

PART III
VAUGELAS 'HONNÊTE HOMME'

CHAPTER 13

THE POPULARITY OF THE *REMARQUES* IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the *Remarques*, like the Quintus Curtius translation, were a great success in the seventeenth century. The book ran to more than twenty editions in the period up to 1738, at a time when, as Lough points out, the reading public was relatively small owing to widespread illiteracy.¹ Its success was as great in the provinces as in Paris: Martin and Lecocq record from their study of the accounts of one Grenoble bookshop that twenty-one copies of the work were sold in this one bookshop alone between 1647 and 1658, eight of them in 1649.² Moreover, it is well known that Pierre Corneille during his retirement from writing plays between 1652 and 1659 revised his earlier plays in line with the pronouncements of the *Remarques* and that Racine took a copy of them with him to Uzès so that he should not be corrupted by the language of the provinces.³ Molière in his *Femmes Savantes* of 1672 can refer to the linguistic norm associated with correctness and politeness as ‘parler Vaugelas’ without explanation, assured that his audience will understand the allusion.⁴ Not only does the Classical literature of the third quarter of the seventeenth century bear witness to the extent of the popularity and influence of Vaugelas’s work; as we shall see in the next chapter, the vast majority of the works on language produced in the next half-century owe a debt to Vaugelas’s book, whether in respect of content, form or style. In these too, many of the authors refer to Vaugelas’s ideas or decisions without explicitly mentioning him by name, apparently confident that their readers will know to whom they are referring. Reviews of different editions of the *Remarques* further confirm the popularity of Vaugelas’s work. Le Clerc begins his review by asserting how well known the *Remarques* are, Basnage de Beauval notes that ‘les *Remarques* de Mr de Vaugelas ont passé pour un chef-d’œuvre’, and Bernard comments that everyone is agreed on the usefulness of the *Remarques*.⁵

Why were the *Remarques* so popular with the public? If we consider their function in the society of the time and look at who purchased the work we may be better equipped to answer this question. The book was clearly not used in schools, for we know that at this time the primarily Jesuit educational

establishments aimed to teach their pupils to write Latin elegantly.⁶ Nearly all the lessons were conducted in Latin and the pupils were obliged to speak Latin all the time, even when conversing amongst themselves. French was taught from textbooks written in Latin and was considered relatively unimportant. In the teaching of Latin the grammar of Despauterius held sway for many years, and it was only later in the century in the Port-Royal schools that Lancelot's *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre facilement et en peu de temps la langue latine* (1644) written in French was introduced.⁷ The Preface of the *Remarques* confirms that the book was neither aimed at this audience, nor intended for foreigners (*R*, xiv, 4).

Lough establishes that writers generally aimed their works at the Court and the well-educated: living in an aristocratic society, writers wrote for the upper strata of that society, from the King and Court down to the more cultured sections of the middle class.⁸ Martin and Lecocq record that in Grenoble the majority of readers came from the *Cours de justice* and from the aristocracy of the town.⁹ For a work to be successful in Paris in the seventeenth century, Lough claims it had to appeal to the Court and especially to the ladies.¹⁰ This raises two questions: do our sparse records about purchasers of the *Remarques* confirm this claim and why should the Court wish to read a work on language?

II. THE PURCHASERS OF THE *REMARQUES*

From the small sample of purchasers mentioned in the records of Nicolas's bookshop in Grenoble we can gather a few shreds of evidence about the occupations and hence about the social status of those purchasing the *Remarques* as represented by the customers in this provincial town. The people who bought a copy of the *Remarques* in the period up to 1668 in Grenoble are listed in Table 11.¹¹ From Martin's analysis of the collections in various individuals' libraries in Paris at the time, we can gather that the occupations of the

TABLE 11. The Purchasers of the *Remarques* in Grenoble (1647–68)

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- S.d., à M. de la Salle, chastellain de Montfleuri, 1 ex. à 2l.
- S.d., à M. Laigneau, 1 ex. (Philippe de Lagneau, gentilhomme ordinaire de la Chambre du Roi: bibliophile distingué il possédait 4000 volumes, mais fut, paraît-il obligé de vendre sa bibliothèque pour payer les dettes du Président Le Blanc)
- 1648, juillet, à M. Giraud, secrétaire de Mgr. de Servien, intendant en l'armée du Roi delà les Monts, un "observations de Vaugelas" à 5l. 5s. (Abel Servien, avocat en la Cour, nommé procureur général au Parlement par lettres du 31 août 1616, reçu le 22 mai suivant; nommé conseiller du Roi, maître des requêtes ordinaire de son hôtel en 1624; devint ensuite

- intendant de justice, police et finances de l'armée d'Italie, président du Conseil souverain établi à Pignerol et premier président au Parlement de Bordeaux; il allait rejoindre ce poste lorsqu'il obtint la charge de secrétaire d'Etat à la guerre)
- 1648, 6 août, à M^{lle} Du Portes, 1 ex. en veau fauve à 7l.
- 1649, (juin) à M. de Chevrières, conseiller du Roi et Président au Parlement de Bourgogne, 1 ex, à 2l.
- 1649, (octobre) à M. Du Vivier, vice-bailli, 1 ex. à 2l. 10s.
- 1649, novembre, aux enfants de M. de Lionne, Président aux comptes, 1 ex.
- 1649, novembre, à M. Balme, le fils, avocat, 1 ex. à 2l. 5s.
- 1649, (novembre) à M. de Mombive, 1 ex. à 2l. 5s. (Avocat en la Cour, nommé conseiller au Parlement par lettres du 4 octobre 1649, reçu le 16 novembre suivant; nommé président en remplacement et sur résignation de son père par lettres du 28 février 1655, reçu le 13 mai suivant)
- 1649, 31 décembre, à M. de Chevrières, conseiller du Roi, 1 ex. [as above]
- S.d. (1649), à M. de Bernard, conseiller du Roi, 1 ex.
- 1649–50, à Lyon, sur l'ordre de M. Blache de Romans, 1 ex.
- 1650, mars, à M. Vireli, secrétaire de Mgr. de la Berchère, 1 ex. à 2l. 15s.
- 1650, 15 mars, sur le compte de M. Ruynat, procureur en la Cour, à Monsieur son fils, 1 ex. à 2l. 10s.
- 1650, juin, à M. Maxemi, 1 ex. à 2l. 10s. (Avocat en la Cour, remplace son frère Philippe dans l'office paternel de secrétaire du Parlement par lettres du 25 Juillet 1649 et reçu le 20 août suivant; ensuite nommé en 1659 maître auditeur à la Chambre des comptes)
- 1651, 8 septembre, à M. Roux, conseiller du Roi, pour M. de Tremini, 1 ex. in-8° à 2l. 10s.
- 1653, 6 mars, à Mgr. de la Berchère, 1 ex. à 2l. 15s.
- 1653, avril, à M. de Morard fils, conseiller du Roi, et trésorier, 1 ex. in-4°.
- 1653, décembre, à M. Marnais le fils, trésorier, 1 "Vaugelas"
- 1656, 8 mars, à M. Bonnet, étudiant en théologie à Die, 1 ex.
- 1658, 23 novembre, à l'homme de M. de Bonneval et sur son compte, 1 ex. in-4° à 5l.

Grenoble purchasers were representative, for Martin mentions a copy of the *Remarques* in the libraries of Jean Fabry, 'simple "conseiller du roi en ses conseils et en sa direction des finances"', Jean-François Le Grand, 'simple avocat au Parlement de Paris', and Louis de Lapara, 'Lieutenant général des armées du Roi, gouverneur de Montdauphin et chevalier de l'ordre militaire de Saint-Louis'.¹² The readers of the *Remarques* in Grenoble cover a wide range of people including a woman, a student, and even some children;¹³ the nobility

is also represented. However, the most common profession in this list is that of 'conseiller du roi', glossed by Mousnier as 'de nombreux officiers, membres de Parlements, baillis, sénéchaux, leurs lieutenants, trésoriers généraux de France'.¹⁴ These were the financial and judicial office holders of the seventeenth century. The cases of M. de Mombive and M. Maxemi are particularly interesting. M. de Mombive, baptized in 1635, started his career as 'avocat en la cour'. In the year he purchased the *Remarques* he was named 'conseiller au Parlement', a promotion which entailed a rise in society, and he went on to become 'président' of this Parlement. M. Maxemi was another young man (baptized 1631) who began as an 'avocat en la cour'. He purchased his copy of the *Remarques* in the period between being named 'secrétaire au Parlement' and entering this position; he later became 'maître auditeur à la Chambre des comptes'. These then were two young men buying the *Remarques* at a crucial stage in their career when they were beginning to rise in society. It seems that the *Remarques* were especially popular amongst the financial and judicial office holders, some of whom came from aristocratic families, but many of whom may well have purchased their offices and may have been thereby ennobled, becoming members of the 'noblesse de robe' legally, even if they were not accepted socially by the 'noblesse de race' as fellow nobles. In order to see why the *Remarques* should primarily appeal to such men, we need to examine briefly the socio-cultural background of the work. In Wagner's words:

les grammaires qui sont des œuvres beaucoup plus personnelles qu'on ne le penserait au premier abord, ne prennent toute leur signification que si on les rattache d'abord à leurs auteurs et en second lieu à leur époque ainsi qu'aux milieux où elles ont circulé.¹⁵

III. REASONS FOR THE POPULARITY OF THE *REMARQUES*

It is well known that the seventeenth century was a period of rapid social mobility in France, when a large number of new nobles were created, resulting in what Bitton calls 'confusion and fluidity of noble status'.¹⁶ Mousnier, for instance, comparing Charles Loyseau's analysis of French society in 1610 with that of Saint-Simon writing at the beginning of the next century, notes that whereas for Loyseau French society is essentially a society of orders still based on the value of military service, with the *noblesse d'épée* being held in higher esteem than the *noblesse de robe*, by Saint-Simon's time magistrates and civil servants are more highly honoured than the hereditary profession of arms.¹⁷ During the reign of Henri IV and increasingly under Louis XIII the *noblesse de robe* gradually replaced the *noblesse d'épée* in the civil service of the state, and as the century progressed commerce became more and more dominant. Saint-Simon, along with the majority of the old nobility, protests at this change in society and characterizes his age as that of the 'règne de vile bourgeoisie'.

This social mobility was essentially the consequence of economic changes and the increasing need of the growing absolute monarchy with its concomitant expanding bureaucracy to raise money. Members of the old nobility were suffering economically, forced into debt and compelled to sell their estates, for, unlike the middle class who could do business freely and thereby amass wealth, they were debarred from trade. The wealth acquired from commerce enabled the bourgeoisie to rise in society by various means. From the sixteenth century on, but particularly during two periods under Richelieu from 1614 to 1622 and from 1633 on, the sale of offices mushroomed to raise finance for such ventures as the Thirty Years War.¹⁸ Many of the offices brought with them noble status, for example, that of *secrétaire du roi* or *magistrat des Cours souveraines*. Members of the old nobility did not have the resources to purchase these offices and so a large number of new nobles was created. Another road to social mobility was through the acquisition of *seigneuries*. Bitton claims that between 1400 and 1550 in the region south of Paris, at least 52 of the 65 lay *seigneuries* changed hands once or more and that the majority of these were taken over by non-nobles. Although land transfers in themselves did not effect a change in personal status, once a wealthy *roturier* owned a noble estate, he was in an excellent position to assume an aristocratic life-style, establish marriage connections and finally to become a full nobleman.¹⁹ Ennoblements by means of royal letters patent also increased dramatically during the seventeenth century as Louis XIII and Richelieu transformed France into the absolute state epitomized by Louis XIV and Versailles. A few new families were embraced by the nobility through intermarriage, for occasionally the daughters of rich middle class families married nobles, who were forced to accept *roturier* brides to provide the money to save their ailing estates. Finally, there were those members of the bourgeoisie who held offices which did not entitle them to noble status, who nevertheless adopted a noble life style and, like the parodied M. Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, aped the nobility in behaviour and dress. It was very often representatives of this group who were subsequently able to buy ennobling offices and establish themselves by buying what Mousnier calls the 'insurance policy' of the *paulette*.²⁰ The rise to nobility was not normally effected in one generation and Mousnier adds that very often the family would fall into decline quickly once it adopted the noble life-style of luxury and generosity.²¹

The acquisition of noble status by members of the bourgeoisie and the change in society thereby engendered was not, however, as simple as it may first appear. While these men were legally new nobles, they were not necessarily accepted socially as such by the old nobility who were often hostile to them.²² Certain practical distinctions were made between the old nobles and the *anoblis*. For instance, the latter did not always enjoy the same tax exemptions, they had to stand at council meetings, they were obliged to sit on

the back row of the Estates and they were not allowed to vote with the nobles.²³ Outward manifestations of social difference were, however, often ignored. Loyseau relates, for example, how, despite the ordinances forbidding non-nobles to wear noble clothing, the wives of privileged office holders did so anyway.²⁴ Moreover, the change in society was not so great that the bourgeoisie wanted to abolish the traditional stratification of society. On the contrary, their desire to acquire noble status underlines the importance they attached to the noble way of life. While then the *noblesse d'épée* were most unwilling to accept the *noblesse de robe* as true nobility and fought to exclude them from the ranks of the nobility, the new nobility strove to become accepted socially and fully integrated into noble circles by adopting a noble way of life in behaviour and dress.

A key feature of this process of assimilation was the adoption of the use of language appropriate to life at Court. Strosetzki in his study of conversation in the seventeenth century summarizes well the central importance of a good command of language and the skills of conversation if one wished to succeed as an *honnête homme* in the Court society of the day.²⁵ He notes how the concept of the *honnête homme* also evolved during the course of the seventeenth century. From being a moral and religiously based notion, it became a quality defined in social terms.²⁶ The ability to speak well therefore became a key factor in the evaluation of a newcomer to Court; in the words of Morvan de Bellegarde writing in 1697, 'on decide du merite d'un homme sur la maniere dont il se tire d'une Conversation'.²⁷ Gradually it was no longer considered essential to be high born to be an *honnête homme*, and it was felt that *honnêteté* could be acquired either from books or from association with other *honnêtes gens*.²⁸ It was deemed the duty of the speaker to please his hearer and this was something to which he was obliged to direct all his efforts. This was particularly true for a conversation with a woman because, as Vaugelas himself implies, women are very difficult creatures to please and one displeasing word will make them stop listening and lose interest in their interlocuter completely!:

Il ne faut qu'un mauvais mot pour faire mespriser vne personne dans vne Compagnie, pour descrier vn Predicateur, vn Aduocat, vn Escricuain. Enfin, vn mauuais mot, parce qu'il est aisé à remarquer, est capable de faire plus de tort qu'un mauuais raisonnement, dont peu de gens s'apperçoient, quoy qu'il n'y ait nulle comparaison de l'un à l'autre. (R, IX, 2)²⁹

As Strosetzki notes, a large amount of literature was devoted to helping people improve their conversational skills, primarily courtesy books aimed at familiarizing young people, provincials etc. with the ways of Court, but also literary works, grammars and rhetorics.³⁰

All this suggests why the *Remarques* were purchased by those aspiring to rise in society, as is indicated by Martin's documents. The *Remarques* were popular at a time when French society was changing rapidly, with the number of office

holders and sale of offices increasing, and men striving to ape the nobility. Like the courtesy books, so popular in the period, the *Remarques* provided a way, for those aspiring to a position of respect in society, of acquiring the behaviour necessary to be acceptable in Court circles.³¹ With the extension of polite society to groups outside the traditional nobility, the *Remarques* were useful in providing a way for newcomers to learn the language of the Court, so that they no longer stood out as different, but through imitation conformed socially. Surely the greatest fear of the new noble striving for social integration was to appear ridiculous, and Vaugelas offers much advice as to how to avoid this:

Et il ne faut pas croire, comme font plusieurs, que dans la conuersation, & dans les Compagnies il soit permis de dire en raillant vn mauuais mot, & qui ne soit du bon vsage; où si on le dit, il faut auoir vn grand soin de faire connoistre par le ton de la voix & par l'action, qu'on le dit pour rire; car autrement cela feroit tort à celuy qui l'auroit dit, & de plus il ne faut pas en faire mestier, on se rendroit insupportable parmy les gens de la Cour & de condition, qui ne sont pas accoustumez à ces sortes de mots. Ce n'est pas de cette façon qu'il se faut imaginer que l'on passe pour homme de bonne compagnie; entre les fausses galanteries, celle-cy est des premieres, & i'ay veu souuent des gens qui vsant de ces termes & faisant rire le monde, ont creu auoir reussi & neantmoins on se rioit d'eux, & l'on ne rioit pas de ce qu'ils auoient dit, comme on rit des choses agreables & plaisantes. (*R*, VII, 3)

If this is indeed the purpose of the work, then the reasoning behind much of Vaugelas's linguistic theory is explained, for instance, the insistence on linguistic conformity and the need to choose the word which the listener himself would have chosen in order to please. The social consequences of not choosing the right word are stressed and the reader is continually warned not to use any personal peculiarities of language, but is urged to conform (*R*, III, 2). The overriding concern to please also helps to justify many of the individual pronouncements. For instance, Vaugelas's comments on syntax are underpinned by a constant preoccupation with the avoidance of any ambiguity as this distracts the reader and causes displeasure.³² The *Remarques* can then be seen as a kind of courtesy book, aiding the newcomer to adopt the correct manners for his society, and to act with *bienséance*,³³ establishing his position in polite society through displaying a good use of language.

To the modern reader, especially one who has not grown up in a society sharing the Frenchman's concern for his language, the idea of having to learn one's own language like this may appear somewhat strange. The speaker is encouraged to guard against his natural inclinations and to concentrate on refinements of language which create an inexplicable feeling of pleasure in the reader or hearer. In the observation which expresses a preference for co-ordination of two nouns of different genders if possible, Vaugelas admits that many people will consider such a concern an over-refinement, but he adds:

Aussi ie ne blasme point ceux qui n'en vseront pas, mais ie suis certain que quiconque suiura cet auis plaira dauantage, & fera vne de ces choses dont se forme

la douceur du stile, & qui charme le Lecteur, ou l'Auditeur sans qu'il sçache d'où cela vient. (R, *473)

As the last clause indicates, the speaker or writer must not, however, give the impression that he is making an effort, that is, his use of language must appear natural. Any obvious attempt to be learned is frowned upon and a clear distinction is maintained between the *savant* and the *pédant*, who pursues learning to the exclusion of the social graces.³⁴ As we have already seen, Vaugelas recommends that technical terms should be restricted to their specialized sphere; it would not, for instance, be appropriate for a noble to use a commercial term associated with trade and consequently the province of the middle class.

Where did this social integration take place? Lougee suggests that one of the places where those aspiring to rise socially could learn to *vivre noblement* was the salons where questions of language were much discussed.³⁵ It has already been noted that Vaugelas himself was a regular visitor to the salons of Madame de Rambouillet and Madame des Loges, where he probably tried out many of his ideas on language and made detailed observation of the linguistic habits of the salon-goers. Here too behaviour rather than social position was the key to advancement: in order to succeed one had to conform to the accepted etiquette, dress and use of language. Lougee suggests that in a sense the salons were an extension of the institutionalized Court which, since the sixteenth century, had embraced the city elite.³⁶ Increasingly in the salons money rather than social status was the common factor in the lives of the salon ladies; Lougee's analysis proves the diversity of the origin of salon ladies — noble and non-noble, titled and untitled, from families who had acquired titles and those who had inherited them — and contrasts this with the relative homogeneity of their wealth.³⁷ For instance, about half of the ladies on Somaize's list of *Précieuses* belonged to families outside the traditional nobility, to administrative, financial and *parlementaire* families, indeed to those families who had profited from the expansion of bureaucracy, the expedient of venality, and the system of tax farming to rise to positions of power and wealth.³⁸ The salons then were a place where old and new nobles could meet, a place of cultural fusion. It may well have been in the salons that Vaugelas came to realize the power a good use of language could have and saw the need for a work on good language usage which would help social aspirants to adapt themselves to their new environment. Manuals to give instruction on various aspects of culture were numerous³⁹ and, as we have seen, Vaugelas's work is closer in format and method of presentation to, for instance, Faret's *Honneste Homme* than to any previous grammar.

It was women then who came to be considered the arbiters of good taste and of social behaviour in the seventeenth century. The *Précieuses* in particular concerned themselves with questions of language. While this tended towards

extravagance and eccentricity in the second half of the century, as the exaggerated parodies of Molière and Somaize suggest, in many ways the *Précieuses'* concept of purism was inspired by Vaugelas's formulation. Magendie therefore summarizes their role in polite society in the following way: 'En un mot, elles ont appliqué l'esprit de politesse et l'élégance à la conversation'.⁴⁰

Certain features of the *Remarques* suggest that the work may have been written with the salon milieu as well as the Court in mind. Just as women dominated salon life, so they played a crucial role in the elaboration of the *Remarques*. Their speech is taken as the best source of information about good usage, since their judgements are generally not coloured by pedantry, and their reactions to a certain word or phrase are taken as a measure by which one may judge its acceptability. For instance, Vaugelas is reluctant to condone the use of *expedition* because:

j'ay bien pris garde, que des Dames d'excellent esprit lisant vn liure, où ce mot estoit employé au sens dont nous parlons, s'estoient arrestées tout court au milieu d'un des plus beaux endroits du liure, perdant ou du moins interrompant par l'obscurité d'un seul mot le plaisir qu'elles prenoient en cette lecture. (*R*, 370)⁴¹

The shift of emphasis from written to spoken usage between the manuscript and the published *Remarques* discussed in Chapter 5 might also be explained by referring to Vaugelas's growing realization of the importance of good linguistic usage both at Court and in the salons.

However, it is likely that it was not only to the *anoblis* that the *Remarques* appealed. Such works on etiquette and correct behaviour were also read by members of the old nobility who, stripped of their former role in society, found themselves 'unemployed'. Bitton points out that the majority of the nobility no longer participated in the most characteristically aristocratic form of military service because of the declining use of the *ban et arrière-ban*, the growing importance of the infantry and the breakdown of class segregation in military units.⁴² Moreover, since the administrative and judicial offices had become purchasable, the nobility had been unable to compete with the *nouveaux riches* for them, and with the growth of central government their role in the provinces was likewise lessened. In their idleness they turned to the Court and the salons for entertainment, to discussions on language, manners and etiquette.

Strosetzki goes so far as to suggest that since the nobility only had Court and salon life to preoccupy them, then the art of conversation became virtually a professional occupation for them. It was by their success in conversation that they were judged by their peers. If misunderstandings could be dangerous and perhaps even result in a duel, skill in conversation could bring favour from princes and perhaps as a consequence financial reward.⁴³ The ability to speak well then not only helped social integration but was also a means of finding

favour, of improving one's position, in short, as Ott terms it, of wielding power over others:

le bon usage pouvait devenir pour celui qui tenait compte du mécanisme des 'ressorts cachés', un instrument puissant et délicat pour gouverner les autres . . . moyen d'adaptation à la société, elle [sc. l'obéissance au bon usage] constituait également le dernier raffinement du machiavélisme.⁴⁴

Both the old nobility and the *anoblis*, once they had achieved the social integration desired, strove to exclude the entrance of new members to their ranks. They wished to remain an elite and so aimed at an increasingly refined use of language which would distance them from their social inferiors. Perhaps this is one reason why Vaugelas himself speaks of good usage being the possession of an elite and not of 'la lie du peuple', a recurring mark of condemnation in the *Remarques*. The idea of elitism is also fundamental to *préciosité*, whose very name suggests, in the Abbé de Pure's words, a desire to 'se tirer du prix commun des autres'.⁴⁵ Nor is it surprising that it is to the Court and to Paris that Vaugelas looks for his informants on good usage. The monarchy had gained considerably in prestige since the time of Catherine de Médicis, and with the growth of absolutism under Louis XIII and Richelieu all eyes became focused on the King and his immediate circle.⁴⁶

Reference to the socio-cultural milieu and historical background against which the *Remarques* were written thus not only helps to explain the popularity of the work, but also elucidates many of the methodological decisions made by Vaugelas. If the success of a work was dependent on its appeal to the Court and especially to the ladies as Lough suggests, then it is no wonder that the *Remarques* were so popular. Sorel's appreciation of the way in which people are judged in society highlights the particular appeal of the *Remarques* in facilitating social integration and guaranteeing social success:

On prend aujourd'huy pour des Hommes de basse condition & de peu d'esprit, ceux qui parlent mal François; au moins on les tient pour des Prouvinciaux qui n'ont iamais veu la Cour & le grand Monde, ou pour des Gens mal instruits. On doit donc s'étudier à la politesse du Langage, autant qu'à celle de la contenance, ou de la maniere de se vestir, et qu'à tout ce qui parest [sic] en l'exterieur; Il ne faut pas qu'il manque rien à celui qui se veut rendre parfait.⁴⁷

As the title of the work indicates, the *Remarques* are to be useful 'à ceux qui veulent bien parler et bien écrire', and Vaugelas's observations appear to have been successful precisely because they fulfilled this aim.

CHAPTER 14

THE INFLUENCE OF THE *REMARQUES*

I. INTRODUCTION

The impact of the *Remarques* has been wide-ranging and profound. Vaugelas, the *honnête homme* writing for polite society, had produced a best-seller and subsequent writers were quick to adopt the format or the style of presentation of the work for their publications or indeed to assimilate its contents. If, in Pellisson's words, Vaugelas's *Remarques* 'ont été choquées de plusieurs', they were nevertheless read, digested and copied; in short, 'elles s'établissent peu à peu dans les esprits et y acquièrent de jour en jour plus de crédit'.¹ Vaugelas's method and presentation inspired many and he helped to establish a new tradition of works containing observations on the French language, a large number of which appeared in the 1680s and 1690s despite the publication in 1660 of the Port-Royal *Grammaire generale et raisonnée*, which was to be so influential in the following century.² But the style of presentation and content of the work did not only influence the writers of grammars and treatises on language in the period immediately following its publication: Vaugelas's pronouncements have found their way into standard reference works for French, his descriptive methodology has been adopted, for instance, in an important contemporary grammar, Grevisse's *Le Bon Usage*, and his chosen format of short observations on problematic issues has probably contributed to the establishment of the French fashion for 'linguistic journalism', short articles devoted to 'faits de langage' in newspapers and journals. In a broader sphere, seventeenth-century works on rhetoric echo and develop many of Vaugelas's ideas, as do courtesy books and etiquette manuals, and the literature of the second half of the century for the most part respects Vaugelas's judgements and shares his concern for the value of *netteté* and *pureté*. Even today, when the observations themselves may be little read, the influence of the *Remarques* on grammatical writing and indeed on French usage is still evident.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE *REMARQUES* IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A. *Works on the French Language*

Both the content and the format of the *Remarques* inspired Vaugelas's successors. Already in the 1650s material from Vaugelas's work was adopted

and assimilated by writers on the French language. In some cases the observations found their way, virtually unchanged, into collections of works on French. For instance, Jean Macé, under the pseudonym of 'le Sieur du Tertre', published in 1650 a collection of three works on language, a 'Methode generale et raisonnee; pour apprendre facilement les Langues, principalement la Latine', a treatise on orthographic problems, and a summary of Vaugelas's *Remarques* placed in alphabetical order, a format which, he claims, will aid the 'honnestes Gens' for whom Vaugelas intended the work.³ In his *Preface au lecteur* he makes no claim to be an original thinker, merely an editor: 'Je n'ay donc fait que cueillir ces belles, & iudicieuses Remarques. Je n'ay fait que les déuelopper des raisonnemens & des exemples, qui en déroboient souuant la ueuë & le profit'. After a brief summary of Vaugelas's conclusions on each point, Macé appends comments and criticisms from La Mothe le Vayer (see below) and those of another unnamed writer whose manuscript, Macé says, has provided much of the material for the rest of the work; the second edition (1652) also includes Scipion Dupleix's views, first published a year earlier. In d'Aisy's two volumes on the 'Genie de la langue françoise' Vaugelas's remarks are set next to those of Bouhours and Ménage.⁴ Like Macé, d'Aisy praises Vaugelas enthusiastically and disagrees with him only over his choice of a random presentation, maintaining that the subject of the various observations is not entirely unconnected but that there are numerous remarks 'dont la parfaite intelligence dépend de leur liaison & de leur rapport'.⁵ The *Avertissement* of the first volume makes it clear that he sees his role as being simply to collate the various comments on the same topic scattered in different parts of the works of the three authors. Popularization of the content of the *Remarques* continued even at the end of the century, for instance, in André Renaud's *Maniere de parler la langue françoise selon ses differens styles* of 1697.⁶ The role he assigns to usage (p. 10) is identical with that of the *Remarques* even though fifty years had elapsed and the Port-Royal grammar had long been in circulation. Once again the author's only claims to originality are in bringing together material not previously found in one volume and in his choice of ordering:

L'ordre que j'observe, c'est de parler d'abord de la nature de nôtre Langue, puis de ses propriétés essentielles, ensuite des moïens les plus universels de les aquerir; enfin je traite les divisions generales & les divisions particulieres des styles differens. (pp. 7-8)

However, examination of the chapter headings hints at influence from Vaugelas. For instance, Chapter Two deals with 'Trois qualités generales du beau Langage' — 'De la Pureté du Langage' (Article I); 'De la Clarté du Langage' (Article II); and 'De l'Exactitude du Langage' (Article III).

A second type of work into which the contents of Vaugelas's *Remarques* were assimilated was basic teaching grammars of French. Claude Irson's *Nouvelle Methode* of 1657 adapts Vaugelas's material for pedagogical aims

while incorporating more elementary material.⁷ He acknowledges usage as the ‘grand Maître des langues vivantes’, but he argues in his preface that it is a fallacy to believe that a language can be learnt without the help of grammatical rules, ‘puisque l’expérience nous fait voir des personnes qui ont plus profité en vn Mois dans la pratique des Règles de nôtre Langue, qu’elles n’auroient fait en dix ans par les conversations fréquentes & par l’vsage ordinaire’. The preface also comments on the generally low standard of language teaching and Irson decides to pay special attention to questions of ordering and presentation to aid the learner; he employs tables, lists and clear definitions, and moves from the simple to the more complicated in a step-by-step method. Vaugelas’s material appears mainly in the fifth chapter of the third book on syntax ‘Des mots et des phrases qui sont en vsage’, in the sixth chapter ‘Contenant trois Listes de quelques Noms dont le Genre est douteux’, and in the seventh, which lists words of doubtful pronunciation. It is thus, according to Irson, introduced to a wider audience, for he claims:

Il n’y a rien maintenant qui soit capable de détourner toute sorte de personnes d’apprendre la Grammaire; elle paroît sous vne autre forme, elle n’a plus ce masque hideux dont on l’avoit déguisée, & elle ne rebutera plus ceux qui en voudront avoir la connoissance. (Preface)

Like Macé, Irson gives a brief summary of Vaugelas’s conclusion without the discussion of the finer points of detail, but interspersed with a few other topics including examination of where usage has apparently changed since Vaugelas’s day. Irson is reluctant to question the correctness of Vaugelas’s observations and so he explains differences of judgement in terms of evolution of usage. For example, on the question of the acceptability of *recouvert* for *recouvré*:

RECOUVERT & recouvré ont deux significations & deux vsages differens; quoy-que du temps de Mr de Vaugelas on les ait confondus: car *recouvert* vient de *recourir*, & *recouvré* vient de *recouurer*, qui signifie *retrouuer*. (pp. 106–07)

Vaugelas’s observations not only found their way into works teaching elementary grammar. In 1659 with the appearance of Chiflet’s *Essay d’vne parfaite grammaire de la langue françoise* Vaugelas’s material was assimilated into another type of grammatical writing — grammars intended for foreigners — a school represented so admirably at the beginning of the century by the work of Maupas and Oudin.⁸ Chiflet aims his work both at French speakers wishing to perfect their language who, he says, should read the work right through, and at foreigners whom he advises to concentrate on the main points and omit the observations. His relationship to Vaugelas is quite clearly set out in the preface. He acknowledges his great debt to Vaugelas, but continues:

Je ne suis pas pourtant tellement idolatre de ses opinions, que ie n’en aye dit mon iugement, quâd i’ay creu qu’il estoit mesconté: & ie sçay bien que si cet excellent homme, qui a fait l’honneur de me visiter, il y a plus de trente ans, estoit encore en

vie; sa modestie ne s'offenseroit pas. L'auoüe franchement que i'ay beaucoup appris de ses Remarques; & que ie le choisirois volontiers pour le principal censeur & le judicieux correcteur de mes fautes, si Dieu ne l'auoit desja retiré au ciel.

While adopting Vaugelas's principles and authorities, once again Chiflet deems Vaugelas's random method of presentation unsuitable for his intended audience. In Part I of his grammar he orders his material according to the parts of speech, giving the categories applicable to them, and adds the definitions so lacking in the *Remarques* as well as tables for easy reference. For example, in the chapter dealing with verbs he gives very basic facts about their conjugation for the beginner, sets out verb tables, makes comparisons with other languages (drawing attention to particular sources of difficulty for foreigners) and indicates how to form the various tenses, conjugate irregular verbs and compose compounds. He gives instructions about the use of tenses, moods and the government of verbs and includes a very large number of exceptions. He admits the impossibility of reducing all the possible uses of verbs to rules, arguing that some can only be learnt from observing usage. The final section of the chapter contains the observations intended for the more advanced reader and comprises Vaugelas's comments on verbs given succinctly in alphabetical order. Chiflet's greater independence from Vaugelas is illustrated in his comments on *recouvré/recouvert*, where he criticizes Vaugelas for recording a mere passing fad:

C'est pourquoy, comme ie diray ailleurs, il ne faut pas ceder aux nouveautez impertinentes, quoy qu'elles durent quelque temps, & puis, comme vn torrent esoulé, se changent en boüe. Et M. de Vaugelas, qui auoit vne bonne maxime d'obeir à l'vsage, qu'il appelle le *Tyrans des Langues*, en vsoit vn peu trop rigoureusement; se portant avec trop de facilité à condamner de bons mots, & à en approuuer de mauuais, sur l'observation d'vn Vsage, dont il prenoit les mesures vn peu trop courtes. (p. 94)⁹

It is rather ironic that Chiflet should censure Vaugelas for being too receptive of neologisms, for later commentators, grouping Vaugelas with the more rigorous Bouhours, have blamed him for impeding the natural development of the language by not tolerating the use of new words and expressions. Chiflet perceptively foresees the danger that Vaugelas's decisions even where not founded on usage will become accepted and thereby influence the development of the language simply because of the authority of his name (p. 211). Yet it is fair to say that Chiflet's own work relies very heavily on the *Remarques* and could not have been composed without the material taken from them. Chiflet's work was very popular and therefore made Vaugelas's judgements known to a large audience, including Flemish readers at whom his grammar is primarily aimed.¹⁰ Foreigners and provincials were thus encouraged to adopt the linguistic habits of the Court and of the best authors, which helped to promote greater standardization of the language.

A similar treatment of Vaugelas's material is found later in the century with Alcide de Saint-Maurice's collection of observations 'sur les principales difficultez que les estrangers ont en la langue françoise'.¹¹ Alcide de Saint-Maurice also notes the mistakes peculiar to foreigners and adopts a part of speech format which he considers most suitable for his intended audience. However, unlike Chifflet's *Essay* his work is intended solely for foreigners and, since it is not aimed at complete beginners, dispenses with basic material. The preface therefore states that readers should already know how to decline and conjugate correctly and 'avoir parcouru plusieurs fois toutes les parties du Discours dans quelque bonne Grammaire'.

Marguerite Buffet's observations, the majority of which are culled from Vaugelas, are specifically intended for women.¹² Buffet concentrates primarily on niceties of language and stresses the social advantages of being able to speak well: it is through a good use of language that one gains and maintains the favour of the Prince at Court (p. 5). Although she claims that she has employed a new method because previous ones have proved unsuccessful or too slow, examination of the headings of her four sections indicate her dependence on Vaugelas. The first deals with 'termes barbares & anciens', the second with pleonasm, the third with 'mots corrompus & mal prononcez' and the last with 'quelques termes mal adaptez'. She abbreviates the *Remarques* to prevent her readers from becoming bored or dissatisfied (pp. 6–7) and, unlike the writers discussed above, retains the random method of presentation since a formal grammar would no doubt have deterred the women for whom she was writing. Her lists of mistakes commonly committed by women are enlightening about actual linguistic practice, for example:

On dit assez ordinairement, vous avez controuvé toutes ces choses; il faut dire vous avez supposé [sic] ces choses, quand ce sont personnes au dessous de soy, autrement il seroit trop injurieux. (pp. 28–29)

The book contains some features peculiar to Buffet, for instance, the section on the origin of alphabetical characters, but this minor work contributes little to the history of literature on the French language.

The content of the *Remarques* thus found its way into different types of works on language — compendiums, basic teaching grammars, grammars designed for foreigners and works especially for women — commonly in abridged form with the examples or details omitted, which has tended to encourage the idea that Vaugelas was dogmatic in his opinions. Usually this assimilation involved a change in the format and a structuring of the material to suit the purpose of the work. The *Remarques* continued to receive by various minor writers the same treatments as those mentioned above with only slight variations right up to the end of the seventeenth century, but at the same time there emerged an important group of writers of observations, including such

major figures as Bouhours, Ménage and Thomas Corneille, who retained Vaugelas's methodology and format, either assimilating Vaugelas's remarks, or amending or criticizing them, or providing new observations of a similar style.

Consideration of the influence of Vaugelas on subsequent writers on the French language would not be complete without some discussion of the writings of Bouhours. I do not intend to give a comprehensive account of Bouhours's work, for this has been done admirably by Rosset.¹³ But I think it is important to consider the ways in which Vaugelas and Bouhours differ, for it has partly been through confusion of the opinions of these two writers that a distorted picture of Vaugelas's views have been perpetuated. If anyone in fact tended to impede the natural development of the French language and was over-zealous in his attempt to purify the language, it was Bouhours rather than Vaugelas.

That Vaugelas is Bouhours's source of inspiration and main authority is indisputable. His acceptance of Vaugelas's Preface in its entirety for his *Remarques nouvelles* of 1675 reflects his general adoption of Vaugelas's theory, aims and methodology, as does his use in both the *Remarques nouvelles* and the later *Suite* (1687) of Vaugelas's chosen method of presentation, described as an 'agréable mélange de diverses choses, dont chacune subsiste séparément'.¹⁴ Yet despite this avowed allegiance to Vaugelas, Bouhours shows a surprising degree of independence from his master in certain respects. Notably, Bouhours is much more rigorous in his purism — a stance often mistakenly assigned to Vaugelas — for instance, in being much less tolerant of the use of neologisms or synonyms. Unlike Vaugelas, Bouhours will not accept derivations from existing words and, perhaps reacting against the worst excesses of the *Précieuses*, permits a neologism only when a new word is created with a new thing or when a suitable word is not available. Indeed he is even doubtful about the acceptability of a neologism in these cases:

N'est-ce pas le plus seur, de ne rien innover dans la Langue? On risque beaucoup, en faisant un nouveau mot: s'il est bien reçu, on aqiert [sic] peu de gloire; s'il est rebuté, on s'attire la raillerie du Public.¹⁵

The use of synonym pairs is condemned as pleonastic, since Bouhours maintains that one word should be able to express the concept adequately. The most significant difference between the two, however, is that Bouhours assigns more importance to the written language, concentrating on a written norm and written authorities and refinement of style;¹⁶ the *Remarques nouvelles* are said to be composed particularly 'pour régler le style, elles regardent moins le peuple, que les personnes qui se meslent un peu d'écrire' and the purpose of the *Suite* is summarized in the preface as 'de servir ceux qui veulent écrire correctement'. Moreover, Bouhours's view of Vaugelas was modified over the

years. While in the *Doutes* he asserts that Vaugelas's *Remarques* and his translation of Quintus Curtius are essential reading for the acquisition of an elegant style (p. 280), in the *Avertissement* of his *Suite* he qualifies the praise:

Quoy que ce soit un de nos Maistres, je ne le croy pas infaillible; & l'admiration que j'ay toujourns eu pour luy, ne m'a pas fermé les yeux sur les fautes qui luy ont echappé dans son Quinte-Curce.

He updates and modifies many of Vaugelas's decisions, notably in the section in the *Remarques nouvelles* entitled 'En quoy il ne faut point suivre les Remarques de M. de Vaugelas' (pp. 395–413) which criticizes fifty-one of Vaugelas's observations, and he pays particular attention to defining the meaning of words and to differentiating near-synonyms, claiming that since Vaugelas's day the French language has become more polished (p. 396). Thus while Bouhours maintains that he is continuing in Vaugelas's footsteps, he is more dogmatic than his model, and in some respects is closer to Malherbe, for he does not adopt in the main the flexibility and tolerance of approach found in the *Remarques* which makes Vaugelas's work so interesting and unique. This failure to distinguish Vaugelas's and Bouhours's position by some critics has led to unjustified criticisms of Vaugelas. For instance, he has been blamed for the divergence between the spoken and written language which is supposed to have occurred in the seventeenth century. However, as we have seen, Vaugelas pays attention to the spoken language and in the *Remarques* advises his readers to write as they speak. It is in the work of Vaugelas's successors, who superficially share the same theoretical positions and adopt the same style of observations, that the source of good usage is shifted firmly on to the written language.

It is a mark of Vaugelas's influence that Ménage, whom Streicher considers to be Vaugelas's greatest critic, nevertheless shares many features with him and can be seen as part of the tradition emanating from his work.¹⁷ Ménage's debt to Vaugelas is apparent in several respects. Firstly, he adopts the random ordering of remarks in his two volumes of observations, rather than that of a part of speech grammar, despite his reputation for erudition.¹⁸ Secondly, more than a quarter of his first volume of observations covers topics dealt with by Vaugelas whose decisions Ménage confirms, rejects or supplements. Crucially, Ménage declares the sovereignty of usage over grammatical rule and analogy, and, in theory at least, over etymology.¹⁹ However, in practice he pays particular attention to the history of the language and the etymologies of words. Where Vaugelas's view is synchronic, Ménage's is frequently diachronic:

L'Auteur des Remarques, en parlant du verbe *détromper*, qu'il a vu venir à la Cour, & de celui de *dévoloir*, dont Malherbe semble estre l'auteur, dit que ces verbes, & autres semblables, comme *défaire*, *dêmesler*, *desarmer* &c. Sont composez du simple & de la particule *de*, mais à laquelle on ajoûte une S, si le verbe commence

[sic] par une voyelle: *armer, desarmer*. Il se trompe. Ces mots sont composez de la preposition *dis* . . . (I, 85)

Elsewhere, Ménage looks to past generations of writers and grammarians for authority for a word (e.g. *plurier*, I, 8–10). In practice too Ménage's conception of the scope of good usage is broader than Vaugelas's, for at times he refuses to adjudicate between the usage of the Court and that of Paris ('A l'égard d'*Vrsulines*, & d'*Vrselines*, l'usage est partagé à Paris & à la Cour; & ainsi on peut dire l'un & l'autre' (I, 25)) and he tolerates the Gasconisms 'Je vous ay dit de faire cela' and 'Je vous demande de faire cela' on the grounds that since there are so many Gascons at Court these expressions are frequently heard there (I, 371). His criticism of Vaugelas and other writers is stringent and direct, lacking the tact and delicacy found in Vaugelas: for instance, after quoting the whole of Vaugelas's *remarque* entitled *Ployer, plier* Ménage dismisses it haughtily with the words: 'Cette remarque est nulle de toute nullité' (I, 57). The number of authors and grammarians he refers to and quotes far surpasses that in any of the other writers we have considered and ranges widely from Classical Latin and Medieval authors to sixteenth-century and contemporary French sources. These references together with the etymologies give Ménage's work its erudite air and sometimes make his prose heavy and difficult to read, perhaps illustrating why Vaugelas chose not to include too many learned references and technical terms. Yet it must be remembered that Vaugelas had great respect for Ménage and that the influence was reciprocal, Vaugelas asking Ménage's opinion about his decisions, if not always following his advice:

M. de Vaugelas me faisoit l'honneur de me communiquer ses Remarques devant que de les envoyer à son Imprimeur: mais il ne me faisoit pas toujourns celui de déferer à mes sentimens. Quand je lui renvoyay le caier, où il avoit fait cette observation, je me souviens que je lui écrivis qu'elle n'estoit pas absolument veritable. (I, 104)

Sharing Vaugelas's belief in the importance of clarity and precision, Ménage is, like Vaugelas, the *homme du monde*. But he is also the *savant*, and it is the impression of haughty disdain for the less erudite which pervades his writings that differentiates his work above all from Vaugelas's model.²⁰

Not surprisingly, Vaugelas's work was particularly an inspiration to members of the French Academy for, as Bouhours comments, Vaugelas's relationship to the Academy was of the closest kind:

Mais l'esprit de M. de Vaugelas ne vit-il pas encore dans l'Académie; ou plutôt n'estoit-ce pas l'esprit de l'Académie qui animoit M. de Vaugelas, quand il composoit ses Remarques . . . ?²¹

In 1687 Thomas Corneille published a new edition of the *Remarques* with notes on certain of the observations, intended merely to update Vaugelas's decisions, not to undermine his theoretical standpoint, and with an enlarged index.

Corneille's own role in the work is minimal, for he assimilates the opinions of Ménage and Bouhours, follows the advice of Mitton,²² appends Chapelain's comments and acknowledges his debt to the Academy for some of his decisions. Three years later twelve *Nouvelles Remarques* appeared in a collection which in the 1693 and 1695 Brussels editions is attributed to Furetière, but which were probably composed by Jacques Cassagne (or Cassagnes), another member of the Academy.²³ The twelve *Remarques* are undistinguished, lacking any preface or justification, and follow the by now normal format of heading and discussion with very few references to other works or authorities. Despite his avowed allegiance to usage, Cassagne at times seems to depend entirely on his own judgement and he is scathing about the Purists and their disputes over detail (p. 238), so that Streicher praises him for his 'critique éclairée, sans parti-pris, sans surcharge d'érudition'.²⁴ Yet it is the lack of these qualities that, in my opinion, makes Cassagne's comments rather lightweight and illustrate how observations can become dull and uninteresting in the hands of a second-rate writer.

Two other Academicians, Patru and Conrart, who also acted as editors of the Quintus Curtius translation, both remained faithful to Vaugelas's principles in their comments on the *Remarques*.²⁵ These principles were also adopted by the French Academy as a body and thus became official French linguistic policy, thereby further extending the scope of Vaugelas's influence. The Academy's dependence on Vaugelas is witnessed in two collections of observations and comments made by the Academy. The first was presented in 1698 by Tallemant who published some of the Academy's decisions to satisfy a public critical of the lack of works produced by the Academy.²⁶ Tallemant acts as secretary to the Academy's discussions, presenting their comments in a random order and aiming to model his style on Vaugelas's. Many of Vaugelas's *Remarques* are taken as starting points of the discussion and changes in usage are noted; for instance, Tallemant records the current preference for *cet homme-cy* over *cet homme icy*.²⁷ Tallemant's work was complemented in 1704 by an official publication of the Academy aimed to silence criticism about the non-appearance of its long-awaited grammar: a new edition of Vaugelas's *Remarques*, together with the Academy's observations on them.²⁸ The *Avertissement* indicates how, even at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it is considered unnecessary to comment on Vaugelas's preface since only the details of usage have modified.

Thus, even fifty years after the publication of the *Remarques*, the work was still venerated and considered worthy of comment. Further examples of influences could be multiplied, even in the work of those who rejected some of Vaugelas's tenets. Louis-Augustin Alemand, the editor of the *Nouvelles Remarques*, published his own *Nouvelles Observations, ou Guerre civile des François sur la langue* in 1688, giving an alphabetical treatment of 124

questions, covering the letters A, B and C, many of which had already been discussed by Vaugelas.²⁹ Noting changes in usage, he gives various opinions (including his own) from many different grammars in a rather weak and contorted style, which suffers from an unhelpful use of punctuation:

Sur 'Araignée' ou 'Aragnée'

Il n'est rien surquoy on ne dispute en Grammaire, cette question en est une preuve, ceux qui donnent tout à l'étimologie voudroient qu'on dit *Aragnée*; parce qu'il est plus conforme au latin *aranea*, d'où il vient, les Parisiens disent presque tout *arignée*; enfin le grand nombre est pour *araignée*, M. Ménage se déclare pour ce dernier, quelque penchant qu'il ait pour le langage Parisien & pour les mots qui sentent le latin; l'Academie a aussi décidé qu'il falloit écrire *araignée* le J. Corneille préfere pareillement ce dernier à *aragnée*, qu'il ne rejette pourtant pas, on ne sçauroit donc faillir en disant *araignée*; à l'égard d'*aragnée* il peut passer, & on peut souffrir à des Parisiens *arignée*, pourvû que cela ne passe pas le discours ordinaire. (p. 147)

Alemand shows particular interest in documenting the history of grammatical writing (e.g. Question I) and in questions of pronunciation (e.g. Question III). Both he and another Jansenist writer, Andry de Boisregard, reserve special criticism for the Jesuit Bouhours. In his alphabetical *Réflexions* Andry gives usage as his authority, but his notion of acceptable usage is again broader than that of Vaugelas.³⁰ He argues that words classed as *bas* or *populaire* nevertheless have a role to play in the functioning of the language and he is in favour of retaining a choice of expressions (Preface). Discussing *acquiescer*, *acquiescement*, he says:

Consentir n'est-il pas meilleur, disent-ils? & quand il le seroit, ce qui n'est pas, est-ce une raison pour les rejeter? s'il falloit ne garder que les meilleurs mots & abolir tous les autres, on se verroit bien-tost réduit à des redites continuelles. (pp. 21–22)³¹

He follows the general trend since the *Remarques* of naming the people he criticizes, who include Vaugelas. Aimed at beginners and at confirming the tacit knowledge of more advanced learners, Andry's comments, however, often suffer from being too brief and simplistic.

Such wide-ranging influences underline the importance and influence of Vaugelas's *Remarques*. This is true both for the format, which initiated a new style of works on language giving random observations on current topics of importance, and for the content, especially the doctrine of the Preface on usage, which remained untouched even in 1704 when it gained the official support and acknowledgement of the French Academy. Vaugelas's doctrine of usage therefore also appears in works of a completely different format, such as François de Callières's successful *Des Mots à la Mode et des nouvelles Façons de Parler* which gives in dialogue form his opinion on various neologisms, particularly those affected in the jargon of the 'gens de qualité'.³² The

expanded title of the work indicates its relationship to the courtesy book aspect of Vaugelas's work ('Avec des observations sur diverses manières d'agir & de s'exprimer') and François de Callières consequently stresses the social importance of speaking well: 'C'est, Madame, répondit le Commandeur, en parlant juste, & en parlant bien qu'on se distingue par le langage, & non pas en affectant des manières nouvelles & extraordinaires de s'exprimer' (p. 50). Commentators on Vaugelas's observations remained true to the spirit of his work in noting the details of the changes in usage, while respecting his principles as he had predicted (*R*, x, 2). Even Antoine Arnauld, co-author of the *Grammaire generale et raisonnée*, supports the maxim 'Que l'usage est la Regle & le tyran des langues vivantes' in his seven reflections of 1707 with the words: 'Il faut demeurer d'accord que personne n'a fait, sur notre langue, des Remarques plus judicieuses que M. de Vaugelas, & qu'on ne peut lui contester le principe qu'il a pris, qui est, que c'est par l'usage qu'on doit juger des bonnes ou des mauvaises façons de parler'.³³ It is true that he thinks that this maxim has been carried too far, and he is particularly critical of those adopting a more extreme purist attitude such as Bouhours, whom he criticizes for making arbitrary decisions on points of doubtful usage, for making distinctions that do not exist between words, for not allowing a choice of expressions and for over-fastidiousness. He also disagrees with Vaugelas for not giving equal importance to the usage of the people of Paris as to the Court, questions Vaugelas's doctrine on neologisms and argues that in the case of new usage, unlike established usage, reason must be consulted. The Port-Royal *Grammaire generale et raisonnée* (1660) itself contains, according to its subtitle, 'plusieurs remarques nouvelles sur la Langue Françoisse'. Of course, Arnauld and Lancelot try to give explanations for their rules and apparent exceptions wherever possible within the framework of general grammar, and thus their work is quite different from Vaugelas's; yet even they are forced to admit that expressions from a previous period, for example, that have become fixed in the usage of a language cannot be reduced to rules. The chapter in their grammar entitled 'Examen d'une Regle de la Langue Françoisse: qui est qu'on ne doit pas mettre le Relatif apres vn nom sans article' is instructive on this point. Having offered explanations for Vaugelas's rule and reformulated the rule to embrace its apparent exceptions, Arnauld and Lancelot are left with a residue which can be explained only by invoking the notion of usage:

Or c'est vne maxime, que ceux qui trauillent sur vne langue viuante, doivent tousiours auoir deuant les yeux; Que les façons de parler qui sont autorisées par vn usage general & non contesté, doiuent passer pour bonnes, encore qu'elles soient contraires aux regles & à l'analogie de la Langue: mais qu'on ne doit pas les alleguer pour faire douter des regles & troubler l'analogie, ny pour autoriser par consequence d'autres façons de parler que l'usage n'auroit pas autorisées. Autrement qui ne s'arrestera qu'aux bizarreries de l'usage, sans obseruer cette maxime, fera qu'une Langue demeurera tousiours incertaine, & que n'ayant aucuns principes, elle ne pourra jamais se fixer.³⁴

Once again this suggests that the Port-Royal grammarians and Vaugelas did share some common ground, and that rather than totally denying Vaugelas's stance Arnauld and Lancelot transcended it.

Ironically, even Vaugelas's opponents helped to spread the fame and the influence of the *Remarques*, since Vaugelas's work remained virtually untouched by their criticisms, thereby gaining in authority. I do not propose to discuss here Vaugelas's two main critics, François de la Mothe le Vayer and Scipion Dupleix, both of whom stood for a greater freedom of choice of expression, for their work falls outside the scope of this discussion.³⁵ Suffice it to say that their criticism had little effect, because their support for a rich and all-embracing lexicon — a doctrine which held sway at the time of Ronsard — could only appear old-fashioned to the new generation of writers on language of the second half of the seventeenth century (Dupleix was, after all, nearly eighty by the time of the publication of the *Remarques*).

B. *Other Works Influenced by Vaugelas in the Seventeenth Century*

Vaugelas's influence did not extend simply to writers of grammars and observations on the French language in the seventeenth century. A brief glance at a standard work on French Classicism indicates the debt of the Classical authors to contemporary works on the language and notably to the *Remarques*, and, if occasionally the details of Vaugelas's influence on, for instance, Pierre Corneille, Racine or Molière are questioned, the fact that Boileau speaks of Vaugelas as 'le plus sage . . . des Ecrivains de nostre Langue' testifies eloquently to the position of respect in which Vaugelas was held by the writers of the second half of the century.³⁶ Other works, such as the novels or the conversations of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, rather than directly borrowing Vaugelas's ideas on language, simply grew out of the same salon and Court background, although it must be remembered that here too Vaugelas's ideas helped to shape the notion of conversation.³⁷

A third and important field of influence is on books on rhetoric, especially in the section on *elocution*, described by Le Gras as the most important and most difficult part of rhetoric.³⁸ This is not surprising, for it has already been noted that in some respects Vaugelas's work straddles the traditional boundary between grammar and rhetoric. The Preface of the *Remarques* (*R*, xv, 3) alludes to the composition of a rhetoric by Patru, which will embrace much of the material of the *Remarques*, but go beyond it in scope and content. Le Gras claims in his preface that it is because this work has not appeared after twenty-four years that he has decided to undertake the task himself, so that his rhetoric may be seen as being in some ways complementary to Vaugelas's observations. The influence of Vaugelas on Le Gras manifests itself in several ways. In the preface Le Gras specifically refers to Vaugelas's work as 'tres-important &

tres-utile', adding that it 'contient de tres-beaux preceptes pour apprendre la pureté de nostre Langue, & à parler correctement'; however, since he considers that the content of the *Remarques* does not even exhaust the material for one of the five parts comprising a rhetoric (*Invention, Disposition, Elocution, Memoire* and *Prononciation*), he aims to supplement them. He adds that the section on *Elocution* is subdivided into two, the first part dealing with questions of *pureté* and *netteté* and the second with *Ornement du Langage* and *Figures de l'Eloquence*. In the former he is almost entirely dependent on Vaugelas, for instance, his treatment of *mauvais arrangement* is identical to Vaugelas's.³⁹ Le Gras's dependence on Vaugelas is also evident in more general terms: for instance, in his preface Le Gras stresses the supremacy of usage over reason and analogy.

Despite Le Gras's claim that Vaugelas's desire for a rhetoric had not been fulfilled, in fact Bary's *La Rhétorique françoise* had first appeared in 1653, twelve years before Le Gras's own work was published.⁴⁰ Here again Bary embraces in his sections on the correct use of language many of Vaugelas's decisions. His rhetoric contains two sections, one entitled 'De l'usage des mots' which differentiates pairs of related words and the other 'De l'usage des phrases', both of which for the most part simply list Vaugelas's decisions (omitting exceptions and explanations) from various observations, sometimes supplementing them with Dupleix's comments or with some personal contribution; the first lists, for example, the difference between *dépenser* and *dépendre*; *serge* and *sarge*; *hormis* and *fors* (p. 228). Bary, like Le Gras, shares many of Vaugelas's principles, including the central importance of clarity if one aims not to displease, and the need to refer to a Court and Academy milieu (pp. 226–27), and he quotes Vaugelas's ideas on synonymy (pp. 375–76).⁴¹

References to other works on rhetoric showing the impact of Vaugelas's ideas could once again be multiplied.⁴² Suffice it to say that his *Remarques* were read by a large number of authors and some of his ideas and pronouncements assimilated into a wide range of works, in some cases only as a passing allusion, but in others as a major contribution.

III. THE POPULARITY AND INFLUENCE OF THE *REMARQUES* FROM 1700 TO THE PRESENT DAY

The rapid succession of editions of the *Remarques* continued until 1738 when the edition containing the notes of Thomas Corneille and Patru appeared. After that the *Remarques* were not published again until 1880 when Chassang reproduced them with an introduction and notes as a historical text worthy of attention. Since then they have been issued in four new editions, the most important of which is that by Jeanne Streicher.⁴³ The distribution of editions seems to suggest that Vaugelas's work was no longer popular nor influential

from about the middle of the eighteenth century on. To some extent this is undoubtedly true: by the middle of the eighteenth century the grammars of the *philosophes* were predominant and grammars of usage were overshadowed by those following in the tradition of the Port-Royal *Grammaire generale et raisonnée*. Yet, to a lesser extent, Vaugelas's *Remarques* still influenced many eighteenth-century writers on language, who assimilated his ideas to varying degrees.⁴⁴

A. *Influence on Works on Language*

The influence of Vaugelas's ideas continued to be felt in at least four different types of works on the French language in the eighteenth century and subsequently. Firstly, and most obviously, there are those grammars and collections of observations still predominantly based on usage, for example, those of Buffier and d'Olivet.⁴⁵ Alexis François has charted well the course of 'la grammaire du purisme' in the eighteenth century and the reader is referred to his work.⁴⁶ While these authors at first sight apparently follow closely in Vaugelas's mould, there are significant shifts of emphasis in the interpretation of where good usage may be observed. Buffier, while stressing the sovereignty of usage over reason, substitutes 'la plus nombreuse partie' for 'la plus saine partie' in Vaugelas's definition, because of the difficulty of interpreting the latter notion. The idea of good usage being the prerogative of an elite is thereby weakened.⁴⁷ Secondly, there is a tendency to move away from looking to contemporary authors for authority. Buffier expresses a desire to fix the language as it is and prefers to turn to authors 'de réputation' rather than 'du temps'.⁴⁸ While Buffier still stresses the importance of the Court as an authority for good usage, François rightly observes that the political and social circumstances had changed since Vaugelas's day with the Court dispersing and more significance being attached to the life of the town of Paris with its salons, cafés and rendezvous for 'beaux-esprits'.⁴⁹ D'Olivet, however, no longer attaches prime importance to the spoken language: 'autre chose est de parler, ou d'écrire. Car si l'on veut s'arrêter aux licences de la conversation, c'est le vrai moyen d'estropier la Langue à tout moment'.⁵⁰ The reason for this has been stated above: the eighteenth-century writers simply believed that the French language had reached its peak of perfection in the usage of the Classical period.⁵¹ The usage-based grammars of the eighteenth century therefore have a predominantly conservative flavour.

The importance of usage as an authority also continues to be emphasized in the Academy dictionaries, although here too a change in interpretation is discernible. In the preface to the fifth edition of 1798 the decision not to consult the 'beau langage du beau monde' is made since 'le beau monde pense et parle souvent tres-mal'; rather *le bon langage* 'composé des vrais rapports des mots et

des idées' is preferred. These two notions, once identical for Vaugelas (*R*, vii, 1), are thus separated. In this and in the preface of the seventh edition, primary authority is granted to the written usage of the past: 'L'usage, en un mot, tel que le comprend l'Académie, embrasse les trois grands siècles qui ont marqué notre littérature d'une si forte empreinte, le dix-septième, le dix-huitième et le nôtre.'⁵²

In our century the concept of *bon usage* is notably represented in the work of Grevisse, termed by Bazui in the preface to the tenth edition of *Le Bon Usage* as 'le Vaugelas du vingtième siècle'.⁵³ In his *Petit Plaidoyer pour le bon langage* Grevisse views the ability to write and speak well as a duty, which gives the speaker prestige, 'une sorte d'estime et de considération dans le milieu où nous vivons'.⁵⁴ But it is not only in the work of Grevisse that the resonances of Vaugelas's concept of good usage are sounded. Albert Dauzat, for instance, in his *Guide du bon usage* defines good usage as 'l'usage de la classe cultivée de Paris à une époque donnée' and stresses the vital significance of clarity, the need to 'respecter la propriété des termes et surtout respecter la syntaxe'.⁵⁵

A second type of work in which Vaugelas's ideas continued to feature fairly prominently were the collections or compilations of observations and grammatical pronouncements about French, a genre made particularly fashionable in the eighteenth century by the prevailing conservative attitude.⁵⁶ Perhaps one reason why the *Remarques* were not newly published after 1738 is that the content still considered relevant and of value was included in these compendiums through which it was popularized and assimilated into 'accepted' rules. La Touche in the preface to his *L'Art de bien parler françois* declares his debt to Vaugelas, Ménage, Thomas Corneille and Bouhours, and his second volume is devoted to a summary of a selection of their *remarques* together with some of his own observations presented in alphabetical order. In the first volume too, comprising a basic part of speech grammar, La Touche occasionally refers to the *Remarques*, stating his position in relation to that of Vaugelas and adding 'corrections' where he deems it necessary.⁵⁷ This type of compilation is carried on in the work of De Wailly and Féraud and culminates in the *Grammaire des grammaires* of Girault-Duvivier, which ran to more than twenty editions in the first seventy-five years after the original edition (1811).⁵⁸ Vaugelas is the earliest grammarian cited by Girault-Duvivier and references to him are fairly sparse, partly because those decisions of Vaugelas still valid had either become accepted usage or had been reiterated elsewhere. Girault-Duvivier seeks a reasoned justification of his 'rules' in terms of logic and therefore prefers to cite the *philosophes*. There is already a suggestion in this work that Vaugelas is quoted mainly to indicate how a rule came into being, and this is also the way he is treated in a contemporary compilation of pronouncements on the good usage of French, Dupré's *Encyclopédie du bon français dans l'usage contemporain*. The editorial team take their comments from grammars which appeared almost

entirely in the post-Littré period, but Vaugelas is included in those references where his pronouncements mark the beginning of a contemporary usage or help to formulate a modern rule, as in the case of *héros*, *fors*, or past participle agreement.⁵⁹

Vaugelas's grammar of usage is usually contrasted with the general and rational grammars of the eighteenth-century *philosophes*, who, from Port-Royal on, tried to provide explanations for the behaviour of language and, wherever possible, formulate this in rules applicable to every language, thereby stressing the features common to all languages rather than focusing on the characteristics peculiar to French as Vaugelas had done. Thomas, for instance, criticized Vaugelas for being 'grammairien sans être philosophe, et c'est vouloir être astronome sans géométrie'.⁶⁰ Despite this fundamental difference in outlook, the *philosophes* nevertheless at times use Vaugelas's material and try to explain the language behaviour recorded in the *Remarques*. In this respect they tend to be rather conservative. For instance, Sahlin says of Du Marsais's general grammar, which cites Vaugelas, that it is 'essentiellement éclectique', and she comments on the role played by the *philosophes* in fixing a usage not always based on accurate observation because they were not concerned with observing language usage themselves:

De ce point de vue, l'influence de la grammaire générale a été nuisible car elle a raisonné et par conséquent stabilisé certaines règles arbitraires établies par Vaugelas et d'autres grammairiens, qui ne comprenaient pas toujours bien ce qu'ils observaient dans la conversation et qui par suite légiféraient parfois contrairement au génie de la langue.⁶¹

She adds that in this way the general grammarians tended to impede the natural development of the language, the most notable example of this process being the fixing of the rules for the agreement of the past participle, for instead of the validity of the rules being reassessed, they were fixed on the grounds that they had a rational basis. Again Girard, a key figure in the history of rational grammar, nevertheless speaks of usage as the *maître* and claims that 'dépendant toujours de la portion dominante, il s'apprend à la Cour & dans la Capitale'.⁶² He maintains, in theory at least, that each language must be considered according to its own usage and often at the end of a chapter on a part of speech discusses particular examples from the *Remarques*. Nevertheless, he and the other *philosophes* tend to attach a great deal of importance to the concept of analogy, which tends to produce a somewhat simplified picture of language behaviour and contrasts with Vaugelas's awareness of the complexity of usage. Not all the *philosophes* give so much space to Vaugelas's ideas: Restaut, while admitting in his *Principes généraux et raisonnés de la Grammaire française* that there are both general and particular principles for language, owes little, if anything, to Vaugelas and relies predominantly on Port-Royal.⁶³ To conclude, while the *philosophes* formed a distinct and significant school

opposed to the tradition initiated by the *Remarques*, they were nevertheless not entirely immune to the influence of usage-based works, and particularly Vaugelas's *Remarques*, which often provided their data.

A fourth and important area of influence of Vaugelas's *Remarques* is in the field of 'linguistic journalism'. François mentions the role of criticism in literary periodicals in the eighteenth century, notably in the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, *Journal des Savants*, *Pour et Contre*, *Année littéraire* and the *Journal encyclopédique*, all of which examined new grammatical works and provided reviews of them.⁶⁴ Perhaps the most famous of these 'journalistes grammairiens' in the eighteenth century was the Abbé Desfontaines. Today the very French fashion for discussing *faits de langage* in journals and newspapers must surely owe something to Vaugelas's method of commenting on problematic linguistic questions in short observations. In the twentieth century *chroniques de langage* feature or have featured in nearly all the major Paris newspapers and in the large weekly literary periodicals, in addition to there being journals such as *Vie et langage* devoted entirely to discussion of linguistic questions. In the pre-war period distinguished linguists like Grevisse in Belgium, Dauzat (*Le Monde*), Snell and Schöne (*L'Œuvre*) and Abel Hermant (*Le Temps*) in France all regularly wrote short pieces for newspapers and this tradition is continued for instance by Jacques Cellard in *Le Monde* on Sundays. Cellard, who reviews the different types of *chroniques* — anecdotal, defensive, prescriptive and descriptive — and examines their major preoccupations, concludes that all of them have a common 'field': 'c'est celui des tensions entre la norme et l'usage montant'.⁶⁵ Abel Hermant, who styled himself a modern Lancelot, was nevertheless close to Vaugelas in stressing the primacy of good usage and, on one occasion at least, he appeals to the reader to consider how Vaugelas would have reacted to a certain word or expression.⁶⁶ It is not only the attention of linguistic specialists that such columns attract; from Vaugelas on, the ability to be able to write and speak well has been a major concern of all educated Frenchmen and a pride in their language dictates that even non-specialists in linguistic matters are keenly interested in the development and the application of their language. Thus, when the French felt their language under threat from Anglo-American borrowings, newspapers and journals such as *Le Figaro littéraire* responded by sounding out public opinion about *franglais* words and criticizing those words deemed unnecessary. This might perhaps be seen as a modern counterpart to Vaugelas questioning his informants about various new words and recording his findings in the *Remarques*. It is not without some justification that the French have been termed a nation of grammarians, for even a popular radio station like *France Inter* which has a very large audience, broadcasts programmes about language. If then the details of Vaugelas's pronouncements are no longer always deemed relevant, he is nevertheless still followed in spirit.

Vaugelas has therefore continued to be influential although in different and perhaps less obvious ways, with his ideas being interpreted in various lights according to the prevailing linguistic attitude of the day. While some writers diverge dramatically from his standpoint, others, who ostensibly maintain a usage-orientated approach, nevertheless modify his ideas subtly and, in the extreme case, merely pay lip-service to him. Such was Vaugelas's reputation, however, that he has been a source of inspiration to foreigners as well as in France. For example, Manzoni in Italy adopted Vaugelas's approach to good usage, just as there are obvious parallels in Gottsched's ideas in Germany, and in England there appeared anonymously in 1770 a work entitled *Reflections on the English Language, In the Nature of Vaugelas's Reflections on the French* by Robert Baker.⁶⁷

B. *Vaugelas's Influence on the Development of the French Language*

School grammars, an important means through which language usage is influenced, have not been mentioned above, since Vaugelas's influence on them has not been as great as one might expect. Obviously the emphasis placed by Vaugelas on the value of being able to speak and write well has helped to ensure that importance is placed on the study of language in elementary schools in France, and some of his more general rulings, such as for the use of participles, have been assimilated with modifications into the accepted dogma recorded in school grammars. Nevertheless, Vaugelas seems to have had little direct influence on the detailed pronouncements of perhaps the two most important and most popular school grammars of the nineteenth century, that of Lhomond, first published in 1780 and re-edited and reprinted for more than 100 years, and that of Noël and Chapsal, first published in 1823 and constantly re-edited well into the 1880s.⁶⁸ Lhomond's grammar, for example, contains very basic material and there is only the occasional case where ideas articulated by Vaugelas are found (he is not named), for example, in the injunction that the pupil should not confuse *avant* and *auparavant* or *au travers* + *de* and *à travers*.⁶⁹ Noël and Chapsal's grammar, another basic textbook, including for the first time exercises, perhaps comes closest to Vaugelas's work in Chapter 15, which contains an alphabetical treatment of various difficulties; here the meanings of *consommer* and *consumer* are distinguished and the different usages of *matinal*, *matineux* and *matinier* detailed.⁷⁰ The somewhat restricted degree of influence may be explained by various factors. Firstly, much of Vaugelas's material, dealing with refinements and niceties of language, is far too sophisticated and complicated for a basic school text, and reference to past recommendations would only confuse the pupil. Secondly, as Chervel notes, nineteenth-century school grammar teaching was essentially based on part of speech grammar and Vaugelas's random presentation may

have discouraged writers of school grammars from searching in the *Remarques* for the required material.⁷¹ Thirdly, school grammars tended to focus on spelling and morphology and units larger than the word were, on the whole, neglected, except in the discussion of the tropes. Grammar was therefore taught through a number of spelling rules: whereas, for instance, exceptions to the rules of agreement for the past participle were originally founded on phonetic grounds, in a nineteenth-century school grammar they were typically generalized into grammatical rules formulated in terms of orthography.⁷²

Vaugelas's influence on the development of the language was therefore not principally through school grammars, for many of his detailed ideas were too advanced for such basic textbooks, although some of his more general notions, such as his concept of the ideal, clearly-ordered, well-constructed and unambiguous period are as important in these as elsewhere. Nevertheless, there is plenty of evidence that Vaugelas's observations did influence the subsequent evolution of the language and helped to standardize certain rules. How then did this influence come about? The assimilation of Vaugelas's ideas by the rationalist grammarians and the attitude of eighteenth-century writers on language to the Classical authors who, in the main, tended to follow his prescriptions, have been mentioned above. A key figure for the transmission and endorsement of Vaugelas's ideas in the nineteenth century was Littré, whose dictionary was highly influential. For Littré 'contemporary usage' in a broad sense embraces not only the current usage of his day, but French usage since Malherbe, from whom Littré dates the beginning of modern French.⁷³ Littré's tendency to be conservative and to prefer long-established usage favours the transmission of Vaugelas's pronouncements. In nearly every article which treats a question also discussed by Vaugelas, the latter's decision is either cited directly or given as representative of seventeenth-century opinion, and in more than half of these this is with approval. To quote one example, Littré notes under the heading *auparavant*: 'C'est Vaugelas qui a établi que *auparavant* devenait adverbe et cessait d'être préposition ou conjonction'. Significantly, then, it is a lexicographer who forms an important link in the transmission of Vaugelas's decisions, the lexicon being the repository of irregularities. Certainly, with the passage of time, many details of Vaugelas's usage have gone out of currency, but Vaugelas's influence on lexicography has been and remains great, with most of his decisions, for instance on the correct gender for particular nouns, being those still recorded by modern dictionaries. Vaugelas is also cited more than one hundred times in the articles contained in Dupré's *Encyclopédie du bon français*. Here more often a change in usage since Vaugelas's day is observed, but quite frequently authorities on French such as Brunot and Bruneau (*septante*), Thomas (*quelque*) and Martinon (*chose*) are forced to recognize the debt of the language to the author of the *Remarques*.

I do not intend to elaborate on the extent of Vaugelas's material influence on the language here, for in general I have commented on it in the detailed discussion of various aspects of language in the *Remarques* above. However, it is important to note that Vaugelas's ideas were influential in all aspects of language use. For instance, in the sphere of orthography and pronunciation his decisions on the correct pronunciation of infinitives ending in '-er', of 'oi'/'ai' in certain lexical items and verb endings, and of *guérir*, *août*, *héros* etc. have remained. In the realm of vocabulary his authority ensured the retention in usage of *autrui*, the acceptance of various new words including *pudeur*, *à l'improviste*, *incognito* and the loss of *partant*, *maint*, *corrival*, *nonante* etc. from current usage. His distinctions between the meanings of related words have also been adopted (e.g. *consommer/consumer*; *fureur/furie*) and there is a long list of words the gender of which Vaugelas helped to fix (e.g. *affaire*, *anagramme*, *doute*, *duché*, *erreur*, *étude* etc.). Various pronouncements on the correct form of nouns (*arsenal*, *caniculier*), verb forms (*vêtir*), conjunctions (*sur*, *sous*, *dessus*, *dessous* etc.), and adverbs (*quelque*) have remained, as have the details of the usage of many of the parts of speech (negative particles,⁷⁴ use of prepositions). Vaugelas's ideal of the perfectly constructed sentence in which all the syntactic relationships are clearly and explicitly marked is still that promoted in grammars today, and various details of syntactic usage have also remained fixed since the *Remarques* (e.g. agreement with various uses of the part participle, verb agreement with collectives, repetition of the article, the use of *dont*, *de* or *des* and the construction of certain verbs (*dire* etc.)). Perhaps his greatest influence has, however, been in promoting the idea of good French style, the value of *clarté* being epitomized in the work of Vaugelas. Just as in the seventeenth century Vaugelas was the man who personified the prevailing attitude to language, responding, as did Racine, to a need in the society, so today Vaugelas is a symbol for the tradition which favours discipline and precision in language use, demands that rules should be obeyed and only permits creativity within the scope defined by rules of grammar. Hatzfeld, who asks whether it is still legitimate to speak of good literary usage when writers are striving to diverge at all costs from normal usage, thereby creating a number of individual styles, nevertheless concludes that there are still enough authors who, like Camus, 'évitent à la fois la recherche et la platitude et donnent un magnifique exemple de liberté maîtrisée', and that such authors are the true authorities for good usage today.⁷⁵ In the education debate in France today, supporters of a classical French education require that pupils should be taught in *rédaction* and *composition* classes that the goal of writing is the formulation of ideas in good, clear French rather than primarily the expression of the inner self, and that children should not be encouraged to innovate in language usage. Vaugelas therefore above all serves as an authority within the tradition which places the highest value on the good usage of French that is still

a characteristic feature of French education. Antoine Adam argues that in contemporary times, when many authors write too quickly and without enough attention, Vaugelas can still instruct on the value of writing slowly and carefully, and on the need to give perfect expression to thought. He concludes:

Vaugelas est pour les écrivains un maître d'honnêteté. A toutes les époques, cette leçon est valable; de nos jours, elle est urgente.⁷⁶