised and standardised German which was made to measure for the purpose of printing. Having been born as a written language the latter had great advantages over its contributing regional dialects, in that it was immediately available for the influential purposes which give status to a language, i.e., commerce, government and religion.

---

<sup>72</sup> (The idea that dialects are languages that have been distorted or corrupted, or furthermore that they are standard languages which are being badly spoken, is totally erroneous.)

<sup>73</sup> Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series. 6 May 2003.

However, there is a body of modern literature written in Alsatian, including works of the poets André Weckmann, Claude Vigée, Adrien Finck and others. And 1,600 modern plays in the language are available for use in the library of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. At the University of Strasbourg III, Marc Bloch, I attended lectures in the department of Dialectology, which were entitled *Langue et culture régionales*, rather than *Dialecte et culture régionaux*.

I find it strange that Finck states ‘C’est au début du XIXe siècle qu’apparaît alors la littérature dialectale’ (It is at the beginning of the XIXth century that literature appeared in dialect) (Finck 1990, 11). What does he consider that the authors in Alsace were speaking and writing previously ? There is a wealth of theatre works written in Alsatian before that time, as shown in my Section 4.4, from page 136, below, *The History of the Theatre in Alsace*. As stated above, usage of the language had not radically changed for centuries <sup>74</sup> except that it had simplified grammatically, as the demands made upon it for writing had simplified. Finck continues by explaining that what he means is that after the establishment of New High German, firstly as a written amalgam of the regional languages, from the sixteenth century onwards (see Section 3.1, page 74, above) the difference between what was developing into written ‘German’ as we now know it, and the language of the period in Alsace became increasingly apparent. He appears to be saying that now that a ‘correct’ form of the language had been created, we can safely downgrade Alsatian into a ‘dialect’. This interpretation is supported by his acceptance of the controversial definition of the Alsatian language given by Rector Pierre Deyon in 1985, and discussed in this section, above . It might be preferable if Finck had simply stated that literature ‘appeared in the New High German, whilst literature continued to be written in Alsatian, as previously, with a rebirth in the nineteenth century’. This appears to be another example of Alsatians joining in the conspiracy against their own culture, and it is all the more surprising as Finck is a well-known writer in Alsatian.

---

<sup>74</sup> Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series. 10 Dec. 2002.

Jung, in his monumental *Elements de la littérature alsacienne* (Elements of Alsatian literature), without any campaigning spirit and without being overbearing, simply refers on all occasions to ‘Oeuvres en langue alsacienne’ (Works in the Alsatian Language) (Jung 2001, *passim*). He also refers to the ‘three’ languages spoken in the region ‘à partir du XVIII siècle, et de plus en plus, la présentation des oeuvres littéraires devra tenir compte de ce terrain trilingue’ (from the XVIII Century, and increasingly, the presentation of literary works had to be aware of this trilingual region) (*ibid*, 54).

Jung further states that already in the eighteenth century authors were using their own regional languages, and that with the spread of printing, and the increase in reading, the conditions were right for the birth of literature in the Alsatian ‘language’ (*ibid*, 54).

Vassberg supports Charles Stauffer’s (1979) *L’Alsacien et son dialecte* (The Alsatian and his/her dialect), indicating that ‘He does point out that the dialect is a worthy language, ‘une langue au sens plein du mot’ (a language in the full sense of the word)’ (Stauffer 1979, 49 in Vassberg 1993, 39).

A conference in Sélestat on 5 April 2003, entitled *Pour une politique linguistique globale en Alsace : l’exemple du Pays de Galles* (Towards a global language policy in Alsace : the example of Wales) was attended by French ex-Senator Henri Goetschy who spoke of ‘the Alsatian Language’, and by Gérard Cronenberger, Mayor of Ingersheim, in Alsace, who is chairman of a committee for the promotion of the ‘Language and Culture of Alsace’. However, at the same conference I was harangued by an enthusiastic Alsatian who insisted that Alsations both speak and write German, and therefore there is no such thing as the Alsatian language. I did not try to establish my interlocutor’s name, as it would have involved further haranguing. But this latter opinion does illustrate the contrary belief which is strongly held in some quarters.

The fact of whether a vernacular is accepted as an instrument of government in independent jurisdictions obviously distorts objective examination of a language’s qualifications, against Alsatian and in favour of Luxembourgish and Flemish.

Barber, in his *The story of Language* states:

... And, even though so many dialects died out, there were in earlier times a vast number of Germanic dialects spoken in Europe. Their consolidation into a small number of national languages was due to the rise of the modern nation states; as we have seen. The existence of a coherent political unit favours the triumph of a single dialect (a prestige dialect or standard literary language) within its area (Barber 1964, 108. Author's brackets.).

It may seem contradictory, that at the same time as offering my own definitions of 'dialect' and 'language', I must also make a plea for flexibility and tolerance in their use of these words. As stated elsewhere in this study, life would be even more problematic if we constantly refused to employ other people's word usage. Intelligent conversation is difficult when based upon pedantic styles. And I feel that it is essential to tolerate and to participate generously in other people's unfiltered employment of the language. Therefore, if the speech community calls it 'Dialekt Theater' it would make no sense to continually correct this to 'Alsatian Language Theatre', which latter term I use to refer to theatre in that language, in its widest sense.

Above all, we should be wary of resorting to the argument that 'the real meaning' of a word is so and so. There is no intrinsic meaning to any word. A word means what the speech community makes it mean, and if people use the word 'aggravate' in the sense 'annoy', then it means 'annoy'. (Barber 1964, 255).

Appendix One of this thesis is a survey of examples of variations of the many local dialects one finds within the usage of the Alsatian language.

## **Why does it matter ?**

It may appear, in the final count, that it matters little, except to academic linguists, whether what is spoken in Alsace is a language or a dialect.

However, our predisposition to take up one or the other opinion, can provoke value judgements by decision-makers in policy formulation in both regional and central government, and through this, the likelihood of whether the local speech will survive.

If Alsatian is regarded as a German dialect then the education system may remain geared towards teaching High German as a politically important subject area. If Alsatian is regarded as a language it has a better claim to a share of the educational budget, which will result in more young and adult speakers. This, naturally, would lead to better prospects for the future of the theatre in the language, and possibly for the widespread requirement for the language in job recruitment.

The attitude of Alsations towards their own language must surely affect their willingness to be proactive in its support.

### **3.2 Alsatian versus French**

The first act of government which is frequently quoted in relation to the political history of the Alsatian language is the Edict issued at Villers-Cotterêts, near Paris, by Francis I in 1539. This banned the use of Latin in the registration of births, marriages and deaths by local curés and abbots. The purpose, stated in the edict was:

Afin qu'il n'y ait cause de douter sur l'intelligence desdits arrêts nous voulons et ordonnons qu'ils soient faits et écrits si clairement qu'il n'y ait ni puisse avoir aucune ambiguïté ou incertitude.<sup>75 76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> L'Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts, 1539, from < [http:// www. multimania.com/numa/ordVC.html](http://www.multimania.com/numa/ordVC.html). >



To this end Article 111 states that entries shall be made ‘en langage maternel françois et non autrement’ (in the maternal French language, and not otherwise) (ibid). This edict is quoted on both sides of the argument, by those who wish to diminish the influence of Alsatian, by stating that it was banned as early as 1539, and by those who argue that the edict really only banned Latin in registry office entries, and said nothing about Alsatian. Whether the argument is of any real importance nowadays is also a debatable point, especially as Alsace at that time did not belong to Francis I.

Philippe Dollinger, in his 525-paged *Histoire de l’Alsace* does not mention Francis I in his chapter on the sixteenth century. Indeed, he writes:

Mais en Alsace au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle existait-il un Etat ? Notre province plus que tout autre dans l’Empire<sup>77</sup> sans doute, était une marqueterie de seigneuries et de principautés. (Dollinger 1970, 219).<sup>78</sup>

The question of nationhood, and of a national language for Alsace does not appear until after the winning by Louis XIV of the Hapsburg territory in Alsace, under the settlement of the Thirty Years War in 1648. Louis had no linguistic policy for the region, only a religious policy of promoting the Catholic church, which happened to entail the usage of Latin and French.<sup>79</sup>

From this point on French gradually gained ground in Alsace. Strasbourg was captured by the French in 1681. The revolutionaries of 1789 did their best to impose the language, and associated French, for the first time, with patriotism. In the nineteenth century French was increasingly used among the middle classes, until the German annexation of 1871, when the written language became German and Alsatian remained the mode of

---

<sup>76</sup> (So that there shall be no reason to doubt the provenance of such entries on the registers, we desire and command that they be made and written so clearly that there can be no ambiguity or uncertainty.)

<sup>77</sup> The German Empire (The First Reich) otherwise known as the Holy Roman Empire (Wilson 1999, 1).

<sup>78</sup> (But did a state exist in Alsace in the XVI century ? Our province, without doubt, more than any other in the Empire, was a patchwork of seigneuries and principalities.)

<sup>79</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg, 28 Oct. 2002.

everyday communication. Between the two World Wars French became the official language and that of education (Weckmann 1988, 13).

In 1931, 86.7% of those surveyed declared an ability to speak Alsatian. By 2001 this had declined to 61%. In 1931 52.4% declared an ability to speak French. By 1962 this had increased to 80.7%.<sup>80</sup> It would be safe to assume that in 2004 nearly 100% of the regional population speak French. However, the methods used in questionnaire surveys in the past have been notoriously unreliable. Answers to questions asked in French, such as ‘Do you speak Alsatian ?’ may be of little value, if the respondent does not actually speak French.

The campaigning monthly magazine, *D’Heimet*, reported that ISERCO<sup>81</sup> opinion polls show that Alsatians demand respect for the regional language ‘avec une constance admirable’ (with admirable perseverance), by 70% in 1991, and 84% in 2002.<sup>82</sup>

In 1955 the main regional daily newspaper, *Les Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace* (Alsace Latest News) had separate editions in French (an estimated 25% of sales) and High German (75% of sales). It is now called *DNA*, with a much larger French edition containing a Sunday column in Alsatian by Professor Raymond Matzen, alternating with Raymond Daul, both teachers and campaigners of long standing. Until 1984 the German edition had by law to contain at least 25% in French, including the Sports section, as stated above in Section 2.2, page 55, because this is what young Alsatians prefer to read, thus giving the French language a wider appeal.

Other newspapers such as *l’Alsace* and *l’Ami du Peuple* have small sections in Alsatian, but mostly French, with some High German. Some monthly and quarterly magazines are produced by language pressure groups, such as those listed in Section 3.6, page 123, below.

---

<sup>80</sup> Surveys by INSEE 1956, 1962, 1979, and ISERCO 1986, 1989, 1992, 2001.

<sup>81</sup> Institut Strasbourgeois d’Etudes et Recherches Commerciales.

<sup>82</sup> *D’Heimet* 146 (January 2003) 3.

In general Alsatian is now seen as a language for the home, the pub, the workplace. French is the language of education and administration. I have noticed that, and as stated by Vassberg, prominent figures such as mayors, etc, will speak Alsatian in public provided it is realised that they do also speak perfect French, and that this is being done purely to give the occasion some local character (Vassberg 1993, 170).

It becomes obvious, after even a superficial encounter with Alsace, that any native speaker of Alsatian who wants to get on in the world must learn French. But there is little similar economic or social incentive for a French speaker to learn Alsatian. An ex-student colleague of mine, in Strasbourg, criticised her local mayor, who would let the commune down when representing them in Paris, as he could not speak fluent French.<sup>83</sup> And another acquaintance (name unknown) on 2 June 2003, stated that each country should only have one language, because if a gendarme stopped you it would be essential for you both to speak the same language.

Native Alsatian speakers often have a recognisable accent when using French. Marthe Philipp, in her *L'accent alsacien: le Français en Alsace* claims that 'a Parisian tramp is considered to be more distinguished than a member of an Alsatian university who speaks with the accent' (Philipp (1985, 22) quoted in Vassberg (1993, 170).

As explained more fully in Section 3.5, page 117, below, the European Charter on Minority and Regional Languages, has been signed but not ratified by France. This would involve altering Article 2 of the 1958 Constitution, which states simply that French is the language of the nation. The Charter requires that, where regional or minority language speakers approach a civil servant using their own language, there must be a responsible person on hand who can deal with that citizen in that language.

As stated in Section 2.2, page 51, above, there were big problems of reunification after World War II, throughout France, and not only in annexed areas. Symbols of Frenchness, such as the photos by Cartier Bresson, including his *Boy with a bottle of*

---

<sup>83</sup> Suzanne Wilks. Personal interview. 20 Mar. 2003.

wine, and *Couple dancing* and Willy Ronis's *Boy with a loaf of bread*, were promoted by the French government. Alsatian was again the language of the enemy, and schoolchildren were punished for speaking the language in the playground.<sup>84</sup>

Tomi Ungerer, the present day ubiquitous cartoonist and illustrator, also wrote in his *Tomi, A boyhood under the Nazis* (Ungerer, 1998), of how repressive the French 'cleansing' (*l'épuration*) was after 1945.

The post-war campaign by the government in the late 1940s *C'est chic de parler Français* (which is pointed out as not being good French) (It is chic to speak French) is remembered in the region, and it provoked the 2002 *C'est chic de parler l'Alsacien* poster campaign organised by the *René Schickele Gesellschaft* (the René Schickele Association, sometimes called the *Cercle René Schickele*). However, the slogan was printed in French rather than Alsatian, which, I felt, weakened the message. Their campaign in 2003, with stickers stating *Mir rede Elsassisch* (We speak Alsatian) seems more meaningful, as is the annual *Friehjohr fer unseri Sproch* (Springtime for our language) festival of events throughout Alsace, which started in Spring 2002. In February 2004, there were over 300 events, including readings, singing, theatre, exhibitions and story telling. The *Sprochefescht* (Language Festival), an annual multilingual event in Haguenau, organised by the writer Pierre Klein, was held over one weekend in Spring 2003 and 2004, in which I participated, giving a talk in French, Alsatian and English.

It is noticeable that any event intended to promote the Alsatian language, such as the conference at Sélestat, in April 2003, which compared the progress in Alsace with that in Wales, was advertised in French, English and German, and the preferred language of nearly all the Alsatian speakers was French. This again may be looked upon as joining in the conspiracy against the language, although one has to admit the problem created by the variety of dialects spoken within Alsace itself, dealt with later in this study.

---

<sup>84</sup> Paul Adolf. Personal interview. 21 Nov. 2001.

In 1912, Jean-Jacques Waltz, as *Uncle Hansi* had written a strongly pro-French history of Alsace *as told to little children*, which is criticized nowadays by the more outspoken pressure groups. Alsace being part of Germany at the time, he spent three months in prison in 1913. Today there is quite a vogue for *Uncle Hansi* books, both in original and new editions. His illustrations are copied and adapted for everything from postcards to tea towels.

Bilingualism now usually means French and High German. There is a provision for schools to teach the local language for one period a week, but this is seldom implemented. I agree with Vassberg (1993, 178) that 'it [is] hard to see how learning High German in school would foster a greater use of Alsatian in everyday communication'.

There are French-speaking enclaves within Alsace, in some of the valleys of the Vosges, where the Celts retreated when the Germanic people invaded. These are known as the *pays welschs*, and include Lapoutrie, Lebonhomme, and Lalaye, Fonchie, Urbaisse and Steige in the Val de Villé. *Welsch* is a Germanic name for Celtic, and was used by the Nazis in a poster campaign against French culture in Alsace, entitled *Weg mit diesem welschen Plunder !* (Away with this Celtic rubbish !). Today the language is spoken by only a few hundred people. It resembles both Swiss-Jura French and Belgian Walloon.<sup>85</sup>

The concluding chapter of Vassberg's *Alsatian Acts of Identity* (Vassberg 1993, 182 – 192) sums up many of the features of the use of Alsatian at that time, showing it to be partly dependent upon age, gender, class, social and geographical situation, but although acknowledging that the situation is very complex, she asserts that French is the language of prestige.

The regional language does still exist, which I have until now noted principally from the strength of the amateur theatre movement. However, it is still widely spoken in public

---

<sup>85</sup> Michèle Marchetti. *DNA*. 16 Feb. 2003, page *Région 6*.

places, when shopping, in markets and restaurants. (Young people frequently understand but do not use it among themselves as it is not ‘cool’.)

But for the language to be recognised and accepted widely as part of the French heritage it is possible that it firstly needs to gain the usual trappings of a language. For this to occur a ‘tidy’ linguist might posit that an agreed written form is essential, and for there to be a ‘received’ or ‘correct’ pronunciation, although this latter need not be practised everywhere. Such a goal would be difficult to achieve, as I am informed from all sides that each dialect of the language has champions who claim it to be the correct form.

Meanwhile there are translations of theatre works into Alsatian. Examples include Shakespeare (*King Lear*, by Yves LaFuenta, 1994) and Molière (*De Gitzhals* = *L’Avare*, by Marie Hart born 1856), and more frequently comedies such as *De Wend spielt mit de Kabinet Dier*, and a Swiss German play translated as *Peepshow in der Vogese* (Peepshow in the Vosges), by Roger Siffer, discussed in Section 2.4, on page 67, above.

Translations out of the language into the major international languages would add dignity. However, apart from translations by authors into French, such as Claude Vigée’s version of his work *Schwärzi Sengessele* (Black Nettles), in order to reach a wider public, and my own English rendering of the modern Alsatian adaptation of *Antigone*, one has to rely upon good translations into Alsatian as proof that the language has a structure and a vocabulary of sufficient sensitivity which can be shown to equal that of the more widely accepted languages. My own cooperation with Alsatian playwrights in translating and adapting both *Roots*, by Arnold Wesker (1973), and *Hobson’s Choice*, by Harold Brighouse (1916) may contribute towards this end. This evidence may provide the impetus, as indicated by Vladimír Macura (1990, *passim*) for native writers to produce larger quantities of equally acceptable work, which in its turn may be worth exporting from the region. The normalisation of Alsatian, if such is required, might be promoted by the wider use of the language in printing, undergoing a process similar to that in the development of New High German in the sixteenth century.

However, on expressing the opinion that normalisation may be a requirement for the language, I was strongly condemned by an Alsatian and Germanist of some standing, who stated that her language would cease to have relevance if its character and its variations were suppressed. Such well-intentioned and authoritative opinions must be respected.<sup>86</sup> The outsider might be tempted to interpret the situation as one of local charm versus regional practicality. My own observations confirm that most writers of Alsatian choose the Strasbourg dialect as being the most central, and the most universally understood. With the growth of television in the language, as detailed below, in Section 4.6, page 216, it is possible that a de-facto standard may thus arise.

### **Code switching ?**

This section is written from the standpoint of the student coming to Alsace and looking for recognisable facets of bilingual existence. As dealt with in this section, below, the opinion of Alsatian poet and language activist André Weckmann is that the Alsatian language consists of three modes making up one whole means of expression. If we adopt this view, which I personally find convincing, then maybe we should not speak of code switching, but perhaps of ‘moving among the modes’, or some other suitable expression. This latter is not intended as a conceit, but as a contribution towards our thinking about how multilingualism is accommodated in normal everyday activities.

It is a normal aspect of the Alsatian language that it uses many French words. *Merci vielmohls* is normal Alsatian for ‘Thank you’, whereas *Danke* is definitely German. *Bonjour bisomme* (Good morning, all !), is another common Alsatian blend of the two modes of expression, which are so closely bonded that it could be argued that Alsatians do not switch codes, into and out of French. They simply use different aspects of their one language – Alsatian.

---

<sup>86</sup> Astrid Meyer, Germanist, tutor at the University Teacher Training College of Alsace (IUFM). Personal interview at Interregional Languages Conference, at Ingersheim, Alsace. 24 Sept. 2003.

Although the use of the two languages is not a principal feature of this study, it does demonstrate an aspect of the relationship between French and Alsatian among bilingual speakers which is worth observing and noting. My own observations, confirm some of what has been written elsewhere.

In my experience, the bilingual speaker will not address an unknown person in Alsatian. The latter is a language for use in confidence among acquaintances, or at home and only among those whom one knows are within the community of Alsatian users, and who will not subject the user to ridicule. During my first period in Alsace, in 1955/56, I found on several occasions that people whom I approached in French might hurry away rather than speak to me in that language. I have since then accepted it as a compliment when people address me in Alsatian. The *René Schickele Gesellschaft* has a small swallow-shaped lapel badge to be worn by those who wish to demonstrate their readiness to talk Alsatian, but after wearing it since early in 2003, no stranger had recognised it.

The above phenomenon is dealt with by Piotr Kuhiwczak in his *Translation and Language Games in the Balkans* (1999, 219) in which he deals with how language is linked to distinct national identities, and in which he quotes Jasna Levinger on how language use determines whether one will be rejected or accepted into the group. 'How to decide which form of greeting to use – the one one usually uses, or the one the other party uses; will he interpret this as provocation, offence or courtesy?' (1994, 235).

Among the situations which I have observed to be customary are the following:

a) In the Crédit Agricole bank in Haguenau on 28 June 2002, a man of about sixty years or more, dressed in dungarees was paying in a large number of packs of coins, which took a long time. The female cashier replied in Alsatian when he spoke to her in Alsatian, and in French when he spoke in French. When either party changed mode the other did likewise. Matters concerning the filling in of forms, receipts for paying-in, account numbers, or anything businesslike, were dealt with in French. The more everyday matters, and exchanges of local hearsay were in Alsatian.



b) At an estate agent's office on several occasions around the same date, when the proprietor was talking to clients on the telephone, he would conduct all the business matters in French. But to emphasise the community of feeling with his clients he would use Alsatian, particularly to round-off conversations, and to ensure that matters ended on a friendly note. In a Mini-market in Haguenau I noted that the proprietor held a friendly conversation with a customer in Alsatian, but conducted the business matters in French.

The emphasis on friendship with clients was also noted by Vassberg (1993, 76) when, in a butcher's shop an elderly customer was offered a small favour in Alsatian, that language being used to let the client know that she is a valued regular customer.

c) However, contrary to the latter observation, I was in the Reception of the BMW car dealership in Strasbourg on 6 November 2001, where I observed a well-dressed, male client of sixty years or more, conducting a complete conversation in Alsatian with the younger female receptionist. It did not appear that much of the conversation was of a technical nature, but it was noticeably monolingual, contrary to similar situations which I have noted elsewhere. Afterwards I regretted not having had the opportunity to interview the client, who may possibly have been a particularly avid campaigner for the use of the language. The situation was unusual in that he was confident enough not to have needed, during my presence, to have demonstrated his fluency in French, as his 'passport' to the right to speak Alsatian.

Whether, in spite of what is written above, Alsatians actually indulge in code switching proper is a matter for discussion.

Alsatian poet André Weckmann states that the vernacular in Alsace consists of three modes of expression.<sup>87</sup> These are French, the Dialekt (what is normally referred to as Alsatian) and High German. These three blend together to make up the Alsatian

---

<sup>87</sup> Television programme. *Une poignée d'orties* (A handful of nettles). France 3 Alsace. 28 Feb. 2004. Dir. Daniel Coche, Dora Productions.

language. He also states that those brought up in a monolingual culture could not comprehend this concept. But following this argument one must concede that in moving among the three modes of expression an Alsatian is not, strictly speaking, switching codes. He is simply using the full range of his language. Weckmann's following short poem illustrates the concept:

Drej sproche  
e müeder  
e schweschter  
e liëbschdi  
wels  
esch jetz  
welli ?  
mànichmol verwachsli  
d schweschter met de  
liëbschdi  
un d müeder lachelt  
dezüe.

(Three languages/a mother/a sister/a lover/which/one is/which ?/often I confuse/the sister with the/lover/which makes the mother/smile.) (Weckmann 2003, 28).

### **3.3 Regional languages in the UK**

By comparison, the UK has dealt liberally with its regional languages, even though regionalism represented a threat to the central power of Westminster. Apart from Welsh, Great Britain's other regional languages are mostly defunct, sometimes being re-invented, as in the case of Cornish, which process does not add a great deal of validity to their present-day usage. Cornish fell out of general use at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Present day Cornish is the result of a revival set in train by Henry Jenner in his 1904

*Handbook of the Cornish Language*, as explained in *Carn*, the magazine of the Celtic League (Gendall 1997, passim).

*The Sunday Telegraph* of 17 November 2002, quoted in *The Times* the following day, stated that Cornish, now spoken fluently by 100 people, with 3,500 having some knowledge of the language, 'has been granted official protection under the provisions of a European Union charter on 'minority languages', paving the way for schoolchildren to be taught it'. The Government had committed itself to ensuring that Cornish lessons will be available 'at all appropriate stages'. There was also a Cornish language feature film produced in 2002. And I am told that recent regional language publications in Britain by the Arts Council include work in both Cornish and Hebridean.

In the case of Welsh, it is Bishop William Morgan who is credited with preventing it from 'joining Middle English and Old Norse in the linguistic dinosaur park',<sup>88</sup> by publishing his translation of the Bible, which appeared in 1588. During the same period Henry VIII had introduced the Acts of Union, which made the Welsh full subjects of the realm, thus releasing them from the taint of being a defeated nation, as they had been under the Plantagenets. But similarly to François I in France, he banned all other vernaculars from all legal documents, in favour of English, the language of the realm. However, during succeeding generations Morgan's Bible was used to teach the Welsh how to read and write their own language.<sup>89</sup>

More recently, there was a history of violence in Wales during the 1960s and 1970s, including the bombing of post offices, and the burning of holiday homes in the principality. The Welsh language speech by the Prince of Wales at his investiture in Caernarvon in 1969 was possibly the last time he used the language.<sup>90</sup>

When contacting the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority by internet in December

---

<sup>88</sup> See website <http://www.100welshheroes.com/en/biography/bishopwilliammorgan>. 22 Dec. 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Jeremy Turner, Artistic Director. Theatr Arad Goch, Aberystwth. Telephone interview. 21 Dec. 2005.

<sup>90</sup> The opinion stated by Cefin Campbell, Commercial Director of Welsh Television, at Sélestat conference. 5 April 2003.

2002, the information which appeared on my screen was side-by-side in Welsh and English, whether I wanted it or not. I understand that any communications with the Social Security, Passport Office or other government agency, in any part of the United Kingdom, may be made in Welsh, and Welsh language forms are available for this purpose. Furthermore, Welsh language schools are available in the principality, where English is taught only as a foreign language. From my own English relatives who moved to Wales in recent years I know that it is now *chic* to speak Welsh.

In a Seminar at Warwick university on 30 January 2002, Amanda Hopkinson, who is responsible for Translation Policy at the Arts Council stated that at the University of Cardiff each student has the right to present any piece of oral or written work in the Welsh language, although there is a dearth of teaching staff capable of marking such work.

Welsh is nowadays taught in virtually every school in the principality. At the 1991 Census, among those who claimed to speak the language, 22% were under 15 years, and only 21.7% were over 65. In south-eastern Wales, which is not a stronghold of the language, 30% of the speakers were under 15. This is the reverse of the situation in Alsace, and indicates that the Welsh language has good prospects for the future (Brake 2000, 6). It should also be noted that there is positive job discrimination in favour of Welsh speakers, and the language does not replace English, but complements it.

Although Wales is held up, in Alsace, as a shining example of a regional language being revived, the comparison of Wales with Alsace is not altogether valid, in that Wales is not a border region locked between two strong traditional enemies. There is no alternative neighbour to whom its allegiance could be transferred. It has not a valuable economy, now that coal has diminished in importance, in contrast to Alsace, which is stated to be the second richest area in France, after Paris. Wales is an outpost of Europe, rather than being at its centre, as is Alsace. Wales has not had a happy relationship with England, but that has not in recent centuries been on the same scale as the suffering of Alsace at

the hands of both its neighbours. Its language is not claimed to be a dialect of that of one of its neighbours, nor is it always 'the language of the enemy'.

The setting up of regional assemblies in Scotland, N. Ireland and Wales has demonstrated a certain feeling of confidence by the Westminster government, in spite of the fact that the Northern Irish Assembly has had to be suspended on various occasions, which has been due to sectarian violence rather than language problems.

### **3.4 The survival of the Alsatian language**

#### **What right does a language have to survive ?**

Artificially keeping languages alive appears to be a relatively modern liberal concept, the child of an age in which we can indulge our higher needs, as proposed by Maslow. At some period in the past one may presume that the means of communication remained purely a tool to serve lower order needs for survival.<sup>91</sup>

The Alsations have to a certain extent been responsible for the decline in usage of their own language. When a region such as Alsace was devastated by three major wars in a period of seventy-five years after 1870, and has had the status of an enemy within its own nation, it is hardly surprising that the inhabitants simply wanted to get on with recovering and maintaining the means of surviving from day to day, without bothering about which language they use for survival. William R. Beer, investigating language activism in France since World War Two, quoted in Vassberg, states that:

There is a correlation between economic development of an area and ethnic political militancy, i.e., the higher the degree of economic development in an area, the lower the level of political militancy. Indeed, Alsace was ranked first of the

---

<sup>91</sup> Website < <http://Chiron.Valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html> > 14 April 2002.

seven ethnic regions [of France] for average annual income. (Beer 1980, quoted in Vassberg 1993, 39).

As examples of positive attempts to kill languages one may quote Senator Henri Goetschy who, at a conference in Strasbourg, which I attended, on 8 March 2004, (addressed by François Héran (Héran, 2004) concerning the influence of English and other immigrant languages) stated that during the Second World War there was no other language than High German, meaning that both French and Alsatian were banned and despised. And the French government's anti-Alsatian language campaign after World War Two included the repeated exhortation 'Oubliez chaque jour un mot de dialecte et apprenez un nouveau mot de français' (Forget a word of dialect every day and learn a new French word) (Bister-Broosen 2002, 101).

Jeremy Paxman, in *The English*, draws a useful parallel from British history:

... by the nineteenth century [the English] were presiding over the most successful empire the world had ever seen, in which it was clear that what got results were the practical, self-disciplined qualities of the Anglo-Saxon: it followed that the best thing an emotional Celt could do was to acquire them, instead of messing about with sentimental excursions into the history of a marginalised people. And ... so many of the Celts suffered from an inferiority complex about their own birthplaces. 'The land of my fathers,' said Dylan Thomas, 'my fathers can keep it'. (Paxman 1998, 51).

### **Why do languages flourish or die ?**

Languages are, among other things, tools of communication. They fit, or do not fit, the needs of the age in which they exist. Such needs include the economy, politics, administration, the law and religion.

Economically, they need to be used for earning a living, to inform manufacturers, growers, employees, customers, and for basic survival needs such as shopping, housing and medicine. Politically, they are required so that countries can be governed. There is a need to make laws which all can understand and carry out. Administratively, we need to communicate in order to carry on the business of getting things done. Legally, language enables relationships within the bounds of custom and justice. Associated with this is the need to keep clear records.

Religion is a major user of language, and a decision maker regarding which one shall be used, for enabling the various faiths to carry on practising their beliefs. Clovis, King of the Franks, in 496 AD defeated the Alemans and took possession of large parts of Alsace. The Alemans remained, and retained their Alemanic language. (Schimpf 1998, 16). But when he converted to Christianity, Latin became the written language, opening up new ways of thought.<sup>92</sup> After the Reformation Latin was the ceremonial language of the Catholic Church. However, the French spoken in Catholic France was considered to be immoral by the Alsatian Protestants, who spoke Germanic.

A feature which may help a language to survive is whether it is an acceptable social vehicle among the young and the would-be young. Does it enable the normal interchanges that facilitate our living, working and socialising? Fashion is also a dictator of language. During the reign of Louis XIV the fashionable language in England and Germany was French.<sup>93</sup> During the reign of Queen Victoria German words also became fashionable. There is no other reason why the main entertainment centre at Southend on Sea should have been named the *Kursaal* (Spa Hall), nor why Hammersmith in London (and many other towns) should have borrowed from French a *Palais de Danse*.

Languages need to be dignified, and possibly obscure, enough, to support ceremony. English is presumably too modern for some British ceremonies. Latin is still used when awarding degrees in Cambridge and Oxford.

---

<sup>92</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 7 Oct. 2002.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.* 14 Oct. 2002.

In order to survive, languages need to be able to adapt to changed circumstances. Neologisms are, to my knowledge, not frequent in Alsatian. Survival is attempted mainly through borrowings, and French is the normal source. There is not much evidence of American English in Alsatian. This is possibly because Alsatian is not a language of preferred usage by the young. Older people use Alsatian more frequently, and by training and instinct they borrow more naturally from French.

The survival of a language such as Alsatian may depend upon enough emotional pressure being exerted politically, based upon reminiscence and nostalgia among the old, and upon liberal attitudes among younger pressure groups who are energetic and have the spare time to devote to such activities. For this to happen access is required to the media, to money, and to an intelligensia with experience in manipulating the decision-makers in government. An alternative, of regional independence for Alsace, was attempted between the wars with disastrous results. The other alternative, of civil disobedience and violence, such as occurred in Wales, is highly unlikely considering the relative economic well-being of the region as it now stands. The only indication that either of these thoughts is still alive is occasional graffiti along main roads announcing autonomy for Alsace.

According to Jeremy Paxman regional cultural nostalgia is highly suspect:

For every pseudo-druidical Welsh eisteddfod (dating back to all of 1792), which celebrated native poetry and song, huge numbers were engaging with the Anglo-Saxon reality ... (Paxman 1998, 52).

And defunct regional languages are not a matter of great concern:

The last native Cornish speaker died in 1777, the last speaker of Manx in 1974, the last speaker of Deeside Gaelic in 1984. There are more native speakers of Chinese in Northern Ireland than there are native speakers of Irish. Whatever



vigour remains in the languages survives as a consequence of political ideology and the subsidy of English taxpayers, as the Welsh television channel and the great number of Irish speakers among former IRA prisoners attest. (ibid).

Academic interest should not be a reason why languages endure, but while it is the main reason for this study to be carried out, I do have a genuine interest in Alsace and its vernacular, and have, in a limited fashion, contributed to the attempts to help the language survive.

It is encouraging to note that Swiss German has entered modernity since 1945, as has Luxembourgish. It is possible for dialects to develop, but official encouragement is required, which has not happened in France, whose government, since the Revolution, has consistently assisted its regional languages to die out.<sup>94</sup>

### **Tests of a language's viability**

In order to test a language's viability one could compose a list of test questions. Whilst not producing a precise answer, and not giving a score out of ten, at least it may give some prediction of longevity. The questions chosen here are not exhaustive, but hopefully cover the main requirements of a modern-day language. Opinions should be expected to vary widely about judgements offered on the performance of a language in the various categories suggested.

Firstly, can it adapt ? How good is it at creating neologisms, new vocabulary, usage, and even new grammatical forms ? Yes, I think if put to the test Alsatian would perform well. How does it deal with borrowings ? Do they stick out like sore thumbs or are they well integrated ? Yes, OK on this topic.

Is the new literature in the language of a comparable value with that of previous ages, and

---

<sup>94</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 2 Dec. 2002.

with that of other languages ? Is it suitable for use in the theatre, cabaret, art- and folk-song, the media, advertising, radio and television ? Is it inventive, and is experimental literature being created in the vernacular ? According to Strasbourg University lecturer and writer, Maryse Staiber, no experimental literature is being created in Alsatian. It is all reflective and nostalgic.<sup>95</sup> I would not entirely agree with this, but examples of forward-looking writing are few. The adaptation of *Antigone* by Jung and Schmittbiel, which I have myself translated into English, is one example.

Is Alsatian rich enough to cope with translations into and out of the vernacular ? This has been done. Can it express a wide range of concepts ? Possibly, with imaginative use.

Is it suitable for use in contemporary technology and electronics ? Most languages borrow extensively from American here. Does it perform well in the labelling of places, products and people ? Yes, it has done so for centuries.

Other areas in which a language should be exemplary are teaching, the creation and discussion of legal documents, political debate, diplomacy, intelligent complex discourse, medical diagnosis and treatment. Probably OK, with plentiful borrowings from the international vocabulary that is common elsewhere.

We need to ask whether it fulfils the needs of the young as well as of the old. The young would need a lot of convincing regarding Alsatian. Is it precise, concise, nuanced, rich, imaginative ? Yes. Can it be used free of its geographical roots and context ? I cannot imagine a need for using Alsatian out of the region, except among emigrant workers.

Does the language command respect, and do people actually want to use it on a day-to-day basis ? Is it chic ? Is it 'cool' ? Is it supported by opinion leaders and decision makers ? A low score here for Alsatian.

---

<sup>95</sup> Lecture series on Alsatian literature. MLCR Licence course. U. Strasbourg. 21 Feb. 2003.

We need to know whether people want to retain it purely for nostalgic reasons. Are opinion polls simply wish-lists, or do people act according to their stated opinions ? On the latter point Alsatian may score very badly.

One presumes that it has been suitable for traditional and historical applications, otherwise it would not exist already. On this front we have to accept the credentials of Alsatian.

Playwright and director, Joseph Schmittbiel, in an interview published in the programme for his *D'Antigonn (Antigone)*, in May 2003 stated:

... Wenn awer unseri Sproch sich net mit moderni, politischi un anderi, Theme befasse kann, dann isch sie nemi läwesfähig. Im Grund genumme, versuech ich mit mim Theater ze zaje, dass die Sproch so viel wart isch wie alli andere ... (... But if our language cannot deal with modern, political, and other, topics, then it is no longer capable of surviving. Basically, in my theatre I try to show that this language is worth as much as any other ...)

In my opinion the two ultimate tests of whether a language will survive are, firstly, how many people have to speak the language in order to find or keep their job. I have met and heard of a few in Alsace. They were all in the caring professions, such as nurses who need to understand older patients whose language choice when in need is Alsatian, doctors and pharmacists, who need to ensure that older customers understand their medication, and the Samaritans. In 2002 these were looked upon as novel applications, and were directed towards a reducing clientele. Tradespeople in general will use Alsatian if they know it, but I have not heard of it being a decisive requirement of anybody's job qualification.

On 6 January 2004 I was told that advertisements for senior posts in commerce and industry sometimes now require applicants to speak Alsatian<sup>96</sup> but I have not seen any such advertisements.

Playwright producer Raymond Bitsch advertised in the Alsatian press in the 1980s for a sales representative who could speak Alsatian, and was shortly afterwards visited by the police who wanted to know why, as this offended the law on racial equality.<sup>97</sup>

Secondly – do young people speak the language to each other in the street or at social occasions ? I know of no cases of this, whereas they will reply to parents or grandparents at home in Alsatian if spoken to in that language. But I have only met one young person who was proud to show off his Alsatian to other young people, and that was on a book stand which sold Alsatian books at a book fair.<sup>98</sup>

Based on these criteria the language does not have a bright future. And until and unless a critical mass of pro-active speakers and campaigners appears one can expect the decline in numbers of Alsatian speakers outside the theatre to continue.

### **Why has Alsatian fared so badly ?**

Alsatian was bypassed in creation of High German, which was first a written language, and later a spoken one. German has since attained the status of a major language, while Alsatian has petrified. There is no agreed written form, although it is written by all the major regional linguistic authorities and pressure groups, and in regular newspaper articles. There are fourteen identified dialects of the language (Matzen 2000,a, 10). But people find it difficult to read the various versions.<sup>99</sup> There is from time to time pressure

---

<sup>96</sup> David Wilkins, long-term English resident in Strasbourg, retired research director for Dow Chemicals in Alsace. Personal interview.

<sup>97</sup> Personal interview. 12 Mar. 2004.

<sup>98</sup> *Salon des Livres*, Colmar. 15 Nov. 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Ruth Kosmann, Jean Potier, Raymond Bitsch, Strasbourg citizens. Personal interviews. 2003.

for a standard Alsatian orthography, only to achieve a phonetic method of writing down the various different pronunciations. Regarding the normalisation of the language, each dialect group considers itself to be the one to be used.

Historically Alsatian has been a language disdained by two neighbouring enemies. It has been undesirable internally since the French revolution, with subsequent Jacobin policies of governments ever since. It was used as a second or third language under the Germans, from 1870 to 1918, but despised by the Nazis in World War Two.

In previous ages it was banned in schools when teaching was in Latin, and this continued when teaching was in French. Notices such as *Il est interdit de cracher par terre, et de parler l'Alsacien* (No spitting on the floor, and no speaking Alsatian)<sup>100</sup> were normal. Other such campaigns are noted elsewhere in this study.

There has been social, economic and political pressure to adopt French as the everyday mode of communication. French civil servants are only allowed to use the language of the Republic in their contact with the citizens<sup>101</sup>. During several visits in January 2003, to the *Sous-Préfecture* in Haguenau, which has a high percentage of Alsatian speakers, while waiting to be served by Monsieur Braun who was obviously from the region, I did not hear one word of Alsatian.

Youth culture is very evident in contemporary France, and the language of choice is either French, or French slang, or American English.

Alsations have a tendency to accept the norms of the French administration, and join in the conspiracy against their own language and culture, as shown in the theatre and elsewhere. Alsatian speakers will use French in many situations where they could equally use their own language. In my year of study at the Department of [Alsatian] Dialectology at the University of Strasbourg I did not hear one conversation in the

---

<sup>100</sup> Bernard Vogler. Lecture at Interregional Languages Conference, at Ingersheim, Alsace. 24 Sep. 2003.

<sup>101</sup> Unknown speaker. Interregional Languages Conference at Ingersheim, Alsace. 25 Sep. 2003.

language. Alsatian was only used for demonstrating literature in the language, which was always discussed in French. Conferences on the regional language are normally advertised and conducted in French.

From lectures at Marc Bloch University, Strasbourg<sup>102</sup> I learned that the reduction in usage of Alsatian since the 1950s is noticeably related to the emancipation of women in Alsace. Since 1956 the relative usage of Alsatian by the sexes has changed significantly. The INSEE enquiry in 1956 showed that, of the respondents, 89.6% of men, and 91.8% of women declared a knowledge of how to speak Alsatian. However, by the CSA<sup>103</sup> enquiry in 1998 66% of men and only 56% of women claimed a knowledge of how to speak the language. Not only had the overall usage reduced, but the balance had changed.

This was explained by Huck<sup>104</sup> in terms of the fact that family planning had granted to women the freedom to choose whether to follow their mothers as career housewives, or to adopt a profession outside the home. In order to obtain jobs with a career structure they needed to learn French. Having experienced the liberation which this offered, they ensured that their daughters, in turn, had a good knowledge of French, so that they could benefit from a profession apart from that of housewife. Our instincts may persuade us to regret the apparent part played by female participation in the decline of Alsatian – but the same instincts paradoxically lead us to support that same emancipation which accelerated the decline.

However, the Director of the French Institute of Demographic Studies demonstrated that in a survey in 1999 a roughly equal number of fathers and mothers claimed to have passed on the Alsatian language to their children in the period from 1955, and children of that period confirmed this. There was in fact a recovery in use of Alsatian in the 1960s, followed by an accelerating decline (François Héran, 2004, and INSEE/INED<sup>105</sup> 1999).

---

<sup>102</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 2 Dec. 2002.

<sup>103</sup> French market research and public opinion survey organisation.

<sup>104</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 2 Dec. 2002.

<sup>105</sup> Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques.

There may be evidence here of the difficulty of collecting reliable statistics which are not simply wish lists concerning language usage.

In 1956 in Alsace I noted the rather snobbish wish of some people to avoid being ‘tainted’ by a knowledge of Alsatian, but they were none the less often able to speak it when necessary. This feature is highlighted and satirised in many Alsatian plays. But it was a very important adjunct to living after World War Two, when speaking the language could be equated with having been a collaborator. The population had expected to pay a linguistic price for their liberation.<sup>106</sup> And that expectation has featured in their guilt ever since.

A further problem has been the attitude, promoted by Alsations and others, of their region as a nostalgic theme park, typified by the Disney-like introduction by Odile Lorraine to the *Cours d’Alsacien* (Alsatian language course), by Elsa Laugel-Erny:

Il était une fois, il y a très longtemps, un pays où tous les gens parlaient une drôle de langue sympathique. Tout le monde était heureux ... il y a bien longtemps quand les hommes suivaient des yeux le vol rassurant des cigognes. (n.d., unnumbered page).<sup>107</sup>

In October 1945 the *Bulletin départemental de l’enseignement* (The Departmental Education Bulletin) stated that the acquisition of French was the principal aim of school life, that French was the only language to be used in schools, and that Alsatian should never be used, except exceptionally for purposes of discipline.<sup>108</sup>

From conversations with Alsations generally I have learned that there is still, at present, a glass ceiling within organisations which limits the level attainable by those who speak French with an Alsatian accent. The Alsatian accent is recognisable by the fact that,

---

<sup>106</sup> Dominique Huck. Lecture series on Alsatian language and culture. U. Strasbourg. 2 Dec. 2002.

<sup>107</sup> (Once upon a time, long long ago, there was a country where the people spoke a strange but friendly language. Every one was happy ... long ago when people watched the reassuring flight of the storks.)

<sup>108</sup> Département du Bas-Rhin. Sep.-Oct. 1945.

whereas French is spoken largely with an equal emphasis on each syllable, Alsatian places emphasis unequally on syllables, as do German and English. There is a certain musicality in the French spoken by an Alsatian as in the English spoken by a Welsh speaker.

### 3.5 What the French Government says – and what it does – regarding Regional Languages

La coïncidence absolue d'un territoire national avec le domaine géographique naturel de sa langue officielle paraît à bien des gens une vérité élémentaire. On a même peine à concevoir que, dans un pays donné, d'autres langues, non moins valables, puissent côtoyer l'idiome national. Il y a là une sorte d'adéquation automatique et inconsciente entre les concepts de langue et nation, particulièrement patente en France où des siècles d'excessive centralisation en ont fait un véritable truisme. (Bec 1963, 5).<sup>109</sup>

Since the above words were written by Pierre Bec in the Introduction to *La Langue Occitane*, over forty years ago, many countries have developed an enlightened attitude towards their regional and minority languages. Such enlightenment has been lacking in France, where, despite the occasional assurances of its leaders to the contrary, the Alsatian language is still looked upon with suspicion, even in Alsace itself.

Of their regional languages, Oc, or Occitan, a language with Latin roots, is possibly the least known outside France, where it was spoken in the southern half of the country, the *Langue d'Oc*, where the word for 'Yes' was 'Oc'. In contrast, the northern half of France spoke dialects of the *Langue d'Oil*. Occitanie, about 40% of France, was included in the

---

<sup>109</sup> (The exact correlation of a national territory with the natural geographical domain of its official language appears to many people to be an elementary truth. It is even difficult to conceive that, in a given country, other no less valid languages could rub shoulders with the national language. That is a kind of automatic and unconscious appropriateness between the concepts of language and nation, which is particularly patent in France, where centuries of excessive centralisation have made this a veritable truism.)



territory of the Count of Toulouse. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century it passed to the French king, but kept its own institutions until the French Revolution. The language experienced a renaissance in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but has been in decline since (Petit Larousse 1980, 635).<sup>110</sup> Alsatians encountered it when evacuated to the region in World War Two.

It is worth noting here that within European France there are nine regional languages spoken, namely – Flemish, Francique (in Lorraine), Alsatian, Occitan, Catalan, Béarnaise, Basque, Breton and Corsican. Geographically this covers more than half of the national territory. And this does not include all the minority languages brought in from France's colonies abroad and elsewhere. The historian, Eugen Weber, quoted by Grace Neville, and by Liliane Vassberg, highlights this irony:

The Third Republic found a France in which French was a foreign language for half the citizens ... Until the end of the First World War, the 'langage maternel françois' of Francis I was not that of most French citizens. (Weber quoted in Neville 1987, 148.), (Vassberg 1993, 36).

But Alsatian has also been subject to administrative confusion. In 1867 Napoleon III, at the Préfecture in Strasbourg, stated that one could be 'un bon Français tout en parlent un dialecte allemand' (a good French citizen while speaking a German dialect) (Philipps 1986, 84). But at the same period 'la realisation du vaste dessein de l'unification linguistique de la France restait l'une des préoccupations majeures de tous les préfets' (the grand design of the linguistic unification of France remained one of the major preoccupations of the Prefects) (ibid, 85).

In a letter to Alsatians, from Marshall Joffre, in Thann, Alsace, dated November 1914 (i.e., at the start of World War One, while Alsace was still German).

---

<sup>110</sup> and François Héran, Directeur, Institut national d'études démographiques (National Institute of Demographic Studies), and Member of the Academy of Science, Paris. Lecture *Entre les langues d'immigration et l'anglais, quelle place pour les langues régionales ?* (Among the immigrant minority languages and English, what place is there for regional languages [in France]). At the Federation of Catholic Students (FEC), Strasbourg. 8 Mar. 2004.

Notre retour est définitif. Vous êtes Français pour toujours. La France vous apporte, avec les libertés qu'elle a toujours représentées, le respect de vos libertés à vous, des libertés alsaciennes, de vos traditions, de vos convictions, de vos mœurs. Je suis la France. Vous êtes l'Alsace. Je vous apporte le baiser de la France. (Quoted in Baas, 1972).<sup>111</sup>

The phrase 'le baiser de la France' (the kiss of France) is frequently used ironically by Alsatians when commenting upon their treatment by officialdom.<sup>112</sup>

In a report written in 1996 by the French Senator Henri Goetschy, entitled *Les langues régionales de France* (The Regional Languages of France) (Goetschy 1996), which makes European comparisons, various pronouncements by the French Government are cited. Unfortunately his report suffers from being an enthusiastic political text, in that it assumes prior knowledge of events, which means that it is not academically disciplined in giving exact reference details which the student reader requires. He refers one, for instance, to Article 28 of the 1789 revolutionary government's Declaration of the Rights of Man. But that Declaration has only 17 Articles. However, his report remains a potent indictment of the continuing attitude of government in France.

In 1870, Charles de Gaulle, a prominent Breton poet and the uncle of his namesake who became President (Peter Berresford Ellis, 1985,59), wrote in a petition to the *Corps Législatif* (I am not certain which 'Legislative Body' is meant here, but I presume it to be the French Parliament) as follows:

Pour que la décentralisation administrative ne soit pas un vain mot, on reconnaît la nécessité d'émanciper les provinces de l'exclusive domination intellectuelle de Paris, qui absorbe, à son profit, toute la vitalité nationale ... À ce titre, quel plus

---

<sup>111</sup> (Our return is certain. You are French for always. France extends to you, with the liberties which it has always represented, respect for your own liberties, Alsatian liberties, your traditions, your beliefs, your customs. I am France. You are Alsace. I offer you the kiss of France.)

<sup>112</sup> For example, the magazine *D'Heimet* No. 145, November 2002, 3, concerning language education policy.

puissant instrument de décentralisation intellectuelle que la conservation des langues provinciales ?

Pendant longtemps on n'a voulu voir dans ces diverses langues que des patois informes, indignes d'être cultivés et d'attirer l'attention du savant. S'efforcer de les détruire, de les supprimer, telle était la préoccupation exclusive du législateur, trop ami de l'uniformité ... En demandant pour ces langues le droit de garder leur place au soleil de la grande patrie, nous ne prétendons, du reste, porter en rien atteinte à la suprématie acquise par la langue française ...

La sagesse de la politique ne consiste-t-elle pas à résoudre les questions avant qu'elles aient passionné l'opinion publique ? Celles des langues locales se pesera tôt ou tard. Evitons les tiraillements, les haines de clocher à clocher. Que l'administration, en renonçant franchement, radicalement aux abus du système centralisateur, achève de dissiper les derniers soupçons et d'enlever tout prétexte aux récriminations ... (Goetschy 1996, 3).<sup>113</sup>

François Mitterrand, then newly elected as President, at Lorient, Brittany on 14 March 1981, stated:

Le temps est venu d'un statut des langues et cultures de France qui leur reconnaisse une existence réelle. Le temps est venu de leur ouvrir grandes les portes de l'école, de la radio et de la télévision permettant leur diffusion, de leur accorder toute la place qu'elles méritent dans la vie publique. (ibid, 1).<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> (So that the decentralisation of administration shall not be an empty expression, one recognizes the necessity of emancipating the provinces from the exclusive intellectual domination of Paris ... . For this purpose, what more powerful instrument of intellectual decentralisation can there be than the conservation of provincial languages ?

For a long time the desire has been to see these diverse languages only as rough patois, unworthy of being cherished and of attracting the attention of the learned. Trying hard to destroy them, to suppress them, such has been the exclusive preoccupation of the legislator, who is too wedded to uniformity ... In requesting for these languages the right to retain their place in the sunshine in the country as a whole, we do not wish to challenge, in any way, the supremacy acquired by the French language ... .

Does not the wisdom of politics consist in resolving questions before they have stirred up the public ? Questions regarding local languages will be pressed sooner or later. Let us avoid the friction, the local hatred. Let the administration, by frankly and radically renouncing the abuses of the centralising system, manage to dissipate all suspicions and remove any pretext for recrimination ... .)

<sup>114</sup> (The time has come for a law on the languages and cultures of France, which would recognise their actual existence. The time has come to open wide for them access to schools, to radio, to television,

He proclaimed ‘le droit à la différence’ (the right to be different) and hoped that France would cease to be ‘le dernier pays d’Europe à refuser à ses composants les droits culturels élémentaires reconnus dans les conventions internationales qu’elle a elle-même signées’ (the last country in Europe to refuse its component peoples the elementary cultural rights, recognised in international conventions which she herself had signed.) (ibid). Basically, nothing has changed since then.

The Research Director of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) stated in 1992 in his book *Les Minorités en Europe* (Minorities in Europe) that the case of France was particularly significant. Ten years of culturalism had produced evidence of blocking of the decentralisation of institutions, and of the derisory measures which had been taken by successive governments since 1981 (Giordan 1992, 15). France has until now refused to ratify and apply the European Charter for Regional Languages, of June 1992, which she earlier signed. It is feared that to do so would run counter to the present French Constitution, dating from 1958, which states in Title I, ‘on Sovereignty’, Article 2, ‘The language of the Republic is French’. However, the ten new nations which joined the European Union in May 2004 were required to sign and ratify that Charter before accession. If any of them had refused, France would have been put in the ironic situation of having to vote against their entry, for that reason. Playwright and language activist Joseph Schmittbiel stated that in his opinion the Charter is so vague that France could easily ratify it without altering the Constitution, and without engaging in any proactive measures.<sup>115</sup> However, the Charter, Part III, Article 10, 1) a) ii), requires states to ‘ensure that such of their officers as are in contact with the public use the regional or minority languages in their relations with persons applying to them in these languages’.<sup>116</sup> At present French civil servants may only deal with the public in French. At one language conference which I attended, a lawyer chairing a working group laughed openly at the idea of an Alsatian being able to deal with the tax inspector in Alsatian.<sup>117</sup>

---

allowing them to become widespread, to grant them the position which they deserve in public life.)

<sup>115</sup> Personal interview. 25 May 2003.

<sup>116</sup> Available in English on website < [http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/ch\\_ang.htm](http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/ch_ang.htm) >

<sup>117</sup> Interregional Languages Conference. Ingersheim, Alsace. 24 Sep. 2003.

Virtually all the regional languages in the country, while ignored by the French Government, are officially recognised in neighbouring European countries. Catalan and Basque are official languages in Spain. Flemish is an official language in Belgium, as is Gaelic, a close relative of Breton, in Great Britain. Corsican, a close relative of Sardinian, is recognised in Italy, as is Occitan, and the two languages of Alsace and Lorraine, Alemanic and Francique, are official languages in Luxembourg and Switzerland respectively (Goetschy 1996, 5-9).

Speaking in Béarnaise, the regional dialect of the Béarn, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the then Minister of Education, while visiting Pau, the capital of the region, in 1993, said (cited in French) ‘La France a vécu deux siècles de répression contre les langues minoritaires. Moi je dis aujourd’hui que ces langues méprisées ont la dignité des langues de France, de langues d’Europe’ (France has lived through two centuries of repression of minority languages. But I say today that these despised languages are dignified to be languages of France, languages of Europe). His speech continued in a similar vein (Goetschy *ibid*, 2).

In a not clearly dated speech, in about 1995, in the Senate, the Minister for Culture and the French Language, M Toubon, stated:

Il fut un moment regrettable de notre histoire au cours duquel les dispositions destinées à bannir le latin et réhabiliter la langue vulgaire, le français, ont été dirigées contre les langues régionales, privant d’ailleurs, à cette époque, la France de grandes richesses culturelles. (*ibid*, 3).<sup>118 119</sup>

This was a reference to the decree of Francis I in 1539 at Villers Cotterêts, dealt with in Section 3.2, page 89, above. In the ensuing debate the words ‘langues régionales de

---

<sup>118</sup> Speech dated 12 April, either 1995 or 1996.

<sup>119</sup> (It was a regrettable moment in our history when measures intended to ban Latin and to reintroduce the popular language, French, were directed against the regional languages, depriving France at this period, of great cultural richness.)

France' (regional languages of France) were written into a legislative document, which is considered to have been a step forward, although the document is not considered by Goetschy to contain much radical material.

On 5 April 1994 the Senate approved the setting up of a *Haut-Conseil National des Langues Régionales de France* (National High Council for the Regional Languages of France), which focused the efforts of those interested in the safeguarding and protection of Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Creole (thinking of the French overseas territories), Flemish, Francique (in Moselle, Lorraine), and Occitan. It is interesting that the document previously cited above, from which these quotations are taken, mentions a ministerial speech in Béarnaise, but does not list it as a French regional language here. Presumably it is generally considered a dialect. I attended a folk festival in the Béarne, in 1998, and would respect an argument in favour of their vernacular being called a language.

A law dated 2 March 1989 confers responsibility for cultural development upon the *Conseils Régionaux* (Regional Government). With this power the Regional Council for Alsace, among other things, promotes bilingual teaching in schools through the organisation ABCM<sup>120</sup>, although the second language taught is High German, and not Alsatian.

Goetschy cites three further instances of Government pronouncements from the mouth of President Chirac, as follows -

On 2 December 1995, at Cotonou, Benin, West Africa, on the occasion of the sixth summit of the Chiefs of State of French-speaking nations, he stated:

L'usage du français ne veut et ne doit en aucune façon menacer la vitalité des langues nationales ou locales ... Chaque langue a son génie. S'affirmer

---

<sup>120</sup> L'Association pour le bilinguisme dès la classe maternelle (The Association for Bilingual Teaching from Nursery Level).

francophone, c'est enfin combattre<sup>121</sup> un risque majeur pour l'humanité:  
l'uniformité linguistique et donc culturelle. Le danger existe ... d'une éradication  
complete des langues vernaculaires. ... J'appelle la francophonie à prendre la tête  
d'une vaste campagne pour le pluralisme linguistique. (ibid, 4).<sup>122</sup>

However, it is my own observation that the French boast of 'Egalité', as one of the tripartite pledges in the well-known motto, is frequently put into practise as 'Uniformité', or 'Conformité'. This is evident in the argument that one cannot give special privileges to one group of people that others cannot enjoy, which is quoted as a reason for not recognising Alsatian. However, it is overlooked that one can give the right to use Alsatian to all French citizens, even though a majority will not need to exercise it. The same applies to other regional languages in France, as it does to Welsh in the United Kingdom. Hoffet states 'le complexe d'uniformité aboutit nécessairement à l'intolérance' (the fixation upon uniformity always ends in intolerance) (Hoffet, 1973 (1951), 170). This latter opinion may be relevant in the French government's decision in August 2004, regarding the new law that religious symbols may not be worn in schools, that 'There will be no concessions in the way the law is implemented, no matter what attempts are made to circumvent it'.<sup>123</sup>

At Kemper (Quimper) in Brittany on 29 May 1996, speaking to MP's of the region, Chirac declared himself in perfect accord with the principles of the European Charter for Regional Languages.<sup>124</sup>

Finally, in Paris, on 20 June 1996, at a reception given at the presidential palace in honour of the participants at the international meeting of Amerindian communities:

---

<sup>121</sup> Translation note – President Chirac's speech indicated, at that conference of French speaking nations, that one should be aware that being francophone does not necessarily imply French nationality. Many nations use that language, and other languages as well.

<sup>122</sup> (The use of French does not and must not indicate in any manner a threat to the vitality of national or local languages. ... Each language has its genius. In stating one's self to be francophone one faces a major threat to humanity; linguistic and therefore cultural uniformity. The danger exists ... of a complete eradication of the vernacular languages. ... I call upon French-speaking nations to take the lead in a great campaign for linguistic pluralism.)

<sup>123</sup> Amelia Gentleman. Paris correspondent. *Observer*. 29 Aug. 2004, p. 24.

<sup>124</sup> *D'Heimet*. 146 (2003) 3.

La France, vous le savez, fidèle à sa vocation, s'est résolument engagée dans le grand combat pour le respect des cultures ... Comment pouvons-nous intégrer des cultures que nous avons si longtemps rejetées ou que nous avons tenté de détruire ? ... Mais connaître une langue ancestrale, dépositaire de traditions et de valeurs millénaires, c'est aussi posséder un trésor ... Ce message est celui de l'enrichissement par le multilinguisme, de la diversité dans le respect des traditions.<sup>125</sup>

At its meeting on Thursday 21 November 2002, concerning regional languages, the Chambre des Députés of the Assemblée Nationale considered two proposed amendments to Clause 2 of the Constitution. The first amendment would make the clause read 'The language of the Republic is French, 'dans le respect des langues régionales qui font partie de son patrimoine' (... whilst respecting the regional languages which are part of its heritage) - hardly a revolutionary concept. Of the 575 Deputies only 89 voted, although it is possible to vote by proxy. The amendment was rejected by 50 votes to 39. A second sub-amendment would have added in the words 'défense des langues régionales' to make the clause read 'The language of the Republic is French, 'whilst protecting the regional languages' which are part of its heritage.' (My underlining in both cases.) Ninety-six deputies voted, defeating it by 54 to 39 (sic).<sup>126</sup>

On an individual scale the French state is still equally uncooperative. In February 1998, in Perpignan, in a Catalan-speaking region, the registrar of births refused to accept the first name Martí for a child, because the final letter 'i' had an acute accent, and was not recognised as part of the French language. In February 2001, a court in Perpignan upheld the decision because, 'depuis le 2 thermidor an II, l'emploi de la langue française est obligatoire dans les actes publics' (since 2 thermidor of year 2, the use of the French

---

<sup>125</sup> (You are aware that France, being faithful to its mission is resolutely engaged in the great battle for the respect of cultures ... How can we integrate cultures which we have for so long rejected and that we have tried to destroy ? ... But knowing an ancestral language, the depositary of traditions and thousand-year-old values, is also to possess a treasure. ... This message is that of enrichment via multilingualism, of diversity in the respect of traditions.)

<sup>126</sup> *D'Heimet*. 146 (2003) 3.



language is obligatory in public records), referring to the revolutionary calendar date, 20 July 1794. In January 2003 a public appeal was launched, for contributions to finance an appeal to the supreme court, and if necessary to the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>127</sup>

It would be fitting to end this section on the pronouncements of politicians regarding the Alsatian language with a quotation from General de Gaulle (President from 1944 to 46 and 1959 to 69):

Comme un homme politique ne croit jamais ce qu'il dit, il est tout étonné quand il est cru sur parole. (Mignon 1996, 67).<sup>128</sup>

This is the same Charles de Gaulle who, in his famous 'Vive Quebec libre' speech in Montreal in 1967 encouraged separatism in Canada.

Considering the amount of power which Paris has lost externally to Brussels in recent years, by comparison, the active appreciation of its internal linguistic heritage would appear to be an insignificant step to take. Furthermore, at a lecture on the future of the languages of France the speaker agreed with me that French, as well as German, themselves are in danger of becoming regional languages in a few generations, in face of the present-day rampant linguistic colonisation by American English. He stated that 'le français pourrait devenir le nouvel alsacien' (French may become the new Alsatian).<sup>129</sup>

On a local level in Alsace things are not much different. One learns not to expect local government monthly or quarterly news magazines, which are delivered to all households, to contain anything in Alsatian, except, exceptionally, a few token words. The *Strasbourg Magazine*, number 156, October 2004, for example, contains only one word in Alsatian. That word is the one for Cathedral (*Minschter*), used to emphasise the quaint nature of Strasbourg. The magazine is, however, co-signed by the Assistant Mayor, Robert Grossmann, whose book *Main basse sur ma langue* (Hands off my language !)

---

<sup>127</sup> *ibid*, 7.

<sup>128</sup> (As a politician never believes what he says, he is quite surprised to be taken at his word.)

<sup>129</sup> Hérán. Lecture. 8 Mar. 2004., also dealt with above, in this Section (3.5).

is a politician's cry for recognition of his own self-importance and, secondly, of the Alsatian language. The brochure *La CUS en chiffres* (The Strasbourg Urban Community in statistics) (2003) gives fourteen pages of information in great detail about the activity of the city council, including its aims, activities and budgets. But there is not one word concerning the regional culture or language.

### **3.6 Alsatian language teaching and pressure groups**

These groups are frequently difficult to identify precisely. Often they are run by an enthusiastic person or couple. They sometimes disappear for a while, perhaps to be revived later by others, and they frequently have publications which may be short-lived or spasmodic, and which have different names from the organisation itself. The distinction between teaching, campaigning and simply publishing information is blurred and often not easy to establish. Therefore I can claim no permanence, nor indeed 100% accuracy in the list below.

- *Office pour la Langue et la Culture d'Alsace (OLCA)* – financed by the Conseil Régional.
- *Universités Populaires* in most towns – teaching subjects from beginners level, which include Alsatian.
- *Groupe ment de Théâtre du Rhin* - association of around 250 amateur theatre groups.
- *Stammtisch Rouffach* - a social club in the town of Rouffach, of a type found in other locations also, under various names.
- Other language classes – various social clubs offer language classes.
- Culture groups (eg Hagenau) – many towns and villages have cultural associations.

- Haguenau, with a population of 30,000 has four Alsatian language theatre groups.
- *René Schickele Gesellschaft* – named after a famous pacifist Alsatian writer, teaches and campaigns for the language and culture.
- *L'Association pour le bilinguisme dès la classe maternelle / ABCM Zwei Sprachigkeit* - presses for High German teaching in primary schools, presumably in the belief that it will help youngsters to speak Alsatian.<sup>130</sup>
- *Fer Unsri Zuakunft (Haut Comité de reference pour la langue et la culture alémanique et francique d'Alsace et de Moselle)* - a culture and language pressure group.
- *Rot un Wiss* (Red and White, the colours of the Alsatian flag)– the magazine of an outspoken pressure group led by campaigner Bruno Wolf.
- *Land un Sproch* - the magazine of the *René Schickele Gesellschaft*.
- *Fer unsri Sproch: a magazine for the Alsatian language.*
- *Association Choucrouterie* - politically satirical cabaret theatre in Strasbourg.
- *CB Junior* – young people's organisation for bilingualism.
- *Cercle Nathan Katz* – named after an Alsatian poet.
- *Culture et Patrimoine d'Alsace* – regional culture promotion.

---

<sup>130</sup> But my personal interview with its president, Christian Huber, 7 Nov. 2001, convinced me that they have no interest in teaching the use of Alsatian. Bister-Broosen's comment (2002, 108) was that teaching German is hardly likely to promote Alsatian.

- *Eltern 68* – parents pressure groups for High German in schools.
- *D'Heimet* - magazine of *Heimatsproch un Tradition* association – promotion of the language and traditions.
- *IMEDIA* – promoting the use of Alsatian in the media.
- *Lehrer* – teachers of bilingual classes in schools.
- *S'Elsass in d'Schuel* – teachers of the language and culture.
- *Société des amis de la culture bilingue en Alsace* - a bilingual cultural association meeting monthly, organised by teacher and writer Pierre Klein.
- *Alsace-Junge fers Elsassische* – a monthly social evening in Alsatian, for young people, founded in 2001.
- *Comité Fédéral des Associations pour la Langue et la Culture Régionales d'Alsace*
  - A cultural organisation based in Colmar which I have only heard of once, in December 2004.
- There is an annual festival in Strasbourg which started in April 2002 entitled *E Friejohr fer unsri Sproch* (A Springtime for our Language), which is organised by the bilingual (French and German) Strasbourg newspaper *L'Ami du Peuple* (The People's Friend). The festival consists of many different types of events in celebration of the language, all over the region.

There is also occasional fly-posting and graffiti in favour of an autonomous Alsace, presumably by an unnamed group.

### 3.7 The printed Media

Although powerful agents in opinion forming, the media are not a major part of the present study, which concentrates instead upon the theatre, the essence of which is the spoken word, used in an environment which invites immediate feedback via audience reaction. The media deal in one-way communication, which does not encourage interaction.

The media are business organisations, and as such, must make a profit or cease to exist. Therefore, if readership and advertisers require certain matter to be published it is their job to do so. Powerful, wealthy or energetic controlling interests may spin the news and information published in one direction or another, but one observable phenomenon is that regional publications tend to be more sympathetic towards the region, and national publications are, as one might expect, looking for national exposure and sales, and are more likely to mention Strasbourg, not as the capital of Alsace, but as seat of the European Parliament and the Court of Human Rights.

Daily newspapers such as the *DNA*, published in Strasbourg, and *Alsace*, published in Mulhouse, walk the tightrope of sympathising with the locality, while satisfying the more outward looking readers, although the *Ami du Peuple* is very localised. Monthly magazines, *Land un Sproch* (Land and Language), and *D'Heimet* (Homeland) are frank campaigning vehicles for regional interests. *En Alsace* (In Alsace), a glossy monthly, is about Alsace, but all in French.

However, the normal national range of magazines and newspapers are sold in Alsace, and Strasbourg itself is a completely cosmopolitan city.

## **4 The politics of the Alsatian language theatre**

### **4.1 A working definition of the performing arts**

The working definition of ‘the performing arts’ to be used in this study is initially seen as ‘activities normally associated with the theatre, cabaret, folk- and art-song, recited poetry, opera, film, television and radio’. Emphasis will be placed upon live oral performances before an audience, because of the immediate nature of the performance, its impact upon the audience, and its further importance in commenting upon and influencing events which take place outside the arena. Film, television and radio play a lesser role in the present study because they do not involve immediate contact with the audience.

However, their influence may be greater, as they reach a wider public. Ballet is omitted, as it obviously does not use the Alsatian language, and I am not aware of any opera in Alsatian.

### **4.2 Theatre**

Attending and taking part in theatrical events unites an audience, and this factor is one of the conventions which audience and performers expect, and they would feel cheated if such a bonding did not occur. From working in the professional theatre in London, and running a folksong club in Hampstead for 12 years from 1964, I am very aware of this. Alsatian language performing arts appear to share the same aura as folksong clubs, with common shared knowledge and interests. Richard Eyre, one-time Director of the National Theatre, expressed this when he stated ‘You go to the theatre as an individual and come out as part of a group’<sup>131</sup>. Modern outdoor pop music concerts in any country take this shared emotional involvement to extremes.

---

<sup>131</sup> *Pick of the Week*. BBC Radio 4. 13 Jan. 2002.

British playwright Willie Russell stated that his *Educating Rita* ‘turned out to be a massively political play, although I did not set out to write a political play’.<sup>132</sup>

Writing from Buenos Aires, in the Foreword to the English edition of his *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Teatro del Oprimido), Augusto Boal, states:

Those who try to separate theatre from politics try to lead us into error - and this is a political attitude. ...the theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. ... For this reason the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination. In so doing they change the very concept of what “theatre” is. But the theatre can also be a weapon for liberation. For that it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. (Boal 1997, 15).

This concept, embedded in his radical analysis, may provide one among many tools required in this present study, for looking at the reasons for performance, and why it takes some forms and not others, possibly best exemplified during the period of the Second World War in Alsace. Censorship, even in its more subtle forms, has always been practised by governments in determining which aspects of society may be highlighted in front of audiences.

### **4.3 Political theatre**

As both the concept of what is ‘Theatre’ and of what constitutes ‘Political’, could lead to differences of opinion, it may perhaps be wisest to approach the matter by beginning with a working definition of ‘Theatre’, and then go on to similarly define ‘Political’, before putting the two concepts together.

---

<sup>132</sup> *The Reunion*. Concerning the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool. BBC Radio 4. 9am., 27 Aug. 2004.

## A working definition of 'Theatre'

Dictionary definitions are probably the least inspiring versions of a word's meaning, but as a lot of thought has been put into them we can start with a dictionary definition from *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, ninth edition, and then work on from there :

**1 a** a building or outdoor area for dramatic performances. **b** (picture theatre) a cinema. **2 a** the writing and production of plays. **b** effective material for the stage (makes good theatre) ...

I omit the remaining part of the definition, which includes 'lecture theatre', 'operating theatre' and 'theatre of war'.

The definition thus proposed seems rather narrow for my purposes. I have attended performances of collections of songs, such as *Bei mir bist du Yiddisch* (For me, you're Jewish), and mixed performances of song and story-telling by, for instance, Roland Engel, which are definitely 'theatre'. Also relevant is 'street theatre' and informal outpourings, folk festivals which pursue objectives that might loosely be embraced by the term 'political', the burning of effigies, or of national flags, performances of Punch and Judy, and puppet theatre.

In any performance the actors and the audience are two groups who may be completely different, or they may partially overlap, as in pantomime where the audience is expected to interact, with comments such as 'Oh, no he isn't !', or 'Behind you !'. The two groups may also totally coincide in their participation in the emotional experience that is 'theatre'.

In other words, my concern here is the activity rather than the venue. The activity being a presentation by people, for people, who could conceivably be the same people, the audience also being the performer, as in political, religious or cultural festivals or demonstrations. An anti-globalisation demonstration, the Durham Miners' Gala, or Holy



Week in Seville, or a Welsh Eisteddfod, or the communal singing of protest songs, such as *We Shall Overcome*, are examples of this. The burning of tokens, such as effigies or of national flags by crowds of protesters, in the street, is, in my definition, also ‘theatre’, maybe an extreme example of political theatre. Chants such as ‘What do we want ? [statement of demands]. When do we want it ? Now !’, come into this category.

The essential element is the suspension of disbelief; the fact that the audience is prepared to accept the presentation of unreal situations as if they were either real in the present, or desirable and capable of becoming real in the future.

During the annexation of Alsace in World War Two, although performances took place within theatre buildings, street theatre was considered important. Vogler states that the Nazi regime accorded great importance from the psychological point of view to mass demonstrations. These obeyed various themes, combining their festive nature, bearing witness en masse, military discipline, political engagement, recalling German history, and the pretended decadence of the French regime, which had suppressed the German nature of Alsace (Vogler 1995, 256).

As discussed later in this study, in Sections 4.4, on pages 164 to 179, the politics of the theatre also happens out of doors, and in the form of the dramatic political monologue, such as in the speeches by Hitler at the Nuremberg rallies, and those of the Gauleiter and Kreisleiters in Alsace. In this we should not ignore the dramatic power which uniforms bestow on those at all levels.

Aldous Huxley, in *Brave New World Revisited*, writing about the speeches of Hitler:

He would yell, he would scream, his veins would swell, his face would turn purple. Strong emotion (as every actor and dramatist knows) is in the highest degree contagious. Infected by the malignant frenzy of the orator, the audience would groan and sob and scream in an orgy of uninhibited passion. And these

orgies were so enjoyable that most of those who had experienced them eagerly came back for more (Huxley 1984 (1959), 300).

Also:

Under Hitler, for example, the yearly Nuremberg rallies were masterpieces of ritual and theatrical art (ibid, 302).

Leni Riefenstahl was persuaded by Hitler to make her film of the 1934 rally, *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will), as the best pre-television way of conveying to the world the strength and unity of his Reich (Taylor and Shaw 1997, 237).

Virginia Cowles wrote, concerning the 1938 Nuremberg rally:

... the drums continued their steady beat ... some of the audience began swaying back and forth, chanting 'Sieg Heil !' over and over again in a frenzy of delirium. I looked at the faces around me and saw tears streaming down people's cheeks. The drums grew louder and I suddenly felt frightened (Cowles 1999 (1994), 320).

### **A working definition of 'Political'**

From the same source as the previous definition, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*:

**1a** of or concerning the state or its government, or public affairs generally. **b** of, relating to, or engaged in politics. **c** belonging to or forming part of a civil administration. **2** having an organized form of society or government. **3** taking or belonging to a side in politics or controversial matters. **4** relating to or affecting interests of status or authority in an organisation rather than matters of principle (a political decision).

Such definitions do vary considerably, and this one is not completely suitable for my present use. Hoffer, rather simplistically, states that the politician seeks to ensure the happiness of man (1951, 27).

Politics concerns the art of persuasion, over one person or group, by another person or group. The persuasion may be serious or flippant, as illustrated by the case quoted by Jeremy Paxman, in *The Political Animal* (Paxman 2002, 91), when in the 1960s, Harold Macmillan's campaign slogan *Life is better under the Conservatives*, was parodied by the Oxford University Conservative Association, who issued a poster showing a seductive girl, with the slogan *Life is better under a Conservative*.

My working definition in this study is that politics is the persuasion or manipulation of people by other individuals or groups in order to gain power over them by influencing how they think or act. This persuasion is sometimes backed up by force. Such individuals or groups are not limited to acknowledged politicians or parties. Religious leaders have been heads of states, have provoked crusades and other aggression and have exerted considerable worldwide influence over the lives of other leaders and of ordinary people. There are countless examples of which the religious wars in Northern Ireland and Israel are extreme. Interference in the democratic process is common, as when Greek Orthodox Bishop Chrisostomos<sup>133</sup> of Pafos told his congregation that anybody voting on 24 April 2004 for the reunification of Greek and Turkish Cyprus would be excommunicated.<sup>134</sup> Father Shaun Middleton, parish priest at the church of St Francis of Assisi, in north London, is quoted as saying of the Opus Dei that 'They make no bones about the fact that part of their work is to influence those people who are going to influence society'.<sup>135</sup>

According to Philipps, the Catholic Church was the main reason why the Alsatian language remained dominant in the region until World War One, in spite of the vigorous attempts of the Government to eradicate it (1986, 96). Religion has also had a

---

<sup>133</sup> Named after the earlier cleric martyred by the Turks. Website < <http://members.fortunecity.com> >.

<sup>134</sup> Greek citizen John Tsatsas and others. Personal interview. Cyprus. 20 July 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Jamie Doward. *Observer*. 26 Dec. 2004. p 4.

considerable influence on the theatre in Alsace, and although its confessed target is our welfare in the next world, the church should be included in my definition, as being persuasive, and exercising political power. It is not a coincidence that the Catholic community tends to vote for the traditional right wing.<sup>136</sup> During this same period both the Protestant and the Jewish religions were not prepared to abandon the use of the vernacular in their faiths (Philipps 1986, 100). This was in spite of all three religions being financed by the State.

Oliver Roy states that:

... ethnicity is transitional and metaphorical, and cannot offer the basis for political action, because it lacks any stable constituency. Religion, on the other hand, can offer a set of stable and unambivalent principles, the observance of which could define a 'community'. (1999, 62).

One could support this opinion by reference to the collection of values associated with 'the Christian community' in the West, and its lack of understanding of the 'Islamic community' in the East. However, within each of these communities one witnesses a variety of political activities, which do not give an impression of the unity required for effective political action on behalf of either 'community'. Furthermore, in stating that ethnicity cannot offer the basis for political action Roy ignores the effective political movements founded upon both Welsh-ness and Scottish-ness in the United Kingdom, and Basque and Catalan movements, among many others in continental Europe. We may therefore indicate the latent possibility of effective political activity based upon Alsatian-ness.

The local reinforcing of preconceived well-established beliefs is also frequently a socio-political manifestation of Dialekt Theater in Alsace. The racist play *Hôtel Pension Gabrielle* is an example of this, as described in Section 4.6, page 205, below. My

---

<sup>136</sup> Bernard Schwengler. Lecture. *Société des amis de la culture bilingue en Alsace*. 11 Feb. 2004., and see book reference in Bibliography.

concern here is the creation of or the bolstering of communal beliefs or attitudes by opinion leaders who are skilled in the techniques of dramatic persuasion.

Such activities may be brutally manifest, as in nationalistic theatre, such as the post-World War Two *pièces patriotiques*, where actors may be called upon to perform as soldiers, patriots or traitors on stage, or they may require the audience to exercise its imagination by presenting situations parallel to those which exist in reality and to which they wish to draw attention, as in the play *Barbara*, where the excesses of the Thirty Years War are depicted. They may be presented in a humorous style, in satire or parody of political figures, as in the play *D'r Michel müess in d'Bardej* (Michael must join the Party), by Franz Froh, 1946, in which a small village council receives a letter from the Nazi party to remind them that nobody in that village belongs to the Nazi Party. Somebody must be chosen, but everyone has an excuse. Finally it is realised that the only member of the community qualified to join the party is Michel, the village idiot.

They may also consist in part of the charismatic political monologue delivered outside the formal theatre but addressed to a target audience, and often accompanied by other forms of street theatre, such as rallies or parades. In extreme situations such events include features not normally associated with theatre, such as prolonged periods of waiting, sensory deprivation, lack of food, drink and rest, with emotional build-ups before the main speaker appears.<sup>137</sup> There may be intense concentration upon a magnetic speaker, to the exclusion of all other thoughts or emotions. This is persuasive one-way communication with no possibility of questioning the speaker as to *why*, or *how*, or *whether* such things are true. The intensity of the performance is confused with the validity of its contents. It is the ultimate hard sell, driven by a total intention to persuade and prove a point, which is targeted at a precise goal. Examples are given of this later, in the section on theatre history during World War Two. Heightened susceptibility to normally unacceptable concepts, ensured the suspension of normal criteria for judgement, with a requirement for 100% commitment. Peer coercion and devotion to the cause were

---

<sup>137</sup> All these aspects become more believable when compared with conditions experienced by fans at modern pop music festivals, such as Glastonbury.

two of the pillars of Naziism, the main one being personal sacrifice for the good of the nation state. These are activities nowadays associated with re-education by cult activities.

### **A working definition of 'Political Theatre'**

Political theatre is theatre which consciously or unconsciously seeks to persuade audiences for the purpose of influencing opinions or the exercise of power, or to reinforce previously held views and to encourage behaviour which is approved of by the organisers of the event as being suitable political or socio-political activity.

In view of the history of theatre and of the opinions stated in Section 4.2, from page 127, above, we might simply have to concede that theatre is a political weapon, which sometimes remains sheathed, but which is very pointed when required.

### **Political theatre in Alsace**

I would posit, in accordance with my definition above, that all Alsatian language theatre is political, in that it stems from a need to bolster its community of feeling in the hostile environment of two very different nations, each of which has persistently denied the region its true identity. It demonstrates resistance, and persuasion, and this applies whether the performance is an overtly patriotic piece about World War Two, or a Christmas miracle legend.

However, when I started asking people of the theatre in Alsace about political theatre I was told that it did not exist, that it was possibly too hot a subject to deal with in the theatre. Cabaretist Huguette Dreikaus told me that she does not mix politics with her performances,<sup>138</sup> but one of her audience told me that she is very political on stage,<sup>139</sup> which is a valid opinion concerning many dedicated Alsatian artistes.

---

<sup>138</sup> Personal interview. 16 Oct. 2002.

#### 4.4 A history of the theatre in Alsace

##### From earliest times until 1800

According to the Alsatian scholar, Edmond Jung, who died in 2002, the oral tradition of recounting religious and profane myths and legends can be traced back to the eighth century in Alsace. The recounting of alliterative poetry was founded on the inability of the audience to read, the lack of printed material, and the need for entertainment of a type which, in the Christian tradition was considered not to be dangerous for the faith (Jung 2001, 11). Thus, by my working definition, the theatre in Alsace, as elsewhere was born of persuasion exercised by the Church upon the populace, and was therefore political, using the vernacular as its medium.

After tracing the origins of primitive drama, which centred around public ceremonies, and which drew heavily on the theme of rebirth, Jung develops the topic via liturgical ceremonies celebrated in the church by priests reciting in Latin, with the later participation of the faithful in presenting miracle and mystery plays. Comedy he sees as having developed from autumn wine festivals, and the freedom which drinking accords to mockery and satire (Jung 2001, 39). It is interesting how, even today, having a character pretending to be drunk on stage is one of the easiest ways to induce laughter in an audience.

By the twelfth century, Alsatian troubadours, such as Gottfried von Strassburg, who composed *Tristan and Isolde*, around 1210, were in demand at royal courts throughout Europe. Dealing with the twelfth century, Finck states that the 'classic' of the period of courtly poetry was the troubadour Reinmar von Hagenau, who lived at the court of the Dukes of Austria, in Vienna. Among other Alsatian Minnesänger (poets of courtly love) were Ulrich von Gutenberg and Konrad von Hohenburg (Finck 1990, 7).

---

<sup>139</sup> Britta Trendel, German school teacher, resident in Hagenau. Personal interview. 19 Feb. 2003.

L'Alsace, avec tout le sud de l'Allemagne, est au centre de l'activité littéraire, et la langue poétique, ... (le moyen-haut-allemand), s'inspire des parlers de ces régions. On le sait : la civilisation courtoise est placée sous le signe de l'influence française, la poésie des troubadours est venue de Provence, les poètes allemands prennent volontiers leurs sujets dans la littérature française ; l'Alsace est bien placée dans ce jeu des grandes influences où souffle l'esprit. (Ibid).<sup>140</sup>

Schoen states that performances are recorded in Colmar from 1503, including a Passion Play in 1514. He claims that the Oberammergeau Passion derives from the Haut-Rhin (Schoen 1903, 19).

L'époque de la Renaissance, de l'Humanisme et de la Réforme est volontiers appelée l' « âge d'or » des lettres en Alsace. Une fois de plus, l'Alsace est bien placée dans les grands courants de civilisation et joue un rôle essentiel dans l'épanouissement littéraire du monde germanique. (Finck 1990, 8).<sup>141</sup>

The first well-known Alsatian play was a biblical work entitled *Joseph*, written by a mid-sixteenth century mayor of Strasbourg, Theobald Gart. Called a 'comedy', as it had a happy ending, the play used narrative, action and a chorus led by Jesus, in recounting the life of Joseph. Later the same century Johannes Rasser, a Catholic curé at Ensisheim wrote educative religious plays for acting by his pupils (Jung 2001, 40). His *Spil von Kinderzucht* (Play concerning the upbringing of children) was written in order to interest his parishioners in material from his sermons. It took two days to perform, with a cast of one hundred and thirteen children, which was common for such plays. It was in Alsatian,

---

<sup>140</sup> (Alsace, with the whole of the south of Germany, was the centre of literary activity, and the language of poetry ... (middle high German), was inspired by the speech of these regions. One knows that courtly civilisation was placed under the sign of French influence, that the poetry of the troubadours came from Provence, and that the German poets willingly took their subjects from French literature. Alsace was well placed in the interplay of great influences in which the artistic spirit takes its breath.)

<sup>141</sup> (The period of the Renaissance, of Humanism and of the Reformation is spontaneously referred to as 'the Golden Age' of letters in Alsace. Once more, Alsace was well placed, in the great currents of civilisation and played an essential role in the blossoming of Germanic literature.)



with some lines in Latin (Metz 1962, 122 to 126). Jung writes also of Jakob Balde, born 1604 in Ensisheim, who wrote in Latin (2001, 51).

In contrast to the Catholic Church's interest in popular theatre Vogler emphasises the importance placed upon the establishment of schools, by the Protestants, in this as in later periods, popular literacy being essential for individuals in exercising their right to study the Bible privately (1996, 70).

The popularity of the theatre in the sixteenth century is indicated by the fact that performances were strictly controlled. It was necessary to get permission in order to stage any play. In 1536 a production in Guebwiller was prohibited at the last minute and the organisers heavily fined because the script had not been submitted to the abbot nor was permission received from the Provost. In the second half of the sixteenth century popular theatre falls into the hands of priests, in Colmar, Guebwiller and Thann. As the Reformation gained ground anti-reform polemics were staged by Jesuits, Dominicans and Carmelites. The language used became less popular and more erudite. In 1689 in Thann a satire was staged, entitled *The glorification of the Edict of Nantes* (Schoen 1903, 24-25). Hardly a crowd-pulling title, concerning Henri IV's edict in 1598, proclaiming freedom of worship, later revoked by Louis XIV in 1685.

Jörg Wickram was another sixteenth century playwright, who presented his 'carnival plays' and later his serious works in Colmar, where he set up a singing school. He also wrote a number of edifying novels before his death in 1562 (ibid, 42 and Schoen 1903, 21).

In the Republic of Mulhouse, which remained Swiss until 1798, popular theatre did not flourish. Predominantly Protestant since 1530, and surrounded by a mainly Catholic Haut-Rhin, learning replaced drama, with occasional dialogues satirising the main events of the year. Similarly in Strasbourg, Protestant theatre appears to have been limited to productions put on in Latin by students at the Protestant High School, founded in 1538. Such plays included works by Terence and other Latin authors. The audiences were

mainly made up of parents, as is still common with school plays (Crüger 1888, 305-354). Jundt states that the first recorded Latin production there was as early as 1512 (1881, 305). Gromer reports similarly on Catholic student productions in Haguenau in the seventeenth century (1926, 26). Pantaleon Deck also gives extensive details of such productions (1948, 9).

In France, under the Ancien Régime, Latin was the first language of education. Children only learned French once they had conquered Latin. And at college there were “spies” who checked on children during recreation time, to ensure that only Latin was spoken, as noted by the Abbé Grégoire in 1791 (Waquet 2001, 8).

The first half of the seventeenth century saw the Thirty Years War, ended in 1648, in which Alsace lost two-thirds of its population, and which led to its being enveloped in the French nation state. Germanic theatre and literature is not very evident during this period (Weckmann 1988, 19), whereas France saw a blossoming of its artistic and literary output and the influence of its language, particularly under Louis XIV.

Le théâtre allemand de l'époque mêlait aux scènes tragiques des intermèdes bouffons et grossiers ... et Gottsched, encore au XVIIIème siècle, pensait que la purification de la scène allemande ne pouvait venir que de l'imitation de la tragédie française. (Jung 2001, 47).<sup>142</sup>

The seventeenth century had seen some dialogues which indicated the existence of a popular form of theatre, also puppet theatres. There was an educative theatre group in Colmar, of which little is known.

Jung tells of dialogues written in the eighteenth century in the form of conversations between women (*Frauenbasengespräche*), nine of which have been preserved. They contained no action. Written in Alsatian rhyming couplets, they presented the gossip of

---

<sup>142</sup> (Germanic theatre of the period interlaced tragic scenes with buffoonery and vulgarity, and [the writer] Gottsched, in the eighteenth century still considered that the purification of German theatre could only come via the imitation of French tragedy.)

the household, one example being *Vertröulis Brunne-Gspräch* (Intimate conversation at the well). Such dialogues were written until the second half of the nineteenth century, and as they satirised well-known individuals of the period and were frequently scandalous, they were anonymous (ibid, 55). In Mulhouse the same genre was called *Basquilles*.

Logel states that plays in Alsatian were less frequent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, serious writing being normally in French or German (1901, 104-106). In the context of the late eighteenth century *Sturm und Drang* movement the Alsatian Heinrich Leopold Wagner contributed the violent drama *Die Kindermörderin* (The Murderess of Children, 1776). Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712 –1786), one of the so-called ‘enlightened monarchs’ preferred to speak French, and wrote his memoirs in that language. He had little sympathy for the German literature of his time.<sup>143</sup>

### **The Alsatian theatre movement from 1800 to 1900**

The romanticist movement of the late eighteenth century, which looked to popular language for inspiration, might have promoted the use of the vernacular in Alsace. Schoen states that unfortunately the overriding problems of the Revolution and the Napoleonic period gave more serious preoccupations. The popular tradition gave way to French and German imports (1903, 34). The proof that the Alsatian language theatre had lost favour is in the paucity of output, and the fact that plays were often not staged until long after they were written. The dialect was so disdained that it was left to servants, peasants and workers (ibid, 39). Paris became the centre of all administrative and cultural life, to be copied by the regions.

Harsany claims that the period from 1799 to 1814 was the ‘age of gold’ in Strasbourg for the theatre in French and German, but to a much lesser extent in Alsatian:

---

<sup>143</sup> Websites < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_the_Great) > and < <http://eserver.org/books/strachey/voltaire-and-frederick.html> >. Also John Banville, *Guardian Review*. p 9, 8 Jan. 2005., reviewing James R. Gaines. *Evening in the Palace of Reasons*. London: Fourth Estate, 2004.

[Napoleon] estime notamment que des tragédies, soigneusement choisies et expurgées, sont aptes à provoquer l'émotion, l'enthousiasme et, pourquoi pas, l'adhésion de la masse à sa politique personnelle ... [il était] un puissant protecteur [du théâtre]. (1975, 103).<sup>144</sup>

As there was no German language troupe in Strasbourg from 1808, permission was received from the mayor to import German theatre groups. This permission was given provided the texts were censored by the Commissioner of Police beforehand. This continued into 1813, in spite of the fact that France was at war with the German States. (ibid, 107). Patriotic anti-English songs were written and performed, to celebrate Napoleon's coronation, and his victories. Although there were frequent disturbances in the theatres, much of which was due to the military, these were not anti-government, as in the later first German occupation (ibid 114).

Jung, ever a crusader for Alsatian values, claims that the nineteenth century is rich in names of Alsatian playwrights, even though their individual outputs were slight compared with what was to come later. He lists various examples (Jung 2001, 64).

In 1816 the Dean of Law at Strasbourg, Georg Daniel Arnold, wrote his only play, *Der Pfingstmontag* (Whitmonday), a comedy in verse, in the Strasbourg dialect, which parodied various typical Strasbourg characters. This play is one of five works analysed in Section 5, from page 221, below. Ehrenfried Stoeber, wrote in 1823 *Daniel, oder der Strassburger auf der Probe* (The temptation of Daniel the Strasbourger), a musical comedy in two acts, glorifying Alsatian probity, in which the hero refuses stolen money, and does not want to leave Strasbourg, which was also studied in depth by Gall (1973, 31).

---

<sup>144</sup> ([Napoleon] considered notably that tragedies, carefully chosen and expurgated, are apt for stimulating the emotions, enthusiasm and, why not, the support of the masses for his own policies ... He was a powerful protector [of the theatre].)

Many theatre groups grew out of Catholic associations to promote the healthy bodies and minds of the faithful, such as gymnastic clubs. Daniel Hirtz, Père (the elder), a Strasbourg gymnast, in 1839 produced *de Meiselocker* (The Bluetit Catcher), which was a nickname for the Strasbourgeois. The piece was subtitled *Eine häusliche Szene aus unseren Tagen* (A contemporary family scene).

The Protestant Church, in contrast, has never appeared to take an interest in either athletics or the amateur theatre<sup>145</sup> as ways of controlling and directing the energies of their congregations. They were more interested in setting up colleges and pursuing liberal education. Schoen also notes that Mulhouse, in the south, mainly Protestant since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but within the Catholic Haut-Rhin, learning was considered more important than drama (1903, 29).

Even in 2003, Pastor Mall, newly retired, in Haguenau, in the north, had no knowledge of any Protestant theatre groups,<sup>146</sup> and a resident of the nearby village of Griess, in a private conversation at the village festival,<sup>147</sup> confirmed to me that their Protestant church took no part in such activities.

A pastry cook, Thomas Mangold, born in Colmar in 1816 wrote farces, and Friedrich Alphons Pick, born in Strasbourg in 1808, created bourgeois comedies. Georg Daniel Hirtz the younger, born in Strasbourg in 1830, left three comedies, each of a moralising tone in two acts. Karl Berdelle, from Haguenau, wrote one-act moral plays.

Political satire was evident in the works of Karl Friedrich Kettner, born in Strasbourg in 1840, who left several plays, including another use of the title *d'Meiselocker* (The Bluetit Catcher), in three acts, in which he portrays a convinced Republican, an opportunist and a Jew speaking Yiddish in what Jung calls 'un amusant tableau de mœurs' (an amusing comedy of manners) (2001, 64).

---

<sup>145</sup> I only know of one Lutheran theatre group, the Union de Jeunesse Chrétienne, based in Bischwiller, in the north of Alsace, in the years from 1952 to 1956.

<sup>146</sup> Telephone interview. 3 Sep. 2003.

<sup>147</sup> 20 July 2003.

But possibly the greatest playwright of the period was August Lustig, born in 1840 at Hartmannswiller, near his later home in Mulhouse. After being a military musician he wrote twenty-five, mostly one-act, comedies for the 'Cercle de Mulhouse' theatre group, for a working class audience, employing farce and depicting unpretentious milieux. He was never overtly politically satirical.

Jung states that for the last eighty years of the nineteenth century Alsatian playwrights generally avoided using their own language (2001, 64), and Schoen agrees firmly that only recently [to 1903] had there been a revival of the local patriotism, history and traditions of the area in which one was born or grew up (1903, 46). And Emile Strauss, in 1901, pointing up the revival, writes of a new spirit in Alsace (1901, 16), and Shoen reports that between 1898 and 1903 sixty new plays had been written, of variable quality (1903, 313).

Looking back at the nineteenth century as a whole, we see that the Alsatian language theatre inherited the problems of 1789 and its aftermath. There was nothing solid to fall back on after the debacle at Waterloo in 1815. After the twentieth century chaos in 1918 and 1945, as we see later, there was in each case a firm basis for either retrenchment or renewal. Nineteenth century reliance upon French and German theatre in the region, and the humiliation of 1871, added to the pressures building up to the outburst of relevant local theatre around the year 1900, with the founding of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg and its satellite groups, with the vigorous activity of their associated playwrights. The nineteenth century produced nothing significantly political. For this one has to await the realisation of local values encouraged by Stoskopf and others. They had easy targets for comedy. It is always welcomed if one satirises officialdom, and even more so if those depicted are foreigners. In Alsace there are interfering foreigners on all sides, even in one's own Republic.

## Patriotism in the theatre in Alsace from 1871 to 1918

Apart from looking at the work of playwrights, historians and theorists concerning the upsurge of patriotism in the theatre in Alsace I found it interesting to search among the very incomplete archives of the Municipality of Strasbourg, for this period.<sup>148</sup>

In the records of the municipal theatre, now the Opera house, although Alsace was German from 1871, records were still being kept in French in 1896. A similar overlap of some years, from German into French, occurred after 1918.

Also, the repertoire in this period was nearly all French, with French companies, including from the Odeon, Paris. But on 12 March 1884 there was noted a reprise of *La Fille du Régiment* by 'the German troupe'. 'The first [female] singer 'intervenes' in French, with *The Air of the Crown Diamonds* and *The Salute to France*' (underlining as in the record). The 1888 archive shows that French productions were banned. On 24 September 1890 the ban had been lifted, and the first French production was staged. In 1893 it is noted that in the reprises of *La Fille du Régiment* there are nearly always some patriotic French airs introduced. This piece was the most frequent production in the theatre.

By 1911 all records were kept in German.

In the occupied part of Lorraine the archives show that matters were similar.<sup>149</sup> In Metz, it is noted that since 1888, as in Strasbourg, the public only bothered to go and applaud touring French artistes and weekly productions by the troupe from Nancy. In Thionville, in 1910 French productions were nearly forbidden because of a disturbance during a production of a very patriotic play concerning 1870, 'La Fille de Roland', by Henri de Bornier. The line 'Every man has two nations, his own, and then France',

---

<sup>148</sup> Strasbourg Municipal Archive 180 MW 20, 'Aperçu historique du Théâtre Municipal 1873 – 1940'.

<sup>149</sup> Strasbourg Municipal Archive 180 MW 250.

caused a riot of enthusiasm . German officers in the audience left the theatre. Thereafter only six French productions were allowed per year, all of which were censored.

But in 1918 there is a reference to the first duty of the Prefect which was to expel the German theatre groups and install French groups in their place in the municipal theatres of Strasbourg, Metz, Colmar and Mulhouse, and in future only to stage French productions. It was also noted that theatre schools should concentrate on teaching correct French pronunciation in Alsace and Lorraine.

### **Working definitions of ‘Dialekt Theater’, and ‘Alsatian Language Theatre’**

In the Alsatian theatre of the twentieth century the term ‘Dialekt Theater’ is widely used. But all theatre in the language is not ‘Dialekt Theater’. Therefore it may be advisable at this stage to look into what the two terms mean.

On 8 April 2003, I attended a discussion group lead by playwright Joseph Schmittbiel, in conjunction with his forthcoming production of a modern adaptation of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. The meeting was entitled ‘... [une] rencontre qui [traitera] du théâtre en langue alsacienne’ (A meeting concerning Alsatian language theatre). Apart from the author himself, the meeting was attended by well-known personalities such as serious playwright Pierre Kretz, and a writer of light-hearted theatre, Christian Rieffel who writes under the name of Christian Royer and is a leading member of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg (TAS), and by the chairman of the René Schickele Gesellschaft, François Schaffner. Such meetings are not uncommon in Alsace, when serious playwrights and producers hold discussions before the staging of new work.

At the meeting Christian Rieffel defined ‘Alsatian Language Theatre’ as any production which uses the medium of the Alsatian language. This includes translations into the language, with the possibility of their subject having no relevance to the region, whereas the expression ‘Dialekt Theater’ means typical plays written in Alsatian and concerning regional subjects in an Alsatian manner, which latter concept may require a definition.



Dialekt Theater productions fall generally under the heading of *boulevard*, light-hearted adventures. *Boulevard* is a genre of broad-brush event-led superficial adventures, which have to be understood immediately at face value, and which always seek to amuse. There is little subtlety beyond obvious *double-entendres*, and mistaken identities. It compares more with British pantomime (without the audience participation) than with the oblique humour found in the ‘theatre of the absurd’, in which the textual inconsistencies require mental processing in order to establish their significance within the flow of the dialogue. *Boulevard* does not encompass tragedy or serious drama.

In Alsatian language theatre, the dialogue is written to be spoken. The text is purely a transitory form, and is not looked upon as literature in its own right. This also appears to be the case in the short articles in newspapers such as the *DNA*, and in magazines which are written in the language. They have a cosiness about them which suggests conversations in the parlour. They do not contain much in the way of news, and very little solid information, as this is nowadays not considered to be the purpose of the language.

‘The Alsatian manner’ may be defined as ‘relating to the region in a way which takes into consideration the history of Alsace and its traditional values, probably dealing with village or small-town matters, possibly concerning the family and maybe considering outside threats from the French or from the Germans’. This definition has to be robust enough to include the post World War II *pièces patriotiques*, which deal with politics and national upheaval, and also the Radical theatre of the 1970s, as typified by the *Jung Elsassers Buehn* (The Young Alsatian Theatre Group).

The traditional tenets of Dialekt Theater have altered little up to the present day. These feature heavily the hierarchy of respect for the Church, the mayor, the head of the family, the farmer, the innkeeper, and ignoring the school master. Education has never featured largely in Alsatian language theatre. And the well-depicted clash between the Catholic Church and education in the play and film *La femme du boulanger* (The Baker’s

Wife), by the Marseillais Marcel Pagnol (Pagnol (1938) 1963, 9 – 17) could not have been dealt with at that time in Alsace. Also taking centre stage in Alsace are the importance of family values, the work ethic, and the importance of land, crops and animals as the source of wealth. The Catholic Church has an all-pervading influence, which is seldom mentioned on stage, except in Passion Plays, or in polemics such as the *Frau Pfarrerin* (the Wife of the Protestant Pastor), written by an unknown author in Haguenau in 1817 (Gall 1973, 25), or *Johann Bochelen - Ein elsässischer Märtyrerpriester der Grossen Revolution* (Johann Bochelen – An Alsatian martyr-priest of the Great Revolution) by Dieudonné Liebe (1955).

Dialekt Theater is not philosophical, it is naïve. You do not have to draw your own conclusions. They are presented to you on a plate. These are historical documents, comedies of manners, mostly of how things used to be in Alsace, and not detached dramas about a prince of Denmark. You do not have to ponder on what is meant by ‘To be, or not to be’. They are immediate, not contrived, not conceited. They have to be obvious, popular, amusing. Irony and subtlety have no place. They appear to be fed by a need to state ‘Mir sin halt eso’ (That’s just how we are), and you can take us or leave us. There have been countless threats from outside the region, and this is one form of response. But it is a response which looks back rather than forward. Even when the French troops retake Alsace in 1918, in the play *D’Brüeder* (The Brothers), by Paul Clemens (1948), what is being anticipated is the restoration of things to how they were previously, not some improved life style.

The wider form, of Alsatian Language Theatre, in general, does include some more experimental work, such as *Kàrfridaa* (Good Friday), by Raymond Weissenburger (1984). But such prize-winning work is seldom staged among the great mass of Dialekt Theater productions. It is far too meaty, as are a few other worthy works, such as *Familierot* (The Family Council), by Pierre Kretz (2002).

The meeting on 8 April 2003 agreed that whereas Alsatian Language Theatre as a whole includes some works which have been exported with world-wide success, (which I am

not aware of) it is unlikely that such would be the destiny of the Dialekt Theater. I would not entirely agree with this latter conclusion. Although the vast majority of Dialekt Theater pieces are very run-of-the-mill material, (as are many of the offerings in the West End of London,) there are plays such as Stoskopf's *D'r Herr Maire* (The Mayor) which are small-town subjects but which have a universal validity. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, has a validity which is not limited to Verona, nor to London, where it was first staged.

### **The *Dialekt Theater* of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The Dialekt Theater, which overlaps and outlasts most other periods of the theatre in Alsace, can be recognised by its limited range of themes, featuring the aspects of life mentioned in the preceding section, above. This may be the form which most clearly typifies the region as it was around the year 1900, and it leaves an uneasy legacy for the twenty-first century.

Alsatian Fritz Leinhard criticised *D'r Herr Maire* as being anti-German, stating that in these various works, the great merit of Stoskopf was in teaching Alsace that it had a soul of its own, manners of its own, customs of its own and its own style of dress, and that he taught that it is a province, a nation, a country, because it possesses a language and a conscience.

While the Dialekt Theater movement can be seen continuing throughout the twentieth century and beyond, there are periods when it was overshadowed, such as the Second World War, and challenged by other later movements, such as the Marxist Theatre of the 1970s, and others, which will be dealt with separately.

The oft-quoted milestone in the history of Alsatian theatre is the founding of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg (the TAS), in 1898, by painter Gustav Stoskopf, born in Brumath, in the north of Alsace, in 1869, and Julius Greber, born in Aachen in 1873. Instead of

assembling the necessary personnel for an occasional performance, and then re-assembling a different group for the next production, a momentum could be maintained by working regularly with the same colleagues on each new work.

But the TAS was a disciplined group. As a protection against artistic temperament, active members had to sign a contract, agreeing to conform to the rules concerning their engagement in rehearsals and other activities. If they did not participate as agreed they were fined (Gall 1998, 24). In 1908 a documentary history of the reasons why two members left the group was published from the Minutes of meetings of the committee, showing how seriously such matters were taken (Haus 1908, pages not numbered). The Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau, founded in 1922, adopted the rules of the TAS, and similar care is shown in recording details of their proceedings.<sup>150</sup>

During the process of founding the TAS it was firstly proposed that a *Comité d'Honneur* of prominent Strasbourg personalities be invited to oversee the new venture. But the prime movers, Stoskopf and Greber, opposed this vigorously, as the older generation would stifle the enthusiasm of the young movers and shakers (Gall 1998, 24). Contrary to other sources who emphasise the selfless nature of such groups, Gall states that the actors were paid the same rates as professionals, which makes the strict discipline more believable (ibid). This was confirmed by the Honorary President of the TAS in 2004, who stated that payments continued up until World War Two.<sup>151</sup>

The TAS was quickly followed by permanent groups being formed in other major towns, such as Colmar, Mulhouse, Thann, Guebwiller, Haguenau and Wissembourg, to the extent that Stoskopf was able to form a *Federation of Alsatian Theatres* in 1901, which still exists, and whose Honorary President, in 2004, is the grandson of the original treasurer.

---

<sup>150</sup> Archives of the Ville de Haguenau, document 05W. Seen 5 Feb. 2004.

<sup>151</sup> Marcel Spegt. Telephone interview. 19 Oct. 2004.

Two important influences were current in Alsace during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Firstly, the generation born around the time of the defeat of 1870, and the handing of Alsace to Germany, were:

Sentimentalement fidèles, ... à la patrie absente mais sans contact réel et fecund avec elle, ils se sont ménagé une position de repli : celle du passé alsacien. Leur devise à peine inavouée pouvait se formuler ainsi : “Français ne puis, Allemand ne daigne, Alsacien suis” (Robert Heitz, in Fischer 1968, 112).<sup>152</sup>

Finck expresses similar sentiments about this generation, as do Jung, Fischer, and other historians of their literature:

... arrivée à l'âge de l'homme à la fin du siècle évolue de la façon la plus marquante dans le sens d'une nouvelle affirmation de l'« alsacianité » ... pour résister à l'assimilation allemande, mais aussi pour mieux se définir par rapport aux nostalgies du « souvenir français ». L'« alsacianité » allait surgir de partout, dans la recherche folklorique et muséographique (création du Musée Alsacien, Strasbourg 1898), comme dans l'intérêt porté aux dialectes populaires . ... Mais c'est au théâtre surtout que la littérature dialectale fait une entrée remarquée. (Finck 1990, 42).<sup>153</sup>

The second influence was that indicated by Finck - the resurgence of interest in local languages and traditions. In France, ‘... le renovateur de la culture provençale Frédéric Mistral écrit toujours et sera un des premiers Prix Nobel.’ (... Frédéric Mistral, the

---

<sup>152</sup> (... sentimentally faithful ..., but without a real fruitful relationship to an absent motherland, they established a fallback position: that of the Alsatian past. Their undisclosed motto could be expressed thus – ‘I cannot be French, I do not deign to be German, I am Alsatian’.)

<sup>153</sup> (... [They,] arriving at adulthood at the turn of the century, developed in a most remarkable manner in the direction of a new affirmation of “Alsatian-ness”: to resist assimilation into Germany, but also to distance themselves from the nostalgia of the “memory of France”. “Alsatian-ness” was going to make its appearance everywhere, in folkloric and museum-based research (the creation of the Alsatian Museum in Strasbourg, 1898), as well as in the interest displayed in popular dialects. ... But it is in the theatre above all, that literature in dialect makes a remarkable entrance)

renovator of provençal culture, was still writing, and would be one of the first winners of a Nobel Prize) (Jung 2001, 64).

Stoskopf extended his influence as a writer by founding, in 1908, *Die Strassburger Neue Zeitung* (The New Strasbourg Newspaper).

It is to be remembered that the Alsatian theatre groups made use of the stage of the local professional theatres, and that, in larger towns, they gave typically a total of up to eight performances a year, which may have included two or three productions. Smaller town and village groups gave up to four performances of one play per year, as they still do. Apart from this, the theatres continued to present their normal blends of German and French language productions, drawing upon an international repertoire, with visiting troupes from abroad, whereas the Alsatian groups drew upon the combined talents of small communities in a region half the size of Wales, and produced an output which has to be accepted as a considerable achievement.

Gustav Stoskopf, who was to develop into the most significant Alsatian playwright, created pieces of political satire which are still well-known today, including *D'r Herr Maire* (The Mayor), *E Demonstration* (A Demonstration) (sub-titled in French as *An evening of revolution*), *De Hoflieferant* (The purveyor to the court), and *De verbotte Fàhne* (The forbidden flag), and many others. 'Les fonctionnaires allemands arrogants venus en Alsace pour "germaniser la plaine" sont admirablement dépeints ... [et] ...ont réellement existé.' (The arrogant German officials, who had come to Alsace "to Germanise the plain" are admirably depicted [and] had actually existed) (Fischer 1968, 110).

Such an output was predictable from a writer whose sentiments were made clear in his first letter to his parents when he went, at the age of eighteen, to study in Paris, and described the scene on first crossing the frontier into France.

Quelle explosion de joie ... après le passage de la frontière ! Quel délire à la vue du premier soldat français. Mille cris de “Vive la France !” fusèrent . ... Quel plaisir de pouvoir crier “Vive la France” alors qu’à Brumath cela vaut au bas mot deux mois de prison ! (ibid).<sup>154</sup>

*D'r Herr Maire* was made into an anti-German film in 1939, ending with a liberation of Alsace by French soldiers. It could not be shown until 1947, when it was a great success. This is still reckoned to be the most regularly presented Alsatian play.

Jung says of *D'r Herr Maire*:

L'affirmation de la personnalité de l'Alsace [dans cette pièce] n'est pas dans le sujet ni dans les personnages, mais dans la valeur littéraire et linguistique qui crée durablement, en langue locale, une production qui compte s'affirmer à côté des langues nationales. (Jung 2001, 66).<sup>155</sup>

Stoskopf and colleagues were not anti-German, but anti-Prussian, a much more precise emotion against closely identified enemies.<sup>156</sup>

*D'r Herr Maire* is particularly relevant to the present study, as it came out of the upsurge of the Dialekt Theater. Previous to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the theatre had been a middle and upper class activity centred on the towns. It was a place to be seen, even if one did not appreciate the performance. Dialekt Theater, although it was also strong in the towns, moved the activity and the subject of theatre-going into the villages, and presented

---

<sup>154</sup> (What an explosion of joy ... after crossing the frontier ! What delirium on seeing the first French soldier. A thousand cries of “Vive la France !” broke out. ... What a pleasure to be able to shout “Vive la France”, whereas in Brumath it would have cost at least two months in prison.)

<sup>155</sup> (The affirmation of the personality of Alsace [in this play] is not in the subject matter nor in the characters portrayed, but in the literary and linguistic value, which creates durably, in local speech, a production which achieves parity with national languages.)

<sup>156</sup> Marcel Spegt, Hon. President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg. Personal Interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

portrayals of life which was well understood in the countryside. Traditional values were depicted and what was shown as evil did not succeed.<sup>157</sup>

The story of *D'r Herr Maire* is of a small-town mayor with two beautiful daughters, during the German annexation, from 1871 to 1918. A German professor (*Herr Doktor*) comes to study the language and falls in love with the elder daughter, who wishes to marry someone intelligent from the town. But she does not fall for him. Her father mistakes him for the German *Sous Préfet* who is due to visit, and is happy for the match. The latter's title was commonly expressed in French, indicating a liberal attitude to the use of that language. The other daughter is engaged by her father to a rich, and old, local farmer. They both want to choose their own husbands.

A holiday maker from the town arrives on his bicycle, which has a puncture in the town square. He and the younger daughter fall in love. The elder daughter also has a sweetheart. But the Mayor will not hear of the affairs, until the real *Sous Préfet* arrives, with a long-service medal for him. This puts him in a good mood, and he agrees to the marriages.

Julius Greber, Stoskopf's co-founder of the Théâtre Alacien de Strasbourg, was also a playwright, who considered it necessary to 'prouver que le dialecte de Strasbourg, se prêtait bien à la mise en oeuvre d'un sujet sérieux et moderne' (to prove that the Strasbourg dialect lends itself well to the handling of serious modern subjects) (Jung 2001, 65). His best-known work is *D'r lätz Pardessus* (The wrong overcoat).

To satisfy the increasing need for regular productions, adaptations were made, by Karl Hauss, of novels such as *D'r Ami Fritz* (Our friend Fritz) and *D'Rantzau* (The Rantzau Brothers), from the works of the paired writers, Erckmann and Chatrian. Many Alsatian restaurants are now named after the former work. But Finck states that these two novelists were 'en dehors de la vie littéraire de notre province' (outside the literary life of our province) (1990, 12). He considers that the popularity of their novels 'animés d'un

---

<sup>157</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lectures in series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 9 and 16 May 2003.



vif sentiment patriotique et dont l'impact fut renforcé par l'annexion de l'Alsace-Lorraine. Ainsi s'est formé en France un « mythe » de l'Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>158</sup> (ibid 26).

From 1871 until the war started in 1914, the authorities were much more tolerant in their approach to the theatre, and plays such as Stoskopf's could be produced provided there was no overt anti-German demonstration during the performance. This may indicate the quiet confidence which the Germans at that time had in their own superiority over any French nationalism. The ability to laugh at yourself and still carry on demonstrates a certain invincibility, such as that shown by the British forces, whom the Kaiser called 'that contemptible little army', which, nickname they adopted for themselves. The Germans may also have recognised that political satire is a safety valve through which minor grievances can be released before they evolve into serious unrest. As life becomes more intolerable, so the need for satire increases, to enable people to cope.

From 1914 until 1918 the occupation became much more repressive.<sup>159</sup> However, this latter period was not as severe as the attitude of the Nazis during the second world war,<sup>160</sup> when the theatre was not only politicised but also militarised.

Stoskopf died on 7 December 1944, within a few days of the liberation of his home town of Brumath. Members of his funeral cortege dived for cover as four Stukas flew overhead, and the interment was carried out in haste.<sup>161</sup> Matzen, however, claimed that these were actually American aircraft,<sup>162</sup> another example of how stories vary in the retelling, among respected sources, possibly ending up as part of the folklore of the region.

The theatre groups created their own momentum, and as today, they required to be fed with increasing numbers of suitable texts. The favourable environment at the time

---

<sup>158</sup> (animated by a lively patriotic sentiment, of which the impact was reinforced by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Thus, in France, a "myth" of Alsace-Lorraine was created.)

<sup>159</sup> Marcel Spegt, Hon. President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

<sup>160</sup> Jean Potier, Alsatian citizen, 81 years. Personal interview. 30 June 2003.

<sup>161</sup> Marcel Spegt. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

<sup>162</sup> Lecture on the Alsatian poets, the Matthis Brothers, at Haguenau, 11 Mar 2004.

stimulated writers such as Ferdinand Bastian (1868 – 1944) to write the play *de Hans im Schnokeloch* (Hans [or Jean] in the Mosquito Hole), inspired by a local song (and an error in popular memory, as described elsewhere in Sections 1.6 and 2.4, on pages 17 and 67 of this thesis. It fits well into the regional perception of the Alsatian as suffering from a split personality. Bastian's output included a peasant historic drama *Andreas Ruffenach*. He also wrote several childrens' Christmas musicals, which became standard items in the winter repertoire. Particularly between the two world wars such works made up a large part of the repertoire of Alsatian theatre. Of the Alsatian plays in the pre-computerised card-index catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNUS, the National University Library of Strasbourg) I counted that 66% of the entries are such Christmas miracle plays.

Dialekt Theater groups were set up, and still exist today, in all the main centres of population in Alsace, and in most villages, to the extent that during the autumn and winter season of 2002, one could choose, on any weekend, to attend any among thirty-five to forty amateur plays in the département of the Bas-Rhin alone. And such productions were frequently sold out shortly after the tickets went on sale, with advertising by word-of-mouth only.

### **Between the two world wars**

The war having been won, and Alsace being French once more, the big question for the theatre in the region was – which language was to be used, which repertoire, and which nationalities would be allowed on stage. It was obvious that French productions would be politically correct. But the prospect of works in Alsatian, or in the German language, with the possibility of German casts, as in previous years, was in serious doubt. There is also a lack of clarity in official letters of the period, on whether the productions concerned were to be by Germans or simply in German. Although the writers presumably knew what they meant it is not clear eighty years later.

The clearest political statement concerning the problem for Alsatians when faced with the authority of France, rather than Germany, was made in the play *So sinn mr halt !* (That's just how we are !), by Marcel-Edmond Naegelen (1931), a socialist politician, who was ironically an advocate of complete assimilation with France, as expressed in the popular argument of the day, that 'les Alsaciens ont voulu devenir Français ; qu'ils acceptent la législation française et la départementalisation pure et simple ; leur conviction nationale le réclame'<sup>163</sup> (Baas 1972, 33). Naegelen's play is analysed in Section 5.2, from page 228, below.

Camille Schneider states that immediately after the 1918 Armistice one had to expect a sudden halt in literary output, due to the disorientating situation (Schneider 1937, 108). The twenty years of peace until 1939 was a confused and violent period with strange alliances, such as the Catholics and the Communists. It did not see the hoped for economic expansion in France, which did come about in Germany however, on the back of the preparations for war.

Vogler refers to 'un malaise culturel et politique' (a cultural and political unrest) from 1918 until 1939:

Après 1918 le théâtre municipal de Strasbourg se limite aux seules oeuvres françaises jusqu'en 1929, d'où un recul du niveau des représentations et une baisse sensible de la fréquentation, en particulier dans les classes moyennes. Plusieurs opérettes sont données en traduction française, ce qui suscite en général une certaine déception. Le théâtre tombe au niveau d'une scène de province qui ignore les spécificités régionales. (Vogler 1993, 415).<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup> (Alsatians wanted to become French. Let them accept French laws and French départements, pure and simple; their national fervour requires it.)

<sup>164</sup> (After 1918 the municipal theatre of Strasbourg limited itself solely to French works, until 1929, due to which there were fewer productions and noticeably reduced audiences, mainly among the middle classes. Many [German] operettas were given, in French translations, which provoked general disappointment. The theatre was reduced to a provincial level, ignoring local characteristics.)

Vogler notes the refusal of the Prefect to allow professional German language productions (which would also exclude Alsatian language performances) for several years, and a scandal in 1920, with the prohibition of a German language play in Colmar. The election of an autonomist municipal council there in 1929 favoured such productions, which increased in number and in attendance. After 1933, due to national politics, German language productions were mainly given by a troupe from Basel, although, in spite of protests, a troupe from Germany was also welcomed (ibid, 416).

But I found different information in the records concerning the propaganda and censorship in favour of French productions , as is shown below.

The Strasbourg Municipal Archives, File 180MW20, *Aperçu historique du Théâtre Municipal – 1873 – 1940* (Historic review of the Municipal Theatre – 1873 to 1940), show that, rather strangely in the circumstances, on 23 May 1921 the main speech at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Municipal Theatre of Strasbourg was delivered in High German, and a memorial history was published in dual text, French and German. Correspondence and records at both the Municipal Theatre and the Mairie remained only in German until 1923, when French starts to appear. But German continued to be used until 1935.

The situation before 1925 may well have been as Vogler states. Municipal Archive file 180MW263 contains letters concerning resuming German productions in Strasbourg in 1919. Letters from the Schauspielhaus (Theatre) in Saarbrücken 24 September 1919 and 6 October 1919, and from Stadttheater (Municipal Theatre), Freiburg im Breisgau, 27 September 1919 (both being neighbouring German theatres) all offer to arrange to bring productions to Strasbourg. No replies to these theatres are on file.

A letter dated 30 September 1919 written in German, translated into French for sending, from the Director of the Municipal Theatre in Strasbourg, to the Commissaire Général de la République (the head of the regional government), asked for permission to stage two productions per month in German, as only 20% of the population understood French. On

17 October 1919, a further letter requested an early reply. A reply stated the letter had gone to the Prefect. Dated 27 October 1919, a reply from Prefect stated, in French, that this would be permitted, but only for French works which had been translated into German. ‘Sans qu’aient à souffrir ni le prestige de notre théâtre national, ni l’influence de l’art français’ (So that neither the prestige of our national theatre, nor the influence of French art would have to suffer.) All works were to be censored before production, to avoid possible demonstrations.

But the confusion surrounding the politics of the language situation in the theatre in Alsace is shown by letters in the same file showing that as late as 3 November 1924, the Commissaire Général wrote to the Prefect that the Foreign Minister had just advised him that performances in German by German language groups would be completely inappropriate at present. This decision was conveyed to the Mayor on 6 November. But on 12 November the Assistant Mayor wrote to the Prefect telling him that in a private conversation the Foreign Minister had given the Mayor permission for a production of Don Carlos in German by the Basler Stadttheater, on 26 November.

In the same file a newspaper article by Georges Berguer in *Comoedia*, 29 November 1924, concerned some unfavourable reactions to the municipality restarting German theatre in Strasbourg, but maintained that the Strasbourg press was unanimous in approving the measure taken by the municipality, as under the German régime French productions were authorised and encouraged.

This same article quotes from the Catholic *l’Elsaesser* that ‘le théâtre en dialecte est insuffisant’ (there is not enough theatre in the [Alsatian] dialect). In the 30 November 1924 edition of *L’Action Française – Organe du nationalisme integral* the *Lettre de Strasbourg* column, by *Argentoratus* (a name adapted from the Roman name for Strasbourg), states that in about 1920 a Catholic theatre group had been refused permission to stage a production in Alsatian, and that ‘nous avons donné assez de preuves de patriotisme au temps allemand, comme en 1918, pour ne pas mériter cette méfiante tutelle’ (we gave enough proof of our patriotism during the German occupation, such as

in 1918, not to deserve this distrustful domination). The same article claimed that the troupe presenting *Don Carlos* were in fact German nationals, using High German, and that if anybody complained at this they would be considered anti-German-language-theatre, rather than anti-German. It also complains that *Don Carlos* is an anti-Catholic work. A letter from the Mayor of Strasbourg to the Prefect, dated 30 November 1925 asks permission for 8 Germans, 6 Swiss and 1 Hungarian to come from Basel and perform a play by Schiller on 9 December (Municipal Archive file 180MW551). Such visits then increased, also to Mulhouse, with additional groups from Zurich and Vienna.

On 6 December 1924 *L'Alsace Française*, edited by Georges Berguer reported that on the coming Monday the TAS would present a play by the Alsatian Ferdinand Bastian, entitled *Im Traumland* (In Dreamland). This was presumably in Alsatian. The article also noted that since 1918 of this author's works, only fairy tales had been staged.

In the same archives, File 180MW250, the report from *Comoedia*, dated 20 October 1925, entitled *The situation of the theatre in Alsace* states that in Strasbourg the season's programme contained equal numbers of works from Germany, France and Italy. This clashes with Vogler's claim that only French works were presented in Strasbourg until 1929.

Again, in the same Municipal archives, I examined File No. 180MW345 entitled 'Affaires Générales 1940 – 1945' (General Affairs 1940 – 1945). None of the contents of the file actually refer to 1940 – 1945, except one document in German - 'Aus der Festschrift des Stadttheaters zu den Oberrheinischen Kulturtagen 1940' (From the records of the city theatre at the Upper Rhine Cultural Conference, 1940), referring to the German *Gau* which included Alsace in World War Two. The document is entitled 'Deutsches Theater in Strassburg während der Franzosenzeit 1918 – 1939' (German Theatre in Strasbourg during the French Period 1918 – 39). This is a political document in a German report summarising the conference. It notes that the French would tolerate no German language production, until the winter of 1924/25 when it allowed the Basel City Theatre to give two performances in Swiss German, of *Don Carlos*. In the 1925 to

1926 season 14 evenings were put aside for German productions. The first High German performance was in 1928. This contrasts with file reference 180MW250, which includes the unnamed newspaper report dated 20 October 1925, stating that in Strasbourg the season's programme contained equal numbers of works from Germany, France and Italy. But there may be some confusion here regarding Swiss German and High German and the nationality of the performers.

The German report charts the increasing number of German language performances and the rush for tickets. It tells of anti-German demonstrations at performances in March 1933, 'kurz nach der Machtergreifung Adolf Hitlers, die auch der [sic] deutschen Kunst einen bisher nicht erlebten Auftrieb verhieß' (shortly after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, which also raised German art to a level previously not experienced). The writer, in the first year of World War Two, predicted a strong demand for German theatre in Strasbourg. The inference to be drawn from this report is that the German authorities considered the theatre to be a political activity, even if the content of the text of plays were not, and that the language used in the theatre is symbolic.

The *Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau*, founded in 1922, only received the support of the local *Sous-Préfet* by promising to give some plays in French as soon as the group was able. But the Minutes of committee meetings until September 1927 show no evidence of a French performance having been planned.<sup>165</sup>

Interestingly, the Strasbourg Municipality file No. 180MW250, contains a report from *Comoedia*, dated 20 October 1925 and referred to above, entitled *La situation théâtrale en Alsace-Lorraine: Une étude par M. Albert Carré* (The situation of the theatre in Alsace-Lorraine: A study by M. Albert Carré), on its role in the propagation of the French language, and the perfecting of its pronunciation. He wrote, 'Efforçons-nous donc de corriger l'accent des Alsaciens-Lorrains pour épargner aux victimes l'injure d'être confondues avec leurs bourreaux.' (Let us therefore strive to correct the accent of the people of Alsace-Lorraine, to spare these sufferers the insult of being mistaken for

---

<sup>165</sup> Archives of the Ville de Haguenau, document 05W.

their [German] executioners). The article continues by claiming that a parrot, newly arrived from Brazil, if given to a Strasbourg cook, would soon adopt that accent. It states among other things that one can, if it is not undertaken too late, correct an Alsatian's accent by changing his environment. It gives the story of a young Alsatian actor who gave up his friends and moved to Paris in order to acquire the correct accent. Then, by trying hard he succeeded in theatre school better than his Parisian colleagues. The writer also quotes from a letter from the Député for Colmar, that as a means of Frenchification the theatre will certainly be one of the most efficient media for propaganda. The State should support the theatre for this purpose. This article is one of the most indicative French political statements of the period relating to the political use of the theatre in Alsace.

Alsatian language theatre experienced troubled times during this period, due to certain patriots viewing it as incompatible with national unity. Contemporary satire vanished as a subject, due to governmental intolerance. During the autonomist crisis in the 1930s many theatres, including that of Colmar, were reorganised, and [in Alsatian language productions] Francophile sensitivities were respected, pulling in larger audiences, as was the case also in Mulhouse, which presented seventy mostly new plays during this period. Alsatian language theatres arose in other smaller towns as well (Vogler 1993, 416).

In the same archive file were newspaper articles illustrating the contentious nature of Alsatian language theatre in the 1930s. The German-language *Elssas-Lothringer Zeitung* on 15 July 1933 celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Alexander Hessler, who had been director of the Municipal Theatre of Strasbourg, and of other cities in the region. Four days later the French-language *Journal d'Alsace et de Lorraine* attacked the other newspaper as autonomist, for remembering the man who imposed German theatre on the Alsatians, who did not want it. On 19 September of the same year, the latter newspaper wrote on 'La defense du théâtre français à Strasbourg' (The defence of French theatre in Strasbourg).



Eve Cerf states that in the period after World War One most French people assumed that Alsace simply wanted to be absorbed uncritically into France. It was no longer the moment for political and social satire. The TAS had to watch its tongue, and give up its original anti-authoritarian stance, which the Germans had mostly tolerated. It took refuge in the imaginary world of fairy tales and religious miracle plays. These had previously been short pieces, with from three to five performers. Now, they became three- and five-act full-scale productions. Although originally foreseen as children's pieces, increasing numbers of adults attended. Such plays were characteristically Alsatian in content and language, although they sometimes adopted French or German titles (Cerf, 1998, 69 – 70.). As stated previously, such plays made up 66% of those which I counted on the card index at the National University Library of Strasbourg.

According to Cerf these mystery plays from 1921 to 1939, often based upon the myth of St Odile, the patron saint of Alsace, who was maltreated by her father, the king, constitute a core of hope for Alsace, and for the continuity of justice and reconciliation, which would have been greatly desired at that time. Cerf has attempted to resolve some of the confusion surrounding the dominant Alsatian myths. The king, being the seat of power, has brutalised his daughter, the unprotected Odile, who is confusingly similar to St Lucie,<sup>166</sup> who is also the Kristkindel (confusingly, not the Christ child), who accompanies the wicked Hans Trapp at Christmas, who punishes or rewards children according to their behaviour (ibid, 95).

Entre les deux guerres mondiales, le mythe de la jeune fille lumineuse a permis aux Alsaciens de se montrer tels qu'ils voulaient se donner à voir. Face aux bouleversements politiques de leur région, ils ont magnifié la dimension mythologique de leur culture et souligné leur fidélité aux valeurs chrétiennes. (Cerf 1998 ,96).<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> See also Section 2.1, page 34, above.

<sup>167</sup> (Between the two world wars the myth of the young girl [St Lucie, or the Kristkindel] carrying a light permitted Alsacians to show themselves as they would like to be seen. Faced with the political upheavals in their region they magnified the mythological dimension of their culture and emphasised

Nowadays such plays are seldom performed. Maybe the public today prefers to ignore these myths, or maybe their needs are satisfied at Christmas by television and a surfeit of material gifts. Perhaps their relatively comfortable lifestyles have dulled the need for symbolic retribution over the political situation in Alsace. However, the 1930s period does illustrate the need for communal fantasies which form part of the set of beliefs that contribute towards the culture of a people, and into which a community can withdraw in order to avoid open conflict in troubled times (Rose, 1996, 15 and *passim*).

The Alsatian monthly for exiles in Germany, *Elsass Lothringen Heimatstimmen* (Homeland voices of Alsace-Lorraine), published from Berlin, by Robert Ernst, carried articles in 1926 by an anonymous *Alsaticus* denouncing the state of the theatre in Alsace, due to imports from Paris and the disdaining of local culture (October 1926, 571-6). In September 1926, on page 285, *Alsaticus* encouraged Catholic groups to stage productions and recommended the periodical *Die elsässische Vereinsbühne* (Alsatian [Catholic] Theatre Clubs). He criticised the quality of plays being produced, and states that the self-confidence of a people also dictates its history. Ironically, Ernst, would later, as the Nazi mayor of Strasbourg, become part of a machine that intended to eliminate the regional language.

In the 1930s pacifism was the politically correct attitude in France. Films such as *La Grande Illusion*, made in Alsace by Jean Renoir in 1937, but in French, demonstrated the anti-war argument. German money was poured into making French films such as *Peace on the Rhine* (1938),<sup>168</sup> in which the French characters are seriously flawed, and the face of the German heroine is superimposed onto the image of Strasbourg Cathedral. Meanwhile, German films were patriotic and warlike, as was Germany's absorption of the Sudetenland and Austria. On 6 December 1938 Hitler signed a treaty solemnly respecting their frontier with France. The 1941 film *Das deutsche Elsass* (German Alsace),<sup>169</sup> however, claims that Alsace had always been part of greater Germany.<sup>170</sup>

---

their fidelity to Christian values.)

<sup>168</sup> Swiss director Jean Choux, from the 1934 novel by Pierre Claude.

<sup>169</sup> Director Walter Leckerbusch, at Tobis Studios.

<sup>170</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. May 2003.

## **The Theatre in Alsace during World War Two**

One could consider omitting the World War Two period from the history of Alsatian language theatre, because contemporary politics dictated that the language be banned in favour of High German. Also, when I started asking Alsatian theatre people about the theatre in Alsace in World War Two I was initially told by each person I consulted that it did not exist.

However, my present study is of the political influences upon Alsatian language theatre, and if it was suppressed it is necessary for me to investigate the reasons and consequences of this suppression, and also to see whether this policy was applied consistently in time and in location.

It would not be surprising if all Alsatian language theatre records from the Nazi period were destroyed at the end of the war. No Alsatian who had collaborated, even passively or innocently, would want their activities to stay on record during the post-war period of *épuration* (cleansing), which was, in some ways, comparable to the Nazification of the war period. No actor, director, playwright, could expect to work again if their careers had been tainted by collaboration. Well-known French entertainers, such as Maurice Chevalier, were accused of collaboration, and were, in French eyes, forever tainted. The fate of Alsatians would have been much more severe.

Also, it would hardly be unexpected if the Nazis took very firm control of the theatre. It is probable that they were aware of the popular demonstrations that occurred in the theatre during the previous annexation of Alsace. Theatre scripts may be censored, but the actual delivery of the text can give quite unexpected meanings to innocent words. They did make extensive use of the cinema, which is a much easier medium to control. All texts, and the contents of every scene had to be approved fourteen days before shooting, and the production teams were organised according to a pyramidal 'leader'

principle.<sup>171</sup> Once the film was made it could only be projected in the same manner at every performance, and the Nazi propaganda machine ensured that the audience would receive the intended message. The propaganda film *Das deutsche Elsass*, noted in the previous Section, on page 163, which I have seen, is extremely persuasive, using heroic music and a commentary, to demonstrate the decadence of France, and how much better Alsace was as part of its natural homeland of Germany.

Out of 485 theatre texts in Alsatian, indexed in the BNUS, from 1902 onwards, including several during the period from 1871 to 1918, which I consulted, only one play is shown as being published during the Nazi period, from 1940 to 1945, and this one had already been published before the war, although the author's name now appeared as Klaus Reinbolt, rather than Claus, as it was before and after the war.

Whereas the Archives of the Municipality of Strasbourg, and of the Département of the Bas-Rhin, were disappointing, the microfilm library of newspapers in the BNUS offered much relevant material. One immediately obvious revelation was that there was a great deal of theatre of various kinds in Alsace during the war, but it was of a totally different dimension from that of any other period of Alsatian history. This period is also interesting in that it helps to explain the outburst of *pièces patriotiques* (patriotic plays) as part of the healing process which took place in Alsace immediately after World War Two, and which is still not entirely completed.

While Alsatian language theatre continued to be performed by and for Alsatian evacuees in theatres in Châteauroux and Périgueux during the winter of 1939/40 (Gall 1998, 48), German theatre was being established in Alsace itself. Largely from contemporary newspapers I was to find an abundance of productions during this period, and street theatre was also considered important. Vogler states that the Nazi regime accorded great importance from the psychological point of view to mass demonstrations. These obeyed various themes, being their festive nature, bearing witness en masse, military discipline, political engagement, recalling German history, and the pretended decadence of the

---

<sup>171</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronzacq. Lecture series on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 16 May 2003.

French regime, which would have suppressed the German nature of Alsace. (Vogler 1995, 256)

When I found people who knew of the existence of the theatre from 1940 to 1944, one, a playwright, actor and producer, assured me that the Alsatian language was used during that period in the south of Alsace,<sup>172</sup> and the other, who was 17 at the outbreak of war, and whose knowledge was more of the north of Alsace, assured me that all theatre during that period was in High German.<sup>173</sup> Senator Goetschy stated that during that period there was only one language – High German.<sup>174</sup> But the Vice-President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse, in the south, told me that in World War Two their theatre continued with the same name under the Kraft durch Freude (KdF = Strength through Joy)<sup>175</sup> movement in a cinema on outskirts of Mulhouse, in the Alsatian language. The stage set always had some blue, white and red elements in the décor. The local Municipal theatre was used for German language performances. There was obviously some disparity to be investigated, and I have had to settle for published accounts in newspapers and books, while acknowledging that these have also gone through the mill of spin-doctoring and memory recall.

Lothar Kettenacker states that in the inter-war period even Strasbourg did not have a permanent theatre company, whereas in World War Two Strasbourg, Mulhouse and Colmar all had their own permanent troupes (1978, 56).

Eugène Philipps confirms that, to conform with the Nazi timetable of five years for the identity of Alsace to vanish (1986, 224), ‘... les dialectes devaient disparaître au bénéfice du haut-allemand’ (dialects had to disappear, for the benefit of High German) (ibid 233). ‘Ils n’avaient nullement l’intention de respecter ni leur originalité culturelle ni leur originalité linguistique’ ([The Nazis] had no intention of respecting either [the Alsatian] cultural nor their linguistic originality) (ibid 234).

---

<sup>172</sup> Pierre Kretz, playwright and director. Personal interview. 16 June 2003.

<sup>173</sup> Jean Potier, Alsatian citizen. Personal interview. 30 June 2003.

<sup>174</sup> At a conference on minority languages and English, Strasbourg, FEC, 8 March 2004.

<sup>175</sup> René Freytag, Personal interview. 4 Dec. 2003. The KdF was the organisation which controlled all cultural activities under Nazi Germany.

Things were different from during World War One, when Germany was led by soldiers. Germany and Alsace were now dominated by Hitler, who ‘was a lunatic, a cunning dangerous homicidal lunatic, with some strange but compelling technique’ (Bielenberg 1968, 87 and passim). In such a situation few normal rules of conduct apply, and inconsistencies and sudden reversals of normality occur.

From 1914 until 1918 the previous occupation had become much more repressive.<sup>176</sup> However, that period was not as severe as the attitude of the Nazis during the second world war,<sup>177</sup> when the theatre was not only politicised but also militarised. Leading theatre people in Germany, to which Alsace belonged, had a military rank, and could wear full dress uniform in public, as did Benno von Arent, from Berlin, who had the title of ‘Reich Stage Designer’, and ‘Professor’. He founded the National Socialist League of Stage Artists, and was a member of the National Socialist Reich Chamber of Drama (Junge, 128).

The established TAS and its sister groups in other towns were dissolved and reformed under the KdF movement. But I was surprised to discover the apparent difference in the treatment of the Alsatian language in the theatre by the authorities in the northern half of Alsace, of which Strasbourg is the main city, from that in the south of Alsace, dominated by Mulhouse, as reported in the two main newspapers, the *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* (SNN), and the *Mülhauser Tagblatt* (MTB, *Mulhouse Daily News*). In an interview with the Honorary President of the Federation of Alsatian Language Theatres I was told that this difference was due to the strong influence of the Catholic church in the south, as opposed to the more Germanic influence of the Lutheran Protestants in the north.<sup>178</sup> There appeared also to be an inconsistent policy within the north of Alsace itself.

---

<sup>176</sup> Marcel Spegt. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

<sup>177</sup> Jean Potier. Personal interview. 30 June 2003.

<sup>178</sup> Marcel Spegt. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

The Strasbourgeois did not have the opportunity to see much theatre in their own language. On 5 January 1941 delegates from all the Alsatian Theatres were told that all productions must conform to National Socialist principles, and no trace of French language or culture was permitted (Lutz 1941, 656-662), to which the playwright Stosskopf replied that you cannot write plays to order. Most of his previous works were banned, anyway. The archives and the library of the TAS were destroyed. The group was reformed as the Elsässische Volksbühne Strassburg (The Strasbourg People's Alsatian Theatre)<sup>179</sup>, and most previous members rejoined, as a way of avoiding being regimented into other civilian forms of service for the Reich (Gall 1998, 49).

An interesting oversight by the supposedly efficient German Civil Government is that one Otto Badermann, staged the Alsatian Play, *Pfingstmontag* (Whitmonday) by Daniel Georg Arnold, (1816), in the open air Stadtgarten (the Orangerie) in Strasbourg on 2 June 1941, and it was enthusiastically reported by the main Nazi newspapers in Strasbourg and Mulhouse on the following day, although the same Otto Badermann only requested permission for such performances on 15 December 1941, and permission was not granted for such theatre by the Gauleiter until two years later, on 22 January 1943,<sup>180</sup> and then on condition that performances were given only in High German. However, this particular play is one of those which parodies the Frenchified manners of some Alsatians, and holds them up to ridicule. Permission for its production would possibly have been assumed, as it contained suitable propaganda.

The published history of the Théâtre Alacien de Strasbourg (TAS) shows that as the *Volksbühne* it performed at the Union Theatre (not at the Opera House, where it usually plays), in July 1941 the anti-French *Liecht in Dunkelbach* (Light in Dunkelbach, a pun on the name of a village *Dark-stream*), in June 1942 *D'Heimet* (Homeland), and as late as June and July 1944 *So wie d'Alte g'sunge* (Like they sang of old), all by well-established Alsatian playwrights (Gall 1998, 50).

---

<sup>179</sup> It was inconsistent with Nazi policy to have included 'Alsatian' in the title of this theatre group, as according to Kettenacker 'Alsace' as a name was to disappear within five years (1978, 57).

<sup>180</sup> Departmental Archive file reference 142AL119, paq 3.

Overall Nazi policy however ran contrary to any aspirations for the dialect theatre:

L'opinion du Gauleiter sur le dialecte alémanique montre tout à fait que la « volonté culturelle » national-socialiste en Alsace se souciait en fait fort peu de maintenir le particularisme du peuple alsacien, même lorsque les responsables ne cessaient de l'affirmer. Il est dit dans une circulaire que « les parlers locaux (dialectes) représentent, eux aussi, un indubitable obstacle à l'évolution de notre peuple vers l'unité de la nation ». (Kettenacker 1978, 57) (Hühnenburg 1952, 875).<sup>181</sup>

The German Reich had established its Cultural Law on 22 September 1933, and this was officially applied, rather late, in Alsace, but a regulation published on 4 January 1943, subsequent to which Mr Badermann received his long-awaited reply (above), clarified the aim of total cultural assimilation within the Reich. Alsace had, however, experienced the application of such policies long before the actual regulation was promulgated (Kettenacker 1978, 58).

I searched in the Archives of the Department of the Bas-Rhin,<sup>182</sup> for details of Alsatian theatre during WWII. There are two files. The theatre came under the Nazi department for Public Information and Propaganda. The first file, Ref AL 142 119, paq 3, was entitled *Alsatian Folk Theatre and Alsatian Homeland Theatre, formerly Alsatian Theatre* and dated 1941-44.

There was one note, the meaning of which was unclear without its accompanying contextual documentation, plus one letter, as follows:

---

<sup>181</sup> (The opinion of the Gauleiter concerning the Alemanic dialect demonstrates completely that the National Socialist "cultural inclination" in Alsace was little concerned with maintaining the individuality of the Alsatian people, even though those in charge never ceased to state the contrary. One circular states that "local forms of speech (dialects) also represent an indubitable obstacle to the evolution of our people towards the unity of the nation").

<sup>182</sup> 5 rue Fischart, Strasbourg. 13 May 2003.



From the ‘Chef der Zivilverwaltung im Elsass’ (Head of Civil Administration in Alsace), to the head of his ‘Abteilung Volksaufklärung und Propaganda’ (Department for Public Information and Propaganda).

Entitled – ‘betr. Elsässisches Heimattheater’ (concerning Alsatian Homeland Theatre)

Dated 24 January 1943

‘Der Chef der Zivilverwaltung im Elsass ist damit einverstanden, daß “Das Elsässische Heimattheater” endgültig genehmigt wird, wenn von der Aufführung von elsässischen Mundartstücken abgesehen wird.’ (The Head of Civil Administration in Alsace has definitively agreed to permit [plays in the style known as] Alsatian Homeland Theatre, provided they are not performed in the Alsatian dialect.)

The second file, ref AL 142 – 115, paq 3, entitled *Miscellaneous, Art and Science, Theatre Activities, General*, had three items noted on its contents list. None were there. The only content was a programme from the Baden, Germany, state theatre, for the season 1943/44. I can only conclude that some of the contents of these files have been removed by persons who were mentioned in them.

Kettenacker mentions a comment of the Gauleiter in April 1944, that ‘Il vaut mieux ne pas soulever le problème de dialecte actuellement parmi le publique.’ (... it would be better not to raise the question of the dialect at present among the public.) (1978, 69, endnote 133) (Hühnenburg 1952, 877).

The Gauleiter, in his ruling dated 4 January 1943, which pronounced quite clearly that ‘Der Entwicklung unseres Volkes zur einheitlichen Nation stehen zweifellos auch die Mundarten im Wege’ (It is without doubt that dialects stand in the way of the development of our people into a unified nation), sounded the intended death knell of the Alsatian language. He refers continually in his ruling to the need for all Alsatians to be

fluent in speaking the 'written language', giving evidence of the continued conception of two languages (Hühnenburg<sup>183</sup> 1952, 875,).

In the edition of the *SNN* on 15 October 1940 there was an announcement of free German language improvement classes for Alsatians. By the end of that year it was claimed that 25,000 people throughout Alsace were participating in these classes (Kettenacker 1978, 55). Politically, the Alsatian language was excluded by the civil government in Strasbourg.

On the basis of the evidence cited above and below, I can only assume that the 'dialect' used in Alsatian theatre during the Second World War must have been watered down to the extent that it became indistinguishable from High German. One could, of course, perform Glaswegian theatre in a home counties voice, but the value of the production might be called into doubt. Kettenacker considered that the dialect was in fact used in a condescending manner which held it up to ridicule (ibid 57).

There were regular radio broadcasts in 'Alsatian', but they were criticised because the language used was too Germanic.<sup>184</sup>

The famous Alsatian cabaretist and playwright, Germain Muller, who lived through the Nazi annexation, recounted on German television his experience of that period on the evening of 12 October 1976, as reported by Alfred Faessel in the *DNA* on 14 October 1976 (no page number), saying that the Alsatian dialect allows the whole region to preserve its identity, but this was abhorred by the German occupiers, who tried between 1940 and 1945 to impose German as the language of communication in Alsace.

Spontaneity and individuality were undesirable. Every field of endeavour, including the theatre, had to be meticulously organised and standardised by an offshoot of the Nazi

---

<sup>183</sup> Pen name of Fritz Spieser, WWII head of the *Volksbuchhandlung* (Peoples Book Company).

<sup>184</sup> Marcel Spegt. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.

Party, according to the National Socialist principles of Race, the Nation State and the Leader, and bolstered by family values and self-sacrifice.

As predicted in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*:

... no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behaviour ... murder kills only an individual ... Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at society itself. (Huxley 1932, 135).

### **The situation in the north of Alsace**

Dans son projet de fusion de l'Alsace avec le pays de Bade en Gau Oberrhein, le Gauleiter Robert Wagner ... avait élu Strasbourg comme capitale. Future metropole, Strasbourg devait s'élever au rang des grands foyers culturels et artistiques allemands ... (Bogen 1991, 74).<sup>185</sup>

I consider that contemporary newspapers are a good source of information, not necessarily because they state the truth, but they at least show what many people were persuaded to believe at the time, and in which particulars their behaviour was adjusted to meet the needs of the state. They also demonstrate the inconsistencies which result when one is trying to exercise excessive control over the minutiae of the everyday life of each citizen, as is demonstrated below.

The *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* (SNN), was the pre- and post-war German language title of the Strasbourg edition of the bilingual *Dernières Nouvelles de*

---

<sup>185</sup> (In his project for the fusion of Alsace with the region of Baden [on the other side of the Rhine] as the Gau of the Upper Rhine, Gauleiter Robert Wagner ... had chosen Strasbourg as his capital. As a future metropolis, Strasbourg was to be raised to the status of the other great German centres of culture and art ...)

*Strasbourg*,<sup>186</sup> whose presses were confiscated during the war, and used for the publication of the Nazi version, under that same German title.

In the BNUS I searched this publication, of which the pages were not always numbered, for the following periods, due to restricted availability, each period representing one roll of microfilm -

1 October to 30 November 1940,  
1 January to 28 February 1942,  
1 November to 30 December 1942,  
1 September to 23 November 1944.

I chose these as being representative of the beginning of the annexation period, the middle, and the end, up to 23 November 1944 (the last publication available), two weeks after which date (9 December 1944) I have a photo of my house, in the town of Haguenau, fifteen miles from the Rhine, where I have been based during this study, with an American tank standing on the pavement.

This newspaper, the *SNN*, covered mainly the northern half of Alsace, which includes Strasbourg. Several general principles were noticeable in this publication. Firstly, there was no mention at any time of the Church as a religious organisation, which had been important at all other periods, except where its buildings were relevant in articles concerning local architecture, such as an item on climbing up the tower of the church of St George, Haguenau.<sup>187</sup> Therefore there would not have been the previous religious influence on the theatre in Alsace during this period. On the second day of the Nazi *SNN*'s publication (9 July 1940), page 6 had a photo of a celebration held in Strasbourg Cathedral in thanksgiving for the armistice in France. But, again, this had no religious significance, except for the use of the building for military purposes.

---

<sup>186</sup> Aline Martin, Strasbourg citizen. Personal interview. 20 Oct. 2004.

<sup>187</sup> *SNN*, weekend edition 16-17 Sep. 1944.

Bernard Wittmann states that:

Après l'annexion *de facto* de 1940 et sans perdre de temps, les nazis s'attaqueront de suite à l'Eglise qui demeure encore en Alsace la seule structure organisée qui puisse s'opposer à une mainmise totale du Parti sur l'individu et la société dans son ensemble. (2000 vol. III, 20).<sup>188</sup>

Secondly, in the periods which I examined, only one article appeared in the Alsatian language, which was a humorous dialogue between two characters, such as appears in the press nowadays on a weekly basis. However, this one article *D'r Güschtel un d'r Seppel* (Auguste and Joseph),<sup>189</sup> was unique, and presumably the differentiation which it accorded to Alsace was not appreciated by the contemporary rulers. High German was the language of the Nazi Party, and therefore of government and of social interaction.

Thirdly, no famous living Alsatian was featured, except for Nazi party officials. Several articles appeared about famous Alsatians who were safely dead for many years, and who could be cited as pan-Germanic, such as Oskar Jerschke, a German playwright who had settled in Alsace, and died poor and embittered under French rule in 1928.<sup>190</sup>

Fourthly, Alsace was not featured as a unit, but as part of the 'Upper Rhine', which included the territory on the other side of the river, with which Alsace was now combined, as in the article *Deutsches Elsass* (German Alsace).<sup>191</sup> Thus, in every respect, Alsace was treated as a part of the greater German empire, with articles such as *Weissenburgs urdeutscher Charakter* (Wissembourg's original German character).<sup>192</sup>

Fifthly, although in 1940 and 1942 there were many articles on the theatre and on culture in general, it was always on German culture, or on the German nature of Alsatian culture,

---

<sup>188</sup> (after the *de facto* annexation in 1940, and without losing time, the Nazis immediately attacked the Church, which remained, in Alsace, the only organised structure which could oppose the total control by the Nazi party over the individual and society as a whole.)

<sup>189</sup> *SNN*, p. 3, Saturday 3 Jan. 1942.

<sup>190</sup> *SNN*, p. 4, Friday 9 Jan. 1942.

<sup>191</sup> *SNN*, p. unnumbered, 20 Oct. 1940.

<sup>192</sup> *SNN*, p. 6, 8 Oct. 1940.

such as *Oberrheinische Kulturtage* (Upper Rhine Culture Days).<sup>193</sup> Famous actors who were based at the Strasbourg Municipal theatre were featured regularly in 1942, such as Wolf Gambke, and Herbert Gärtner,<sup>194</sup> but the latter was the only one born in Alsace and they all trained and gained fame in pre-war Germany.

Futhermore, one should mention that in the *SNN* everything that was reported was accorded the highest praise. Nothing was questioned, nothing 'could have been better if ...'. This indicates that anything that was contrary to the wishes of the Civil Government, which means the Nazi Party, was not mentioned. This is unfortunate for a researcher, who is interested in the opposing opinions in the debate that should have taken place, as well as in the cold facts which the Party wished to present.

In accordance with my working definition of 'political theatre' I find the broadest use of that medium during the Nazi period. The drama of the political monologue is widely used at party meetings, both indoor and outdoor. Street theatre is used in the form of parades, marches and outdoor manifestations of devotion and sacrifice to the cause. Formal indoor presentation of pan-Germanic culture features strongly during the early period of the war. However, to fill the theatres cheap tickets had to be distributed to schools and via Nazi organisations (Bogen 1991, 78, note 8). But the theatre is almost totally ignored in the *SNN* later in 1942 and in 1944, when the war effort became more important. An approved repertoire of patriotic plays, of opera and music recitals, was presented on a regular basis in the first half of the war. German language cinema was also used regularly for propaganda, for instruction, and for escapism. There were 101 cinemas in Alsace.<sup>195</sup> On 16 November 1940 there was a review of the film *Achtung ! Feind hört mit !* (Mind out ! Walls have ears !). Little Alsatian language cinema had ever existed, except for the film *D'r Herr Maire*, made in 1939, which was very anti-German.

---

<sup>193</sup> *SNN*, p. 3, 16 Oct. 1940.

<sup>194</sup> *SNN*, p. 3, 10 Jan. 1942.

<sup>195</sup> *SNN*, 27 Oct. 1940.

Goebbels used the cinema as an instrument of government, and knew the power of images over words. His films were very professional, and his directors knew how to touch the heart. They were particularly adept at using the *Heimatfilm* (Homeland Film) and *Blubo* (*Blut und Boden*) (Blood and Land) genres, which would ensure financial success as well as putting the message across.<sup>196</sup> Particularly well-known in this genre was Leni Riefenstahl, although she was working on a pan-Germanic rather than an Alsatian scale.

As stated previously above, local Alsatian ‘Heimat Theater’ was not officially permitted in Alsace until 22 January 1943 (Departmental Archive ref 142AL119), but even then it had to be presented in High German, and not in Alsatian. Political theatre, music and song, were fostered by the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth),<sup>197</sup> by the Bund Deutscher Mädel (the German Girls League),<sup>198</sup> and, above all, by the KdF movement.<sup>199</sup>

As Kettenacker notes:

La grande tradition du théâtre alsacien dialectal souffrit ... car on l’obligea à coopérer très étroitement avec la formation national-socialiste « la Force par la Joie » ; aussi, les pièces représentées devaient-elles exprimer « l’adhésion inébranlable à l’Allemagne ». Un certain nombre de pièces beaucoup jouées et très appréciées naguère furent interdites de ce fait, le Gauleiter, qui n’était pas porté sur la plaisanterie, ne tolérant pas que l’on se moquât le moins du monde de l’Allemagne et des Allemands en Alsace. La polémique envers la France en revanche n’en fut que davantage favorisée. (Kettenacker 1978, 56).<sup>200</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 16 May 2003.

<sup>197</sup> *SNN*, p. 6, 20 Oct., and p. 14, on 17 Nov. 1940.

<sup>198</sup> *SNN*, 3 Jan. 1942.

<sup>199</sup> *SNN*, 11 Jan. 1942.

<sup>200</sup> (The great tradition of Alsatian dialect theatre suffered ... because it was obliged to cooperate very strictly with the National Socialist Kraft durch Freude movement. Consequently, the plays produced had to express ‘unwavering attachment to Germany’. A certain number of plays formerly produced and very much appreciated were banned on this basis. The Gauleiter, not given to humour, would not tolerate anybody mocking Germany and the Germans in Alsace. Arguments against France, however, were therefore favoured.)

However, a certain degree of scepticism was evident among the population, who circulated the well-known couplet ‘Auf dem Feld und auf der Heide, verlier ich Kraft durch Freude’ (In the fields and on the heather, I lose strength through joy).<sup>201</sup>

There were annual *Hausmusik* (Home Music) weeks in which people were encouraged to make their own small scale musical entertainments, as reported in an *SNN* article on 15 November 1942.

### ***The dramatic political monologue***

I have shown in Section 4.1, on page 130, above, how political speeches by Hitler were aspects of the theatre in its wider sense, and how the confirming responses of ‘Heil Hitler’ can be compared with the ‘Amen’ responses of the faithful in church services. It is a form in which favours can be bestowed on the worthy, prizes awarded, and it has features of the modern-day Oscar awards in Hollywood.

The dramatic political monologue form of drama can be demonstrated locally by the report of the speech by the infamous Gauleiter, Robert Wagner, reported in the *SNN* on 16 November 1942, when he spoke to a reported 10,000 Nazi party members on the ‘Kampf bis zum Endsieg’ (fight until final victory):

Die gestrige Generalmitgliederversammlung der NSDAP in Strassburg wurde zu einer wuchtigen Demonstration nationalsozialistischer Kampfbereitschaft. Rund 10 000 Mitglieder der Partei, des Opferrings und der Parteigliederung erlebten in der Markthalle eine mitreißende Rede des Gauleiters Robert Wagner, der sich eingehend mit aktuellen elsässischen Fragen auseinandersetzte, um dann ein von unerschütterlicher Siegeszuversicht getragenes nüchternes Bild der militärischen

---

<sup>201</sup> My previous knowledge, confirmed in a Personal interview with Jean Potier, 3 March 2003.



und politischen Lage Deutschlands um [und ?] seiner Verbündeten zu Beginn des vierten Kriegswinters zu entwickeln.<sup>202</sup>

The remainder of that report shows a blurring of the meaning of ‘spin-doctoring’ and propaganda. By the end of the war such performances required the essential factor in audience participation, that of the suspension of disbelief, which was being stretched to its limits.

Gauleiter Wagner’s performances were made easier by his abandoning his original family name of Backfisch, meaning fried fish, or colloquially, a pretty young girl. After the war he was tried, and shot on 14 August 1946 (Le Marec 1988, 98).

At the beginning of the annexation period, when German victory looked inevitable, it must have been easy to believe the propaganda. However, as the war proceeded and the likelihood of winning receded, belief in success must have progressively diminished. For audiences to have participated in the drama of charismatic political monologue the suspension of disbelief was essential. The suspension of disbelief is one of the essential elements in establishing a dramatic liaison between the text, the performer and audience.

Nothing was available which might provoke thought or discussion, other than how to increase the war effort and to show one’s devotion to the leader, and therefore to eventual success in defeating Germany’s enemies. Political monologue, either spoken, written or visual, is the ideal medium for propaganda. It is a one-way message system, which appears to be more efficient than a two-way system, as its only permitted result is enthusiastic reception by the target audience. Two-way systems allow for questioning

---

<sup>202</sup> (Yesterday’s general assembly of the Nazi party in Strasbourg became a mighty demonstration of national socialist readiness for battle. The approximately 10,000 members of the party, the Opferring [a junior Nazi party] and associates were carried away with enthusiasm by the speech of the Gauleiter, Robert Wagner, who set forth in great detail the situation concerning present day questions regarding Alsace, in order to instill a tenacious confidence in victory, thus developing a clearheaded picture of the military and political situation of Germany and her allies at the beginning of the fourth winter of the war.)

and for doubts to be raised. But it is only in answering doubts that genuine conviction can be established in the mind of the receiver.

Among other similar examples, the *SNN* on 12 September 1944 carried a report of a speech by Kreisleiter Hauß, who was the district leader of the Nazi party in Haguenau, given to local political leaders, in which he stated that ‘Wir haben den unbedingten Glauben, daß wir diesen Kampf mit dem Sieg beenden werden’ (We have an unconditional belief that we shall end this war victorious). Within three months most of Alsace had been liberated. Hauß himself was condemned to death in absentia in 1947, but lived in Germany until 1965 (Andrés 2003, 191). He was born during the first German annexation, and christened Renatus. During the inter-war years, as René Hauss, he was an active autonomist, arrested and maltreated by the French Government.<sup>203</sup> From 1940 he became Renatus again. Hauß had been one of the later recipients of the inspired but dreadful hoax perpetrated upon the German people in the 1930s, a people who wanted and needed to believe the simple slogans and promises made by the Nazi leaders. Such a firm belief was now essential for those in Alsace whose life depended upon final victory.

A problem for charismatic leaders, from the Führer down, is that they had to continue producing dramatic victories. Once they are unable to produce continual evidence of success the theatre of war becomes a ‘theatre’ of war.

### ***Theatre performances***

In the beginning of the annexation period, in October and November 1940 there was a great emphasis on German culture and the theatre. Regular reports appeared of cultural performances in Strasbourg and in other parts of the Gau, including Baden and Freiburg,

---

<sup>203</sup> Bernard Wittmann. Personal email interview. 29 Oct. 2004. Karl Hauss, father of René, was one of the founders of the TAS, with Stoskopf.

such as the review of *Tristan and Isolde* at the Freiburg Municipal Theatre.<sup>204</sup>

Strasbourg's Municipal Theatre had closed when the population was evacuated, and was reopened on 16 November 1940 with a succession of visiting troupes from Berlin and from neighbouring German cities. It closed from April to November 1941 for far-reaching structural improvements, paid for out of a large budget made available by Hitler. When it reopened it passed into the control of the Nazi Civil Government, with a new director, Ingolf Kuntz, who had been Goebbels' international cultural representative (Bogen 1991, 74).

All theatre during the annexation had to conform with National Socialist ideals, and retribution was swift in any cases where this was not observed. All did not go well in the 1942 season which included a scandalous opera production by an invited director, which was referred to as 'régie d'aliéné' (stage management by a lunatic) and 'une manifestation de culture bolchévique' (a manifestation of Bolshevik culture), and which was reported in the press throughout Germany. No details are available as to why the scandal arose. There was sometimes confusion due to the contradictory wishes of the Gauleiter, the Oberbürgermeister Ernst,<sup>205</sup> the Head of Propaganda Adolf Schmid, and Fritz Speiser<sup>206</sup> who was appointed Head of the Volksbuchhandlung (People's Book Company) in Strasbourg in 1941 (Kettenacker 1978, 69, footnote 136. Also Bogen 1991, 77).

Strangely, the Mulhouse newspaper, the *MTB*, in the south, reported on page 3, on 4 June 1941, that a performance had been given in Strasbourg, of *Der Pfingstmontag* (*Whitmonday*) written in the 'Alsatian' dialect in 1816 by Daniel Georg Arnold. The manner of reporting could have been considered a criminal offence in 1941. It mentions the pre-war name of the group as being the 'Alsatian Theatre', it says that the performance was in the 'Orangerie', a banned French word for the renamed 'Stadtgarten',

---

<sup>204</sup> *SNN*, p. 6, 2 Oct. 1940.

<sup>205</sup> An Alsatian who went to Germany in 1918, who published from Berlin, the *Elsass Lothringen Heimatstimmen*, and who helped Alsatian refugees in Germany between the wars. (See also Section 2.2, page 46.)

<sup>206</sup> Spieser wrote *Tausend Brücken* under the pen name of Hühnenburg, published by the Hühnenburg Verlag (see Bibliography).

and it praises the ‘Alsatian dialect’.

Seit Monaten wartete man sehnsüchtig auf die Wiedereröffnung des in die ‘Strassburger Volksbühne’ umgewandelten Elsässischen Theaters; sie fand jetzt mit einer ausgezeichneten Aufführung ... statt ... das entzückende klassische Werk der elsässischen Dialektliteratur ... in der Strassburger Orangerie ...<sup>207</sup>

The emphasis on praising the vernacular is amazing in the circumstances, but it highlights that this all-pervasive system for controlling every detail of human activity seems to have had its loopholes, depending, presumably, upon the individuals concerned.<sup>208</sup> Laurence Rees states this more emphatically (2005, *passim*), demonstrating the chaos which ensued when the Nazi leadership competed with each other, in trying to apply the visionary speeches of Hitler to the realities of regional government.<sup>209</sup>

The Honorary President of the TAS told me on 14 November 2003 that the play had been presented by that group, in Alsatian, under their wartime incarnation as the Volksbühne. However, the leading actor was Wilhelm Kutter, from Stuttgart Radio. Stuttgart being in Baden, he may well have been familiar with the local dialect, which is close to Alsatian. It is therefore possible that the piece was actually performed purely in Alsatian, but my study of the situation leads me to doubt this.

By contrast, in the north of the region, the conformist *SNN*’s report of the same production, on 3 June 1941 praised the production and referred only to the new name of the ‘Volksbühne’. The production was in the ‘Stadtgarten’, and ‘aus dem Herzen des deutschen Elsasses kommende Absage an alles welsche Getue’ (from the heart of

---

<sup>207</sup> (For months we have been waiting longingly for the reopening of the Strasbourg People’s Theatre, which was the renamed Alsatian Theatre. It took place with an excellent performance ... The charming work of classical Alsatian dialect literature ... in the Strasbourg Orangerie.)

<sup>208</sup> In a review of a biography of Adolph Eichmann, in *Guardian Review*, p.7, 28 Aug. 2004, Chris Petit states that the author David Cesarani ‘takes the current position on the Third Reich as more muddle than efficiency’.

<sup>209</sup> Laurence Rees, writer and presenter of *The Nazis: a Warning from History*, BBC2 television, 7.35pm, 7 May 2005, and the book of the same title, with historical script consultant Professor Ian Kershaw, Sheffield University.

German Alsace's future rejection of all those French mannerisms). In this it conformed to the contemporary policy of a pan-Germanic approach to news reporting in Alsace.

## Cabaret in World War Two

The German distinction between *Kabarett* (satirical, often political, reviews) and *Cabaret* (humour, song and dance), was not imported into Alsace. Only the latter was on offer, and the political messages included in productions by the *Hitler Jugend* were not entertaining, and these were only attended by those whose livelihood depended upon conformity.<sup>210</sup>

Surprisingly, satirical references were still made on stage in Munich, in Germany itself, where cabaretist Ferdel Weiss, known as *Weisspferdel* (Little White Horse) constantly parodied the Nazis, and was frequently arrested and released due to his popularity. Such mercy was unlikely to be shown to an Alsatian.<sup>211</sup> Similarly Karl Valentin, another Munich cabaretist, wrote and performed sketches which parodied the Nazis, one of which included the line, while giving the Nazi salute 'Heil ! – oh, what's his name ?'.<sup>212</sup> The inter-war years had stifled any latent topical political satire, and perhaps the newer Nazi regime in Alsace was not as confident and relaxed as that in Munich.

The only evidence of cabaret performances during this period comes from articles advertising vaudeville style cabarets in Strasbourg, *Die Mühle* (The Mill)<sup>213</sup> and *Heitz*<sup>214</sup>, which both offered international singing and dancing groups, and the *Rio Rote Saal* (the Red Rio Room). My contact, Jean Potier, told me on 30 June 2003 of another well-known *Trinkhalle* (Bar) with entertainment by the name of *Schirmann's* which was advertised in the *SNN* on 1 September 1941.

---

<sup>210</sup> Confirmed in conversations with Alsatian citizen Jean Potier.

<sup>211</sup> Jean Potier. Personal interview. 30 June 2003.

<sup>212</sup> Joseph Schmittbiel. Personal interview. 6 Feb. 2004.

<sup>213</sup> *SNN*. 4 Nov. 1942.

<sup>214</sup> *SNN*. 13 Nov. 1942.

## The situation in the south of Alsace

While political street theatre, the political monologue, the cinema, and other forms of entertainment were used in the same manner in the south as in the north, and visiting theatre groups from across the Rhine presented pan-Germanic culture, native Alsatian theatre was dealt with differently in the south. Considering the same five principles which I discovered in the *SNN*, for the north of Alsace, the reporting in the *MTB* in the south, while respecting the overall Nazi policy, showed a different picture.

I studied the microfilm records of the *MTB* for the following periods.

1 November to 31 December 1940

1 May to 31 August 1941

1 January to 31 December 1942

1 January to 30 November 1944

Firstly there was mention of the Church, for example on page 7, on 1 May 1941, there was recounted the history of a religious settlement at Saint Appolinaris in southern Alsace. On page 4, on 13 May 1941, an article included material on the preservation of church music. On the Sunday page on 13 July 1941 a poem entitled *Pflugschar in heiliger Hand* (The Ploughshare in Holy Hands), included the line 'Gott pflugt sich die Erde neu' (God ploughs the soil anew). Also, on 16 May 1941, changes to the dates of church festivals were announced. On page 3, on 3 June 1941 there were articles about Whitsun. Church music was also being cared for, and its history recounted.<sup>215</sup> The *MTB* article on page 5, 3 November 1940, *Religiöse Freiheit im Grossdeutschen Reich* (Religious freedom in the Greater German Reich) carried an explanation of the independent position of the church under the German state, and individual freedom of

---

<sup>215</sup> *MTB*. p. 4, 13 May 1941, and p. 7, 1 May 1941.

worship. There was a Ministry of Religious Affairs. The church was reminded of its responsibility to foster the (Nazi) principles of race, engagement in greater German communal responsibility, and the maintenance of order. Naturally, as with statements by governments in any period, we have to read between all the lines.

Secondly, there were numerous references to the Alsatian language, with, on page 3, on 1 May 1941, an article entitled *E Strissle Maigleckle ?* (A bunch of Mayflowers ?), and a series of weekly articles on *Elsässische Redensarten* (Alsatian sayings). However, Kettenacker considers similar articles in the *SNN* were intended to ridicule the dialect and the Alsatian mentality (Kettenacker 1978, 57). There was continual reference to the Alsatian language in reports on the Mulhouse Volksbühne (People's Theatre), which was to present Homeland Theatre, although this may have been a smokescreen to hide the intention to 'purify' the language used. On 16 May 1941, on page 3, an article had an Alsatian title 'Morn isch Kilwe z'Durni' (Tomorrow is a village fête in Durningen). Paradoxically, the report on page 3, of the *MTB* on 16 July 1941, which I have quoted above, confirming that the language of Alsace is German, goes on to assert that due to the acceptance of the Alsatian dialect as a medium of literary expression the Upper Rhine was once more shown to have a cultural unity, at least for the majority of the Alsatian people. An *MTB* article on 22 December 1940 (page 5) wrote of the inter-war imposition by the French of their language upon Alsace. Concerning children coming out of their newly French-speaking schools, 'Hatte der Junge die Schultüre hinter sich geschlossen, so redete er munter sein liebes Elsässerditsch' (As soon as the schoolchild had the school gates closed behind him, he happily spoke his beloved Alsatian German) (ibid).

However, the *MTB* on page 3, on 16 July 1941, reported on 'Die Sprache als geistiges Schicksal' (The language as spiritual destiny), and noted that 'Die Sprache eines Volkes ist sein Geist' (The language of a people is its soul). This was a quotation from nineteenth century Alsatian teacher Andreas Ulrich. 'Er meinte damit die deutsche Sprache im Elsass' (He meant the German language in Alsace). The report further emphasizes '... die Sprache des linken Oberrheins die deutsche ist' (...the language of the left hand side of the Upper Rhine [i.e., Alsace], which is German).

The further inconsistency in the situation becomes apparent in the *MTB* article on page 4 on 21 August 1941, showing its dedication to the cause and celebrating one year of publication under the directorship of Nazi Party member Rössler. A photo of the celebration shows Kreisobmann (Nazi District Chairman) Weiss, flanked by the company's apprentices in Hitler Youth uniforms.

Thirdly, in the publications of the *MTB* which I searched, there was an article celebrating the fiftieth birthday of a poet from Mulhouse, Paul Schneider, with two of his poems in High German (page 3, 5 June 1941). And on 7 August 1941 there was an article celebrating the 65 birthday of poet Hans Karl Abel, in the Munster valley.

Fourthly, reference was sometimes made to Alsace's unique character, without emphasising the region's part in Greater Germany. A report on a lecture on '*Das Volkslied im Elsass*' (*The folksongs of Alsace*) (page 3, 22 May 1941) was entitled '*Ein Kernland deutscher Musikforschung*' (*[Alsace -] A centre of German music research*). On page 3, on 23 July 1941 an article was entitled '*Elsässisches Volkstum im Sprichwort – Eine volkskundliche Plauderei*' (*The Alsatian character in proverbs – A folkloric chinwag*).

Fifthly, among articles such as *Das Deutsche Grosse Welttheater* (*The Great German World Theatre*) there were also articles on Alsatian folk theatre, which was taken firmly under control by the Nazi Party and by the KdF movement, as described below. However, this was still subject to continual references to the culture of the Upper Rhine, rather than of Alsace.

It is regrettable that due to the differences of memories among interviewees, reported in this thesis, it is not clear whether the Alsatian language was consistently used by the newly reformed Volksbühne (Peoples Theatre). I suspect that, due to the difficulty of exercising control on the details of the group's activities, the resulting productions were a mixture of Alsatian and High German.



## Theatre performances

The *MTB* on 23 November 1940 carried an article on page 13 concerning the reopening of the Municipal Theatre, ending with the words ‘... die erste Spielzeit des deutschen Theaters im deutschen Mülhausen’ (... the first season of the German theatre in German Mulhouse). This was followed in later periods with exhortations to the public to attend, and offering special seat prices. An article in the *MTB* on 18 July 1941 encourages people to attend the People’s Theatre, pointing out how little the tickets cost. On the next day there was a report on cheap season tickets if one joined the ‘Kraft durch Freude Theatre Club’. I was assured by one of my interviewees that Alsatians would not have attended German theatre during the war.<sup>216</sup>

On page 7, 1 May 1941 there was a call to all those who had been involved in the various pre-war Alsatian theatre groups, to attend a meeting in Mulhouse to set up the new Mülhauser Volksbühne (Mulhouse People’s Theatre). The appeal went to ‘alle jene, die durch die Liebe zu unserem Elsass sich mit uns verbunden fühlen’ (all those who feel united with us through their love of our Alsace). Unusually, Alsace continued to be promoted when the meeting was reported on 5 May 41 (*MTB*, page 6), under the title *Ein Hort der Pflege elsässischen Volkstums* (*A sanctuary for the maintenance of Alsatian customs and traditions*). The previous five theatre groups were now combined, under the control of the KdF movement, under its Commissar-Leader Reiner Schaffar who confirmed that Mundartbühne (Dialekt Theater) had awoken like Sleeping Beauty. ‘Regional People’s Education Warden’ Loose stated that French culture had collapsed, but that this region had maintained and cared for the German language. Great care must be exercised to ensure that only those plays were chosen which promoted the National Socialist cause. People’s Theatre would serve the Alsatian people in respecting the dialect and keeping it pure. It would be the link between the nation state and the people and the breeding ground of new words. They were given a hall in the suburbs to rehearse

---

<sup>216</sup> Jean Potier. Personal interview. 30 June 2003.

in, and their job was to play in the villages, in Alsatian. The municipal theatre in Mulhouse housed a German group who played in High German.<sup>217</sup>

But I found no reports of productions of Dialekt Theater being staged by the *Mulhouse People's Theatre*. However, a report in the conformist *SNN* (page 4 on Thursday 15 January 1942), rather than the more sympathetic *MTB*, in telling of a production by the amateur Colmar People's Theatre, of a popular childrens' Christmas play, *Peterchens Mondfahrt* (*Little Peter's Journey to the Moon*) by Clemens Schmalstich shows the official attitude. This took place in the Colmar Municipal Theatre, with all the technical work done by professionals of that theatre. The style of the article could be taken as condescending towards the regional language, and shows the desire to keep it under control. 'Daß der elsässischen Mundart dabei ein gut gewählter Platz – als Charakterisierung einiger Figuren – eingeräumt war, ohne ihn zu breit werden zu lassen, trug zur Unmittelbarkeit des Spiels bei und gab den Laienspielern freiere Entfaltungsmöglichkeit.'<sup>218</sup>

This latter comment is interesting when we remember that the cast were getting their own back by always having blue, white and red elements in the décor of their productions, as noted in Section 4.4, page 166, above.<sup>219</sup>

It is evident that the Nazi party in southern Alsace had decided to harness the power of Alsatian Homeland theatre to entertain and enlighten the people in line with National Socialist principles, and that it was considered that sufficient control could be exercised, and that a sufficient repertoire could be created and supervised for this purpose. The concept of purity had crept into the arena of the Alsatian language, which is notable for its enormous variety, and lack of anything related to Aryan conformity. And its borrowings from French would have given Hitler many times the problems which de Gaulle had decades later, in trying to de-Anglicise the French language.

---

<sup>217</sup> Pierre Kretz, playwright, director. Personal interview. 30 July 03.

<sup>218</sup> (The fact that the Alsatian dialect was skillfully used to add character to some of the parts, without letting it get too broad, added to the reality of the play, and gave freedom of expression to the amateur actors.)

<sup>219</sup> René Freytag, President of Alsatian Theatre of Mulhouse. Personal interview. 4 Dec. 2003.

In the *MTB* on page 4, on 3 June 1941, is the report of a one-week orientation course in Germany for those involved in the Volksbühne, in order to instill in them the correct outlook. At the end of the week a play which they had studied was produced, in High German, after which ‘... die Teilnehmer kehrten ... in ihre Heimatorte zurück, um dort weiter die Arbeit zu pflegen und sie [sic]<sup>220</sup> in den Dienst der NS-Gemeinschaft “Kraft durch Freude”, und der ganzen Volksgemeinschaft zu stellen.’<sup>221</sup>

Articles about visiting German theatre groups also appeared, such as an appearance by the Karlsruhe Theatre, in Mulhouse.<sup>222</sup> Nine German language cinemas in the Mulhouse region regularly advertised at this period (eg, *MTB* 3 May 1941). Also, the Zirkus Althoff (The Althoff Family Circus) which was claimed to embody a great German circus tradition, played in Mulhouse from 6 May 1941.<sup>223</sup>

In the last two years of the war, references to entertainments of any kind in Alsace become fewer and fewer.

## **After World War Two**

The end of World War Two left Alsace, as well as the rest of continental Europe, in a state of chaos. Once more the situation for Alsations was a complete reversal of the temporary normality which Naziism had imposed. One amazing positive feature was the almost immediate resurgence of the popular theatre.

## **Dialekt Theater**

Dialekt Theater started again in Strasbourg on 22 October 1945 with a production of ‘*D’Wunderros*’ (The Miracle of the Rose), a celebratory play dedicated to the construction of the rose window in Strasbourg Cathedral. This was a suitable symbol of

---

<sup>220</sup> A grammatical error. ‘sie’ (they) should be ‘sich’ (themselves). ‘sich’ not to be confused with ‘sic’.

<sup>221</sup> (... the participants returned home ... to carry on the good work, and to offer themselves in service to the National Socialist Kraft durch Freude movement and to the whole community.)

<sup>222</sup> *MTB*. p. 3, 15 May 1941.

<sup>223</sup> *MTB*. p. 4, 8 May 1941.

patriotism in a period when the Alsatian language was starting to come under a barrage of fire from a new direction – that of Paris.

Henceforth the non-denominational Federation of Alsatian Theatres, founded in 1902, and the Association of Rhineland Theatre Groups, which grew out of the Catholic Avant Garde du Rhin in 1991, would take up again the task of continuing the tradition which by the end of the century would come under the criticism of being outdated. A problem stated to me by several groups in the year 2003 was that their audiences want to see new plays, but the plays must be on the same themes as the old ones, which makes it difficult to treat modern or controversial topics.

Alsatian Dialekt Theater had, both before and during World War Two, lost its role of satirising the government of the day, and it did not wish, in the unfavourable climate after the war, to take up that role again. But this was the very element which had been so successful under the first German administration in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which, according to Gall had been its strong point (Gall 1998, 54). In 1900 there was a lack of, but also a desire for, parody of the contemporary political situation, and there was also a government in power, which until 1914 was liberal enough to permit such parody provided it did not actually cause disturbances in theatres. The role of contemporary parody was inherited, after 1945, by the cabarets, firstly the *Bàràbli*, and then the *Choucrouterie* and other, itinerant, groups.

Édouard Kutna, writing in 1995, recalls the pièces patriotiques, with men playing the few female roles, and claims that mixed roles on stage started only in the 1950s, associated with the introduction of melodrama. In the early 1960s performances were frequently given before audiences of only thirty or thirty-five. When humour was introduced with younger roles the audiences increased (Kutna, 1995, 16-17).

Gall also refers to what became the:

‘... hiatus que marque mai soixante-huit dans l’histoire des mentalités. Le théâtre populaire passa de plus en plus pour un facteur de défense et de preservation du dialecte’. (1998, 56).<sup>224</sup>

While seeking to adapt the tradition to current expectations, the audiences at the TAS doubled in the late 1960s, and the group increasingly played in Germany. By 1981 the season brought in an average audience of 800 per performance (ibid, 57).

### **Patriotic Theatre**

Immediately at the end of World War Two, there was an outpouring of *pièces patriotiques* (patriotic plays), which were no doubt a necessary part of the healing process, of coming to terms with the horrors of the recent past.

The patriotic plays seem to fall under three headings.

Firstly, those which openly depict the brutality of war, though not necessarily of the war just ended, such as *Barbara*, by Philippe Hoehn (1950). Of the 28 *pièces patriotiques* in the card index of the BNUS all were written in the period 1945 to 1950, and eleven depict scenes from parallel wars. *Barbara* deals with the excesses of the Thirty Years War, from the Catholic viewpoint, in which the wife of the hero, in trying to save him, is captured by the Protestant *Evangelische Union*, has her eyes put out and her tongue cut off. She dies, melodramatically on stage, and a chapel is built to St Barbara. Her husband inflicts her fate upon her killer. The play includes a *Malgré Nous* who is Protestant, but was forced to fight. He deserts to help the Catholics and is spared, but remains a *Ketzer* (heretic). The Protestants are depicted as evil bloodthirsty, disease-carrying mindless assassins. It is interesting that, at this date, the list of characters, the stage directions, and three pages of introduction are all in High German.

---

<sup>224</sup> (... hiatus which May '68 represents in the history of people's mentalities. Popular theatre increasingly became a factor in the defence and preservation of the dialect)

Secondly, there are plays which parody wartime experiences, such as *de Nej Fahne* (The New Flag), by Frédéric Lutzinger (1946). and *D'r Michel müess in d'Bardej* (Michel must join the [Nazi] party), by François Froh (1946). In the former, sub-titled *E luschedichi Scene üss d'r Schwowezyt* (A comedy from the Boche period), the council of a small commune is meeting to plan the reception of a new swastika flag from the Nazi party. The mayor, who is simply trying to help his town survive, has to persuade his councillors, each of whom has a very good reason to be elsewhere, to turn up and take part. This involves bribing them with access to the town's supply of firewood. The amount involved increases as the degree of participation required increases. It is still very amusing. In this work all stage directions are in Alsatian.

Thirdly, those which blend both of these elements, in a more global style, such as *Enfin ... Redde m'r nimm devun* ( Well ... don't let's talk about that any more), written in 1949 by cabaretist Germain Muller. For the first time the errors on both sides are shown, and the divided loyalties of ordinary folk are pinpointed, showing that nobody is a hero. We simply do what we have to in order to make what we can of our lives. Tragedy is heightened by humour, and vice versa. The family depicted keeps two flags, and they mistakenly bring out the swastika when the French liberators arrive. The local Nazi *Blockleiter* lives in the apartment above the anti-hero's family. But the latter's wife has been hiding refugees in the attic, for which he receives a decoration after the war. He knew nothing about it, but the whole neighbourhood knew, having been told by the *Blockleiter's* wife. This is the best known modern Alsatian play, but many people will not act in it, and many will not go to see it, as it recalls raw memories.<sup>225</sup> I have only seen modern editions of this work, in which all except the text is in French.

---

<sup>225</sup> As recounted to me by Actor/Director Raymond Bitsch, concerning his production of this play at Achenheim on 22 Nov. 2002, which I attended.

## Alsatian Miracle Plays

As stated previously, of the Alsatian plays in the card-index catalogue of the older works in the BNUS 66% of the entries are miracle plays. They were a retreat from the traditional anti-authoritarian stance of the Alsatian language theatre, in the face of French nationalism and anti-Alsatian attitudes in Alsace and the rest of France.

At Christmas time in particular, miracle plays have at times formed an important part of the entertainment repertoire in Alsace, not only for children. They have been extensively analysed by Alsatian scholar Eve Cerf, as described in section 4.4, from page 155, above. One could go so far as to read political motives into the stories, which include hunting, oppression, a voyage into the ‘world beyond’, resurrection and the character of the *Kristkindel*. However for the purpose of this study, the importance of these plays in the history of Alsatian language theatre lies elsewhere.

After World War Two these plays were important, as they had been after 1918. Then, as in 1945, the Alsatian language had to bear the burden of being, for the majority of French people, once again ‘the language of the enemy’. Any contemporary political satire of the current government in the Alsatian theatre therefore might have carried a double stigma at a time of French nationalism and victorious rejoicing. In 1918, ‘Pour survivre, le TAS dut s’imposer une autocensure et perdit l’esprit frondeur de ses débuts’<sup>226</sup> (Cerf 1998, 69). The Miracle plays enabled a defensive position to be established which would not offend the political authorities.

The success of these miracle plays after World War Two ensured their continuity as part of the repertoire:

Après une période de latence qui s’étend jusqu’en 1970, le Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg crée des contes nouveaux qui reproduisaient sur un mode mineur la

---

<sup>226</sup> (In order to survive, the Alsatian Theatre of Strasbourg (the TAS) had to impose censorship upon itself, and it lost its original anti-authoritarian spirit.)

structure des textes anciens. Les gentils héros de ces pièces sont à l'image de l'enfant véhiculée par la société dominante. (ibid).<sup>227</sup>

The themes of such plays are undoubtedly religious, by which they risked the possibility of exacerbating religious divisions. However, much more at stake was the regional identity and the continued existence of the Alsatian language theatre as a whole. On the other hand, the 'pièces patriotiques' of the immediate post-war period needed no justification, and their presentation in Alsatian reinforced the patriotic stance which was essential at that period.

#### **4.5 The influence of the Church on the theatre in Alsace**

My working definition of politics in Section 4.3, page 131, above, being that it concerns activities which seek to exercise influence over the way other people think and act, I feel that it is legitimate to investigate the extent to which the church has exercised influence over the theatre in Alsace, as I have partly done in preceding sections. The theatre is a potentially powerful medium for questioning the establishment and spreading discontent, so it would not be unusual for an organisation which depends upon the hierarchy of respect, and which supports other Alsatian tenets, such as the family, and conformity of belief, to wish to preserve such beliefs in the face of the progressive breakdown of these fundamental values.

We learn from written histories of the theatre that it began in the church and gradually moved to the courtyard in front of the church building before taking off into other venues, before other audiences. Jung confirms that this was so in Alsace (Jung 2001, 11). Deck tells us that Passion Plays were particularly popular in the fifteenth century (1948, 10), and they are still written and produced today. I was offered a part in one written by

---

<sup>227</sup> (Following a period of marking time, which stretched as far as 1970, the Alsatian Theatre of Strasbourg created new fables which reproduced in a lesser fashion the ancient texts. The amiable heroes of these plays are in the image of the child exalted by the dominant society)



Raymond Bitsch in 2003. So we should not be surprised if the influence of the church has remained palpable, although diminishing, to this day.

On asking those involved in parish theatre groups about the influence of the church in their activities I found that some considered the question to be rather strange, as if this situation were being questioned as being not normal. It is rather like asking someone ‘Do you consider it normal to breathe?’ If you have been brought up in a certain all-enveloping environment you could think it unusual if an outsider proposes that this context might not represent normality.

I interviewed the President of the Catholic Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin, which links local theatre groups, and which was ten years old in 2001. It grew out of the one hundred years old Elsässischer Turnerbund (Alsatian Gymnastic Association), which, in 1918 became the Avant Garde du Rhin (The Vanguard of the Rhine), which is a federation of sports and cultural associations. I was told that it has 186 groups in Alsace, and there are forty more which are in another federation, plus others which are not federated. They hold 1,000 events per year, with a total audience of 210,000. The association holds a library of 1,600 scripts of plays which local groups can call upon. In their 2001/2002 catalogue there were approximately 100 living playwrights listed, mostly producing comedies.<sup>228</sup> In 2003/2004 I counted 109. Such an increase, if continued, would lead to there being 155 of these in ten years time, which, with the demand for plays, is not by any means impossible.

According to the Haguenau town quarterly magazine *Haguenau Infos*,<sup>229</sup> the two Catholic parishes in the town set up gymnastics clubs in 1908, in response to the ‘... souci du clergé Catholique de controller la jeunesse; elles sont en outre un peu suspectes aux yeux des autorités allemandes qui les jugent trop francophiles.’ (... the wish of the clergy to control young people; they were additionally treated with suspicion by the German

---

<sup>228</sup> Paul Sutter. Personal interview. 7 Nov. 2001.

<sup>229</sup> No 56, (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2003) 6.

authorities who considered them too Francophile). This corresponds with the anti-Catholic stance of the German administration noted elsewhere in this thesis.

The controlling influence of the Catholic church over amateur theatre in Alsace was a natural part of their wish to control behaviour in general. Traditionally, theatre groups were promoted by the church, but only as single-sex activities, separate groups existing for men and women. Boys and girls went to separate schools, and in church men sat on the right and women on the left.<sup>230</sup> And they were not permitted to appear together on stage. Many athletic clubs and theatre groups were set up around 1900 by the Catholic church, partly to increase their influence and partly to increase their funds. Local theatre groups are frequently still attached to and named after their parish churches, and they rehearse in the church hall.<sup>231</sup>

The President of the Catholic Théâtre Alsacien St Nicholas in Haguenau confirmed that theatre groups which consisted of both sexes were the birthplace of relationships which continued to flourish after the last night of the production.<sup>232</sup> The fact that Protestant pastors could marry and have children may have contributed towards the fact, already established above, that their Church did not concern itself with what their parishioners got up to if they went on the stage. Is it possible that the Catholic church was still fighting a rearguard action of Counter-Reformation ?

Conformity was required. Even in recent years, as I was told, in a theatre group in Haguenau one man was asked to leave, by the now mixed-gender group, because he was considered homosexual, and in the same group a woman was asked to leave because she was divorced.<sup>233</sup>

The single-sex activity may be due to the fact that cultural life in Alsatian villages and towns seems to have centred around the Gymnastic and Athletic Clubs, known as

---

<sup>230</sup> Raymond Bitsch, Vice President of Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. Personal interview. 5 Mar. 2003.

<sup>231</sup> Pierre Kretz, playwright, producer. Personal interview. 2 Mar. 2003.

<sup>232</sup> Francis Walter. Personal interview. 20 Nov. 2003.

<sup>233</sup> Joseph Schmittbiel. Personal interview. 15 March 03.

*Bengele*. Alsatians whom I have asked say this name may refer to the batons which they used in their exercises. However, *Bengel* is a colloquial German word for a boy, which seems to me to be a likely derivation. The hall in which they met was called the *Bengelesaal*. These were male activities. One of many examples was *En Amerikaner uf'm Winmarik* (An American at the Wine Market), by A. Walter, first performed by the Société de Gymnastique "Olympia" in the Town Hall at Barr, on 15 March 1930.

An analysis which I did showed that the publishers of plays, *Editions Théâtrales Salvator* at Mulhouse, in 1950, had 56 plays in its *Herren-Bühne* (Mens' Theatre) collection, featuring 412 male roles, plus one girl in one play. The few girls' roles were usually as messengers, or as waitresses in the inn, where the action often took place, and these were usually played by men.

I was frequently told that it was a traditional feature of Alsatian theatre that women would not normally take part. Perhaps this is due to the widely held view that the theatre was not a suitable activity for ladies, and in a village community the uniformity of opinion might damage the reputation of those participating. This is strange, as during the two world wars, women had taken on roles in real life which were traditionally reserved for men. However, plays were frequently centred around inns, which allowed the many entrances and exits required, and although women would be serving in inns, they were not to be found drinking and playing cards in public. Also, women only obtained the vote in 1945, so they had no part in actions where important decision-making processes took place.

Possibly due to the influence of the Catholic church in supporting such groups, love does not feature seriously in the repertoire, even where, as in *D'r Herr Maire* it is part of a farce where a stereotypical young couple need to defeat the unreasonable opposition of the father. There is no passionate dialogue, and no passionate activity in Alsatian language theatre. It was common, until the 1950s in small town and village theatre groups, for the curé to read all scripts proposed for production, to ensure that they were suitable. Even now I think that self-censorship must exist, in that I have never seen any

kind of comment on, nor criticism of, religious values on stage, even in the outspoken Choucrouterie cabaret in Strasbourg.

In Sélestat the name ‘Cercle Catholique Aloysia’, as reported in the *DNA* of Sunday 6 November 1977, referred to the church theatre group, which had been known originally as the *katholischer Jugendverein* (the Catholic Youth Club), with the Abbé Oswald as its ‘Spiritual Director’. Members were previously obliged to leave if they married.

The playwright and director Guy Lafuente told me that in the period after World War Two, the curés considered Sunday sports to be evil, and they dominated theatre from 1945 until 1962. But after the public unrest of 1968 new theatre groups felt they could start up without church patronage and control. Also after 1968 there was a backlash against the prohibition on speaking Alsatian, and a need to return to forbidden roots.<sup>234</sup>

I was shown the archive of the *St Nicholas Alsatian Theatre Group* in Haguenau, by its chairman, Francis Walter. Their 1948 production was their first play with a woman in the cast. The curé was always on the organising committee. Such groups were normally attached to churches because the church had a hall where they could rehearse, and had the organisational expertise in obtaining an audience. The group, founded in 1908, produced its own Passion Play, in which the same person played Jesus from 1933 until 1963. Women were allowed to perform in this provided written permission was obtained from the diocese. This group did not perform under the KdF movement during World War Two.<sup>235</sup>

The Hagenauer Volksbühne whose director during World War Two was the Protestant Ortsgruppenleiter (Area Group Leader), named Deck, cooperated with the KdF to produce *'s Teschtament* (The Testament) in 1942.<sup>236</sup> This group was formed out of another association known previously as the *Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau*, a mixed

---

<sup>234</sup> Guy Lafuente, teacher, playwright, director, Assistant Mayor of Truchtersheim. Personal interview. 25 Nov. 2003.

<sup>235</sup> Francis Walter, President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau. Personal interview. 20 Nov. 2003.

<sup>236</sup> *SNN*. 23 Nov. 1942.

gender group, founded in 1922, whose secretary had been René Trabant, a campaigner for Alsatian values.<sup>237</sup>

The director of the Haguenau *Theater Grupp St. Georges* had played in this group from 1938. He stated that during the war they played in Alsatian, and toured in Baden Baden, and other German towns.<sup>238</sup> But he told me that they never discussed politics in the theatre group.

However, there must have been some considerable variation in the pattern of church control. In the publication *L'Alsamanach d'Huguette: 2002* (Huguette's Alsatian Almanach: 2002) an annual photo-calendar, there is a photograph on which there is the clear inscription on the photo itself, *Haguenau, le Théâtre Alsacien*, taken on stage, of a production in which there are six men and five women, one of whom has her arm around a man (possibly her husband). The date on the photo is 1922 (Dreikaus 2002, 27). This was of a different, non-religious, group, and it looks almost bawdy by comparison with photos of Catholic theatre groups. But this is presumably how the amateur theatre would have been if the Church had not exerted such an all-embracing role. And it took place in a town, rather than in a village. This non-Catholic Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau, founded in 1922 is not the same group as the present one of that same name, which was started in 1977.<sup>239</sup> A further 'Theatre Alsacien St. Nicholas' in Haguenau started in 1908 as the St. Nicholas parish group, and still incorporates that fact in its name.

The Theater Grupp St. Georges, in Haguenau was set up at the instigation of the Abbé Joseph Finck on 8 February 1954, as shown by the Minutes of its first meeting.

The TAS, and the similar group in Mulhouse, which was founded in 1899, have always been non-sectarian, and the President of the latter group in 2003, was Jewish. Their casts were always of mixed gender. Two of the other three groups in Mulhouse were Catholic

---

<sup>237</sup> See also Section 2.2, page 47, above.

<sup>238</sup> Marcel Lindershaus. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2004.

<sup>239</sup> Maurice Trimolé, President of the other Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau. Personal interview. 12 Feb. 2004.

but have dropped their religious association.<sup>240</sup> There is no evidence of a Protestant group in Mulhouse, nor anywhere else in Alsace, apart from that mentioned previously, at Bischwiller in the 1950s.

One effect of the church's involvement in the theatre movement would be to reinforce the hierarchy of respect, and the conformity of behaviour, that are two of the bases of traditional Alsatian life. Nobody would want to offend the curé by expressing strong or novel opinions, whether religious, political, social or economic. And nobody would want to propose modern topics for treatment on stage. If such attitudes were expressed in performances the reaction of the audiences coming from church congregations would have been to stay away, in the safety of their own homes, no doubt after hearing the opinion of the curé during mass.

Monter sur les planches a été, à certains moments, également un geste de dévotion religieuse. Les scènes devaient évoquer des épisodes de la Bible, un peu comme les Mystères joués dans le temps sur le parvis de l'église. J'ai un souvenir ineffaçable des lectures de la Passion du Vendredi Saint. (Dreikaus 2002, 26).<sup>241</sup>

There was to be no Alsatian Ibsen.

It may be of interest here to note another style of theatre, peculiar to Mulhouse, and completely outside the control or influence of the Church. The *Herre 'n' Owe* (Mens' night) started as part of *Carnaval* (sic, the French spelling), 100 years ago. Originally in rhyme, as a *Schnitzenbank* – a song in rhyme recounting events over the year, the men performing did the round of the bars and returned to the theatre in a drunken state. This was stopped by the theatre in 1903. Now revived and performed in a hall at the side of the theatre it is an increasing success. Written in alternate years by Tony Troxler (now deceased) and Freddy Willenbacher, around 250 men now attend each performance.

---

<sup>240</sup> René Freytag, Vice-President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse. Personal interview. 4 Dec.2003.

<sup>241</sup> (To tread the boards was at times like an act of religious devotion. The scenes had to evoke episodes from the Bible, rather like the mystery plays of old, acted out on the courtyard of the church. I have a permanent memory of readings from the Passion on Good Friday.)

Over 4,000 males are invited to *Herr'n'Owe*, which gives 18 performances per year. There is now a *Dame'n'Owe* (Ladies' Night) to which over 1,300 women are invited to their six performances per year.<sup>242</sup>

*Carnaval* was a period in which normality was turned on its head, out of control of both the church and the municipality. There was a revival from 1962 to 1977, under the name of the *Wackes Fassenacht* (Rascals' Carnival), which then lost much of its enthusiasm and roguish character (Cerf 1978, 24-37).

The influence of the Church was drastically reduced during World War Two, and it never fully recovered afterwards. Geographically, the biggest concentration of French Protestants was in Alsace, where they were mainly Lutheran of the Augsburg Confession, which could have made them the obvious preference of the occupying administration. However, Naziism had no patience with any competing organisation which could organise public opinion. Although Catholicism was strong in the region the Catholic Church in Alsace, as elsewhere in France, had little part to play during World War Two. In Brittany it had previously supported the separatist movements, which went against the dominant pan-Germanic strategy of Hitler, as the Alsatian separatists were also to discover. In 1936 Pope Pius XI had spoken out against the persecution of German Catholics, and in 1937 he addressed German Bishops in condemning Nazism, which could not bode well for that faith during the annexation (Hirschfeld 1989, 73-4). Being powerful representatives of the Vatican, the Bishop of Lorraine, Mgr. Heinz, was exiled to France, as was Mgr. Ruch of Alsace, with Rector Terracher of the University of Strasbourg. Strasbourg cathedral was handed to the Protestants, who annoyingly refused the gift. Catholic schools were closed, as were the two religious faculties at Strasbourg, and their staff expelled. Catholic youth movements were disbanded, including theatre groups, as was the Catholic scout movement. Any distinctive non-Nazi badges or uniforms or flags were banned (ibid 1989, 82-4).

---

<sup>242</sup> René Freytag, Vice-President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse. Personal interview. 4 Dec.2003.

## 4.6 Into the twenty-first century

### Theatre

As noted in Section 4.4, on page 143, above, Jung states that for the last eighty years of the nineteenth century Alsatian playwrights generally avoided using their own language (2001, 64), and Schoen agrees firmly that only recently [to 1903] had there been a revival of the local patriotism, history and traditions of the area in which one was born or grew up (1903, 46). And the two opinions may be put into perspective by the fact that in the present day the Alsatian language is going through one of its most serious periods of decline. Yet one association lists 115 current Alsatian language playwrights.<sup>243</sup> By comparison, Schoen's opinion that there were not many playwrights in the nineteenth century, and Jung's, that only five are worthy of mention, may illustrate how unusual, unexpected, and valuable the contribution of the theatre is towards the possible salvation of the language at the start of the twenty-first century.

It was also the opinion of the current Honorary President of the Federation of Alsatian Theatres that repertoires needed to take on board the fact that modern life is not the same as that lived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>244</sup> The peasantry has disappeared, marriage is not the sole style of relationships, wealth does not mainly consist of the possession of land, and the power of the church is greatly reduced.

In his history of the TAS Jean-Marie Gall recognises that while that troupe is averse to experimental theatre, it still remains true that Alsace has gone through enormous changes since the last war. With the disappearance of the peasantry, traditional rural society has given way to urban communities. With the emancipation of women, marriage, which was central to many comedies, has lost its prestige. Childhood is bound up in strip cartoons, Walt Disney films and science fiction, and play stations. The Alsatian language

---

<sup>243</sup> Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. Calendar 2003/04, 62-63.

<sup>244</sup> Marcel Spegel. Personal interview. 14 Nov. 2003.



is no longer used by the young. All these factors would make Gall fear for the future of the Alsatian theatre, except that he, in 1998, sees a revival of interest in regional culture in the young, since the events of 1968 (Gall 1998, 65). I see little evidence of this, and never hear teenagers talking Alsatian in the street. Their presence at the Alsatian theatre appears to consist of token family outings with parents rather than with their own friends. Gall does recognise the need for plays which deal with subjects that interest the young (ibid). I however see little evidence of such plays being performed, and could not imagine Dialekt Theater dealing with unwanted teenage pregnancies, abortion, drugs, or AIDS. The experiments of the Jung Elsasser Buehn in the 1970s might have developed into a realist theatre, but the lack of stamina and discipline in the group, was the reason why this novelty was short-lived. They were enthusiasts who might have benefited from the kind of discipline imposed by the founders of the TAS, but for whom such an imposition would have been unacceptable. Being idealists in an emotional activity which required constant compromises in rehearsal locations, venues, audiences and subject matter, the intensity of their involvement inevitably burned itself out.<sup>245</sup>

Similarly, young groups, like *Narrespiegel*, with an average age of 17 years, which commented in cabaret fashion, upon current events, starting in 1974, tried to link the theatre to real life for young people, playing annual reviews in Alsatian, with occasional forays into French and German (Christian Hahn, 1982, 61-70). After 1982 I find no references to their continued existence.

In general, the whole panorama of Dialekt Theater from 1945 until 2004, can be seen as a cyclical phenomenon marking the shift in themes from the need to deal with the overwhelming events of WWII and its aftermath, back to a retrospective ‘boulevard’ representation of village life in 1900. From *Pièces Patriotiques*, via Marxist theatre of the 1970s, back to popular local light comedies. The return forward to the year 2000 and beyond is not an easy one for playwrights or audiences to cope with. The *Choucrouterie* cabaret style of local political satire is probably the easiest to continually update, as its very nature is ephemeral.

---

<sup>245</sup> Information from the private archives of the group.

In Alsatian language theatre, the arousal of love does not appear as a serious theme, except sometimes in order to convey confusion about how one should think of the enemy, as in the pièce patriotique *Gabrielle*, by Eugène Gerber, date of publication unknown (but probably around 1948). In *'Familienrot'* by Pierre Kretz (2002), it is the end, not the courtship stage of a marriage, which is portrayed, and in *Kàrfridaa* by Raymond Weissenburger (1984), the result of a breakdown of marriage, infidelity by the wife, redundancy at work, and loss of self-esteem are paramount. Maybe love was never a suitable theme due to the historical preponderance of male roles in Alsatian plays, and the convention that female roles were also played by men. A male hero courting a cross-dressed fe/male would hardly be acceptable, even without the domination of Catholic morals in the Alsatian theatre. Also, in a male dominated society, amateur female players in local theatre groups would not be expected to appear in love affairs being conducted on stage, with the required close contact with male actors. And in cabaret love scenes would only be included for satirical purposes.

Of modern playwrights Weissenburger is the most popular. Although he prefers writing more serious pieces such as *Kàrfridaa*, *E Herz üss Gold* (1985), and *Rusalem* (2001), he is obliged to retain his audiences by providing comedies.<sup>246</sup> His plays are well-known for introducing some modern themes. His *Romeo un Julio* (sic) (2004), which concerns a theatre group about to stage *Romeo and Juliet*, displays some novelties, such as dealing with pregnancy before marriage. But it also introduces onto the Alsatian stage a presumably homosexual character as a figure of ridicule, which, in Alsace, may be considered novel. There are jokes about Viagra. One mature male character in the 'cast within a cast' has to keep leaving the stage during 'rehearsals', to urinate. To keep him on stage during the 'performance' the director issues him with a bucket, and he disappears from time to time behind scenery, reappearing with the partly-filled bucket, which he carries with him on stage. One is at a loss to imagine where this latter device could lead. There is also recourse to having a drunken character on stage, a time-worn method, in Alsace as elsewhere, of obtaining laughs from an audience.

---

<sup>246</sup> Personal interview. 28 Oct. 2004.

Traditional Alsatian language theatre may be considered too introspective. Its parochial focus might be balanced by the externalising influence of more translations of such as *Le Malade Imaginaire* (D'r Ingebeld Krank) and *L'Avare* (D'r Gitzhals), both by Molière, published before 1950 by (Salvator-Theater, Mulhouse), and also of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. However, this may simply show how clever the language *can* be if challenged, and the proof of quality may also lie in whether these are direct translations, or simply adaptations.

How 'challenged' does a successful language need to be? Major languages have stood the test of time, and have successfully fought off or assimilated invading influences. It might be argued that British English at present is not successfully resisting the incursion of American English, partly because the invader is able to infiltrate due to its similarity to the native breed. David Crystal, in *Language Death* (2000) copes admirably with the vagueness of the data available on numbers of languages spoken, and claims that English will eventually be the universal language. He presumably means American English.

## **Racism**

### **Present day politics and the National Front.**

On 24 February 2004 a sealed black plastic bag arrived in my letter box in Haguenau. It was a publicity leaflet of the *Front National* (FN), for the regional elections in March 2004. I have to say, that if I were a traditional Alsatian I would find its arguments difficult to resist. These included promises of promoting the regional language in schools and the local culture generally. It is, of course, easy to promise anything if you are not in power. Logically, remembering that Hitler was elected to power on similar issues, I would obviously not vote for a totalitarian and authoritarian party. But it is the only one which promises itemised benefits for genuine Alsatians, to the exclusion of incomers. Solid support in Alsace came mainly from less wealthy city suburban voters, won over by policies on anti-immigration, insecurity and unemployment. The FN claim that two million unemployed French citizens means two million immigrants too many is difficult

to counter.<sup>247</sup> And in the smaller communes in the countryside, some with under 100 voters, the FN gained over 50% of the vote in the 2002 presidential elections. The overall vote in Alsace for the FN was 25%, whereas in the rest of France it was 15%.<sup>248</sup> One visible loophole in their argument is that the leaflet noted above does not actually carry one word in the Alsatian language.

In contrast, the publicity leaflet of the ruling President of the Conseil Régional of Alsace, Adrien Zeller, (RPR, or Chirac's Presidential Majority party on the traditional right wing) was more vague. Its one advantage was that it contained three words of Alsatian !

### **Racism in village theatre productions**

On 9 November 2001 I attended a local theatre production at the village of Neuve Eglise. The organisers were interested that an Englishman should take the trouble to come to see their production, which was *Hôtel Pension Gabrielle* by Robert Kurz, concerning a small family hotel. Although the action was not difficult to follow, and the play was a comedy, the treatment of two Arabic characters and of a black character was extremely racist, and was difficult to watch. Strangely, although the action was racist, there was a note in the programme stating that the producers had decided to go ahead with the production in spite of the sensitivity of the situation following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in the USA. Also a line had obviously been added into the play, concerning the Arabic characters, that 'They are not all terrorists'.

The racist nature of the action was not in the form of propaganda, but simply the attitude that Arabs are funny people who pray to Mecca in inconvenient situations where you fall over them, and the black character was announced as the new boyfriend of the hotel owner's daughter. This brought roars of laughter from the audience, and the character was beaten up on stage, and left for dead, to general approval. In the second interval I

---

<sup>247</sup> *Entretien*, an interview of Bernard Schwengler by François Schaffner in *Land un Sproch*, 151 (2004) 8–10.

<sup>248</sup> Bernard Schwengler. Lecture, promoting his *Le Front National*. 11 Feb. 2004. See bibliography.

thanked the organisers profusely, made an excuse, and left.

A lecturer in English at the teacher training college at Colmar, who is English, and whom I met a few days later, stated that her husband, who is Alsatian, had warned her before she herself went to another local Alsatian theatre production, that it was often racist. In that production a Turkish woman character was depicted as being a habitual thief. There is a significant Turkish minority in Alsace.

On 2 March 2003 I was invited by a liberal-thinking solicitor to see a village production in Nordhouse, south of Strasbourg, of a play entitled *100,000 Euros Lesegald* (100,000 Euros Ransom) by Raymond Knibihler, in which a gypsy family is portrayed, ridiculing their manner of speaking Alsatian, and showing them to be simpletons who fail in trying to carry out a kidnap. A police inspector with a Corsican accent was humiliated and told to go home and sort out the crimes in Corsica, and a Turkish 'Fremdààweiter' (guest worker) was criticised as being very 'fremd' (strange) and not much 'Ààrweit' (work). It was only at my prompting that my companion stated that possibly this was also an aspect of racism.

At present I can only assume that the fear of the unfamiliar by a group which itself is a minority, and which has experienced severe hardships and ridicule through its being different from both nations who have conquered it, leads Alsations to band together to ridicule outsiders, and thus gain in communal security. The geographical and social isolation of some Alsatian villages may serve to enforce this attitude. As in all societies, we instinctively suspect the alien. This is obviously an aspect of my study, and I have to acknowledge the political theatre which results.

Schwengler writes:

Si l'on n'est pas respecté et si l'on ne se respecte pas, toutes les dérives, dont la violence et l'intolérance ne sont pas les moindres, sont alors possibles. Ayant eu l'intolérance comme référent dans sa jeunesse, celle-ci s'imposera plus tard à

l'adulte comme un modèle familial qui se reproduira. Il deviendra lui-même intolérant. Cette dérive n'est sans doute pas étrangère au bon score du FN en Alsace. (2002, 34).<sup>249</sup>

### Joining in the conspiracy

No doubt sometimes entirely innocently, the Alsatian language community appears to join in the conspiracy against their language and culture. If one's standing in the community and one's job prospects depend upon detaching one's self from one's roots, then this is not an unexpected phenomenon. It is certainly not ignored in the theatre, there being characters such as Mme Du Verschlag, a pretentious wife of a bank manager, in *Die bringe m'r nemmi nüss* (We'll never be rid of them), by Bernard Eibel. Her 'real' Alsatian name is Mme Düveschlaag (Mrs Pigeonloft).

If you contact an Alsatian language organisation you will probably be greeted in French, the language which legitimises all activities. In contrast, if you contact a Welsh language organisation you will definitely be greeted in Welsh.<sup>250</sup>

The cabaret, *Les Scouts*, who perform mainly in French, depict Alsatian speakers as drunken, ill-mannered, low achievers. Alsatian writer and academic Adrien Finck, while reinforcing the opinion of the Rector Pierre Deyon, that Alsatian is not a language in its own right, ignores the neighbouring contradictory comments of Deyon, that Alsatian is one of the three languages which must be preserved (See Section 3.1, pages 82-83, above). The Municipality of Strasbourg in 2002 honoured the memory of the most feared policeman of the 1920s and 1930s, who tracked down and imprisoned Alsatian

---

<sup>249</sup> (If one is not respected, and if one does not respect one's self, any inclinations, of which violence and intolerance are not the least likely, become possible. Having experienced intolerance as standard behaviour in youth, this is imprinted on the adult as a familiar behavioural model, the adult then becoming intolerant. This inclination is doubtless a factor in the high vote for the National Front in Alsace.)

<sup>250</sup> My own phone calls to the Drama Department of the University of Aberystwyth are typical.

autonomists, ‘Schisshüss’ Becker, by naming a street after him, as noted in Section 2.2, page 46, above.

Wittmann recounts how, in the mid-1950s, he was punished at school for speaking Alsatian. He told his mother, who replied ‘ S’esch guet gemacht fer dich; hätsch Franzeesch geredd. Dü weisch jo, dass s’Elsässische verbote esch in de Schuel; dü muesch besser horiche.’ (That was well deserved. You should have spoken French. You know well that Alsatian is forbidden in school. You must be more obedient.) (2002, 37). She was aware that survival involved cooperation.

The poet Claude Vigée, quoted by Wittmann, voices instinctive self-disdain with ‘Une petite erreur du destin nous avait fait grandir dialectophones ... nous, les mal foutus de la parole.’ (A slight error of fate made us grow up speaking the dialect ... us, the vocal cripples.) (ibid, 42).

## **Cabaret**

Cabaret and Revue are obviously becoming increasingly popular in Alsace. Five different amateur satirical revues outside of Strasbourg were listed in a routine information email which I received from the organisation *Culture et Bilinguisme*,<sup>251</sup> as occurring on one day, taken at random, Saturday 6 March 2004. Others no doubt also exist, some being offshoots of local theatre groups, which were not featured in this particular email. The increasing popularity of this format may be due to the fact that scenes are brief, which appeals to the ‘soundbite’ offerings by television channels, and satire and humour are paramount. Various writers may cooperate in putting such a show together, which does not require the long-term dedication of a playwright. Also, parody of well-known political figures is a sure-fire method of gaining audience support. Whoever is in power is certain to be unpopular.

---

<sup>251</sup> Website < [@libertysurf.fr](http://www.bilinguisme.Alsace) >.

Cabaret in World War Two has been mentioned in Section 4.4, page 182, above, where reference was made to song and dance theatres and bars in wartime Strasbourg.

However, satirical and politically aware cabaret, what in Germany is known as Kabarett, has played a significant role in Alsatian language theatre since World War Two.

Cabaret in Alsace is dominated by two names. Firstly that of Germain Muller, who directed '*D'Bàràbli*' (le Parapluie = the Umbrella), from 1948 and who died in 1994. There are several books published of his poems and songs, and the scripts of some of his plays are available. Secondly, the *d'Choucrouterie* (Sauerkraut Factory), also in Strasbourg, was opened by singer Roger Siffer in 1979.

### **The cabaret *D'Choucrouterie* in Strasbourg**

The Choucrouterie is a politically satirical cabaret which attracts sophisticated audiences. It is not a tourist attraction, and does not rely for its comedy upon characters pretending to be drunk, nor on sexual innuendo. The production is in both French and Alsatian, and is held in adjoining small theatres, the French performance starting fifteen minutes before the Alsatian language version of the same scenes. The actors move to and fro between the theatres, speaking in the appropriate language in each case. The same theatres are used for visiting small scale productions.

Targets for the satire are French politicians, both local and national, the problem of calculating prices in the Euro, a version of *The Weakest Link* television programme, which has taken root in France, in which representatives of Alsace, of neighbouring Lorraine and of Germany compete. The winner is the Alsatian. The general tone of the cabaret is similar to that which I witnessed at a regional festival in the Bearne, in southern France, 1993. A too-clever official or expert from Paris comes to tell the local people how to behave, and is shown to be ignorant of local customs, and of how to survive in the region. Pompous local politicians are also a target.



Again, in this instance, comfort is obtained by ridiculing neighbouring regions, or powerful institutions, but the more sophisticated production and the educated audience, permit ridicule of the region itself, and, among other things, its fear of the introduction of the Euro. Such a production might be poorly received if played before a village audience.

The founder-director, Roger Siffer himself, told me of his own feelings of inferiority at school, due to his coming from an Alsatian-speaking family. He told his fellow pupils that his poor French was due to his coming from Algeria, because he feared their ridicule. His book, celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, mentions myself and the research which I am undertaking (Kretz 2004, 139).

Apart from presenting satires they also put on more serious material, including an evening dedicated to the Alsatian Dadaist poet and sculptor Jean Hans Arp, with original music performed on a range of home made instruments in an orchestration reminiscent of the early Vaughan Williams works for '*Façade*'.

There are other producers of occasional Alsatian cabaret elsewhere. One, Raymond Bitsch (with whom I have studied the language) of the Theater Grupp St George, at Achenheim, who directs a *Cabaret Alsacien*, and another is Jean-Marie Neubert. At Mulhouse, under the title *Herre 'n'Owe* (Men's Night), as mentioned in Section 4.5, page 199, above, there has been for twenty-five years an annual cabaret written and produced by men, to which women are not admitted. There is now also the *Dame-n-Owe* (Ladies' Night), written and produced by a woman. Jean-Georges Hirschfeld who is the mayor at Triembach au Val, produces a cabaret each year entitled *D'Brandkessel* (the Boiler). Also, *La Budig* (the Workshop) by Yves Grandidier. There are no doubt many others, which do not need to advertise their existence, as their performances are always sold out due to local support.

## **Jewish Theatre**

Although Jewish theatre as such does not have a place in this study, there is an Alsatian Yiddish dialect, although it is not normally looked upon as being one of the regional languages of France, and there is one very professional group, the *Yiddische Mamas et Papas*, who should be mentioned, as they perform to audiences of all denominations throughout Alsace, to great acclaim, as noted in Section 2.3, page 62, above. They have a cabaret or musical theatre style, and their musical director, Richard Doust is English. But their themes are non-contentious and non-political. Alsace was at one time the home of 80% of the Jews in France (Rigoulot 1997, 49).

## **Art- and Folk-songs**

Art-songs (which I define as consciously composed songs by one or more identifiable composers, intended for performance on formal occasions, and for publication), are less likely to occur in professional theatre productions, an example being the song *Heimet* by Bastian and Simon, from the 1922/23 season production at the Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar, named *D'Wundergei* (The Miraculous Violin) (Bopp 1924, 85). But art-songs do form an important part of cabaret.

However, it is very difficult to define folk-songs, except by reference to their themes or ethnicity. I would suggest that central to the meaning of the expression are 'songs which have existed in the region for some time, and whose original composer is unknown'.

This leaves modern 'protest' songs, and rallying songs which should be included.

Drinking and love songs, and indeed work songs need to be considered, as they may also evoke feelings of regional or group identity. Furthermore, nowadays, adaptations of emotive poetry may be regarded as 'folk', even though they are consciously written and composed for performance rather than participation, examples of which are cited below, where, as previously, some flexibility in the definition is required.

CD's of Alsatian song and music are published under the trade name *Üss'm Liederbrunne* (Out of the Well of Songs). At the Colmar Book Fair, in November 2001, I met the singer Isabelle Grussenmeyer, whose new CD included songs based upon traditional texts, as well as modern poetry. The same publisher has issued *Zwei Woertle* (Two Little Words) by the Danny Dollinger Trio, with songs using Alsatian poetry and prose, accompanied by traditional instruments, and also *Mit'nander* (Together), a collection of the works of songwriters from Alsace, Lorraine and Baden (Germany) on the themes of tolerance and fraternity. Their CD *Summerlied 2000*, which is a recorded live performance from the *Summer Song Festival 2000* is not so much Alsatian as international. A further CD issued by *Üss'm Liederbrunne* is *Mini, dini, andri* (Mine, yours, other people's) using texts by various Alsatian writers, including Professor Raymond Matzen.

There are various music festivals in villages and towns, which frequently feature a mixture of French and Alsatian items, in which the latter often appear to be included as nostalgic museum pieces.

The internet has several websites of singers and groups who claim to be Alsatian and to perform in that language. These include the groups *A Manella*, *Eden*, *l'Ensemble Vocal Allegro de Strasbourg*, *La Space Family (Groupe Alsacien de FrancoFunk)*, *Le Choeur d'Hommes de Griesbach*, *Made in Elsass (Groupe de Rock in Elsassich [sic])*, *ng swing (jazz vocal alsacien)*. It would appear therefore that new music and song groups of various types continue to be offered. I have not investigated these, and cannot vouch for their relevance or value in the context of Alsatian culture.

### **Conteurs - oral poetry and story telling**

As quoted above, Jung states that theatre is basically a by-product of narration (Jung 2001, 39).

There is a wide range of poetry written in Alsatian, mainly for home consumption. It is published regularly in language pressure group magazines such as *D'Heimet* (Homeland). Sample titles of poems, among many others, are – *D'Heimetsproch* (Our own language), *Schlettstadter Marikbarecht* (Sélestat Market), *D'Müetersproch* (The Mother Tongue), *Mi Elsass, Mini Heimet* (My Alsace, my Home), *Zum Müettertag* (On Mothers' Day), and again *D'Müetersproch*.<sup>252</sup> These works, dominated as they are by the need to obey a regular rhyming pattern, are seldom forward looking or experimental, but they demonstrate the need that many Alsatians feel, to express their uniqueness and to let it be seen and acknowledged.

There is also a more literary Alsatian poetry by established writers, such as André Weckmann, Claude Vigée, Raymond Matzen and many others, which is comparable with the finest output from major language groups worldwide, and these are sometimes used in front of an audience, such as in *Misch masch*, a 'cabaret littéraire'.<sup>253</sup>

Performance being an oral form, the problem of how to write the language is not paramount, provided the performer understands what is written.

Alsatian poet/story-tellers such as Rene Engles and Roland Engel, are usually musician/singers as well. *The Guardian* newspaper on Saturday 18 April 2003, in its Obituaries, wrote of poet/singer Richard Caddel that he agreed with Ezra Pound, that 'poetry atrophies when it gets too far from music'. It is common in Alsace for folk-style singers to set poetry to music. From my own experience as a folksinger over a period of fifteen years, I am well aware that the music is often just a convenient vehicle for the words, which carry the message. Good melodies are re-used continually to carry new verbal communications.

---

<sup>252</sup> All from website < [http:// www. heimetsproch.org/poesies.htm](http://www.heimetsproch.org/poesies.htm) >. 6 Sep. 2001.

<sup>253</sup> Seen at the Cheval Blanc theatre, Strasbourg. 7 Feb. 2004.

## Cinema

Cinema only plays a restricted role in this study, partly because there is only one well-known film in the language. However, being a mass medium, its influence is extensive, mainly due to its lack of support for the language and culture of the region.

The Alsatian section of the BNUS has only two books on Alsatian cinema, one being *Cent Ans de la Grande Illusion* (One Hundred Years of the Grand Illusion) (Gozillon-Fronsacq, 1999). This title refers to the 1937 anti-war film, by Jean Renoir, starring Pierre Fresney and Eric von Stroheim, which was shot in Alsace, but in French. I attended a series of lectures given at the University of Strasbourg III - Marc Bloch, by Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq in March to June 2003. She is involved in creating a complete archive of all cinema concerning Alsace, for the Archive Départemental of the Bas-Rhin.

Germany, and to a lesser extent, France, were in the forefront of experimental and artistic film production in the early years of the twentieth century, but were soon overtaken commercially by American producers.

In 1920 a film was made by Joseph-Porphyre Pinchon, called *Mon Village* (My Village), as a French Alsatian propaganda film, based largely on the books of cartoon drawings by 'Hansi' (Jean-Jacques Waltz), the well-known Francophile artist, whose work is described in Sections 2.4 and 3.2, pages 70 and 94 respectively, and who inspired others to emulate his style. The character chosen for this film was *Becassine*, a young girl whose homeland, Alsace, suffers at the hands of the Germans. Being a silent film there is lots of text, which makes it comparable with a 'Hansi' strip cartoon.

In the 1930s, while Germany was rearming and occupying neighbouring German-speaking territories, the French cinema produced a mainly pacifist output, typified by *La Grande Illusion* (in Gozillon-Fronsacq, 2003, 229-354).

The most representative Alsatian film of the period was the French language production of an Alsatian novel *Paix sur le Rhin* (Peace on the Rhine), made in 1938 by the Swiss Jean Choux, which I have seen. Although it concerns an Alsatian family nobody in the film speaks the language, and only one actor has an Alsatian accent, a maid who explains that she does not understand much because she fell on her head when she was young. This ridiculing of Alsatian speakers continues today in some cases in the theatre. In the film the father of the family is shown as being typically prejudiced against Germans, biased and stubborn. The Parisian wife of one son is shown as being feckless, while the German fiancée of the other son is shown as being charming, and in one scene her face is superimposed upon a view of the façade of Strasbourg cathedral, which is the most famous symbol of Alsace. She also turns out to be a skilled nurse, who saves the life of the father. It may be unsurprising that the film was largely financed by German money, which was the case with other films of the period, always on the understanding that Germany be shown in a favourable light.<sup>254</sup> (See also Section 4.4, page 163, above.)

It was of no importance which language the actors spoke until the advent of sound in the cinema, first introduced in the middle of *The Jazz Singer*, by Al Jolson, in 1932. An often-quoted ‘Alsatian’ film, *L’Ami Fritz* (My Friend Fritz, 1933), from a novel by a pair of writers who combined their names as Erckmann-Chatrian, and adapted for the theatre by Gustave Stoskopf, was made in two versions, French and High German. The Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar had produced the same story on stage in the 1904/5 season, presumably in Alsatian (Bopp 1924, 85).

The only film certainly made in Alsatian was *D’r Herr Maire*, in 1939 by the company Heimat Production, but due to the war, not shown until 1947, when its box office takings were a contemporary record, as noted in Section 4.4, page 152, above. This latter film had been first produced as a play, in Strasbourg, by Stoskopf, its author, at the TAS, in 1898, and in the Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar for three out of their five performances in 1903/4 season, four out of nine performances in 1908/9, and two of eight performances in

---

<sup>254</sup> Odile Gozillon-Fronsacq. Lecture on cinema in Alsace. U. Strasbourg. 11 April 2003

1912/13 (Bopp 1924, 86). This is noteworthy, during the German annexation, due to the theme of the play.

The film was shot during the evident preparations for war on both sides of the Rhine, and the prophetic final scenes included the post-war liberation of Alsace. As Alsace had been liberated from Germany previously, this may not have been such an extraordinary ending for the film. It is also interesting that all the actors were unpaid amateurs, which is normal in Dialekt Theater in Alsace. However, a few Alsatian actors did achieve international success, as did the director of non-Alsatian films, William Wyler, who went on to Hollywood to make *Ben Hur* and *Roman Holiday*, among others.

While Alsace was creating theatre and films based on its traditional values, in the rest of France films were being made such as '*La Femme du Boulanger*' (Pagnol, 1938), mentioned in Section 4.4, page 147, above. This dealt with the inward-looking nature of village life, sexuality, infidelity in marriage, the fact that you can sin and then carry on with life, and the conflict between education and the Catholic church – all matters which have never been adequately dealt with in Alsatian theatre or cinema.

## Television

Television may be important in promoting the increased acceptance of Alsatian as a respected language in that it may help to normalise the language, as it did in Wales.<sup>255</sup> Standardisation would help to set it apart from High German, which is frequently quoted as being 'the written expression' of the spoken Alsatian dialect. But reservations by some of those I have interviewed, and by myself, are noted in this thesis.

There has been very little time given to Alsatian language broadcasts. In 2003, there was a short daily evening programme called *Rund Um* (Round and About), on Saturdays a short programme called *Sür un Sies* (Sweet and Sour), and on Sunday afternoons frequently an Alsatian play.

---

<sup>255</sup> Cefin Campbell, Commercial Director, S4C Welsh Television. Personal interview. 5 April 2003.

In winter 2003/04 there were normally programmes on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in Alsatian, on France 3 Alsace. These included, on a randomly chosen Saturday, 6 March 2004, one of a series of three twenty-six minute films concerning the Vosges, and on the Sunday a film on the sources of the Rhine. There are also frequently Alsatian language plays, often divided into two and broadcast on two Sundays. But these are special interest programmes, on the cultural channel, which do not compete with the mass-appeal programmes on the more commercial channels. Programme makers presumably feel that advertisers, who finance such channels, would not consider that enough viewers would be attracted by mainstream Alsatian language programmes to make advertising economically attractive.

One reason for the anticipated increase of Alsatian language theatre on television in 2004 is the need for filling new channels on cable TV, and the low cost of broadcasting an amateur performance, or of featuring campaigning enthusiasts who by their very nature seek exposure, whether or not it is paid for.<sup>256</sup>

Among the few serious treatments of recent history was a black and white television film which is well known in Alsace, *Les Alsaciens, ou Les Deux Mathilde*, written by Henri de Turenne and Michel Deutsch, and directed by Michel Favart in 1995. The title being in French indicates the lack of importance bestowed upon the Alsatian language content of the story, which concerns a small village and the effects upon it of the Franco-Prussian War and all the years following, up to the liberation after World War Two. The French dialogue is interspersed with short sentences in Alsatian, but these simply add local colour and the story could be just as easily set in any border province. The film however deals sensitively with many aspects of the family and regional crises during the period covered.

---

<sup>256</sup> Pierre Kretz. Personal interview. 16 Feb. 2004.



## **Radio**

There are few radio programmes in Alsatian, and this is a continual bone of contention. In the past there were frequent radio plays in the language, in which the TAS were frequent participants. The prospect of increased exposure of the language on television may have reduced the pressure on radio time. And as television is looked upon as the prime home entertainment it seems unlikely that radio output in the language will increase. However, the Alsace region of the RFM national chain is the only one to use the regional language, at the insistence of the previous owner of the wavelength.

### **4.7 Government support for the performing arts**

On 30 June 1976 the Cultural Charter for Alsace was published. It had been created by the French Secretary of State for Culture, the Conseil Général for the Département of the Bas-Rhin, the Conseil Général of the Haut-Rhin and by the Conseil Régional. It contained much vague talk of support for the 'Popular arts and traditions of Alsace' in general, without specifying them individually, and with no reference to the theatre in any language. A total budget for the whole year, of 90,000 francs, was allocated to such activities (Seiler 1986, 167).

The Second Cultural Charter for Alsace, which covered the three years 1981 to 1983 inclusive, showed an awareness of the importance of the theatre, and budgeted 9,900,000 francs for the development of youth theatre in French. For the same whole three years only 60,000 francs were allocated to supporting Alsatian language theatre (ibid, 46) (about £6,000 in modern terms).

At the meeting in Sélestat on 5 April 2003, mentioned on pages 87 and 93, above (Towards a global language policy in Alsace : the example of Wales) the chairman of

the Culture Committee of the Conseil Régional of Alsace, Jean-Laurent Vonau, made a speech in which he emphasised that what was needed in Alsace was not more money to promote the usage of the language, but a more positive mental attitude on the part of campaigners and other Alsatians. He was frequently interrupted and roundly criticised, both by a teacher in the audience, and by Senator Henri Goetschy, whose work is quoted elsewhere in this thesis, on the grounds that the will to campaign for the language existed, but it needed proper financial support as well.

The Agence Culturelle d'Alsace provides help for cultural activities in Alsace, in any language. But on 5 February 2004 Emilie Canniaux, head of 'Cultural Mediation' told me that theatre support in Alsatian was being handed over to the Office pour la Langue et Culture d'Alsace (OLCA). I interviewed Guy Dahl, the head of OLCA, on 20 February 2004.

OLCA was set up by the regional government in 1994, as the Office du Bilinguisme, the second language implied in the title having been German, rather than Alsatian. Their main concern now is why so little Alsatian is spoken at home. But they have met official resistance. At a recent meeting to set up a bilingual primary school the regional inspector of education had refused to have OLCA information material present at the meeting. OLCA is financed 90% by the region, 'plus a little from the département'. Their budget in 2004 was 700,000 Euros a year (approximately £500,000), of which the theatre is allocated £175,000. They have financially supported plays, some of which I have seen. They financed a medical dictionary, and brochures giving Alsatian vocabulary for football and fishing, and they have encouraged Alsatian language theatre in schools, Alsatian folksong groups and an Alsatian language reggae, rock and blues concert.

OLCA is also enrolling large firms, such as the Coop d'Alsace, to label products in the language and to encourage its use between staff and customers. As expected, Guy Dahl told me that their staff of six, and their budget, are not enough to carry through plans like in Brittany, where six hundred large firms have signed up to take action for the Breton language, and where there is a 25-point charter which local authorities can sign up to, as

an action plan for steps towards greater visibility for the language.<sup>257</sup>

---

<sup>257</sup> Information from the Breton Language Office (Ofis ar Brezhoneg, 17 straed Auvours, 44000 Naoned, France. Website < ofis.bzh @ wanadoo.fr >. 18 Oct. 2004.)

## 5 Analysis of five Alsatian plays

In order to exhibit the characteristics of Alsatian language theatre, there now follows an analysis of five plays, under the headings of:

- Synopsis, (given in full in Appendix Two),
- Language,
- Political influences,
- Religious influences, and
- The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian Language Theatre.

These sample plays are chosen to demonstrate the range of Alsatian theatre since 1816.

- *Der Pfingstmontag*, by Georg Daniel Arnold, 1816,
- *So sinn mr halt !*, by Marcel-Edmond Naegelen, 1931,
- *Gabrielle*, by Eugène Gerber, [1948 ?],
- *Kàrfridaa*, by Raymond Weissenburger, 1984, and
- *D'Antigonn*, by Edmond Jung, adapted by Joseph Schmittbiel, 2000.

These particular plays have been chosen either as prime examples of that playwright's work, or as fully illustrative of the genre, or as indications of how the Alsatian language theatre may advance in the future. They are not proposed as perfect theatre pieces, but such a distinction is rare anywhere. In the case of *Der Pfingstmontag*, it is the only known work by this author, and it is a seminal work of Alsatian theatre which is constantly referred to, including by those who have never read it, nor seen it performed. *So sinn mr halt !* is pure political propaganda, demonstrating many of the complaints which Alsace lays claim to. It shows a family trying to remain united while exhibiting the same tensions that the region as a whole suffers from, but tolerating the situation on a day-to-day basis. The play's weakness may lie in the author's attempt to include too much politics within the span of one theatrical work.

An example has to be included of the *pièce patriotique* genre, and *Gabrielle* is one of the most melodramatic, whilst manifesting the history and mythology of the region. It represents the region at the extreme limits of its torment. This genre was a necessary part of the healing process, following World War Two, but would only become fashionable again if such suffering were to revisit Alsace.

Nearly all Alsatian literature is nostalgic, but if it is to have a future one would expect to find new works which relate more closely to modern-day activities, and in which one can predict the survival of the language in all its facets. *Kàrfridaa* is an experimental quasi-religious drama in one-act, by a largely mainstream playwright whose works are central to the canon of Alsatian theatre. This play is not political. It says nothing about the condition of Alsace as a region that is not equally valid in all advanced industrialised countries. But it is in the language, and it deals with basic human emotions. It contains some of this writer's most powerful statements.

*D'Antigonn* is the product of two dedicated protagonists for Alsatian culture. Jung created an Alsatian Antigone, and Schmittbiel gave it an international focus. Again, the language was the vehicle. Here the problem is not Paris or Berlin, but the power which oil production bestows on rulers. Although this family drama has echoes in traditional Alsatian theatre, it is not regional, and not even national, but possibly the first international drama written in Alsace. As such I feel that its mould-breaking story-line should be analysed here.

The full synopsis of each of the plays is given in Appendix Two.

## 5.1 *Der Pfingstmontag*

In 1816 the Dean of Law at Strasbourg, Georg Daniel Arnold, wrote *Der Pfingstmontag* (Whitmonday), a comedy in verse, in the Strasbourg dialect, which parodied various typical Strasbourgeois characters, and which was praised by Goethe (Finck 1990, 12).

No other dramatic work by Arnold has survived. And this piece, although written in 1816 and republished in 1820, was only first performed, in a private household, as late as 1835. My references are to the edition published in 1914.

The action takes place in Strasbourg on a public holiday, Whitmonday, 1789, which fell on 1 June, significantly just before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The play concerns two related families, and the romantic intentions of their daughters and their suitors. All the characters depicted are middle-class, the men being professionals, such as boat-builder, future doctor, a Protestant preacher, and the old graduate whose actual profession is not revealed. Developing the theme for many later Alsatian plays, the parents have other plans for their daughters' futures. The resulting plotting is sometimes difficult to follow. The action is at times not a logical progression. Important matters in the plot are not explained, such as the graduate being attacked in the street, which appears to be a device whereby we may take pleasure from the discomfort of a pretentious character. Reinhold, who is courting Lissel, is accused of forgery and later released, neither event being clarified. The final celebrations of Lissel and Reinhold's engagement, plus the silver wedding of her parents, with the ensuing procession have an air of Cinderella about them, all problems being resolved in some inexplicable way. But the presence of the mayor and assistant mayor means that all is what a respectable middle-class family would hope for. The action is also interspersed with an odd mixture of old-wives' remedies, and folk tales, reminiscent of the *Fraubasengespräche*.

## Language

This work is a dignified study of the dialect as it was in 1816, for which the theatre, rather than the novel, was the suitable vehicle. Speech, accompanied by action, rather than written text, conveys more fully the subtleties of a local dialect. The play text occupies 192 pages, with Arnold's own additional dictionary (*Wörterbuch der hier vorkommenden eigenthümlichen Ausdrücke*)<sup>258</sup> in which I counted approximately 1,000 Strasbourg Alsatian dialect words, with their meanings given in High German. That was

---

<sup>258</sup> (Dictionary of characteristic expressions used in this work.)

intended for Alsatians, to clarify reading the work in 1816, a task which has become much more difficult today. The 1914 edition has a further 33 closely printed pages of very detailed notes, by Joseph Lefftz, and a heavily-annotated 45-paged Introduction by Ernst Marckwald. A present-day edition would require even more in the way of explanations.

Arnold's orthography attempts, not always successfully, to reproduce the words as closely as possible to their pronunciation. However, in recent years a great deal of effort has been put into trying to express the pronunciation of the various Alsatian dialects in one agreed orthography, as described in this thesis. The one unifying feature of this effort is the continuing disagreement which results. There is no evidence that Arnold, a lawyer, was more successful than others have been. He uses the standard High German alphabet, without, for instance, the recourse to double vowels and the accented 'à'. This would lack the ability to show a difference in the pronunciation of 'Arweiter', and 'Àrweiter', both meaning 'worker', but the former, apart from the 'w', being thoroughly German. Arnold's orthography may have encouraged later producers, such as the Nazis in 1941, to adapt the pronunciation and even the vocabulary, to overcome the difficulties inherent in staging a work in a dialect dating from 150 years beforehand. We should not, however, underestimate the importance of the work as a symbol of Alsatian identity at a period when such recognition was seriously lacking.

Jung indicates that this was the first attempt at serious literature in Alsatian, intended to confer dignity on the playwright's regional language, and not simply a piece of humorous dialect.

Et en Alsace cette illustration de la langue populaire dans sa richesse n'était pas seulement sensibilité et nostalgie romantique, mais aussi réaction contre le mépris et la suspicion où étaient tenus les parlers des provinces (Jung 2001, 62).<sup>259</sup>

---

<sup>259</sup> (And in Alsace this illustration of popular language in its richness was not simply romantic sensitivity and nostalgia, but also a reaction against the disdain and suspicion in which provincial forms of speech were held.)

Goethe, who had lived in Alsace, and whose statue stands in front of the university in Strasbourg, stated that the play was a living idiomatic lexicon, and Arnold in his reply wrote that he had put into the work everything that he had heard and experienced since his childhood in that city.<sup>260</sup>

It may be considered that Arnold set in train what was to become an Alsatian ‘theatre movement’. Whereas what had previously been written for public performance simply fitted in with current modes of entertainment, the trend developed for theatre which reacted to the decreasing value placed upon Alsatian identity. This represents a self-conscious examination of local values and their possible loss in the face of increasing intrusions from across the Vosges.

In the play, the self-important Lizenziat (the graduate), who continually makes himself a figure of ridicule, peppers his Alsatian with French expressions, such as in Act One, Scene Three: Pongswar (Bonsoir); Pong, pong (Bon, bon); Athiö (Adieu); Schmangwäh (Je m’en vais = I am leaving), no doubt all accompanied by florid gesturing and exaggerated pronunciation. By modern standards this is insignificant, but after a period in which French was pressed upon them, no doubt it was a welcome piece of humour.

One does not hear lines from this play quoted, and I do not think that Jung would have made great claims for it as a piece of literature. The action may be remembered, but the speeches are not, possibly because, as Goethe said, they are a lexicon. As such they are not compelling reading. They were simply used as a valid vernacular that should not be overlooked simply because it stood outside of the mainstream of what, due to successes in warfare, have become the dominant fashions in language.

### **Political influences**

The day on which the play is set is significant, just a month before the outbreak of the French Revolution. Shortly after 1789 all regional languages in France were officially

---

<sup>260</sup> *Über Kunst und Altertum* (1820), and *Goethe-Jahrbuch* (1892), quoted in Gall 1973, 18.



condemned as being unpatriotic, as they undermined the concept of ‘the Republic one and indivisible’, as described in more detail in Section 2.2, page 39, above. We are shown how people in Strasbourg behaved and spoke beforehand. The timing of the publication in 1816 is also significant. In the previous year Napoleon had been defeated at Waterloo. There had been a military campaign which damaged villages near Strasbourg, and the profits from the sale of the text were to be donated to benefit those villages and the industrial poor school in Strasbourg (Gall 1973, 18). This was a demonstration of belief in the ability of the region and its own culture to survive after a very difficult period.

This might therefore be taken as the first intentionally political theatre work in Alsatian, in that its purpose is persuasive and proactive in carrying a banner for the region and its people. It is interesting that it was used by the Nazis in 1941 to ridicule French culture, being one of the few Alsatian plays actually approved for performance during the Second World War. However, by present-day usage, with multiple borrowings from French, the Lizenziat’s interjection of the odd word in French would hardly seem significant today for propaganda purposes. His adopting French manners is commonplace today in the Dialekt Theater.

There is also some fun poked at the German language, when Lissel states in Act One, Scene Two:

*Lissel* -            ‘Sisch <sup>261</sup> e narrechdi Sproch diss Hochdytsch. (It’s a silly language, this High German.)

and with Christinel, in Act One, Scene Three, they are unable to understand Reinhold’s German:

*Lissel* -            Was het er ewwe gsait ? (What on earth did he say ?).

---

<sup>261</sup> This is a contraction of the words *Es isch*, and should therefore be written *’s isch* even at the start of a sentence, the upper-case *E* having been omitted. Nowadays the related error of writing and printing this as *S’ isch* is common.

*Christinel* - I weiß jo nit. (I've got no idea.)

Continual misunderstandings occur, but the implied anti-German humour is stood on its head, as Lissel also says that she wants to make an effort to learn German, because her intended is a medical student from Bremen, and she does get her man.

### **Religious influences**

The play is set among middle-class believers. Their observance of Christian values is so normal that it would not be noticed without inspection. Pastor Wolfgang is a desirable catch for his admirer, and for her widowed mother. It is interesting in that a Protestant clergyman could be depicted on stage, whereas Catholic curés never appear. The family is sacrosanct. Traditional values, such as the father giving his daughter's hand without her knowledge, are challenged and reconciled, but marriage remains the sole target of courtship. In Act One, Scene Four, fun is made of the Lizenziat by sending him to attend a funeral at which the longest most boring Strasbourg song will be chanted. He is also humiliated partly because he is not married, marriage being one of the requisites of respectable middle-class life.

### **The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre**

This is obviously a very important work which presages the Alsatian theatre movement in all its campaigning aspects. However, having chosen the theatre as the correct medium for this action featuring the local dialect, it is interesting that it was reprinted four years after its first publication, confirming its contemporary value as a text to read. But its value as a spoken work on stage was only tested nineteen years after its first publication, and then in private. In this play the paradigm is confirmed, of a comedy based upon young people trying to overcome their parents' contrary wishes regarding their marriages, and featuring the values of family, church, the work ethic, the value of land and middle class respectability, all crowned by a happy ending. Such is still the typical presentation even today.

However, one has to accept that this is a work of which people in the modern Alsatian theatre are aware, without being familiar with its plot, or its turns of phrase. It is not a work which one hears quoted. It moved the theatre forward from the static *Fraubasengespräche* by adding action on stage (See Section 4.4, page 139). It is seminal in that it shows how this kind of thing can be done, but one is tempted to think ‘If he could do it, so can I’, rather than ‘I could never achieve something like that’. Arnold died in 1819, sixteen years before the first performance of his only play.

## **5.2     *So sinn mr halt ! (That’s just how we are !)***

The action takes place in Strasbourg, in Summer 1928, around the home of the family of Jacques Riffholz, a foreman. Of his two sons, one, Maurice, has gone to work in Paris as an accountant, the other, Paul, is firmly rooted in Alsace, as is the daughter, Suzanne. Maurice has adopted Parisian manners, to the annoyance of his father. Suzanne’s wedding plans are complicated by the interference of her parents, but she accepts the Alsatian in preference to the German. Maurice courts the Parisian daughter of their new neighbours. She, in turn, adopts Alsatian dress for the 14 July celebrations. The family friend, Brummer, a well-intentioned but rather unsophisticated wool merchant, complains about competition from Poland, but happily accepts a Polish bar owner as his wife.

The play ends with some questions not neatly answered, with the words of the title ‘*So sin mr halt*’ (That’s just how we are), meaning ‘We are fallible’. Relevantly, but probably unintentionally, the word ‘sin’ is spelt differently here from in the title of the play. Jung, in his comments on the work, spells it in two further different ways (Jung 2001, 67 and 79).

## Language

All stage directions and scene settings are given in High German, although the list of characters and their professions, and also the date of the action is in Alsatian. This is an unusual mixture, for which I see no reason. The difference cannot be justified on the ground that text which is intended to be read is usually written in High German, and spoken words are in Alsatian, because all these items are for reading rather than for speaking. Furthermore, the list of works by the same author is given in French, although two of these are Alsatian language dramas.

Although the father uses a few French expressions, these are all written and pronounced in Alsatian, such as in Act One, Scene One, 'Fissele', being an Alsatian diminutive of the French 'fils'. Again, in the next scene, he says 'in Paris isch's Nowler !' (It's more modern in Paris). 'Nowler' being an Alsatian comparative of 'nouvel'. But Maurice, on entering says 'Bonjour Papa ! Comment vas-tu ce matin ? As-tu bien dormi ?', to which the father replies 'Was, ob ich guet gschloofe hab ?' (What, did I sleep well ?), showing that he understood the French, but refuses to use it.

The Parisian neighbour, Simone, attempts some Alsatian. Brummer congratulates her on her dress, saying, on page 34, 'Très joli, je vous gratule'. The last word being Germanic, they all laugh. He should have said 'Très joli, je vous félicite' (Very pretty, I congratulate you). There are some malapropisms from Brummer, who is portrayed as being simple but good-hearted. In Act Two, Scene Five, he says 'Anna –gehtmit' (Anna goes too) instead of 'Académique'.

There are several examples of one typical Alsatian grammatical feature, the emphatic use of the verb 'to do', as in the English 'he does like it', whereas the French would be 'il l'aime', possibly with 'beaucoup' for emphasis. In Act Two, Scene Seven, Riffholz says 'Un ich Möecht doch nit, dass im Maurice d'Fraid glich verderbt dät<sup>262</sup> wäre' (I would not wish that Maurice's joy (did) be immediately spoiled). The subjunctive form 'dät' of

---

<sup>262</sup> My underlining.

‘tüen’ is correct here, as the dialect used allows a ‘d’ to be used instead of a ‘t’. Apart from in the present tense, everyday French conversation tries to avoid the subjunctive. In High German the verb ‘tun’ is not used in this emphatic sense, although the verb ‘to do’ serves this purpose in English.

## Political influences

Jung writes:

Une pièce de thème semblable [à *D'r Herr Maire* de Stoskopf] avec des Alsaciens face au pouvoir français sera écrite, paradoxalement, non par un autonomiste ou un régionaliste, mais par un des plus fermes tenants de l'assimilationnisme : *So sinn mer hàlt !* [sic], de M.E.Naegelen<sup>263</sup> (Jung 2001,66).

The playwright, Naegelen, was a right-wing Socialist, and supported full integration of Alsace within the French Republic. He was minister of education from 1946 for two years.<sup>264</sup> As such he would have been largely responsible for the policy that the object of education was the total Frenchification of schools. It may appear strange that this whole play is a cynical look at Paris, and against the subjection of Alsace to the ‘Republic one and indivisible’. However, it may be that in the 1930s Naegelen was able to look at the situation of Alsace in the 1920s and 30s from several viewpoints, and that he wanted to put all points of view on the stage. It may also be that as a politician he courted support at home while promoting different policies elsewhere, or that he simply wanted to win support from as many sides as possible. Born in 1892, he had seen the region under both the Germans and the French. His play *D'Ferme Iltis* (The Iltis Farm), published by *Les Dernières Nouvelles*, in Strasbourg in 1931, shows a family in 1914 in which the grandfather wants to see the return of the French, while his son and daughter-in-law have

---

<sup>263</sup> (A similar play [to *D'r Herr Maire* by Stoskopf], with Alsations faced with the power of France, would be written, paradoxically, not by an autonomist or a regionalist, but by one of the most firm believers in assimilation: *So sinn mer hàlt !*, by M.E. Naegelen.)

<sup>264</sup> Marcel Spégt. Telephone interview. 22 Oct. 2004. He stated that the TAS was Socialist before World War Two, and that Alsations in the inter-war years were right-wing Socialist/Autonomists. A rather sweeping statement.

accepted the annexation, and fear the coming war. The grandson is called up by the Germans, but his cousin enlists with the French. In his later work, *Wer wurd Maire, od'r 30 Johr später* (Who will be Mayor: or Thirty Years Later), elections are due and the new candidate accuses the old mayor of having collaborated with the Germans. Naegelen's political career included his staying in Périgueux during the Second World War, where he helped in the production of the daily *maréchaliste* newspaper *Le Mot d'Ordre* (*The Guiding Principle*), which followed the collaborationist policy of Maréchal Pétain. It is also said that he worked with the resistance. He held at one time the post of deputy mayor of Strasbourg, and was a strong defender of the *Lois Laïques* (The special religious laws in Alsace) (Andres 2003, 196). His involvement in politics included his unsuccessful attempt to become President, in 1953.<sup>265</sup>

In *So sinn mr halt !* arguments continually arise concerning the preference given to Paris, including a Parisian band having won a national competition, in spite of the son, Paul's, band having performed better – in his eyes.

The father of their new Parisian neighbours works at the Prefecture, where, at that time, most important jobs would have gone to those parachuted in from Paris. In Act Two, Scene One, Jacques Riffholz interrupts Brummer, who is singing a German war song, and reminds him it is the 14<sup>th</sup> July. Brummer then starts a parody of *The Marseillaise*, but is reminded that the other neighbour, a customs officer, no doubt from Paris also, would be offended. Brummer insists on recounting how, at the parade that morning, a bystander had said that the Kaiser's birthday parades had been better. But on seeing a Polish incomer, who had lost nothing in the war, Brummer had felt compelled to join in *The Marseillaise*, to show who is master. But Mme Riffholz will have nothing of this, as all people are acceptable, provided they are respectable. She reminds Brummer that there are plenty of charming Polish girls in the town.

The celebrations in Act Two are for the illumination of the Cathedral, always a powerful symbol of Alsatian identity.

---

<sup>265</sup> [http:// www. inrp.fr/she/ministres\\_bio/naegelen.htm](http://www.inrp.fr/she/ministres_bio/naegelen.htm)

## Religious influences

Apart from the generally Christian attitudes of the characters depicted, and the respect for marriage, even before courtship, there is little overt reference to religion, apart from, Act Three, Scene Two, in which Mme Riffholz reminds her husband that he is not the master outside the house 'In Gottes grossem Garten sind alle Menschen gleich' (In God's great garden all people are equal). Her quotation is in High German.

## The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian Language Theatre

Humorous allusions to incomers, to French manners and the double talk of ministers, and to German domination are normal in Alsatian theatre. However, Naegelen's play demonstrates more frankly than most the bitterness and disdain felt by the region in reaction to its powerful neighbours. The whole range of discontent is portrayed within the circle cultivated by one Strasbourg family. Nothing is missing. The final act gives the impression of having originally been too long, and therefore possibly interesting parts appear to have been edited out. But the play still sits well in the mainstream of Alsatian language theatre.

### 5.3 *Gabrielle*

Published by Jaggi-Reiss after World War Two, there is no publication date for this play written by Eugène Gerber, and no introduction nor author's indication of the date or place of the action, except that it is centred around Théodore Dritschler's village inn (a convenient location in many plays, which allows for any kind of character to appear and leave the stage at will). The dialogue mentions the news of the Russian revolution and the execution of the Czar, which places us in 1917. There is, however, one character called 'Nazi', which is an unfortunate Alsatian first name (not used now), which could mislead one into setting the action in the second world war.

The title page of this Alsatian language publication states that this is a ‘Pièce patriotique in 4 Akte’ (Patriotic play in four acts), the code-switching in the title is in itself an interesting indication that ‘Pièce patriotique’ was an established genre when published, which would indicate a publication date of between 1945 and 1950. This is also evidenced by the state of the printed volume. The stage directions and text are in Alsatian, with occasional patriotic outbursts in French and with three German characters speaking in High German.

There is no humour in this intense drama. The genre of pièces patriotiques was only written for a few years after World War Two. It involves Dritschler, a typically depicted stubborn Alsatian father, in an equally typical scenario of divided loyalties. Of his two daughters, Gabrielle has married a German, Rathke, to whom she is devoted, in spite of his anti-Alsatian sentiments and actions, whereas Alice is married to Dumont, a French officer who is absent at the front. Dritschler persists in his anti-German behaviour, and accuses Rathke of denouncing him in order to take over the inn. When liberation is near, Rathke is called up, leaving Gabrielle alone, to accept the only fate she can envisage. She pays the current, post-World-War-Two, price for ‘horizontal cooperation’ and has to be sacrificed, with her child, in order to satisfy the desire for ‘épuration’ (*cleansing* of the human stock).

## **Language**

It is interesting that the stage directions and introduction are all in Alsatian, even in a period when that language was once again seen as the language of the enemy, and the unity of the French Republic was being bolstered as much as possible. This however was a period when Alsatian was more widely used than today. Nowadays, in plays, the language normally only appears as the spoken text. Everything else in the published work, and in the theatre programme, is now in French, reinforcing the view that going to see an Alsatian play is now a nostalgic exercise, almost voyeuristic in nature, as demonstrated in *Peepshow in der Vogese*.



The frequent use of rhyming couplets and other simple verse forms in the dialogue does also at times give the action a rather unfortunate *Robin Hood* atmosphere. For example, Gabrielle, who married a German, and is the unhappy daughter of the inn keeper, declaims on page 40:

‘Ech wur jo g’hetzt wje armes Reh,  
Alli, alli mache mehr weh.’

(I am hunted down like a poor fawn,  
Everyone, but everyone, causes me pain.)

Another typical speech:

‘Ehr ljewi Litt, noch zehn Minütte,  
Ech ben nüß bis a d’Cité-Matte  
Un ha dert met’m Ohr am Bodde,  
Schon unseri Chasseurs hehre ritte.’

(You dear folk, just ten minutes ago,  
I was out at the city meadow  
And with my ear to the ground  
I could already hear our cavalry riding hither.)

The three German characters speak German, and although he would not normally do so, Gabrielle’s father risks speaking French, to defy the Germans although another character has been imprisoned for two years for the same offence.

## Political influences

It would be difficult to find a line of the play which has no political significance. Alsace, while totally intent upon a French victory, still remains totally Alsatian. This is a purely flag-waving moralistic work, which punishes those who transgress against their roots. But apart from celebrating the return of the French soldiers it does not feature the problems which the return to France would bring. A sequel might interestingly deal with some of the aftermath of reunification. Apart from the political turmoil of the 1920s and 30s, and the economic turmoil caused by those government employees parachuted in from Paris at higher rates of pay than the locals, there was the social turmoil surrounding those other 'Gabrielles' who did not leave for Germany when the war ended, and equally of those men who were recruited into the German army, and had to return home from the front, defeated and disgraced. The latter problem after the Second World War is touchingly dealt with in André Weckmann's poem *Amerseidel*, in which the 'malgrés nous', drafted into the German army between 1942 and 1945 returned home, to be sidelined and ignored, while the French soldiers were fêted. But such a mature digest of the situation can only be delivered after the memories have been allowed to fade. Such was not the business of the pièces patriotiques.

Another of Gerber's plays, *D'Aposchtel üss em Elsass* (The Alsatian Apostle) also deals with an Alsatian girl married to a German man. It is unimaginable that an author would deal with an Alsatian man marrying a German woman. From the Alsatian point of view, the aggressor must always be masculine and the victim appears more worthy of pity if it is a woman. Women are presumably expected to be weak, and easily lead astray, easily manipulated, having to sacrifice themselves in order to pay their debt to society.

## Religious influences

There are echoes of the Thirty Years War, when the French Catholics had been fighting the Evangelische Union from across the Rhine in an equally bloody conflict. In this play Gabrielle's husband Rathke breaks not only the portraits of her parents, trampling on her family bonds, but also those of the Virgin Mary and of Joan of Arc, the latter referred to by the Alsatians as 'D'heilig' (Holy), thus defiling the sacred bonds of her faith. On page 54 Gabrielle is described, when a child, as having prayed to Joan of Arc.

The drama is encapsulated in the dilemma of the heroine, who struggles to do her duty towards her holy bonds of marriage, and who realises that she and her child have to pay the price of infidelity to her country.

## The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre

A prime example of the genre. Although this style of drama lasted for only a short period it served a purpose which is unfortunately typical of the switchback ride which is the history of Alsace, that of aiding the healing process after an underserved set of reversals of fate. Noticeable also is the totally Alsatian nature of the work, without linguistic intrusions from across the Vosges. The use of German and a little French, are both seen as foreign in this context.

### 5.4 *Kàrfridaa* (Good Friday)

Written by Raymond Weissenburger, who is probably the most prolific and successful modern Alsatian playwright, in 1985, *Kàrfridaa* received a prize from the Agence Culturelle d'Alsace, and was televised by *France 3 Alsace*. It is a serious dramatic work, completely outside the normal range of family comedies, which unfortunately means that it is not a moneyspinner for local theatre groups to produce. The author also writes and produces at least one comedy a year, and his works are often billed for

productions, and all the seats sold, before they have been completed. Other serious works of his include *Himmel ohne Sterne* (2000), and *'Rusalem* (2001).

A contemporary television review, in 1986, saw the play as follows:

C'est un véritable pari qu'a fait là Raymond Weissenburger. A l'époque du soap opera des [sic] Santa Barbara ... avec leurs insipides et riches « héros », lui, a écrit un drame en un acte sur un jeune « couple » en plein marasme. Patrick au chômage, seul (sa femme l'a quitté) et Françoise,<sup>266</sup> prostituée, qui vivent chacun de leur côté quelque part sous les toits de la zone. Avec pour seuls vrais compagnons : la bibine et le pinard.<sup>267 268</sup>

There is little physical activity in this one-act play, but the action continues throughout, leading to an inevitable conclusion. As in many successful tragedies there is a possibility of a happy ending before the antihero confirms his fateful decision to continue on his chosen path. In this case the chosen path is that leading to the cross. This is a replay of the crucifixion which took place two thousand years ago, accompanied by the symbolic representations of the elements involved in Christ's own life.

### The language

Weissenburger lives in the north of Alsace, and the dialect in which he writes reflects the Germanic influences in that region. Some of his work has been written in German, even for performance in his village, and his plays are often staged in Germany. There are very few words of French, and one English greeting, 'Happy Birthday'.

---

<sup>266</sup> This reviewer refers to Dolly as Françoise.

<sup>267</sup> France Bittendiebel, Television Review, France 3, Dimanche, 13 Oct. 1986.

<sup>268</sup> (Raymond Weissenburger has taken a real gamble here. In the age of soap operas from Santa Barbara ... with their insipid wealthy 'heros', he has written a drama in one act about a young 'couple' in the doldrums. Patrick, out of work and alone (his wife has left him) and [Dolly], a prostitute, who each lead their own lives somewhere in the slum belt, with cheap wine, and even more cheap wine, for their only true companions.)

It is interesting that in this modern play by Weissenburger all the introductory text and the cast list are also in Alsatian. Whether they are so in the programmes for individual productions is a matter for local custom. The author's works from about 1995 have all the incidental material in French, for ease of use in modern productions.

### **The political influences**

This is not a political work. It is purely introspective, and the only intrusions upon Charly's pain are from his prostitute girlfriend Dolly, from the flower dealer, and from his former employer. He does complain about the capitalist system, which has put him out of work, but he makes no suggestions as to how the system could be improved. He also does not criticise, nor try to reform Dolly. He sends her away simply so that he can fulfil his role alone.

### **Religious influences**

Religious imagery is the vehicle for this drama. But although our attention is focused upon the antihero, in the guise of Christ, the cause of his misery is the breakdown of marriage and the loss of his job due to mechanisation of the production process. It is not due to his having preached against the system or having a dangerous number of converts or disciples.

He takes on the role of Jesus, and assumes the way of the cross until he dies at 3 o'clock (when Jesus died). He presumes that everyone is against him. Dolly tries to understand Charly's acceptance of his problems. 'Wo nämmsch den die Kraft her, fer nie ze hasse?' (Where do you find the strength not to hate?). Christian symbols appearing include the fatted calf, the washing of hands by Pontius Pilate in the guise of his old boss, who gives him a cheque to recompense for the damage he has caused, and who feels better having gone through a symbolic confession. There is also the throwing of the money-changers

out of the temple, and imagined insults from bystanders who see Jesus pass carrying the cross. Charly also feels the loss of self-esteem and the self-reproach which is felt by those who have been made insignificant by redundancy at work. Mary Magdalene in the role of Dolly, is finally sent away, and Charly/Jesus is left to die on stage as the lights fade.

It is tempting to try to make all the features of this work fit the pattern of Jesus's last days. But we can also indicate that Charly's mother abandoned him, whereas Mary did not abandon her son. Charly has a need to be abandoned, whereas Jesus did not, neither was He dependent upon alcohol to deaden his suffering.

Someone voicing a modern view of Charly's lack of ability to cope with his situation might suggest that he go to see his doctor before things get out of hand, so that he could get treatment for depression. Doubtless a few sessions with a counselor would be advised, in addition to anti-depressant pills, and a visit to the Job Centre. But it is man's capacity for suffering here which is in the spotlight, and his lack of ability to accept the helping hand when offered, rather than the ability of modern medicine to step in and alter the course of history. Dolly tries to help Charly. Jesus was also helped by bystanders in carrying the cross on his way to Golgotha. But it was all too late. His fate was decided, by himself as much as by his detractors. The one big difference is that the death of Jesus has had great significance for the rest of history. The death of Charly will probably not even be mentioned in the local daily paper.

### **The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian language theatre**

This play is not typically Alsatian, and there is no indication that it will have a lasting influence, although it may encourage others to undertake more novel work in the theatre in Alsace. But we would look in vain for its Alsatian roots. It runs in parallel with, rather than in continuity with, the Passion Plays which are common at Easter in Alsace as well as elsewhere in devoutly Christian countries. It is encouraging to those who seek a more experimental output in Alsatian language theatre, but whether it will alter the

general pattern only time will tell. The fact that the Agence Culturelle d'Alsace offers prizes for new works may skew the output slightly, but it does not appear to deflect the path of productions greatly from the standard comedies which are the normal expectations of the mass of theatre-goers in the region. As stated elsewhere, prize-winning plays are usually produced only once at a prize-giving ceremony and that performance is shown on television.

## 5.5 *D'Antigonn*

It is significant that this work was written by one devoted campaigner for Alsatian values, Edmond Jung, and adapted by another, the playwright and director, Joseph Schmittbiel, both of whom are frequently referred to in the body of this thesis. We are therefore here dealing with the work of two playwrights, one working in 1978 (the play being left in manuscript, unpublished), and the other discovering the original version in September 2001. And yet, in spite of all this, the plot, first written by Sophocles in 442 BC has nothing at all to do with Alsace. This inconsistency may be explained by Schmittbiel, who said in an interview<sup>269</sup>:

Je crois qu'aujourd'hui, il faut oser la création contemporaine en alsacien, c'est une autre manière de dire que cette langue, comme toute autre, est capable d'exprimer le monde. Mais Edmond Jung a fait une interprétation alsacienne d'Antigone, en évoquant de manière indirecte les Malgré-nous. Il avait lui-même porté l'uniform de la *Wehrmacht*, et j'ai trouvé ce parallèle discret entre le sort de Polynice et le sien très touchant. Du point de vue de l'auteur, cette Antigone est un appel désespéré à la paix et à la fraternisation.<sup>270</sup>

---

<sup>269</sup> Interview with Emma Guntz and Raymond Piella, published in the theatre programme of the first production in Strasbourg, Illiade theatre, March 2003.

<sup>270</sup> (I think that nowadays we must presume to create contemporary work in Alsatian. It is another way of stating that this language, like any other, is capable of expressing the world. But Edmond Jung made a Alsatian interpretation of Antigone, indirectly recalling the Malgré-nous [called up into the German army during World War Two]. He had himself worn the uniform of the Wehrmacht, and I found this subtle parallel, between the fate of Polynice and his own, to be very moving. From the point of view of the author, this Antigone is a desperate call for peace and fraternity.

The play depicts a royal family split by divided loyalties, the new king being a dictator who is trying to hold on to power and unite his country by promulgating laws which punish traitors, while his family disintegrates around him. His niece, Antigone is to marry his son Haemon. But she is on a collision course with her uncle by insisting on giving her brother Polynice a proper burial, for which she is condemned to death, in order to show the people that nobody is above the law. Creon refuses to let family matters interfere with the law which he has proclaimed on television. On page 35 he says ‘Des isch e Fröj vun Staatsehr’ (It is a matter of the honour of the state), to which his wife, Eurydice, replies ‘Dass ich net lach ! Dü reddsch vun Staatsehr un dodebi handelt ’s sich jo numme um dini Macht ! ... Morje kann e andrer an dim Platz sitze numme wil de International Währungsfond ’s entscheide het.’ (Don’t make me laugh. You talk of the honour of the state, but you are only interested in your power. ... You could be replaced tomorrow, simply because the World Bank decides it).

In one scene Antigone and her sister dance to the music of James Brown singing *Living in America*. Ismene says ‘Why switch it off. It’s our national anthem’. There are regular breaks in the action, while they drink beer from the refrigerator. Antigone’s death is announced by the actor playing her role. She and her secret lover had driven her beloved Mercedes into a concrete pillar at 200 mph.’ Creon and Haemon then sing *Candle in the wind*.

References abound, to world events which are of no more consequence to Alsace than to the rest of the world. But the use of the Alsatian language in depicting such topics, which we see on our television sets every day, is the overarching principal which gives significance to the region’s position in the contemporary global environment. Schmittbiel is saying ‘Why do we have to be fed these happenings in French, or in American English, when we have the means to do it for ourselves ?’

## **Language**

In the first three plays analysed above, the language conflict was between Alsatian and



French. In this work the problem is linguistic colonisation by American English, as epitomised by the continual reference to newscasts and advertisements for Shell oil, on American television, wherein lies the real power to influence world opinions. The persuasive power of Presidents is subject to their ability to command space on prime-time world-wide channels. The international marketplace is the motivation behind the action of the play, and it is remarkable only that the choice of language should be modern Alsatian.

Although the stage directions are given in Alsatian, the text is peppered with English words. In the first scene, on page 9, Creon sings an English song. There follows an interchange:

Nicodemus - Saa mol, worum benutzt er immer wider englishi Werter wenn er redd ?  
(Tell me, why does he keep on using English words when he speaks ?).

Haemon - Des nennt mer code switching (We call that code switching).

Nicodemus - Wie meinsch ? (How do you mean ?).

Haemon - Code switching. 's isch schins chic. Code switching isch chic (Code switching. It's apparently cool. Code switching is cool).

The song *How deep is your love* follows.

In setting the style, possibly the most indicative words are spoken by Antigone, early on:

‘Tele luesch a kenns ?’ (Isn't anybody watching [the news on] the telly ?).

which is followed shortly after by the war-film music *633 Squadron*. American songs are played frequently, to point up the action.

## **Political influences**

Creon's position as king of Thebes does not depend upon his ability to settle matters within his kingdom. It depends upon his being able to align his country's oil wealth with the dominant world power. In his plan for Thebes, intellectuals will be sent to the mad house. Reason is not to be allowed to interfere with politics. Chechnya is mentioned. The death of Princess Diana is mirrored in the death of Antigone.

The intrusive political problem is not that of Paris, but that of America's need for world domination and its securing sufficient supplies of oil. Thebes is simply a bauble in the world economy.

## **Religious influences**

Traditional religion plays no part in this work. God is (or Gods are) replaced by the fervour for earthly power. Burial of the dead is subject to having behaved acceptably towards the monarch. Marriage was defiled before the action began by the son, Oedipus, having slept with his mother. Although Antigone is betrothed to Haemon, she has a lover, and commits suicide in a high speed car crash.

One's place in the hierarchy of respect now depends upon one's command of oil, the principal world source of energy, and the high priests are those Presidents who can gain and retain access to it.

## **The place of this play in the canon of Alsatian Language Theatre.**

This play is unusual, and possibly unique, in that its source is directly classical, but the adaptation is thoroughly modern. Its style is argumentative, and leaves us with an uneasy feeling that we are individually responsible in some way for the international politics of

the tragedy that unfolds. Although adaptations of other plays exist from other languages, experimental work is rare in Alsatian literature, and, as with *Kàrfridaa* we should not expect this piece to appeal to an audience outside the middle-class intellectual milieu of the few big cities in Alsace, although I could imagine it being a success in London, in English. As indicated elsewhere in this thesis, what mass audiences go to see in Alsace is familiar comedy. But the importance of this work, in indicating a possible route for further adaptations and experiments is inestimable.

## 5.6 Comments

The five plays chosen above cover a period of two hundred years, ranging from the period of the French Revolution up to wars in Chechnya and Iraq, and the death of Princess Diana. Of those analysed, only *Kàrfridaa* makes no reference to matters outside Alsace, but it does closely involve Christian beliefs and mythology, in a way which appears both eternal and international. In the four others, as in most Alsatian plays, the action involves comparing the region with external powers. In *Der Pfingstmontag* as with *Gabrielle* those are both France and Germany. In *So sinn mr halt!* it is Paris. In *D'Antigonn* it is the USA. While most campaign for the region, the latter campaigns for the language as interpreter of world events.

Alsatian theatre normally examines its position in its known world, and the Alsatian paradigm always appears favourable by comparison. Only *D'Antigonn* leaves us feeling detached from the region and from our established expectations. In so doing it may well deserve more prominence than the theatre in Alsace is able to afford it.

## 6 Conclusions

### 6.1 An overview of Alsatian language theatre

Jean Morel, in 1902, wrote that ‘Le théâtre alsacien est la déclaration d’indépendance d’un peuple original qui se sent une âme propre.’ (Alsatian theatre is the declaration of independence of an authentic people who are aware of their own soul.)<sup>271</sup>

Schoen, writing in 1903, concludes that it is all done without the lust for money. It lies in family values and selfless love of ‘la petite patrie’ (the little homeland). It gives a true-to-life impression of the life of the people, the tranquil bonhomie of the Alsatian peasant, his fatalistic resignation, his enthusiasm for nature, his mocking and obstinate character, and his simple and unassuming manner. Alsatian language theatre is ‘avant tout, la reproduction sincère et prise sur le vif de l’âme populaire en un lieu donné et à un moment précis de l’histoire’ (above all the sincere and candid reproduction of the soul of the people, at a given place and at a precise moment in history’) (1903, 322).

This slightly Disney-esque analysis came before the Alsatian theatre movement really got under way when kick-started by Stoskopf and the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg, with their politically aware satires.

The analyses of Morel and Schoen are culled from the humorous theatre of the past and are reflected in the nostalgic theatre of the present. But they still ignore the harshness of agricultural life in Alsace and the need to exhibit respect and toe the line whenever required. Truly modern plays are rare in Alsace, and what appears to be up-to-date is mostly a bending of the previous parameters in order to bow to a few of the recent changes in society.

Dialekt Theater is not philosophical, it is ‘in-your-face’, immediate, naïve. There is no subtlety involved. The conclusions are drawn for you, especially in the campaigning or

---

<sup>271</sup> (Jean Morel. *Revue de l’art dramatique*. 13 Oct. 1902, 481-482.)

moralistic works. They have in the past tended to be contemporary documents, comedies of manners of the period in which they were written, not blood-and-thunder histories of regicide in a Scottish castle. They are not contrived and not conceited. They have to be obvious, popular, amusing. This is not the theatre of the absurd. Irony and subtlety have no place on the traditional stage in Alsace.

Schoen finalises his argument, more realistically:

Et, par dessus tout, le théâtre alsacien nous est apparu comme l'expression concrète et vivante du désir ardent d'un petit peuple qui sent en lui-même une âme indépendante, qui fait effort pour conserver sa littérature, sa langue, ses traditions et sa nationalité propre ... C'est une preuve nouvelle de la ténacité, de l'endurance d'une petite race que les armes n'ont pu terroriser, et qui veut rester elle-même envers et contre tous. (1903, 326).<sup>272</sup>

It may be interesting to note that the above patriotic comment was written in French during the first German annexation of Alsace.

From 1898 to 1903 sixty plays one to three acts long, of variable quality, were written in Alsatian (Schoen 1903, 313). This is said to have been all done without lust for money. Why, then ? Peer esteem at a period when a desire for self-expression in an environment of repression was laudable ? An act of defiance to threats from the outside world ? Why choose this outlet ? The challenging political situation may have provoked and encouraged this form of self-expression. Language is the most obvious expression of Alsatian-ness, and the theatre, in a period before television, was a very effective way of reaching and influencing a relatively large number of middle-class opinion leaders.

---

<sup>272</sup> (And above all, Alsatian theatre has arisen as the concrete and living expression of the ardent desire of a confined group who are aware of their independent soul, who are making an effort to conserve their literature, their language, their traditions and their own nationality. ... This is a further proof of the tenacity, and of the endurance of a small racial group whom armaments have not been able to terrorise, and who wish to remain themselves in the face of and against everyone else.)

## **6.2 Political and religious influences on the Alsatian language theatre**

The two main influences on the Alsatian language theatre have been political and religious, in the forms of successive governments which have attempted to suppress the language, and the Catholic Church, which has used the theatre for fund-gathering and management of the faithful.

Successive governments from both sides of the Rhine have, since 1789, imposed a policy of eradication upon the Alsatian language, and have thus influenced the means of delivery of the Alsatian language theatre. Their efforts, while successful socially, economically and politically, have been counter-productive in the theatre, as witnessed by its repeated flourishing. The influence of politics has been greatest in periods of transition or stress, due to outside sources, mainly French or German. Such features provoked the creation of the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg, and stimulated its core writers. Other critical periods were after 1918, due to domination by Paris and domestic anti-autonomist propaganda, which accompanied the increasingly pacifist stance adopted towards Germany. Similarly, World War Two and its aftermath were testing and fortifying episodes.

The Protestant Church, since the Reformation, had promoted its opinions via literacy and education in general, encouraging believers to study the scriptures themselves, whereas the Catholic Church has tended to promote conformity by guiding the activities of parishioners into healthy pursuits in gymnastic clubs and inoffensive amateur theatre productions where traditional values are reinforced. Education has never featured to any noticeable extent in Alsatian language theatre.

Although nowadays this theatre acknowledges the presence of infidelity within marriage, (but not of infidelity towards the church), it does not attempt to 'deal with it' in the modern sociological sense of the expression. It is only depicted 'for a bit of a laugh', as

in *E Schinheiliger Gockel* (A phoney cockerel), by Raymond Weissenburger, or *Aloïs wo bisch dü gsin ?* (Aloisius, where have you been ?), by Paulette Becker. And married couples are always reconciled before the end of the play. Furthermore, children and parents who are at odds also find reconciliation. The only play which deals seriously with the breakup of a marriage, and ends unhappily, is the modern *Familierot* (Family Council), by Pierre Kretz. For this reason one could safely predict that it will never do the rounds in the villages. And one effect of the breaking of convention in this manner was that the couple who played the leads in its first staging actually separated after the production. Maybe the Catholic Church knew what it was doing !

The single mother in the modern *Hurrah ! e Kneckes* (Hurrah ! a Baby !), by Arnold and Bach, has conveniently died and her baby is equally conveniently adopted by the man who married her out of pity, while not being the father. *Noch e Bubbele vor d'r Hochzitt* (Another Baby before the Wedding), by François Long, deals with the story of a servant girl who passes her illegitimate baby off as that of the son of the family. As they are both seeking a spouse the matter ends happily. These two plays were performed at the first *Festival of Alsatian Theatre* in 1989, and the latter is in the Year 2001 Catalogue of plays available from the Catholic Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. But, although it is a comedy, I have not noticed it being produced during the seasons from 2000 until 2004, and I think it doubtful that such a subject would be welcomed by many Alsatian language theatre groups even today.

In Alsatian productions love is dealt with more in the word than in the deed. Lovers who are reunited, and newly weds, will say 'Let me give you a kiss', and then they proceed to deliver a chaste peck on the cheek. Anything more direct would have scandalous repercussions in real life, as being behaviour not befitting a small pious community.<sup>273</sup>

In such a climate only light-hearted boulevard style theatre could flourish. When life-threatening matters are broached, such as in the post-1945 *pièces patriotiques*, either

---

<sup>273</sup> I did on one occasion see a young engaged couple kiss gently on the lips twice on stage, but that was in *D'Millionepartie*, by Stoskopf, at the more professional TAS in Strasbourg, produced by Pierre Spegt, on 31 Oct. 2004.

drama spills over into melodrama, as in *Barbara*, by Philippe Hoehn and *D' Brüeder* (The Brothers), by Paul Clemens (1946), in which two brothers end up fighting in opposing uniforms, or it is dealt with humorously, as in *D'r Michel müess in d'Bardej* (Michael must join the Party), by Franz Froh, 1946, or *D'r nej Fahne* (The New Flag), by Frédéric Lutting (1946), in which an Alsatian village mayor tries to keep both the Nazis and his villagers happy. An exception which manages to deal sensitively with the dangers and the humour of the Nazi period is *Enfin ... Redde mir nim devun* (Don't let's talk of that any more), by Germain Muller (1949) (all dealt with in Section 4.4, from page 190).

But the *pièce patriotique* could not have survived as a genre, any more than the KdF could have continued to hijack the Alsatian theatre as a National Socialist propaganda machine. Both were extreme, and could therefore not have been absorbed successfully. They were thoroughly alien to the modest, harmless, everyday, parochial phenomenon which is Alsatian language theatre. The rare examples of experimental theatre which are offered today have a similar struggle to find audiences, as they are positioned at the extremity of the paradigm of normality in the Alsatian theatre.

There are well-established conventions which prevail in Alsatian theatre, as detailed in the next Section, below. A continual problem for Alsace is that while its theatre still reacts to a political environment which has changed little in two centuries, its portrayal of village life and everyday morality is clearly out-of-date.

### **6.3 The culture and the theatre are out-of-step**

In Alsace there used to be a clear link between the rules for managing interactions within communities and the conventions in their traditional theatre. The rules have changed, but has the theatre kept in step? At an Alsatian language theatre production one could sometimes imagine that Alsatian is now a foreign language. Everything except the



dialogue is in French. The theatre building is like a time machine, to carry us back to village life in 1900.

Previously the rules, following the customs of the period, were reflected in the theatre:

- Family values and family structure were maintained,
- society was patriarchal,
- the hierarchy of respect was observed,
- wealth was based upon the ownership of land,
- the influence of the Church was all-pervasive,
- crops and animals were of prime importance,
- the work ethic was a basic tenet,
- conformity of belief, actions, aspirations was expected,
- life existed within the village,
- women were housewives and mothers,
- success meant staying put and building on one's roots.

In the theatre there were additional conventions. These mostly remain:

- No serious consequences of the action remain at the final curtain,
- chaste behaviour is required on stage,
- men may drink – women may not,
- it is in men's nature to flirt – women may only flirt to gain a husband,
- human impulses must be controlled, otherwise things go wrong,
- the community requires respect for others,
- one should respect law and order,
- incomers are to be suspected,
- misbehaviour must be pardoned in the final scene,
- except for a few vigorously proselytising plays, the Church is never mentioned.<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>274</sup> The rules and conventions which I cite can be deduced from and extracted from the plays and

Nowadays, in real life, by my own observation:

- The family is eroded by relationships outside marriage,
- marriage is not a necessary prerequisite for having children,
- women are increasingly emancipated,
- birth control is common,
- daughters expect to have a career, to choose relationships freely,
- women have had the vote since 1945 (parodied in a play at the time),  
wealth is based upon education, and position in the business,
- the work ethic is eroded by redundancy, unemployment,
- work may involve moving out of the region to live,
- work may involve commuting to Germany daily,
- teachers, priests, are no longer automatically accorded respect,
- bank managers are respected more than the priest,
- people have different aspirations,
- success means abandoning one's roots,
- drugs and violence affect individuals and society,
- gay relationships are increasingly recognised and accepted,
- increasing numbers of immigrants are present in the community.

We also have to note the recent increase in 'un-Alsatian' phenomena, such as:

- Service industries,
- quick-fire TV entertainment,
- the influence of foreign cultures, mainly American,
- behavioural 'attitude', i.e., lack of respect,
- racial intermixing,
- global marketing instead of dealing within the community,

---

performances cited in Section 7.1 *Primary Sources*, below.

- the preponderance of sex and violence in TV, cinema and computer games.

Dialekt Theater embodies nostalgia for the older generation. Each production provides a Sunday afternoon performance for the 'third age'. It would not be 'cool' for a group of youths to go voluntarily to see the traditional theatre. They go with parents, or on an organised outing. What is replacing it for younger people as elsewhere, is television, cinema and computer games.

Perhaps the Alsatian language theatre found its voice at a time when its target audience can no longer hear, because it no longer understands the words it uses, and because its ears are tuned to the vocabulary of American television ? And perhaps the language remained parochial, while the rest of the world has gone global ?

Until 2004 there have been only two well-known examples in the language, of detective mystery plays, which appear to have been a response to the endless *crimi's* (police dramas) on television. These are *De Wend spielt mit de Gabinet Dier*,<sup>275</sup> adapted by Michel Schutz, and *Mordstraum* by Raymond Weissenburger. Here the emphasis is upon a greater offence to our Christian values, that of murder. But again, the subject can be treated light-heartedly, as murder is something we only read of, whereas infidelity is a constant possibility in everyday life, and apart from the necessity, in the plot, of the murder itself, all the other conventions are respected. In addition, justice always prevails. No doubt this imported genre will increase in popularity.

#### 6.4 Racism in the theatre in Alsace

'It is normal that fear defines the boundaries of our known world'.<sup>276</sup>

---

<sup>275</sup> From Jack Popplewell's *Busy Body*.

<sup>276</sup> Jeremy Hardy. *Jeremy Hardy Speaks to the Nation*, BBC Radio 4, 6.30pm, 10 Sep. 2004.

One can only assume that fear of the unfamiliar by a group which itself is a minority, and which has experienced severe hardships and ridicule through its being different from both nations who have conquered it, leads Alsatians to band together to ridicule outsiders, and thus gain communal security. The geographical isolation of some Alsatian villages may serve to enforce this attitude, at the same time as bolstering the vote for the National Front. This aspect spills over into Alsatian theatre, and I can only define it as political theatre.

The inability to deal with outsiders is expressed in various humorous plays. The outsider cannot become an insider in Alsace. During the long periods of government by France and Germany, the region has never identified itself with either, in spite of their concerted efforts. In my periods of living in the region I have been regularly mistaken by strangers for either a Frenchman or a German, but never for an Alsatian. When I worked as a bus and tram conductor in Strasbourg during the summer of 1956 I was regularly scolded by passengers for being ‘un Français de l’intérieur venu prendre un emploi d’un bon Alsacien’ (a Frenchman from the interior who had come to take a job from a good Alsatian). The insecurity which the outsider engenders, and the need to consolidate one’s position and attitude, is resolved in the theatre by bringing the audience’s attention to the problem and suggesting a comic solution of which everybody approves. Mutual confirmation is thus established, that *they* have funny ways of behaving, whereas *our* ways are normal, an attitude which, in itself, is normal everywhere. This feature is at its most extreme when dealing with recognisable racial minorities.

While being suspicious of those with foreign roots, Alsatians are also sometimes intolerant of their own roots. Scorning one’s roots is such an insidious process that even those who would defend their culture may condone and take part. One well-known theatre producer/actor<sup>277</sup> with whom I studied the language, understood my concern that the audience at the *Les Scouts* cabaret had been invited to join in laughing at Alsatian speakers (see Section 4.6, page 208). But he then went on to give us a spoof translation from Alsatian into French, in order to laugh at traditional errors which Alsatians make

---

<sup>277</sup> Raymond Bitsch. 12 Feb. 2003.

when translating using a dictionary, and mistakes made due to ‘false friends’. It is, however, also normal for Alsatian plays to also poke fun at other Alsatians who have tried to reject their own roots. It does seem more socially acceptable to make jokes about one’s-self, than to belittle those from other ethnic groups.

There is still a noticeable inability, in Alsatian language theatre, to ‘deal with’ uncomfortable topics such as racism, prejudice, women’s rights, abortion, gay relationships, single parents, isolation following the break up of the family, and the fact that the traditional values, listed in Section 6.3, page 250, above, are no longer the basis upon which acceptable behaviour is grounded.

Racism, where it appears in the theatre, is not acknowledged as such. It is simply the depiction of what is seen as facts of life, of having to deal with with lower orders who behave unacceptably. What might be seen as prejudice, again, is shown as a problem caused by the victim. Women have the right to be annoyed when their husband follows his nature by drinking, flirting, and behaving unreasonably. But they cannot take long-term revenge, and they are not shown as having any equal role outside the home.

Abortion is not mentioned, as there is no possibility of getting a laugh from it. Only one gay role has come to my notice, in *Romeo and Julio*, but it is only there as a figure of fun, and possibly to enable doubtful members of the audience to mock someone with whom they wish to make evident that they obviously have no commonality. Single parents are occasionally dealt with, provided they enter the fold of respectability before the end of the action. Family breakup has, to my knowledge, only appeared once, in *Familierot*, a worthy play which will never do the rounds in the villages, because the emotions expressed are too real for comfort, and because it is not a comedy. And comedy is what brings in the audiences.

I know of only two Alsatian plays which actively promote inter-racial harmony. Both are by Raymond Weissenburger. In one, *e Herz üss Gold* (A Heart of Gold, 1986), a black boy wins peer approval via the intervention of an old man with magical powers. The other, *Rusalem* (Jerusalem, 2001), concerns the grandson of a Alsatian conscript in the

German army (a *malgré nous*) who goes to Jerusalem to absolve the memory of guilt attached to his grandfather's role in a massacre of Jews in World War Two.

## **6.5 What if there had been no political or religious influences on the Alsatian language theatre ?**

If Alsace had not been the subject of repressive regimes from both France and Germany I think that the theatre in the regional language would not be so vigorous. My own conclusion, supported by the variety of sources quoted in this thesis, is that the language is not the prime stimulus for the Alsatian language theatre. The language is simply the most suitable tool for showing the frustration felt at not being able to fully express regional identity, and the theatre is its vent-pipe, supported by and hinting at the turmoil below. The theatre happens to be an effective manner of both reaching large numbers of people, and of stimulating them to sympathetic reactions. This is an important reason for its success. In the presence of outsiders the regional language has been a private message system which bestows identity and exclusivity upon its owners.

The Catholic church happens to have been the seemingly eternal point of reference for behaviour, whether at home, in the street, or in the theatre. As such, its influence has been proportionately large in determining subject matter, style of presentation, and audience reaction to productions offered. Its presence has been so all-pervasive that few have wondered if there was another way. The Reformation and the arrival of the Protestant church hardly altered the existing situation. Until World War Two there were few who felt that they could present theatre without the approval of the Catholic church. And even since the 1950s care has been taken not to transgress against the basic tenets of that faith. Without that influence one can imagine that the theatre would be quite different, and that groups which did exist, taking into account its present dominantly boulevard nature, would possibly resemble cabaret, with more risqué political and possibly even religious satire.

The Alsatian language theatre can, therefore have benefited from both the political repression and the religious control which it has been subjected to, both of which have been seen to be its *raison d'être*. Both Breton and Welsh theatres may be seen as having benefited indirectly from the intervention of the Church in supporting their regional language, as demonstrated elsewhere in this study.

## **6.6 The ways in which 'Alsatian-ness' is dealt with in the theatre**

In order to draw conclusions and to indicate possible future development, it appears necessary to see how Alsatians, and non-Alsatians, deal with Alsatian-ness in the theatre.

Playwrights, in writing to forward their careers, also need to fill theatres. To do the latter they have to deal interestingly with matters which their public want to share. To a large extent nowadays, local theatre simply provides a comforting escape route. The older section of the community is aware of the danger to their culture, and they need to return to their roots for reassurance, into an imaginary situation where nothing has changed linguistically, and therefore not socially nor politically. Meanwhile, in the real world, the same audience views and condones the conspiracy against their own real culture.

During troubled times people have to deal with simply surviving. After troubled times people need to replay their experiences in the light of what they wish had happened, and how they wish they had dealt with those circumstances. In this way we re-run events in our minds, with alternative variations on the plot, to investigate the most satisfactory solution to an unsatisfactory situation. This theme was explored to the full in the film *Last year in Marienbad* (Alain Renais, 1961) in which half-remembered events are replayed endlessly in the mind of the heroine (Delphine Seyrig).

The *pièces patriotiques* of the post-World War Two period provide this replay facility, offering idealised outcomes to situations which overwhelmed their participants at the time. People are self-critical as well as being critical of others, and they need to identify

with the characters portrayed in parallel events. Parallel themes are easier to deal with than reruns of actual events. Seeing the liberation of Haguenau in December 1944 re-enacted on stage would be too raw an experience for those who lived through the reality. Seeing a community deal with parallel events in the Thirty Years War, or even in the First World War, is a more digestible undertaking for audiences post-1945.

For these reasons Alsatian language theatre has a purely internal function. It shows Alsace as seen from the viewpoint of its own people. To see Alsace represented from outside we have to look at cinema and television. In *Paix sur le Rhin* (Jean Choux, Switzerland, 1938), made with German money, the maid who speaks with an Alsatian accent had fallen on her head as a child, and was therefore a bit simple. This is similar to the use of ‘Uncle Tom’ characters in early American cinema. And the father of the Alsatian family is shown as being typically prejudiced against Germans, i.e., biased, stubborn and unreasonable.

The television series *Les Deux Mathilde* (The Two Mathildas) made as late as 1995 by Michel Favart takes six hours in all to cover the period 1870 to 1953, dealing historically with many of the sensitive issues, including the ‘sorting’ of Alsatians after 1918 into four categories according to the degree of French or German blood in their veins, the political turmoil of the 1920s and 30s, the autonomy trial in Colmar in 1928, members of the same families fighting on different sides, the expulsion of Jews, communist movements, the *épuration* after World War Two. In it, Alsatian is spoken only occasionally, to give some local colour, but it could just as easily be dealing with any other mythological border region.

## **6.7 The political agenda of the Alsatian language theatre**

The present-day hyperactivity in Alsatian theatre seems to stem from a need for communal self expression, and as a general comfort factor, in a situation where the environment lacks the confirmation that one’s identity is acceptable. Maybe it has



something in common with the confessional, in stating that, 'OK, so I am imperfect, now make me happy with that !' Or perhaps 'They *tell* me that I am imperfect ...'. Both attendance at the theatre, and taking part in the production, are more than just membership of a club. They are more parallel to a religion than to a superficial expression of interest in the thespian muse. Among the prerequisites are prior knowledge, faith and the belief in a healing process which will be the outcome of participation.

We should not ignore the fact that the Alsatian language theatre also has a political agenda. It is itself a political animal. Although outside influences crowded in on it, it also created its own events, and it has tried to manipulate history, attitudes and policies. This is most immediately obvious in cabaret and satire, where prominent personalities and policies are lampooned. But the theatre movement in general has also acted more consistently, by supporting a banned or disdained language. At times the theatre has condescended to allow itself to be manipulated, and has cooperated with unpopular or brutal governments. One hears in confidential conversations of 'certain people who after the Liberation left the group because of their activities in the previous period'. These are people who may not have been so prominent that their names are quoted, but whose actions had contributed to political consequences.

We tend to think of the Nazi period, for instance, as having been universally hated at the time. However, Hitler was voted into power, and Austria invited him in. He was the most popular European leader in the 1930s.<sup>278</sup> And in Alsace there were enthusiasts, such as Robert Ernst, a voluntary exile in 1918, who helped install and run the wartime system and became Oberstadtkommissar of Strasbourg in 1944. The *Kraft durch Freude* movement was apparently run by enthusiasts, who reorganised the contemporary *People's Theatre*. Some who took part claim that it was in order to avoid more onerous duties in other organisations. We should be cautious in condemning those who collaborated. Under any de facto regime one has to decide how to survive in both the

---

<sup>278</sup> Professor Ian Kershaw, Sheffield University, BBC4 television programme '*Hitler's place in history*', 8.40pm, 30 April 2005.

short and the long term. The borderlines between openly resisting, passively resisting, tolerating, cooperating, taking part and supporting, may become easily blurred when peer pressure is applied by those who are actively profiting from an unwelcome situation.<sup>279</sup> And these are dilemmas which we face daily in democracies as well as in dictatorships.

However, Alsatian language theatre would not exist if it had just let history wash over it. Being not simply a product of history, but a contributor, it has, in more peaceful times, taken up the cudgels and attacked persons, policies and attitudes, normally against outsiders, but sometimes against insiders, such as in *der Pfingstmontag*, by Arnold. Those insiders who adopted French manners are parodied, as well as those who succumbed to promises from across the Rhine.

It is interesting to note that the Federation of Alsatian Theatres, which has groups in six major towns, and of which the Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg was the founding member in 1902, has never had a religious affiliation. It is recognised as having had socialist and autonomist leanings between the wars. Women have always played the female parts in its productions. Its member group in Colmar, which has had two Jewish presidents, came under the influence of Rossé, the autonomist in the 1920s, when increasing numbers of Germanic plays were proposed, causing some members to leave the group.<sup>280</sup>

On 6 February 2004 I attended the small theatre *Le Cheval Blanc* in Strasbourg, for the *Literary Cabaret* entitled *Misch Masch*. At the start the leading actor stated ‘This is not a political review’, to much applause. However, the whole evening was a statement of Alsatian-ness in opposition to the outside world, with readings from regional writers, nostalgic children’s songs, and other unmistakable assertions of identity.

---

<sup>279</sup> An interesting summary of some studies on group conformity by Solomon Asch, Stanley Milgram and Samuel Stouffer, can be found in John J. Macionis and Ken Plummer *Sociology: a Global Introduction* (1997, 182-7). See Bibliography.

<sup>280</sup> Dr. René Vogel, President, Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar, Personal interview. 4 Dec. 2003.

## 6.8 Prospects for the future of the Alsatian language theatre

We live by value systems, and have a need to put a comparative value on those things which we want to possess, to save, to revive, to promote. We act within certain constraints, and have access to limited opportunities which we may exploit or ignore. As stated previously, French is ironically no longer the smart language. The smart language at the start of the third millennium is American English, and both French and German are in danger of themselves becoming regional languages in the global market. We now live by global market values which owe no allegiance to regions or languages. My own experience during thirty years of doing business in continental Europe and elsewhere is that one essential acquisition for foreign businessmen is an ability to abandon their own language in favour of American English. Japanese executives are often called Chuck, Billy or Freddie, or similar adopted names, and, in common with their European satellites, they speak with an American accent.

The future can never be predicted with confidence. Among the variables which are likely to affect the Alsatian language theatre in the coming years are:

- The French government's entrenched attitude,
- Alsatian local government,
- Education policies in Alsace,
- The vigour and stamina of language activist groups and individuals,
- Similarly, the ability of political activists to organise public opinion,
- The determination and ability of the Alsatian language theatre to adapt itself.

Neophiliacs might ask 'Could Alsatian be 'the new Welsh' ?' Certainly not until action groups realise that this is a political issue, and a political movement arises which is the equal of Plaid Cymru, a party which campaigns purely in the interests of its region. Such a party should be respected throughout the whole of France. *Alsace d'Abord* (Alsace First), a recent splinter group of the National Front, is tainted with the right wing policies

of its parent, with its own spin on immigration and similar issues. It does not promote the vernacular and the regional culture for their own intrinsic value.

Jung states that for the last eighty years of the nineteenth century Alsatian playwrights generally avoided using their own language (2001, 64), and Schoen agrees firmly that only recently [to 1903] had there been a revival of the local patriotism, history and traditions of the area in which one was born or grew up (1903, 46). And the two opinions may be put into perspective by the fact that in the present day the Alsatian language is going through one of its most serious periods of decline. Yet one association of theatre groups lists 115 current Alsatian language playwrights.<sup>281</sup> By comparison, Schoen's opinion that there were not many playwrights in the nineteenth century, and Jung's, that only five are worthy of mention, may illustrate how unusual, unexpected, and valuable the contribution of the theatre is towards the possible salvation of the language at the start of the third millennium

This apparently self-contradictory situation, in which the language is in decline, but the Alsatian language theatre is experiencing better attendances at its productions, led the President of the Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar to state 'Nous mourrons riches !' (We shall die rich !).<sup>282</sup> Possibly a more realistic, if sombre tone, is found in the line in Germain Muller's classic *Enfin ... redde m'r nimm devun*, 'M'r trumpiert sich oft im Elsass'.<sup>283</sup>

The theatre in Alsace's neighbours, France and Germany, does not have such complex relationships to express, (apart, of course, from in those regions of France itself where other languages are spoken). Other than the desire for peer esteem or advancement in the chosen profession, there is little common ground. We have to look at the similarities and dissimilarities with somewhere like Wales before the Alsatian language theatre can be fundamentally be evaluated. The Artistic Director of the Welsh *Theatr Arad Goch*, Jeremy Turner, confirmed that there are few theatre groups in Wales performing in the language. In the 1930s Welsh language theatre presented the same kinds of plots as the

---

<sup>281</sup> Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin. Calendar 2003/04, 62-63.

<sup>282</sup> Dr René Vogel. Personal interview. 4 Dec. 2003.

<sup>283</sup> (Things are often misleading in Alsace.) (Muller 1996 (1948), 89.)

traditional Alsatian Dialekt Theater, as did the early Irish theatre, but since then the number of amateur groups has declined, and the traditional stories seldom reappear. Since the 1970s the number of professional groups has increased to only about eight or nine, and there are few amateur groups also. There is no longer any need to make political statements in the theatre about the language. Such campaigning themes are repetitive, and young people in Wales do not need any longer to be told about the importance of the language. Therefore the plots are very varied. Although some chapels have established their own groups, religion has played little part in the theatre, although the translation of the Bible into the language in 1588 was instrumental in the survival of Welsh as a language.<sup>284</sup> From this one might wonder if the success of the language had coincided with the decline of the theatre which uses it. None of these features parallels those we find in Alsace.

Apart from its political significance, we can value the Alsatian language theatre today for its straight forward ability to deal with everyday situations with humour and realism, as demonstrated in Raymond Weissenburger's *e Mortstraum* by Hortense, describing the passing away of her husband, Prosper:

Johhh... Wàs haisst do g'storwe... meh devung'schliche isch er mir, vor drei Johr... Stell n'eich emol vor wàs der mir losg'lon het... Geht der mir Oowes g'sund ins Bett un wàcht tod uf, de àndere Morje. Isch d'gànz Nàcht näwe mir gelaije un sààt àwer nix... Guet, ich muess saawe, viel geredd het er nie, de Prosper... Awer er het mich wenichstens preveniere kenne, dàss er geht... Nà, wàs welle n'r, emol het's muen sin... (Yes, well... I don't know so much about dying... it's more like he slipped away from me, three years ago... Just think about it, how he left me... He came to bed quite well that night, and woke up dead the next morning. He lay beside me the whole night and didn't say a word... Well, I must say, he never was one for talking much, my Prosper... But

<sup>284</sup> See website [http:// www. 100welshheroes.com/en/biography/bishopwilliammorgan](http://www.100welshheroes.com/en/biography/bishopwilliammorgan). 22 Dec. 2005.

<sup>284</sup> Jeremy Turner, Artistic Director. Theatr Arad Goch, Aberystwth. Telephone interview. 21 Dec. 2005.

he could at least have warned me that he was going... Oh, well, what do you expect, it had to happen sooner or later...) (Act One, Scene One).

Just like Prosper, the Alsatian language and the culture which it underpins could drift away in the night unless an awareness of this probability is translated into more widespread positive action by those whom it most closely concerns. The elected decision-makers are, by their very nature, interested in the voting population, who shape their own future, for better or worse according to their own preferences, or lack of them. But in a democracy it is necessary not only to say how you would like things to be, but also to do something positive to achieve the desired goals, and this applies equally to Alsace.

## Appendix One

### Local dialects of Alsatian

My working definition of an ‘Alsatian dialect’ being for present purposes, local variations of the Alsatian language, it may be interesting to investigate such variations and to see how and why they occur.

However, we immediately find a clash of definitions which has to be explained. Matzen stated in a language class on 7 January 2003, that ‘dialects’ are more conservative than major languages. By ‘dialects’ in this case he meant regional vernaculars such as Alsatian, rather than variations on the vernacular, which I am here defining as dialects. He stated that major languages need to move with the times, and are continually modified in response to external and internal pressures, whereas ‘dialects’ do not experience such pressures. They are to a certain extent bypassed by events. For this reason, Alsatian usages, and its various pronunciations have survived since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Alsatian, for instance, retained the verb form of *han* (to have), and others, from the time of the troubadours, whereas German now uses *haben*.

It is noticeable that borrowings in Alsatian are mostly from French, and French words are simply treated to Alsatian pronunciation and grammatical handling, whereas French and High German borrow mainly from American English, which creates problems of pronunciation and grammar. In French a male television announcer is a *speaker*, but this becomes a problem if feminine, as a *speakerine*. In a German restaurant *Spareripps* is not a proper German plural, and in the singular nobody knows whether it is neuter, masculine, or feminine. By convention only, foreign words are treated in German as neuter, unless there are good reasons otherwise.

Alsatian, for example, borrows the nouns *Bütik* (boutique) or *Ateliee* (atelier) for a workroom in a house, *Schäslüg* (chaise longue), *Fotöi* (fauteuil = armchair) and *Kànàpee* (canapé = sofa), *Hordöwer* (hors d’oeuvre), *Dessär* (dessert), *Glass* (glace =

ice cream) and *Schàmbùng* (jambon = ham). The verbs *arrangiere* (to arrange), *trompiere* (to mistake), *insistiere* (to insist), *expliquiere* (to explain), and others, are dealt with each according to normal Alsatian spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. The normal German pronunciation of a borrowing such as *rasiere* (to shave) puts the accent on the penultimate syllable. But the Alsatian traditional pronunciation is *rasiere*.<sup>285</sup> However, my own observation of random occurrences has noted Alsatians normally accenting the penultimate syllable of borrowed verbs. In one example, also noted at random (in restaurant Sept Fontaines, at Drachenbronn, on 26 January 2003), an unknown speaker, talking to other Alsatians did use the borrowing *Proprietaire* (owner) with the accent on the first syllable.

The Germanic usage when applied to French borrowings sometimes leaves grammaticians confused. Some masculine French nouns ending in ...age, such as *étage* (storey), *gage* (wage), *garage* and *blamage* (disgrace), were taken into German when it was considered elegant to borrow from French. But they were then treated as feminine, following the German pattern. When subsequently borrowed back by Alsatians, they still today remain feminine when spoken in Alsatian, while the same words are masculine when spoken by the same people in French.<sup>286</sup>

However, the dialect variations which one finds within Alsace itself, in correct Alsatian pronunciations and spelling, are not just a quaint inconvenience. They do hinder communication. In Achenheim, west of Strasbourg, the word for ‘fog’ is *Navel*. When I used this word in Haguenau, thirty miles away, it was not understood, the local word being *Nebel*. It would similarly cause confusion in English if we spoke of someone as being ‘very naval’, when we meant that the person was ‘very noble’.

Grammatical variations abound. Jenny and Richert state quite clearly what the rules of Alsatian grammar are. For example, the pronoun *mir* is the first person plural in the nominative case, and is also the first person singular in the dative (1984, 57). It is not

<sup>285</sup> Raymond Matzen. Alsatian language lecture series. 21 Jan. 2003.

<sup>286</sup> Raymond Matzen. Personal interview. 13 May 2003, and Lydie Toussaint. Personal interview. 15 May 2003.



used in other situations. But this, and other rules are applied extremely flexibly. This Alsatian word is used to mean *I*, *to me*, and *we*, the third person singular pronoun *one* and in surprising instances *they*, *he* and *she*, almost indiscriminately, both in orthography and grammatically. In language classes by Professor Raymond Matzen, the ex-Director of the Department of Dialectology at the University of Strasbourg, he stated, on 14 January 2003, that:

*mer* means *we*,

*mir* means as in German, the dative form *to me*, *from me*, etc,

and *m'r* pronounced '*mer*' (as in '*mercy*') means *one*, as in *one might think that ...*

But Matzen himself (Matzen 2000, un-numbered fifth page) also quotes a famous song by the cabaretist Germain Muller, *Mir sinn nitt d'Letschte* meaning '*We* are not the last people'. So this is not just a case of a variation in spelling of *mer*, *mir* and *m'r* to mean one single pronoun.

In *Parlons Alsacien* (Schimpf 1998, 61) *mr* is given as the spelling of *we*.

But in the children's vocabulary book by Edmond Jung (n.d., title page) we also find *Mir* as meaning *We* in the title, *Mir Kinder rédde Élsässisch* (We children speak Alsatian).

And in the text of the play *De Wend spielt mit de Gabinet Dier* (The Wind plays with the Toilet Door), a London success translated in the local dialect of Roeschwoog, 25 miles north of Strasbourg - on page 66, *m'r* means *I*, and on page 53, *mer* means *to me*, although on page 55 it means *we*.<sup>287</sup>

In the play *D'Brüeder* by Paul Clemens, on page 47 (taken at random), in line 19, *mer* means *to me*, although on lines 2 and 3 *mir* means *to me*. On lines 28 and 31 *mr* appears to mean *we*, although on line 32 *mir* means *we*.

---

<sup>287</sup> The page numbers refer to the actors' text for that production.

Surprisingly, in the play *Kàrfridaa* (Good Friday) by Raymond Weissenburger, on page 41, *m'r* means *they*, in '...Was han Sie verbroche, das m'r Sie zü uns g'fiert het ?' (What have you committed that they have led you to us ?) In the Alsatian, the final verb *het* is in the singular, and should be *han* in the plural.

Also, in Weissenburger's play *e Mordstraum* (A Dream of Murder), on page 53, *m'r* means *he* or *she* in 'Eich, hat m'r umbringe welle !' (You are the one he/she wanted to kill !) (Author's edition 2003).

Furthermore, in his *E schienheilger Goggel* (A showy Cockerell), *m'r* means *you* plural, on page 42, when Anna says 'Dass m'r nit emol 's Telephon höerte klinge.' (You didn't even hear the phone ring.)

Urban (1975, 35) in *Ecrivez l'Alsacien*, while offering a scientific unified method of writing the language, proposes, on one line *m'r sàt* (one says), and on the next line *'r sàt m'r* (he says to me). The confusion is not simply due to a normal usage of the mode of each personal pronoun, the first being nominative and the second dative. And Bergmann, in his 1872 *Die beiden Merr in der elsässischen Mundart* (The two Merr's in the speech of Alsace), found both *we* and *one* written as *merr* (passim).

Schimpf and Muller in *Parlons Alsacien* (1998, 61) add to the confusion by showing the conjugation of the verb *si* (to be) with *er* given to mean both *he* and *you*, whereas *you* in Alsatian, is more commonly spelled as *Dü*, *Ihr* or *Sie*.

This may all be further evidence that in Alsatian, as in other languages, context is largely the arbiter of meaning, and that writing is a fallible method of conveying both speech and meaning. It is understandable that High German grammaticians since the sixteenth century were interested in regularising the situation. They, however, still handed down a written language in which *sie* can mean *she* or *they*, and *Sie* can mean *you* singular or plural. And we have to remember that when spoken it is not possible to distinguish the lower-case 's' from the upper-case 'S'.

The titles of plays may be expressed surprisingly differently. Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire*, when translated is called *De Ingebilt Krank* in the north of Alsace, which surprises south-Alsatians, but it is *Dr Ibeldungs Krank* in the south, which surprises north-Alsatians. The Alsatian play *E schienheiliger Goggel*, by Raymond Weissenburger, written in the Strasbourg dialect, becomes *E schinheiliger Gockel* in the south. Other versions of the title also appear. This may be considered the equivalent of *Orthello*, or *Love's Labors Lost*. But it should be noted here that Raymond Weissenburger's play *Romeo un Julio* (2004) concerns a situation in which both parts are played by men, due to a humorous turn in the intended action of the play.

Maybe it can be summed up in the title of the 1986 play by Freddy Willenbacher, *Mir sin halt eso !* (That's just how we are !), which, ironically only adds to the confusion, as the almost identical title *So sinn mr halt !* (That's just how we are !) was used by Marcel-Edmond Naegelen in 1931, although the two plays are very different.

## Appendix Two

### The Synopsis of each Play analysed in Section 5

#### *Der Pfingstmontag*

In Act One, Mr Starkhans, a boatbuilder, and his wife are about to set off to walk to a nearby village. Their daughter, Lissel, stays at home, awaiting a visit from her admirer, Reinhold, a student of medicine, from Germany, who arrives shortly after her friend Christinel. The two girls can hardly understand Reinhold's florid flattery in German. He goes off to return later with his friend Wolfgang, a Protestant preacher and graduate in philosophy. An old foppish conceited graduate (the 'Lizenziat') arrives. In language peppered with pseudo-French he asks why they are at home on such a fine day. They get rid of him, and his cousin Mehlbrüh arrives, with his wife Rosine. They ask Lissel about her forthcoming engagement. She imagines they mean with Reinhold, although her mother wishes her to marry Wolfgang. Lissel's parents are planning to celebrate their silver wedding that evening at their country estate, followed by celebrations for Lissel's engagement. Reinhold appears with Wolfgang, who is in love with another, Klärel.

In Act Two the Lizenziat tries to interfere in the liaisons of the young lovers. He goes off to try his luck with Lissel. Klärel's mother wants her to abandon Wolfgang in favour of Gläsler, an Alsatian from Colmar, who arrives and pays court to Klärel, in which the Lizenziat tries to meddle. After the latter's departure the pair become closer.

Act Three starts with the Mehlbrüh and Starkhans parents presuming that Lissel loves Wolfgang. Their daughters discuss the young men. The Lizenziat arrives, knowing that Reinhold is to be arrested for forgery.

Act Four sees Mehlbrüh and Mme Starkhans discussing Reinhold's fate. Starkhans announces he has betrothed Lissel to Wolfgang. She is furious and her mother is annoyed with her. Lissel says she will go to the galleys with Reinhold. The Lizenziat

arrives, supported by Gläsler and Christinel. He has been assaulted in the street. Wolfgang has refused Lissel's hand. The two sets of parents argue.

In Act Five Reinhold and Wolfgang rejoice that through the intervention of others, their preferred marriages have been arranged. Celebrations begin. The Mayor and Assistant Mayor arrive. The Lizenziat is teased, and is the only one without a partner in the procession which ends the play.

### ***So sinn mr halt !***

The Riffholz family has a daughter, Suzanne who lives with them, and two sons, of whom Maurice is visiting home from Paris, where he now works as an accountant. He sleeps late, and enters wearing pyjamas, the latest fashion item. His mother makes a fuss of him, but his father prefers a nightshirt in bed, and is critical and suspicious of his son's new ways. His brother Paul, a civil servant, enters in the uniform of the local youth band. He also mistrusts his brother's new manners.

The father's friend, Brummer, enters and they reminisce about the latter's visit to Paris as representative of the local Chamber of Commerce. The Minister made lots of promises about improvements for Alsatian traders, but Paul assures him that these will remain promises, with no actions to follow. Brummer also complains about unfair Polish competition, and takes every opportunity to hold forth about them. In Act Three he announces his engagement to Mme Marie, the owner of a bar he frequents. Later he is surprised to discover that she is Polish, but she will become French upon their marriage.

Maurice's friend Henri, engages Suzanne's mother's help in gaining access to propose, to Suzanne, the opportunity being to accompany her to a 14<sup>th</sup> July celebration. They keep the plan a secret. Meanwhile, brother Paul's friend, Max, engages Suzanne's father's help in gaining an opportunity also to propose to her, at the same 14<sup>th</sup> July celebration. They also keep the plan a secret.

Meanwhile, Simone, the young Parisian neighbour, appears in Alsatian dress, at which her own father had laughed. Those on stage are enchanted.

They assemble at home for the celebrations, and both father and mother announce that there will be a big surprise. Brummer partly gives some secrets away. Both suiters try to propose at the same time, and Suzanne runs off crying. Next day her father and mother complain to her about the shame she has brought on the family. She accepts the Alsatian, Henri. Max, German and awaiting French citizenship, is philosophic about his defeat. Meanwhile Maurice has made progress with the Parisienne, Simone.

### ***Gabrielle***

A village inn keeper, Dritschler, has two daughters. He is strongly anti-German, and faces prison after talking French in his inn, and causing an affray with his daughter's German husband, Rathke, and the latter's two German friends. One character is already in prison for talking French. The German characters are considered to be spies, checking on the behaviour of the locals.

Dritschler's stubbornness is featured in this play, as a character fault which leads him into trouble, as with the hero in *Barbara*, by Philippe Hoehn, published in 1950, and set in 1622. He is in this sense a Shakespearean hero, and his speeches frequently read like classical philosophical reflections on the political situation, in parallel with those on the family relationships, rather than the directly emotional expression of anguish.

Dritschler considers that his daughter's German husband wants to denounce him in order to take over the inn. But the latter has to leave and join the army. In spite of her family and friends, and the proximity of the French army, Gabrielle decides her duty is with her husband. But he smashes her portraits of her parents (thus assaulting her family bonds), of the Virgin Mary (offending her religion), and of Joan of Arc (symbolising her nationality). Men come to take her father away, on the same train on which she should

be leaving with her husband, to Germany. She refuses to go, and reminds her husband that her shame is due to her having married him. He promised her an escape from the family inn, as he was an *Assessor* (a holder of a higher civil servant's post). He calls her father a miser. She refuses to go with him. She is 'kä Schwob' (not a Boche), she has her 'Heimet em Harz' (her homeland in her heart).

The other 'good' daughter, Alice, is married to Dumont, an absent French officer, who happens in the final scene to be part of the liberating force of their village.

In the fourth act the village is liberated, with patriotic speeches and scenes of rejoicing. But Gabrielle reappears, in the shadows, with her child in her arms. The villagers intend to chase out all the Germans. She says that this concerns her as well. On the final page she stands on the parapet of the bridge and declaims 'Long live noble France, and my dear Alsace, Adieu', before jumping with her child into the ravine. Her father says 'That is hard !'

### ***Kàrfridaa***

The action takes place in the claustrophobic setting of the chaotic apartment from which the alcoholic Charly will be evicted because he cannot pay the rent. He is 33 years old, and was made redundant from his factory when they installed robots. His wife left him for another man. The play is mainly a dialogue with Dolly who loves him. It is Charly's birthday, and Good Friday. In a drunken haze he starts to recount his problems. Dolly enters, bringing him flowers. Later, it is apparent that she has stolen them, and the flower seller appears, wanting his thirty francs, the symbolic pieces of silver, or he will inform the police. Dolly condemns him as a successful businessman, and a 'arme Litt hasser' (hater of poor people). Charly is determined that everyone has or shall abandon him. His mother always phones on his birthday, except this year.

Dolly has money, and proposes that they go away together and start life anew. She will give up prostitution and find a proper job, offering salvation. However, Charly's actions

indicate his choice of symbolic crucifixion. The sparse furniture in the apartment is heaped together to suggest the hill upon which he will die.

### ***D'Antigonn***

Before the action takes place in Thebes, Oedipus, having unknowingly killed his father, King Laius, and produced two sons and two daughters with his mother, learns of his sin, and goes off, blind into exile, while his mother Jocasta hangs herself. Eteocles and Polynice, their sons, agree each to rule in alternate years. But unable to gain power when it is due, Polynice enlists the aid of his father-in-law to attack Thebes. Both brothers die in a duel, and Jocasta's brother Creon is invited to become king. He refuses to let his nephew Polynice be properly buried, but Eteocles is to become a national hero. Creon's son Haemon is to marry Polynice's sister Antigone. But she buries her brother, and is condemned to death by her uncle, for whom family bonds are not above the law. She kills herself in a high speed car crash, with her secret lover.



## 7 Works consulted, performances seen and persons interviewed.

### 7.1 Primary sources

#### Plays read or consulted or cited, but not seen in performance

Abel, Jean Charles and René Prévot. *D'Waldmuehl*. Strassburg: L.Beust, 1901. [Folk-play in 3 acts.]

Arnold, Franz, and Ernst Bach. *Hurrah ! e Kneckes*. N.p.,n.d. [2001?] [In 3 acts. An illegitimate baby is accepted by the second wife.]

Arnold, Georg Daniel. *Der Pfingstmontag*. Strasbourg: Treuttel et Würtz, 1816.

Strassburg: J. Lefftz und E. Marckwald, 1914. [Comedy in 5 scenes, in verse.]

Bastian, Ferdinand. *D'r Hans im Schnokeloch*. Strassburg: C.A. Vomhoff, 1903. [Play in 4 scenes.]

Bernhard, Karl. *Der Steckelburger*. Strassburg: Ad.Christophe, 1871. [Comedy in 4 scenes, with songs.]

Bischoff, Alphons. *D'Herre Doktor*. Strassburg: Schlesier und Schweighardt, 1902. [Comedy in one act.]

Clemens, Paul. *D'Brüeder*. Gundersheim, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1948. [Drama with reconciliation. Pièce patriotique in 5 scenes, set in the First World War.]

Contet, Franz. *D'Wisse Hosse*. Strassburg: Elsässische Druckerei, 1903. [Comedy in one scene, in various dialects.]

*Die Frau Pfarrerin*. [Anonymous.] [Haguenau ?]: S.König, 1817. [Anti-Protestant comedy in one act at the time of the Lutheran celebrations, 1817.]

Froh, François. *D'r Michel müess in d'Bardej*. Gundershoffen, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1946. [Pièce patriotique in one scene.]

Geis, Albert. *Geld und Liewe*. Mulhouse: J. Brinkmann, 1900. [Comedy in 4 acts.]

Gerber, Eugène. *Gabrielle*. Gundershoffen: Jaggi-Reiss, n.d. [Pièce patriotique.

Tragedy of daughter's marriage to a German in Alsace during World War One.]

---. *D'Aposchtel üss 'm Elsass*. Gundershoffen: Jaggi-Reiss, n.d. [ Pièce patriotique.

Tragedy of daughter's marriage to a German in Alsace during World War One.]

- Glattfelder, Philippe. *Em Herr Maire sini Tochter*. N.p.,n.d. [In four acts. With elections approaching, the mayor offers his daughter, as a bribe, to his opponent.]
- . *Mit Kind und Kegel* [The whole family]. N.p.,n.d. [In 3 acts. Family comedy. Confusion concerning an invitation.]
- Greber, Julius. "E Hochzitter im Kleiderkaschte." in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Sprache und Litteratur Elsass-Lothringens*. Strassburg: J.H. Heitz, 1894. [Comedy in one act in Strassburg dialect.]
- , and Gustav Schwarzkopf. *D'r lätz Bardessü*. Strassburg: Schlesier und Schweikhardt, 1904. [Comedy in one act.]
- Hattermer, Michel. *D'Atom Bommb*. N.p.,n.d. [In five acts. Deaf grandfather causes problems through misunderstanding.]
- Hoehn, Philippe. *Barbara*. Gundersheim, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1950. [Tragedy, set in 1622, during the 30 years war. Pièce patriotique.]
- Horsch, D.G.A. *D'Madam fahrt Velo !* Strassburg: A.Ammel, 1901. ['Modern comedy' in one act.]
- Kettner, Ch.F. *D'Maiselocker*. Strasbourg: J. Noiriel, 1877. [Comedy in 3 acts in Strasbourg dialect.]
- Kirstetter, Marcel. *En unserem Hüß wurd net gepolitikt*. N.p.,n.d. [In three acts. A husband entering politics conceals his activities.]
- Kleisecker, H. *A Sunndaasbroote mit Schnaps: oder a Malheur in der Krütenau*. Rixheim, Alsace: F.Sutter, 1897. [Comedy in one act, in Strasbourg dialect.]
- Knecht, Anne-Frédérique. *An de Grenz*. N.p., n.d. [In four acts. In style of a Pièce Patriotique, dealing with a family caught up on both sides of the Franco-Austrian conflict at time of French revolution. Two sons, in different uniforms.]
- Liebe, Dieudonné. *Johann Bochelen: Ein elsässischer Märtyrerpriester der Grossen Revolution*. n.p., 1955. [Five acts. A Catholic priest refuses to become a civil servant. Is arrested and shot. Based on true story.]
- Long, François. *Noch e Bubbele vor d'r Hochzitt*. n.p.,n.d. [In three acts. Servant Amélie discovers a baby. Marries son of the family by pretending it is his.]
- Lueger, Alfred. *D'r Onkel Anatol*. Mulhouse: J.Brinkmann, 1989. [Comedy.]

- Lustig, A. *Vor und no d'r Hochzeit !* Mulhouse: Brustlein et Cie, 1885. [Comedy in two acts, in Mulhouse dialect, with songs. He wrote for Cercle de Mulhouse, before TAS started. 21 plays by him are listed in Schoen.]
- Lutzing, Frédérique. *D'r Unkel üs Berlin*. Gundershoffen, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1947. [Pièce patriotique. Comedy in 3 acts, set in World War Two.]
- Lutzing, Frédéric [sic]. *D'r nej Fahne*. Gundershoffen, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1946. [Pièce patriotique. Comedy in one scene.]
- Müller, Charles-George. *Die Frau Velten*. Strassburg: Veuve Berger-Levrault, 1867.
- Naas, Charles. *d'Ferie Pension 'Waldesfried'*. n.p., n.d. [In three acts. Hotel landlady marries a guest.]
- Naegelen, Marcel-Edmond. *So sinn mr halt !* n.p., 1931. [In three acts. Family comedy asserting the values of Alsace versus those of Paris.]
- Pauli, Paul. *D'Doppelt Hochzitter*. n.p., n.d. [In three acts. Family comedy, confusion over engagements.]
- Pick, Alphonse. *Der Tolle Morgen*. Strassburg: G. Silbermann, 1864. [Part Alsatian, part German, in two acts.]
- Quirin, Hélène. *Bim Fuchs geht's luschtig zu* (Fun at the Fox's house). n.p., n.d. [In 3 acts. Farmer/mayor has problems composing a speech in French.]
- Rath, Charles. *D'r König Charles X im Ower-Elsass*. Mulhouse: J. Brinkmann, 1896. [Comedy in 3 acts with songs.]
- Riff, Jean. *Bieje – awer nit breche !* Strassburg: J.H. Heitz, 1902. [Character study in one act.]
- Schieb, Gérard. *Nur zehn Tröpfle*. N.p., n.d. [Romantic comedy in 3 acts.]
- Schleiffer-Gutbub, Nany. *D'erschte Frauenwahl: Oui, oui-non, non*. N.p., 1947. [Comedy, One act. Concerns the first womens' suffrage in 1945.]
- Sonnendrucker, Paul. *D'r drissigjahri Krieg*. Adapted from Jean Variot. N.p., n.d. [A typed script 16 pages long. A father returns from many years at war. His wife has remarried. She recognises him, but stays with her present husband.]
- Stoeber, Ehrenfried. *Daniel oder der Strassburger auf der Probe*. Strasbourg: G.L. Schuler, 1823. Strassburg: Ed. Hubert, 1887. [Comedy with songs in two acts.]
- Stoffel, A. *D'r Romeo un's Juliette vo Colmer*. Colmar: n.p., 1897. [Comedy in one act.]

- Stoskopf, Gustave. *D'r Kandidat*. Strasbourg: n.p., n.d.
- . *D'Reiss uf Paris*. Strasbourg: n.p., n.d.
- . *D'Millioneipartie*. Gundershoffen, Alsace: L.Jaggi-Reiss, 1948.
- Stroh, Richard. *D'r Pfarrhussengel* (The angel in the presbytery). n.p., n.d. [In three acts. The priest's sister/housekeeper mistakes a burglar for the new priest.]
- Walter, A. *en Amerikaner uf'm Winmarik*. Barr: n.p., 1930. [One act. Comedy, with songs in praise of local wines. Alsatian boy returns from America and appreciates Alsace.]
- Weiss, Alfred. *D'Inspection vom Gesangverein vo Brieling*. Mulhouse: J.Brinkmann. 1897. [Humorous scene in Mulhouse dialect, with songs.]
- Weissenburger, Raymond. *Gauner Symphonie* (Crooked Symphony). Author's text, 1981. [In three acts. Family inheritance causes problems until it is all spent.]
- . *Kàrfridaa*. Mulhouse: Agence Culturelle Technique d'Alsace, 1986. [One act. Drama, related to a symbolic Crucifixion.]
- . *e Herz üss Gold*. Author's working text, 1985. [One act. Boys at play continually reject an Arabic boy, until a miracle occurs and he is accepted.]
- . *Herbschtwind*. Author's working text, 2002. [Serious drama in two acts, referring to World War Two.]
- . *Rusalem*, Author's working text, 2001. [An Alsatian discovers his grandfather was involved in a massacre of Jews in World War Two. He goes to Israel to seek forgiveness.]
- . *E Rose für de Harry*. [Comedy in three acts.]
- Willenbacher, Freddy. *Hit Wird g'erbt*. n.p., n.d.
- . *Mir sin halt eso !* n.p., [1986 ?].
- , and Tony Troxler. *D'r Adelsichtige Tuechhandler*. n.p., n.d. [Translation/adaptation of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.]

### Plays seen in Performance

- Becker, Paulette. *Aloïs, wo bisch dü gsin*. Marcel Lindershaus. dir. [Family flirtation misunderstandings, comedy in 3 Acts.] Theater Grupp St Georges, Haguenau. 5 Mar. 2004.

- Doust, Richard. Dir. *Bei mir bist Du Yiddisch*. [Collected Yiddish songs and sketches.] Choucrouterie. 25 June 2002.
- Eibel, Bernard. ... *die bringe m'r nemme nüss*. Marcel Lindershaus. dir. Director's text. n.p., n.d. [Family comedy in three acts.] Theater Grupp St. Georges, Haguenau. Seen in several rehearsals and in production. 9 Feb. 2003.
- Engel, Roland. Songs and stories for Christmas. [Conteur and song-maker.] Hunsbach Lutheran church. 8 Dec. 2002.
- Grandidier, Yves. *Land Wirtschaft*. Francke Girolt. dir. Author's text. n.p., n.d. [Sketch in one act, in which an Alsatian farmer's family get the better of visiting town folk.] Nordhouse. 1 Mar. 2003.
- Jiddische Mamas et Papas*. Richard Doust. dir. Revue. Seen on three occasions at various venues.
- Jung, Edmond. *D'Antigonn*. Director's text. n.p., n.d. [Adapted and staged by Joseph Schmittbiel, from the adaptation by Jung. Later translated into English by T. Gould.] Strasbourg. 27 June, 2002.
- Knibihler, Raymond. *100.000 Euros Lesegald*. Franck Girolt. dir. Director's text. n.p., n.d. [A comedy in three acts, with racists overtones. A gypsy family attempt to kidnap a bank manager. A Turkish guest worker is humiliated.] Nordhouse. 2 Mar. 2003.
- Kretz, Pierre. *Familierot*. Pierre Kretz. dir. Author's text. n.p., 2002. [Family drama in 3 acts.] Seen in rehearsal 14 Mar. 2002, and in production 23 June 2002, at Lichtenberg theatre.
- Kurtz, Robert. *Hôtel Pension Gabrielle*. Jean-Paul Humbert. dir. [Comedy in three acts, centred at a small hotel. Strongly racist overtones. Arabic characters are humiliated and a black character is assaulted.] Neuve-Eglise. 9 Nov. 2002.
- Les Scouts. *Vies vendues: Univers sale: Revue 2003*. [Cabaret, mainly in French, with dirisive allusions to Alsatian characters.] Schiltigheim. 10 Feb. 2003.
- Misch-Masch: Cabaret Littéraire*. [Alsatian cabaret, including poetry, childrens rhymes, songs and stories.] Cheval Blanc, Schiltigheim. 6 Feb. 2004.
- Muller, Fred, and Francis Freyburger. *Üsgezünt*. n.p, n.d. [Social commentary.] Haguenau. 10 Feb. 2004.

- Muller, Germain. *Enfin ... Redde m'r nimm devun*. 1949. Dir. Raymond Bitsch.  
Mulhouse: Journal l'Alsace, 1996. [Tragi-Comédie. Pièce patriotique in 3 acts]  
Achenheim. 22 Nov. 2002.
- Pfeiffer, Daniel. *Arriba Margarita !* n.p., n.d. [Holiday adventure in 3 acts. Three married couples visit Mexico.] Haguenau, Le Théâtre Alsacien. 28 Feb. 2004.
- Schmittbiel, Joseph. *Dialogues d'Alsace et d'Algérie*. Playwright's working text. 2000. [In French, Alsatian and Arabic. Episodes in colonisation of Algeria by Alsations after 1881, compared with the colonisation of Alsace by both the French and the Germans.] Birschtewerik Theater, Strasbourg. 27 June 2002.
- Schutz, Michel. *De Wend spielt mit de Cabinet Dier*. Actors' text. n.p., n.d. [Better known as *'s Paulette von der Vogesestross* Adapted from Jack Popplewell's *Busy Body*.] Roeschwoog. 11 Jan. 2003.
- Siffer, Roger. trans. *Peepshow in der Vogese*. Pierre Kretz. dir. [Adapted from a Swiss play. Title and author not known to me.] Tantzmaten Theatre, Selestat. 19 Mar. 2002.
- . ed. *Papa Rhein: Chansons, Lieder, Cabaret: 2000*. [A collection of works concerning the Rhine.] Haguenau Municipal Theatre. 7 Nov. 2002.
- . ed. *Les Dents de la Paire: Revue 2002*. Pierre Diependaële. dir. Choucrouterie, Strasbourg. 12 Nov. 2001.
- . ed. *Chauffe qui peut: Revue 2003*. Pierre Diependaële. dir. Choucrouterie. 14 Nov. 2002.
- . ed. *On a décroché le Pont-pont: Revue 2004*. Pierre Diependaële. dir. Choucrouterie. 14 Nov. 2004.
- . trans. *D'r Dorfdoddel*. 2001. Reitsch, Marcel. *Village cherche idiot*. [A village idiot is electrocuted when he tries to fly from an electricity pylon. The post is advertised, and a new idiot appears.] France 3 Alsace, television. 13 Sep. 2003.
- . ed. *Krambol*. 2003. Louis Ziegler. dir. [Collected works by the Dadaist, Jean Hans Arp, performed with music.] Choucrouterie. 13 Sep. 2003.
- Stoskopf, Gustave. *D'r Herr Maire*. Comedy in three acts. Strassburg: Schlesier und Schweikhardt, 1898. Film, 1939, Heimat Productions. Seen at University of Strasbourg. 13 April 2002.

- . *D'Millionepartie*. Gundershoffen, Alsace: L. Jaggi-Reiss, 1948. [Family comedy in three acts.] Read, and seen at TAS, Strasbourg Opera House. 31 Oct. 2004.
- Voltz, Christophe. *Ich bekum a Aff: One-man show en Alsacien*. Author's working script: n.p., n.d. Strasbourg. 20 Feb. 2004.
- Weissenburger, Raymond. *E schienheiliger Goggel*. Gundershoffen, France: Jaggi-Reiss, 1981. [Three acts. Family comedy. Extra-marital affair.]
- . *e Mordstraum*. Author's working text, 2003. [Three acts. Murder mystery.] Read, and seen at Selz. 13 Oct. 2003.
- . *Em Pàràdies gibt's ken Engel meh*. Author's working text, 2002. [Three acts. Family comedy concerning an old aunt's will.] France 3 Alsace. Television production in two parts. Sundays 23 and 30 Nov. 2003.
- . *Romeo un Julio* [sic]. Author's working text. 2004. [Comedy. A group of actors is preparing *Romeo and Juliet*. Juliet gives birth on the night of the performance, and a man 'Julio' has to take her part.] Saverne. 30 Oct. 2004.
- Wesker, Arnold. *Roots*. Seen Royal Court Theatre, London. 1954 [?]. Read and translated, into French by myself. 2002.

**Alsatian citizens and others, interviewed and cited.** (See footnotes in text.)

- Adolph, Paul. Ex-colleague at Lycée de Garçons de Haguenau. Researcher. Teacher of English. Author of two major works on the relationship between Alsatian and English. Holds two PhDs in dialectology at University of Strasbourg.
- Armstrong Young, Andrea. Lecturer at Institut Universitaire de Formation de Maîtres (IUFM), Mulhouse.
- Armstrong Young, Dominique. Lecturer at University of Strasbourg.
- Arnold, Prof. Matthieu. Faculty of Protestant Theology, Univ. Strasbourg.
- Bitsch, Raymond. Author, playwright, director, actor. Vice-president of Groupement des Théâtres du Rhin.
- Campbell, Cefin. Commercial Director S4C, Welsh Television.

Canniaux, Emilie. Responsible for support of performing arts at Agence Culturelle d'Alsace.

Cronenbourger, Gérard. Mayor of Ingersheim. Alsatian language activist.

Dahl, Guy. Head of Office pour la Langue et la Culture d'Alsace (OLCA).

Deck, Bernard. Editor, weekly bilingual newspaper *'l'Ami du Peuple'*.

Dreikauss, Huguette. Playwright, cabaretist.

Engel, Roland. Singer, songwriter, raconteur.

Finck, Adrien. Alsatian poet, author.

Freytag, René. Vice-President, Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse.

Frick, Paul. President, Théâtre Alsacien de Guebwiller.

Goetschy, Henri. Ex-Senateur. Alsatian language activist.

Gozillon Fronsacq, Odile. Lecturer at University of Strasbourg III. Researcher in film Archive at Archives du Bas-Rhin, Strasbourg.

Grussenmeyer, Isabel. Folksinger, songwriter.

Helot, Christine. Lecturer at IUFM, Mulhouse.

Hiebel, Armand. Bank official, Crédit Agricole, Haguenau. Amateur theatre actor.

Huber, Dr Christian. Pediatrician. Activist for bilingual (French/German) education in primary schools.

Huck, Dominique. Lecturer in dept of Dialectology, Univ. Marc Bloch, Strasbourg.

Kosmann, Ruth. Citizen of Strasbourg.

LaFuente, Guy. Theatre director. Assistant Mayor, Truchtersheim.

Lindershaus, Marcel. Director, actor. Theatre Grupp St George, Haguenau.

Martin, Aline. Citizen of Strasbourg. Actor. Employee at Town Hall, Strasbourg.

Matzen, Raymond. Professor, University of Strasbourg. Ex-Director of Dept of Dialectology. Lecturer. Poet. Author. Alsatian language activist.

Mayer, Anthony. Geologist living in Strasbourg.

Noblesse-Rocher, Prof. Annie. Faculty of Protestant Theology, Univ. Strasbourg.

Owen, Dr Roger. Lecturer, Drama Dept., University of Wales at Aberystwyth.

Philipp, Marthe. Author. Lecturer. Alsatian language activist.

Philipps-Pfeiffer, Gaby. Citizen, member of English Speaking Community association, Strasbourg.



Radley, Martin. Director, Opera Teifi, Aberteifi (Cardigan).

Roussel, Cathy. Employee of Darty electrical retailer, Schweighouse. Amateur theatre activist.

Schaffner, François. Chairman of *Culture et Bilinguisme d'Alsace et de Moselle* (The René Schickele Gesellschaft ). Alsatian language activist.

Scherb, Henri. Chairman of the association *Heimetsproch un Tradition* (Home Language and Tradition). Alsatian language activist.

Schmittbiel, Joseph. Playwright/director. Alsatian language activist.

Siffer, Roger. Playwright, singer, songwriter, director of cabaret *La Choucrouterie*, Strasbourg.

Spegt, Marcel. Honorary President, Federation of Alsatian Theatres. Survivor of WWII.

Steiber, Maryse. Lecturer, German Dept, University Marc Bloch, Strasbourg.

Sutter, Paul. President, Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin, Mulhouse.

Turner, Jeremy. Artistic Director. Theatr Arad Goch, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales.

Toussaint, Lydia. Citizen of Kolbsheim.

Trendel, Britta. German and French citizen. Researcher. Teacher of German in Germany.

Trimolé, Maurice. President of Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau.

Tugene, Georges. English teacher.

Vogel, Dr. René. President, Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar.

Vonau, Jean-Laurent. Chair of Committee for Culture of Regional Council of Alsace.

Walter, Francis. Chairman of St Nicholas Alsatian Theatre Group, Haguenau.

Weckmann, André. Prominent Alsatian writer and poet.

Weissenburger, Raymond. Author, playwright.

Wilkins, David. UK citizen, resident in Strasbourg since 1978.

Wittmann, Bernard. Prominent Alsatian author and campaigner.

## 7.2 Secondary sources

### Bibliography

- 100 Jahr ETM-TAM*. Mulhouse: Théâtre Alsacien de Mulhouse, 1999.
- 1871-1914 = Les autonomistes. (Alsace 1871-1914, Autonomiste, (191))*. [Videodisk. Seen at Bibliothèque Municipale de Mulhouse, ref NIM.32116]
- Adolf, Paul. *Dictionnaire: L'Anglais par l'Alsacien*. Obernai, France: Université Populaire d'Obernai, 1996.
- "Alémanique." *Encyclopédie de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: Publitotal 1 (1982):108.
- Allardt, Eric. "What constitutes a language minority?" *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 3 and 4, 195-205.
- 'Alsaticus'. "Die katholische Vereinsbühne im Elsass seit 1918." *Elsass Lothringen Heimatstimmen*. Vol. IV (1926): 285 - 292. Berlin: Robert Ernst.
- . "Das deutsche Theater im Elsass seit 1918." *Elsass Lothringen Heimatstimmen*. Vol. IV (1926): 571 - 576. Berlin: Robert Ernst.
- Althöfer, Heinz. "Fragmente und Ruine." *Kunstforum International* 19 (1977): 57-169.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1996.
- Andres, Gabriel. *Joseph Rossé: Itinéraire d'un Alsacien*. Strasbourg: Salde, 2003.
- Angrand, Sophie, Emmanuelle Diolot, and Caroline Fabre. *Les optants d'Alsace-Lorraine à l'étranger*. Paris: Editions Archives et Culture, 2003.
- "An interview with Paul Adolf." *Alsace*. [Strasbourg] 8 Nov. 2001.
- Anscombe, G.E.M. "The Reality of the Past." in M. Black. *Philosophical Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963. 36-56.
- Appiah, Anthony. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003.
- Archives Municipales de la Ville de Haguenau. *Document 05W*. [Minutes of Committee meetings of] *Théâtre Alsacien de Haguenau: 1922 to 1927*.
- Archives Municipales de la Ville de Strasbourg. [Various documents, as noted in text.]
- Archives Départementales du Bas Rhin. [Various documents, as noted in text.]
- Arnold, Paul. *Histoire secrète de l'Alsace*. Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1979.
- Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Cambridge: CUP, 1960.
- Auer, J.C.P. *Bilingual Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1984.

- Baas, Geneviève. *Le Malaise Alsacien 1919/1924*. Strasbourg: Journal Développement et Communauté, 1972.
- Baechler, Ch. *Les Alsaciens et le Grand Tournant de 1918*. Strasbourg: CCP, n.d.
- Baier, Annette. "Mixing Memory and Desire." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 13 (1967): 213-20.
- Baker, O.R. *Categories of Code-switching in Hispanic Communities*. Diss. U. Texas. Austin: U. Texas, 1980.
- Baldeweck, Y. *Il y a cinquante ans : 374,000 Alsaciens évacués*. Mulhouse: L'Alsace, 1989.
- Bankwitz, P.C.F. *Alsatian Autonomist Leaders 1919 – 1947*. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978.
- Barber, C.L. *The Story of Language*. London: Pan Books, 1964.
- Bardou, Michel. *La Paille et le Feu: Traditions vivantes d'Alsace*. Paris: Berger Levrault, 1980.
- Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Pubs., 2000.
- Bartlett, F.C. *Remembering*. Cambridge: CUP, 1967
- Bass, Christiane, et al. "Le théâtre dialectale." *Bi uns d'Heim: l'écho de la region*. 2 (1986): 1-16. Commission langue et cultures régionales du Haut Rhin.
- Baugh, John and Joel Sherzer. eds. *Language in use: Readings in Sociolinguistics*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Beebe, Leslie M. "Social and situational factors affecting the communicative strategy of dialect code-switching." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 32 (1981): 139-49.
- Bec, P. *La Langue Occitane*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963.
- Becker-Dombrowski, Carola. "Zur Situation der deutschen Sprache im Elsass." in Urland, P. Sture. ed. *Kulturelle und sprachliche Minderheiten in Europa*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1981.
- Beer, William R. *The Unexpected Rebellion: Ethnic Activism in Contemporary France*. New York: New York U Press, 1980.
- Bentley, James. *Alsace*. London: Aurum Press, 1988.

- Bergmann, Friedrich. "Die beiden Merr in der elsaessischer mundart, und das Strassburger volkslied vom Hans im Schnôkeloch [sic]." *Sprachliche Studien*. Strassburg: G.Silbermann, 1872.
- Bernado, D.J. "Apparail educatif et langue autochtone: le cas du Catalan." *Langue Française* 25 (n.d): 37-61.
- Beyer, Ernest, and Raymond Matzen. eds. *Atlas linguistique et ethnographique de l'Alsace*. Vol. 1. Paris: Editions du Centre de la Recherche Scientifique, 1969.
- Bielenberg, Christobel. *The Past is Myself*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1968.
- Binz, Jean. *Le chant d'un « Malgré Nous »*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2003.
- Bisch, Yvers. *Mon Ecole*. Strasbourg: Editions du Rhin, 1989.
- Bister-Broosen, H. "Alsace." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 23, 1 & 2, (2002): 98-111.
- Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press, 1997.
- Bogen, Isabelle. "Un théâtre d'ombres et de lumières." *Saisons d'Alsace* Vol. 44, 114. (1991-92) Strasbourg: ISTR.
- Bopp, Marie Joseph. *Le Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar*. Colmar: Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar, 1924.
- Bothorel-Witz, Arlette, and Marthe Philipp. *Atlas linguistique et ethnographique de l'Alsace*. N.p., n.d.
- Bouchholtz, Fritz. "Ernst Stadler und die Strassburger studentische Wanderbühne." *Elsass Lothringen Heimatstimmen* Vol. IV (1926): 643 to 645. Berlin: Robert Ernst.
- Boulot, Serge, and Daniele Boizon-Fradet. *France : Pays multilingue*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987. 163-188.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Ce que parler veut dire*. Paris: Fayard, 1989.
- Brake, Julie, and Christine Jones. *Teach Yourself Welsh*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000.
- Braudel, Fernand. *The Identity of France*. Trans. Siân Reynolds. Vol I. London: Collins, 1988.
- . *The Identity of France*. Trans. Siân Reynolds. Vol II. London: Collins, 1990.

- Brant, Sebastian. *Le nef des fous*. 1494. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1977. 'The Search'
- Brealey, Nicholas. *The Search*. London: John Battelle, 2005.
- Brighouse, Harold. *Hobson's Choice*. 1916. London: Heinemann Educational, 1982.
- Brogly, Médard. *Die Grosse Prüfung: Das Elsaß unter der Herrschaft des Dritten Reichs*. Colmar: n.p., 1944.
- . *La grande épreuve, l'Alsace sous l'occupation allemande*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1945.
- Broudic, Fañch. *L'Interdiction du Breton en 1902: La IIIe République contre les langues régionales*. Spezet, Brittany: Coop Breizh, 1997.
- Brunner, J-J. *L'Alsacien sans peine*. Chennevières sur Marne: Assimil, 2001.
- Bryson, Bill. *Mother Tongue, the English Language*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990.
- . *Notes from a small island*. London: Doubleday, 1995.
- Burtschy, Bernard and Vincent Heyer. *1939-1945 : Deuxième Guerre mondiale dans le Sundgau*. Colmar: n.p., 2003.
- Büsemeyer, Hartwig. *Das Königreich der Spielleute : Organisation und Lebenssituation elsässische Spielleute zwischen Spätmittelalter und französischer Revolution*. Reichelsheim: Verlag der Spielleute, 2003.
- Byrne, Lavinia. *The Journey is my Home*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000.
- Calvet, Louis-Jean. *La guerre des langues*. Paris: Payot, 1987.
- Candidus Hilarius (Mgr. Heitz). *Réponse à Psychanalyse d'Alsace*. Strasbourg: la Fontaine, 1952.
- Cent Ans: Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar*. Colmar: Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar, 2001.
- Cercle René Schickele. *Notre avenir est bilingue*. Strasbourg: Cercle René Schickele, 1968.
- Cerf, Eve. "Signes et Symboles au Théâtre Alsacien." *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est* 6 (1977): 20-29.
- . "Carnavals en Alsace: Tradition, Evolution, Manipulation." *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est* 7 (1978): 24-37.
- . "Les contes merveilleux du Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg." in *E.T.S. - T.A.S.: 1898 – 1998, Hundert Jahr Elsässischs Theater Strossburi*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1998.
- Cernay, L. *Le maréchal Pétain : l'Alsace et la Lorraine*. Paris: Les Iles d'Or, 1955.
- Cesarani, David. *Eichmann: His Life and Crimes*. London: Heinemann, 2004.

- Chambers, W. Walker, and John R. Wilkie. *A Short History of the German Language*. Methuen: London, 1970.
- Châtellier, Hildegard, and Monique Mombert. Eds. *La Presse en Alsace au XXe siècle*. Strasbourg : Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2002.
- Chatellier, Louis. *Religion et piété en Alsace et Lorraine*. Strasbourg: Annales de l'Est, 2003.
- Chaurand, J. *Histoire de la langue française*. Paris: Seuil, 1999.
- Citron, S. *Le mythe national*. Paris: EDI, 1991.
- Clark, Kenneth. *Civilisation*. London: BBC Publications, 1969.
- Colombani, J-M. *Les infortunes de la République*. Paris: Grasset, 2000.
- Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin. "Développer de Bilinguisme." *Dynamiques* 16 (Oct. 1993): 4 to 5.
- Cook, M. ed. *French Culture since 1945*. London: Longman, 1993.
- Coppleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 6, pt.1. New York: Image Books, 1964.
- Cowles, Virginia. "The 1938 Nuremberg Rally." in Harley, Jenny. ed. *Hearts Undefeated*. 1994. London: Virago, 1999.
- Crüger, Johannes. "Zur Strassburger Schulkomödie." in *Festschrift zur Feier des 350 jährigen Bestehens des Protestantischen Gymnasiums zu Strassburg*. Strasbourg: Protestant.[sic] Gymnasium Strassburg, 1888.
- Crystal, David. *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- De Costiglioli , A-M. ed. *France Lives*. Paris: Hyperion, [c. 1946].
- Deck, Pantaleon. *Histoire du théâtre français à Strasbourg : 1681 – 1830*. Strasbourg-Paris: F.-X. le Roux, 1948.
- De Maupassant, Guy. *Boule de Suif et autres Contes de la Guerre*. London: Harrap, 1982.
- Denis, Marie-Noële. "Usage de l'Alsacien en milieu urbain : évolution et perspectives." *Revue d'Alsace* 111 (1985): 149-156. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue.
- , and Calvin Veltmann. *Le déclin du dialecte alsacien*. Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1989.
- Dentinger, J. *2000 Jahre Kultur am Oberrhein*. Mundolsheim/Basel: Dentinger, 1977.

- De Vries, John. "Factors affecting the survival of linguistic minorities." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 5, 3, and 4 (1984): 2007-2216.
- Deyon, Pierre. "Le programme 'Langue et cultures régionales en Alsace' : bilan et perspectives, Juin 1982 – Juin 1985." *Revue d'Alsace* 112 (1986): 363-371. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue.
- . *Rencontres en Alsace*. Strasbourg: Saisons d'Alsace, 1994.
- « Dialecte Alsacien ». *Encyclopédie de l'Alsace*. Vol. 4 (1985): 2329-2345. Strasbourg: Publitotal,
- Discovering Alsatian Judaism*. Strasbourg: Agence de Developpement Touristique du Bas-Rhin, 1999.
- Djian, Jean-Michel. *La Politique Culturelle*. Paris: Le Monde Editions, 1996.
- D'Jung Elsassers Buehn présente : Mer Hoseloddel : Création collective*. [Theatre programme]. Eglise Saint-Nicholas, Strasbourg. 10-19 November 1977.
- Dollinger, Philippe. *Histoire de l'Alsace*. Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1970.
- DNA – Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*. Strasbourg daily newspaper. Various dated articles, 1945 – 2003.
- Dreikaus, Huguette. *L'Alsamanach d'Huguette : 2003*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2002.
- . *L'Alsamanach d'Huguette : 2004*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2003.
- . *L'Alsamanach d'Huguette : 2005*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2004.
- Dreyfus, Bernard. Ed. *Vademecum des collectivités locales et territoriales*. Paris: Arnaud Franel, 2004.
- Dreyfus, F.-G. *Histoire de la résistance*. Paris: de Fallois, 1996.
- Dreyfus, François. *La Vie politique en Alsace 1919 – 1936*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1969.
- DTV :Atlas zur Deutschen Sprache*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985.
- Dunn, Douglas. *The Faber Book of Twentieth-Century Scottish Poetry*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.
- Edwards, John. *Language, Society and Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- Ehrsam, Nicolas. *Der Stadt Mülhausen privilegirtes Bürgerbuch*. Mulhouse: n.p., 1850.
- Ellis, Peter Berresford. *The Celtic Revolution*. Talybont, Wales: Y Lolfa Cyf, 1985.
- Elsass-Lothringen Heimatstimmen*. Berlin: Robert Ernst, 1926.
- English, Jean-Louis. *Une certaine idée de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2003.

- Epp, René, Pierre René Levresse and Charles Munier. *Histoire de l'Eglise catholique en Alsace des origins à nos jours*. Strasbourg: Signe, 2003.
- Erckmann-Chatrian. *l'Ami Fritz*. n.p., 1933. Film in French and German from the book.  
[No other details available.]
- Ernst, Robert. *Rechensschaftbericht eines Elsässers*. Berlin: n.p., 1954.
- Eschbach, Jean. *Au Coeur de la résistance alsacienne*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2003.
- Fasold, Ralph. *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.
- Fédération des Théâtres Alsaciens. *Répertoire général des pièces jouées par les T[héâtres] A[lsaciens] de Bâle, Colmar, Guebwiller, Mulhouse, Strasbourg, depuis leur fondation jusqu'à la saison 1968/69*. Mulhouse: Fédération des Théâtres Alsaciens, 1969.
- Fervacque, Pierre. *L'Alsace et le Vatican*. Paris: Ets. Busson, 1930.
- Festprogramm zur Erinnerung : die 50. Aufführung des Lustspiels « D'r Herr Maire », Sonntag, den 16 Februar 1902*. Strasbourg: G Fischbach, 1902.
- Finck, Adrien. ed. *Nachrichten aus dem Elsass, Mundart und Protest*. Vol II. Hildesheim: Olms Presse, 1978.
- . *Littérature Alsacienne : XXe Siecle*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 1990.
- , and Marthe Philipp. eds. *L'Allemand en Alsace*. Strasbourg: Presse Universitaire, 1988.
- Fischer, Antoine. ed. *BRUMATH: destin d'une ville*. Strasbourg: Saisons d'Alsace, 1968.
- Fishman, Joshua. *Language and Nationalism*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1970.
- Freiburger, Antoine. "La Vitalité du théâtre dialectal." *Paysan du Haut Rhin* 31, 50 (1976):21.
- Friedrich, Jean-Marie. *Liedle fer's ganze Jahr*. Strasbourg: CRDP, 1985.
- Forbes, Jill, and Michael Kelly. eds. *French Cultural Studies, an Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 1995.
- Fuks, Simon. *Un Rabbin d'Alsace*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2003.
- Furia, Daniel. *Des Alsaciens pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*. Lyon: Belier, 2003.



- Gall, Jean-Marie. "Le Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg (1898-1998)." in *E.T.S. – T.A.S.: 1898 – 1998, Hundert Jahr Elsässisches Theater Strassburg*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1998.
- . *Le Théâtre Populaire Alsacien au XIXe Siècle*. Strasbourg : Librairie Istra, 1973.
- . "Le Théâtre de verdure en Alsace." *L'Ecrivain d'Alsace et de Lorraine*. 29 (1987): 8 -10.
- Gardner-Chloros, P. "Le code-switching à Strasbourg." in *Le Français en Alsace*. Geneva: Slatkine, 1985.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London: Hutchinson, 1995.
- "Gegenwarts Probleme: Sorgen der elsässischen Dialektbühne: Ein internationales Kollegium der [sic] Elsässer Theater in Colmar." *Voix d'Alsace-Lorraine* 10 (1970): 2-3.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- . *Reason and Culture*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992.
- . *Conditions of Liberty*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994.
- . *Encounters with Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994.
- . "Adam's Navel: 'Primordialists' versus 'Modernists'." in Mortimer, Edward. ed. *People Nation & State*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1999.
- Gendall, Jan. "The Cornish Language: Against all Odds." *Carn: a Link Between the Celtic Nations* 100, (Winter 1997/98). Dublin: The Celtic League.
- Gerhards, Auguste. *Théo Gerhards, 1900 – 1943 : un Alsacien en résistance*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 2003.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.
- Gildea, R. *France since 1945*. Oxford: OUP, 1996.
- Giordan, Henri. *Les Minorités en Europe*. Paris: Kimé, 1992.
- , and Tangi Louarn. eds. *Les Langues Régionales et Minoritaires de la République*. Brussels: IEO Editions, 2003.
- Godenzi, Juan Carlos. "El recurso linguistico del poder." in Godenzi, Juan Carlos. ed. *El Quechua en debate*. Cusco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos, 1992.

- Goetschy, Henri. *Les Langues Regionales de France*. Mulhouse: Haute Comité pour les Langues Alsaciennes, 1996.
- Goetz, Gaston. "30 Jahr Cabaret Bonjour." *By uns d'haam* (1977). [no further stated information].
- Goodfellow, Samuel Huston. "From Germany to France ?: interwar Alsatian identity." *French History*. 7 (1993): 450-471.
- Gozillon-Fronsacq, Odile. *Alsace Cinéma: Cent Ans d'une Grande Illusion*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Blue, 1999.
- . *Cinéma et Alsace: Stratégies cinématographiques 1896-1939*. Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Cinéma, 2003.
- Grad, Charles. *L'Alsace*. Paris: Hachette, 1889.
- Graff, Martin. *Nous somme tous des Alsakons*. Strasbourg: Saisons d'Alsace, 1995.
- Green, Jonathan. *Neologisms: New words since 1960*. London: Bloomsbury, 1991.
- Grillon, Vincent. *Les revues parisiennes, et la vie politique: 1925-1929: Regard sur l'autonomisme*. Strasbourg: Grillon, 1999.
- Gromer, G. *Les representations scolaires au Collège des Jesuits à Haguenau au XVIIe siècle*. Haguenau: Bull, 1926.
- Groshens, Marie-Claude. "Acculturation et Théâtre Populaire en Alsace." *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est* 4 (1975): 52-61.
- Groshens, Marie-Claude. *Récits et contes populaires d'Alsace*. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.
- Grosjean, F. *Life with two languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Grossmann, Robert. *Main basse sur ma langue*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1999.
- Grünewald, Irmgard. *Die Elsass-Lothringer im Reich, 1918 – 1933*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984.
- Grupe-Loercher, Erich. « Gustave Stoskopf. » *Velhagen und Klasings Monatshefte* XVI, 5 (January 1902) : 550-560.
- Guizard, Claude. *Trésor dialectal d'aujourd'hui pour les Années*. Mulhouse: Ed. du Rhin, 1990.
- Guizard, C., and J Speth. *Dictionnaire*. Mulhouse: Ed. du Rhin, 1992.

- Guyomarch, Alain. et al. eds. *Developments in French Politics 2*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Haas, Didier. *Le Théâtre alsacien des origins à nos jours*. Diss. University Marc Bloch, Strasbourg, 1987.
- Haberey, Christophe. *La presse autonomiste de Strasbourg et les accords de Munich*. Paris: Haberey, 1938.
- Hahn, Christian. "A propos d'une troupe de théâtre: Narrespiegel." *Fragments* 3 (1982): 61-70. Faculté des Sciences Humaines, Université Marc Bloch, Strasbourg.
- Harsany, Z.E. *Le Théâtre de Strasbourg sous le Consulat et l'Empire*. Strasbourg: n.p., 1975.
- Hartweg, F. "Les églises et le français en Alsace de 1850 à 1918." in *Le Français en Alsace*. Geneva: Slatkine, 1985.
- Hauser, Fernand. "L'Alsace d'aujourd'hui." *Le Monde Illustré* 2400, 47 (28 March 1903): 300 – 301.
- Héran, François. "Entre les langues d'immigration et l'anglais: quelle place pour les langues régionales ?" Address by Directeur, Institut national d'études démographiques, Membre de l'Académie des Sciences. Fédération des Etudiants Catholiques, Strasbourg. 8 Mar. 2004.
- Hertz, Frederick. *Nationality in History and Politics*. London: Kegan Paul, 1944.
- Hessini, Marguerite Aimée. "Language use in culture spaces: Alsatian, a Case Study." Diss. Ann Arbor U, 1983.
- Hewlett, Nick. *Modern French Politics*. Oxford: Polity, 1998.
- Hirschfeld, Gerhard, and Patrick Marsh. eds. *Collaboration in France*. Oxford: Berg, 1989.
- Hirtler, J.L. *Le Mouvement Républicain Populaire dans le Bas Rhin en 1945/46*. Strasbourg: CCP, n.d.
- . *La Gauche dans le Bas Rhin sous la 5e République*. Strasbourg: CCP, n.d.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. "Mass-producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914." in Hobsbawm, E. and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: CUP, 1983.
- Hoffet, Frédéric. (1951) *Psychanalyse de l'Alsace*. Colmar: Editions Alsatia, 1973.

- Hofmann, Jürgen. "The Theatre System of Germany." in H. von Maanen, and S.E. Wilmer. eds. *Theatre Worlds in Motion*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998.
- Holderith, Georges. *Poètes et Prosateurs en Alsace*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1978.
- Horn, J. "John Langshaw Austin." in Ted Honderich. ed. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: OUP, 1995.
- Huck, Dominique. "Langue et Cultures Régionales." Department of Dialectology, University of Strasbourg III. Sept. 2002 to June 2003. [Course lecture notes.]
- Hug, Marc. "La situation en Alsace." *Langue Française* 25 (1975): 112-120.
- Hughey, Michael. ed. *New Tribalisms*. London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Hühnenburg, Friedrich [Fritz Spieser]. *Tausend Brücken*. Stuttgart: Hühnenburg Verlag, 1952.
- Huxley, Aldous. 1932. *Brave New World*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1984.
- . 1959. *Brave New World Revisited*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1984.
- Inglis, Fred. *Raymond Williams*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- INSEE [Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques]. Direction régionale de Strasbourg: *Chiffres pour l'Alsace*, 1946 – 1990.
- Insight Guide to Alsace*. Singapore: APA Publications, 1999.
- Irjud, Alphonse. "La Germanisation des Noms en Alsace entre 1940 et 1944." *Revue d'Alsace* 113, partwork 591 (1987): 239-60.
- ISERCO [Institut Strasbourgeois d'Etudes et Recherches Commerciales]. Statistical surveys, 1986, 1989, 1992, 2001.
- . "Les Problèmes de Bilinguisme en Alsace et en Moselle germanophone." *Culture et Bilinguisme*. (Aug. 1989).
- . "Le Bilinguisme en Alsace et en Lorraine." *Culture et Bilinguisme*. (Sep. 1989).
- . "Les Problèmes de la langue régionale en Alsace et en Moselle." *Culture et Bilinguisme*. (Oct. 1989).
- . "Qu'en pensent les alsaciens en 1992." [A telephone survey, two weeks before the regional elections.] *Culture et Bilinguisme*. (Feb. 1992).
- Jeffries, Stuart. "French switch on EastEnders to speak proper." *Observer*. 1 October 2001, 23.

- Jenny, Alphonse, and Doris Richart. "Précis de grammaire alsacienne en référence principalement au parler de Strasbourg." *Saisons d'Alsace* 83 (1983). Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue.
- , and Doris Richart. *Précis pratique de grammaire alsacienne*. Strasbourg: Istra, 1984.
- Jenny, Bernard. *Germain, en Alsace le contraire est toujours vrai*. Colmar: Jerome Do Bentzinger, 1999.
- Jorgensen, E. W., and H.E. Jorgensen. *Eric Berne: Master Gamesman*. New York: Grove Press, 1984.
- Jundt, A. *Die dramatischen Aufführungen im Gymnasium zu Strassburg*. Strasbourg: C.F. Schmidt's Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1881.
- Jung, Edmond. *Wie heisst dïss uff Elsässisch ?* Engwiller, Alsace: Jung, 2003.
- . *Mir Kinder rédde Elsässisch*. Strasbourg: SALDE, n.d.
- . *Grammaire de l'alsacien: dialecte de Strasbourg avec indications historiques*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1983.
- . *Elements de littérature Alsacienne*. Engwiller, Alsace: Jung, 2001.
- . "Les Poètes Alsaciens: un théâtre pour aujourd'hui." *Land un Sproch* 130 (1999): 21. Strasbourg: Cercle René Schickele.
- . *Offe Gsaat*. Colmar: Jerome Do Bentzinger, n.d.
- Junge, Traudl. *Bis zur letzten Stunde*. Munich: Classen Verlag, 2002.
- Kammerer, Odile, Henri Nonn and Bernadette Schnitzler. *Nouvelle Histoire de l'Alsace*. Toulouse: Privat, 2003.
- Kettenacker, Lothar. 1973. "La politique de Nazification en Alsace." *Saisons d'Alsace* Vol 23, 65 (1978). [Trans. from German *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumpolitik im Elsass*. Translated into French by François Hugelé.] Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue.
- , and Gerhard Hirschfeld. *Der „Führerstaat“: Mythos und Realität*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981.
- Khettry, Françoise. "Comportement linguistique de jeunes Alsaciens." *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 38, 3 (1982): 469-484.
- Kiefer, Paul. "Les Théâtres alsaciens au sein des troupes d'expression dialectale." in *Livre d'Or: Théâtre alsacien de Colmar – 1899/1979*. Colmar: TAC, 1980.

- Kirby, S. and K. McKenna. *Experience, Research, Social Change*. Toronto: Garamond, 1989.
- Klein, Pierre. *Raisons d'Alsace*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2001.
- . "Le Bilinguisme scolaire en Europe de l'Ouest." *Les cahiers du bilinguisme*. Strasbourg: Cercle Schickele, 1986.
- . *La question linguistique alsacienne de 1945 à nos jours*. Strasbourg: Salde, 1998.
- . *L'Alsace inachevée*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2003.
- Koehler, Gustav. *Das Elsass und sein Theater*. Strasbourg: Schlesier und Schweikhard, 1907.
- Kretz, Pierre. "Eloge du Théâtre dialectal." in *Quand la choucroute rit*. Siffer, Roger. ed. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2003.
- . *La langue perdue des Alsaciens*. Strasbourg: Saisons d'Alsace, 1994.
- . "Langue et pouvoir judiciaire." Institut Dialectal International: Symposium de Strasbourg. 17-20 September 1982.
- Kuhiwczak, Piotr. "Translation and Language Games in the Balkans." in Anderman, Gunilla, and Margaret Rogers. eds. *Word, Text, Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999.
- Kutna, Edouard. "Elsasser Théât'r." *Reussir: le Haut Rhin* 43 (1995): 16-17.
- La CUS en chiffres*. Strasbourg: Strasbourg Communauté Urbaine, 2003.
- Ladin, W., and H. Rosenfeld. "Le processus de normalisation linguistique en Alsace." *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est*. 8 (1979): 120-157.
- Ladin, Wolfgang. *Der Elsässische Dialekt : Museumsreif?* Strasbourg: Salde, 1982.
- « Hat unser Dialekttheater noch eine Zukunft ? » *L'Ami du Peuple*. 27 April 1969.
- Land un Sproch*. René Schickele Gesellschaft. 1999 – 2004. [Quarterly publication].
- Lang, Jacques. *Une politique pour les Langues et Cultures de France*. Paris : Ministre de l'Education Nationale et de la Culture, 1993.
- Laugel-Erny, Elsa. *Cours d'Alsacien*. Strasbourg: Le Quai Editions, n.d.
- "La véritable histoire du 'Hans im Schnokeloch'." *Gazette Hotelière d'Alsace et de Lorraine*. Yr 81, No 8 (1985).
- Leavis, F.R., and D. Thompson. *Culture and the Environment*. London:Chatto and Windus, 1933.

- L'Ecrivain d'Alsace et de Lorraine*. Strasbourg: La Société des Ecrivains d'Alsace et de Lorraine, various dates.
- Le Judaïsme alsacien*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2003.
- Le Marec, B., and G. Le Marec. *L'Alsace pendant la guerre 39-45*. Le Coteau, France: Horvath, 1988.
- L'Encrier*. Strasbourg: APEPLA, passim.
- L'Enquête Familiale, 1999*. Paris: INSEE/INED, 1999
- Lercher, A. *Les fantômes d'Oradour*. Lagrasse, France: Verdier, 1994.
- Les Cahiers du Rhin*. Dessenheim, France: Claude Diringer, n.d.
- Les Racines du Futur*. Strasbourg: Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin, 2003.
- Levinger, Jasna. "Language war : war language." *Language Sciences* 16(2), 229-236.
- Levy, Paul. *Histoire Linguistique d'Alsace et de Lorraine*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929.
- Lewis, Clarence Irving. *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*. La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1946.
- Lintilhac, Eugene. *Histoire générale du théâtre en France*. Paris: Flammarion, 1910.
- Livre d'Or: T.A.C. 1899 – 1979*. Colmar: Théâtre Alsacien de Colmar, 1979.
- Lodge, Anthony R. *Le français, histoire d'un dialecte devenu langue*. Paris: Fayard, 1997.
- Logel, Joseph. *Victime du paradoxe*. Colmar: Jerome Do Bentzinger, 1990
- Logel, M. *Revue Alsacienne Illustrée*. (1901): 104-106
- Lorraine, Jacques. *Les Allemands en France*. Paris: n.p., 1944.
- Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: CUP, 1985
- , and Marcus Binney. *Our Past Before Us: Why do we save it ?* London: Temple Smith, 1981.
- Lündner, Max. *Das Elsässische Theater zu Strassburg im Elsass*. Strasbourg: n.p., 1901
- Lutz, Desiderius. "Die Neuordnung der elsässischen Mundartsbühne." *Strassburger Monatshefte* 5. Jahrg., Heft 10 (1941): 656-662. Zivilverwaltung: Strassburg.  
[German Civil Government regulation concerning the reorganization of Alsatian Dialect Theatre.]
- Macionis, John J., and Ken Plummer. *Sociology: A Global Introduction*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1997.

- Macura, Valdimir. "Culture in Translation." in Bassnett, S. and A. Lefevere. eds. *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Cassell, 1990.
- Maguenau, Doris. *Die Besonderheiten der deutschen Schriftsprache im Elsass und in Lothringen*. Mannheim: Duden, 1962.
- Markey, T.L. "Language Expansion, Contraction and Death." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 8 (1987): 19.
- Martin, E. and H Lienhart. *Wörterbuch des elssäschen Mundarten*. Strasbourg: n.p., 1907.
- Matzen, Raymond. *Petit dictionnaire des injures alsaciennes*. Strasbourg: Le Verger, 1995.
- . "Le domaine dialectal." *Folklore et Tradition en Alsace*. Ingersheim, France: SAEP, 1973.
- . "Orientations actuelles du théâtre alsacien." in *Actualité du dialecte et de la littérature dialectale en Alsace*. Strasbourg: n.p., 1977, 31-45.
- . "Le dialecte alsacien et l'apprentissage de l'allemand." In Finck, Adrien, and Marthe Philipp. eds. *L'allemand en Alsace*. Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1988.
- , et al. *Mon premier dictionnaire français-alsacien en images*. Paris: Gisserot, 1997.
- , and Léon Daul. *Wie Geht's ?* Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2000, a.
- . *Wie Steht's ?* Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2000, b.
- Matzen, S. *Emprunts au français dans le parler de Strasbourg*. Strasbourg: USHS, 1976.
- Maugué, Pierre. *Le Particularisme Alsacien : 1918-1945*. Paris: Presses d'Europe, 1970.
- Mawer, Irene. *The art of mime*. London : Mettmén, 1932.
- Metz, René. "Jean Rasser, auteur de drames scolaires au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle." *Les Lettres en Alsace* (1962): 121- 140. Strasbourg: ISTRAS.
- Metzger, Jean-Jacques. *So sin m'r halt*. Ingwiller, Alsace: Le club Temps Libre et Loisirs d'Ingwiller, 2003.
- Mey, E. *La drame de l'Alsace : 1939/1945*. Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1949.
- Mignon, Ernest. ed. "Les Mots du Général, 1962." in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. Oxford: OUP, 1996.
- Morel, Jean. *Revue de l'art dramatique*. (13 Oct 1902): 481- 482.
- Morgan, Kenneth. *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880 – 1980*. Oxford: OUP, 1981.
- Morris, Peter. *French politics today*. Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 1994.



- Mossmann, M.X. *Les origines du théâtre à Colmar*. N.p., 1875.
- « Mouvement pour l'Autogestion Culturelle en Alsace. » *Unsri Gerichtigkeit*.  
Strasbourg: cf éditions, 1981.
- Mülhauser Tagblatt [MTB]*. Various dates 1940 – 1944. [Daily newspaper of the NSDAP (Nazi Party) in southern Alsace, organ of the civil government in the Gau of the Upper Rhine, published in Mulhouse.]
- Muller, Germain. *Germain Muller raconte Strasbourg*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 1988.
- . *Strasbourg : Ville de Rencontres*. Strasbourg: Editions DNA, 1979.
- . *Poèmes et chansons*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 1975.
- . "Points de vue ... Théâtre Alsacien: théâtre musée ou théâtre vivant ?" *Elan*. 3 (1971): 4-5.
- . *Le fou d'Alsace*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 1956.
- . *Enfin ... Redde m'r nimm devun*. N.p.:n.p., 1949. Mulhouse: Journal l'Alsace, 1996.
- Muller, Irene. *Anthologie des compositeurs de musique d'Alsace*. N.p.:n.p., 1970
- Neville, Grace. "Minority languages in contemporary France." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 8, 1 and 2 (1987): 147-157.
- Nouveau Dictionnaire de Biographie Alsacienne*. Strasbourg: Revue d'Alsace, 2003.
- Oberlé, R. *Juifs d'Alsace et Alsaciens*. Strasbourg: Ligne à Suivre, 2003.
- Oberlé, Raymond. "L'histoire de l'Alsace, du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours." in Dollinger, Philippe, and Raymond Oberlé. *L'histoire de l'Alsace, de la Préhistoire à nos jours*. Colmar: SAEP, 1985.
- «Ou va l'Alsace ?» *Saisons d'Alsace*. 110 (1991). Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue.
- Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. 3rd ed. London: Book Club Associates, 1979.
- Pagnol, Marcel. *La femme du boulanger*. Paris: Les Editions Films Marcel Pagnol, 1938.  
Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1963.
- "Parlers Alsaciens." in *Encyclopédie de l'Alsace*. Vol.10. Strasbourg: Publitotal, 1985. 5838 - 5883.
- Paxman, Jeremy. *The Political Animal*. London: Penguin Books, 2002.
- Perillon, Marie-Christine. *Strasbourg : l'euro péenne*. Paris: Hoëbecke, 2003.

- Petit, Jean. *L'Alsace à la reconquête de son bilinguisme*. Nancy: Les Nouveaux Cahiers d'Allemand, 2000.
- . *L'immersion, une Revolution*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, n.d.
- Philippe, Marthe. "L'accent alsacien." in *Le Français en Alsace*. Geneva: Slatkine, 1985.
- Philipps, Eugène. "Après la querelle de France 3 Alsace." *Le Monde* 25 Oct. 1990, 35.
- . *Comprendre l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: MEDIA, 2002.
- . *La Crise d'Identité: L'Alsace face à son Destin*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 1978.
- . *Schicksal Elsass*. Karlsruhe: Müller, 1980.
- . "L'Alsacien", c'est fini ? Strasbourg: MEDIA, 1989.
- . *Le pont / Die Brücke: la fin d'un cauchemar alsacien / das Ende eines elsässischen Alptraums*. Strasbourg: MEDIA, 1991.
- . *La Crise d'Identité: l'Alsace Face à son Destin*. Strasbourg: Société d'Édition de Basse Alsace, 1978.
- . *Le Défi Alsacien*. Strasbourg: Société d'Édition de Basse Alsace, 1982.
- . *L'ambition culturelle de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg : SALDE, 1996.
- . *ALSACE : Nostalgies "Blut und Boden"*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 2000.
- . *Les Luites Linguistiques en Alsace Jusqu'en 1945*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 1986.
- Piela, Raymond. ed. *L'Alsacien, c'est fini ?* Strasbourg: Objectif Alsace, special ed. Dec. 1989.
- Poigant, B. *Les langues de France*. Montpellier: Osez l'Europe, 2000.
- Ponteil, Felix. "Deux livres récents sur l'Alsace." *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg* 30, 7 (April): 1952, 288-90.
- Price, Roger. *A Concise History of France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Raphael, F., and Geneviève Herberich-Marx. *Mémoire plurielle de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: Société Savante des Régions de l'Est, 1991.
- Raynaud, F. *Histoire de la langue allemande*. Vendôme: Que Sais-je, 1993.
- Rees, Laurence. *The Nazis: a Warning from History*. London: BBC Publications, 2005.
- Reff, Sylvie. *Lumière des vivants*. Paris: Dervy, 2002.

- . "14<sup>th</sup> C mysticism in the Rhineland." Lecture at Association des Amis de la Culture Bilingue en Alsace. Marienthal. 10 March 2004.
- Reithler, Joseph. ed. *Anthologie: Elsässische Dichter der Gegenwart*. Strasbourg: Oberlin. 1978.
- Rémond, B. *De la démocratie locale en Europe*. Paris: Presse de Sciences Politiques, 2001.
- Reuss, Rodolphe. *Histoire d'Alsace*. Paris: Furne-Boivin, 1912.
- Revue Alsacienne de Littérature*. passim. Strasbourg: Les Amis de la Revue Alsacienne de Littérature.
- Reynaud, Jean, and Yves Grafmeyer. *Français, Qui êtes-vous?: Des Essais et des Chiffres*. Paris: La Documentation Française, 1981.
- Riedweg, E. *Les «Malgrés-Nous»*. Strasbourg: Editions du Rhin, 1995.
- Riegert, Henri. *Le journal historique de l'Alsace*. Muhouse: L'Alsace, 1983.
- Rigoulot, Pierre. *L'Alsace-Lorraine pendant la guerre 1939-1945*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.
- Roberts, Michèle. *Playing Sardines*. London: Virago, 2001.
- Robinson, J.H. *Readings in European History*. Vol 2. Boston: Ginn, 1906.
- Robson, Colin. *Real World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- Rocker, Rudolf. *Nationalism and Culture*. Los Angeles: Rocker Publications, 1937.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *States of Fantasy*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Rothenberger, K. H., and E.-L. Die. *Heimat und Autonomie Bewegungen*. Berlin: Peter Verlag, 1976.
- Roy, Oliver. "The Elusive Cultural Community." in Mortimer, Edward. ed. *People Nation and State*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1999.
- Royer, Christian. "le Rôle culturel du Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg." in *Le Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg: Programme de la Saison 1986/87*. Strasbourg: TAS, 1986.
- . "Entre deux saisons au Théâtre Alsacien de Strasbourg." *Courier de Schiltigheim*. 13, 50 (1978-79): 37-8.
- R.R. "Il y a 65 ans naissant ... L'Ensemble de Théâtre alsacien 'Saint-Nicholas'." *Journal de Haguenau* 135, 8 (1975): 1-2.
- Russell, Gillian. *Theatres of War*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

- Sand, M. *The history of harlequin*. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1915.
- Schaffner, François. "Théâtre en mouvement." *Land un Sproch* 126 (1998): 22-3.
- Scherb, Henri. *Chronologie de l'Histoire de l'Alsace*. Vogelsheim, Alsace: Heimetsproch, 2000.
- Schimpf, Jean-Paul, and Robert Muller. *Parlons Alsacien*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998.
- Schmidtlin, J.P. "Volkstheater". *Cahiers du bilinguisme*. 5, 7 (1975): 3-4.
- Schmittbiel, Joseph. *Domokrate: Lache un Hossezuebinde in de fineft Repüblük*. Strasbourg: n.p., 1996.
- . *D'Antigonn*. [Director's working edition.] 2002.
- Schneider, Camille. *L'Alsace depuis son retour à la France*. Strasbourg: Comité alsacien d'Etudes et de l'Information, 1937.
- Schneider, Malou. ed. *42 Johr « Barabli » : Histoire d'un cabaret alsacien*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1988.
- Schoen, Henri. *Le Théâtre Alsacien*. Strasbourg: Editions de la Revue Alsacienne, 1903.
- Schrodi, Lucien. *Us minem Soldatelawe*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2001.
- Schwengler, Bernard. *Le Front Nationale*. Strasbourg: Oberlin, 2003.
- . *L'Alsace bilingue*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2001.
- Sellar, W.C., and R.J. Yeatman. *1066 and all that*. London: Methuen, 1930.
- Seiler, Richard. *La politique culturelle du Conseil Régional d'Alsace, 1972 – 1986*. Vol. II. Strasbourg: Université de Strasbourg Faculté des Sciences Historiques, 1986.
- Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and Culture: 1830 – 1980*. London: Virago, 1987.
- Siat, Jeannine. *Histoire du rattachement de l'Alsace à la France*. le Coteau, France: Horvath, 1987.
- Siffer, Roger. *Morceaux choisis*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2000.
- . et al. *Quand la choucroute rit*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 2003.
- Sittler, Lucien. *L'Alsace : terre d'histoire*. Colmar: Alsatia, 1973.
- . *Geschichte des Elsass*. Colmar: Alsatia, 1939.
- Sitzmann, François. *Aperçu sur l'histoire politique et religieuse de l'Alsace*. Belfort: Paul Pélot, 1978.
- Smith, Anthony D. *National Identity*. London: Penguin, 1991.

- Spegt, Marcel. [Honorary President of the Federation of Alsatian Theatres.] Personal interviews. 14 Nov. 2002 to March 2004. [Cited in footnotes.]
- Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* [SNN]. 1940 – 1944. [Daily newspaper of the Nazi Party, organ of the civil government of the Gau of the Upper Rhine, published in Strasbourg].
- Stankiewicz, W.J. *Politics and Religion in Seventeenth-Century France*. Berkeley, Calif.: n.p. 1960.
- Stark, Astrid. "Introduction au théâtre yiddisch alsacien au XIX siècle." *YOD Revue des études modernes et contemporaines hébraïques et juives* 31-2 (1990): 145-159. Paris: Publications Langues'O [sic].
- Stauffer, Charles. *L'Alsacien et son Dialecte*. Strasbourg: Editions Oberlin, 1979.
- Stintzi, Paul. *Sammel-Katalog elsässischer Theaterstücke*. Strasbourg: Alsatia, 1926.
- . "Johann Rasser." *Almanach du Journal de l'Alsace: Der Elsässer Kalànder 1964*. (1964): 97-8.
- Stoeckicht, Otto. *Sprache, Landschaft und Geschichte des Elsass*. Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1942.
- Stourm, Michel. *La cigogne, l'autriche et l'escargot*. Strasbourg: Saisons d'Alsace, 1995.
- Straus, Emil. *Le Théâtre Alsacien*. Paris: Bibliothèque de la Critique, 1901.
- Strauss, Léon. *L'Alsace de 1918 à 1945: d'une libération à l'autre*. Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires, 2002.
- Streicher, Jean-Claude. *Histoire des Alsaciens*. Paris: Nathan, 1979.
- . *Impossible Alsace*. Paris: Editions Entente, 1982.
- Streicher, Jean-Claude, et al. *Histoire de l'Alsace : 1789 à nos Jours*. Luçon: Nathan, 1979.
- . "Questions à la création théâtrale en Alsace". *Cahiers du bilinguisme* 9, 5/6 (1979): 27-8.
- Stucki, Jean-Pierre, and Catherine Munsch. *Sectes : des paradis totalitaires ?* Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires, 2003.
- Sutter, Paul. [President of the Groupement de Théâtre du Rhin.] Personal interview. 7 Nov. 2001. [Cited in footnotes.]
- Tabouret-Keller, Andrée. "Regional languages in France: Current research in rural situations." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 29 (1981): 5-14.

- , and F. Luckel. "La dynamique sociale du changement linguistique: quelques aspects de la situation rurale en Alsace." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 29 (1981): 59-69.
- Taylor, James, and Warren Shaw. *Dictionary of the Third Reich*. London: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Thompson, E. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage, 1963.
- Tomalin, Claire. *Samuel Pepys : The unequalled self*. London: Penguin Books, 2002.
- Tourneru-Aumont, Jean-Marie. *L'Alsace et l'Alemanie*. Nancy: Etudes de géographie historique, 1919.
- Trouiller, B. *Das Elsass : Grenzland in Europa*. Köln: Böhlau, 1997.
- Traband, André. "Au service de notre patrimoine linguistique." in Finck, Adrien, and Marthe Philipp. eds. *L'Allemand en Alsace*. Strasbourg: Presse Universitaire, 1988.
- Trendel, Britta. "Der Status der deutschen Sprache im Elsass." Diss. Professional school teachers' examination, State of Niedersachsen, German Federal Republic, 1993.
- Ungerer, Tomi. *Tomi: A Childhood under the Nazis*. Boulder, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart, 1998.
- . *Das Tomi Ungerer Bilder- und Lesebuch*. Zurich: n.p., 1982.
- Urban, Michel. *Ecrivez l'Alsacien*. Strasbourg: Journal Développement et Communauté, 1975.
- Vassberg, Lilian. *Alsatian Acts of Identity*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters, 1993.
- Veltman, Calvin. "La transmission de l'alsacien dans le milieu familial." *Revue de Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est* 12 and 12bis (1983): 125 – 33.
- Vermes, G., and J. Boutet, eds. *France, pays multilingue*. Vol. 1. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987.
- Vicari, Eros. *L'Histoire de la Littérature en Alsace*. Strasbourg: la Nuée Bleue, 1985.
- Vogeliu, Martin. *Quellen und Bausteine zu eine Geschichte der Musik und des Theater im Elsass, 500 – 1800*. N.p., n.d.
- Vogler, Bernard. *Nouvelle Histoire d'Alsace*. Toulouse: Privat, 2003.

- . *Histoire politique de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1995.
- . *Histoire Culturelle de l'Alsace*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1993.
- . *Histoire de l'Alsace*. Rennes: Editions Ouest-France, 2002.
- . "On the history of Alsace." Lecture. 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Regional and Minority Languages and Cultures. Ingersheim, Alsace. 24 Sept. 2003.
- . *L'après-guerre à Strasbourg*. Strasbourg: Le Verger, 2003.
- Vogler, Pierre. "La planification du bilinguisme alsacien." *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est* 3 (1974): 210-220.
- Vonau, Jean-Laurent. *Le Procès de Bordeaux*. Strasbourg : La Nuée Bleue, 2003.
- Von Polentz, Peter. *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978.
- Wach, Monique. "Le vécu de l'élève dialectophone." in Denis, M.N., and C.Veltman. eds. *Le déclin du dialecte alsacien*. Strasbourg: Les Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1989. 101-122.
- Wachsmann, P. *Les droits de l'homme*. Paris: Dalloz, 1993.
- Wackenheim, Auguste. *La littérature dialectale alsacienne*. Vol 5, 1945 to 1999. Issy-les-Moulineaux: Prat, 2003.
- Wackernagel, D. *Geschichte des Elsass*. 1918. Freiburg im Breisgau: Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1940.
- Wahl, A., and J-C Richez. *L'Alsace entre France et Allemagne 1850 – 1950*. Paris: Hachette, 1994.
- Walter, Hughes. *1,000 échantillons du vocabulaire alsacien*. Mulhouse: L'Alsace, 1974.
- Walter, Francis. [Chairman of St. Nicholas Alsatian Theatre Group, Haguenau.]  
Personal interview. 20 Nov. 2003.
- Waltz, Jean Jacques. *L'Histoire d' Alsace Racontée aux Petits Enfants par l'Oncle Hansi*. Paris: H Fleury, 1915.
- Waquet, Françoise. *Latin or the Empire of a sign*. London: Verso, 2001.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. *Languages in competition*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- Waterman, John T. *A History of the German Language*. Seattle: U. Washington Press, 1967.
- Weber, Eugen. *The Hollow Years*. New York: Norton, 1994.
- . *Peasants into Frenchmen*. Stanford, California: N.p., 1976.

- Weckmann, André. *Brève Histoire Linguistique de l'Alsace*. 2<sup>me</sup> ed. Strasbourg: Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique, 1988.
- . *Langues d'Alsace: mode d'emploi*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 2001.
- . *Wie die Würfel fallen*. Kehl: Morstadt, 1981.
- . *Bekanntmachung : Avis à la population*. Strasbourg: SALDE, 2003.
- . *E Wüd vor Babylon*. Strasbourg: Hirlé, 2003.
- Wells, C. J. *German: a Linguistic History to 1945*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Wesker, Arnold. *Roots*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1973
- Williams, Penry. "Edward VI" in *Heritage of Britain*. London: Readers Digest, 1975.
- Wilson, P.H. *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495 – 1806*. London: Macmillan, 1999.
- Winter, L. *Ciel ! Mon mari est muté en Alsace*. Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2000.
- Witt, Marie-Louise, and Pierre Erny. *Les Stoeber: Poètes et premiers folkloristes de l'Alsace*. Colmar: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, 2003.
- Wittmann, Bernard. *Une Histoire d'Alsace, Autrement*. Morsbronn-les-Bains, Alsace: Editions Rhyn un Mosel, 2000.
- . *Marianne m'a « tuer »*. Haguenau: Editions Nord Alsace, 2002.
- Woehrling, Jean-Marie. *Langue et Pouvoir : Sprache und Macht*. Strasbourg: BF Editions, 1983.
- Wood, Micheal. *In search of Shakespeare*. BBC2 television documentary. 12 July 2003.
- Wright, Gordon. *France in Modern Times*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.
- Wright, Sue. *Community and Communication: The role of language in nation state building and European integration*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, 2000.
- "Zeitschriftschau: feiern oder fordern ?" *Rot un Wiss*. 45 (1998), 4.
- Zind, Pierre. *Elsass-Lothringe - Alsace-Lorraine : une nation interdite : 1870 – 1940*. Paris: Copernic, 1979.
- Zipfel, Antoine. *S.O.S. Alsace*. Strasbourg: Jérôme Do Bentzinger, n.d.

### **Websites consulted**

Ref. Alsatian language.

< [http:// site. voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/BO\\_19\\_juin\\_2003.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/BO_19_juin_2003.htm)>.

24/05/2005.



< <http://www.languesdefrance.com/HTML/Alsacien/Alsacien.htm> >. 02/07/2004.

< <http://www.olcalsace.org/cgi/index/php?wpage=portail> >. 02/07/2004.

< <http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/dialecte.htm> >. 08/10/2001.

< <http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/bilingue.htm> >. 08/10/2001.

< <http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/pollang.htm> >. 08/10/2001.

< <http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/festival.htm> >. 08/10/2001.

< <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/alsover.htm> >. 09/10/2001.

< [http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/acceuil/cours\\_d'alsacien/cours.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/acceuil/cours_d'alsacien/cours.htm) >. 07/10/2001.

< <http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/langue/passe/passe.htm> >. 07/10/2001.

< [http://www.flarep.com/flarep/common\\_files/alsace99.html](http://www.flarep.com/flarep/common_files/alsace99.html) >. 09/10/2001.

< <http://www.flarep.com/news/lire.html> >. 09/10/2001.

< <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/universitepopulaire.dobernai/page5.htm> >. 13/10/2001.

< <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/christian.huber/images/polourd%201.jpg> >. 12/11/2001.

#### Ref. Alsatian culture.

< <http://www.Google.fr/search?q=%27Voila.fr%2Falsacezwei%27&ie=UTF-8&hl=fr> >. 02/07/2004.

< <http://www.alsace-lorraine.org?liens.htm> >. 08/10/2001.

#### Ref. Alsatian language poetry.

< <http://www.heimetsproch.org/poesies.htm> >. 06/09/2001.

#### Ref. Alsatian language and pressure groups.

< <http://www.heimetsproch.org/poesies.htm> >.

< <http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/CHIRACmars2005.htm> >. 24/05/2005.

< <http://www.multimania.com/elsassnet/ruw.htm> >. 20/04/2001.

< <http://www.heimetsproch.org/contacts.htm> >. 06/09/2001.

< <http://www.multimania.com/elsassnet.indexupa.htm> >. 06/09/2001.

< <http://www.multimania.com/elsassnet/programme.htm> >. 06/09/2001.

< [http:// www. multimania.com/elsassnet/depeches.htm](http://www.multimania.com/elsassnet/depeches.htm) >. 06/09/2001.

< [http:// www. multimania.com/elsassnet/rum.htm](http://www.multimania.com/elsassnet/rum.htm) >. 06/09/2001.

Ref. Alsatian Language Theatre, and entertainments in Alsatian.

< [http://www.bilinguisme.Alsace @libertysurf.fr](http://www.bilinguisme.Alsace@libertysurf.fr) >. Updated fortnightly.

< [http:// www. cigogne.net/annuaire/categories.html?numeroparent=15](http://www.cigogne.net/annuaire/categories.html?numeroparent=15) >. 16/10/2001.

Ref. The Bonapartes.

< [http:// histclo hispeed.com/royal/fra/royal-frn.htm](http://histclo hispeed.com/royal/fra/royal-frn.htm) >. 19/01/2002.

< [http:// www. history.sfasu.edu/history/WCOut6B.html](http://www.history.sfasu.edu/history/WCOut6B.html) >. 19/01/2002.

Ref. Breton language revival.

< [www. ofisr.bzh@wanadoo.fr](http://www.ofisr.bzh@wanadoo.fr) >.

<[http:// site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/melenchon.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/melenchon.htm)>. 24/05/2005.

Ref. British theatre history.

< [http:// www. britannia.com/bios/lords/essex2rd.html](http://www.britannia.com/bios/lords/essex2rd.html) >.

Ref. Concordat of Napoleon with the Pope.

< [http:// fr.encyclopedia.yahoo.com/articles/ni/ni\\_2280\\_p0.html](http://fr.encyclopedia.yahoo.com/articles/ni/ni_2280_p0.html) >. 12/01/2002.

< [http:// alsacemedia.com/diocese/multi%20confessions/corps%20concordat.html](http://alsacemedia.com/diocese/multi%20confessions/corps%20concordat.html) >.  
12/01/2002.

< [http:// www. histoire.org/19e/documents/concordat.htm](http://www.histoire.org/19e/documents/concordat.htm) >. 12/01/2002.

Ref. The Council of Trent, 1545 [Trento, Italy].

< [http:// www. historylearningsite.co.uk/council\\_of\\_trent.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/council_of_trent.htm) >. 25/07/2001.

Ref. Courtly love.

< [http:// icg.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/lifeman/love/](http://icg.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/lifeman/love/) >. 22/02/2003.

Ref. Edict of Nantes.

< [http:// www. hightowertrail.com/HUG2.HTM](http://www.hightowertrail.com/HUG2.HTM) >. 11/01/2002.

< [http:// www. stetson.edu/~psteeves/classes/documentationstyle.html](http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/classes/documentationstyle.html) >. 11/01/2002.

< [http:// history.hanover.edu/early/nonantes.htm](http://history.hanover.edu/early/nonantes.htm) >. 11/01/2002.

Ref. English language – Chaucer.

< [http:// icg.fas.harvard.edu/~ chaucer/special/varia/life\\_of\\_Ch/ch-life.html/](http://icg.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/varia/life_of_Ch/ch-life.html/) >.  
22/02/2003.

Ref. English – Early modern.

< [http:// www.uni-saarland.de/fak4/norrick/HSShak.htm](http://www.uni-saarland.de/fak4/norrick/HSShak.htm) >. 22/02/2003.

< [http:// www.dartmouth.edu/~engl24/chrono.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~engl24/chrono.html) >. 22/02/2003.

< [http:// www.bardweb.net/man.html](http://www.bardweb.net/man.html) >. 22/02/2003.

Ref. Enlightenment.

< [http:// 2000pat.ifrance.com/2000pat/fiches\\_cours\\_4e/philosophes\\_éclairs\\_resume.htm?](http://2000pat.ifrance.com/2000pat/fiches_cours_4e/philosophes_éclairs_resume.htm?)  
>. 20/01/2003.

< [http:// pages.globetrotter.net/pcbcr/lumieres.html](http://pages.globetrotter.net/pcbcr/lumieres.html) >. 20/01/2003.

< [http:// hypo.ge-dip.etat-ge.ch/www/cliotexte/html/france.lumieres.html](http://hypo.ge-dip.etat-ge.ch/www/cliotexte/html/france.lumieres.html) >. 20/01/2003.

Ref. European Charter for Regional Languages

< [http://www. alsace-lorraine.org/ch\\_ang.htm](http://www.alsace-lorraine.org/ch_ang.htm) >. 08/10/2001.

< [http:// site. voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/discrimination.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/discrimination.htm) >.  
24/05/2005. [English language website.]

Ref. France: Government and Revolution.

< [http:// europeanhistory.about. com/library/readyref/blFranceRulers.htm](http://europeanhistory.about.com/library/readyref/blFranceRulers.htm) >. 06/01/2002.

[Constitution of 1958.] < [http:// www. assemblee-nat.fr/English/8ab.asp](http://www.assemblee-nat.fr/English/8ab.asp) >. 21/12/2001.

[Constitution of 1830] < [http:// www. fordham.edu/halsall/mod /1830frenchconstitution.](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1830frenchconstitution.html)  
html >. 21/12/2001.

[Rev.Tribunal.] < [http:// www. chronicus.com/revfr/docs/loi22prairialan2.htm](http://www.chronicus.com/revfr/docs/loi22prairialan2.htm) >.

21/12/2001.

< [http:// 2000pat. ifrance.com/2000pat/fiches\\_cours\\_4e/philosophes\\_éclairs \\_résumés.  
htm? >](http://2000pat.ifrance.com/2000pat/fiches_cours_4e/philosophes_eclairs_resumes.htm?). 23/12/2001.

< [http:// www. warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/bibliog.html >](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/bibliog.html).  
06/01/2002.

< [http:// www. warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/chrontab.html >](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/chrontab.html).  
06/01/2002.

< [http:// www. warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/glossary.html >](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/History/teaching/french-rev/glossary.html).  
08/01/2002.

[Republican calendar.] < [http:// pchapelin.free.fr/calrep/index.htm >](http://pchapelin.free.fr/calrep/index.htm). 21/12/2001.

[Republican calendar.] < [http:// pchapelin.free.fr/calrep/calen2.htm >](http://pchapelin.free.fr/calrep/calen2.htm). 21/12/2001.

[Republican days of the year.] < [http:// www. genealand.com/jourrep.him >](http://www.genealand.com/jourrep.him). 21/12/2001.

[Rights of Man.] < [http:// www. justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm >](http://www.justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm). 30/06/2004.

[Rights of Man.] < [http:// www. sar.org/history/rightman.htm >](http://www.sar.org/history/rightman.htm). 30/06/2004.

< [http:// members.lycos.fr/apecking/Sommaire/Oberlin/JFOberlin.htm >](http://members.lycos.fr/apecking/Sommaire/Oberlin/JFOberlin.htm). 30/01/2003.

< [http:// perso.club-internet.fr/ledig/ban/Oberlin/Oberlin\\_action.htm >](http://perso.club-internet.fr/ledig/ban/Oberlin/Oberlin_action.htm). 30/01/2003.

Ref. France – legislation.

< [http:// www. senat.fr >](http://www.senat.fr). 12/02/2002.

< [http:// www. assemblee-nationale.org/ >](http://www.assemblee-nationale.org/). 12/02/2002.

< [http:// www. social.gouv.fr/index.htm >](http://www.social.gouv.fr/index.htm). 12/02/2002.

Ref. French language.

< [http:// www. ncl.ac.uk/sml/links/french3.htm >](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/links/french3.htm).

Ref. French Political Parties.

< [http:// www. ambafrance-au.org/aboutfrance/pages/politicalparties.en.htm >](http://www.ambafrance-au.org/aboutfrance/pages/politicalparties.en.htm).

Ref. French State and religion.

< [http://www.justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm >](http://www.justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm). 30/06/2004.

< [http://alsacemedia.com >](http://alsacemedia.com). 15/03/2003.

Ref. Frederick the Great.

< [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_the\\_Great](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_the_Great) >.

< <http://eserver.org/books/strachey/voltaire-and-frederick.html> >.

Ref. German language teaching in schools.

Parents would prefer English as the first foreign language

<[http:// site. voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/droit\\_local.htm](http://site.voila.fr/alsacezwei/francais/alaune/actualites/droit_local.htm)>. 24/05/2005.

Ref. Holy Roman Empire.

< [http:// www. encyclopedia.com/articles/05990History.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/05990History.html) >. 14/02/2002.

< [http:// ragz-international.com/holy\\_roman-empire.htm](http://ragz-international.com/holy_roman-empire.htm) >. 14/02/2002.

Ref. Jacobin influence in French politics.

< [http:// www. bartleby.com/65/ja/Jacobins.html](http://www.bartleby.com/65/ja/Jacobins.html) >. 09/01/2002.

< [http:// www. freemasonwatch.freepress-freespeech.com/frenchrevolution.html](http://www.freemasonwatch.freepress-freespeech.com/frenchrevolution.html) >.  
09/01/2002.

< [http:// www. fordham.edu/halsall/sbook11.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook11.html) >. 14/02/2002.

Ref. Ordonance de Villers-Cotterêts, 1539.

< [http:// www. multimania.com/numa/ordVC.html](http://www.multimania.com/numa/ordVC.html) >. 15/01/2002.

< [http:// globegate. utm.edu/french/globegate\\_mirror/fraren.html](http://globegate.utm.edu/french/globegate_mirror/fraren.html) >. 15/01/2002.

Ref. Maslow.

< [http: //Chiron.Valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html](http://Chiron.Valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html) >. 14/04/2002.

Rep. Napoleonic Germany.

< [http:// www. geocities.com/vrozn/napgerm.html](http://www.geocities.com/vrozn/napgerm.html) >. 14/02/2002.

Ref. National Front publicity.

< [http://www. trains-en-voyage.com/actualite/0401.htm](http://www.trains-en-voyage.com/actualite/0401.htm) >. 22/02/2004.

Ref. Reformation and Humanism.

< [http:// www. encycolpedia. com/articles/10856Background. html](http://www.encycolpedia.com/articles/10856Background.html) >. 28/12/2001.

< [http:// www. bbc.co.uk/history/state/church\\_reformation/reformation\\_pettegree1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/state/church_reformation/reformation_pettegree1.shtml) >. 28/12/2001.

< [http:// www. fiaf.org/travel/alsace4.shtml](http://www.fiaf.org/travel/alsace4.shtml) >. 26/12/2001.

< [http:// www. oup-usa.org/search97cgi/s97\\_cgi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=%2E%2E2](http://www.oup-usa.org/search97cgi/s97_cgi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=%2E%2E2) >. 26/12/2001

< [http:// www. virgin.net/search/sitesearch?start=0&format=1&num=10&restrict=site&site](http://www.virgin.net/search/sitesearch?start=0&format=1&num=10&restrict=site&site) >.

26/12/2001.

< [http:// www. oup-usa.org/sc/0195137124/0195137124\\_01.pdf](http://www.oup-usa.org/sc/0195137124/0195137124_01.pdf) >. 26/12/2001.

Ref. Religious influence upon politics.

< <http://members.fortunecity.com/fstav1/chrisostomos.html> >. 23/07/2004.

Ref. Romanticism.

< [http:// www. ibiblio.org/wm/paint/glo/romanticism/](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/glo/romanticism/) >. 18/11/2003.

Ref. Struthof Concentration Camp.

< [http:// www. cohums.ohio-state.edu/english/People/odlin.1/graphics/france /struthof.htm](http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/english/People/odlin.1/graphics/france/struthof.htm) >. 17/01/2002.

< [http:// crdp.ac-reims.fr/memoire/enseigner/Natzweiler\\_Struthof/01site.htm](http://crdp.ac-reims.fr/memoire/enseigner/Natzweiler_Struthof/01site.htm) >.

Ref. Transactional analysis.

< <http://www.itaa-net.org/ta/bernehist.htm> >. 10/02/2003.

< [http:// www. emotional-literacy.com/ta.htm](http://www.emotional-literacy.com/ta.htm) >. 10/02/2003.

Ref. University of Strasbourg.

< [http:// www.hood.edu/academic/abroad/StrasbourgUni.html](http://www.hood.edu/academic/abroad/StrasbourgUni.html) >. 10/10/2001.

< [http:// www-pole.u-strasbg.fr/a-GB/sommaire/P-sommaire.html](http://www-pole.u-strasbg.fr/a-GB/sommaire/P-sommaire.html) >. 10/10/2001.

< [http:// www-pole.u-strasbg.fr/a-GB/F-set-etrangers/P-etrangers2.html](http://www-pole.u-strasbg.fr/a-GB/F-set-etrangers/P-etrangers2.html) >. 10/10/2001.  
< [http:// www. Sudoc.abes.fr/cgi-bin/nph-wwwredir/www.sudoc.abes.fr](http://www.Sudoc.abes.fr/cgi-bin/nph-wwwredir/www.sudoc.abes.fr) >. 15/10/2001.  
< [http:// www-bnus. U-strasbg.fr/frames/principal-contact.htm](http://www-bnus.U-strasbg.fr/frames/principal-contact.htm) >. 15/10/2001.  
< [http:// www.bnf/pages/collections/coll\\_d1.htm](http://www.bnf/pages/collections/coll_d1.htm) >. 15/10/2001.  
< [http:// cwis. kub.nl/~fdl/research/ti/Docs/Projects/Erasmus/strasbou.htm](http://cwis.kub.nl/~fdl/research/ti/Docs/Projects/Erasmus/strasbou.htm) >.  
13/10/2001.  
< [http:// www. cnrs.fr/fnak/](http://www.cnrs.fr/fnak/) >. 06/10/2001.

Ref. Wales.

< [http:// www.red4.co.uk/About%20Wales/population.htm](http://www.red4.co.uk/About%20Wales/population.htm) >. 08/03/2002.

Ref. Bernard Wittmann.

< [http://www. elsass-frei.net](http://www.elsass-frei.net) >.

< [contact@ elsass-frei.net](mailto:contact@elsass-frei.net) >.

**X-Bibliography Complete – 3 Jan. 2006**