Acadiens, Cadjins, and Cadiens:
Exploring How Cajun Identity Is Depicted and Negotiated in *Une fantaisie collective*

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how Cajun identity, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or otherwise, is depicted in the collection of theatrical pieces by Le Théâtre Cadien: *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien*. It examines portrayals of Cajuns by analyzing variations in spelling and contextualizing the use of a phonetic orthography as an act of dialect writing. Through an analysis of the representation of the written word, this thesis establishes links between how that non-conventional spelling contributes to a character's classification as Cajun. It then investigates the relationship between Cajun French, standard French, and English in the plays. These three languages are inspected in the orthography used as well as in the content of characters' dialogues. Such a discussion contributes to an exploration and understanding of how identity is established and negotiated across the generations depicted. This is notably achieved by comparing the various depictions of Cajun culture, way of life, and language present in the anthology. Characters' dialogues on Cajun identity contribute to an understanding of how Cajuns are distinguished from other French speakers in their respective plays. Finally, this research contextualizes *Une fantaisie collective* as ethnic theatre and examines how depictions of social problems and the Cajun way of life contribute to a conceptualization of Cajun identity. Overall, this thesis has found that in spite of the multitude of different ways that Cajuns are represented and that Cajun identity is negotiated in *Une fantaisie collective*, this collection of literary works still distinguishes French-speaking Cajuns as unique from other Francophones in Louisiana.

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Introduction

Louisiana has over the years become the home of various francophone immigrant communities and each community has brought with it a dialect of its own. This has significantly contributed to the French "cultural and linguistic mosaic" in Louisiana (Brasseaux 2). However, the presence of these different speaking communities has set the scene for a struggle in language vitality. With language mixing and inter-marriage, some scholars have argued that today it is more accurate to label the French spoken in Louisiana as "Louisiana Regional French" (Klingler 2009, Dajko 2012) as opposed to identifying the once-pronounced variations.

This thesis examines how the collection of plays in *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien* constructs a uniquely Cajun identity through an analysis of the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identities portrayed. I argue that by the use of dialect writing and theatrical plays as a medium, the language used in this collection is recognizable as Cajun French as opposed to that of a non-identified French speaking community. The use of a modified orthography, Cajun specific terms, and phrases in contrast with that of standard French contributes to a negotiation of Cajun identity in the anthology. This, along with an analysis of the portrayals of Cajun characters and the content of the plays, enables this thesis to address the tension between the various representations of the Cajun community. It shows that the depictions of French-speaking Cajuns in *Une fantaisie collective* are not only unique and complex, but also culturally unifying.

The first chapter explores how Cajun identity is depicted through the written representation of the group's language. It examines how the use of varied written forms is successful in presenting the unique aspects of Cajun identity. It demonstrates that through an identification of the varied presence of linguistic features there are diverse representations of

Cajun identity throughout the anthology. Through a critical analysis of the plays, I investigate the representation of and the relationship between Cajun French, standard French, and English. This close reading not only addresses the linguistic identity crisis but also reflects on the use of dialect writing as a means to both present and challenge conceptions of Cajun identity. This chapter then examines how the use of a modified and non-standard spelling plays a role in the preservation, validation, and transmission of Cajun identities: linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or otherwise as they are portrayed within the anthology.

The second chapter identifies and examines the ways in which the theatrical pieces portray Cajun identity and identities. It discusses how the depictions of different characters and different generations result in multiple representations of Cajun identity (identities). I then compare and contrast the extent to which the various depictions of Cajun identity encompass the stereotypical portrayal of Cajun identity represented by Henry and Bankston (2001). Through this exploration I argue that although Cajun identity is expressed in different ways this anthology can still be observed as a collection of uniquely Cajun plays. Yet, in spite of the uniting components the interactions between characters in the plays demonstrate that some characters and generations negotiate Cajun identity differently. As such, the plays in this anthology represent both a Cajun identity and Cajun identities.

The third and final chapter contextualizes the anthology as ethnic theatre, drawing from *Ethnic Theatre in the United States*, edited by Maxine Schwartz Seller. It examines how theatre can carry a "social, political, cultural and educational importance" (3), particularly to minority groups. This chapter explores how the plays "Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," "Mille misères: Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane" and "La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne" can inform the audience of Cajun perspectives on assimilation into the

dominant (American) culture. It also argues that through the depictions of Cajun political identities and responses to social problems, these plays can act as an educational tool and call for action. They present the effects of assimilation on three generations of Cajuns and through the characters' discussions of Americanization these texts critique the stigma associated with Cajun culture, way of life, and language. I then discuss how within the context of ethnic theatre and through the presentations of social issues these theatrical pieces can be used as a tool to inform their audience about Cajun culture and identity.

Although *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien* does not provide an exhaustive collection of plays written by Cajuns or in Cajun French, I chose to analyze the works in this anthology because of the objectives of Le Théâtre Cadien, the theatre troupe that staged the plays in the anthology. As May Waggoner provides in her introduction to the anthology,

> *Le THEATRE CADIEN existe pour encourager les Cadiens à s'exprimer dans leur langue française et à mieux connaître leur culture à travers les arts dramatiques. Deuxièmement, LE THEATRE CADIEN a comme but de partager l'expérience franco-louisianaise avec tous ceux qui s'y intéressent, particulièrement dans le monde francophone.* (emphasis in original, Waggoner 1)

Since this theatre group encourages playwrights to express themselves in Cajun French, the written texts provide insight into how the authors themselves may seek to characterize and present Cajun identity. In addition to Le Théâtre Cadien's desire to share "l'expérience franco-louisianaise" with everyone and anyone by encouraging writers and allowing them the liberty to express themselves in the written form without restrictions (spelling/Cajun-specific vocabulary,

etc.), they are able to transmit the unique features of Cajun culture, way of life, language, identity, and experiences. These theatrical plays, some of which were staged before being written, no doubt seek to present the image of Cajuns with respect to both the classification of a cultural community but also the everyday struggles and challenges that accompany being a member of the Cajun community.

The desire to share "l'expérience franco-louisianaise" is also seen in the wide variety of topics and genres, varying from folktales, historical fiction, and diverse representations of the Cajun community, presented in the anthology. The phrase "l'expérience franco-louisianaise" is also interesting in itself, as it does not limit the playwrights to portraying Cajuns and Cajun identity. Rather it allows for an exploration of other French communities in Louisiana as well, as is represented in James Fontenot's "Les Attakapas." Likewise, Cajun identity is depicted through an identification of some of the locations in which the plays take place, for example; Vermillion Parish, Lafayette Parish, St. Landry Parish, the region of the Attakapas, etc. Since there are a variety of Cajuns represented in this collection this may also have an effect on the written form of the Cajun dialect. Waggoner echoes the linguistic diversity of Cajuns in the introduction to the anthology, writing that "on trouve une multiplicité de prononciations dans les diverses régions de l'Acadiana" (8). This is significant as it allows the anthology to explore the diversity of Cajun culture and Cajun identities while at the same time presenting a unified cultural group. Regardless of the different ways in which Cajun identity is constructed in these plays, this collection of works suggests that there is not only a linguistic distinction between Cajun dialect and standard French but there are also variations in how each author writes Cajun French. My analysis shows that in spite of how each author chooses to portray Cajun identity, *Une fantaisie*

collective can still be understood as a representation of the unique Cajun community through the presence of several unifying features in the plays.

This anthology is also significant because the play "Jean L'Ours et la fille du Roi" is attributed as being "the first Cajun literary work" and was "[w]ritten in 1977 by Richard Guidry and Barry Jean Ancelet with the assistance of the amateur theatrical troupe *Nous Autres*" (Allain & Ancelet 6), the predecessor to Le Théâtre Cadien. The time in which it was written situates it in the cultural, linguistic, and literary renaissance that has been "unfolding in the region since the 1970s, driven by the desire to preserve the unique French heritage of Acadiana" (Guenin-Lelle 439). During the renaissance, there was a surge of publications and productions by self-identified Cajuns and Cajun enthusiasts and the ethnic group was beginning to flourish. This literary movement was encouraged by the establishment of *le Conseil pour le développement du français en Louisiane*, better known as CODOFIL, in 1968 (Brown 80). The founding of CODOFIL itself was also arguably inspired by *Cris sur le bayou: naissance d'une poésie acadienne en Louisiane*, which "est généralement considérée comme le manifeste de l'émergence d'une literature écrite en français vernaculaire louisianais" (Mauguière & Ryon 203). This collection of poetry "offers the reader a more critical perspective on the consequences of social and cultural transmission" and is also "the first published work of literature written in Cajun French" (Guenin-Lelle 440). *Cris sur le bayou* was instrumental in leading to an influx of literary works written in Louisiana French (Brown 83). In the early stages of the movement, "Prose and Poetry [were] the most common genres" and "[t]he phenomenon [was] already [being] called 'a literary renaissance'" (Brown 83). The publications that followed contributed to a growing corpus of Cajun literature, helping to establish Cajun identities and revive Cajun culture. For Cajuns, who have been characterized as a community struggling with the loss of cultural identity, language, customs,

and traditions, this literary renaissance, a Cajun revival, has also resulted in an increase in both academic and non-scholarly interest in the Cajun community. Such works include Carl A. Brasseaux's *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana* and *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People, 1803-1877,* Shane K. Bernard's *The Cajuns: Americanization of a people*, multiple publications by Barry Jean Ancelet, both under his own name and the pseudonym Jean Arceneaux, The *Dictionary of Louisiana French: As Spoken in Cajun, Creole, and American Indian Communities* by Albert Valdman, Rottet, et al., and scholarly articles by Becky Brown, Sylvie Dubois, and Thomas Klingler, to name a few.

Due to the fact that these plays address issues of identity within the context of a literary renaissance, this anthology can also be understood as ethnic theatre. The theatre troupe Nous Autres, which was formed in 1977, changed its name to Le Théâtre Cadien in 1981 (Waggoner 4 366). This name change is recognized as important "since it reflects the transformation of Cajun theatre from exclusionary and self-centered – closed to non-Cajuns – to vibrantly ethnic – an open celebration of difference" (Heylen 454). This shift also notably occurred after the 1979 play "Mille misères", which "squarely faced the problem of ethnic identity and survival, condemning America's encroachment upon Cajun tradition" (Allain & Ancelet 6). After "Mille misères", the plays begin to overtly address and criticize social and political issues. They portray the battle against the "melting pot" – assimilation into the American language and culture. Through this they can also be understood as a call for action to preserve Cajun culture and languages and a means of transmitting and legitimizing Cajun French.[1]

Since the plays in the anthology present Cajun culture, identity, and social problems, it is important to provide some historical background on Cajuns in Louisiana. First, Cajuns were not

[1] *Une fantaisie collective* is further contextualized as ethnic theatre in Chapter 3. See also Maxine Schwartz Seller's introduction to *Ethnic Theatre in the United States* for more on the general use and effects of ethnic theatres in the United States.

the only French-speaking people in Louisiana. Carl A. Brasseaux's *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*, identifies the different French-speaking communities in Louisiana and provides a historical background on how they came to the state. *Houma* refers to the aboriginal French-speaking people residing in Louisiana, who have their own dialect of French. *Creole* French is attributed to the descendants of African immigrants in the 1720s (Brasseaux 13), as well as descendants of the French-speaking refugees from St. Domingue, present day Haiti (Brasseaux 22, Dajko 285). However, the term *creole* now also refers to anyone with a black or mixed ancestry (Dajko 2012). *Colonial French* is understood as the variant most closely related to standard French and is identified as the dialect spoken by the descendants of European immigrants (Brasseaux 33). It is the only dialect of the above-mentioned immigrant populations whose language was also accompanied by a "written literary tradition" (Brown 70). The written form was a key component to the preservation of the language. Finally, *Cajun* is classified as the dialect spoken by the descendants of Acadian refugees.

Acadians came to Louisiana after *Le Grand Dérangement*, a large-scale deportation that saw them expelled from Acadia, present day Maritime Provinces, leading them to settle in various places in North America. "Of the 10,000-12,000 expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755, approximately 3000 would eventually make their way to Louisiana, arriving between 1765 and 1785" (Dajko 282). Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that there existed various French-speaking communities in Louisiana, the French territory was not as promising as the Acadian exiles had hoped. The group of exiles, who are almost always described as being a remarkably homogenous group, who placed much value on family, language and culture (Dormon 1984, Brasseaux 2005, Dajko 2012), experienced linguistic stigmatization upon their arrival in Louisiana because they

were speaking a dialect of French. The prestige associated with the French spoken by the colonizers, *Colonial French*, provoked a division in the once homogenous group of Acadians into two sub groups; the "Cadiens dorés" (Acadian Genteel), who were associated with urban life and the "Cadiens" (Cajuns/ Plains Cajuns), who were characterized by their rural lifestyle (Dormon 1045). This complicated not only the classification of Acadian descendants but also the cultural identity of present day Cajuns.

In addition to the stigmatization generated by the division of the group into urban and rural, the growing Anglophone presence in Louisiana would pose more difficulties for the Cajuns. "Francophobia had been rife within Louisiana's Anglo-American community since the Louisiana Purchase" (Brasseaux 1992, 98) and the Americanization of existing settlers in the territory began to take place. With the arrival of Anglophones, Cajuns as well as other French-speaking populations were increasingly exposed to the English language. However, the status of French was not in grave danger until 1916 when the compulsory education act was put to effect in Louisiana (Brasseaux 75). Following this in 1921 another law established English as the official language in the state (Brasseaux 75). This has been perceived as "probably one of the most damaging state legislation for Francophones to this day and was probably the genesis of language shift" (Brown 71), and it greatly affected the transmission of French in Louisiana.

During this time, the Cajun dialect of French became the subject of stigmatization, as observed through testaments of the poor treatment of Cajuns by teachers in schools in Louisiana. Brasseaux notes that "teachers showed no more sympathy than their Anglo colleagues for Cajun French, and French speakers in their care were chastized and publicly humiliated for using their mother tongue on the school grounds" (76). This shows that not only was the Cajun dialect stigmatized but also that following the language laws, the French language and all its variants

were poorly received. The use of French was forbidden in schools and churches, two crucial settings for language use, consequently having an effect on its vitality. According to Brown, "[a]s the domains of language use decreased, French became the minority, stigmatized variety" (72). This stigmatization not only increased bilingualism among Cajuns but also discouraged the transmission of their maternal tongue to future generations (Brown 76). Consequently, the use, exchange, and transmission of Cajun French diminished considerably, in particular with younger generations.

Due to the hostile language environment and oppressive language laws, "the majority of Cajuns born after 1950 was mother tongue Anglophone and at best passive bilingual in French" (Sexton 40). English had become the language of prestige, replacing *Colonial French* with serious consequences. The residents of Louisiana were not only forced to speak English by law, but speaking English also became an important attribute as "the mainstream offered promise of the good life, and those elements of their cultural baggage popularly associated with their heritage were denigrated as archaic, crude ('low class'), or absurd" (Brasseaux 77). Since people who were fluent in the English language were often able to acquire higher socio-economic status, if the Cajun people wished to survive in this incresingly English dominant society they were forced to abandon their language.

Even though the Cajuns lived several years under the oppression of the English language, the late 1960s marked the beginning of an ethnic, linguistic and cultural rebirth, a Cajun renaissance. In 1968, *le Conseil pour le Développement du Français en Louisiane* (CODOFIL) was founded, with the intention to revive and valorize the French language in Louisiana. Brasseaux referred to this as the "resulting backlash" from "young Cajun urbanites, [who] in the late 1960s, came to resent the fact that they had ever been made to feel ashamed of their heritage"

(79). CODOFIL chose to use International (standard) French, instead of one of the dialects of French spoken in the state of Louisiana, for language instruction. According to Brown this was somewhat controversial, "[o]n the one hand are the lawmakers, searching for a prestigious norm; on the other hand are the local community members, learning that their mother tongue is incorrect and inappropriate" (77). It was evident that CODOFIL's objective compromised more than a simple resurgence of French as a minority language in Louisiana, but by choosing standard French they were criticized by the speakers of the minority variations. In spite of the controversy associated with this choice it did serve an underlying strategic purpose: by using a standard variation, they were presented with a pre-established writing system.

After all, not only were many of the speakers of the other dialects illiterate in their maternal tongue, but between the three primary variants, Colonial French was the only one that was accompanied by a writing system (Brown 70). Additionally, if CODOFIL wanted to re-establish French in the state it seemed only logical that they chose standard French as "the variety has served in many ways as a vehicle for access to the French community" (Brown 77) and has brought "recognition and status to the local French culture in general" (Brown 78). Furthermore, the choice to use standard French can to an extent be considered unbiased. Since neither Creole nor Cajun had a written tradition, the use of standard French could enable literary contact between the three dialects.

Aside from the strategic choice to teach standard French in schools, the action perhaps most poorly received by the French speaking communities was the importation of French language teachers from Belgium, France and Canada (Quebec) (Dormon 1050). This decision was seen as somewhat audacious by minority French dialect communities and left the other variants of the French language in Louisiana in an unfavourable position. This is because

bringing in teachers from outside of Louisiana, who spoke a different dialect of French, reinforced the stigma associated with the minority dialects. Nevertheless, with the French language progressively regaining status, the Cajun renaissance persisted. The next step? An overt criticism of CODOFIL by francophone minorities, notably Cajuns, which resulted in the birth of a Louisiana French written code, and the creation of a Louisiana French Literature (Brown 91).

The development of a writing system, which employed a unique spelling different from that of standard French, posed many challenges to CODOFIL, the ambitious group of French enthusiasts, who aspired to legitimize French minority dialects in Louisiana. When it came to the codification and standardization of Louisiana French, CODOFIL proposed using standard French for the basic structure (Brown 95). This enabled authors to render the written form of a word more representative of its oral pronunciation, while at the same time keeping it recognizable as French. Through the use of a phonological orthography writers were then presented with the difficult choice between both the orthography, stylistic or non-standardized, and the dialect, Cajun or Creole. For example; "'je vais,' 'j'vas,' [Cajun variants or] 'mo va' [the Creole variant]" (Ancelet 1989, cited in Brown, 83). A choice, which albeit personal and intimately tied to the individual identity of the writer, could at the same time help to resolve ambiguities posed in dialect differentiation that resulted from both inter-marriage and ethnic self-identification.

With the growing interest in French language diversity, preservation, and presence in Louisiana, research conducted on linguistic differences and features of the varieties spoken have yielded interesting findings and propositions for language classification. A recent publication by Dajko (2012) suggests that presently the distinction between Creole and Cajun may be more related to race and ethnicity than the actual spoken language. By attributing the ambiguities present in dialect distinction to both intermarriage and ethnic self-identification she suggests that

it has become progressively more difficult to address the status of Cajun French in Louisiana. It is, however, possible that with the increasing distance between the self-identified Cajuns of today and their Acadian ancestors, Americanization, and inter-marriage that the distinctions between these minority variants of French are over time becoming less and less visible.

Ethnic self-identification suggests that since the dialects may have come in contact, language is at times classified according to the race of the speaker. Being black and speaking French was immediately associated with Creole, because of the influx of French and Creole speaking refugees, free people of colour, and slaves who came to Louisiana from St. Domingue. Whereas, being white and speaking French was associated with Cajun, due to the undisputed image of Acadian immigrants (Dajko 279, 285). In spite of the challenge posed in distinguishing between the French variants in present day Louisiana, "even when both Cajuns and Creoles are speaking the same language variety, there may be small differences in pronunciation between the two groups" (Klingler 2008 cited in Dajko 2012, 290). Through the use a phonological orthography, the way in which a word is spelt may be capable of rendering a specific dialect language visible in the written form. This process, dialect writing, can be helpful in identifying, highlighting, and differentiating French vernaculars in texts. Additionally, Cajun authors make use of dialect writing to various extents. As such, this thesis shows that their use – or lack thereof – of this strategy has affected how Cajun identity is represented in texts, and has an effect on the transmission of Cajun culture. Although a phonetic spelling may be helpful in dialect identification it is not the only means of identifying any given literary production as Cajun.

In the past few decades much work has appeared on Cajun French and Cajun culture, providing a solid foundation on which to build this thesis. I have notably turned to research and written works by Carl A. Brasseaux, Becky Brown, Carl L. Bankston, Jacques M. Henry,

Bénédicte M. Mauguière, Dominique Ryon, Maxine Schwartz Seller, Sylvie Dubois, and Barbara M. Horvath. However, aside from research by Mauguière, Dominique, and Romy Heylen, little work has extensively examined Cajun theatrical pieces. What differentiates this work from previous scholarly interventions is that it reflects on the presentation of Cajun cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities within the context of ethnic theatre and gives notable consideration to the effects of dialect writing. It also demonstrates the intertextuality between the texts in *Une fantaisie collective* in spite of the fact that the plays differ in content, form, portrayals of Cajun culture and identity. Nevertheless, this thesis will demonstrate that this collective body of works does in fact provide a rich representation of Cajun identity through a uniting presence of variation.

In conclusion, this research contributes to understanding textual portrayals of Cajun identity. It addresses the depictions of social concerns and how different characters are represented as reacting to these concerns. Moreover, as I am not a member of the Cajun speaking community, my analysis provides a unique perspective on the texts studied. I provide insight into how Cajun identity is constructed and presented by members of the community to a larger, non-Cajun public, and more specifically I address the tension between the various methods used to represent this identity throughout the plays. This ultimately demonstrates that although the Cajun community itself is unique and complex, in spite of the multifarious means used to portray Cajun identity, this body of works still demonstrates the degree of coherence within Louisiana's Cajun community that sets it apart from other Francophone groups.

Chapter 1

Writing Cajun

This chapter analyzes how Cajun identity is negotiated through written language in the anthology *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien*. It discusses how the presentation of Cajun French, in the form of dialect writing, enables the written form to be expressed in many different ways. Through an investigation of the varied features of the dialect displayed, such as unique spelling forms, this chapter seeks to investigate Cajun linguistic identity by addressing how it is distinguished from standard French. Consideration is also given to the medium of the text as a theatrical piece within the context of ethnic theatre. This examination demonstrates how the phenomenon of dialect writing engages with the medium of ethnic theatre to evoke an awareness of both social and political issues, such as marginalization through language, which results in the construction of a Cajun identity. I also examine how the context in which different spelling variations of the word cadien affect its meaning and depict how different characters may understand Cajun identity. The following pages are devoted to dissecting, through close readings, how Le Théâtre Cadien uses both dialect writing and ethnic theatre strategically. More specifically, I examine how a manipulation of the written form distinguishes Cajun French from standard French and legitimizes the Cajun dialect through textual portrayals of Cajun linguistic and cultural identity.

Sumner Ives' article "A Theory of Literary Dialect" states that "[a] literary dialect is an author's attempt to represent in writing a speech that is restricted regionally, socially, or both." (146). Dialect writing can then be simply understood as a written representation of a vernacular oral language. It is then through the use of dialect writing that the written text illustrates a

struggle between the representation of Cajun French, which has been transformed from oral speech into a written code, and the established grammatical rules for standard French. This struggle is observed through the authors' choices and approaches to dialect writing as well as the features of standard French that they modify, in what Barry Ancelet refers to as *la langue problématique*, he suggests that

> [t]he choice of a word is a commitment, a risk, a conflict [...] How do you write a language which is only oral? What risk does one run when confronted with the empty page? ... The dilemma of language is present for the writer in each line, each word. (cited in Brown 83)

In spite of the fact that the majority of the plays in this anthology are written in "français 'cadien," the challenge in writing an oral language is reflected in the varied ways that different authors make use of a non-standard orthography, grammar, or lexical terms. Although each author and play approaches dialect writing differently, I argue that they all succeed in representing the Cajun dialect. Since dialect writing presents language in non-standard forms and varies from author to author, the presence of dialect writing allows for a complex reading of both the individual text as well as the anthology as a collective body of works.

The concept of dialect writing is much more complicated than the definition above suggests. In order to analyze its use within a text a reflection and consideration of multiple factors – such as language, content, and medium – is required as they are all related and co-dependant. In "The Psychology of Dialect Writing," George Philip Krapp proposes the following as a point of departure in the analysis of a text that employs dialect writing:

> [t]he first question that occurs to one looking at this exuberant dialect literature is whether it comes up from below, that is, whether it is a

> reflection and echo of an authentic folk interest in literary expression, or is imposed from above as an ingenious invention of sophisticated literary artists. (23)

In order to discern whether the use of dialect writing in the texts at hand is "authentic" or "invented," I turn to the mission statement of Le Théâtre Cadien, which states: "*Le THEATRE CADIEN existe pour encourager les Cadiens à s'exprimer dans leur langue française et à mieux connaître leur culture à travers les arts dramatiques*" (emphasis in original, Waggoner 1). This suggests that the theatrical pieces in the anthology do have an "authentic folk interest in literary expression" as the theatre troupe's mandate states that it exists for Cajuns to express themselves in their language and to better know their culture. On the other hand, the labelling of these texts as "authentic folk interest in literary expression" is not only qualified but is challenged by the second part of Le Théâtre Cadien's mission statement, which reads "*Deuxièmement LE THEATRE CADIEN a comme but de partager l'expérience franco-louisianaise avec tous ceux qui s'y intéressent, particulièrement dans le monde francophone*" (emphasis in original, Waggoner 1). The troupe seeks to share the franco-louisianan experience with the francophone world in particular. This suggests perhaps that these works of dialect writing may also be understood as "an ingenious invention of sophisticated literary artists," rendering Cajun culture and the Cajun dialect accessible to a broader audience. Nevertheless, regardless of whether the dialect writing of a specific play is reflective of an authentic folk interest or an ingenious invention, the mission statement of Le Théâtre Cadien is only one facet to consider in the complex process of analysing dialect literatures.

The medium of the text should also be considered when investigating how a dialect is represented. By identifying the medium of these literary productions as theatrical pieces and

considering them within the context of ethnic theatre suggests that there are multiple possible readings of the plays at hand. Minority groups used ethnic theatre not only for entertainment purposes as it "made the history, literature, and folklore of the homelands accessible to literate and illiterate alike," but also as educational tools to expose "audiences to sophisticated examinations of social problems" (Seller 6-7). This, in conjunction with the possible rhetorical use of dialect writing in which "[s]peakers and writers can consciously manipulate linguistic variation in order to invoke associated social meanings" (Dubois & Horvath 264), suggests possible implications of the plays in this anthology. For example, a specific play may provoke social and/or political concerns by drawing awareness to the social status of a given vernacular or dialect while also serving as a call for action to preserve and legitimize the language of an ethnic group.

Moreover, the fact that the works at hand are theatrical pieces further complicates the analysis of dialect writing and how Cajun identity is presented in the text. Consequently, when embarking on an analysis of the use of dialect writing in theatrical plays, it is important to consider the significance of both the spoken word and the written word as they are undoubtedly intertwined in this medium. Given that generally the ultimate goal is for the written text (script) to be presented orally, when examining a theatrical piece, the mode of the written form must certainly be addressed. This is particularly relevant since according to Mauguière, Le Théâtre Cadien

> développa des pièces originales qui, par leurs formes, leur langue, leurs thèmes, pouvaient 'parler' à un public relativement étranger aux conventions culturelles héritées d'une longue tradition théâtrale mais par

> contre intimement familier et réceptif à l'art de la performance orale. (cited in Mauguière and Ryon 205)

The written text must also in the context of dialect writing be understood as representative of the oral language. This presents a conflict within the text as the goals for the conceptualization of the written form arguably undergo opposing processes. Where one may generate a written text that seeks to render oral features evident in the written form, perhaps by working from a pre-existing code of grammar, the other seeks to transform the oral language into a written representation without being influenced by an established written code.

Taking this into consideration, there are many ways to render the oral features of a dialect readable and as a result, visible or even audible in the written form. One such method would be to indicate in the character descriptions the particular way in which the character's lines should be spoken. This is exhibited, for example, in the play "Grosbecs" where one of the main characters, Pee Wee Leblanc, a simple hunter living a relatively isolated life with his wife Rose, is described as having an "accent cadien […] très épais" (Stelly 132). The playwright could also alter the spelling of the written word, rendering it more indicative of a desired oral representation. The script for a theatrical play might include words written phonetically to emphasize linguistic features like accents. An example of this can be seen in "La douce réunion" where the word "Christmusse" (Broussard 330) is written for the character of Douce, a grandmother who speaks Cajun French as her first language. In this example, the written form of this word serves to depict how the English word "Christmas" should be performed orally by the Cajun French-speaking character.

In addition to this, it is also important to understand that theatrical plays may be more likely to exhibit colloquial speech and thereby represent a reflection of how people might

actually speak. “Les Attakapas”, a play about the interactions between members of different French speaking communities living in Louisiana during the American Civil War, exhibits how the pronunciation of the spoken word is not necessarily consistent with the grammatically correct written representation of the same word, for example, "[w]e needa be gettin back to camp" (Fontenot 226). In this sentence, the word "needa" is grammatically incorrect in the written form: it should have been written as "need to." It, however, is a perfectly acceptable utterance in verbal discourse as well as within the written context of a theatrical play. The use of phonetic orthography could also be used to illustrate expressive speech, as "O yé yaïe" (Waggoner 13) in “Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi”, the theatrical adaptation of a French folktale. This exclamation is an example of Cajun French and is part of the spoken domain of the language, yet, here it has been transcribed to become part of the written domain. These examples clearly demonstrate the challenge and importance of understanding the relationship between the spoken word and the written word in theatrical pieces.

The correlation between oral and written is even more intricate when considering the task of writing Cajun in particular, as the dialect was historically classified as a solely oral language (Brown 79). This brings into question why the written texts being produced were being considered part of a literary *renaissance*[2] (Brown 83) as opposed to a literary *naissance.* It seems that through the varied methods employed by authors to exhibit the Cajun dialect, the creation of literary productions written in *français 'cadien* could very well be understood as a demonstration of both a literary *naissance* and *renaissance*. They are establishing a new written code through the modification of an existing system. This suggests that, as Brown has proposed, "an adequate sociolinguistic analysis of Louisiana French should question the place of an emergent writing system in a culture that already has one" (89). That is to say, this “emergent writing system”

[2] Brown states, "Since the appearance of *Cris sur le Bayou*, several more Louisiana French writings have surfaced

should be contemplated, especially given that the authors are in fact modifying an existing written code in order to create a new one. As such, in spite of the fact that the French language had "been handed down orally from generation to generation [... and] the written medium was not a mode of language transmission," the increasing amount of literary productions can perhaps be understood in terms of a "recovery of this written system" (79). This is particularly relevant when considering that in the context of the French-language mosaic developing in Louisiana (Brasseaux 2), there were three notably distinguishable variations of the French language present:[3] Colonial French/European Creole, Creole French and Cajun French. Out of these three dialects, Colonial French was the only variety that was accompanied by a written code since "only the European colonists brought a written literary tradition" to Louisiana when they immigrated (Brown 70). Furthermore, given that Cajun French and standard French are mutually comprehensible (Brown 73), it is not at all shocking that many authors in this anthology use standard/International French as a backbone for the written form of French dialects, a tactic that was also proposed by CODOFIL (Brown 95).

Even though CODOFIL had previously suggested a plan for "the codification and standardization of Louisiana French orthography" (Brown 95) that suggested the use of International French as a point of departure, there are still no established rules for orthography when writing in Cajun French. This is evident when comparing the varied written representations of Cajun French in this anthology. In “Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an’ y'all?” the written representation of the monologue of the Grandmother, who is a native speaker of Cajun French, makes use of irregular and phoneticized spelling. This is quite different from the written

[3] Some scholars also make reference to the French language spoken by the Houma tribe, which is identified as being linguistically similar to Cajun French. For more information regarding immigration to Louisiana and understanding the distinction between these French-speaking communities, see Carl A. Brasseaux's *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana.*

representation of Cajun French and standard French in “La douce réunion”. This play tells the story of a family reunion centered around the Grandmother, Douce, who is also a native speaker of Cajun French. The spelling in this play, however, is less phoneticized than that in “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?” in spite of the fact that both plays contain a Grandmother figure who is a native speaker of the Cajun dialect. In “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?” the written form of her language is immediately distinguishable from standard French “J’sus assez larguée d’a’tend parler d’not’ magnière de parler à nous-aut’, j’pourrais rej’ter. Y a la môtché du mond’ qui dit qu’on devrait oublier l’français, pis l’auti môtché du monde […]” (Guidry 73). Although in the first few utterances by Douce in “La douce réunion” there are some similar omissions at the beginning of words “Z’enfants! ‘Ois-donc tout ça! Quelle surprise!” (Broussard 327) in her next line it can be seen that there are significantly less modifications in spelling “Mais, moi-même, j’ai oublié plusieurs fois aujourd’hui. Ha! Ha! Chaque fois que j’pensais à te dire que c’était ma fête, j’commençais à faire quelque chose d’autre et j’oubliais” (Broussard 327). Both characters employ the use of contractions but the spelling of Grand-M’Man’s speech is more drastically modified as seen in the spelling of the words “magnière” (manière) and “môtché” (moitié).

This variation in the execution of dialect writing could be a result of multiple factors, for example the rhetorical objective may be different for the authors, or, as Ives suggests, the authors may simply have different conceptualizations of the standard from which they are deviating. "This 'standard' language [...] can only be the variety of the language which the author himself considers to be 'standard' [... t]here are many pronunciation features in all varieties of speech which are not considered 'dialectal'" (Ives 157). This means that what one author may perceive as a distinct feature of Cajun French, another may not. The proposition that different authors

conceptualize the standard language differently is also alluded to in the introduction of *Une fantaisie collective*, in which Waggoner addresses the fact that there are indeed different representations of the Cajun dialect within the anthology:

> Le problème se complique du fait de la variation inhérente au français cadien et des variantes dans les systèmes de transcription utilisés par les divers auteurs. Par exemple, on trouve une multiplicité de prononciations dans les diverses régions de l'Acadiana. (8)

The differences in written representations of Cajun French are further complicated by the fact that several varieties of French exist in contact with one another in Louisiana. As a result, the effects of language mixing could have also contributed to the authors' conceptualization of the standard language and choices in spelling. The representation of these dialects in the text may be influenced by a desired representation of the Cajun community, such as a marginalized social status or desired social status. It could also include features of other dialects of French present in Louisiana to portray effects of language mixing and inter-marriage.

The fact that these languages have surely come in contact has led some scholars to suggest that the distinctions between the three above mentioned variants are becoming ambiguous. As Nathalie Dajko has observed, "it is very difficult today to attribute features of modern Louisiana Regional French to any one source, Acadian or otherwise" (286-7). This leaves what one would expect to be a simple task, spelling a word, to be quite difficult for this speaking community. This is because "a closer look at this phenomenon," the writing of Louisiana French, "reveals the complexity and the conflict involved in the choice and spelling of the written word, in that each decision entails a negotiation of one's identity and social role" (Brown 69). Nevertheless, if the languages of these speaking communities are becoming less and

less distinguishable, the act of dialect writing enables authors to identify exactly which features of the language are significant in presenting a desired cultural identity.

Taking this into consideration, the choices made in orthography can be taken as conscious decisions, since the playwrights are generating a written form for a language that previously had none. These writers are also identifying which features of the language are linked to membership in the Cajun community. Through dialect writing and a strategic manipulation of orthography authors in *Une fantaisie collective* are negotiating the construction of Cajun identity, as proposed by Brown in her article "Social Consequences of Writing Louisiana French."

> By overcoming the obstacles of writing in Louisiana French, and by choosing to express themselves in that code, local writers are demonstrating cultural unity and solidarity and, in effect, are making a social statement. In other words, the orthography is itself a presentation of oneself, one's identity, a direct reflection of the culture. (84)

She also suggests that the written form can be understood as "an artistic decision, and orthographic choice [as] a political statement" (81). Ives likewise asserts that

> the author is an artist, not a linguist or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific. In working out the compromise between art and linguistics, each author has made his own decision as to how many of the peculiarities in his character's speech he can profitably represent. (147)

All of these factors (medium and language) contribute considerably to the analysis of dialect writing and the portrayal of Cajun French. The act and execution of a literary dialect is the product of many influences that all have an effect how Cajun identity is depicted within the

anthology. Dialect writing plays a crucial role in the way in which the written word paints a portrait of Cajun linguistic and cultural identity.

Since the written word can be used strategically, it is crucial to discuss the different linguistic processes employed in dialect writing that give the text a rhetorical value. Language can be studied according to its morphological, phonological, and syntactical features. Morphological changes in the written form may indicate some structural changes, which have become regularized in the dialect. For example as Waggoner points out "[d]ans la plupart de la région, les verbes sont conjugués avec *avoir* au passé composé; donc on entend *il a venu*, *j'ai passé*, *il s'a fait mal*" (10). This is different from standard French in which the verb *être* would be used as the auxiliary verb in Waggoner's examples. Phonological changes, on the other hand, highlight or mark how the sound of a specific word is different in the dialect. The changes exhibited in the written form that diverge from standard or grammatically correct representations of a language are significant in the context of dialect writing as they can serve multiple purposes in the text. In their article "Sounding Cajun: The Rhetorical Use of Dialect in Speech and Writing," Dubois and Horvath propose that the change in the representation of one feature of the language as opposed to another may be more revealing, "[o]ur suspicion is that the morphological data of dialect writing are more useful than the phonological, since sociolinguistic interviews generally yield a sufficient number of tokens of variable pronunciations of sounds" (284). This is a logical deduction given that pronunciation within a given speech community varies not only from member to member but also, as Ives points out, "[i]t is a truism of linguistics that no two utterances are ever completely the same, and it follows that the speech pattern of every individual is unique" (152). This may explain not only why we see different spelling variations for the same word in the anthology but also variations within the same text.

The spelling of the word "quelque" for example, is written as "quelque" (Broussard 327) in “La douce réunion”, "quèque" (Marcantel 44) in “Mille misères” and as both "quelqu'un" (Comeaux 107) and "quèqu'un" (Comeaux 109) in “La fête à Clomaire”. Consequently, as the phonological representation of the written word varies widely from play to play and within each play, the widespread use of the same morphological changes in orthography may be more important in determining which linguistic features indicate membership in the Cajun speaking community.

This is not to neglect the strategic use of phonological alterations to the spelling of words in the written text. As previously mentioned, the plays in this anthology make use of orthographical changes to varied extents. Taking this into consideration, it is crucial to analyze these plays with respect to their use of phonological and/or morphological alterations. Since morphological changes may be fundamental in conceptualizing the differences between the writing of standard French and Cajun French, it can be assumed that these changes will exist in both plays that make use of phonological modifications to orthography and those which do not. However, although morphological features may be more useful in demonstrating that Cajun French should be considered independently of standard French, exhibiting phonological features is an equally substantial component of dialect writing.

The use and variation of phonological features can highlight the importance of the oral aspect of the language. These features can also be used to evoke social and political concerns related to Cajun identity and the challenges associated with identification in this ethnic group. As Brown points out "how one spells a word is a major issue from both a practical and sociopolitical point of view," (69) and as she demonstrates in her article "The Social Consequences of Writing Louisiana French," "the writing of Louisiana French [is] one of the crucial links between social change and linguistic change. […] social change is bringing about the writing of Louisiana

French, which in turn is bringing about linguistic change" (70). As a result, the analysis of the plays in *Une fantaisie collective* will further be broken down into distinguishing between plays that exhibit a phonological orthography in comparison to those that do not.

My analysis of the plays employing the use of a phonetic spelling will focus specifically on the following four theatrical pieces; “Mille misères,” “Hallo cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an’ y'all?,” “La douce réunion,” and “Les Attakapas.” The scope of this research has been narrowed to these plays in particular, as they are "présentées comme leurs auteurs les ont créés [*sic*]" (Waggoner 11). This suggests that no additional changes have been made to the written representation of the theatrical pieces and notably to the spelling choices made in the written form. The first three of these plays also demonstrate how the Cajun French language has changed over generations. Their unique presentation of the written word provides additional meaning to the content of the plays that address the issues of Cajun linguistic and cultural perseverance and preservation.

This anthology exhibits a wide-range of written forms of Cajun French, yet, the plays still portray unique Cajun written code. Some of the plays are overtly labelled as "une pièce en français 'cadien"[4], whereas “Les Attakapas” is distinguished as "une pièce en français". This play describes the lives of a French family living in Louisiana during The Civil War in 1863, and their interactions with the local French speaking habitants, Cajuns and Creoles, and American Anglophones in the army. However, although this play is labelled as “une pièce en français” it can still be understood as an example of dialect writing. As the definition of dialect writing cited earlier suggests, this play makes use of a phonetic spelling for specific characters. This highlights the Cajun words and Cajun linguistic features that distinguish the language of the Cajun

[4] “Mille misères,” “Grosbecs,” “Martin Wèbre et les Marais Bouleurs,” “La dernière quilte, Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis.”

character from other French-speaking characters in the play. This distinction between the written forms of the different dialects is further supported by a statement made by Emira, a character of French nationality, who comments on the French language use in their community, stating that: "[c]hacun parle un français différent, ou ce qui passe pour du français" (Fontenot 198). It is through the technique of dialect writing that Fontenot, the author of this play, is able to clearly differentiate the Cajun dialect of French from the French spoken by other characters in the play.

Additionally, although the play is written in French, Fontenot makes use of phonetic changes in orthography to mark the language of the Cajun speakers. He does this by representing oral features of the language in the written form. Cajun speakers are distinguished, for example, by the spelling of the French word "Elle" which becomes "Alle" and "a" (Fontenot 202), differentiating their pronunciation. Their pronunciation can also be seen in the words "demander" which becomes “tchémander” (Fontenot 201) and "dire" which becomes “zire” (Fontenot 202). Although their language is presented as distinct when compared to the French immigrants (standard French/ Colonial French), it is also differentiated from Creole French. For example, the written representation of the same phrase is manipulated according to the dialect of the speaker, Lucy, a Cajun, says "Je vas" (Fontenot 206) whereas Cama, a Créole, says "Je vais" (Fontenot 206). By identifying these features of the Cajun dialect, Cajun linguistic identity is negotiated according to the author's written portrayal of the Cajun language. The act of dialect writing is used to isolate the oral features of Cajun French, as well as the other languages in this play, that is, standard French, Créole, and American English. Fontenot's use of dialect writing highlights the Cajun dialect as unique, since it is written differently in the play than the other dialects/variants. It is also through his use of dialect writing that he provides insight into the

possible complexity of the linguistic situation and the language interactions occurring in Louisiana at the time.

Although the spelling choices in “Les Attakapas” portray linguistic differences between the varieties of French spoken in Louisiana, other plays in the anthology also show a change in language over generations. These plays are significant as they suggest instability in the language change that has occurred over time. “Les Attakapas” made selective use of a phonetic orthography, which succeeded in isolating the Cajun dialect from the other variants of French spoken in the play. Other plays like “Mille misères” and “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?” make use of extensive phonetic spelling but their use makes a different statement about the Cajun language. As I will show in the following pages, the written representation of Cajun French in these plays brings awareness to the loss and negotiation of Cajun identity across generations. At the same time their use of dialect writing also challenges the legitimacy of the Cajun dialect.

In “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?”, the monologue of a Cajun Grandmother, the text addresses the linguistic situation with respect to the Cajun dialect in the context of English speaking America. It brings awareness to the fact that there has been an identity loss over generations. Grand-M’Man says: "j'ai des enfants qui croyont, eusses aussite, qu'i' sont des Amaricains" (Guidry 73). She goes on to suggest that this identity loss may have been a result of the stigmatization of Cajun French; "A' voulait pas qu'i souffront côme elle alle avait souffert..." (Guidry 73). This short monologue also alludes to the important role that language plays across generational lines: "[c]'est *mon* sang qui coule dans leurs veines et j'sus pas capab' d'yeux montrer côment j'les aime" (emphasis in original, Guidry 73). These citations demonstrate that there has been a shift in identification in spite of ethnicity and this shift seems

to be affected by the marginalized status of the Cajun dialect. Likewise, the content of the play is built upon the use of dialect writing exposing the reader to the oral features of the Cajun dialect and engaging him/her in an audible reading of the text. Although the dialect, at times, resembles standard French this association is blurred with the representation of Cajun French notably on the level of pronunciation. It is through the choices in spelling that the reader is then almost obligated to articulate each word, sounding it out in order to associate the written word with the French language. The effect of dialect writing for this text not only enables the reader to visualize the oral features of the Cajun dialect it also alienates the reader from the Cajun community through the complex way in which the oral language is written. Through representations of the Cajun dialect the reader is able to visualize how this dialect varies from standard French. This presentation of Cajun French in the written form that makes extensive use of phonetic spelling portrays an image of Cajun linguistic identity.

The written representation of the language also makes a political statement about the Cajun dialect. By abstaining from the exclusive use of standard French orthography it renders Cajun French as distinct. As cited earlier, Brown states that "[b]y choosing to express themselves in that code, local writers […] are making a social statement. […T]he orthography is itself a presentation of oneself, one's identity, a direct reflection of the culture" (84). The written form can be an expression of identity and through dialect writing certain features of the language depicted, the author can highlight certain features of the language, contributing to the classification of Cajun linguistic identity. The presence of oral features (phonetic) of the language, for example, demonstrates that the pronunciation of Cajun French is different than that of standard French. Even though the target audience is presumably fluent in standard French, they are still able to decode the Cajun dialect without actually having an extensive knowledge of

Cajun French. Exposure to a literary work that makes use of dialect writing enables the reader to realize that although standard French and Cajun French are mutually intelligible, they can also be thought of as distinct languages.

It is through dialect writing, the use of spelling modifications to standard French, and the choice to use exclusively standard French for certain characters that the conceptualization of Cajun linguistic and cultural identity is brought into relief. The link between Cajun French and Cajun identity is extensively debated and negotiated in "Mille misères". This play is about a rural Cajun family who struggles to survive both culturally and linguistically. It makes noteworthy distinctions in the presentation of language between the members of the family. A look at the written representation of the language used by the two brothers, Purphy (also known as Père), a rural resident who speaks Cajun French, and Avocat, who resides in the city and speaks standard French, displays the effective and strategic use of dialect writing:

> Père: Je peux pas faire comme toi. J'sus cadien jusque dans les tripes. J'ai bu l'eau bousillée de Bayou Tèche et je peux pas quitter mon pays pour viv' chez les étrangers. Je peux pas faire comme toi, arrêter d'êt'cadien.
>
> Avocat: Mais je ne peux pas arrêter d'être acadien non plus. Je suis né des mêmes parents que toi.
>
> Père: Ti comprends pas quoi c'est êt' cadien. On peut a'oir ein nom cadien sans êt' cadien. Et' cadien, c'est eine monyère de viv' et de jongler. (Marcantel 59)

In this excerpt the alternation between spelling in standard French for one brother, and the phonetic spelling of the Cajun dialect for the other provides further meaning and significance to

this interaction. It shows that although these two characters are brothers, and both ethnically Cajun, the language they use is quite different. In this dialogue, both characters use some of the same words but the variation in spelling of the same word adds more meaning to the text. The dialogue of Avocat follows the grammatical rules for standard French, for example, his use of negation – "je ne peux pas," – contrasts with Père who simply says "je peux pas." The use of apostrophes is also significant in this text, as it modifies the pronunciation of the word. It should be noted that Père's speech is written with frequent use of apostrophes to indicate a modification in pronunciation, for example, "êt'," whereas Avocat's speech completely abstains from the use of apostrophes, for example, "être." This use of dialect writing quite clearly marks the language of each character and complements the content of the passage in which the two brothers discuss what it means to be Cajun. In Père's conceptualization of what it means to be Cajun, it is evident that language is an important component of this "monyère de viv'." This is emphasized by the written representation of his language and how it contrasts with his brother's language. Avocat, on the other hand, has not only isolated himself from the Cajun rural lifestyle, but has also rejected the language, two essential parts of Cajun identity, according to Père. However, it should also be noted that in spite of this rejection of Cajun dialect, Avocat still considers himself Cajun, ethnically at least. This suggests that members of the same family and same community may understand Cajun identity differently. For one member, there is an emphasis on culture and language, whereas for the other, Cajun identity can be defined according to genealogy. It is through the strategic use of dialect writing that this distinction is amplified and enhanced in this dialogue.

This notion of varied conceptualizations of Cajun identity also is presented in the play “La douce réunion”. This theatrical piece contains direct quotations from “Mille misères”, but it

goes a step further in addressing language diversity within the family through a substantial presence of the English language. “Mille misères” reads as a call to action for the Cajun community to embrace their language and cultural identity, whereas “La douce réunion” presents the changes to the language and familial interactions over the generations as they struggle with language and identity loss. Unlike “Mille misères,” which burdens the youngest generation with the task of preserving Cajun language and culture, in “La douce réunion,” the grandmother, Douce, as well as her children and grandchildren, are all presented as responsible, in spite of the fact that the grandchildren may not speak Cajun French or even identify as Cajun.

By presenting the language of three generations, the play exhibits a tendency for younger generations to employ the English language. This is an accurate representation of reality, according to Brasseaux: "the various Francophone immigrant groups of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed the classical three-generational model of assimilation as set out by the United States Bureau of the Census" (31). The three-generational model of assimilation predicts that by the third generation, an immigrant group will be fully assimilated into the dominant culture. For the Cajun community, some factors of this rapid assimilation included compulsory education laws and social stigma (Brasseaux 75). The opportunities offered by absorption into the dominant American culture also had an effect. According to Brasseaux in his book *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*,

> [t]he mainstream offered promise of the good life, and those elements of their cultural baggage popularly associated with their heritage were denigrated as archaic, crude ('low class'), or absurd. The very term *Cajun*, for example, came, by the late 1950s, to be viewed as the supreme insult to persons of French descent in Acadiana. (77)

Although the term *Cajun* is no longer stigmatized, when analysing language use across generational lines, it is important to consider that the social status of the Cajun way of life and language was once marginalized. The term today however does not carry the same stigma. Nevertheless, through a juxtaposition of Cajun French with both English and standard French, the social status of the Cajun dialect is further challenged within "La douce réunion." When Douce, a native speaker of Cajun French, whose language is marked by the use of a non-standardized orthography, receives a letter from her grandson, who is taking French in school, there are obvious differences in the two languages and the Cajun dialect is presented as stigmatized, even by its native speakers.

Jolene: Passe-moi la lettre, Grandma. J'vas vous la lire.

Chère Grand-mère,

Je voudrais vous souhaiter mes meilleurs voeux à l'occasion de votre anniversaire. J'espère venir vous voir pendant les vacances de l'Action de Grâce pour pratiquer mon français. J'aime beaucoup le français.

Amitiés et à bientôt,

Marcus Daniels

Douce: Mais, chère, équand c'est il dit qu'il va venir nous 'oir?

Jolene: Pour *Thanksgiving*, Gram.

Douce: *Boy*, ça c'est un graçon qui connaît du bon français. (332)

In this letter, the reader notices that dialect writing is used to mark phonetic changes in the speech of the three characters. First, it should be noted that Jolene, the granddaughter of Douce, uses both French and English words, "Grandma" and "Thanksgiving." This is not surprising

since she would be part of the third generation, and would therefore have a knowledge of English, the language of the dominant culture. In her speech, the spelling of "Je vais" is modified by an apostrophe, "J'vas" to indicate a specific pronunciation of her French. The speech of Douce, on the other hand, also includes both markers of pronunciation – "'oir" instead of "voir" – as well as the Louisiana French specific term "équand."[5] The written representation of these two characters, when compared to the letter by Marcus, Douce's grandson, who learned standard French in school, portrays striking differences in the French language through the act of dialect writing. For example, the confusion evoked from this letter due to the word choice used for Thanksgiving, shows that although these three characters all speak French, there are indeed dialectal differences, such as the presence of English words. "[L]'action de Grâce" (Broussard 332) written in standard French is misunderstood because Douce, a native speaker of Cajun French, does not recognize this word, she knows it as Thanksgiving. Additionally, the statement "*Boy*, ça c'est un garçon qui connaît du bon français" (Broussard 332) overtly states the stigmatized social status of Cajun dialect as well as the preferred status of standard French even among Cajun speakers. This is further enhanced through the changes in spelling present in the text. The reader sees that there are non-standard spellings present in Cajun French and when presented along with a letter written completely in standard French, s/he is better able to visualize the differences in the two languages courtesy of the strategic use of dialect writing. It is also fair to say that the message that some varieties of French are better than others would not have been as powerful if the author had abstained from making modifications to the spelling of words to mark the Cajun dialect. By visually presenting the phonological differences in the two variants the impact is intensified.

It is evident that employing a non-standardized phonetic orthography adds supplementary value to the above-mentioned plays. The use of dialect writing is strategic since it contributes to

[5] "when" (Valdman, Rottet, et al. 503).

the visual classification of Cajun French, insisting on difference and that it is a distinct form of language. It also emphasizes the need to both legitimize and preserve this distinct dialect since it contributes to Cajun linguistic identity. These plays also draw attention to the social (stigmatized) status of Cajun French even among those who speak it. The portrayals of the political desires for the classification and comprehension of the distinctness of Cajun French are enhanced by the written representation of the dialect. However, as mentioned earlier, the modification of spelling to represent phonological features of a language is not the only tactic used to highlight a dialect in the written form. The morphological transformations in Cajun French may have resulted from phonological processes, but some have developed grammatical significance for the Cajun dialect. The recurring presence of morphological changes, such as the use of avoir instead of être in the passé composé, contribute to what Waggoner calls "un mouvement vers la régularization" (10) and demonstrate that Cajun French has its own grammatical system.

The presence of a 'subconscious' grammatical system distinguishes the plays and the act of writing Cajun, as representative of a language independent of standard French in spite of their similarities. The distance between these two languages is further broadened through the presence of Cajun specific terms that appear in both the individual plays and across the anthology. In the wake of the literary renaissance and the movement towards regularization, a team of scholars collaborated to publish *The Dictionary of Louisiana French* (Valdman, Rottet, et al. 2010). In the dictionary, they note specific terms used by French speaking communities in Louisiana. As it is the dictionary of “Louisiana French” it also suggests some unity among Louisiana dialects, as suggested by Dajko, “given that many dialects bore similarities to each other, it is very difficult today to attribute features of a modern Louisiana Regional French to any one source” (286-7). In

spite of this, she also writes “Louisiana French is highly variable” (Dajko 279). This is observed by the variation in written representations of the French speakers in the anthology. Nevertheless, this linguistic work legitimizes the dialects of French spoken in Louisiana, as it recognizes the variations in spelling as grammatically correct through their presence in a reference text. It also distances dialects of French spoken in Louisiana, including the Cajun dialect, from standard French by establishing an independence from the governed rules of standard French. Although Cajun French can be differentiated from standard French by the numerous alterations in its linguistic features, it can never be entirely detached from standard French nor should it. The relationship between these two languages is too substantial to completely dissolve. Dialect writing allows authors to portray the features of the Cajun dialect that help to construct an image of the Cajun dialect and Cajun linguistic identity through a visual representation of its unique features.

These changes in the written form of Cajun French, phonological or morphological, are all significant, especially within the context of dialect writing and the written regularization of Cajun French. They enable the language used to be representative of the Cajun dialect, without the use of a phonetic orthography. Such changes include the presence of the suffixes "nous/vous/eux" followed by "autres." This feature of Cajun French is present in every play in the anthology, even those that do not make use of a phonetic orthography. This suggests that they have an almost fixed meaning for the Cajun dialect, that is not necessarily present in standard French. The presence of Cajun vocabulary words like "cadien," arguably exist as a result of a phonological process (Brown 70). These words have since become fixed in the Cajun language and explain why they have been used even in plays that are written in standard French. Additionally, the presence of Cajun specific words such as "éyoù"and "asoir" serve to identify

the text as Cajun in spite of it being written in standard French.[6] These are only a few examples of changes in the written word that appear frequently within this anthology that are not phonetic representations of the language. In spite of the fact that these changes may not be phonological they too can be understood as a means of legitimizing the language. It can show that the language does in fact have grammatical rules that are somewhat regularized and that Cajun French is not all that different from the non-stigmatized standard French, with the exception of a few lexical terms and morphological processes.

Finally, with respect to the use of phonetic spellings as well as Cajun specific terms in dialect writing, one set of variants of the same word merits particular attention. There are several variants for the word "Cajun" present in the theatrical plays in this anthology; *cadien*, *'cadien*, *acadien*, *cadjin* and finally *cajun*. In some cases, the same variant is used, but depending on the context it carries a different meaning, as I will explain below. The change in meaning may be present as a result of dialect writing and notably the use of a phonetic orthography. Where a standardized orthography is used, the meaning of the variant in that context can be perceived differently. It is through the strategic use of dialect writing that the semantics of these terms are understood differently based on the way Cajun is written in the theatrical piece. Consequently, before examining the use of these variants, it is helpful to define them.

The difference between the terms *Acadien*, *Cadien*, and *Cajun* has certainly evoked scholarly interest. Brown that *Cadien* ('Cadien) is a decomposition of the word *Acadien*, resulting from a phonological process, to describe the group of French speaking people who were forced out of Acadia during the *Grand Dérangement* (Brown 70). The change in the community's identification, from Acadian to Cajun, has widely been associated with a change in pronunciation, as Brasseaux suggests, the term 'Cajuns' is "an Anglo corruption of the term

[6] "where" (Valdman, Rottet, et al. 52) and "tonight" or "this evening" (Valdman, Rottet, et al. 585).

Acadians" (emphasis in original, 72). In spite of the etymology and relationship between these terms, some scholars insist that once in Louisiana, the Acadian descendants morphed into a new identity. For example, Dajko suggests in her article "Sociolinguistics of Ethnicity in Francophone Louisiana," that "the high rate of intermarriage, which produced a strong pressure to assimilate, resulted in a new hybrid culture" (285), which is likely a result of the Cajuns establishment in a new environment. Likewise, Maurice Basque in "Acadiens, Cadiens et Cajuns: identités communes ou distinctes?" suggests that the three groups not only vary in classification by geographical location but also by the language spoken. It would appear that although Cajun cultural and linguistic identities may be rooted in an Acadian heritage, the present day language is the result of "a process of cultural and ethnic mixing" (Klingler 94). Through this ethnic mixing the linguistic distinctions between the various immigrant and language groups (French, English, Spanish, etc.) have become unclear. This has resulted in scholars such as Klingler in his article "How Much Acadian is There in Cajun?" proposing that "today it is possible to speak of a single generalized variety of Louisiana French [...] that shows a certain amount of regional variation" (98). Klingler, like Dajko (2012) and Basque (2009), suggests that this ambiguity in Cajun identity – linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or otherwise – is further complicated by the "appealing convenience and simplicity of a unitary explanation of the origin of the Cajuns, reinforced by the obvious lexical relationship of *Cajun* to *Acadian*" (102).

This emphasis and preference for the Acadian-Cajun association is visible in CODOFIL's selection of an "official term" for this group of people. When CODOFIL was tasked with deciding on the spelling for "the name of its own people," (Brown 94) they would eventually narrow down the choices to *Cadien* or *Cadjin* (Brown 94). Whereas "[s]ome chose *Cadien* because of the historical etymology; [and] others wanted *Cadjin* because it is uniquely Louisiana

French and established a clear, separate identity" (Brown 94) it is clear that whereas some members of the community wanted to keep the association with an Acadian ancestry and others did not. CODOFIL would finally choose the variant *Cadien* though they also accepted the variant *Cadjin* (Brown 95).

In the discussion on the meaning of the terms, *cadien*, *cadjin*, *acadien*, and *cajun*, their respective use in literary works becomes an interesting topic of investigation. The use of other variants of the term *cadien* in the anthology must be considered since *cadien* has been made the official term. The choice of *cadien* as an official term conditions Cajun identity and establishes a relationship to Acadian ancestry. Where variants of this form exist, their use within the anthology is meaningful because the written form deviates from the standard term. In the context of dialect writing and the medium of theatrical plays, the presence of variants of the same lexical term suggest that the meanings associated with them are subject to a more sophisticated interpretation. The analysis of the use of these terms is also particularly complicated as the terms may portray an overlap in phonological and morphological changes.

The table below shows the distribution of the variants as presented in this anthology.

Table 1.1: Variations of the Term "Cadien"
√ indicates use of the word by a character (to be presented orally).
X indicates use of the word either in stage directions or descriptions of characters (not to be presented orally).

	Cadien/ 'cadien	Acadian/ acadien	Cadjin	Cajun
"Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi"	-	**X**	-	-
"Martin Weber, constable"	-	-	-	-
"Mille misères : Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane"	√	√	√	-
"Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?"	-	-	√	-
"La table des veuves"	√	-	-	-
"La fête à Clomaire"	**X**	-	-	-
"Le charivari"	**X** √	-	-	-
"Grosbecs"	**X**	-	-	-
"Martin Wèbre et les Marais	-	-	-	-

Bouleurs”				
“Les Attakapas”	**X** √	-	-	-
“La dernière quilte”	√	√	-	-
“Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc”	√	-	-	√
“La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne”	**X** √	√	-	-

This table shows that there appears to be a preference for the term *cadien* throughout the plays, but this spelling variation is perhaps influenced by CODOFIL's establishment of *cadien* as the official name for this community. The term *cadjin*, the other variant accepted by CODOFIL, is only used in the plays “Mille misères” and “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?”, which are both written phonetically. The use of *cadien* in plays that are not written with an extensive use of phonetic spelling may be explained through the use of a standardized orthography and as a result the standardized term.

It is essential to note that although “Cadjin” appears in both “Mille misères” and “Hallo, cher, Grand’M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?,” these two plays are both phonetically written and the term appears exclusively in the dialogue of characters of the older generation. The fact that this variation is present in these two phonetically written plays may show that the different generations conceptualize Cajun differently. In “Mille misères,” the variant *cadjin* is used in the last sentence of a monologue by the character Grand-Père. This suggests that the use of this variant can also be associated with a desire to conceptualize Cajun as an identity separate from, yet, affiliated with Acadian origins. Although Grand-Père does not use the term “Cadjin” in this excerpt (he uses it later, see below), in this monologue he tells the story of the *écrevisse* (crawfish) and how it is the symbol of the Cajuns while also representing the transformation in identity from Acadian to Cajun:

> Et quand les Cadiens ont quitté l'Acadie, les homards s'ennuyont assez qu'y z'ont commencé à suivre leurs amis jusqu'icitte. Mais y z'ont dû nager pour v'nir, ein voyage de plus que deux mille milles. A cause de ça le voyage était plus dur pour eusse que pour les Cadiens. Equand-ce qu'y z'ont arrivés icitte y z'aviont rap'tissé assez qu'y z'étiont des écrevisses. (Marcantel 53)

This transformation of *homard* (lobster) to *écrevisse* to portray the change from Acadian to Cajun is reflected in the spelling of *cadien*. In this monologue, Grand-Père starts the story by saying "Y disont que les aut'fois dans l'Acadie, les *Cadiens* pêchiont des homards pour manger et faire leur vie" (my emphasis, Marcantel 52). Here, the spelling of the word *cadien* is linked to l'Acadie since Grand-Père is in fact telling the story of the *Grand Dérangement* and how Acadians moved from *Acadie* to *Nouvelle-Acadie*. It is peculiar that the written portrayal of his pronunciation of *cadien* to refers to *acadien* at the beginning of the story and seems to reflect the phonological change in this term proposed by Brasseaux (2005) and Brown (1993). Near the end of his story, he says instead "Les *Cadjins* et les écrevisses sont pas capons!" (my emphasis, Marcantel 53). His use of the term *Cadjin* alongside *écrevisse* reaffirms this transformation and also suggests that although there is a link with *Acadie*, for Grand-Père the Cajuns of Louisiana do have a unique and separate identity. The fact that this variant of the term is used exclusively by the older generation – grandparents in both plays – could suggest that the older generation classifies Cajun identity differently than other generations.

These character and generational differences are further elaborated when looking at the use of the term *Acadien.* In “Mille misères,” the use of this variant can represent the stigmatized value of Cajun French. Since the term Cajun resulted from a phonological process, the choice to

use "Acadian" when actually referring to "Cajun" can be understood as a phonetic over-correction. This is observed by returning to the dialogue between the two brothers, Père and Avocat, whose language is represented differently despite the fact that they are brothers and share a common Cajun ancestry and cultural heritage:

> Père: Je peux pas faire comme toi. J'sus cadien jusque dans les tripes. J'ai bu l'eau bousillée de Bayou Tèche et je peux pas quitter mon pays pour viv' chez les étrangers. Je peux pas faire comme toi, arrêter d'êt'cadien.
>
> Avocat: Mais je ne peux pas arrêter d'être acadien non plus. Je suis né des mêmes parents que toi.
>
> Père: Ti comprends pas quoi c'est êt' cadien. On peut a'oir ein nom cadien sans êt' cadien. Et' cadien, c'est eine monyère de viv' et de jongler. (Marcantel 59)

In this exchange, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, the two brothers conceptualize Cajun identity quite differently. Père believes that Avocat has rejected his Cajun identity and this is visually reflected in the striking differences in their language. Avocat, conceptualizes Cajun identity ethnically and states "je ne peux pas arêter d'être acadien non plus" (Waggoner 59). This exchange is valuable on many levels, especially here for its use of *acadien* and *cadien*. In the context of Avocat's language use – that is standard French – he is so absorbed by his desire to speak *good* French that the change in his pronunciation results in a semantic change and has a dual meaning. Since the transformation of the term Acadien-Cadien is associated with a phonological process, it is not surprising that through the use of dialect writing and a phonetic spelling, Avocat would revert to the standard French pronunciation. The use of the term *acadien*

is also significant because, as he says in the text, he cannot stop being "acadien," he is after all ethnically Acadian. He can however, stop being *cadien* as his brother Père proposes. The term *cadien* has been labelled as distinct from *acadien* as such the use of each term demonstrates that Cajun identity can be understood differently, even by members of the same generation.

Acadien may also be used to distinguish between the populations of Acadian descendants living in the United States. The use of *acadien* in “La dernière quilte” is unique and makes reference to the Acadian descendants who settled in Texas. Frank, the fiancé of Belle, who is Cajun, is frequently labelled as an American by the Cajun characters in the play, Claude one of her neighbours says: "Frank est un Américain" (Broussard, Toups and LeBlanc 244). However, although Frank is labelled as American, he also speaks French and later reveals that he is part of the Acadians living in Texas, "[m]oi, je fais partie des Acadiens du Texas" (Broussard, Toups, and LeBlanc 277). The use of the term *Acadien* instead of *Cadien* along with the fact that Frank has been labelled as an American suggests that the term *cadien* is reserved for the identification of Acadian descendants in Louisiana. This further emphasizes the Cajun community’s unique identity, as Cajun characters in the play refer to themselves as *Cadien*. Conversely, the use of *acadien* in “La douce réunion” is used to clarify the term *cadien*, as employed in a direct quotation from “Mille misères” “tout le monde est cadien, acadien” (Broussard 339). The term *acadien* suggests here that the Cajun people, although distinct, do have a relationship to Acadians. Finally, the use of the term *Cajun* in “Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis” is employed only when the language of discourse changes from French to English. This demonstrates through the authors’ word choice that *Cajun* is the term used when the discourse is in English, whereas *Cadien* is used for discourse in French. When examined through the use of

dialect writing, the supplementary meaning behind these words and spelling choices becomes clearer.

In conclusion, this chapter establishes that the plays in *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien* differentiate identity through the juxtaposition of standard French and Cajun French. This has been accomplished by drawing attention to some of the tactics used by writers to render Cajun linguistic identity readable through dialect writing. It demonstrates how different choices in orthography, phonological or morphological, have been used strategically by the authors to portray Cajun identity. Likewise, through an explanation of the terms *Cadien*, *Acadien*, *Cadjin*, and *Cajun*, it shows that differences in spelling can signify a morphological change or a phonological change. I also argue that by analysing these changes, the meaning of the same word when spelt differently becomes both ambiguous and multifold. The conceptualization of Cajun identity is also presented as varying from character to character based on the written representation of their speech. Finally, it is through this observation that in spite of the various spelling modifications made throughout the plays, the texts in this anthology still succeed in establishing uniquely Cajun written form.

Chapter 2

Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes:

Representing Cajun Identity in *Une fantaisie collective*

This chapter examines how Cajun identity is both represented and negotiated in *Une fantaisie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien.* This is achieved through comparing and contrasting the descriptions of the Cajun characters in this anthology. I argue that the portrayal of Cajun identity is not only reinforced through repetitive descriptions, but that it is also challenged through character interactions in the plays. Although the contents of this collection of works ranges widely, and includes plays that depict everyday life, historical fiction, comedy, drama, and even an adaptation of a folktale, theatrical pieces in this anthology embody a uniquely Cajun collection of works. These plays demonstrate, through their portrayals of Cajun culture, conflicts in conceptualizing Cajun identity. In this chapter I analyze character dialogue to show that the conceptualization of Cajun identity is challenged in the plays. This negotiation of Cajun identity is explored by examining interactions between different generations in the anthology. The following pages are devoted to identifying components of Cajun identity, such as language, cultural practices, ethnicity, religious practices, and place of residence, as presented in the text. Once identified as stereotypical, these components are broken down according to dialogue and discussions between characters in the anthology.

In their 2001 article "Ethnic self-identification and symbolic stereotyping: the portrayal of Louisiana Cajuns," Jacques M. Henry and Carl L. Bankston III analyzed depictions of Cajuns in multiple media (textual, visual, etc.). They examined how both insiders and outsiders of the Cajun community portrayed Cajuns. Through this investigation they discovered a link between a

shift in the representation of Cajuns, the "three periods meaningful to the Acadian presence in Louisiana [... and] the historical development of Cajun ethnicity" (Henry & Bankston 1026). The table below displays the portrayals of Cajuns associated with the respective time period, as per Henry and Bankston's study.

Table 2.1: Stereotypical Portrayals of Cajuns

Period	Representation of Cajun
1. "from the arrival of exiles to the emergence of Cajuns as a discrete group" (1026).	"[...] small farmers raising crops and animals for subsistence supplemented with hunting and fishing bounties, poverty, a French Acadian origin, competent but not overzealous workers, enjoying life and good Christians. This yields the ideal typical portrait of Acadians as Catholic, poor but happy farmers of Canadian origin [...] " (1028).
2. "negative ascription of Cajun ethnicity (1860s to 1960s)" (1026).	"The depiction of Cajuns in the second period, from 1880 to 1960, is more complex and complete and this period can be seen as the formative time of the Cajun stereotype. [...] Although language appears in most accounts with reference to the limited abilities of Cajuns to speak either French or English, occupations, activities and personal traits gather the greatest number of references. Acadian origin, relative poverty and a slow propensity to change also emerge as dominant traits" (1028). "The data yield an ideal typical image of Cajuns as adept agriculturalists of Acadian ancestry, Catholic, speaking a French dialect, living in relative yet poor simplicity enlightened by festive occasions, and slowly adapting to the changing world around them" (1030).
3. "ethnic resurgence (from the late 1960s on)" (1026).	"The portrayal of modern Cajuns is dominated by references to activities, occupation, language, environment and origin" (1030). "Many authors [...] note the evolution from marginal rural settlers to well-integrated productive members of a modern society" (1030). "Linguistic abilities are almost invariably mentioned [...] as peculiar in English and disappearing in French. Finally, references to Acadian origin, environment fitness and likable personal traits round up a portrayal of contemporary Cajuns as residents of Southwest Louisiana of Acadian descent, busy at many occupations and proudly celebrating a threatened heritage and a simple rural way of life" (1032).

Since Henry and Bankston have already proposed and established a stereotypical image of Cajuns, my analysis examines whether this stereotypical image is consistent with the portrayals of Cajuns and Cajun identity in *Une fantaisie collective*. For this analysis, I compare and contrast the association between language, culture, ethnicity, religion, residence, occupation, and Cajun identity as presented in the anthology.

As observed in the above-mentioned study, language is a key component of the stereotypical image of Cajun. Perhaps not surprisingly then, language is used in the anthology as a classifier of Cajun identity. As I have already shown in Chapter 1, the representation of the written word highlights features of the Cajun dialect, signifying whether a character is Cajun or not. This is a significant point of observation since not all of the plays explicitly identify their characters as Cajun, rather this conclusion can be made through an investigation of the written representation of their language. In written representations of the language where the author has not made changes in the spelling to emphasize phonetic features of the dialect, the presence of Cajun-specific words and proverbs help the reader to recognize the characters' identities as Cajun. For example, phrases "fils de poteau," a variation of the phrase "fils de putain" (Valdman and Rottet 285-6) or "laisser les bons temps rouler," a Cajun proverb (Valdman and Rottet 563), are present in several of the plays in the anthology.[7] The frequency of these two phrases both in the anthology and across the theatrical pieces establishes a relationship between language (Cajun dialect) and Cajun identity. In the anthology, the presence of Cajun proverbs or Cajun-specific terms enables the play "Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi" to be classified as Cajun. This play is an adaptation of a folktale, that is "enraciné solidement dans la culture francophone de Louisiane, avait subi une 'louisianification:' c'est-à-dire une adaptation d'éléments européens à la culture

[7] See Appendix 1
[8] "La dernière quilte," "Mille misères," "Grosbes," "Martin Wèbre et les Marais Bouleurs," and "Messieurs, Mesdames et Mes Chers Amis" are all labelled as being written "en français 'cadien."

francophone louisianaise" (Waggoner 2). The process of 'louisianification' allows the reader to identify the speakers as Cajun through their language use. This can be seen in the following citation, in which Jean L'Ours, the main character of the play describes his life and lifestyle as an adventurer by making reference to "[...] toute la bière, tous les amis, tous les bons temps que j'ai laissé rouler" (Waggoner 13). The first part of this citation, "toute la bière," fits the stereotypical image of Cajuns as drinkers, as suggested by Henry and Bankston in their 2001 study on the portrayal of Cajuns in various domains: "Cajuns' propensity for eating, dancing, drinking, playing music, and gambling is ubiquitously noted and constitutes the bulk of non-occupational activities recorded" (1031). The second part, "tous les bons temps que j'ai laissé rouler" reinforces that the character is Cajun because he is saying a Cajun proverb. Since the play does not overtly state or express that the characters are Cajun, the presence of Cajun stereotypes enable the reader to associate the theatrical piece with the Cajun community and to identify the characters as Cajun.

The stereotype of Cajuns as speakers of Cajun French is also portrayed in the play "Les Attakapas," by James E. Fontenot. Unlike other plays in the anthology, this play is written "en français" as opposed to "en français 'cadien."[8] Although, the ethnicities of some characters are presented in the character descriptions:

> PERSONNAGES
>
> Cama, Négresse affranchie, prêtresse de vaudou
>
> Jo Jo, Homme noir, esclave
>
> Emira Desjaques, Femme d'Henri Desjacques
>
> Henri Desjacques, commerçant de nationalité française

[8] "La dernière quilte," "Mille misères," "Grosbes," "Martin Wèbre et les Marais Bouleurs," and "Messieurs, Mesdames et Mes Chers Amis" are all labelled as being written "en français 'cadien."

Magdaleine Trahan, une Cadienne

Octavie Leblanc, une Cadienne

Lucy Broussard, Jeune fille des Desjacques

Tom Fuller, Soldat de l'armée américaine, un nordiste

[...]. (Fontenot 193)

It should be noted that Lucy, one of the main characters in this play, is not labelled as *Cadienne* in the character descriptions. Instead, she is identified as Cajun (*Cadienne*) through the written representation of her language.[9] The presence of Cajun linguistic features enables Lucy to be classified as Cajun and not Creole or French (from France). This is further solidified in the dialogue between Henri and his wife Emira, who both came to Louisiana from France:

Henri: Lucy est une fille intelligente, elle parle le français et l'anglais, et elle est indispensable à mon commerce.

Emira: Tu appelles ça du français! C'est une espèce de patois, de jargon sans allure qui n'est pas facile à comprendre. [...]

Henri: [...] Son français est vieux, mais il est impeccable. Tu te rends compte que ces Acadiens sont arrivés au nouveau monde il y a plus de deux siècles, dispersés dans les marais d'Acadie et la Louisiane sans grands contacts avec la France. (Fontenot 198)

In this excerpt, Henri and Emira discuss Lucy's language. Henri states that she speaks both French and English and Emira discredits Lucy's French as a dialect. Henri then argues that Lucy's French is indeed French, old Acadian (Cajun) French. This exchange confirms that Lucy

[9] Please refer to Chapter 1 for a more detailed analysis of her language use in comparison with the language used by other characters in the play.

speaks a dialect of French, Cajun French, and as such she can be understood as a stereotypical Cajun. It also presents two contrasting perspectives on the value of the Cajun dialect. Given the period in which this play takes place, 1863 (Fontenot 193), Lucy fits the stereotypical image proposed by Henry and Bankston for the second period of Cajun ethnicity. She speaks both English and French, and her language is stigmatized, at least according to Emira who calls it "une espèce de patois, de jargon, sans allure" (Fontenot 198). Language use however, is not the only stereotype employed in the portrayal of Cajuns in this anthology.

Lucy also fits the stereotype of Cajuns as rural/farmers. In one scene, Lucy tells Cama, who also works for Henri Desjacques, that it is difficult to engage in conversation with Marie-Louise, the daughter of Henri and Emira. She states: "[c]'est vraiment dûr de parler avec elle. A s'intéresse pas à la recolte, ni aux animaux" (Fontenot 202). This citation depicts Lucy as rural since she is able to talk about crops, harvesting, or animals, subjects that are apparently not interesting to the more worldly Marie-Louise. Lucy and Marie-Louise are further contrasted in the following excerpt: "[a]lle a jusqu'à zire de venir ramasser les oeufs avec moi. A se cache les yeux quand je tords le cou d'une poule grasse" (Fontenot 202). In telling Cama that Marie-Louise covered her eyes, Lucy seems to be suggesting that Marie-Louise's reaction was odd. This interaction further differentiates the two and portrays Lucy as rural, since she is comfortable with the labour of the farmyard and accustomed to taking a hands-on approach to procuring her food.

The stereotype of Cajuns as rural is not limited to the representation of Lucy in “Les Attakapas.” Throughout the majority of the plays, Cajuns are not only portrayed as residents of Louisiana, but more specifically of rural Louisiana. This is exhibited through the identification of the setting and location in which the plays take place. Out of the thirteen plays in this anthology,

ten overtly state that the scenarios take place somewhere in Louisiana.[10] Several of the characters in this anthology are explicitly identified as rural and are presented as either working with the land, animals, or hunting. In the play "Martin Weber, constable," for example, this stereotype is supported through the setting (Ossun, Louisiana) and the portrayal of the characters' economic status as farmers. This can be seen in casual conversations between characters:

> Arnest: Oh, mieux que ça, ça serait des bêtises. J'ai eu une terrible bonne récolte de maïs cette année. Je suis paré pour l'hiver.
>
> Arcade: Moi aussite je suis paré pour l'hiver. Tout mon foin est rentré. Et comment le coton a été cette année, Ambroise?
>
> Ambroise: Oh j'ai eu beaucoup une bonne récolte de coton [...]. (Waggoner 29)

In this dialogue, Arnest, Ambroise, and Arcade, the son of Martin Weber, discuss their harvests. Through their conversation, their depiction as the stereotypical rural Cajun farmer is reinforced. Each of these characters is a farmer, harvesting a different crop: corn, wheat, and cotton. Rurality is, then, represented through the setting of the plays as well as the characters, a portrayal that, as I will show, is quite common in the anthology.

As in "Martin Weber, constable," the play "Le charivari" also depicts the main character, Clomaire Trahan, as a stereotypical Cajun. In the character descriptions he is labelled as follows "Clomaire Trahan, un Cadien" (Trotter and Broussard 111). His identification as Cajun is further enforced through the narrator's description of Clomaire, in which he is further characterized according to the Cajun stereotype:

> Narrateur: Bonjour. J'aimerais vous présenter deux de mes vieux amis. Ça icitte, c'est Clomaire Trahan. C'est un habitant cadien qui

[10] See Appendix 2

> a tout le temps resté à la campagne jusqu'à qu'il y a à peu près cinq ans, quand il pouvait pus réussir à faire récolte. Ça fait il a été travailler *off-shore*[...]. (Trotter and Broussard 111)

In this passage, the narrator establishes a link between Cajun, rural, and farmer in his/her description of Clomaire. S/he states that Clomaire is a Cajun who lived in the country until he could no longer make a living farming. This portrayal of Cajuns persists throughout the anthology and helps to reinforce the stereotype of Cajun as rural. Depictions of characters as farmers appear in “Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi,” “Martin Weber, constable,” “Le charivari,” “Grosbecs,” “Martin Weber et les Marais Bouleurs,” “Les Attakapas,” “La dernière quilte,” and “La douce réunion.”

Along with the rural stereotype, this passage also alludes to the labelling of Cajuns as poor. This is overtly presented in “Martin Weber, constable.” In this play, one of the main characters, Jean, is presented with the ransom amount that he must pay if he wishes to see his kidnapped wife-to-be. He is disappointed, stating that it is only Americans who have that kind of money: "Eyoù tu crois que je vas trouver de l'argent comme ça? Ça pousse pas sur des arbres. Il y a juste les Américains qui ont de l'argent comme ça" (Waggoner 37). Nevertheless, for the case of Clomaire, since the narrator tells that he harvested crops until he could no longer make a living doing it, he is depicted as being forced to change occupations.

This transition from a rural vocation to other employment opportunities resonates with Henry and Bankson's depiction of Cajuns in the second period where they are presented as "slowly adapting to the changing world around them" (1030). Other plays also demonstrate the relationship between Cajun identity and rural residences. “Mille misères, Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane,” for example, depicts the lives of a rural family living in Bayou St. Pierre,

who are no longer able to hunt *crocodile.*[11] According to the father of the family, Père, the American government "nous empêcher de gogner eine vie honnête en Louisiane" (Marcantel 43). In his highly phonetic French, Père blames the Americans and the government for preventing them from making a living and goes on to tell his son, Garçon: "[t]oute cette histoire de cocodris est arien d'aut' qu'ein complot pour nous faire déménager à la ville. Y savont qu'eine fois à la ville, le Cadien perd tout son héritage. C'est ça y voulont" (Marcantel 45). This excerpt shows that Père associates the transition from rural to urban with a loss of Cajun heritage and Cajun identity. The relationship between identification as Cajun through residence is reinforced since Père proposes that the move from rural to urban is a form of assimilation. He perceives it as a breakdown or loss of Cajun identity. Without rural residence and lifestyle, he feels that Cajun identity is lost. This reflects the Cajun as rural stereotype and the portrayal of Cajuns as adapting to "the changing world around them" (Henry and Bankston 1030).

Consequently, as presented in “Mille misères,” the representations of the rural/urban dichotomy in this anthology also appear to be linked to the transformation from Cajun to American. Cajun identity is not only classified through rural residence but also the change from rural to urban portrays a shift from Cajun to American. Several of the plays in this anthology suggest that you cannot be both Cajun and American; you are either one or the other. For example, in “La table des veuves,” one character, Phémie tells a story about some of her American neighbours who were inebriated.

> [Phémie: ...] Ils sont saloûes les deux. John a rentré, Evelyne a pris le rouleau, elle se l'a pété sur dessus la tête: *chop!* jusqu'à il saignait, au bout de son nez. Il a fallu que ça l'amène à l'hôpital en ville. Y avait pas de sang du tout icitte. Tu connais, les

[11] In Louisiana French *crocodile* refers to alligators (Valdman, Rottet, et al. 140-141).

> Cadiens et les Américains ça prend pas la même qualité de sang. C'est pour ça qu'ils l'ont amené en ville. (Waggoner 81)

She reports that when one of the husbands returned home to his wife, she injured him and as a result he needed to go to the hospital. In this passage the Cajun-rural and American-urban dichotomy is reinforced when Phémie ends her story by saying that the American neighbour was taken to the city. This emphasizes the relationship between American and urban. The fact that Phémie says, "[y] avait pas de sang du tout icitte. Tu connais, les Cadiens et les Américains ça prend pas la même qualité de sang" (Waggoner 81) also strengthens the differences between Cajuns and Americans. She points out an essential and biological difference in stating that their blood is different. This citation has multiple meanings. It can be understood as a sarcastic utterance, making reference to the idea that Americans are superior to Cajuns since they go to their own hospital in the city. On the other hand, through the reinforcement of the Cajun/rural and American/Urban dichotomies, this passage also suggests that Cajuns are marginalized. As such, this excerpt supports the portrayal of Cajuns as rural and brings awareness to just how different Phémie perceives Cajuns and Americans to be.

The stereotypical image of Cajuns in this anthology, then, presents Cajuns and Cajun identity independently of Americans. This may be to highlight the unique features of the Cajun community, such as language, cultural practices, and way of life, but there is a definite distinction between American and Cajun identities. In “Les Attakapas,” for example, Henri debriefs his wife, Emira, who recently immigrated to Louisiana, about how to address the different French-speaking populations with whom they interact. He states: "Il ne faut jamais que tu les appelles des Américains! C'est une grande insulte que de les traiter d'Américains! Il faut toujours que tu les appelles Cadiens, Français, ou Créoles. Sinon tu risques de les offenser"

(Fontenot 196). By informing his wife that it is a *grande insulte* to call Cajuns, Creoles, or French people American, he differentiates the residents of Louisiana. This establishes Cajuns, Creoles, French, and Americans as independent of one another. However, this also establishes a unity between Cajuns, Creoles, and French, because they are all not American.

The classification of Cajuns and Americans as separate and unique groups in this anthology is not limited to a differentiation between urban/rural. Identification as strictly Cajun or American is so prevalent that even characters that exhibit some features of the Cajun stereotype are still considered as American in spite of their residence, language, or occupation. In "La dernière quilte," a play about an engagement between a Cajun woman and a French-speaking American, ethnic distinctions are reinforced. It suggests that Cajun identity is more than just the language, way of life, and rural residence; it is also linked to ethnicity:

> Otis: Il paraît à moi que Frank, il est comme nous autres. Il travaille dur dans le clos. C'est le meilleur chasseur dans les alentours d'ici. Et il connaît s'amuser au bal aussi, comme tous les bons Catholiques. Moi je trouve qu'il est proche Cadien. [...]
>
> Claude: Vous autres peut dire ça vous autres veut. Ce Frank Hoffpauir, il est pas un de nous autres. Nos habitudes et nos manières de vivre vont pas changer. Frank est un Américain, et ça va juste faire du tracas dans le ménage, ça. (Broussard, Toups and LeBlanc 244)

In this passage, Otis, the cousin of Belle (a Cajun) who is to marry Frank (an American) suggests that because Frank fits some characteristics of the stereotypical image of Cajuns and by extension Cajun identity, that is, he works hard in the fields and hunts, he is *proche Cadien*.

However, even though he may be *proche Cadien*, Claude, a Cajun neighbour points out that Frank lacks ethnic identification as Cajun, suggesting that Cajun identity is inclusive of ethnicity, language, vocation, and culture. Through the differentiation of Cajun and American identities along the lines of ethnicity, Claude also addresses the fear of Americanization. He states "[n]os habitudes et nos manières de vivre vont pas changer. Frank est un Américain, et ça va juste faire du tracas [...]" (Broussard, Toups, and LeBlance 244). Otis and Claude present two different, and contrasting perspectives on Belle and Frank's engagement. Otis accepts Frank into the Cajun community because he is *proche Cadien.* Claude, on the other hand, rejects Frank because he is an American, and he fears that their marriage will result in a loss of the Cajun way of life and Cajun identity.

The effects of Americanization on Cajun identity are likewise presented in this anthology through Cajun characters' relationships with religion and the Church. The stereotypical image of Cajuns as Catholic presented by Henry and Bankston persists in the anthology. Many plays make reference to Cajuns and Christianity or religious practices.[12] This relationship is solidified by the use of the phrase "Bon Dieu/Bon Djeu," which appears frequently in the anthology.[13] The use of "Bon Dieu" across this anthology establishes a connection between the stereotypical Cajun identity and Christianity (specifically Catholicism), even though not all Cajuns are necessarily presented as practicing Christians. Even when the phrase is used in a blasphemous manner, the fact that it appears so much across the anthology's variously authored plays marks it as a common phrase in Cajun French.

In "Mille misères: Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane," for example, the relationship between religion and Cajun identity is qualified by the effects of Americanization. In

[12] See Appendix 3
[13] See Appendix 3

an interaction between Mère and Père in “Mille misères,” Mère argues with Père, who refuses to go to mass as the sermon is no longer in Cajun (a result of the English language laws).

> Père: C'est pas mon qu'a abandonné l'église. C'est tout le contraire. L'église catholique m'abandonné, mon et tous les aut' Cadiens ya bien longtemps. Y se foutont de nous-aut' tout net. Les Cadiens sont proche tout catholiques [...] Je me rappelle quand la messe était en latin mais le prone était en français. Au moins je comprenais le prône. Mais asteur que la messe est en amaricain, je comprends pus arien. [...]
>
> Mère: Ç'a pas d'importance que la messe soit en amaricain. C'est toujours la messe pareille. C'est toujours la parole du Bon Djeu. [...]
>
> Père: Ecoute, fomme. J'ai toujours respecté les temps solonnels. Je vas aux baptêmes et aux enterrements de la parenté. Mes ces rites me causent eine angoisse effroyab'e. [...] L'église veut pus de nous-aut'. (Marcantel 50-51)

In this excerpt, although Père may not be a practicing Catholic, he does say “I did not abandon the Church, the Church abandoned me.” This shows that he feels that the Church has abandoned him through practicing the sermons in English instead of Cajun French. Yet, he still has a relationship with religion – "[j]'ai toujours respecté les temps solonnels" (Marcantel 51) – since he attends Church for certain occasions. He may no longer attend mass but his relationship to religion and the relationship between religion and Cajun identity still persists. There does, however, appear to be a division between Mère and Père in their religious practices. Mère is

portrayed as practicing religion through going to mass, whereas Père no longer sees the need to go to church since he cannot understand the sermon: "[j] me rappelle quand la messe était en latin mais le prône était en français. Au moins je comprenais le prone. Mais asteur que la messe est en amaricain, je comprends pus arien" (Marcantel 50). Both practice their religion differently and in spite of this, the stereotypical portrayal of Cajuns as Catholics still exists. As such, Père, like Claude in "La dernière quilte," believes that American presence has a negative effect on the Cajun community.

Although Americans and Americanization may have a negative connotation in the anthology, the relationship between Americans and Cajuns, and the effect of Americanization on the Cajun community contributes to the portrayals of Cajun identity. In the anthology, the effect that Americanization had on the Cajun community is depicted through how different generations conceptualize Cajun identity. The portrayals of Cajuns and Cajun identity vary along with the representations of different generations. Because of this, the stereotypical representation that depicts Cajuns as (Cajun-) French-speaking, Christian (Catholic), rural habitants, whose ancestors were Acadian, is challenged in some of the plays.[14] This suggests that Cajun identity is not so easily defined. The subversion of the stereotypical image of Cajuns helps to redefine Cajun identity. Through negotiations of the indicators of Cajun identity, there is a fragmentation of the stereotypical portrayal of Cajuns, which results in the presentation of different depictions and understandings of Cajun identity.

These challenges to the stereotypical image of Cajuns seem to be most visible in plays that depict interactions between three generations of Cajuns. In these plays, Cajun identification is questioned, particularly through language. This negotiation is eloquently presented through the

[14] "Mille misères: Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisaine," "La douce réunion," "La derniere quilte," and "Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?"

proverb "Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes." This proverb can be interpreted in more than one way, and is understood differently depending on the context in which it is written. One reading is that a person who speaks two languages is divided into two distinct parts. Another way of understanding this proverb is that a person who speaks two languages is worth more than one person. This dual meaning contributes to the conceptualization of Cajuns because it suggests that identity can be understood in more than one way. This is observed through a fragmentation of the stereotypical Cajun identity, which is present in the following plays; “Mille misères: Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane,” “Les Attakapas,” “Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc,” and “La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne.”

The proverb, for example, appears in a monologue by Grand-Père, in “Mille misères: Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane,” a play that addresses the vitality of Cajuns and Cajun identity. In his monologue, Grand-Père talks about the effects that the school system had on Cajuns, and notably the transmission of their language. He talks about how his children were punished for speaking French "[p]roche tous mes enfants ont su quoi-ce c'était êt puni pour parler français" (Marcantel 47) and goes on to say that in the American (English) schools they taught Parisian French as opposed to Louisiana dialects of French (Marcantel 48). Grand-Père tells the story of a time when his son Purphy (Père) returned home from school one day speaking French with an American accent, he was shocked:

> [Grand-Père: ...] Ya eine grande différence entr' ein Amaricain qui prétend de parler français comme ein Parisien et ein Cadien qui *est* français et qui parle son langage comme le Bon Djeu l'a ordonné. (Marcantel 48)

In this excerpt, he tells that the schools punished his children for speaking (Cajun) French in order to augment assimilation into American English culture and explains how he was appalled that those same schools were now teaching a variant of French other than the Cajun dialect. Even though his children, and Cajuns already spoke a dialect of French as their native tongue, the dialect that they spoke was stigmatized and had less value than Parisian French. This led Grand-Père to point out that a person who speaks two languages is confronted with a split identity:

> Ti 'ois ça? (*Il indique une affiche qu'il a fixée au mur de sa maison: "An nom kee pahl 2 long vo 2 zom*") "Ein homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes." C'est mon qu'a écrit ça. Peut-êt' j'sus arien qu'ein couillon de "coonass" mais en v'là qu'que choge que mon je connais et que les maît's d'école ont jamais voulu comprend'. (Marcantel 48-9)

Here, Grand-Père alludes to the marginalization of Cajuns, who would be called "coonass" as an insult. However, even though he says he may be no more than a "coonass," he asserts that a person who speaks two languages is worth two people and through this assertion he also alludes to the fragmentation of one's identity. This shows that in spite of its stigmatized value, Cajun French does contribute to the worth of a person in Grand-Père's estimation. He also states that the teachers never *wanted* to understand this, perhaps making reference to the fact that French-speaking students were penalized for speaking their native tongue on school grounds. The students were forced to speak English, which contributed to their assimilation into the dominant culture. In this context, the proverb suggests that regardless of the stigmatized dialect of French spoken by Cajuns, someone who speaks two languages is worth more than someone who only speaks one. In seems as though Grand-Père believes that someone who speaks two languages is worth more than on person. It is also suggested that the school values bilingualism, since the

students are taught French as well. Since Grand-Père and the school both value speaking more than one langage, the fact that the students learn standard French highlights the stigmatized value of Cajun French. The proverb however may also be interpreted according to the effect that bilingualism can have on one's identity, splitting or fragmenting it so they are no longer whole.

This proverb is contextualized differently in "Les Attakapas." In this play Tom, an English-speaking American, falls in love with Marie-Louise, the daughter of Henri and Emira Desjacques. Tom then takes it upon himself to learn French since Marie-Louise is Francophone. Over the course of their interactions, Lucy, the bilingual Cajun worker, interprets for Tom and Marie-Louise. When Tom moves away, he keeps in touch with Marie-Louise through letters, which he initially sends in English and progressively is able to write to her in French. Lucy, who had been translating their letters, fails to inform Tom that Marie-Louise and her family had returned to France, and she continues to write him in the name of Marie-Louise. Tom eventually returns to the Attakapas region, fully fluent in French and in search of Marie-Louise, at which time Lucy regretfully informs him that she has long since departed. Lucy and Tom then realize their love for one another and Tom decides to stay in the Attakapas region and help Lucy run the shop:

> Tom: (*Il regarde autour du magasin*.) Tu n'aurais pas besoin de deux hommes pour t'aider dans le magasin?
>
> Lucy: Deux hommes?
>
> Tom: Je n'aimerais pas croire que j'avais gaspillé mon temps à apprendre à parler français. As-tu besoin d'aide ici? Comme disait Monsieur Desjacques, "Un homme qui parle les deux langues vaut deux hommes." (Fontenot 235)

In this passage the proverb "Un homme qui parle les deux langues vaut deux hommes" demonstrates that a person who speaks two languages is not only worth more than one person, but is literally worth two people. Since Tom is now bilingual, he proposes, that he is able to recognize his value as two people when he asks "Tu n'aurais pas besoin de deux hommes pour t'aider dans le magasin?" (Fontenot 235). However, since Tom is physically only one person, this passage also suggests that a person who speaks two languages is worth more than one person. Henri Desjacques, as stated by Tom, had also said this proverb. Earlier in the play he affirmed that Lucy, who is also bilingual, is invaluable to his commerce since she speaks both English and (Cajun) French. He responds to his wife Emira, who expresses her distaste for Lucy in saying that; "Lucy est une fille intelligente, elle parle le français et l'anglais, et elle est indispensable à mon commerce" (Fontenot 198). Here, Henri, like Grand-Père in “Mille misères,” asserts that being able to speak more than one language does in fact add to one's worth.

The reading of this proverb as meaning that a person who speaks two languages is worth two people is also reflected in Lucy's ability to act out two different identities through speaking either French or English. As a bilingual, she is not only valuable to Henri Desjacques' business. Her ability to speak both English and French allows her to manipulate the interactions between Marie-Louise, a Francophone, and Tom, who prior to learning French later in the play, was exclusively Anglophone. Lucy in a sense plays the role of match-maker for Marie-Louise and Tom, and she translates "*libéralement*" (Fontenot 210) to ensure an agreeable interaction between the two. Later in the play, when Marie-Louise returns to France, Lucy continues to stay in touch with Tom and is able to do so through her ability to act as Marie-Louise when writing to Tom in English. Through her translations of Marie-Louise and Tom’s letters she is able to adopt

multiple personas, demonstrating that someone who speaks two languages can be thought of as having two separate identities, and can act as two separate people.

An interpretation of this proverb as suggesting that the ability to speak two languages represents two identities is also reflected in “Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc.” In this play, Dudley, who is running for office as a representative for Vermilion Parish, gives speeches in various places in Louisiana. In a conversation with a local barber in Lafayette, the two discuss his campaign as the Election Day approaches.

> Léonce: Dud, tu parles en anglais des fois quand tu fais des *speech*?
>
> Dudley: Mais juste hier j'ai donné un *speech* à Gueydan et je l'ai donné en français et en anglais pour montrer que je parle deux langues et mon opponent parle juste une.
>
> Léonce: Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux personnes. (Viator 309)

In this interaction, Léonce makes reference to Dudley's bilingualism and asks if he gave speeches in English as well. Dudley responds in saying that he did, since he wanted to show voters that he speaks two languages and his opponent only speaks one. By saying this, Dudley shows that he views his bilingualism as not only a valuable trait, but also an asset to his campaign. Léonce then affirms this by reciting the proverb "Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux personnes" (Viator 309). In this exchange both Dudley and Léonce make reference to the perceived value of speaking two languages. Through his bilingualism, Dudley had hoped he would have an advantage against his opponent.

Nevertheless, Dudley's ability to speak both English and French did allow him to reach a broader audience in his campaign. In a conversation with Will, who sells insurance (Dudley's former vocation), Dudley discusses the reasons why he wants to run for office, and the changes he wants to make:

> [Dudley: ...] N'importe, moi je vais courrir pour représentant de la paroisse Vermilion.
>
> Will: Mais, Dud, toi aussi tu vas faire n'importe quoi pour aider notre monde d'état. Je connais que tu vas les aider même à trouver l'ouvrage. Tu connais comment les affaires comme ça sont après aller dans la Louisiane
>
> Dudley: Will surtout les Cadiens. Les Cadiens pour des siècles étaient maltraités. Même ces jours-ci, les Cadiens croient qu'ils sont moins que les autres, qu'ils font des excuses pour leur culture et leur langue. Et moi, je veux que ça change ça. Si je peux avoir la chance d'ouvrir le chemin, un Cadien pourrait aller n'importe éyoù et dire avec fierté que "je suis Cadien et je parle français."
>
> (Viator 292)

Not only does the proverb "un homme qui parle deux langue vaut deux hommes" seem to be a response to, as Dudley explains, Cajuns believing that the are worth less than others, but in this excerpt, Dudley tells Will that he wants to make changes, especially for Cajuns, he wants them to be proud of their language and their culture. As he is fluent in both French and English, he is not only able to run for office, but he can address French-speaking Cajuns in French and the English-speaking public in English. He can use his language skills to reach out to both French

and English speaking communities. Through his campaign he hopes to erase the stigma associated with Cajun French and enable the Cajun community to proudly say that they speak French, realizing their worth as "un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux personnes." In spite of this, Dudley, unfortunately did not win the campaign. This, however, creates a distinction in his French persona and his English persona. He is a successful businessman in French, in the first few pages of the play, he convinces Pete his cousin who is also a shop owner two buy “Le Wine of Cardui.” Even though Pete was initially hesitant, he ends up purchasing 5 whole cases:

> Pete: Cinq caisses! C’est sûr de trop. Je peux pas vendre tout ça, Dud, quandmême on a le même nom, LeBlanc.
>
> Dudley: Tu va vendre ça dans une semaine.
>
> Pete: Okay! Okay! Okay! Je vais les prendre. (Viator 285)

Although he is a talented salesman, he is unable to convince even Cajun and English voters alike to vote him in as governor:

> Jacques: M. LeBlanc, j’haîs dire ça mais nous-autres on va voter pour O.K. Allen […]
>
> Dudley: Dis-moi pas que des bons Cadiens comme nous-autres va voter pour ces cous-rouges. […]
>
> Jacques: Mais on croit que O.K. Allen et La Machine est bon pour les Cadiens. (Viator 308)

This perhaps suggests that not all of his qualities are fluidly transferrable from his French persona to his English persona. He is unable to persuade the public to vote for him, and the fact that he speaks two languages did not help him in the political race. Because of this, Dudley also

embodies the other interpretation of the proverb that reads that a person who speaks more than one language has a fragmented identity.

The desire to revive, preserve, and legitimize the Cajun dialect and Cajun culture is also present in "La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne." In this play, family members get together to celebrate Douce Duhon's 75th birthday. This gathering leads to conversations about family members, near and far, and notably about the preservation of the Cajun dialect and way of life. After a conversation with her deceased husband (which directly quotes from "Mille misères"), Douce has an epiphany and decides to give away numerous possessions to her family members in an attempt to preserve Cajun culture and identity. One of the possessions that she gives away is a French-English dictionary, and she decides to give it to her grandson, Marcus. Marcus, who is learning standard French (not the Cajun dialect) in an immersion school, is also leaving soon for a French language exchange program (in an unidentified location) funded by CODOFIL. Eddie, one of the family members, who distributes the objects since Douce was in the hospital, tells Marcus:

> [Eddie: ...] Marcus tu as plus de responsabilitié que tu crois, parce que Grandma Douce te charge avec l'obligation la plus lourde. Ton nom est pas cadien, et tu vis dans une culture américaine qui réussit à étouffer la langue cadienne, le français. Toi, tu peux montrer le chemin à tous les autres jeunes comme toi, que ein homme qui parle deux langues, vaut deux hommes.
>
> *Douce, accompagnée par Alesia, Viviane, arrive soutenue par L.J.*
>
> Douce: Tu parles. Ein homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes. (Broussard 358)

Here again, as in "Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis," the value of Cajun culture and Cajun dialect is linked to their language, which is reinforced through an understanding of the value in speaking two languages.

The significance in speaking two languages, however, seems to give preference to validating Cajun identity. It is interesting, then, to examine portrayals of Cajun identity for Cajuns who willingly assimilated into American culture. Take for example the character Avocat in "Mille misères." Although he is immersed in American culture and has more or less abandoned the Cajun dialect, he still considers himself Cajun. With the presence of two languages and in the context of assimilation, the character essentially has two cultures and two identities. This makes affiliation with only one identity complicated and ambiguous. Avocat is not strictly one or the other (Cajun or American), yet he is not *completely* both, as I will explain later in this chapter. A negotiation of identity and identities thus becomes a strong point of discussion in the anthology and brings into question Cajun identity and legitimacy.

The relationship between language, identity, and legitimacy can be observed through the portrayals of, and interactions between, three generations. In some plays, and for certain characters the relationship between language and identity is essential, whereas for others it is not emphasized. This makes identification as Cajun through language not only complex but also at times unclear, as the content of the plays and interactions between characters results in a disputed classification of Cajun identity. The debate between the representation of Cajun identity through speaking Cajun French seems to mirror the representations that Henry and Bankston found for each period, as well as the characterization of Cajun identity according to the different generations in the plays.

This may also relate to the fact that "the various Francophone immigrant groups of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed a classical three-generational model of assimilation as set out by the United States Bureau of the Census" (Brasseaux 31). Over three generations, members of the immigrant groups were becoming progressively more integrated into American culture and society. This could explain why the representations of the three generations' perceptions of identity are varied within these texts. Likewise, this brings some clarity to the comprehension of the relationship between generational differences and the association of language with identity. The model of assimilation is consistent with representations of characters in the plays where most of the first generation are typically monolingual in Cajun French. The second generation, their children, are represented as bilingual and demonstrate a strong shift towards English language preference, resulting in the representation of the third generation as English monolinguals. It is also significant to note that perhaps courtesy of a Cajun renaissance, some of the third generation are also bilingual, demonstrating a resistance to assimilation into American culture. The model of assimilation is also particularly relevant when considering how different plays represent members of the first generation and notably how they negotiate Cajun identity when compared to depictions of the second and third generations.

Within the theatrical pieces, the first generation is presented as feeling quite strongly about the connection between Cajun dialect as well as Cajun cultural and ethnic identity. This, for example, is observed in “Hallo cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?.” In this play, a grandmother (first generation) explains the distance between her and her grandchildren to the audience through a monologue, "[c]'est *mon* sang qui coule dans leurs veines et j'sus pas cabab' d'yeux montrer côment j'les aime" (emphasis in original, Guidry 73). She shares that although she is related to her grandchildren by blood, she does not have a means to communicate with

them. She says that because of this, she is unable to share cultural traditions such as Cajun dishes since they do not speak the same language: "[j]'voudrais que j'pourrais expliquer aux 'tites filles côment faire ein gâteau au sirop ou des pralines ou des 'tites tartes couvartes" (Guidry 73). These excerpts emphasize the importance of language and its relationship to the transmission of culture as an oral act for the first generation. They also show that although the members of these three generations share Cajun identity through ethnicity and ancestry, because of the language loss, there is also a cultural loss, leaving the conceptualization of the membership in the Cajun community to be presented as inconsistent and variable. The first generation is often represented in the plays as perceiving Cajun identity through culture (including language) and ethnicity, collectively, much like the stereotypical representation of Cajun identity. This is also reflected in "Mille misères." The character Grand-Père addresses the importance of the Cajun dialect for preservation of the Cajun community and way of life. In a discussion about the English language laws, which forbade the use of French in schools, he states:

> [Grand-Père: ...] J'sus sartain que les professeurs sont ben *smart* et instruits, mais y savont pas que not' langage, c'est tout' not' vie. C'est chaque rêve, chaque pensée, chaque mot tend', chaque farce, chaque bonne idée. C'est tout. C'est not' passé. C'est le présent et l'avenir. [...] C'est le fil qui coud not' peup' ensemb'. (Marcantel 49)

Here, Grand-Père proposes that the Cajun language is not only a significant component for identity but that it is woven into every aspect of their lives; "[c]'est tout. C'est not' passé. C'est le présent et l'avenir" (Marcantel 49). Like the character Grand-M'Man in "Hallo cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," Grand-Père also associates language with the transfer of culture and

traditions. He states that without language Cajuns cannot share the past nor can they move into the future; their language is everything "c'est tout' not' vie" (Marcantel 49). Language for this generation is depicted as a crucial component for the preservation of Cajun culture and identity, as Grand-Père says "[c]'est le fil qui coud not' peup' ensemb'" (Marcantel 49).

The importance of language and cultural practices is also presented in “La douce réunion.” In this play, Dovic, a father and grandfather, speaks to his wife, Douce, about the Cajuns loss of language, culture, and identity. He says; "[t]u parles! On est ça qu'on mange! Donne-moi du bon manger cadien. Tu prends les enfants auhourd'hui. Les petits parlent p'us français par rapport qu'ils mangent p'us le manger cadien" (Broussard 338). He makes reference to the loss in Cajun identity through the loss of language and Cajun cuisine. For him, in order to be Cajun you need more than just an ethnic label, you need to be actively involved in the culture, traditions, and way of life, including everything from the language to the food that you eat. Later in the play, he continues to address the problem of the English language laws and their role in assimilating Cajuns into mainstream American culture, resulting in a loss of Cajun culture and identity. This sentiment towards the English language laws and their affect on the Cajun community is also discussed by Grand-Père and Grand-M'Man in “Mille misères” and “Hallo cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?.” Like them, Dovic also has a negative image of the educational system and the effects that it had on the Cajun community:

> Dovic: Ouais, mais Douce, on a dû tous les envoyer à l'école. C'était la loi, on avait pas de choix. Et quoi c'est ils ont appris à l'école? A devenir des amaricains! C'est tout c'est bon pour, les écoles -- montrer des vilaines manières aux enfants! Y en a pas un de nos enfants qui va vraiment

> garder nos traditions. Y'en a trois qui reste plus en Louisaine et leurs enfants comprend pas ce que c'est ein cadien. (Broussard 340)

Dovic acknowledges that the schools were successful tools of assimilation by stating that in school they learnt how to become Americans. He then reflects on the fact that out of his children who still reside in Louisiana, a key component to Cajun identity (as identified in the stereotypical image of Cajuns), none of their children (the third generation) understand what it is to be Cajun. This suggests that Dovic, like Grand-Père, and Gran-M'Man, members of the first generation, conceptualize Cajun identity through more than just ethnicity or blood relations. Being Cajun, for these characters is active and not passive, meaning that it is more than having Acadian ancestors, the language, cultural practices, and traditions all contribute to how the first generation understands Cajun identity.

Consequently, an investigation of the first generation as portrayed in these plays seems to suggest that their image of Cajun identity fits quite closely to the stereotypical image of Cajuns in the "first period" described by Henry and Bankston. In fact, Henry and Bankston's three periods and their respective representations of Cajuns also seem to reflect the portrayals of the three generations present in this anthology. Not only are these representations present in the anthology *Une fantaisie collective* but some plays even depict all three periods (generations). The presence of the different characterizations of Cajuns and Cajun identity within the same play enables the plays to negotiate and challenge how the Cajun identity is conceptualized.

This is evident in the second and third generations' relationship to the Cajun French and other stereotypical features such as place of residence. The changes to, and the negotiation of, Cajun identity are typically depicted through assimilation and the effect that the English

language laws and educational institutions had on the second generation. The anthology depicts how the effect of the language laws and their educational experiences changed how Cajuns constructed their identity, which in turn affected their children, the third generation.

In the anthology, portrayals of the second generation present characters that either assert the association between identity and language or characters who do not find it to be a necessary feature. This is perhaps explained through the establishment of English as the official language for the state in 1921, which stigmatized the French language (Brown 71), and is referenced in many of the plays, including “Mille misères,” “La douce réunion,” and “Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?.” One historical result of the language laws was that "[i]t was not only unacceptable but also illegal to speak French on school grounds, and children were punished for doing so," which undoubtedly hindered the transmission of the Cajun dialect since English was becoming more and more valued in society and was increasingly associated with success (Brown 71). The historical effects of this language law and transmission of the Cajun dialect are then reflected in the anthology and this historical reality has contributed to the negotiation of Cajun identity within the anthology.

Some members of the second generation are presented as conceptualizing Cajun identity through language and place of residence. As such, the shift from rural to urban and Cajun French to English is understood as a transformation from Cajun to American by some characters. For example, in “Mille misères,” two brothers, who are both part of the second generation are discussing what it means to be Cajun. One brother, Avocat, feels that his decision to move to the city, become educated, marry an American and (presumably) speak English does not affect his Cajun identity. Whereas, the older brother, Père, shares the first generation's conceptualization of Cajun identity through which there is an emphasis on cultural practices and language;

Père: Je peux pas faire comme toi. J'sus cadien jusque dans les tripes. J'ai bu l'eau bousillée de Bayou Tèche et je peux pas quitter mon pays pour viv' chez les étrangers. Je peux pas faire comme toi, arrêter d'être cadien.

Avocat: Mais je ne peux pas arrêter d'être acadien non plus. Je suis né des mêmes parents que toi.

Père: Ti comprends pas quoi c'est êt' cadien. On peut a'oir ein nom cadien sans êt' cadien. Et' cadien, c'est eine monyère de viv' et de jongler. (Marcantel 59)

In this excerpt, which has been referenced earlier in this thesis, Père tells his younger brother, Avocat, that he cannot leave his "country/ region" to live with "foreigners/ strangers," and he cannot just stop being "cadien." Père is expressing that he associates Cajun identity with place of residence, among other things. Avocat, on the other hand, responds to Père by saying the he can't stop being "acadian" either, suggesting that Avocat understands membership in this community to be a matter of ethnicity.

The written representation of the French that each brother uses in this passage should also be analyzed when considering how they conceptualize Cajun identity. Père's language is written in Cajun dialect, and makes use of spelling modifications to depict the actual sound of his words. Whereas Avocat's French is written in standard French, and strongly contrasts the French used by his brother. This difference in the written representation of their language is significant for two reasons. First, it allows multiple understandings for how different characters of the same generation construct Cajun identity. Père says "Je peux pas faire comme toi, arrêter d'être cadien" (Marcantel 59) and Avocat responds by saying "Mais je ne peux pas arrêter d'être acadien non

plus" the word "acadien" as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, has dual meaning. According to Brown, “[o]nce in Louisiana, the Acadians became known as Cajuns (for no specific reason other than natural phonological processes)” (70) consequently, the term "cadien" is believed to have originated from the word "acadien" through phonological processes. In this excerpt, Avocat seems to be regulating his speech to replicate standard French, which was not stigmatized, unlike the Cajun dialect. Given that the word “acadien” could be read differently in this excerpt, Avocat’s response to Père carries more than one meaning. He could be saying "I can't stop being *Cajun* either" or "I can't stop being *Acadian* either." The latter makes reference to ethnicity and ancestry, since Cajuns are in fact the ancestors of Acadians who fled to Louisiana during the *Grand Dérangement*. If this is the case then Avocat truly cannot stop being *Acadian* since he has the same parents as Père. Père responds by saying "[t]i comprends pas quoi c'est êt' cadien. [...] Et' cadien, c'est eine monyère de viv' et de jongler" (Marcantel 59). This suggests that he understands Cajun identity as being more that an ethnic relationship (*Acadien*), but a way of living (*Cadien*). This is one possible explanation for why there is a discrepancy in the two brothers' conceptualizations of Cajun identity. One brother, Père, understands it through place of residence, lifestyle, and language, whereas the other, Avocat, understands it through blood lines, ethnicity, and heritage.

Another possibility for the different understandings of Cajun identity could be that the bilingualism of the second generation through exposure to English in the school system, and French at home, had an effect on the characters’ conceptualization of identity. This relates back to the proverb "Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes" and its multiple readings, as discussed earlier in this chapter. If a person who speaks two languages is worth two people, or a person who speaks two languages is worth more than one person, then a person who speaks

two languages should not be restricted to one identity but rather merits two. This could explain why Avocat, who is immersed in American culture, and has abandoned the Cajun dialect still considers himself Cajun. By speaking two languages and considering their presence during assimilation into the dominant culture, the character essentially has two cultures, two identities, which are conflicting. It is clear that the two brothers have very different perspectives on how identity is classified, which makes Avocat's affiliation with exclusively one identity not only complicated but also ambiguous, since it seems that he is not strictly one or the other, yet he cannot be *completely* (culturally, ethnically, etc.) both. The contrasting perspectives on identity within the play demonstrate that Cajun identity is not only being negotiated, but that it can be perceived differently by family members of the same generation.

The representation of the various ways in which Cajun identity is understood is a common and prominent theme in the anthology *Une fantaisie collective*. The possibility of identification as one identity or another exclusively, or both inclusively, is a fascinating point of reflection. It appears that depending on the character's individual perspective, Cajun identity or membership in the Cajun community is constructed quite differently when compared to other characters, and even when it is negotiated by the characters' family members. Père in “Mille misères,” for example, states that his brother, Avocat, could "arrêter d'être cadien" (Marcantel 59). This suggests that through a choice to let go of specific features of the language (standard French/ dialect) or culture (way of life/ rural residence), a character can abandon his or her Cajun identity.

However, considering that Avocat still considers himself as "acadien," the presence of incoherent conceptualizations of identity, portrayed by members of the second generation, may also be associated with a deconstruction of family unity through the fragmentation and re-

creation of (stereotypical) Cajun identity. This breakdown of family unity is also observed in “La douce réunion.” This play tells the story of a Cajun family and the relationships between the different family members. The negotiation of Cajun identity is addressed as early as in the character descriptions. One character, Elargie Ludovic (L.j.) Duhon, part of the second generation is described as follows: "[v]isite souvent la Louisiane, sourtout sa mère, mais se considère Texan. Parle français quand il fait l'effort, mais se considère Américain" (Broussard 325). This character's relationship with his Cajun identity is quite interesting. His name, Elargie, alone, subtly makes reference to the fact that the conceptualization of Cajun identity is not fixed as the stereotypical portrayal suggests, but rather that it has *élargi* or broadened over time. Classification as Cajun is no longer restricted to people with Cajun ancestry, who speak the Cajun dialect, and live in rural Louisiana, it now encompasses characters like Elargie, who resides in Texas and rarely speaks French.

This is consistent with the different understandings of Cajun identity as portrayed by different generations, both in the play “La douce réunion” and across the anthology. Elargie is ethnically Cajun but he self-identifies as Texan and American. This demonstrates that he actively rejects his Cajun identity through his displacement out of Louisiana and his infrequent use of French. Avocat, on the other hand, contrasts with Elargie, as he still claims Cajun identity even though he, too, has moved from rural to urban, and no longer speaks the Cajun dialect of French. Through a rejection of French, and relocation to Texas, Elargie abandons his Cajun identity, and self-identifies as American, in spite of his Cajun ethnicity. Since these two characters from different plays, Avocat and Elargie, both embody a non-stereotypical portrayal of Cajuns, and label themselves differently (*Acadien* and American), they depict the conflicted understandings

and portrayals of Cajun identity not only within family structures and between members of the same family, but also in the anthology.

This disputed and ambiguous conceptualization of Cajun identity is also present in depictions of the third generation. An investigation of the character Marcus in the play “La douce réunion,” along with a comparison of how his character is represented within the play contributes to the changing classification of Cajun identity. As a member of the third generation, Marcus' depiction seems to transcend Henry and Bankston's three periods mentioned earlier and demonstrates the effects that the "ethnic resurgence" had on portrayals and classifications of Cajun identity. Marcus is ethnically Cajun by his mother's side (Marie Duhon), but he is also half American due to his father, Homer "Charlie" Daniels’ side. Marcus is labelled in the character descriptions as "âge 17. Gagne des prix en français" (Broussard 326). His ability to speak French, and the way in which he learnt his French, reflects the efforts of the "ethnic resurgence" period. It should also be noted that Marcus is learning standard French and not the Cajun dialect. This leads to a portrayal of his character as a bit of an anomaly, or an outsider of the Duhon (Cajun) family since he is ethnically half Cajun, half American, yet speaks standard French.

The construction of his identity, and by extension Cajun identity in this play is negotiated through the written representations and language of his character, as well as the dialogues between different members of the family. Of particular interest is the dialogue surrounding his French language, and the effect that it has on his identification as Cajun. For example, early on in the play Elridge, the husband of Vivain Duhon Smith, reacts to the fact that Marcus sent his grandmother a letter in French by saying "Ha! Un amaricain qui écrit le français. Ben, ça m'amuse" (Broussard 332). This excerpt demonstrates that although Marcus is Cajun by blood, the fact that his father is American, making him half Cajun and half American, members of his

own family have made assumptions about his language and he is identified as American. The debate and discussions on identity and language are brought into perspective and are also linked to the proverb "Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes." He speaks both standard French and English, and tries to establish a relationship with his French speaking family, notably his grandmother by communicating with her in French. Although Marcus can express himself in French, there are some differences between the French that he is learning in school, and the French spoken by other members of his family.

These differences are visible in the letter to his grandmother in which he writes "[...] J'espère vous voir pendant les vacances de l'Action de Grâce pour pratiquer mon français" (Broussard 332). Marcus' use of "Action de Grâce" instead of "Thanksgiving" results in a loss of meaning, and as such his grandmother is forced to ask another family member: "Douce: Mais, chère, équand c'est il dit qu'il va venir nous 'oir? Jolene: Pour *Thanksgiving*, Gram" (Broussard 332). The language present in these exchanges demonstrates the relationship between the generations is to an extent affected by the language used, which ultimately has an effect on their identity.

The generational differences in French language demonstrate that Cajun identity is not static, but rather that it has evolved over time, resulting in a broader conceptualization and understanding of it. The change in classifications of identity is also addressed later in the play when Eddie, another relative who has been tasked with dispersing Douce's possessions, as per her request, informs Marcus that “ein homme qui parle deux langues, vaut deux hommes” (Broussard 358). This excerpt contrasts Elridge's commentary on Marcus' ability to write French and provides a more accepting perspective on how members of the Cajun community who do not speak Cajun French are perceived. Unlike Elridge, who labels Marcus as an American, this

citation demonstrates that by the end of the play, there is a realization that classification as Cajun is broader than it had been previously. The re-negotiation of Cajun identity is not only observed within this play, but is understood through the variation in representations of Cajun characters presented in the anthology *Une fantaisie collective* that were discussed earlier in this chapter.

I demonstrate that the depictions Cajun language, culture, and ethnicity, all affect how Cajun identity is understood. This conceptualization and classification as Cajun also varies by character, play, and members of different generations. These representations provide some insight into the complex task of understanding different characters who can be identified as Cajun. Being Cajun is represented through association with select identities (linguistic, religious, cultural, ethnic, etc.). The relationships between these identities and Cajuns in the anthology are presented differently in the plays, notably those in which there are three generations depicted. This suggests that Cajun identity is not static, rather, it fluctuates and varies by character, generation, and play. This has been shown through the written depictions of different characters in various plays in the anthology, as well as through an analysis of the discussions between characters relating to identity. This investigation unveils the significance of the Cajun proverb "Un homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes" when conceptualizing Cajun identity. The plays in this anthology also suggest that conceptualizations of Cajuns may be shifting from the stereotypical representations outlined by Henry and Bankston, to a broader understanding, encompassing the diversity of the Cajun community across three generations. This means that it is not sufficient to classify Cajun identity through dichotomies of rural/urban, French/English, etc.

In conclusion, in spite of the different ways in which characters are identified as Cajun in this anthology, one thing that remains a common uniting feature is their shared history and

ancestry. This is also consistent with Dormon's findings for his study on Ethnic group revitalization in which he states that "though some function in states of disharmony and even tension, there is unity in the sharing of a broadly 'Acadian' ethnic tradition, however it may be personally experienced" (1055). As such, ethnicity may be understood as an essential component for classification as Cajun. Although this analysis demonstrates that identification can occur through fragments of the stereotypical portrayals of Cajuns, there is a wide range of portrayals of Cajuns in the anthology. Nevertheless, the inconsistency in depictions of Cajun characters shows that understandings of Cajun identity are dependant on the character and the context of the play. Overall though, the plays in this anthology still manage to collectively portray characters as Cajun through language, cultural practices, and ethnicity.

Chapter 3

Théâtre Cadien as Ethnic Theatre

This chapter analyses depictions of characters' reactions to political and social concerns in the collection of plays *Une fantaisie collective*. It investigates how portrayals of the relationship between Cajun French and American identities have resulted in the conceptualization of a Cajun political identity. Through an exploration of the interactions between the Cajun and American cultures represented in this anthology, this chapter examines the written depictions of various characters' reactions to the Americanization and assimilation of French speaking Cajuns. It compares the various playwrights' representations of discourse on these two topics and contributes to an understanding of Cajun identity. This analysis reveals how the portrayals of different characters' opinions on – and reactions to – Americanization and assimilation demonstrate the significance of the communities' shared history. In addition to this, the social and political concerns presented in the plays also contribute to an understanding of Cajun identity.

I start by contextualizing this anthology as ethnic theatre. Then, I demonstrate how through classification as ethnic theatre, *Une fantaisie collective,* can also be understood as an educational tool, a platform to express social and political concerns. Next, this chapter examines how, given the nature of ethnic theatre as an educational tool to transmit the language, culture, and present political concerns, an understanding of political identities further contributes to the conceptualization of Cajun identity. The following pages investigate how select plays in the anthology and the theatre troupe *Théâtre Cadien* (formerly *Nous Autres*) are representative of ethnic theatre and consequently, explore its use as an educational tool to depict Cajun culture and identity. Since *Le Théâtre Cadien* can be contextualized as ethnic theatre, it contributes to the

portrayals of Cajun identity. This is done through presenting political concerns like Americanization and the social stigma related to assimilation into American culture.

Ethnic theatre is the theatre of immigrant or minority groups in a dominant society that is presented in the language of their homeland. It "provide[s] education, entertainment, and a focus for social and community life" (Seller 6). This means that "ethnic theatre made the history, literature, and folklore of the homelands accessible to literate and illiterate alike and gave the new American-born generations at least some understanding of the cultures of their immigrant parents (Seller 6). The book *Ethnic Theatre in the United States* examines the presence and use of ethnic theatre by several minority communities, including French-speaking communities in Louisiana. In the introductory chapter, Maxine Schwartz Seller provides a brief and generalized history of ethnic theatre. She starts by stating that ethnic theatre is able to make the culture and language of minority groups accessible within the dominant culture that is assimilating them. She explains that ethnic theatre can also be used for "self-expression and self-definition not available in a mainstream society that stereotyped or ignored them" (Seller 13) and could also examine and negotiate "traditional stereotypes" (Seller 14). Since ethnic theatre has the capacity to transmit the culture and language of a minority group to other members of the group, it is an exceptional educational tool. According to Seller, ethnic theatre could even be used to critique and address social and political concerns making it an excellent educational tool as theatre could "expos[e] audiences to sophisticated examinations of social problems" (Seller 7). As such, ethnic theatre is able to render the culture and language accessible to all members of the minority group, including those who may be illiterate in both their mother tongue as well as English, as mentioned above. Ethnic theatre is then rather important because it provides a platform for cultural transmission that may otherwise be inhibited by assimilation into the dominant culture.

Although Seller presents the possibilities of ethnic theatre for immigrant communities, I believe that it also can be applied to the Cajun community, who like many immigrant communities, experienced assimilation into the dominant culture resulting in a cultural and linguistic loss. In this anthology, it is a representation of their reactions to those losses that contributes to the conceptualization of Cajun identity. Through depicting various members of the Cajun community's reactions to events like assimilation, the plays also transmit to the audience a particular point of view. This further contextualizes the plays and the anthology as ethnic theatre due to their possible use as an educational tool. As Seller noted, "[…] the educational role of ethnic theatre in the early twentieth century included exposing audiences to sophisticated examinations of social problems" (7), through the conversations between characters on such topics.

This anthology can also be understood as ethnic theatre due to the playwrights' explorations of differences between Cajuns and Americans. The representations of the differences between these two groups demonstrates how ethnic theatre can be used as an educational tool as to analyze the "[p]olitical and ideological cleavages within and between ethnic communities and […] mainstream America" (Seller 14). Discussions between characters about the effect of language laws, their way of life, and their quality of living can be found in the following plays, "Mille misères," "Hallo cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," "La dernière quilte," "La douce réunion," and "Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis," and are discussed later in the chapter. These plays were also able to distinguish Cajun people and Cajun identity from mainstream culture through the authors' varied explorations of a "self-definition not available in mainstream society that stereotyped or ignored them" (Seller 13). Through the medium of theatre, the audience gains a better comprehension of the Cajun way of life and the

effects that Americanization and stigma from the mainstream culture had on their cultural vitality. Ethnic theatre provides a Cajun point of view on these effects, allowing the portrayals of different characters' points of views to the same event. This presents some similarities in reactions across plays and contributes to a construction of a Cajun political identity.

Due to its capacity to discuss many viewpoints on a variety of topics, this anthology is an exceptional tool for the education, preservation, and legitimization of the (French) Cajun community. *Une fantaisie collective* makes the history, folklore, and culture of a minority group accessible to the American-born generation, who may not necessarily speak the heritage language (Seller 6). The plays in this anthology demonstrate the connections between language, culture, history, and identity of a community. Likewise, due to the medium of theatre, the works are accessible to people who are literate and illiterate (Seller 6). This makes the content of these plays accessible to members within the community and at the same time provides an opportunity for individuals outside of the community to gain an understanding of Cajun culture and how Cajun identity is constructed. Its accessibility also allows this anthology to be an instrument of decolonization for the group since it gave Cajuns an "opportunity for self-expression and self-definition not available in a mainstream society that stereotyped or ignored them" (Seller 13). This meant that the authors were able to present their perspectives on social and political issues and the effect of these issues all the while negotiating Cajun identity.

Seller also divides ethnic theatre into two periods. She notes, in general, that for communities in America with ethnic theatres, "[t]he post-World War II decade […] original plays were produced dealing with contemporary ethnic life" (12). This is particularly relevant because, *Le Théâtre Cadien*, like other ethnic theatres, evolved and began to portray contemporary ethnic life as well as social and political issues. This change in content is

reinforced by the name change from *Nous Autres* to *Le Théâtre Cadien.* This shift in subject matter presented in the plays can also be linked to the concept of new ethnicity that "called attention to the rich internal life of ethnic communities" (Seller 3) and in turn "encouraged cultural pluralism rather than the 'melting pot' as the model for American society" (Seller 12).

The concepts of new ethnicity and cultural plurality emerged during the second period in the 1960s and 1970s (Seller 12). In the chapter "French Theatre in Louisiana" Allain and St. Martin write that "with the encouragement of this agency" – CODOFIL, which was established in 1968 – "a veritable renaissance has taken place in the French-speaking part of the state [Louisiana], especially among the 'Cajuns'" (159). They suggest that "[t]he renaissance of the language has been accompanied by a revival of theatrical activity and productivity" (159). This helps to situate the formation of the theatre troupe *Nous Autres* in 1977 (Allain & St. Martin 153, Waggoner 2). This influence of new ethnicity to encourage "cultural pluralism rather than the 'melting pot' as the model for American society" (Seller 12) is not only reflected in the multiplicity of different minority theatres represented in the book *Ethnic Theatre in the United States*, but is also present within the collection of plays in *Une fantaisie collective*.

In this anthology, cultural pluralism and new ethnicity are reinforced since some plays distinguish the Cajun community from other communities in Louisiana. Although new ethnicity encourages an acknowledgement of the melting pot and a desire to bring awareness to cultural pluralism, decolonization is an attempt to reverse the melting pot and to establish cultural pluralism. In the play "Les Attakapas," Cajuns are differentiated from French-speaking Creoles, and immigrants from France living in Louisiana. Plays like "La dernière quilte," on the other hand, depict differences between French-speaking Cajuns and French-speaking Americans. It is through distinctions between these communities that the plays demonstrate a shift towards

cultural pluralism. By distinguishing the different minority communities and the dominant culture (American) from Cajuns the plays legitimize the Cajun language, culture, way of life, etc.

This also demonstrates how ethnic theatre may be used as an educational tool since "the educational role of ethnic theatre […] included exposing audiences to sophisticated examinations of social problems" (Seller 7). Theatrical pieces' ability to explore social problems and to present the ways in which different characters reacted to these problems, contributes to an understanding of the Cajun community and its political identities. The social problems addressed in this anthology include characters' reactions to historical events (English language laws, assimilation and Americanization), responses to negative stereotypes of Cajuns, and discussions of the stigma attached to the Cajun dialect. The discussions of these issues contribute to a more comprehensive understanding Cajun identity and identities.

In addition to the concepts of cultural pluralism and new ethnicity, plays in this anthology can also be understood as "littératures émergentes" in the movement of "décolonisation" (Mauguière & Ryon 202). In their article "Minorisation linguistique et émergence d'un théâtre cadien et franco-américain en français vernaculaire," Mauguière and Ryon discuss French ethnic theatre in the United States. Since the relationship between the concept of ethnic theatre and *Une fantaisie collective* has been established above, the anthology is further complicated when considering decolonization. The plays in this anthology can also be understood as attempts to decolonize, or move away from assimilation into the dominant culture to regain cultural independence. I will show that through discussions of the effects of Americanization, the plays revive the culture and identity of a people, who were assimilated, in an attempt to regain cultural independence, reinforcing Cajun identities.

My analysis focuses specifically on how “Mille misères,” “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’, y’all?,” and “La douce réunion” address social problems and depict Cajun political identities. In general, these plays present and discuss the effects of Americanization and assimilation on the Cajun community and its identity. Through these discussions and different characters’ perspectives on these events, the above-mentioned plays contribute to the conceptualization of Cajun and establish Cajun political identities. By addressing these social problems and the effects that specific events had on members of the Cajun community, the plays also re-establish in a sense the cultural legitimacy of the Cajun community, way of life, and identity.

Of these three plays, David Marcantel's “Mille misères” is possibly the most significant. The play seems to have prompted the theatre troupe to change their name from *Nous Autres*, meaning “we/us/the others,”[15] to *Le Théâtre Cadien* in 1981 (Mauguière & Ryon 205-7) because of content of the play. The name change also aligns with a shift in the content of the plays. This is consistent with ethnic theatres in general as Seller suggests: "[a]s the 1980s began [... p]olitical and ideological cleavages within and between ethnic communities and between those communities and mainstream America were reflected in the theatre" (14). The time between the establishment of *Nous Autres* and the name change to *Le Théâtre Cadien* can then be understood as a pivotal point for the transformation in the direction and content of the troupe and ethnic theatres in general.

The first play presented by *Nous Autres* in the spring of 1977, “Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi” (Waggoner 2), is the only adaptation (louisianification) of a folktale present in the anthology. This is consistent with the use of ethnic theatres, as discussed above, to make “the history, literature, and folklore” (Seller 6) of the minority group accessible. The content then transitioned

[15] translation by Heylen 454
[16] Consult Chapter 1 for a more in depth analysis on the differences in the written representations of French in the

into depictions of ethnic life and social problems after World War II and into the 80s as discussed by Seller (12-14). Since name change of the theatre troupe in 1981, following “Mille misères” (1979), the shift in content becomes even more evident, as Waggoner writes, the plays take “une toute autre direction" (3). The content of the troupe's plays transition from exploring the history and folklore of the group, which was accessible to the Cajun community due to its medium – "[c]'était le seul format possible," claims Waggoner (2) – to a more explicit reaction to social problems.

This can be seen in the way in which “Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi” is written: mostly standard French, with some changes in spelling indicating morphological differences in Cajun dialect, as well as Cajun-specific terms.[16] In contrast, Marcantel's play uses a phonetic orthography and reads as a call for action and reaction (Heylen 455). This reaffirms the transition in the both the approach of the theatre troupe as well as the establishment of the plays in this anthology as ethnic theatre. Ethnic theatre acts as an educational tool both by exposing members of the minority groups to their language and culture and by informing members within and outside of the group about social and political concerns.

The use of ethnic theatre as an educational tool to inform its audience about social and political issues is reflected in the drastic change in content from their first play, “Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi” to that of “Mille misères.” This, however, is not the first time that this play has been labelled a work of ethnic theatre. According to Mauguière and Ryon:

> *Mille misères* marque la naissance d’un théâtre véritablement ethnique, en ce sens qu’il revendique de faire voir et de faire entendre d’une part ce que la communauté minorisée considère être le caractère unique et distinctif de

[16] Consult Chapter 1 for a more in depth analysis on the differences in the written representations of French in the play

> sa culture, et d'autre part l''injustice et l'inégalité des rapports sociaux de pouvoir qui la menace d'extinction. (206-207)

This citation also engages all aspects of Seller's characterization of ethnic theatres and particularly the noted change in ethnic theatres at the beginning of the 1980s: they began to address and challenge social and political problems.

The change in subject and content of the plays perhaps reflects the change in desired audience. The plays not only serve to educate members of the Cajun community about their culture, but also can be understood as presenting Cajun identities to outsiders of the community. In the transformation from *Nous Autres* to *Le Théâtre Cadien*, the troupe arguably "reflects the transformation of Cajun theatre from exclusionary and self-centered--closed to non-Cajuns--to vibrantly ethnic--an open celebration of difference" (Heylen 454). This transformation is also reflected in *Le Théâtre Cadien*'s mission statement:

> *Le THEATRE CADIEN existe pour encourager les Cadiens à s'exprimer dans leur langue française et à mieux connaître leur culture à travers les arts dramatiques. Deuxièmement, LE THEATRE CADIEN a comme but de partager l'expérience franco-louisianaise avec tous ceux qui s'y intéressent, particulièrement dans le monde francophone.* (emphasis in original, Waggoner 1)

In its mandate, the troupe invites anyone and everyone to share in the Cajun way of life, culture and to understand Cajun identity.

This Cajun ethnic theatre is therefore not only a means of access to the Cajun dialect for members of the Cajun community, but it can also be understood as an educational tool, to both members of the community as well as outsiders. If this is the case, then all aspects of the

Louisiana Francophone experience are significant components in the construction of Cajun culture and identity to Cajuns and outsiders alike. This also means that the discussions of social and political issues present in and across the plays merit analysis. It is clear that within the context of ethnic theatre and the discussion of Americanization and assimilation, these plays reflect an attempt to engage the audience in a reaction, (re)negotiation, revival, and (re)establishment of the Cajun culture and identity. In order to understand the use of ethnic theatre as a means of decolonization, revival, and transmission of Cajun culture and identity, it is important to explore the process of assimilation (Americanization, acculturation, and colonization) to unveil the ways in which the texts attempt to bring awareness to its effect on the Cajun community. It is, then, necessary to distinguish between voluntary and forced Americanization, as observed in the plays "Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an y'all?," "Mille misères," and "La douce réunion" and explained below.

Forced assimilation may be understood partially within the context of the English Language Law of 1921, which established English as the official language in Louisiana (Brown 71). Following this were laws that enforced the use of the English language in schools and other public domains, where the use of French was to be met with harsh consequences. Bankston and Henry state that public domains were "fundamental links to [the] intergenerational transmission" of the language, second only to family (3). As such, it is no surprise that discussions of the relationship between language laws and assimilation appear frequently in the anthology.

In "Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," Grand-M'Man reflects on the effects that educational institutions had on her family. Her comments demonstrate that she attributes the loss of Cajun culture and identity to Americanization. She tells how because of the effect that assimilation had on her daughter, she cannot talk with her grandchild, she says "C'est par rapport

à elle qu'I parlont pas français, […] mais c'est pas d'sa faute pauv' 'tite bête. A' voulait pas qu'i souffront côme elle alle avait souffert" (Guidry 73). In this excerpt, "elle" refers to Grand-M'Man's daughter, who experienced the stigma of the Cajun dialect in her schooling. However, since Grand-M'Man goes on to say that it wasn't her fault, the audience comes to know Grand-M'Man's perspective on the effects that language laws had on the vitality of Cajun. She does not blame her daughter for not transmitting Cajun French to her own children, rather she holds Americanization accountable.

Grand-M'Man's perspective is also depicted in "Mille misères," when Grand-Père shares his experience of the effect that the school system had on his family and their Cajun identity. He states: "[p]roche tous mes enfants ont su quoi-ce c'était êt' puni pour parler français. Y a ein maît' d'école qu'a dit que c'était bon que les Amaricains ont pris l'affaire en main" (Marcantel 47). Here, like with Grand-M'Man, Grand-Père shares his perspective on Americanization. Since both characters have such strong and negative ascriptions to the educational institutions, the reader begins to understand the social problems caused by Americanization. The audience becomes aware that through assimilation the transmission of Cajun culture, language, and identity was inhibited. This is achieved through reading different characters' recollections of their experiences with and their opinions on Americanization.

This particular perspective on Americanization and educational institutions is also portrayed in "La douce réunion." This play, which quotes directly from "Mille misères," also portrays negative sentiments toward schools and Americans. In this play, Dovic, Douce's late husband, visits her in a daydream in which they discuss their family and Cajun culture. In this exchange, Dovic, like Grand-M'Man and Grand-Père, shows his attitude towards educational schools and Americans, "[e]t quoi c'est ils ont appris à l'école? A devenir des amaricains! […] Y

en a pas un de nos enfants qui va vraiment garder nos traditions" (Broussard and Toups 340). Dovic, like the other characters, attributes the cultural loss to Americanization. Through discussions of the effects of schools, these plays address the problems that arose from assimilation into the dominant American culture. These negative associations of Americans and assimilation are prevalent in the anthology, making distaste for Americans, the dominant culture, and educational institutions as a common political point of view. This contributes to an understanding of the Cajun people through their political identity.

Although the educational system was not the only domain in which assimilation occurred,[17] it should be noted that not all domains are presented or discussed in this anthology. The presentation of voluntary/forced Americanization in "Mille misères" and "La douce réunion" contributes to the representation and classification of Cajun identities and shows different characters' negotiations of Cajun identity. For example, chapter two demonstrated that portrayals of Cajun identity and American identity show how these two identities are generally independent of one another, with few characters negotiating the conceptualizations of Cajun identity. This distinction is further represented through the domains in which Americanization is addressed within the plays. Although Americanization was occurring on many fronts, these plays address Americanization with respect to family, intermarriage, and generational differences. This demonstrates a desire to preserve and re-establish Cajun identity in spite of the factors that led to its dilution. An active reversal and awareness of the effect that Americans and American culture have had on Cajuns and a desire to revive Cajun identity, can be understood as an act of decolonization and a representation of cultural pluralism. Notably, this presents the adoption of

[17] See Shane K. Bernard's *The Cajuns: Americanization of a People* for a more in depth analysis of the process of Americanization and the domains in which it occured.

the English language and inter-marriage as factors contributing to the loss of Cajun culture and identity.

The majority of the plays in this anthology allude to representations of Cajun/American culture through the dichotomies of poor/wealthy and rural/urban.[18] Yet, not all of them depict the relationship between American and Cajun through assimilation and cultural loss. “Mille misères,” “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine an’ y’all?,” and “La douce réunion” all explicitly discuss the effects of Americanization. They negatively depict the process of assimilation as a means of diluting or completely washing out Cajun identity and the Cajun way of life. This can be seen in the use of monologues. Mauguière and Ryon identify the monologue as important, particularly for Cajun theatre since "[i]l permet en effet, dans le contexte d'une culture minorisée et stigmatisée, de faire entendre un langage intérieur, de rendre public et de révéler des émotions et des sentiments habituellement refoulés dans le discours et la vie ordinaire" (209). In other words, the monologue permits this cultural community to share their social struggles and bring awareness to the ways in which certain issues affected their community.

One example of such a monologue can be found in Richard Guidry's “Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's Fine, an' y'all?.” In this short play, a Cajun grandmother talks about her children and grandchildren and the loss of language over the generations. She attributes the language loss to a cultural loss resulting from assimilation into the dominant American culture through educational institutions. The monologue depicts the grandmother's perception of cultural differences between Americans and Cajuns and enables her to discuss her understandings of why the Cajun language has not been transferred across generations. By sharing her point of view on the effects of

[18] The following plays make reference to Cajuns as poor and/or rural and Americans as wealthy and/or urban: “Martin Weber, constable,” “Mille misères,” “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an y’a’ll?,” “La table des veuves,” “Martin Weber et les Marais Bouleurs,” “Les Attakapas,” “La dernière quilte,” “Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis,” “La douce réunion.”

assimilation, the audience is able to sympathize with her and is at the same time exposed to a portrayal of social problems that the Cajun community encountered. For example, this character states that the language was not transferred because of her daughter, yet she does not blame her daughter. Instead, she blames the American school system, for its harsh treatment of French-speaking students: “A’ voulait pas qu’i souffront côme elle alle avait souffert” (Guidry 73). This monologue depicts the poor treatment of Cajuns in the American (English) schools as a contributing factor to their desire to not transmit the Cajun dialect to future generations.

The unwillingness of some Cajuns to send their children to American schools is presented through the grandmother's recollection of how her daughter was treated in school: “Bin. Pow! Emma a r’çu ein coup d’tape su’ la dgeule pis alle a appris ses premières paroles en Anglais: - You-muss-spick-Anglish-li’l girl!” (Guidry 74). It suggests that not only did some Cajun parents have a negative association with the schools because of their use as a tool for assimilation, but also criticizes the severity of their tactics for assimilation: "Côment tu voulais qu'a parle en anglais? Alle avait jâmais a'tendu arien d'aut' que l'français cadjin qu'on parle, nous-aut', à la maison" (Guidry 74). The effects of Americanization are further presented through the debate between the grandmother and her husband, in which they present their hesitations about sending their daughter to school, "Bin il a v'nu icitte ein jour pis i' nous a dit côme ça que si on envoyait pas not' 'tite fille à l'école, i' nous auriont mis en prison. *Well*, on en a parlé moi et pauv' Sosthène pis on a decidé que c'était pas mieux qu'on s'faise mett' en prison" (Guidry 73-4). The fact that they discussed whether it would be better for them to go to prison than to send their daughter to an American school depicts a negative association that this community may have had with Americans, American culture and Americanization. It also illustrates how their perspectives on these events contribute to a conceptualization of Cajun identity.

This negative ascription to educational institutions is also portrayed in "Mille misères" and "La douce réunion." In "Mille misères" both Père and Grand-Père express their distaste for the American education system and the effects it had on Cajuns. Their negative experiences with and perceptions of the school lead Garçon, the grandson of Grand-Père and son of Père, to want to escape Americanization himself. He goes to his teacher and tells her that he wishes to leave school:

> Mademoiselle Sénégal, j'ai venu pour te dire que je vais quitter l'école. L'école est du poison pour les Cadiens. Ça peut pas nous faire du bien. Ça nous détruit. Mon père a jamais eu besoin de l'école. Ça qui est assez bon pour mon père est assez bon pour mon. Je vas rester Cadien pur. (Marcantel 63)

This excerpt highlights the association of school with assimilation since Garçon says that he wants to quit school because "[ç]a nous détruit" and he wants to "rester Cadien pur." It is through the plays' ability to discuss and challenge social problems that the audience gains a better understanding of the Cajun community and their identity. In this excerpt, Marcantel depicts in this fictional play how educational institutions may have negatively affected Cajuns, and portrays the effects that they had across characters of different generations.

In "Mille misères," Marcantel provides the audience with insight into how different members of the same family may perceive Cajun identity in the American state. The use of monologues contextualizes the distaste for Americans and Americanization and explains why characters like Avocat felt that assimilation was necessary for survival. Yet, there still seems to be a trend towards associating loss of Cajun culture and identity with Americanization. In the same play, Grand-Père describes the importance of the Cajun dialect for the Cajun culture,

people, and identity: "y savont pas que not' langage, c'est tout' not' vie. C'est chaque rêve, chaque pensée, chaque mot tend', chaque farce, chaque bonne idée. C'est tout. C'est not' passé. C'est le présent et l'avenir" (Marcantel 49). In this excerpt, Grand-Père explains the importance of Cajun French for the vitality of the Cajun community. He states that their language is everything; it's their life, their present, their future, and their past. By talking about Cajun French and the effects of assimilation the reasons that Grand-Père and Père are against education are contextualized and validated. Obligatory education in English is depicted as having facilitated language loss. This is also observed in "Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," where the use of Cajun French was inhibited due to assimilation through educational institutions and language laws. As such assimilation and Americanization in any form are presented in the play as further contributing to the deconstruction of Cajun identity. This is why this play can be read as a call for action and reaction, because it addresses past social problems between the Cajun community, Americans, and assimilation and it suggests that they still exist.

"Mille misères" also acknowledges that some members of the community turned to Americanization as a means of survival. Avocat, one of Grand-Père's sons, tells Père "je n'ai jamais parlé français avec mes enfants parce que je ne voulais pas qu'ils souffrent ce que j'ai dû souffrir. Je n'ai jamais voulu qu'ils commencent leur vie à zéro" (Marcantel 60). This quote suggests again that Americanization may have had negative effects on the vitality of the Cajun community, at least as they are presented in the play. Both Avocat in "Mille misères" and Grand-M'Man's daughter in "Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," are depicted in a similar way. In both plays, it is neither Grand-M'Man's daughter's nor Avocat's fault for not transmitting the language as they both wanted to save their children from the same hardships that they experienced. Their reactions to Americanization, however, contrast with Père's who

nevertheless believes that the transmission of the Cajun language, culture, and identity is an individual responsibility. These two points of view expose the audience to different portrayals of the ways in which members of the Cajun community may have reacted to assimilation. Both reactions are contextualized as depicting the diversity of Cajun political identities and demonstrating that not all Cajuns share the same sentiments towards assimilation.

To return again to their discussion of what it means to be Cajun, Père and Avocat, who both experienced Americanization through the educational system, understand Cajun identity differently after both having experienced assimilation.

> Père: [...] Je peux pas faire comme toi, arrêter d'êt' cadien
>
> Avocat: Mais je ne peux pas arrêter d'être acadian non plus. Je suis né des mêmes parents que toi.
>
> Père: Ti comprends pas quoi c'est êt' cadien. On peut a'oir ein nom cadien sans êt' cadien. Et' cadien, c'est eine monyère de viv' et de jongler. (Marcantel 59)

This passage demonstrates that Cajun identity is not fixed since both brothers consider themselves to be Cajun in spite of their differences, but it also suggests how assimilation could have affected how members of the community perceive Cajun identity. Avocat does not see his displacement to the city and use of a standard French as abandoning his Cajun identity. Père on the other hand strongly believed the being Cajun is "eine monyère de viv,'" a way of life. Regardless of the different ways that characters conceptualize their own identity, through the examination of social problems, the audience comes to understand that there are varied points of view on Americanization.

Additionally, unlike “Hallo, cher, Grand-M’Man’s fine, an’ y’all?,” which also offers a negative portrait of the effects that Americanization possibly had on the Cajun family relationships and cultural transfer, “Mille misères” addresses Americanization as a current issue that can still be changed. “Mille misères” suggests that there is still a need to address the situation of preservation of Cajun culture and identity and that it is not too late to decolonize and revive the Cajun community. This is visible in the final scene, in which Père loses all hope for the vitality of the Cajun community and tells his son that they will move to the city. This can be understood as a metaphor for assimilation into the dominant American culture since Père had discussed earlier in the play "[t]oute cette histoire de cocodris est arien d'aut' qu'ein complot pour nous faire déménager à la ville. Y savont qu'eine fois à la ville, le Cadien perd tout son héritage. C'est ça y voulont" (Marcantel 45). This suggests that the vitality of Cajun culture is still at risk, but also demonstrates that it is up to the younger generations to react to this and to try to find a solution. Père explains to his son that they are defeated, there is no hope for Cajuns, they have no choice but to assimilate:

> Père: C'est trop tard. On arrive à un point ayoù-ce que les mains sont amarrées. Ya pus de choix pour nous-aut'. Les pouvoirs rangés cont' nous-aut; sont si grands et j'sus si lasse ... Je peux pus me batt'. Je suis trop largue. Je lâche la patate.
>
> Garçon: (*Entrant en scène*) Ayoù-ce qu'on va, nous aut'?
>
> Purhpy: En ville. C'est fini. Hibou, viens vite faire tes valises.
>
> Garçon: Non, vous ira sans moi, alors. Je sors de tchuer le Djâb.
>
> (Marcantel 69-70)

Here the audience observes that not only does assimilation into the American culture have an effect on the preservation of the Cajun culture, but that all aspects of Americanization and the American way of life contribute to this problem. This can be seen in the change of Père's name to Purphy, the English pronunciation of his name "quand Parfait a revenue de l'école il avait devenu Purphy" (Marcantel 46). This, alongside the dialogue, suggests that even moving to the city can have an effect on the vitality of the Cajun way of life and identity since even the most devoted Cajun succumbed to the effects of assimilation into the dominant culture. Likewise, this excerpt demonstrates through Garçon's choice to not follow his family to the city suggests that the fate of Cajun heritage, way of life, language, and identity is ultimately in the hands of the youth and that they need to react in order to keep Cajun alive. This is because it is Garçon who decides to stay and fight against Americanization.

"La douce réunion," like "Mille misères" also addresses the Cajun cultural loss through Americanization. However, unlike "Mille misères," which encourages people to react to the disappearing Cajun culture and Cajun identities, "La douce réunion" approaches the preservation, legitimization, and transmission of Cajun identity differently. Through interactions between Avocat and Père, "Mille misères" shows that there are different perceptions of Cajun identity and that it is not possible to be both Cajun and American. This is evident in the conceptualization of Cajun identity as encompassing, language, locality, ancestry, lifestyle, vocation, culture etc.[19] Yet, in "La douce réunion," there appears to be at least the possibility of being both Cajun and American. Likewise, the tactics used to preserve Cajun culture, way of life, and identity vary from those in "Mille misères." In "Mille misères" the responsibility for preserving Cajun culture is left to one generation. This is demonstrated in the last scene, where Père decides to move to the city and Garçon decides to stay in the country, since the places of residence – rural or urban –

[19] Refer to Chapter 2 for a more in depth analysis of how different characters understand Cajun identity.

are understood to correspond to Cajun and American identities, respectively. "La douce réunion," on the other hand, suggests that it is everyone's responsibility to preserve Cajun language, culture, identity, etc. This is depicted when Douce, the grandmother of the family, decides during a family gathering to divide up her possessions, pieces of Cajun identity. One example of the items distributed was a chaudière. In this exchange between Douce, Richard, her son, and Manoune, her daughter, Douce explains the chaudière's significance and why she wanted to give it to her daughter Vivian;

> Douce: C'est pas ta chaudière, ma fille. J'vas la donner à Vivian pour qu'alle apprend à faire ein bon gombo.
>
> Manoune: Quoi? Vivian va jamais apprendre à cuire comme nous autres.
>
> Richard: Alle a jamais le temps pour venir nous 'oir, alle a sûrement pas le temps d'apprendre à cuire comme nous autres.
>
> Douce: T'a raison. C'est pour ça j'veux 'i donner. Si alle apprend à faire ein bon roux, sans le brûler, a' va peut-être s'approacher à nous autres […]. (Broussard and Troups 351)

This excerpt shows that Douce is actively approaching the preservation of Cajun culture. She is giving the chaudière to one of her daughters who does not know how to make a gumbo, with the hopes that she will learn. Through learning how to make a gumbo Douce says that Vivian "va peut-être s'approacher à nous autres" – that is she may regain some of her Cajun cultural identity. Douce gives away items ranging from a rosary to a French-English dictionary, each with its own significance and relationship to Cajun identity. Additionally, the fact that she assigned items to various family members, children and grandchildren alike, regardless of whether they spoke the language or were half American, demonstrates that she considers each and every one of them

Cajun. Her active role in helping to transmit and preserve Cajun culture and identity suggests that no matter how Americanized members of the Cajun community have become: there is still hope for a revival, rebirth, and legitimization of Cajun culture.

This is reinforced by the position of "La douce réunion" as the last play in the anthology. Although the plays appear in the anthology in chronological order (Mauguière and Ryon 203-4), the placement of "La douce réunion" coincidentally reaffirms *Le Théâtre Cadien* as ethnic theatre. Given the content of this play and the message that cultural vitality and preservation is everyone's responsibility, this play could be used an educational tool for members of the community and outsiders alike. It shows that the power to revive and legitimize Cajun culture is in all of us, no matter how detached we may be from it. This is exhibited by Douce giving her possessions to various family members in hopes that they can regain and revive parts of their Cajun identity. Likewise, since the last object that is distributed is a French-English dictionary to her grandson Marcus, who is half American but learns standard French in school, the importance of language for Cajun identity is also presented. The value of speaking and understanding as it contributes to Cajun identity is also presented in an afterword, on the very last page of the anthology, which states:

> En présentant ces oeuvres dramatiques en français cadien, ça nous rappellera peut-être aussi de bonnes mémoires, en vous donnant en même temps beaucoup d'agrément: mais avant tout, ça vous encouragera peut-être à garder cette précieuse resource de vie en parlant français tous les jours. **Allons parler français aujourd'hui pour demain.** (emphasis in original, Waggoner 366)

Since this appears on the very last page of the anthology, the last play that discussed preservation and vitality of Cajun identity is fresh in the readers mind. The audience also comes to understand why the perspectives on the effects that educational institutions had on the assimilation of Cajuns into the dominant American culture are so negative. Through a better understanding of the Cajun political identities or points of view on social problems, the call for action to re-establish and revive Cajun is reinforced.

In conclusion, this analysis demonstrates that although the relationship between American and Cajun cultures and Americanization is presented in different ways in the texts, its presence in educational institutions can be found in "Hallo, cher, Grand-M'Man's fine, an' y'all?," "Mille misères," and "La douce réunion," which all present different characters' points of view on the effects of assimilation through schools. Although different plays bring different perspectives to the effects of assimilation on the preservation and transmission of Cajun language, culture, and identity, these perspectives contribute to the audience's understanding of Cajun identity. This is because through the plays' presentations of social problems the political identities of different members of the Cajun community are revealed as contributing to the conceptualization of Cajun identity. The presence of discussions and reactions to Americanization demonstrates that although different members of the same community have different points of view on assimilation, the shared experience of Americanization itself is a uniting component in the construction of the Cajun community's identity. Finally, through contextualizing these theatrical pieces as ethnic theatre, the discussion and presentation of social and political concerns presented in the anthology can also serve to depict the social and political identities of the Cajun community, at least as perceived by several playwrights. This is especially relevant when considering the portrayal of and discussions about Americanization and

assimilation in select plays in the anthology. These conversations on Americanization show that the plays could also be understood as an educational tool since they teach the audience about the effects of Americanization. The plays also examine and critique this social problem. The ways in which Americanization is addressed allows the plays like “Mille misères” and “La douce réunion” to act as a call for action to decolonize the Cajun community and re-invigorate Cajun culture and identity.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the portrayals of Cajun identity in the theatre anthology *Une fantaisie collective*. This was achieved through an analysis of the written form used for the theatrical pieces, the different ways that Cajuns of different generations are depicted as conceptualizing Cajun identity, as well as how as an example of ethnic theatre, the plays can be understood as educational tools and a means to address social and political issues. In spite of the variety of depictions of Cajun culture present in this anthology, my research illustrates that defining it is not only more complex than the stereotypical image of Cajuns, but also that it is not fixed. It also shows that representations of Cajun identity are conditioned by many factors: the content of the play, theatre as a medium, the written form of the script, the context in which the play was written, etc.

In short, my research draws connections between the plays in the anthology, the times in which the plays were written, the effects of the written form, the challenges to the stereotypical images of Cajun culture, and social problems. Further research on theatrical pieces outside of this anthology could also provide some insight into the effects on theatre as an educational tool. It would also be beneficial for further research to investigate the reception of the plays and the contexts in which they were performed. Likewise, research on the authors of the plays could provide insight into the reasons for particular orthographic choices and other features of the texts. Finally, as an outsider of the Cajun community, my research only provides an interpretation of the written text. A member of the Cajun community, and a native speaker of the Cajun dialect could no doubt provide a more in depth interpretation of the effects that these theatrical pieces had and have on Cajuns, and could also provide a more in-depth analysis of the spelling choices in the written form and the implications for those choices. This thesis nevertheless takes the first

steps in the study of how the plays in *Une fantasie collective: Anthologie du drame louisianais cadien* may be understood as both a collection and in relation to one another. It also points the way for other researchers to further investigate how Cajun culture and identity are negotiated in theatrical pieces.

Appendix 1: Cajun Specific Phrases

Play	"fils de poteau"*	"laisser les bons temps rouler"*
“Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi”	"fils de p...oteau" (Waggoner 16)	"tous les bons temps que j'ai laissé rouler" (Waggoner 13)
“Martin Weber, constable”	-	-
“Mille misères : Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane”	-	"On laisse le bon temps roule!" (Marcantel 65)
“Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?”	-	-
“La table des veuves”	-	-
“La fête à Clomaire”	-	-
“Le charivari”	-	-
“Grosbecs”	"[...] fille de poteau" (Stelly 144)	-
“Martin Weber et les Marais Bouleurs”	-	-
“Les Attakapas”		
“La dernière quilte”		"Avec les beaux temps qu'on est après avoir là [...]" (Broussard, Toups, and Leblanc 243)
“Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc”	"Fils de poteau!" (Viator 301) "Fils de poteau!" (Viator 311)	"Laisse le bon temps rouler!!" (Viator 305)
“La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne”	-	-

*N.B. the presence of repeated Cajun words or phrases is not limited to the two depicted in this chart. Other words and phrases include; "lâche pas la patate," "éyoù," "asteur," "asoir," "équand," etc. and are discussed more in depth in the first chapter of this thesis.

Appendix 2: Setting of Each Play

Play	Location
“Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi”	“[Jean l'Ours: ...]Mais je voudrais te donner quelque chose qui est très improtant pour un homme comme moi. Roi: et quoi c'est ça? Jean l'Ours: C'est de la terre. Roi: De la terre? Jean l'Ours: Ouais, je vas te donner vingt-cinq arpents de ma terre [...] Puis tu peux aller à la pêche aussi; puis dessus la terre haute, tu peux aller à la chasse. Il y a des animaux en masse, mon ami.” (Waggoner 26)
“Martin Weber, constable”	Ossun, Louisiana
“Mille misères : Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane”	Bayou St. Pierre, Louisiana
“Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?”	-
“La table des veuves”	Coulée Croche, Louisiana St. Landry Parish, Louisiana
“La fête à Clomaire”	sud de Kaplan, Louisiana
“Le charivari”	“C'est un habitant cadien qui a tout le temps resté à la compagne jusqu'à qu'il y a à peu près cinq ans, quand i pouvait pus réussit à faire récolte.” (Trotter and Broussard 111)
“Grosbecs”	Bassin de l'Atchafalya, Louisiana
“Martin Weber et les Marais Bouleurs”	Ossun, Louisiana
“Les Attakapas”	Attakapas Country, Louisiana
“La dernière quilte”	South-West prairies of Louisiana Abbeville, Louisiana
“Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc”	Lafayette, Louisiana
“La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne”	L'Anse Couche-Couche, près de Grosse Ile, Louisiana

Appendix 3: References to Religion and the Use of "Bon Dieu"

Play	Bon Dieu/Bon Djeu	Reference to Cajun as Christian (Catholic) or Cajuns and religious practices
"Jean L'Ours et la fille du roi"	- "Cher Bon Dieu" (Waggoner 18) - "Cher Bon Dieu" (Waggoner 25)	- "C'est quand il y a un'tit enfant qui est mort et qui a jamais été baptisé" (Waggoner 22)
"Martin Weber, constable"	- "Si le Bon Dieu veut." (Waggoner 29) - "Oh, mon dieu!" (Waggoner 30) - "Bon Dieu Seigneur!" (Waggoner 31) - "Oh, cher Bon Dieu!" (Waggoner 32)	- "'vilaine comme sept péchés mortels.'" (Waggoner 40)
"Mille misères : Laissant le bon temps rouler en Louisiane"	- "que le bon Djeu nous aide!" (Marcantel 43) - "[...] comme le Bon Deu l'a ordonné" (Marcantel, 48) - "Le Bon Djeu est après nous punir" (Marcantel 50)*	- "'Joe,' c'était mis à l'église et quand le prêt' a dit qu'y fallait qu'ein bébé porte le nom d'ein saint. T'étais si tracassée d'a'oir ein nom Amaricain que t'avais oublié le Bon Djeu." (Marcantel 47) - "Les Cadiens sont proche tout catholiques." (Matcantel 50)*
"Hallo, cher, Grand'M'Man's fine, an' y'all?"	- "[...] on a prié l'Bon Dieu" (Guidry 74)	- "[...] on a prié l'Bon Dieu" (Guidry 74)
"La table des veuves"	- "Pour l'amour de Dieu, quoi c'est j'ai fait au bon Dieu pour mériter ca!" (Waggoner 76) - "Mais écoute, le Bon Dieu a tout vu de ça chère." (Waggoner 77)	- "Tu connais, on avait été à la messe de samedi soir. [...]" (Waggoner 84) - "[...] j'étais à la maison après dire des chapelets pour mon pauvre mari Claude." (Waggoner 88)
"La fête à Clomaire"	---	- "A la messe, tu connais comment les jeunes sont [...] après la messe il a embarqué [...]" (Comeaux 108)
"Le charivari"	---	- "[...] le prêtre l'a manquée à la table sainte deux dimanches de suite." (Trotter and Broussard 122) - "A la messe [...]" (Trotter and Broussard124)
"Grosbecs"	- "Je veux prier et parler avec le Bon Dieu." (Stelly 146) - "Quoi c'est t'as à dire au Bon Dieu?" (Stelly 146) - "C'est pas comme ça qu'on parle au Bon Dieu." (Stelly 146)*	- "Je suis tannée de rester à ce *camp* dire mon chapelet toute seule [...]" (Stelly 133) - "Tout ce que je fais c'est m'assire icitte avec rien que mon chapelet [...]" (Stelly 136) - "Emmène-moi à la messe." (Stelly 136)*
"Martin Weber et les Marais Bouleurs"	- "Oh, Bon Dieu!" (Waggoner 157) - "Quoi j'ai fait au Bon Dieu pour mériter ça? [...] Pour l'amour de	- "[...] j'ai même entendu dire qu'il avaient l'habitude de rentrer le cheval dans l'église, si tu peux croire" (Waggoner 160)

	Bon Dieu" (Waggoner 162) - "Quoi c'est qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu pour être accroché?" (Waggoner 183) - "Bon Dieu!" (Waggoner 183) - "Oh merci Bon Dieu, je croyais [...]" (Waggoner 186) - "Merci Bon Dieu." (Waggoner 187)	- "[...] Aussi, tu connais, ça sersit un péché mortel. Père Denduron a toujours dit ça. Faut se marier dans l'église." (Waggoner 180) - "Ça va jamais faire si vous autres se marie pas dans l'église." (Waggoner 180) - "[...] ou Dieu va dire [...]" (Waggoner 183) - "C'est ça que tu appelles vilaine comme sept péchés mortels." (Waggoner 189) - "[...] du monde empacté dans l'église" (Waggoner 190)
“Les Attakapas”	- "Je connais bien que le bon Dieu veut [...]" (Fontenot 203) - "[...] prions au Bon Dieu qu'il nous protège [...]" (Fontenot 216) - "Merci Bon Dieu!" (Fontenot 229)	- "On a prié des chapelets et des chapelets, on l'a baignée avec de l'eau bénite [...]" (Fontenot 200) - "Pour l'amour de Dieu [...]" (Fontenot 200) - "Lui et ses grandes messes chantées en Latin!" (Fontenot 201) - "Elle [Lucy] est à l'église." (Fontenot 233)
“La dernière quilte”	- "[...] c'est pas à un prêtre à empêcher quelque chose le Bon Dieu a déjà commencé." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 244) - "Merci le bon Dieu [...]" (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 253)	- "Oh, ils ont fait Pâques avant Careme!" (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc, 239) - "Mais Pâques sera de bonne heure cette année." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 240) - "C'est quelle date le prêtre vous a donnée, chère?" (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 240) - "Frank est pas Catholique. [...] Ouais mais Mom, Frank a déjà donné sa parole à Père Poché d'élever les enfants Catholiques." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 240) - "[...] le prêtre vous a sacré le catéchisme-là [...] le prêtre aurait consenté qu'un Méthodiste se marie dans l'église Catholique."(Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 244) - "[...] comme tous les bons Catholiques. Moi je trouve qu'il est proche Cadien." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 244) - "Frank a déjà signé une promesse d'élever se petits catholiques." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 244) - "[...] la robe que je t'ai fait pour le baptême à Belle." (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 246) - "[...] je t'avais fait cette robe-là pour le baptême à Belle." (Broussard, Troups and

		LeBlanc, 246) - "On a baptisé Belle [...]" (Broussard, Troups, and LeBlanc 246)
“Messieurs, mesdames et mes chers amis: une pièce en français 'cadien de la vie de Dudley J. Leblanc”	- "Le Bon Dieu lui a donné [...]" (Viator 282) - "Dud, le Bon Dieu t'as donné [...]" (Viator 291) - "Que le Bon Dieu bénisse l'âme de ta tante." (Viator 295)	- "Tu vios Broussard, il est Cadien catholique." (Viator 301-2) - "Quand le Bon Dieu a créé quoi nous-autres on connaît comme le monde [...]" (Viator 319) - "Puis tout d'un coup le Bon Dieu a regardé [...]" (Viator 319)
“La douce réunion: des Duhon, une famille cadienne”	- "C'est le Bon Dieu qui l'a décidé il y a ben loongtemps." (Broussard 340) - "Merci Bon Dieu [...]" (Broussard 342) - "Merci Bon Dieu [...]" (Broussard 349) - "Le Bon Dieu connaît que j'ai jamais voulu vous faire du mauvais sang" (Broussard 354) - "Désirée, il faut pouvoir se recommander aux mains du Bon Dieu ma fille." (Broussard 355) - "[...] un don du Bon Dieu [...]" (Broussard 356) - "[...] toujours fier de pouvoir gagner la vie près de la terre et des animaux du Bon Dieu." (Broussard 356) - "Je remercie le Bon Dieu [...]" (Broussard 358)	- "C'est pas moi qu'a abandonné ma religion. [...] L'église catholique m'a abandonné, moi! [...] Les cadiens sont otus Catholiques." (Broussard 340) - "[...] les autres vont ervenir de la messe [...] Awh, mon bon vieux chapelet. [...] J'vas 'i montrere comment prier le chapelet en français. [...] Je vous salue Marie, pleine de grâce, [...]" (Broussard 345) - "Après la messe [...]" (Broussard 348) - "Y avait un gros vent de Carême [...]" (Broussard 352) - "J'ai jamais prié plus fort dans ma vie. Dovic disait que je l'avais sauvée avec mes prières et il m'a acheté ce chapelet pour ma fête.[...]" (Broussard 355) - "C'est pour ça que je voudrais te montrer à dire tes prières en français." (Broussard 355) - "[...] take these prayer beads." (Broussard 355) - "[...] j'ai appris a lire mon cathécisse [...]" (Broussard 257)

*More references appeared later on in the play, however I stopped documenting them after this citation.

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