

EXPERIENCING PROVENCE IN THE REGIONAL IMAGERY OF
PETER MAYLE AND PIERRE MAGNAN

by

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Abstract

Place-defining novelists convey regional imagery and regional sense of place to a wide audience, thus shaping popular perceptions of regions. Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan are the most recent place-defining novelists of Provence, France. This research compares each author's regional imagery and sense of place to understand what it means for each author to be in Provence. Place-name mapping geographically frames each authors' regional imagery and sense of place. Qualitative coding and close readings of selected texts for each author identify sets of regional imagery, including nature and culture imagery, which help develop a sense of place for Provence. The subjectivities of qualitative coding analysis is addressed through personal narratives which acknowledges the researcher's positionality vis-à-vis Provence.

Mayle's nature imagery emphasizes remote, rough topography and bright sunny skies, which presents the natural landscape as benevolent and therapeutic. Magnan's nature imagery emphasizes rough topography, rivers, winds, and storms, which presents the natural landscape as powerful, indifferent or malevolent towards human affairs, and imbued with a sense of deep time and an enigmatic quality. Mayle's culture imagery emphasizes healthy, traditional agrarian lifeways; vibrant village life and social connectedness; a positive and prominent tourist industry; and a food culture which permeates Provençal identity. Magnan's culture imagery emphasizes the harsh realities of agrarian lifestyles; insular and mistrusting villages; hard and frugal villagers; historical continuity; and references to ruined or abandoned landscapes and cultural loss.

Mayle's sense of place defines Provence as a region defined as idyllic, most strongly developed by his culture imagery which emphasizes idealized agrarian lifeways and Provence's food culture. This idyll is deepened with the positive associations with Provence's tourist industry. Magnan's sense of place defines Provence as a region defined by a melancholic sublime. His powerful, enigmatic nature imagery is the strongest shaping force behind developing Provence's sublime qualities. Provence's melancholic quality is linked to Magnan's nature imagery's enigmatic characteristics, which invite contemplation, and his culture imagery associated with ruins and cultural loss, which offers further invitation to contemplation and conveys a sense of grief.

Key Words: literary geography, sense of place, regional imagery, Provence (France)

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Dedication

To Taylor, Mama, and Dad, with love.

Chapter 1 - Personal Prelude and Introduction

Personal Prelude

One hundred fifty years ago Briwas spoke German, or so my father told me when I was six years old, but only because our ancestors lived in Alsace. Our family history, written by my great-great grandfather Michael Briwa, confirmed this, but our name, despite the very German “w,” hints at older, more Gallic origins. This my father knew as well; he told me simply that yes, Briwa was of French origin, and that our name was a Germanic corruption of *brivois*, which roughly translates as “people from Brives.” It was only later, as a French and Geography double major in college, that I finally thought to look for Brives on a map of France and found that our name’s origins are more complicated than I thought.

There are actually at least four towns in France with Brives in their names: Brives, a tiny hamlet in the hinterlands of Chateauroux, smack-dab in the center of France; Brives-la-Gaillarde, a city of some 50,000 in Limousin; Brives-Charensac, a town in the southeast corner of Auvergne; and Brives-sur-Charente, a village near the shore of the Gironde Estuary. I learned that the toponym finds its roots in the Celtic word *briva*, meaning town, but that it eventually became associated almost exclusively with river towns. From this association *briva* morphed into the Old French *brives*, or bridge, and this particular word comes from a lexicon more related to the *langues d’oc* of southern France than to the now-dominant *langues d’oil* that gave naissance to standard French (Blackie 1887). What’s more, I learned that people living in Brives-la-Gaillarde

are referred to as *brivistes*, but that the people who lived in the other Brives are called *brivois* (Malescourt and Andrieu 2004).

So I smile when I think that my father is probably right when it comes to our name's origins, because no matter which of the Brives (save for those *brivistes* of Brive-la-Gaillarde) our family originally came from, we were *brivois*. And I smile, too, when I think of bridges, because I had always enjoyed holism in my studies and, like many others, I associate bridges with connections between places, people, and ideas, something so essential to holistic studies. Looking back now I see that I used my double major as an opportunity to bridge the Atlantic during my junior year, when I applied to and received a scholarship for a summer language immersion program at the Institute for American Universities at Aix-en-Provence. Connection *made*. I never expected to get to experience France as a student, but I did, and my time in Aix-en-Provence was a far cry from the France that I had expected from my courses and a brief taste of Paris during a three day jaunt some five years before.

Aix was dusty, yet the sky had a blue clarity to it that let an ever present sunlight suffuse and bleach the colors from the city. Aix was painted with the tans of plaster walls, with the greys of the cobbles in the *centre-ville*, with the grey-green of tough sedges and olive trees, and with the bright silver-white of fountains and plane tree trunks. It was noisy and boisterous, with clinks of glasses and bottles punctuating the general commotion of pedestrians and vehicles trying in vain to share the same cramped streets and alleys. Aix smelled of dogs, cigarette smoke, and coffee. It tasted of the smooth spiciness of olive oil, the tangy saltiness of goats' cheese, and the sweet earthiness of anise liqueur. Aix had a sharp vivacity where all my senses were constantly bombarded

with the pungent, the noisy, the bright, and the heat. Taken singly, each sense was sharply defined with an almost painful intensity; taken together, they were a heady cacophony that left me reeling with exhaustion by day's end.

If Aix was a cacophony of sharp edged sensory experiences, then my evening runs in the hills surrounding Aix brought me to an entirely different world. The drone of insects and the occasional rumble of a far-off car were the only accompaniment to my foot strikes and bellowing breaths as I ran up and down the narrow roads which twisted through the hills outside of town. Scrubby pines and dense bushes looming on either side of the road were a constant presence during these runs, but one dusky eve I crested a ridge and my breath (admittedly already depleted by the hill) was taken away with the sight of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire turning orange from the last light of the sun. Sweat rivulets leaving tracks in the dust on my arms and hands, an orange-grey mountain fading

into darkness, the drone of cicadas, and a feeling of quiet solitude: this is the *pays d'Aix* (Figure 1).



Figure 1: A moment alone with Sainte-Victoire; a view from La Terrain des Peintres in Aix-en-Provence. Photograph by the author, summer 2012.

I traveled to Arles, Marseille, Aubagne, Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baum, and the Lubéron region during my stay, but Aix-en-Provence and its outskirts define what I think of as Provence. My experiences drive the way I perceive the Provençal landscape and yield a specific set of regional imagery and sense of place which give me a positionality with Provence that is firmly entrenched and difficult to shed. Provence was *Aix*. I knew that I had experienced a small part of a diverse region, and that my time in Provence was too short to consider myself a well-informed observer of Provençal landscapes, yet reflecting on my experiences there made me more aware of the experiences of others who had explored those very same landscapes.

Or were they the same? I thought of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and the way it depicted a Provençal sky in whorls of blue and yellow, colors that I never saw looking up at the sky during my walks back from the cafés. I thought of how my host-mother Andrée must have seen the city as a concentric palimpsest of names, dates, and constructions, since she had lived over seventy years in Aix and watched the first tendrils of urban sprawl reach out from its center. I thought of how none of the other students who attended I.A.U. saw the beauty of getting lost in narrow country lanes in a quest to climb the hill-fort Entremont just outside of Aix. Then I thought of how different Aix was from the texts I had studied in our Provençal literature class: I had read some of Marcel Pagnol's works, struggled through a translation of Mistral's *Mireio*, dabbled in Giono's *Regain*, and seen a film adaptation of Daudet's *Lettres de mon Moulin*. Their representations of Provence merely brushed Aix in passing, or skipped over it altogether!

Yes, some aspects of their landscapes I had experienced directly, but there was a lot that I was unfamiliar with—village life and its social fabric, the toils of farm work and the peasant condition, the passage of seasons and generations, the intimate ties between human life and the earth—and in their eloquence these texts informed me of these aspects of Provence and its cultural landscape and sense of place. Still, I could not relate to them in any material way because city life and a tourist's gaze elsewhere had kept direct experience just out of reach, and yet somehow all these texts and films became part and parcel with my understanding of what it meant to be in Provence. I realized I was letting representations create reality; the idea intrigued me but I let it fall by the wayside as I entered my senior year at Geneseo.

A year later, I found another Provence in Kansas. Or, more precisely, I found echoes of Provence, senses of Provence, in Kansas: I found it in the way the summer sun poured through the windows of my limestone apartment, in the way cicadas droned outside my door and buzzed past my ears on the commute to class, in the way the plane trees offered havens from the heat, and in the way dust stuck to my skin after runs on Linear Trail. I thought once more about representations of Provence; yearning, I searched out the French section at the public library and found a copy of Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence*.

Like the works I had studied in Aix, *A Year in Provence* articulated some of my experiences, yet in others it flew wide of the mark, but the book once again piqued my interest in what other people were saying about Provence. I began to read other works by Mayle and explored other authors, most of whom wrote startlingly similar narratives that shared a specific set of regional imagery and an idyllic sense of place. Then, however, I read *Death in the Truffle Wood*, a novel originally written in French by Pierre Magnan. Advertised as "a mystery of Provence," I expected many of the same images and themes as found in Mayle's works, but Magnan's Provence was vastly different from anything else that I had read previously. I thought of representations and their ability to shape thought. My head swam with questions. Whose voice was truer? Could there be multiple truths, equally valid? What representations are Mayle and Magnan developing? Why? Why dismiss one and not the other? And: does it matter? I knew I was pulled in; I knew I had found my thesis.

Research Introduction

My thesis explores the literary geographies of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan to better understand what it means for each author to be “in Provence.” For both authors, being “in Provence” is a full immersion into place: it is partly a process of defining Provence as a region and recognizing its connections to that of the outside world; it is partly an intimate experience of Provençal landscapes; and it is partly a process of finding self-identity in its places and its people. To be “in Provence” is to have a sense of it as a particular place.

Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan use writing as a way to express their immersion in Provence; their works are rich in imagery and possess a profound sense of Provençal place. My exploration of the works of Mayle and Magnan asks one fundamental question: How do selected works of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan contribute to Provence’s regional imagery and sense of place?

To answer this question, I take an approach that finds its common ground in geography and its core traditions as outlined by Pattison’s 1965 “The Four Traditions of Geography” (1990). My study finds its focus in Pattison’s traditions of regional studies and human-environment interactions. Considering literature’s shaping forces on regional imagery and sense of place fits well within the regional tradition’s goal of understanding “the nature of places, their character and their differentiation” (Pattison 1990), and in a 2014 reconsideration of Pattison’s traditions, Alexander Murphy noted that studies in the human-environment tradition often share the same goal, writing that “the very essence of the human-environment tradition, as signaled by its name, is synthesis—and that synthesis is dominated by studies that focus on individual places” (184).

To explore these traditions, I draw heavily from concepts developed in humanistic geography which emphasize the role that perception and subjectivity play in developing and expressing geographic knowledge (e.g., Wright 1947, Relph 1976, Allan 1976, Tuan 1976, 1977, Zaring 1977) and I use methods developed in literary geography (e.g., Shortridge 1991, Blake 1995, Piatti et al. 2009, Wyckoff 2013) to better understand the regional complexities of Provence from the perspective of literary geography. Furthermore, in keeping with the traditional view of geography as a consilience discipline¹, I adopt an interdisciplinary perspective and draw insights from scholarship in literary history, literary theory, and comparative literary studies (e.g., literary regionalism as discussed by Morgan 1939, McDowell 1939, and Dainotto 1996; Provençal literary movements as discussed by Vitaglione 2000).

My research finds its foundations in scholarship that asserts that regional imagery and sense of place as found in literature are sources of geographic knowledge which often strongly influence how people, both outsiders and insiders, perceive and interact with vernacular regions (McDowell 1939, Salter and Lloyd 1977, Dainotto 1996, Lando 1996, Yarwood 2005, Silva et al. 2013). In his *Discours de la Méthode*, Descartes wrote that “the reading of all good books is like a conversation with the most honorable people of

¹ E.O. Wilson (1998) suggests that *consilience* is a “jumping together” of knowledge by “the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation” (8). Concurrent to Wilson’s discussion of consilience are assertions from geographers (e.g., Tuason 1987, Rediscovering Geography Committee 1997) that geography is a *synthesis* discipline, which cuts across disciplines in its theoretical and methodological approaches to provide understanding about selected phenomena (Rediscovering Geography Committee 1997, 29). I consider geography’s use of cross-disciplinary approaches and theories to help explain geographic phenomena a parallel to Wilson’s definition of consilience.

past ages” (1637), and this metaphor expresses the idea that literature is associated with the act of creation as well as reception. Recent scholarship expands on this idea and notes that literature of any kind is set in a variety of social and geographic contexts (Lopez 1996, Sheeran 1999, Saunders 2010). The text itself finds its inspiration from these, and itself becomes a source of geographic knowledge (Lopez 1996, Yarwood 2005). There is also the social and geographic context of its reception, which suggests the idea that readers use literature as a means of vicarious experience and in doing so form specific attitudes and perceptions about places from the action of reading (Saunders 2010). In short, “all texts, including books and landscapes, come into dialogue with other texts with which the reader is familiar,” (Sheeran 1999) and this characterizes places in a way that is fluid and prone to polyvocality. Descartes probably could not have imagined the extent to which literature’s reception can move beyond the individual reader today, yet tourist brochures, postcards, travel narratives, guidebooks, film, and other media which refer to literary representations of place to promote a region’s imagery are concrete examples of literature’s influence at a macro-level “beyond the book” (e.g., Wyckoff and Dilsaver 1997, Yarwood 2005, Terkenli 2011, Warnaby and Medway 2013).

My initial readings of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan exposed overlapping yet distinct sets of regional imageries and senses of place between the two authors’ works. Phenomenological approaches to place studies and feminist geographers have long touted the concept of situated knowledge and positionalities toward place, arguing that positionalities in relationships with place influence the ways that humans create geographies and interact with place (e.g., Relph 1976, Rose 1997). The concept of positionalities suggests that similarities and differences between Mayle’s and Magnan’s

regional imagery and sense of place cannot be ignored in any study which uses the lens of literary geography to examine Provence; thus, my research uses the place-related similarities and differences between their works as key components in an exploration of regional imagery and sense of place associated with Provence.

The relevance of this research is threefold. First, to the best of my knowledge this is the first case study that **approaches a better understanding of Provence's physical and cultural landscapes and its resulting regional identity through the lens of literary geography**. Using literature as a source of geographic knowledge to better understand and define regional landscapes is a common theme to literary geography (Darby 1948, Paterson 1965, Pocock 1979, Lando 1996), and Mayle's and Magnan's works contain a gold-mine of regional images which effectively illustrate the highs and lows of Provençal physical and cultural landscapes.

Returning to Descartes' metaphor of literature as a conversation, with production and reception each occurring in different social and geographic contexts, this thesis has implications for understanding perceptions of Provence's regional identity both within and outside of its borders. The use of evocative description in literature offers a means to crystallize and communicate cultural landscapes and senses of place (Bandler 1996, Neely 2014). Cultural landscapes are but one of many components associated with the complexities of forming and maintaining regional identities (Meinig 1979, Grieger and Garkovich 1994, Ryden 1999, Paasi 2003, Agnew 2011). Examining Provençal cultural landscapes in the works of Mayle and Magnan offers insights to internal perceptions of Provençal regional identity, and this thesis identifies regional images and senses of place

that are necessary to a future considerations of the reception (and perception) of these literary landscapes beyond Provence's regional borders.

Second, while the use of interdisciplinary approaches is a path well-trod by literary geographers, I use my exploration of Mayle and Magnan to **highlight comparative literary analysis** as an untilled field of study within literary geography. Comparative approaches between case studies are common in other sub-fields of geography (e.g., Boujrouf et al. 1998 for mountain tourism; Moseley 2005 for regional geographies; Törn et al. 2009 for human impacts on forests), yet the scholarship of literary geography has largely overlooked this opportunity for comparative approaches (McManis 1978 and Hart 1986 being notable exceptions), and as Porteous (1985a) points out, literary geographers have tended toward case study approaches which frame their studies through multiple texts with common authorship (e.g., Darby 1948, Patterson 1965, Tuan 1985, Porteous 1986, Blake 1995, Kadonaga 1998, Kelly 2012, Wyckoff 2013). This thesis seeks to demonstrate that there is potential for comparative approaches within literary geography and attempts to narrow the existing gap in the literature.

Appropriating the tradition of comparative approaches within the greater sphere of geography as an academic discipline is one rationale for considering the works of Mayle and Magnan simultaneously in a consideration of Provence, its regional imagery, and its sense of place. Moving beyond that, however, is an opportunity that lies in the relationship between geography and literary studies. Geography and comparative literature have a common history in that both fields possess an identity crisis in terms of their respective subject matters and how to approach them. Within comparative literature this debate about what comparative literature is and how it should be studied continues

(e.g., Wellek 1970, Weisstein 1973, Le Juez 2013), and the dispute over the prerequisite characteristics of texts and their authors for comparative literary studies offers a niche where literary geographers might find a place. This thesis illustrates a set of criteria for comparative literary geography. In doing so, it moves beyond the methodological and into the topical as it highlights an untapped sub-field within literary geography.

Comparative literary geography as a sub-field within literary geography affords an opportunity to breathe further interest into humanistic and literary geography, which has been cited as “faltering” (Bunkse 1990), or drawing away from its ties to other humanistic disciplines (Brosseau 1994). I see the development of comparative literary geographies as a means of addressing these epistemological issues through heightening interdisciplinary communication between humanistic geography and other humanities-orientated fields of study. My comparative study of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan offers a case study with which this potential might be made explicit.

Finally, I strive for this thesis to be **a work of literature** in and of itself; Donald Meinig (1983, 2) called for the geographer to become an artist:

[...] A growing number of geographers are making forays into the hearts of literature and returning to tell us of the riches they have found, but we have yet little solid evidence of their own enrichment in the form of major works that have been shaped by the insights of the humanities (although we are offered tantalizing glimpses of the geographer-poet...)

These tantalizing glimpses of the geographer-poet remain few and far between (e.g., Jackson 1970, Lewis 1985, Marsh 1987, Olstad 2014), and I see this lacunae as detrimental to our academic goals, one of which is communication of our findings. Pierce Lewis (1985) reminds us that communicating our knowledge to the public is a central goal of academic geography, yet one often forgotten during our studies and research, and

in 1982 John Fraser Hart argued the merits of geographic studies written with “imagination, flair, style, verve, dash, panache, [and] enthusiasm.” I see Meinig’s call for the geographer-poet as the way to most effectively communicate geography to the public. Through writing imaginative yet informative literature of our own, we encourage the growth of the public’s “visceral passion for the earth” (Lewis 1985, 467) and increase public awareness about the breadth and scope of our discipline. Why, then, have we not more fully embraced the rich language and descriptions of the geographer-poet? Over the course of this thesis I attempt to blend scholarship and literature; as a literary geographer I think it necessary to attract public and interdisciplinary attention as well as pay our respects to the authors we study through producing an academic work of literary merit. My thesis attempts to meet Meinig’s call; in doing so, I hope to return emphasis to the idea that geography is a discipline which can deftly blend imaginative expression and pragmatic application (Mackinder 1942, Hart 1982, Tuan 1990).

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, “Personal Prelude and Introduction,” introduces my inspiration to study the literature of Provence, the goal of my research, the research question, and the relevance my research as a means to better understand Provence and expand upon research in literary geography. Chapter 2, “Geographic Moorings,” briefly narrates the way that geographers developed humanistic geography and its sub-field, literary geography. I then trace the ways that scholars use literature as a means to explore geographic concepts, including sense of place, a central component to my study. I define sense of place and show how Provençal senses of place might be developed and explored through the lens of methods and concepts of literary geography, such as place defining novels, regional imagery, and the coding process.

Chapter 2 closes with a brief glossary of terms that I have adapted for use in subsequent chapters. Chapter 3, “Provence and its Literary Tradition,” opens with a brief discussion of Provence, its widely communicated physical and cultural landscapes, and explores the Provençal literary tradition that finds its inspiration in human relationships with the environment. Finally, Chapter 3 establishes Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan as authors who embody the contemporary Provençal literary tradition and shows how both fit the characteristics of a place defining writer. In doing so, I touch on the genres that each author prefers in their body of works and discuss some of the implications of genre in each author’s development of regional imagery. The chapter closes with cartographic representations of what each author defines as the geographies of Provence and its links to a broader world through the use of place-names.

Subsequent chapters address common geographic themes that Mayle and Magnan incorporate into their works; this series of chapters serves to “fill in” the regional extents that Mayle and Magnan develop through their works. Once more returning to the concept of literature as a conversation and an intertextual experience driven by the contexts of production and reception, I turn to my own experiences in and associated with Provence to introduce each chapter and its themes, and then explore to what extent and how Mayle and Magnan address these themes. Chapter 4, “Water and Earth,” illustrates the ways that Mayle and Magnan approach the physical landscapes and weather patterns of Provence, and specifically considers descriptions of landscapes considered “wild” by each author. Chapter 5, “Settled Places, People, and Time,” approaches the culture of Provence, exploring what each author considers the quintessential Provençal settled landscape, as well as considers the way that Mayle and Magnan characterize Provence’s people and *la*

vie quotidienne. Chapter 5 also explores the way that each author nests Provence into historical time, and considers how the use of temporal setting influences sense of place. Chapter 6, “A Sense of Provence,” offers final commentary on the Provence(s) of Mayle and Magnan, proposes the final senses of place that each author develops, and connects the research methods and its findings to a wider range of applications beyond Provence as a case study.

Chapter 2 - Geographic Moorings

Humanistic Leanings

Geography's academic history is one fraught with paradigm shifts: in the past century, geography has been seen as a discipline of exploration and discovery; of environmental determinism; of regional studies; as a spatial science; and as a critical and postmodern social science. The epistemological roots of my thesis research cannot be understood without an understanding of the context out of which they emerged: movement beyond the quantitative revolution of the mid-twentieth century. Geography's quantitative revolution emphasized geography as a spatial science, touting its conceptual, model-based, and statistical approaches as a means to understand the world. As Ley (1981) notes, however, the quantitative paradigm had its failings, principle among them a tendency to imbue human actions with a "mechanistic flavor" that ignores the significant shaping force that individual agency has on geographic phenomena. The paradigm of geography as a quantitative spatial science continues to thrive, but its epistemological and methodological gaps fractured the discipline, and some geographers looked elsewhere to help explain human-environment interactions.

One of the major movements within geography that attempted to balance the methods and epistemological stance of the quantitative revolution was humanistic geography, which aims, in broad terms, to "reflect on geographical phenomena with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better understanding of man and his condition" (Tuan 1976, 266). Early humanistic sentiments within geography exist in the writings of J.K. Wright (1947) and Spate (1960), but humanistic geography's full flowering occurred in

the mid-1970s with the writings of Yi-Fu Tuan and others (e.g., Allen 1972; Relph 1976; Allen 1976; Tuan 1976, 1977, 1978).

Humanistic Geography and Sense of Place

A central tenet of humanistic geography is that it attempts to explore human perceptions and experiences of places (e.g., Tuan 1976, 1978). Place perception and experience are elusive and often intangible, and yet combined with more traditional modes of geographic knowledge about physical and social elements of place, they help form a distinct sense of place (Cross 2001). Similarly, Brosseau (1994) argues that humanistic geography's main goal is to explore sense of place through considering the ways that subjective experience links with a location.

Sense of place is a concept used by multiple disciplines, yet its definition is difficult to easily express. As Edward Relph wrote in his 1976 publication *Place and Placelessness*, “[c]larification of sense of place cannot be achieved by imposing precise but arbitrary definitions” (4), and Anne Buttimer suggested that sense of place is “the coincidence of social and spatial identification” (1976, 283). Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), meanwhile, suggested that sense of place develops from the process of people, individually or collectively, giving meaning to spatial settings (2001). Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 410) explains how humans create a sense of place:

People demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations...Sense, as in sense of place, has two meanings. One is visual or aesthetic ... [but] we can know a place subconsciously, through touch and remembered fragrances, unaided by the discriminating eye. While the eye takes in a lovely street scene and intelligence categorizes it, our hand feels the iron of the school fence and stores subliminally its coolness and resistance in our memory. Through such modest hordes we can acquire in time a sense of place.

According to Tuan's insight, a sense of place is built out of the interplay between human sensory experiences of a locality and the emotions and values they impose on that locality. Implicit in Tuan's discussion is the idea that sense of place associated with a location is fluid and evolves over time, gradually gaining more and more depth with increased experience, and this is made explicit in the works of Edward Relph (1976; 1985, 27) and others (e.g., Lowenthal 1985, Hay 1988, Bunkse 2007):

...for they [places] are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory qualified.

These definitions are holistic and encourage qualitative, non-empirical approaches to the investigation of sense of place, and, considered together, they define sense of place as it is used in this thesis research. **Sense of place is a human construction, built out of sensory experience of a locality and emotional reaction towards a locality; furthermore, it is a dynamic construction shaped by the passage of time.**

Underpinning my definition is a philosophical grounding in idealism.

Philosophical idealism presupposes that the "activity of the mind is the foundation of human existence and knowledge" (Acton 1967, 110, quoted in Guelke 1981). Idealism is a broad philosophy, but discussions of its development reveals that there are two dominant schools of thought. There is metaphysical idealism, which states that mental activity occurs entirely independent of material objects and processes. My interpretation of metaphysical idealism is that it is a philosophy which assumes that knowledge can be produced solely from the workings of the human mind and does not require human interaction with an external reality. Then there is epistemological idealism, which

maintains that knowledge of the world can only be found through subjective experience of the world (Guelke 1981). Epistemological idealism links highly subjective experience of objective material objects and processes as a source of knowledge. I contend that my definition of sense of place finds its philosophical foundation in epistemological idealism because it hinges on the idea that for a human to develop a sense of place, he or she must experience an external reality.

Given that my definition of sense of place requires human interaction with an external and material reality, I follow humanistic geography's assertion that one way to approach sense of place is to do so through the lens of the arts, because the arts offer material representations of subjective experiences of an objective reality (Tuan 1978, Meinig 1983); furthermore, the arts have an ability to communicate the subjective experience of the artist to others, and, in doing so, shape their experiences. Essentially, the arts shape the way humans view and interact with the world. Humanistic geographers were quick to embrace this idea and use it to rationalize the use of creative literature in their research, because, as Douglas Pocock (1981b, 15) states, "literature is the product of perception, or, more simply, *is* perception."

Literary Geography: A Brief Overview

Humanistic geography's emphasis on literature as a source of geographic knowledge drove renewed interest into literary geography, which turns to creative literature to explore the "humanized, cultural landscapes of the earth" (Salter and Lloyd 1977, 1). Darby's 1948 study on English landscapes as represented in Thomas Hardy's fiction is the first strong example of the way geographers might examine and use creative literature to produce insights about landscapes, though Darby himself thought of literary

geography as nothing more than an intellectual exercise (Salter and Lloyd 1977, Noble and Dhussa 1990, Lando 1996).

In his 1996 literature review of the sub-discipline, Fabio Lando outlined five themes that geographers explore through literature. Lando wrote that geographers use literature as a source of geographic knowledge (see, Darby 1948, Paterson 1965, Pocock 1979, Blake 1995, Ryden 1999, Wyckoff 2013), as a means to explore sense of place (e.g., Patterson 1965, Butler-Adam 1981, Tuan 1985, Daniels 1992, Dann and Jacobson 2003), as evidence of cultural rooting and place attachment (e.g., Pocock 1979, Hart 1986), as evidence and expression of cultural and ethno-territorial consciousness (e.g., Kelly 2012), and as a tool to explore the deeply complex and subjective relationships people have with the manifest landscapes of the physical world and the latent landscapes of the psyche (e.g., Simpson-Housley and Paul 1984, Porteous 1986). Another strand of literary geography unmentioned by Lando might be defined as a theme that explores concepts underlying literary geography. Examples of research that explore this theme include discussions about the way that geographers approach literary geography (Robinson 1987), the concept of the place-defining novelist (Shortridge 1991), and studies that consider where authors live and how that influences their writing (Pocock 1978; Kelly 1992).

My research finds its strongest fit within Lando's first two themes: that of literature as a source of geographic knowledge, and that of literature as a means to explore sense of place. Although geographic knowledge is a broad term, my interpretation of literature's role as a source of geographic knowledge hinges on the concept of **regional imagery: passages within literature that describe landscapes or**

regions offer visual images which are linked to a particular locality and help define it. Literature's role as a means to explore sense of place draws from my working definition of sense of place, as literature often articulates the links between places and sensory experience beyond the visual, and expressed human values and emotions attached to a locality. I contend that Lando's two themes are inextricably linked to one another. Geographic knowledge about a place, for example, includes an understanding of the place through sensory experiences beyond the visual; furthermore, I argue that a place cannot be fully known without an understanding of the human values and emotions attached to it that shape its sense of place. In short, the lines between Lando's themes are blurred. A closer look at scholarship that fits within the context of these themes offers insights into the rationale behind my own reasoning, and suggests the appropriate methods for my exploration of the literary geographies of Provence.

Lando's Themes: Blurring Lines

"Most literary landscapes," Mallory and Simpson-Housley write, "are rooted in reality, and landscapes have long been the domain of geographers" (1987, xi). Lando's theme of literature as a source of geographic knowledge relies on this idea. This approach to literature supposes that an author is a "keen observer of the landscape," and that his or her writing effectively evokes images of a place, contributing to place-definition at a range of scales, from that of a single town to an entire region (Salter and Lloyd 1977, Shortridge 1991).

Historically, this theme's development stems from the use of literature as a repository of geographical fact, and Lando (1996, 4) noted that one of its earliest uses was "to help reconstruct geographic knowledge of the past," and that a second use of

literature was to “capture territorial realities” in an evocative way that moves beyond the facts and figures of more traditional geographic research. In some cases, a work of literature is the only evidence we have of a specific place in time (Brosseau 1994). Donald Meinig (1983) pointed out that geographers can benefit from using literature as a means to add “color and vitality to the drab and lifeless body of regional geography,” and some have followed this call to incorporate creative literature into geography classrooms (e.g., Wyckoff 1979, Brooker-Gross 1991).

William Wyckoff’s 2013 study on Ivan Doig’s literary works set in Montana is a strong example of the way that cultural geographers approach drawing out geographic knowledge from literature. Wyckoff contends that Doig’s “raw creativity” and ability to observe and record Montana’s landscapes are what make his works valuable as a source of geographic knowledge and that Doig’s use of description is place-defining in its verisimilitude. Wyckoff is explicit in the sorts of geographic information that he seeks to elucidate from Doig’s works: he identifies five themes that might be used as a more general template for further research that considers literature as a source of geographic knowledge. Among these are accurate description of place; an emphasis on cyclic changes in the landscape, including weather patterns, community events, and economic practices; an emphasis on larger historical contexts, or of setting the story in time as well as place; a focus on the labor of ordinary people; and the use of vernacular language. Wyckoff’s research emphasizes the roles that accurate images play in defining a place, and the types of themes that he chooses to develop lend themselves to a consideration of place-definition at a regional scale.

Other geographers have pointed out how certain genres lend themselves to fulfilling the same themes that Wyckoff suggested are essential for a work of literature to act as a source of geographic knowledge. Like Wyckoff, McManis (1978), Hausladen (1996), and Kadonaga (1998) suggested that writers have a responsibility for writing with realistic accuracy, and that for crime novelists in particular, successful plot development is linked to how well they can fulfill this responsibility. All three, however, are quick to point out that a writer's ability to describe geographic realities is not the only factor in defining a place.

Kadonaga (1998) held that for an author to be place defining, it is necessary to move beyond description and incorporate more complex facets of landscapes to effectively convey a sense of place. Similarly, Hausladen argued that accurate detail is only one technique that an author might use to capture the essence of place, and suggests that a writer's status as place-defining relies on a two part process: description and literary mood. Accurate detail is developed through description; mood, however, relies on character development, metaphor, and symbolism (Hausladen 1996). Kevin Blake's 1995 study on Zane Grey's role as a catalyst in the creation of a specific set of regional imagery for the American West illustrates this two-part process. Like Doig, Grey's direct experience of western landscapes allowed him to write accurately about them. His incorporation of character development and archetypes, however, moves beyond geographic facts and further shapes a specific sense of place for the American West (Blake 1995). In a similar study, Pocock (1979) showed how character development combined with landscape description contributes to regional imagery of the English North. Pocock observed that the clear articulation of character traits, such as a male

character's taciturn or unpolished nature, become traits that are associated with the region as a whole and influence the reader's sense of place, and such descriptions develop a sense of place of the North of England that imbues emotion and behavior (hard, honest, industrious) with a dark, industrial landscape.

Prerequisites and Approaches to Literary Geography

Studies in literary geography rely on a common set of prerequisites for the study to take place, as well as a common set of methods to glean insights from creative literature. General tendencies within studies of literary geography include a focus on novels as the ideal type of literary text to examine; a focus on author biographies as an important part of establishing the authenticity (or lack thereof) of their development of regional imagery and sense of place within their texts; a preference for authors who are prolific and who write about a region with consistent regional imagery and sense of place; and studies that examine a single author or a single set of regional imagery shared by many authors. A common set of methods includes the tendency for mapping the spatial settings of an author's work and examining the way that authors address specific geographic themes within their texts through coding and close reading. A relative lacuna within literary geography's scholarship is a consideration of the way that the researcher places his or herself vis-à-vis the texts and authors that are the object of study. This relationship is embodied in Descartes's statement that literature's production and reception is akin to a dialogue. Despite its relative obscurity in the general body of studies in literary geography, there are notable works that address the relationship between literature and the reader and attempt to wrestle with its implications (Brosseau 1994, Hones 2014). This thesis explores the literary geographies of Provence through the

prerequisites and methods that characterize current scholarship in literary geography and attempts to grapple with how my positionality shapes this exploration of Provence's regional imagery and sense of place as represented in the works of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan.

Prerequisites of Literary Geography

Although literary geographers examine a variety of literary forms, including poetry (e.g., Hart 1986, Griffiths and Salisbury 2013), most choose to examine novels during their studies (Brosseau 1994). Daniels and Rycroft (1993) noted that “as a literary form, the novel is inherently geographical,” because since its development in the 18th century the novel has been linked to articulating geographic knowledge and experience from a variety of perspectives. Pocock (1981a) commented that novels are of interest to the literary geographer because they highlight setting in social values and in time, something which other literary forms such as epic and drama fail to fully incorporate². Pocock suggested that these settings imply a specific locale (Pocock 1981a). Anthropologist Janet Tallman (2002, 12) noted that novels have ethnographic characteristics that can convey significant information “about the cultures or cultures from which the novel originates,” which further emphasizes the potential for novels to be of interest to cultural geographers.

² Pocock (1981a) suggests that the dominant forms of literature prior to the novel were the epic and drama, which he states “recounted unchanging moral truths in timeless settings, the plots themselves being freely borrowed from other countries and cultures” (337), and that a consequence of this was a lack of time specificity as well as place specificity. Pocock goes on to suggest that the novel was the first literary genre to rely on historical and regional details to drive narrative; in doing so, it becomes both place specific and time specific.

Biographical information about authors is an essential part of research in literary geography. Pocock's (1979) remark that literature is perception implies a positionality to any literary work; this positionality is the author's perspective. Approaching literary geographies with an introduction to the events of an author's life that shaped his or her literary production helps position the work, its images, and its sense of place within a context situated in time and place (Kelly 2012). Such a context allows for a better understanding of the verisimilitude of the author's use of regional imagery and sense of place. Similarly, Brosseau (1994) stated that geographers need to be aware of whether or not an author experienced the social milieu that he or she writes about, because novelists are often regarded as the spokesperson of place. This concept is illustrated by Wyckoff's exploration of Ivan Doig's literature, because central to Wyckoff's thesis that Doig is a place-defining author is the idea that Doig has intimate experience with the region that he writes about (Wyckoff 2013). Similarly, Zane Grey could not have written as evocatively as he did about the American West without having his adventures (Blake 1995), nor could Faulkner have written so powerfully about the fictional Yoknapatawpha County without having lived in real Mississippian landscapes (Aiken 1977).

Literary geographers prefer to study prolific or well-known authors who have developed a consistent set of regional images. This is partially a response to the amount of available data contained within a text. More written works by a single author offers more texts to draw from in the formation of a study within literary geography. An author's prolific nature, while helping crystallize a consistent set of regional images by weight of available data, does not necessarily mean that he or she is place defining. Some degree of an author's fame is necessary for a novel to be considered place defining;

Shortridge (1991) noted that there are instances of authors who have produced single works that are so evocative that they stand alone in place-definition. The tendency for literary geographers to study prolific or well-known authors highlights two key ideas: one, that an author's place-defining ability is partly grounded in how well their works develop a set of consistent regional images, and two, that an author's place-defining ability is also driven by how many people come into contact with and interact with his or her work. Studies in literary geography, generally seek to consider authors who are both prolific enough to develop and crystallize a set of regional imagery, and well-known enough to have reached a large readership.

In studies that consider multiple authors, literary geographers have suggested that consistent use of regional imagery across groups of authors serves to better crystallize a single place definition (e.g., Pocock 1979), and Brosseau (1994, 336) notes that while the sets of regional imagery used among a group of authors might be highly subjective, they offer a truth that "is objective inasmuch as it is the product of an intersubjective consensus."

Less common to studies in literary geography are those that consider contrasting sets of regional imageries and senses of place, though notable exceptions exist (e.g., McManis 1978, Hart 1986). In the case of McManis's 1978 paper comparing Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell, comparison serves to establish one author as more relevant to studies in literary geography over another. Hart's 1986 paper on the literary geographies of Soweto explores the oppression and alienation white writers witness while traveling through Soweto and compares it to the way that Soweto is represented in poetry by its African communities. A critical point to Hart's study is the way that it reveals a

multiplicity of authentic views about Soweto, each view offering insights into the social and economic dynamics of the community that contributes to its sense of place (Hart 1986). At their core, these two case studies in literary geography employ what anthropologist Rohner (1977) calls an idiographic-comparative approach. The idiographic-comparative approach does not seek to generalize across two samples; rather, it seeks to juxtapose one sample against another to illuminate special features about both. Within anthropology, comparative-idiographic approaches can be implicit or explicit. Implicit approaches use single case studies and assume a comparison between the contexts of the subject under study and that of the researcher. The explicit idiographic-comparative approach compares two samples which have a set of shared characteristics and a set of variable characteristics. My thesis research employs an explicit idiographic-comparative approach and follows in the vein of Hart's work, because while it compares two authors' perceptions, I do not intend to establish one author as more authentic than another; instead, I seek to explore the multiple perspectives representing a region.

Methods

Geographers approach literary geography through a common set of qualitative methods. Two major approaches are the use of cartographic representations of authors' places of production, as well as the settings of their works, and qualitative coding techniques that rely on close reading of the texts under study. There are two primary applications of cartography within studies of literary geography. First, there are cartographies of literary production, which represent the locations from which writers produce literature (e.g., Kelly 1992, Moretti 1998). These cartographic representations attempt to draw insights about the cultural contexts that surround the author's production

of literature. A second, more common application of cartography within literary geography are maps that represent authors' choice of settings. This type of mapping serves to draw insights about the core and extent of the regions that the author represents in his or her literature. In a 2008 study, Piatti et al. note that cartographic representations of literary settings reveal an author's or a novel's "gravity centers vs. unwritten regions" (181). Blake (1995) and Wyckoff (2013) both use cartographic representations to illustrate where the texts' settings are situated within the context of a region, while Moretti (1998) uses cartography to show where Jane Austen's novels begin, develop, and end.

Qualitative coding techniques aim to draw out regional imagery found within a text; such regional images, combined with close reading which sheds light on the way that literary techniques contribute to the mood of the text, help the text convey a distinct sense of place. The coding process is an essential method in literary geography, though its use is often implied rather than made explicit. Coding involves identifying and organizing themes in qualitative data sets. Cope (2010) states that the goals of coding are twofold: the first goal is to reduce the amount of data considered in the study, and the second is to organize it in a way that identifies themes relevant to the scope of the study. In studies of literary geography, the process of coding is essential to reduce the complexity of a text by pulling out passages and words that are relevant to the creation of regional imagery and sense of place. Less often, researchers might use author interviews to glean information about themes prevalent in a text (e.g., Macke 2013, Wyckoff 2013), and this process might be considered an alternative form of coding. Cope noted, however, that one of the more common forms of coding is descriptive coding, which reflect themes

or patterns that are directly stated; for example, a passage that describes a landscape might be coded for the descriptive terms (e.g., adjectives) used.

While descriptive coding is an important part of developing a study in literary geography, it fails to draw out more subtle nuances of literature that contribute to a sense of place. One of the ways that literary geographers can approach these nuances is through the process of close reading. Brosseau (1994, 347) suggested that “geographers need to spend more time on the text itself—its general structure, composition, narrative modes, variety of languages, etc.—before embarking on any sort of interpretation whatsoever,” and I interpret his statement as a call for close reading.

Close reading is a method which developed out of the formalist and New Critical literary theories of the early to mid-twentieth century, and relies on the idea that the language and devices of literature merit study to fully understand a text’s themes and meanings, rather than a reliance on the social and historical contexts of a text’s production (Bressler 1994, Rivken and Ryan 2004). Like coding, close reading is often implied, but it is a process that is ubiquitous to any study in literary geography, even if the researcher is not formally trained in its technique. According to Patricia Kain (1998), close reading is a technique that “observes facts and details about the text,” which parallels descriptive coding, but close reading enables the researcher to tie together the text’s observed regional images with its rhetorical features, structural forms, and historical or cultural references that might escape the process of descriptive coding. Close reading helps develop an understanding of the mood that a work of literature evokes in the reader. In doing so, it links objective observation of a text’s regional images with

emotional reaction towards a locale, an essential component to the development of a sense of place.

My own research uses coding to determine and explore geographic themes in the works of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan. I begin coding with a broad exploration of geographic themes and types of regional imagery that other literary geographers use in their explorations of place defining novels (e.g., Blake 1995, Wyckoff 2013), and in doing so I attempt to glean insights into how these themes are developed in each author's work. My use of coding does not count every instance of certain terms or themes in a given text because I find it inconsistent with my research goal, which approaches Mayle and Magnan's development and use of Provence's regional imagery and sense of place in a holistic way.

Quantifying the presence of terms or themes within a text has several drawbacks. For the purposes of my study, I view such a technique as overly time intensive for its potential gains. Both authors rely heavily on certain place names and images, and given that my analysis uses multiple texts, counting the frequency of these terms as they appear in each author's works would add further time to an analysis which already relies on multiple close readings of a range of texts.

The gains of such a time investment are minimal for this research, which asks what each author contributes to Provence's regional imagery and sense of place. This contribution is not simply a matter of theme frequency. Regional imagery and sense of place can be well defined through short yet evocative passages which are written in a way that engrave themselves in a reader's mind, and, subsequently, the way that they imagine a place or region. Given the power of literature to evoke place in such a way, I think that

term frequencies are inappropriate for the scope of this study. The table or graph which illustrates the results of a term or theme count would do little to deepen understanding of a text's ability to define a place through regional imagery or sense of place. As Selltiz et al. (1959, 336) suggest, quantification tends to obscure "the character of the data available," and literary works, from their creation and dissemination to their reception by the reader, are characterized by deeply complex connections and synthesis which would be obscured by over-quantification. Instead of coding techniques that rely on term counts, I follow methodologies set forth by previous studies in literary geography, where coding is an implied process which occurs during the act of reading and re-reading the texts to identify themes relevant to defining Provence. My coding identifies place-defining images of Provence through identifying which themes and images frequently occur in each author's texts as well as developing themes from the texts' most evocative passages. Evocative passages need not be frequent within a text, but they must be memorable. The extent to which a passage is evocative highlights the role that a researcher's positionality plays during the research process, as what constitutes an "evocative" passage will vary from person to person. Nonetheless, I contend that those passages which remain most memorable after reading the texts have a powerful shaping force in the way that I define and view Provence, and has an influence on the themes that I explore in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

Positionality with(in) Provence

As introduced by my discussion of what constitutes an evocative passage, the themes that a researcher draws out of a text are at least partially influenced by his or her positionality vis-à-vis the text. The phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1952, quoted in

Johnson and Smith 1993, 114) touches on this idea when he writes that “when we analyze an object, we find only what we have put into it,” and literary geographer Marc Brosseau (1994, 347) expands:

There is an inevitable tension for all social or human sciences to engage in a dialogue with an aesthetic object. This problem raises the question of method and ineluctably leads us to ethics (the analyst’s attitude towards the text). [...] geographers have almost always been searching for questions ‘already’ answered in literature and that they knew beforehand what was to be ‘found’ therein. [...] Whatever our reasons for turning to literature, we have almost always tried to find a confirmation of our own thesis [...]

Although increasingly visible in other areas of geography (e.g., Rose 1997, Hopkins 2007), discussions about positionality and its effects on research are rare within literary geography. Susan Hones touches on this discussion in her 2014 publication *Literary Geographies: Narrative Spaces in Let the Great World Spin*. Central to her research is the idea that the novel is an event that is performed:

[The novel is] something that happens—and keeps on happening, in space as well as time. It comes into being and then continues to unfold not only in the creation of an original performance [...] but also in subsequent viewings, interpretations, readings, and memories (Hones 2014, 6).

The novel as an original performance representative of an author’s perception of the world is one aspect of positionality in literary geography. As noted earlier, many works of literary geography seek to explore this positionality through the use of author biographies. Similarly, Yarwood (2005) points out that literary geographers have to think critically about the social context of literature’s production. The other aspect of positionality, however, lies with the researcher in his or her interpretation of the texts. This means that the process of coding and close reading is inherently subjective because

the themes, regional images, and senses of place contained within a text are only formed through the act of reading as a performative and interpretative event. Simply put, my own experiences play a critical role in my reception of the texts I choose to consider in my research and influences the way I apply coding and close reading to my source materials, and, as Brosseau suggests, this raises questions of methodological validity as well as questions of research ethics.

Rose (1997) and Hopkins (2007) suggest that while positionality is an inevitable part of research, it does not necessarily detract from the value of research if the researcher's positionality is acknowledged and made explicit. I see my positionality as both a strength and weakness of my thesis research. On the one hand, the range of experiences that I can draw from during my interpretations of Peter Mayle's and Pierre Magnan's works include direct experience of landscapes in Provence, a strong vocational background in French literature and cultural and humanistic geographies, and a life-long enthusiasm for literature and history. The connections between these experiences allow me to identify themes and examples of regional imagery that help develop a sense of place within Mayle's and Magnan's works that might go unnoticed during another's interpretation of the same texts. Drawing from these experiences during the research process offers, to some extent, an insider's perspective on how these texts contribute to a definition of Provence. On the other hand, these same experiences and background limit my exploration of Mayle's and Magnan's works in ways that I am not aware of, as my experiences taken together offer a view of Provence that is difficult to shed. There is always the possibility of alternative interpretations of the texts I chose to study, even if these interpretations overlap with my own, something which literary theorists have

recognized since the 1960s and 1970s with the rise of the Cultural Poetics movement. Supporters of the Cultural Poetics contend that “critics and texts are interwoven, both to each other and in the culture in which they are produced” (Bressler 1994, 184). Given the advantages and disadvantages offered by my positionality vis-à-vis Provence and the works that I interpret in this thesis, and because I am interpreting the literarily expressed perceptions of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan, I believe it is ethical to embrace and articulate my positionality as an integral part of my thesis research. Throughout this thesis, my positionality will be touched on through passages that articulate my experiences in Provence and are relevant to the themes that I explore in Mayle and Magnan’s works.

Glossary of Terms

My literature review of humanistic and literary geography revealed several concepts which are central to studies of literary geography, among them regional imagery and sense of place. Regional imagery, though a building block of studies in literary geography, is rarely defined, and sense of place has a myriad of interrelated definitions. For my study, I developed definitions for terms that I will frequently use and develop in subsequent chapters:

Regional imagery: language and passages within Mayle and Magnan’s text used to describe Provence.

Sense of place: a subjective, dynamic human construction, built out of sensory experience of a locality, emotional reaction toward a locality, and shaped by the passage of time. In a text, sense of place is a holistic construction,

borne out of the interplay between images of nature and images of culture. A sense of place can be developed at an individual scale as well as a collective scale.

Nature: Provence's physical landscape and other phenomena which are generally considered minimally unaffected by human action; also descriptions of the interplay that takes place between the physical landscape and other phenomena. Regional images of physical landscape includes descriptions of natural vegetation, soils, hydrologic and geologic systems; regional imagery of other phenomena includes descriptions of weather patterns, climatic conditions, and seasonal cycles. Nature contributes to Provence's sense of place.

Culture: Provence's human phenomena, including humans themselves, their behavior, and their constructions. Included in my definition of culture is consideration of historical events and setting in time. Regional imagery of humans and their behavior include descriptions of human physical and emotional health at an individual or collective level, and descriptions of their day-to-day behavior, as well as their social roles. Regional images of their constructions include descriptions of built environments in Provence, including, but not limited to, single buildings, towns, cities, roads, and agricultural lands. Descriptions of historical events and setting in time include references to past events and references to the setting in which the plot of the text takes place.

The goal of humanistic geographers to “explore geographic phenomena with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better understanding of man and his condition” (Tuan 1976, 276) through the lens of the arts gave rise to geographers using literature to explore what Salter and Lloyd call “humanized landscapes of the earth” (1977, 1). Literature’s production and reception is linked to a variety of contexts, among them place, histories, and authors—and so geographers who want to use literature as a means to explore landscape and region consider these three contexts in research. Chapter 3, “Provence and Its Literary Tradition,” explores these contexts through a historical perspective.

Chapter 3 - Provence and Its Literary Tradition

Driving Southeastern France:

An Introduction to Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert Pirsig depicts the road trip as a chance to meditate, to reflect in depth—to engage in, as he puts it, a Chautauqua, one where thoughts cut deeper and deeper into the channels that contain our streams of consciousness (Pirsig 1974). It's true that road trips are good for that process of self-discovery—but I've found during my road trips along the old state highways and interstates of the United States' east coast and Midwest that, for me, the major appeal of road-trips lies in their ability to cultivate *place-discovery* at a dizzying pace. The sights and sounds of a road trip are valuable in and of themselves because they offer glimpses of ordinary landscapes throughout their routes, and as I view the landscape from the windows of a car and trace my fingers along an intended route on a map, I gain an understanding of what each town feels will draw people in off of the highway and a region's internal linkages. If we are so inclined, a road trip in southeastern France would offer the same benefits as its analog in the U.S., and we could spend an afternoon driving from the small town of Barcelonnette, nestled in the Ubaye Valley of the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, to Marseille on the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 2). What's more, if we are sufficiently determined, we can arrive at Marseille with time to check into our hotel and freshen up before dinner, the entire trip taking five hours, beginning from the moment we rent a car and hit the road to the moment we pull into a parking spot, unbuckle our belts, and stretch our legs in Marseille's Vieux Port.

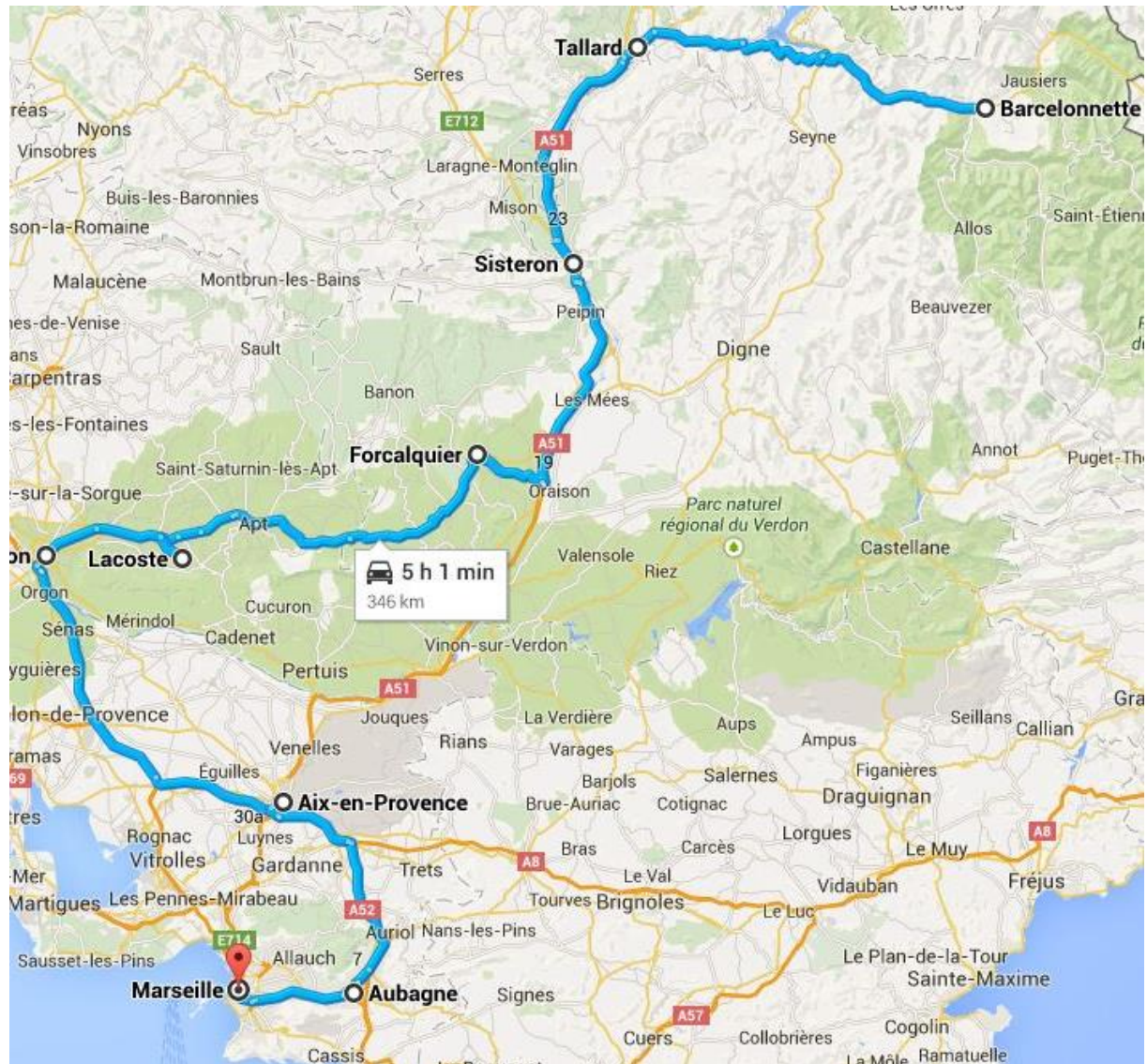


Figure 2: A Hypothetical Itinerary: 5 hours from Barcelonnette to Marseille (Google Maps 2015).

Our rental is a small Citroën, which we drive west out of Barcelonnette; this leg of the journey is through alpine forests typical of the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, and our car coasts comfortably on the descent to lower elevations. We pass through Tallard, a tiny agricultural village with a 13th century castle looming on its hill, though its four towers and great hall are now abandoned, gutted, and crumbling. At Tallard we get on A51, and

a half hour's drive south from here takes us to Sisteron, recognized for centuries as the "gateway to Provence" because of its strategic position in the Durance River valley. Passing through Sisteron, we continue southbound, following A51 all the while, until the exit for Forcalquier. Here, we veer west into the low mountains of the Lubéron and arrive at Lacoste, a medieval *ville perchée* that crouches gargoyle-like on its hill and stares across at Bonnieux, its *frère ennemi* ever since the religious wars of the 16th century (Intéremedes 2014). Our Citroën protests at Lacoste's streets, grumbling as it struggles up their crooked and cobbled ways, but we press on and the village is soon left behind. As we descend into the valley that lies below, the Citroën forgives us and its engine purrs, and our route follows roads peppered by isolated farmsteads and chateaux, whose solid stone construction offers succor from the heat of the summer sun and the biting wind of the mistral. Twenty-two kilometers beyond Lacoste we stop at Cavaillon and pay a brief visit to its Roman arches before leaving town southbound on route E80 (Collins 1995). Forty-five minutes later we arrive at Aix-en-Provence. Aix's *centre-ville* retains a 17th century character, but the outskirts of the city is in a period of rapid expansion, with heavy traffic congestion, so we bypass the city and drive on. We continue south through the rocky *garrigue* scrublands (Figure 3), immortalized in the works of Marcel Pagnol, and arrive at his birthplace of Aubagne.



Figure 3: Garrigue scrubland near Aubagne. Photograph by the author, summer 2012.

At Aubagne, we turn east onto A50 for the final leg of the journey. With the Mediterranean shore's rocky and steep-walled coves and inlets called the *calanques* less than 10 kilometers to the south, we finish our journey at bustling and cosmopolitan Marseille, but another hour's drive east along the coast would pass through the stony alluvial plain of the Crau and arrive at the salt marshes of the Camargue in the Rhône River delta.

Our jaunt through southeast France crosses the diverse cultural and physical landscapes of France's Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur administrative region (PACA). Since its lawful creation in 1956, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and its six *départements*

have had their hard boundaries which define them: lines drawn in sand, mountains, rivers, sea, and earth (Figure 4). Yet PACA with its hard lines is not the region that people immediately think of when they imagine southeastern France; even Michel Vauzelle, president of the Regional Council of PACA, stated that the administrative name "*n'illustre ni la richesse, ni la diversité de ses territoires et de son patrimoine culturel exceptionnel*" [the name PACA "does not illustrate the region's richness, nor the diversity of its lands, nor its exceptional cultural heritage"] (AFP et Reuters 2009). No, people do not envision PACA when they imagine southeastern France: they imagine Provence.

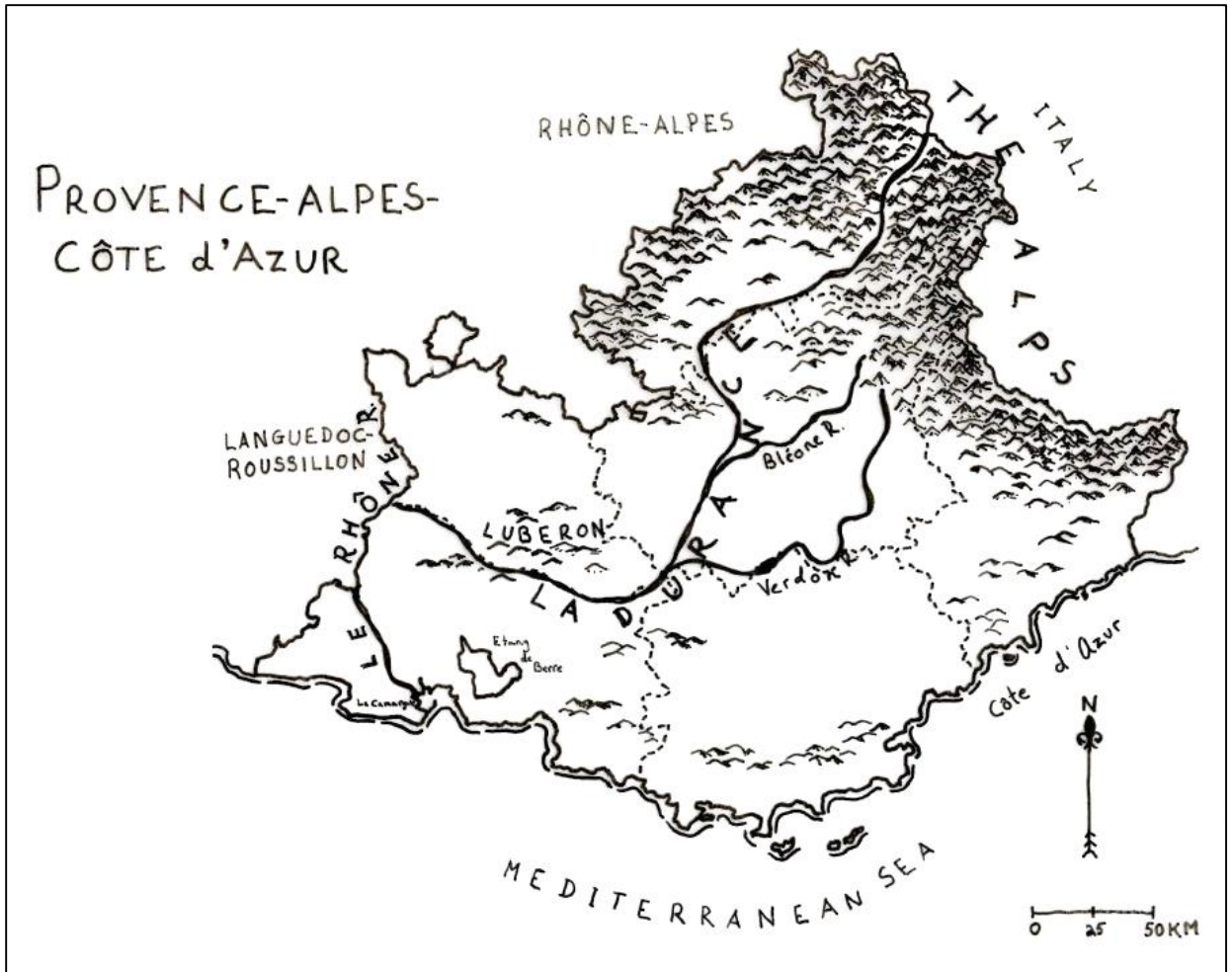


Figure 4: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur reference map. Dotted lines indicate *département* boundaries. Cartography by the author.

Provence's Literary Tradition: Medieval Origins and Development

Provence's history is one colored by a rich literary and artistic tradition that found its thematic focus in the Provençal landscape (Vitaglione 2000, Leca 2006, Smith 2006). Even its name is grounded in territory; "Provence" is a descendent of the classical Latin *prōvincia* (literally "conquered land"), reflecting its history as the first Roman province outside of the Italian Peninsula (OED Online 2014, Curnier 1973). Philippe Blanchet's

book *La Métaphore de l'aïoli* divides Provence's literary tradition into three broad categories: a medieval period, a Renaissance period, and the 19th century *respelido*, or Provençal Renaissance (Blanchet 2002).

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the area that now consists of the administrative regions of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon became a center of European literature, particularly during the 12th and 13th centuries. This first flourishing of literature was that of the wandering troubadours and jongleurs and their lyric poetry. Written and sung in various *langues d'oc*, or Occitan languages, the poetry of troubadours and jongleurs spread like wildfire throughout Europe (Blanchet 2002). Briffault notes that troubadours hailing from the south of France found lodging as far as Cyprus and Hungary, Paris and London, Sicily and Spain. Troubadour poetry burned especially bright in the Mediterranean Basin, but everywhere troubadour poetry was sung there sparked notions of romantic love and chivalrous conduct (Briffault 1965, Lindsay 1976). Many troubadours used their mastery of *langues d'oc* to label themselves *fls de Prouenza*, or sons of Provence, but their poems were largely devoid of a distinct set of Provençal regional imagery or sense of place; instead, time and again scholars focus on troubadour literature's role in developing images of love rather than images of place (Briffault 1965, Curnier 1973, Lindsay 1976, Vitaglione 2000). Despite their popularity and influence on social values, relatively little original troubadour poetry survives. Of the thousands of troubadours who must have lived, traveled, and sung poems between the 11th and 15th centuries, for example, only the works of around four hundred and fifty were written down and copied enough times to trickle through the years and

reach us today; of these, only forty-eight actually hailed from within the borders of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (Vitaglione 2000; Jinright 2003).

During the later years of Blanchet's Renaissance period, which coincides with the European Renaissance of the 14th to 17th centuries, Provençal poets expanded beyond lyrical romances. Drawing from classical sources, notably Virgil, they began to write poems that celebrated the vision of an idyllic pastoral (Blanchet 2002). These pastorals largely draw from a generic sense of classical rural idyll, but at least one poet during this period began to incorporate a specifically Provençal set of regional imagery: Louis Bellaud de la Bellaudière. Bellaud's sonnets are celebrations of a love of life, but more specifically they are a celebration of life in Provence: in his poems mistral winds sweep through the hills during hunts and country folk rub shoulders with aristocracy in the streets of Arles. Auguste Brun (2006) noted that Bellaud's work "is not only Provençal for its language; it plunges its roots [in] and draws its sap from the earth."

Despite these early literary movements that find their geographic roots in Provence, literature produced in any dialect of *langue d'oc* between the 12th century and the early 19th century were representative of the losing side of a linguistic struggle for survival (Blanchet 2002). Although the kingdoms of southern France remained relatively autonomous, the region was annexed by the Kingdom of France in 1481 and was fully incorporated into France in 1790. With political assimilation came a rising tide of acculturation, and linguistic assimilation in particular began early: linguistic standardization at a regional scale began during the mid-16th century. In 1539, Francois I issued the Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts. Of its 192 articles, Articles 110 and 111 are the most influential in the process of linguistic standardization, as the two articles decreed

that all official documents must be written “*en langage maternel françois* [sic] *et non autrement* [in maternal French and none other],” (Parlement de Paris 1539). Although the articles were a reaction against the use of Latin as a judicial language, the use of “maternal French” was widely interpreted as the use of the French language as spoken and written in the royal court; thus, Articles 110 and 111 are widely recognized as the opening salvo against written Provençal (Vitaglione 2000, Blanchet 2002). Further blows against written Provençal came in the 17th century with the establishment of the Académie Française in 1635 and its subsequent local branches opening in Arles (1668), Nîmes (1682), and Marseille (1726). Written Provençal fell out of use as standard French became the written lingua franca (Blanchet 2002). Spoken Provençal, however, was still alive, and even though its various forms were often treated as a second-class patois, it was still spoken side by side with standard French (Aldington 1960, Vitaglione 2002, Blanchet 2002).

Provence’s Modern Literary Tradition: the *Respelido* to the Present

It may seem as though troubadour love poetry and standard French’s imposition on written and spoken forms of *langue d’oc* are two separate streams in time, largely unrelated to each other and even further removed from the literary geographies of Provence. During the mid-to-late 19th century, however, the two streams merged and offered a torrent of inspiration for Provençal writers who wanted to breathe new life into Provençal languages and use them to tell stories about its people and earth. This period is better known as the *respelido*, or Provençal Renaissance, and its most visible figure is Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914), whose lifelong passion for Provence, its language, its

people, and its land were an early driving force behind the modern Provençal literary tradition (Adlington 1960, Wicke 1986, Vitaglione 2000).

Mistral's passion to revive Provence was borne out of a love of Provence's language and landscapes and his anger that Provençal identity was being lost to the centralization of French culture and industrialization's encroachment on the peasant way of life. A passage from his memoir, translated from the Provençal by George Wicke, speaks to the fervor with which he sought a Provençal revival and alludes to the landscape (see Figure 5) which would inspire his later works:

[...] with my foot on the threshold of my father's house and my eyes turned toward the Alpilles, [I vowed to] raise and revive in Provence the traditional spirit that was being destroyed [by centralized education]; to promote that revival by restoring the natural and historical language of the country against which all the schools were waging a war to the death; third, to bring Provençal back into fashion through the benign influence and divine fire of poetry (Wicke 1985, 132).



Figure 5: View of the Alpilles, or, inspiration in Provence's landscape. Near the former Greco-Roman settlement of Glanum, northeast of Arles. Photograph by the author, summer 2012.

Collaborating with a small group of like-minded men and women who called themselves the Félibres, Mistral encouraged the revival of written works in various dialects of *langue d'oc*, and Mistral himself advocated the development of a single standardized spelling for the Provençal lexicon, which had previously never been codified. Working with fellow Félibre Théodore Aubanel, he was a driving force behind the development of an annual publication devoted to Provençal literature, and *L'Armana*

Provençau (*The Provençal Almanac*) became the primary forum for Provençal writers to disseminate their works (Adlington 1960, Vitaglione 2000).

Mistral's charisma and enthusiasm made him the most famous face of the Félibres, and his goal to develop a standard Provençal orthography led him to write *Lou Tresor dóu Felibrige*, or *Treasury of the Félibres* (Adlington 1960). It is his poetry, however, that is so important to developing the themes that characterize the Provençal literary tradition. In 1859 Mistral wrote his best known work, *Mireio*, a poem originally published in both Mistral's Provençal and standard French. *Mireio* is an early example of the modern Provençal literary tradition's focus on developing a distinct sense of Provençalian place through the use of regional imagery (Loggins 1924).

Mireio epitomizes the Provençal literary tradition's focus on the ebbs and flows of *la vie quotidienne* in Provence, one that is intimately tied to the land and different from that of the rest of France. Mistral himself wrote that *Mireio* was drawn from daily life:

[...] one evening during seed time, as I watched the farmhands following the plow in the furrow, singing as they went, [I began *Mireio*. The poem] grew very quietly, little by little, in a gentle breeze or in the heat of the sun or in the blasts of the mistral, during the time when I was managing the farm [...] (Wicke 1986, 132).

Mireio is an epic romance that leads its star-crossed lovers on a journey through the agricultural hinterlands of Provence, only to end when one lover dies of heatstroke. Its characters offer a cross-section of 19th century Provençal life, and their livelihoods are clearly linked to the landscapes where the characters are born, live, love, work, and die (Preston 1974). *Mireio*'s strong use of regional imagery began to crystallize what it meant to be "in Provence" during the nineteenth century.

Other writers drew inspiration from Mistral and the earliest Félibres, and they followed in the same vein of Mistral's writing to produce works that further develop the Provençal literary tradition. The best known of these works, however, are not written in Mistral's Provençal orthography but in standard French, and their accessibility to the general public helped garner a wider audience. During the nineteenth century, Alphonse Daudet's *Lettres de Mon Moulin* (1869) is the most notable, and would later be adapted into film by Marcel Pagnol in the 1950s. The Félibres' influence reached into the twentieth century: Henri Bosco's *Le Mas Théotime* (1945), Marcel Pagnol's written adaptations of his films *Manon des Sources* and *Jean de Florette* (published together as *L'Eau des Collines* in 1962), and Jean Giono's trio of pantheistic novels: *Un des Baumagnes* (1928), *Colline* (1929), and *Regain* (1930) are all notable examples of works that continued to develop the Provençal literary tradition (Vitaglione 2000, Buis 2007, Poirer 2008).

Of the 20th century authors, Jean Giono (1895-1970) is particularly notable. First, he is one of the more widely known Provençal writers who published from Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur's poor and remote interior mountains which characterize the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence *département* (Vitaglione 2000, Magnan 2010). Giono's writing style is described as "rough, austere, and rustic," and all his works are set entirely in the mountains which he loved. In a 1996 comparison between the works of Giono and his contemporary Pagnol, Jacques Guyaux wrote that Giono's Provence was defined by "the gnarled olive tree, sacred and reigning over the rocky solitudes" (Guyaux 1996). At the root of Giono's Provence is humanity's relationship to nature and the shaping force that nature has on human behavior. His pantheistic trio offer clear illustrations of this view: in

Un de Baumgagnes, for example, his protagonist declares that “the real truth is that I am from this soil...it is this soil that made me...and shaped my thoughts, and I am proud of it” (Vitaglione 2000). Giono used his novels to explore some of the themes prevalent in the Provençal literary tradition: the travails of peasant life in relation to the environment, rich descriptions of natural landscapes in Provence, and a rejection of industrialization and centralization (Pare 1995, Bonnet 2013). Finally, like Mistral, Giono inspired others to take up the pen and write in the Provençal literary tradition. Among these authors are Marcel Pagnol, who would adapt many of Giono’s works into film, and Pierre Magnan (1922-2012), to whom Giono offered mentorship and friendship (Vitaglione 2000).

Pierre Magnan: Voice of the Basses-Alpes

Pierre Magnan was born September 19, 1922, in the town of Manosque. Like Magnan and his written works, Manosque is intimately tied to Provence’s land and history. Manosque’s current location has been occupied for over 4,000 years, and the town’s name finds its origins in its pre-Roman Celto-Ligurian past. Manosque is a blend of two etymological roots: the Celtic *manec*, meaning country or hill, and the Ligurian suffix “-asq,” which means water or river. The name is appropriate: *Maneasq* is first mentioned in the writings of Gregoire, an 11th century Bishop of Tours, and its growth centered around a steep central hill, the Mont d’Or, that has been long used as a stronghold and vantage point from which to view the surrounding landscape, including the Durance River valley (L’Office de Tourisme de Manosque 2014). The Manosque of Magnan’s childhood was a small town of around 4,000 people that still found its focal

point in the Mont d'Or; Magnan wrote that his birthplace, what he called "the eternal Mansoque," is still found on the town's hills (Magnan 2005).

Pierre Magnan's childhood was spent in Manosque; his formal education ended at the age of twelve, when he left Manosque's primary school and found work at a printer's shop. In *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre*, Magnan recalled that his eight years in the print shop were marked by inky dark fingers and an atmosphere that was icy or torrid depending on the season, but always thick with the cigarette smoke of the other printers (Magnan 2010). It was while working at the print shop where Magnan met Jean Giono; leading to a relationship with great influence on Magnan's future (Vitaglione 2000, Savigneau 2012).

When Pierre Magnan and Jean Giono first met, Giono was already a well-known author, having published numerous poems and received contracts from major publishers for several of his novels, and Magnan was still an adolescent. At fifteen, Magnan was in awe of Giono, particularly for his prose, and he finally worked up the courage to visit Giono's home in 1937 to ask him to write a foreword for a magazine printing (Vitaglione 2000, Poirson 2012). Giono's warm response sparked a friendship between the two men, and Magnan spent his teenage years under Giono's tutelage, borrowing books from him and traveling with him to the tiny hamlet of Le Contadour, where Giono owned a rustic farmstead. The farm at Le Contadour was Giono's retreat from modernity and a gathering place for many of his admirers and friends, most of whom were intellectuals, writers, and artisans. Among these Contadourians, Magnan met his second mentor: Thyde Monnier, a popular Marseillaise short fiction author (Vitaglione 2000, Naudin and Chavagné 2012). Magnan and Monnier became lovers; he was nineteen and she was fifty-three (*The*

Telegraph 2012). Magnan worked as her housekeeper and secretary, typing out her words as she dictated her writing to him (Naudin and Chavagné 2012).

The German *blitzkrieg* rumbled into France in May of 1940; with it went Magnan's frequent visits to Giono and his seasonal travels to Le Contadour. His relationship with Monnier, however, went on unchecked: when Magnan fled the Vichy government's Compulsory Work Service, he left Manosque to join Monnier and the French Resistance in the Isère *département* of the Rhône-Alpes administrative region. Magnan's role in the French Resistance was of little note: he would later write that "I am ashamed...that the period between June of 1943 and October of 1944...were the most peaceful moments of my life" (Savigneau 2012). In 1946, however, Magnan would draw on his experiences during the war as well as Monnier's guidance and personal connections with Editions Julliard to write and publish his first novel, *L'Aube insolite* [*Unusual Dawn*].

Magnan's first novel was critically acclaimed but did not garner much attention with the general public; when Monnier and Magnan parted ways in 1950, Rene Julliard, head of Editions Julliard, made the decision to cease printing *L'Aube insolite*, sending Magnan a letter that read "You will write good books when you are sixty" (Spagnou 2008; *The Telegraph* 2012). Magnan doggedly kept on writing and submitted three further novels for publication, though rejections of these early attempts forced him to take up work with a refrigeration company. When Magnan was made redundant in the company after twenty-six years of work, he took advantage of his forced time off and turned once more to writing. It paid off: In 1977, at age fifty-six, Magnan fulfilled Rene Julliard's premonition and published *Le Sang des Atrides* [*The Blood of the Atreidae*]. In

a 2009 interview Magnan commented that publication of *Le Sang des Atrides* was “A fairy tale, literally” (Naudin and Chavagné 2012, 51).

Le Sang des Atrides was well received by the public and critics alike: in its first year it sold over 100,000 copies, and in 1978 it received the *Prix du Quai des Orfèvres* for its popularity and critical acclaim. Set in the small city of Digne-les-Bains, *Le Sang des Atrides* established several hallmarks of Magnan’s later works. It is set in the Basses-Alpes, tells a story about series of murders where the intrigue is made more complicated by the resistance of the locals to speak out against their neighbors, and the landscape plays a major role in driving the plot. *Le Sang des Atrides* also introduces Commissar Laviolette, one of Magnan’s central protagonists. A Bas-Alpin by birth and a detective by trade, Laviolette captured Magnan’s audience and would play a central role in many of his subsequent works (Vitaglione 2000; Macke 2013).

The success of *Le Sang des Atrides* gave Magnan the impetus he needed to continue writing and publishing. In 1978 he wrote and published another Laviolette novel, *Commissaire dans la Truffière* (later translated into Swedish, it was awarded the best foreign novel of the year in Sweden in 1983; in 2008 it was translated into English as *Death in the Truffle Wood*). In 1979 and 1980, Magnan continued Laviolette’s detective work with *Le Secret des Andrônes* [*The Secrets of the Andrônes*] and *Le Tombeau d’Hélios* [*The Tomb of Hélios*] (Lanskin 1995). In 1982, Magnan produced yet another Laviolette novel, *Les Charbonniers de la Mort* [*Charcoal Men of Death*] this time set in the Lure region of the Haute-Alpes and introducing the ancestors of Laviolette and his companions. It was, however, not as well received as the other Laviolette novels, and

Magnan left his Laviolette series for a time to introduce a second narrative set in Provence (Vitaglione 2000).

Magnan published *La Maison Assassinée* [*The Murdered House*] in 1984, and in doing so introduced his second major protagonist, Séraphin Monge. Set in the Basses-Alpes at the end of World War I, *La Maison Assassinée* follows Séraphin's attempts to avenge the death of his family, who were seemingly murdered by their neighbors. Like the earlier Laviolette novels, *La Maison Assassinée* was a popular and critical success, with initial printings selling over 500,000 copies, and in its debut year it received the *Prix RTL Grand Public*. Magnan's series with Séraphin Monge was a short one; the second and final book, *Le Mystère de Séraphin Monge*, was published in 1992 (later published in English as *Beyond the Grave* in 2003); during this time he continued to expand the Laviolette series, including *Les Courriers de la Mort* [*The Messengers of Death*] in 1986.

Magnan continued to publish mystery novels and expand into other genres during the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s. His breadth of writings did not diminish his focus on the landscapes of the Alpes-de-Haute Provence (see Figure 6 and Table 1 for a map and place names used in his texts). Autobiographies, travel guides, Provençal literary histories, and novel-length texts on Jean Giono characterized his later writing outside of the mystery genre, but Magnan never left his beloved character Laviolette behind, and continued to publish these mysteries during the last years of his life. Among these works were *Les Secrets de Laviolette* [*The Secrets of Laviolette*] (1992), *La Folie Forcalquier* [*The Forcalquier Madness*] (1995), and *Le Parme Convient à Laviolette* [*Mauve Suits Laviolette*] (2000). In 2012, Pierre Magnan died in Voiron, France, at the

age of eighty-nine. His final publication had been two years before: *Elégie Pour Laviolette* [*Elegy for Laviolette*].

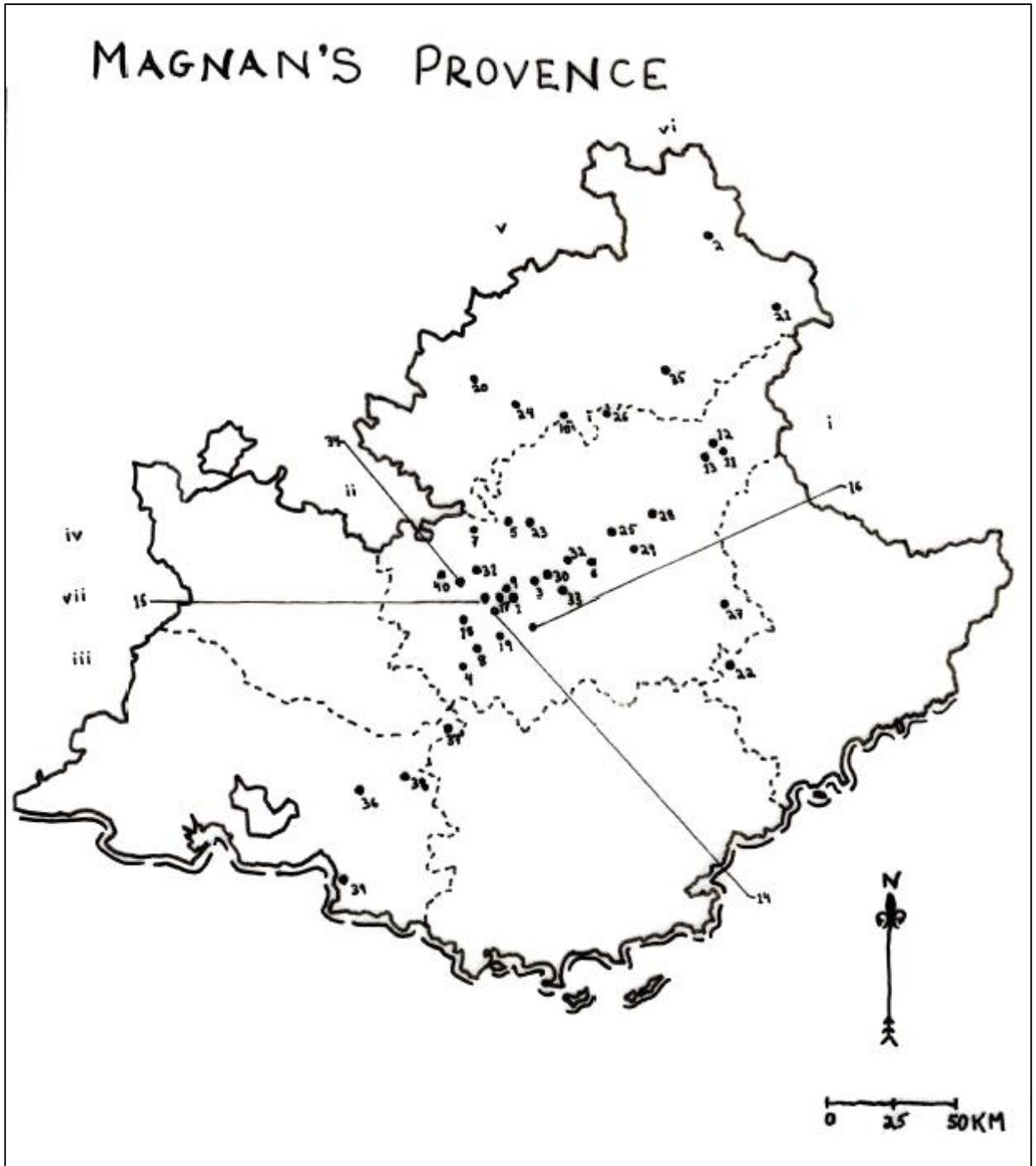


Figure 6: Magnan's vision of Provence. This map illustrates Magnan's focus on Provence as his chosen setting for his texts. Note that Magnan's settings are largely located in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence *département*. Dots indicate the location of a commune

referenced in text, while numbers correspond to the town's name. Cartography by the author.

Number: Commune		Roman Numeral: Location Outside Provence
1: Les Mees	21: Molines-en-Queyras	i: Italy
2: Briançon	22: Saint-Auban	ii: Drôme (Rhône-Alpes)
3: Malijai	23: Saint-Symphorien (now Entrepierres)	iii: Cévennes (Languedoc-Roussillon)
4: Manosque	24: Sigoyer	iv: Lozère (Languedoc-Roussillon)
5: Sisteron	25: Le Brusquet	v: Grenoble (Rhône-Alpes)
6: Digne	26: La Bréole	vi: Germany
7: Noyers-sur-Jabron	27: Aurent (now Braux)	vii: United States of America
8: Volx	28: Chavaille (now Prads-Haute-Bléone)	
9: Peyruis	29: Draix	
10: Piégut	30: Mirabeau	
11: Enchastayes	31: Cruis	
12: Barcelonnette	32: Champtercier	
13: Fours (now Uvernet-Fours)	33: Le Chaffaut-Saint-Jurson	
14: Lurs	34: Saint-Etienne-les-Orgues	
15: Sigonce	35: Embrun	
16: Entrevennes	36: Aix-en-Provence	
17: Ganagobie	37: Saint-Paul-les-Durance	
18: Forcalquier	38: Vauvenargues	
19: Oraison	39: Marseille	
20: Veynes	40: Banon	

Table 1: Map Key to Figure 6. Numbered locations are communes which are mentioned in Magnan's texts and fall within the borders of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur administrative region, while Roman numerals indicate locations that are mentioned in his texts but that fall outside the borders of the region.

Figure 6 and Table 1 display forty selected commune names found in Magnan's texts, and their distribution is reflective of Magnan's experiences in Provence. Place names were selected based on their order of appearance in Magnan's texts, which were chosen at random from the selected works of this research (see Table 3). I chose to consider commune place names because they are standardized and could be searched for on-line; other place names, such as those of physiographic features like mountains or forests, were often associated with local knowledge. I chose to stop recording place names after forty because subsequent readings of Magnan's texts revealed a tendency for a repetition of place names, or referenced communes that would have further developed

the clustering pattern visible in Figure 6. Place names outside of Provence show the connecting links which Magnan develops in his texts between Provence and the rest of the world. For Magnan, these links are often associated with neighboring French *départements* and administrative regions, while international locations are associated with historical events; Germany, for example, is notable in Magnan's texts because of the German occupation of the region during World War II.³ Finally, Magnan's use of place names within Provence frames his use of regional imagery, because place names become associated with his images of nature and culture.

Provence's Tourism and Outside Perspectives

The Provençal literary tradition recognized by most literary scholarship is largely internalized; studies on native-born Provençal writers living in and writing about Provence are common. Less common, however, are studies that consider expatriate writers who produce travel narratives and memoirs about life in Provence from outside perspectives. A brief history of Provence as a tourist destination is necessary to explain the presence of its expatriate community and their narratives of life in Provence.

Provence's landscapes drew tourists beginning in the 19th century, especially along the coastal regions, which were widely regarded as therapeutic landscapes for those suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. The truth was that Provence's landscapes did little to soothe the fevers or knit back together the broken blood vessels so common to tuberculosis, but the draw of Provence's natural landscapes did much to soothe the

³ For further discussion about the role that history plays in Magnan's Provence, see Chapter 5 (pages 118-121).

psyches' of the afflicted (Woloshyn 2009). Most early tourists in search of better health were from other parts of France; by the late 19th century, however, visitors from abroad sought out the clear blue skies and seas of the Côte d'Azur for their supposed health benefits, and the Côte d'Azur became such a popular region for invalids that Maupassant wrote in 1882 that the south of France had become "the hospital of society and the cemetery of Europe" (quoted in Woloshyn 2009, 388). In time, medical advances revealed the inadequacies of *climatothérapie* to heal lung ailments, and the therapeutic landscapes of Provence turned into recreational landscapes (Rudney 1981, Woloshyn 2009). In time, the Côte d'Azur became such a popular tourist destination that rising real estate prices forced some tourists to move farther inland in search of therapeutic landscapes. With tourists came travel narratives and memoirs of time spent in Provence: time and again Provence's landscapes, weather, and people were captured and in the travelers' works. In the Anglophone world, early examples of these works include Winifred Fortescue's *Perfume from Provence* (1933), L. Wylie's *A Village in the Vaucluse* (1957), and M.F.K. Fischer's *Two Towns in Provence* (1964), but such works' contributions to regional imagery and sense of place remained peripheral to natural born Provençal writers until the late 1980s, when English expatriate Peter Mayle published *A Year in Provence* (Sharp 1999).

Peter Mayle: "Golden Burnisher of Provence"

Born in 1939, in Brighton, Peter Mayle's childhood was marked by boarding schools in his native England and abroad: his early years included hops between Brighton College in England and Harrison College in Barbados, until he left his schooling at sixteen and returned to England. His first professional career was with Shell, where he

quickly developed a skill for advertising, and at the age of twenty-one he managed to attach himself to the New York Shell account as a trainee, eventually moving full time into advertising for fifteen years. While moving up the executive ladder in various advertising firms, Mayle took the time to write short children's stories.

His early works were not related to Provence at all; his first book, *Where Do We Come From* (1973), was a "humorous, illustrated sex manual for children," which was so popular that it encouraged him to leave advertising and start writing full time. His initial success was followed by seven years of relative obscurity spent writing in Devon, England, and in Nice, France, where he spent his summers. His love of his French vacation home and hatred of returning to England at summer's end led him and his wife to purchase a small home outside of Ménerbes, France, in 1986. Set back from the coast in the Lubéron region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Ménerbes is in Provence's interior, one commonly described as "sleepy," "bucolic," and "still wild" (Kuett 2011, DelBanco 2011), and its lack of gentrification at the time permitted Mayle to buy his home cheaply. The draws of the Lubéron, for Mayle, were linked inextricably with the land: in a 1991 interview Mayle stated that the Lubéron drew him in because of its "...physical aspects: the light, the space, the beauty, the lack of crowds" (Rothstein 1991).

The farm house that Mayle and his wife purchased demanded renovations that distracted him from his search for writing topics. During an exchange of letters with his primary publisher explaining why his writing was not developing as it should, however, Mayle came to realize that he should "write what he knew," and began to write about his

experiences during his first year living in Ménerbes. In a 1993 interview Mayle recalls that writing about his experiences was nearly effortless (Rothstein 1991, Fields 1993).

A Year in Provence was wildly successful; in 1989 the British Book Awards named it the Best Travel Book of the Year, and in 1992 it was the top-selling non-fiction book in the United Kingdom. By 2009, *A Year In Provence* had been translated into twenty-eight languages and sold over five million copies (Aldridge 1995, Connexion 2009), and it even spawned a short lived television series (Riding 1993). With *A Year in Provence* Mayle found his niche; out of the sixteen books he published after *A Year in Provence*, eleven are set in or are about Provence. He capitalized on his initial success with another memoir, *Toujours Provence*, published in 1992, and followed *Toujours Provence* with a foray into lighthearted mystery novels with his 1994 *Hotel Pastis*.

Mayle's professional success was too much for him to continue to enjoy his quiet lifestyle outside of Ménerbes; *A Year in Provence* and *Toujours Provence* did not use pseudonyms for its characters nor its places, and Mayle and his wife found themselves inundated with visitors (Riding 1993). In a 2009 interview Mayle described his life as "under siege," and recalled that he would find uninvited guests in his garden and pool and tabloid photographers in the bushes around his home. The lack of privacy in Ménerbes forced him to move in 1995, and he purchased a home in Long Island and lived there for four years. Mayle returned to Provence in 1999, though he abandoned Ménerbes in favor of Lourmarin (see Figure 7, Figure 8), where he continued to write travel narratives and mystery novels (Connexion 2009), largely set in the Vaucluse *département* of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Since his return to Provence he has published nine more books, among them *Encore Provence* (1999), *A Good Year* (2004), *Provence A-Z: A*

Francophile's Essential Handbook (2006), and *The Vintage Caper* (2009). He is still living in Lourmarin and continues to write; his most recent novel, *The Corsican Caper*, was published in 2014. Figure 8 and Table 2 depict Mayle's Provence.



Figure 7: Lourmarin in summer. Note vineyards in the foreground; cherry orchards ringed the village. Photograph by the author, 2012.

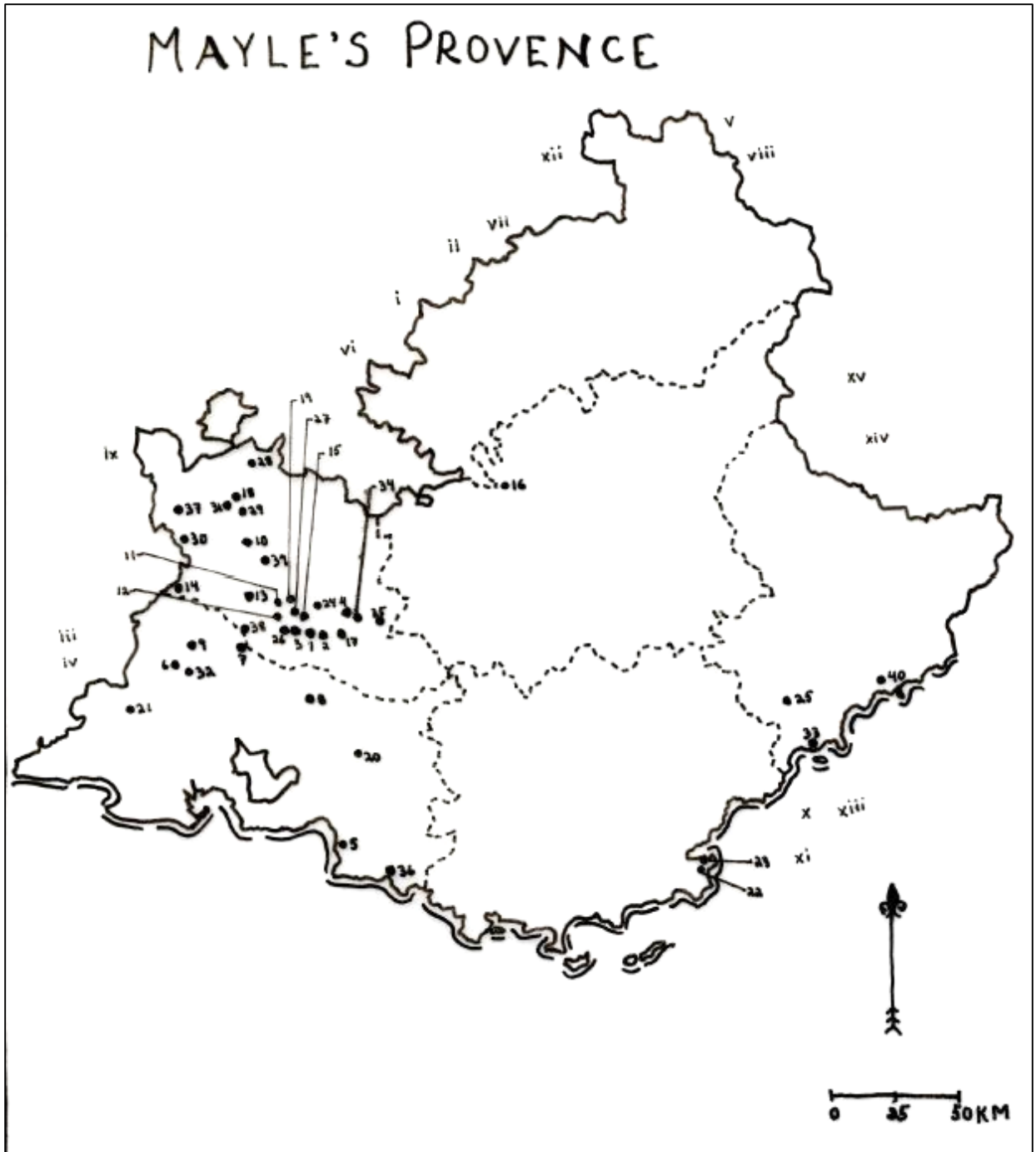


Figure 8: Mayle's Vision of Provence. This map illustrates Mayle's focus on Provence as his chosen setting for his texts. Note that Mayle's settings are largely located in the Vaucluse département, particularly in the Lubéron area (Figure 4). Dots indicate the location of a commune referenced in text; numbers correspond to the town's name. Cartography by the author.

Number: Commune		Roman Numeral: Location Outside Provence
1: Lacoste	21: Arles	i: Great Britain
2: Bonnieux	22: Ramatuelle	ii: Lyon (Rhône-Alpes)
3: Ménerbes	23: Saint-Tropez	iii: Tavel (Languedoc-Roussillon)
4: Apt	24: Roussillon	iv: United States of America
5: Marseille	25: Grasse	v: Germany
6: Les Baux	26: Oppède	vi: Belgium
7: Orgon	27: Saint-Pantaléon	vii: Paris (I'le-de-France)
8: Lambesc	28: Vaison-la-Romaine	viii: Switzerland
9: Saint-Rémy	29: Beaumes-de-Venise	ix: Périgord (Aquitaine)
10: Carpentras	30: Châteauneuf-du-Pape	x: Corsica
11: Cabrières-d'Avignon	31: Vacqueyras	xi: Australia
12: Coustellet	32: Maussane-les-Alpilles	xii: Luxembourg
13: Isle-sur-la-Sorgue	33: Cannes	xiii: New Zealand
14: Avignon	34: Saignon	
15: Lumières/Goult	35: Saint-Martin-de-Castillon	
16: Sisteron	36: Cassis	
17: Buoux	37: Orange	
18: Gigondas	38: Cavaillon	
19: Gordes	39: Saint-Didier	
20: Aix-en-Provence	40: Nice	

Table 2. Key to Figure 8. Numbered locations are communes which are mentioned in Mayle's texts and fall within the borders of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur administrative region, while Roman numerals indicate locations that are mentioned in his texts which fall outside the borders of the region.

Figure 8 and Table 2 show selected commune place names which occur in Mayle's texts, and reflect his experiences living in Provence. The figure and table show a clear connection to Mayle's experiences of Provence, because the strong clustering of place names in and near the borders of the *Var département* reflect where he lived and worked while producing his novels and memoirs. The names of countries and places outside of Provence reflect Mayle's experiences, as well, because they indicate regions which interact with Provence in some way—Paris, for example, is a perennial source of visitors who occupy seasonal homes in the Lubéron region. Mayle's use of place names beyond the borders of Provence indicate the region's connectedness to the rest of the

world, particularly as a tourist destination.⁴ The figure and table also frame Mayle's regional imagery—since these places occur frequently in his works, they become associated with his regional imagery and sense of place for Provence.

Mayle and Magnan as Place-Defining Novelists in Provence

James Shortridge's 1991 publication on American place-defining novels identifies a set of characteristics that make a novel or author place-defining. According to Shortridge, a novel or author may become place-defining if they fit one or more of three characteristics. The first is critical acclaim: authors might be well recognized for their insights into regional culture by critics and scholars, and so their works have value in defining place. The second characteristic is local popularity: authors might be well recognized for their ability to evoke their intimate experiences of a place through their writing. The third characteristic is mass popularity: in Shortridge's words, there are authors whose books are "broadly popular, with strong regional themes regardless of their literary merit or the accuracy of their geographical vision" (1991, 280). Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan offer a unique opportunity to examine Provence through the lenses of literary geography and comparative literature because both authors are writing contemporaneously to one another and epitomize all three contexts of a place-defining novelist.

Both Mayle and Magnan are critically acclaimed authors. They have both received numerous literary awards and have been recognized for writing with a distinct

⁴ Mayle's images of tourism in Provence are further discussed in Chapter 5 (pages 104-107) and tourism's influence on sense of place is developed in Chapter 6 (pages 131-133).

sense of regional identity. British Book Awards selected Mayle for the Best Travel Book of the Year in 1989 and Best Author of the Year 1992; the French government, too, recognized his work as having literary merit and declared him a *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* in 2002 for his books' promotion of "*coopération et la francophonie*." Magnan, meanwhile, won the *Prix du Quai des Orfèvres* for *Le Sang des Atrides*, and *La Maison Assassinée* won both the *Prix RTL Grand Public* and the *Prix Mystère de la Critique*. The level of critical acclaim for each author is important to consider because it suggests that their work is of literary merit and, by extension, can create regional images and sense of place in a powerfully evocative way.

Shortridge's second context, local popularity, is more difficult to assess. Context clues in interviews and newspaper articles, however, testify to the Magnan's and Mayle's popularity within Provence. Both men chose to live their lives in Provence, suggesting that the communities were not hostile or actively supported their writing. Magnan spent nearly his entire life in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur's Alpes-de-Haute-Provence *département*, and Mayle chose to return to the Lubéron after four years abroad because, in his words, "[living abroad] just wasn't Provence" (Connexion 2009).

In Magnan's case, numerous obituaries from France and abroad refer to him as having been approachable and a visible local figure (e.g., *The Guardian* 2012), and an obituary in the regional newspaper *La Provence* notes that his death was sure to cause a strong sense of loss in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and the rest of Provence, "a region to which he was so strongly attached and rooted" (*The Telegraph* 2012, De Bouchony 2012). In 2014, the town of Sisteron organized and held a week-long festival in Magnan's memory, "to discover, re-discover, or better know this Provençal author" (Florence

2014). Some of its events included a biographic exposition on his life and works, a temporary urban art exhibit which incorporates quotations from his books on walls and streets throughout the town, a showing of a film adaptation of *La Maison Assassinée*, and live readings of his works (Florence 2014).

Magnan's long time rootedness in place and the way he is presented in his obituaries suggest that he was a well-respected part of community life in Provence, but Peter Mayle's local popularity is more contested. A review of Ridley Scott's film adaptation of *A Good Year* touches on the controversy associated with Mayle's work in France. The French press has accused Mayle of leaving "no cliché unturned," and points out that Provence has its share of residents who resent the arrival of expatriates who drive up prices and establish enclave communities that are difficult to assimilate into daily French life. On the other hand, however, are the economic benefits that increased awareness of Provence brings into the region; many native French appreciate Peter Mayle's work because it has allowed them to successfully sell otherwise unwanted property or establish successful businesses related to industries related to tourism and expatriate communities (Willsher 2007, Lansen 2007). Mayle recognizes that sentiments against him are contested:

There have been mutterings of the evil [my books have] brought to Provence. I've been accused of everything from the village baker running out of bread to a surfeit of Germans at the café. These are the crosses I have learned to bear (as quoted by Crace 2010).

Tempering these sentiments, however, are other comments found in his published works and in interviews. Mayle declares that he is comfortable in Provence; he and his wife make efforts to immerse themselves into their local (non-expatriate) communities,

have forged long lasting friendships with the people he writes about, and he has been candid with them about how they are portrayed in his works (Aldridge 1995, Connexion 2009). Mayle himself feels that the French government's decision to name him *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* in 2002 marks him as accepted by French society. Furthermore, in 2006 Mayle was contacted by a French publishing company to write a "*dictionnaire amoureux de la Provence*;" the company chose him as the ideal author for this type of work (Barland 2006). Despite his welcome, however, there will always remain a difference between Mayle and his neighbors in Provence. In a 2013 interview, Mayle remarked that a neighbor told him "You are English, which is, of course, unfortunate. But you should know that most of us prefer the English to the Parisians," the playful tone suggesting that he is accepted in the community in which he lives (*The Good Web Guide* 2006).

Local popularity is important for this study because local acceptance and support of these authors suggests that there is a degree of verisimilitude to their choice of images and sense of place, and that their literature has a shaping or reinforcing power on the way that Provençaux conceive of their regional identity and self-identity. This verisimilitude is reflected in the way that critics and scholars have approached both authors' writings. In his discussion of Peter Mayle's authenticity, Alan Aldridge points out that Mayle's tendency to defer to local knowledge and experience helps develop an anthropological mode of writing (Aldridge 1995). Magnan, meanwhile, is presented as authentic because of the intimate links between his personal experiences in the Basses-Alpes and his writing; Jean-Sebastien Macke points out that most of Magnan's work is populated by the peasants, artisans, and farmers whose like he would have met as a child and young adult

(Macke 2013). Magnan himself is self-conscious in his approach to writing about Provence and seeks to present what he sees as the truth:

Sans doute serai-je le dernier à te chanter intacte ... puisque tu es célébrée par des auteurs qui ne rêvent que cigales ou galoubets ou bien par d'autres qui ont fait partager au lecteur leur conception particulière de nos mœurs et caractères ... et puisque désormais notre civilisation s'est éparpillée sous tant d'apports qui ne sont que surcroît, j'ai voulu murmurer ma propre vérité.

Without a doubt I will be the last to sing of you intact ... as you are celebrated by authors who dream of nothing but cicadas or galoubets, or by others who have shared to readers their particular conception of our morals and character ... and since henceforth our civilization is scattered by ever increasing contributions, I want to whisper my proper truth. (Magnan 2005, 8, my translation).

Shortridge's final context for a place-defining author is the extent to which he or she is popular at a supra-regional or international level. Evidence for both authors' overall popularity and widespread recognition is readily available in terms of book sales, numbers of reprintings, numbers of translations into other languages for their texts, numbers of film and TV adaptations, and the extent to which their names have been commoditized in industries beyond publishing and film, particularly in tourist industries.

Jean-Sebastien Macke notes that Magnan's works have sold "millions of copies" over the years, and Magnan's works have been translated into at least eight languages (Rabuté-Magnan 2009; Macke 2013). Mayle has a far stronger international presence in book sales and numbers of translations: *A Year In Provence* sold over five million copies and his books have been translated into over thirty languages (Connexion 2009). Finally, both Mayle and Magnan have moved "beyond the book:" their works have been adapted into television series and film. Mayle's *A Good Year* was adapted by Ridley Scott, and *A*

Year in Provence was adapted into a BBC miniseries. Similarly, Magnan’s entire Laviolette series was adapted into a series of made-for-television films.

Mayle and Magnan display an intimacy with Provence that is expressed through their evocative use of regional imagery and sense of place. Furthermore, their prolific nature and the fact that they are writing contemporaneously to each other permits a comparative study across a body of their selected works. Table 3 shows the texts which I examine to explore Mayle’s and Magnan’s uses of regional imagery and sense of place. These works include their most popular works and are representative of publications that have a particularly strong focus on regional imagery and sense of place.

Peter Mayle	Pierre Magnan
<i>A Year in Provence</i> (1989)	<i>Le Sang des Atrides</i> (1977)
<i>Toujours Provence</i> (1992)	<i>La Maison Assassinée</i> (1984)
<i>Encore Provence : New Adventures in the South of France</i> (2009)	[<i>The Murdered House</i> (2010)]*
<i>Hotel Pastis : A Novel of Provence</i> (1994)	<i>Le Mystère de Séraphin Monge</i> (1990)
<i>Provence</i> (1993)	[<i>Beyond the Grave</i> (2003)]*
<i>A Dog’s Life</i> (1996)	<i>Le Commissaire dans la Truffière</i> (1978)
<i>Provence A-Z: A Francophile’s Essential Handbook</i> (2006)	[<i>Death in the Truffle Wood</i> (2005)]*
<i>A Good Year</i> (2005)	<i>Le Secret des Andrônes</i> (1979)
	<i>Le Tombeau d’Helios</i> (1980)
	<i>Les Courriers de la Mort</i> (1986)
	[<i>The Messengers of Death</i> (2009)]*
	<i>Le Parme Convient à Laviolette</i> (2000)
	<i>Élégie Pour Laviolette</i> (2010)
	<i>Ma Provence d’Heureuse Rencontre</i> (2005)
	<i>Les Secrets de Laviolette</i> (1992)
	* indicates an English translation

Table 3: Selected works of Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan

Although I consider all of these works in my exploration of how Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan contribute to Provence's regional imagery and sense of place, some of their texts play a more central role during my analysis. I contend that their most well-known and popular texts are the most important in terms of their ability to establish Provence's regional imagery and sense of place because these works have the largest potential audiences. I use their other texts to crystallize their use of regional imagery and sense of place; although not as widely read nor as popular as their award winning and best-selling texts, drawing from these less popular texts adds weight to my interpretations, as they show the authors' consistency in developing Provence's regional imagery and sense of place. Furthermore, both authors have written less popular texts which are at times more self-conscious and explicit in their development of regional imagery. Examples of these include Mayle's *Provence A-Z: A Francophile's Essential Handbook* (2006), and Magnan's *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre* (2005).

Magnan's works present a unique personal challenge in their interpretation and analysis. I am not a native French speaker, but I have a sufficiently strong background in French language and literature to read his works and draw out regional imagery and sense of place. Whenever possible, however, I used English translations of his texts to speed the process of analysis. Often, his texts translated into English are also his most popular, such as *The Murdered House*. One aspect of using translations as a source of analysis, however, is that I have to determine whether or not the translations are accurate. My comparisons between the original French texts and the translated text showed that the translations are accurate and in keeping with Magnan's originals both in terms of their

plots and vocabulary, but they also capture the spirit of Magnan's works, in that they hold true to his use of tone towards his subject matter and his development of a literary mood.

A Note on Genres

Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan have written across a range of genres, from autobiography to mystery novels, but both authors have preferences for writing within a specific genre or incorporating elements from a specific genre. In both cases, their choice of genre has a strong influence in their development as a place-defining novelist; additionally, in both cases their choice has an influence on their texts' literary mood.

Mayle's works are marked by a preference for memoir and mystery novels infused with autobiographical elements, as well as elements from travel writing, and he produces texts which parallel elements of the 19th century local color movement. Magnan's works are similarly focused around autobiographical writing and mystery novels, but he chose to incorporate elements from romantic and gothic fiction. A brief exploration of Mayle's and Magnan's preferred genres and their literary characteristics helps establish their status as place-defining novelists and memoirists, and offers insights underlying their development of regional imagery and sense of place in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis.

Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan have both written texts with a strong autobiographical element. Mayle's *A Year in Provence*, *Toujours Provence*, and *Encore Provence* are all examples of memoir. These texts depict a specific time period in Mayle's life, specifically his years in Provence. Although considered a non-fiction genre, literary scholars and professional writers have expounded on the idea that memoirs mold the truth, adjusting the reality of what happened to achieve a specific literary end

(Steinberg 1999, Aciman 2013). The fluid character of what constitutes truth in memoir has implications for Peter Mayle as a place-defining writer. While his memoirs are grounded in reality and offer images of Provence, these images are going to be inevitably shaped by his personal goals of writing. Principle among these goals are to entertain in a lighthearted and upbeat way, for as he notes in an interview, Mayle prefers to write “tongue very firmly in cheek ... I do not take anything too seriously” (Connexion 2009). The same might be said of Mayle’s fiction novels, which are mostly lighthearted mysteries where the protagonists solve a non-violent crime. These novels draw heavily from Mayle’s life experiences and are set in and around the places he writes about in his memoirs, which implies that he presents a Provence with images embellished with flourishes which contribute to the texts’ humorous qualities.

Tempering this embellishment, however, is that Mayle’s works fit into the travel writing genre, and his works incorporate elements typical of ethnographic accounts and reminiscent of the local color movement of the 19th century. Travel writing developed as a distinct genre during the 18th and 19th centuries, coincident with the rise in tourism among upper-class Europeans, and is “fundamentally about situations of contact” between the writer and his or her culture and the people of another culture (Brettell 1986, 133). Unlike ethnographic works, travel writing emphasizes the subjective role of the writer during the process of a text’s production, notably by having the writer express his or her narrative from a first-person viewpoint rather than the more detached third-person viewpoint. Brettell goes on to note that the point of reference in a travel account is the readership, “members of the travel writer’s own culture who for varying motives of their own may themselves be contemplating future contact,” suggesting that a travel writer’s

readership uses his or her work as a source of accurate information about a place (Brettell 1986, 133). Given that Mayle shows himself to be a self-conscious writer about the impact of his writing (e.g., Crace 2010), he realizes the responsibility he has to convey accurate representations of Provence. It is here where Mayle's ethnographic qualities are more fully realized. As Janet Tallman notes, ethnographic writing "conveys significant information about the culture or cultures from which it originates" (2002, 12), and Mayle's writing performs this task admirably because his works position him as an informed observer of Provençal life, albeit one who straddles the line between insider and outsider.

Pierre Magnan, meanwhile, is recognized for his mysteries and has produced a number of autobiographical or self-reflective works. Like Mayle, his autobiographical works carry all of the implications inherent to the dynamics which lie between the writer's subjectivities borne out of his social positions and experiences with the places they write about, the reality of places they write about, and the text's representation of these places. Although Magnan also writes mystery novels, his mysteries are murder mysteries—and, by extension, his literary mood is grimmer than that of Mayle's works; furthermore, his plots usually involve serial killers, which contributes to a continuing sense of tension and suspense that underpins the entirety of his texts.

Critics reading English translations of Magnan's work refer to him as a writer of Provençal gothic (e.g., Jakeman 2006), and many of his works incorporate elements from gothic fiction which have an influence on the text's literary mood. The term *gothic* is marked by such a wide range of interpretations that it requires definition within a literary context. Margot Northey (1976) notes that the idea of "gothic" literature first developed

in the late 18th century. Originally associated with medieval literature, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Ortanto* (1768) catalyzed an evolution in gothic's definition as a means to describe fiction imbued with gloom and terror. The late 18th century also developed associations between gothic literature and Romanticism, which emphasizes the role of nature, imagination, and "sensibility to aesthetic impressions," in human affairs (Hume 1969, 282). Wellek (1949) notes the blurred lines between gothic literature and romanticism when he notes that some 18th century literary critics used the terms gothic and romantic interchangeably in their discussions of a text.

Gothic works built upon the focus on gloom and terror by adding associations with horror. As the 19th century continued, gothic writers more and more often emphasized representations of the macabre, extravagant violence, and a preference for the physically grotesque. Although gothic literature as a genre fell out of popularity during the late 19th century, a diverse array of gothic elements are incorporated into contemporary fiction. These elements can range from an emphasis on horror and the grotesque in a text's characters and settings to a focus on representations of nature and the sublime. Magnan's writing touches on all of these gothic elements, which, like Mayle's use of humor, influences the ways his readers interact with a text.

As my research progressed, I encountered time and again that the language used to describe Provence's natural and cultural imagery were linked to the genres in which Mayle and Magnan write their works. While this is somewhat of a circular facet to my research ('Which came first, the choice of language or the choice of genre?'), I think it appropriate to acknowledge that some of the imagery used in both authors' texts are a

product of each author wanting to write texts which fulfill the demands of his audience base—and they do so through the literary conventions of the genres in which they write.

Chapter 4 - Water and Earth

A Dark and Stormy Night

I kept a journal while I was in Aix-en-Provence. I had forgotten about it until I was cleaning through my childhood bedroom this past summer, rooting around for papers to toss and books to donate. Digging under my bed I found my standard strong-box; opening it, I saw that the top tray had a few E.U. centimes and a Sacajawea dollar stuck to its plastic bottom. When I lifted the tray away, though, I found a dusty itinerary for a flight from Madrid-Baraja Airport to Marseille-Provence Airport. Beneath that I found my journal: a small black Moleskine notebook, its elastic strap stretched out and dangling loosely.

On the first page is my host mother Andrée's address, penned in neat lettering:

Mme R---, Andrée,
Avenue de Tübingen --,
13090 AIX-EN-PROVENCE.

Those are the only neat words in the entire thing: the rest of it is poorly written, words pretentious and over-wrought, and when I read it today I cringe a little bit as I thumb through the entries. Still, I was fairly good at keeping a near-daily record, and the notes, however brief, often comment on the weather and the landscape.

Even poorly written as they are, reading these entries again I can remember the heat of the afternoons that drove me take shade under the plane trees (probably London Plane, *Platanus x acerifolia*) of the library courtyard or the Pavilion Vendôme off of Rue Celony; my hopes to experience a few days of mistral (I never did); and the way that my first (and only) soft and rainy Sunday made me feel the same way as I would after

stepping out into the first fresh-fallen snow of a New York winter: reinvigorated, alive, *serene*.

Aix-en-Provence is an urban landscape. My footsteps cut paths over a continuous surface of asphalt and stones, broken by buildings and the occasional well-ordered planting, and, at the margins of my daily wanderings, landscaped parks. The major streets were lined with trees: huge plane trees, though Andrée told me that those very same streets were once lined by elms, but a blight came through during the 19th century and caused them all to die off. There's still a 17th century fountain in the *centre-ville* planted with three elm trees, named, appropriately enough, *la fontaine des trois ormeaux*, though those three trees are so young that I could nearly fit my hands around the circumference of their trunks, and so the fountain must have had a different name sometime far in its past.

Yes, Aix is landscaped and manicured, but “natural” vegetation still creeps in, into the odd corners and at the edges of the city. From my little room at Andrée's apartment I could look out onto an abandoned lot and see unchecked growth: mostly scrubby plants and tall, uncut grasses punctuated by the occasional tree. Andrée told me that that same lot was an apricot orchard when she was a little girl, but all that was left of that orchard when I saw it was a single apricot tree, unpruned and hanging heavy with fruit just out of reach.

To the east of town, the Parc de la Torse was a wild strip of forest running along a small dark stream—though perhaps that is because the first time I found La Torse during an evening run I was thoroughly lost, alone, and nervous about the encroaching night. The trees loomed, throwing shadows over the gravel path, and I remember that the heat

of the evening suddenly grew heavy with silence, oppressive, and the sky which had been so clear just moments before began to boil with clouds that chased away the last shallow slants of sunlight with a smoldering darkness. When the storm struck it roared with thunder and gusts of wind that set the trees to whipping to-and-fro, and I remember the feeling the thrill that came with seeing the silver-green undersides of thousands of leaves flash in a crack of lightning. Heavy raindrops fell splattering into the dust, and then when the downpour began in earnest they hit my shirt and skin with a *pock-pock* that left my clothes heavy and sodden and streamed water into my eyes, over my shoulders, and down my back, despite the partial cover of the trees overhead.

Three minutes after the first drop, the once-dusty path ran with muddy rivulets that carried off bits of gravel into the little Torse stream. Before it had been burbling a bright tune, but now it roared red-brown with sediment, engorged and eating away at the bank's dirt and carrying bits of debris and trash that I could only assume had accumulated since the last storm. Above, on the path, the slickness underfoot set my feet to slipping and I lost balance. I remember crashing one knee down hard, and letting my stumbling stride drive it back up out of the mud, and when I broke free of the park's darkness and hit the streets and their lights once more I saw that my shoes, calves, and legs were spattered with a red mud (later, I would give up my socks as hopeless and simply throw them away, forever stained with mud). The storm fled nearly as quickly as it had come on, and the skies cleared within fifteen minutes of the first drop of rain. When I returned to the Tübigen apartment, shivering and grinning a wet smile, Andrée was appalled. She heated a towel in the microwave and gave it to me while I stripped off my socks and

shoes and left them at the door, and, shaking an admonishing finger at me, insisted that I drink a glass of dry red wine before a hot shower and bed.

* * * *

Of course, my picture of Provence's weather and its physical landscapes is woefully incomplete: with the exception of a few day-trips, my view is almost entirely set in and around Aix-en-Provence. When I began to research regional images of Provence, I began by reading about its general landscape features: climate, general topography, and vegetation. Provence is dominated by a Mediterranean climate type, with its typical hot, dry summers and wet, cool winters at lower elevations. Climatological data collection stations in southeastern France report average annual temperatures ranging from over 60 degrees Fahrenheit at the coast to below freezing at the highest peaks of Haute-Alpes (there are five national weather stations found within PACA's borders: three are found within 50 kilometers of the coast; one is set back on the eastern bank of the Rhône River; and one crouches, high and lonely, in the tiny alpine commune of Saint-Véran, the highest commune in France at 10,000 feet above sea level (OFME 2008, French Weather Network 2015). The climate statistics available from Marseille give all the appearances of Provence being overwhelmingly bright: of the 8,765 hours in a year, 2,836 of them are sunny. What precipitation that does occur (at Marseille, this averages at just under an inch during each of the summer months; around 2 inches a month during the winter) comes more often than not in cloudbursts, fat drops splattering into the earth.

Provence is widely recognized as possessing three principle physiographic areas: first, there is the coast and coastal lands, a narrow band which stretches some 900 kilometers along the Mediterranean Sea and incorporates *les rivages bas*, or coastal

lowlands (Curnier 1973). Here, the summer droughts and relative warmth year round encourage the growth of *Quercus ilex* (holly oak) and *Quercus suber* (cork oak), save in the stony wastes of La Crau and in the salt marshes of the Camargue. Among the Camargue marsh grasses we might find *Salicornia europaea* (glasswort); *Limonium bellidifolium*, *narbonense*, *virgatum*, and *girardianum* (sea lavenders); and *Tamarix gallica* (salt cedar) (Willm et al. 2012). In the far northeast of Provence are the mountains and glacial valleys of the Haute-Alpes, culminating in peak elevations of 4,100 meters above sea level. Here the landscape is dominated by larches and pines: *Larix decidua* (European larch) in the high reaches and *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) at lower elevations. Sandwiched between the littoral and mountain regions is *la Provence intérieure*, defined by hills and low mountains, and as the general elevation decreases, stands of Scots pine give way to *Quercus pubescens* (downy oak) (OFME 2008, Allemand 2014).

My initial views of Provence and its physical landscapes were borne out of experiences of Aix and from reports and maps and half-remembered scenes from films set and shot in Provence (*Lettres de Mon Moulin*; *Regain*; *Jean de Florette*; *Manon des Sources*). Peter Mayle's and Pierre Mignan's works add a richly textured layer of understanding to wild landscapes, topography, and weather and seasons; they articulate what it means to experience Provence's water, earth, and sky.

I chose to examine Peter Mayle's images before Pierre Mignan's because after my return to the United States, I first found and read Mayle's texts. His works were what got me thinking about Provence's imagery and sense of place, and, when thinking about where I toured with I.A.U., I now have a hunch that we visited places that were in some way coincident with Peter Mayle's choice of imagery, and that his pre-eminence in the

Anglophone world shaped our teachers' decisions when they formed our itinerary as they sought to show us landscapes and activities that define Provence. Exploring the Lubéron region, the medieval *ville perchées*, and the sun-drenched vineyard where we tasted wine and olive oil — these experiences echo passages in Mayle's works. So, I chose to start with Mayle's images, but finish with the alternative voice from which I have learned so much about Provence's natural landscapes: Pierre Magnan.

Peter Mayle

The landscape is magnificent, and so is the light. There are three hundred days of sunshine a year. ... What more could one want?

—Peter Mayle (Mautner 2012).

Peter Mayle's explorations of Provence's natural landscapes and climate is less developed than his explorations of Provence's cultural landscapes and its people, yet he develops several sets of nature imagery that contribute to Provence's place definition and sense of place. His nature imagery includes general treatments of Provence's topography, flora, and fauna, which offer a realistic backdrop to his plots and cultivate the image of Provence as a remote region. He also includes images of Provence's seasonality, weather patterns, and the ebbs and flows of its temperatures, which develop and emphasize the ties between the rural Provençaux and the landscape. Further, his consistent and extensive descriptions of Provence's sky, sun, and clean air infuses Provence with a therapeutic quality that promotes good health and a high quality of life, especially when compared to other places and regions.

Mayle's Earth and Plants

Peter Mayle's memoirs and novels introduce their readers to a wide range of Provence's landscapes, from the urban cityscapes of Aix-en-Provence and Orange to the tourist hotspots of Saint-Tropez and the French Riviera. His early and better known works, however, are set in and around the Lubéron region of Provence; for example, in *A Year in Provence* the vast majority of Mayle's text recounts the months spent renovating his farmhouse outside of Ménerbes, nestled in the Lubéron Mountains:

The Lubéron Mountains rise up immediately behind the house to a high point of nearly 3,500 feet and run in deep folds for about forty miles from east to west. Cedars and pines and scrub oak keep them perpetually green and provide cover for boar, rabbits, and game birds. Wild flowers, thyme, lavender and mushrooms grow from between the rocks and under the trees... For most of the year, it is possible to walk for eight or nine hours without seeing a car or a human being. It is a 247,000 acre extension of the back garden, a paradise for the dogs and a permanent barricade against assault from the rear by unforeseen neighbors (Mayle 1989, 6).

This introduction to the landscape found around Mayle's first home near Ménerbes showcases the way that Mayle consistently approaches Provence's natural landscapes. He uses short passages such as this one to set a realistic backdrop to his narration, something which literary geographers, cultural anthropologists, and literary scholars identify as a means to establish the verisimilitude of a text's imagery (e.g., Wyckoff's 2013 discussion of accurate place description) or as a means to infuse the work with local color, a characteristic of travel writing that is that is often derided by critics yet recognized as one of the genre's fundamental appeals (Dike 1952, Donovan 2007).

More importantly for a study of regional images and sense of place, however, is that this passage epitomizes the general scene which Mayle develops throughout his

works, as it either makes direct reference or alludes to nearly all of the imagery that he associates with Provence's natural landscapes. Mayle repeatedly touches on the Lubéron, and, more generally, Provence, as region with rough topography and rocky soil (e.g., Mayle 1989, 12; Mayle 1992, 80, 234; Mayle 2006, 231). Similarly, he repeatedly represents its forests as made up of scrub oaks, pines, and cedars, and he often notes that the forests have scents of rosemary and thyme (e.g., Mayle 1992, 234, 235; Mayle 2005, 43; Mayle 2006, 10, 232). Mayle's choice of imagery for the wild spaces of the Lubéron permeate the whole of his texts, giving the reader the impression that the Lubéron landscapes are those typical of uncultivated land in Provence.

Mayle's use of regional imagery vis-à-vis the Lubéron's natural landscapes influences Provence's sense of place by infusing the region with a sensation of remoteness, solitude, and peace, and, even if the landscape is wild, it is also represented as benevolent in that it offers both tangible and non-tangible benefits to the people who make use of it. Mayle's forests are planted with herbs and mushrooms and populated by animals that frequently become central ingredients in healthy yet lavish meals, and hunting and gathering from the forest offers recreation or gainful employment to many Provençaux (e.g., Mayle's references to and encounters with seasonal hunters [Mayle 2006, 58] and truffle-hunters [Mayle 1992, 73]). Provence's low mountains, even when described as rocky or sharp, are nonetheless developed as places of comfort and are often personified as having an aspect to them that is soft, cozy, or photogenic (e.g., Mayle 2005, 43; Mayle 2006, 8). Mayle's jaunts into the Lubéron and his other hikes are consistently identified as a healthy retreat from human interaction, and he sometimes refers to these walks as a "tonic" (e.g., Mayle 1992, 234; Mayle 2006, 92, 123, 232). As

illustrated by a description of a bracing walk along “the spine of the Lubéron,” (Mayle 1992, 234), Mayle finds that the solitude of the Lubéron mountains is a reward in and of itself:

The reward for this effort [a strenuous walk] is to find yourself in a silent, extraordinary landscape, sometimes eerie, always beautiful. ... the views towards the sea are long and sharply focused, almost as if they have been magnified, and there is a sense of being hundreds of miles away from the rest of the world. I once met a peasant up there ... we were both startled to see another human being. It is normally less busy... (Mayle 1992, 235).

For Mayle, Provence’s natural landscape is a retreat from the complexities of social spaces, and is a resource which allows a better quality of life for those who experience it because it links them directly to the land. In his own words, Mayle notes that Provence’s wild, solitary landscape is a part of what makes Provence “like a cantankerous old friend” (Mayle 2009, 84): it is something to be taken as it is, and should be returned to time and again as a source of comfort.

Seasons, Climate, and Weather Patterns

Two of Mayle’s texts explore Provence’s seasons and weather patterns in depth. *A Year in Provence* is divided into twelve chapters, each titled with a specific month and narrating the events and seasonal shifts that occur during that part of the year. *Toujours Provence*, while organized through chapters that embody a specific theme or anecdote, offers a similarly wide range of seasonal images. A third text, *Provence A-Z*, is an “essential handbook” that covers curiosities and idiosyncrasies of life in France and particularly those of life in Provence. Many of its encyclopedia-like entries address components of Provence’s landscapes, including entries on weather patterns and climate.

In all three texts Provence's seasons, climate, and weather patterns become inextricably entangled with what it means to experience Provence.

In *Provence A-Z*, Mayle notes that Provence's climate is "often dramatic and can be brutal," and goes on to broadly explore the temperature and precipitation extremes of the region (Mayle 2006, 67). He notes the potential for freezing conditions and the possibility of snow and ice, though in other works he expands on snowfall as an unusual event worthy of note (e.g., Mayle 1989, 24). Mayle's exploration of winter in Provence serves to help demythologize the image of Provence as a region eternally in the grip of a warm and inviting climate, an image that is ubiquitous in tourist brochures developed and disseminated by cities and towns in Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (see Office of Tourism websites for the cities of Aix-en-Provence, Salon de Provence, and Arles as examples). A notable example of Mayle's demythologizing Provence comes at the beginning of a *Year in Provence*, where he notes that the winter *mistral* winds come "at you like a razor," with temperature drops that can discomfit the unprepared (e.g., Mayle 1989, 9, 11).

Winter in Provence, while at times bitterly cold, is presented as a time of year which Mayle relishes for its simplicity and solitude, and he writes that winter is the time to walk for miles, to chop wood, and to eat enormous lunches of traditional peasant food (e.g., Mayle 1989, 12, 13, 25). His representations of winter landscapes also highlight the idea that Provence is appealing in all seasons. Mayle's favored labels to describe winter landscapes are "eerie," "quiet," and generically "beautiful," imbuing the landscape with a sense of quiet and solitude produced from the lack of outdoor activities such as farming, hunting, outdoor markets, and tourism (e.g., Mayle 1989, 12, 13; Mayle 2006, 132).

Although Mayle touches on the transitions between winter and spring, summer and autumn (e.g., Mayle 1989, 43, 192; Mayle 2006, 22, 213), these transitions are usually described in terms of transitions made to Provençal cuisine, rather than through descriptions of weather patterns. Mayle's representation of summer and its climatic conditions, however, are extensive and well-developed, showcasing a consistent emphasis on high temperatures, sunlight, and the tendencies for summer droughts which are exacerbated by wildfires or punctuated by cloudbursts.

Mayle's references to high summer temperatures are often paired with sunlight imagery:

The heat outside was like a blow on the skull and the road back to the house was a long mirage, liquid and rippling in the glare, the leaves on the vines drooping, the farm dogs silent, the countryside stunned and deserted. It was an afternoon for the pool and the hammock and an undemanding book... (Mayle 1989, 128).

This passage epitomizes the way that Mayle approaches descriptions of summer weather, as it directly references Provence's intense heat and bright, ever present sunlight, alludes to drought-like conditions, and conveys the image of summer as a time of sleepy leisure and moderate self-indulgence. These themes are repeated time and again in Mayle's descriptions of summer weather: notable examples include his references to the effect intense sun has on exacerbating wine-induced headaches (e.g., Mayle 1989, 113; Mayle 1992, 64, 68; Mayle 2005, 95) and its influence on his adoption of the mid-afternoon summer siesta (e.g., Mayle 1989 114; Mayle 1992, 68, 203).

Other characteristics of Mayle's descriptions include references to droughts, wildfires, and summer storms, all of which have the effect of adding depth and authenticity to his representations of Provençal landscapes. Through exploring the

influence of drought on the landscape, Mayle paints a picture of Provence that de-emphasizes the image of Provence as a pastoral idyll; in particular, he notes droughts' negative impact on agricultural industries:

Drought in the Luberon hangs over the farmers like an overdue debt. Conversations in the fields and in the village streets are gloomy as the crops bake and the earth turns brittle and crusty (Mayle 1992, 118).

Similarly, Mayle's references to wildfires, often set by pyromaniacs and exacerbated by drought and wind, serve to emphasize the idea that Provence is a region that has its own set of unique environmental challenges, and, furthermore, that these challenges have an impact on the day-to-day life of Provençaux.

Sky, Sun, and Clean Air

Cloudless, blue, and bright, Mayle's Provençal skies are ubiquitous in all of his works set in Provence, and are an aspect of the physical landscape that is place-defining in its constancy and repetition:

It was hard to associate the sunshine and dense blue sky outside with the first of January, but, as everyone kept telling me, it was quite normal. After all, we were in Provence (Mayle 1989, 4).

But when I woke and went out into the courtyard, the seven o' clock sky was a never-ending blue, the color of a Gauloise packet... (Mayle 1992, 38).

Overhead was cloudless, the clean, burnished blue sky that the mistral often brings... (Mayle 1992, 118).

But for the moment, with the sun high in a blue sky, a full stomach, and the thought of tomorrow's excursion ... he was at peace with the world (Mayle 2005, 95).

Mayle's skies are blue and expansive, but inextricably linked with his images of Provençal skies is his use of sun imagery. Mayle's use of the sun's bright light and high position in the sky strengthens the sky's clarity and expansiveness—and these characteristics help develop Provence as open, peaceful, and separated from the pressures of life in other places, notably London:

[The London weather] hadn't changed, and the days passed in a blur of grey drizzle... Traffic barely moved, but most drivers didn't seem to notice; they were busy talking, presumably about money and property prices... I missed the light and the space and the huge open skies of Provence, and I realized I would never willingly come back to live in a city again (Mayle 1992, 79).

[at a dinner in London] "You know what they say about all work and no play?"
"Yes, Ern. It makes you rich." And then he took a mouthful of cheese and thought of the south [Provence]. The warm, seductive south, with its polished light and soft air and lavender evening skies. And no executive committees (Mayle 1994, 19).

The repetition and emphasis on Provençal skies and passing comments made to contrast Provence's sky with those of other places makes Provençal skies place-defining. For Mayle, nowhere else in the world, save for Provence, does the sky have the same qualities of expansiveness and color, clarity and light. Furthermore, Mayle associates the blue skies and bright sunlight with clean, crisp air, and suggests that it brings a sense of well-being and good health to those living in Provence. Notable examples of Mayle's association between Provençal skies and clean air are in his discussions of Lubéron winters (e.g., Mayle 1989, 12), and in his discussion of air quality in *Provence A-Z*. Here, Mayle recognizes that scientific studies have shown that Provence's air quality ranks among some of the most polluted in Europe, but writes that "it's difficult to believe in pollution," because "the air looks clear and tastes good... and that [Provence's flora and

fauna] go about their business, apparently in good health” (Mayle 2006, 8). In approaching Provence’s air quality in this way, Mayle highlights the link between landscape and health.

Mayle’s depictions of natural landscapes and weather emphasizes Provence as remote; as removed from many of the stresses associated with more urbanized regions; and as a region that is overall imbued with therapeutic, stress-relieving, and healthful qualities. Mayle’s use of regional imagery imbues Provence with a therapeutic quality that eerily echoes one of the major reasons which put Provence on the map as an international tourist destination during the late 19th century (e.g., Rudney 1981; Woloshyn 2009). Although Mayle develops year-round seasonality and weather patterns throughout his works, the components of the physical landscape which contribute most to the image of Provence as being therapeutic and healthy are his depictions of Provence’s natural, rugged landscapes, particularly those of the Lubéron region, where hikers and walkers can experience a rejuvenating solitude; and his imagery that defines Provence as a region with clear blue skies and bright sunlight, which are directly linked to the cultivation of a sense of emotional and physical well-being. Mayle’s treatment of Provence is best summed up in the remark of a restaurant owner at the beginning of *A Year in Provence*: “One is fortunate to be in Provence” (Mayle 1989, 8).

Pierre Magnan

Flore Naudin: *Pourquoi cette nature que vous décrivez n’aide jamais les hommes? Elle est toujours aveuglante, cinglante, elle mène à la perte.*

Pierre Magnan: *C’est comme ça que je l’ai perçue toute ma vie.*

Flore Naudin: Why does this nature that you describe never help man? It is always blinding, stinging, and it leads to loss.

Pierre Magnan: It's like that because that's how I've perceived it all my life.

—(Naudin and Chavagné 2012, 14, my translation).

Like other mystery and gothic novelists (as discussed by McManis 1978, Tuan 1985, Hausladen 1996, and Kadonaga 1998), Pierre Magnan uses regional imagery associated with Provence's natural landscapes, climate, and weather patterns to create, in his words, "*une ambiance*," or *ambiance*, that is equivalent to a sense of place (Naudin and Chavagné 2012, 15) and promotes the tension and suspense so essential to effectively developing his texts' plots. Some of the sets of regional imagery which describe nature include consistent references to wild plant species, especially those associated with forested mountainous regions, and an emphasis on rough topography, particularly of the peaks of the Basses-Alpes region within Provence⁵. No less important are depictions of rivers and streams as powerful and destructive, and an emphasis on ferocious storms, dark skies, and strong winds, all of which are often personified and presented as either coldly neutral or malevolent towards humanity. As mentioned earlier, one of the ways that Magnan uses nature in his texts is to create a foreboding *ambiance* that helps immerse the reader into his plots. Magnan builds on these emotional reactions to Provence, however, by describing the landscape in a holistic way, and the harsh physical topography of Provence is inextricably linked to its fierce weather. This helps develop the idea that the landscape is a powerful, untamable entity which consistently challenges and overcomes the Provençaux who live there. Magnan's descriptions of components of the

⁵The Basses-Alpes *département* changed its name to Alpes-de-Haute-Provence 13 April 1970. Since Magnan chooses to refer to the *département* by its former name, and because his characters identify to themselves as Bas-Alpin, I choose to refer to the *département* as the Basses-Alpes.

natural landscape help contribute to the image of Provence as a region that is timeless, harsh, and enigmatic, and taken together, sublime.

Earth, Deep Time, and Trees

Like Mayle, Magnan develops a set of regional images associated with Provence's topography and flora to offer depth to the setting of his novels. Throughout his works Magnan conveys the image of Provence as a region with rough topography, and he frequently refers to four mountain areas in his texts: the Lure Mountains, the Ganagobie plateau, Mont Ventoux, and La Tête de l'Estrop (Magnan 2005, 11, 12, 23).

By his own admission, Magnan wanted to write about mountainous landscapes:

Moi, je ne veux parler que d'un pays où dominant Lure et la Tête de l'Estrop.

Me, I don't want to speak about anywhere but the country dominated by the Lure [Mountains] and the Tête de l'Estrop. (Magnan 2005, 23, my translation).

Slopes, hills, cliffs, mountains, and valleys are prominent in Magnan's works, and the earth is invariably described as rocky and sharp (e.g., Magnan 1999, 12, 35, 49, 65, 67; Magnan 2005, 11, 12, 13, 43, 48, 51, 118; Magnan 2006, 70, 71, 73, 167). An important facet of his descriptions is that topography is not static. Instead, the earth changes and moves, usually as a result of landslides or the power of wind and water erosion, though occasionally Magnan attributes movement of the earth to a trick of the light, as when he likens the Ganagobie plateau to a ship, drifting beneath the moon (1999, 12). Although there are several references to landslides and earthquakes (e.g., Magnan 1999, 246; Magnan 2003, 29, 53), the most notable example is in *Beyond the Grave*,

when one of Magnan's best known characters, Séraphin Monge, is swallowed by a landslide:

“Did the tree crush him [Séraphin]?”

“No! Not the tree! The mud! ... The whole tree lay down. [Its roots] looked like a white octopus. I heard them popping in the mud! [The tree] went over on its roots as though someone was pulling it out by the branches...with a ball of earth as big as a house! And all that slid down on top of Séraphin. ... He held up his arms to hold back the wave of earth that was falling down, but at the same time he was sinking into the ground! And it was so soft, and yielding! It fell like a rain of mud, but with drops weighing fifty kilos! I saw Séraphin struggle against the thing that was swallowing him up, pinning his arms. It was like a shroud of earth... (Magnan 2003, 54).

The earth's swift and violent movement in this particular passage serves to shock its reader at the loss of such a major character; more importantly to Provence's sense of place, however, is the way that Magnan chose to continue his narration of the landslide. The same landslide slows and eventually begins to creep down the slope, and while it does not take any more lives, it destroys a village in its path and erases all traces of its history, even covering over the cemetery. Magnan's narration of the landslide's slow, inevitable, and irresistible destruction of the hamlet presents the earth as dynamic and powerfully destructive, indifferent or malevolent towards human affairs, and it serves to emphasize the insignificance and transience of human works on the landscape.

This theme of human insignificance and transience does not directly contribute to a sense of place, but it implies a contrast: while humans and their works might be temporary, the landscape itself is eternal and operates on time scales far beyond the capabilities of human experience. Magnan's treatment of nature's time scales touches on

geologic deep time, a concept coined by McPhee (1981) to describe time scales for geologic processes, and paralleled by J.B. Jackson in *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*:

Yet it is not hard to be fleetingly aware of a background suggestive of a kind of history with a different dimension... [This] kind of past is far less easy to comprehend than the strictly human history on display. ...we can come close to time measured not by events or seasons but by millennia, a landscape with a history that is perhaps not a history at all, merely the unending repetition of cosmic cycles... (Jackson 1994, 16).

Nature for Magnan is inextricably linked to a sense of deep time because he pairs his nature imagery with time scales that occur beyond an individual human life. In *Death in the Truffle Wood*, for example, he notes that the land “may have taken a thousand years” to drive people from living in the countryside (Magnan 2008, 70), and, in another passage, he touches on the century cycles of erosional patterns and likens them to a shrug of the landscape (Magnan 2008, 71). His descriptions of the Durance River floods and hill formations touch on an even greater time scale, where in the Durance stones are polished round over millions of years, and hills are simply described as being part of *l'éternité* [eternity], or “suspended in time” (e.g., Magnan 2005, 18, 74; Magnan 2008, 74). Magnan’s descriptions of nature existing at a scale far beyond that of an individual’s life span helps develop Provence as enigmatic, as there will always be more questions than the individual human can answer through personal experience of its landscapes (Magnan 2005, 107).

Magnan’s rough landscapes are typically forested and left wild. His novels repeatedly make references to slopes covered in boxwood and holly-oaks, cedars and beeches, and he chose to describe forests in terms that suggest their immensity: he frequently described stands of trees as large groves, as liquid or shimmering masses, as

oceans, or as battalions of soldiers or pikes (e.g., Magnan 1999, 12, 53, 119; Magnan 2005 14, 16, 26; Magnan 2006, 14; Magnan 2008, 2, 3). Interestingly, Magnan's references to trees are not always through the means of visual description; instead, he frequently implies the presence of trees through references to the sound the wind makes as it travels through a stand of trees:

This noise of the river and the tall trees in the wind dominated everything... (Magnan 1999, 7).

The *montagnière* [a mountain wind] roared through the trees as though they were an organ case, crashing its thundering chords, growing louder and louder. All nature's fury was unleashed in this continuous noise, which flooded the ears and locked everyone within themselves (Magnan 1999, 118).

Off she went towards that mass of liquid bronze [the laurel grove], shimmering in the evening wind and clicking like the lances of an army on the move (Magnan 2008, 3).

The use of sound to imply a landscape is an underemphasized topic within literary geography, as more often analysis is restricted to the visual aspects of landscape (or, less commonly, to smellscapes, such as Porteous 1985b and Dann and Jacobson 2003), but the use of sound to help contribute to a sense of place is in keeping with Tuan's idea that a sense of place is built out of the interplay of sensory experiences of a locality and human values and interpretations imposed on that locality (Tuan 1977). In *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre*, for example, Magnan (2005, 9) noted that he first knew "the heart of Provence" from listening to its sounds from his cradle. In his mystery novels, Magnan described the sounds of Provence's physical landscapes in forceful terms (e.g., roaring, domination, military imagery). Magnan's descriptions repeatedly cast Provence's landscapes, especially its forested landscapes, in a forbidding light, which serves to

reinforce the sense that they are potentially dangerous for the people who encounter them.

Water, Winds, and Storms

Magnan's imagery of rivers and storms features heavily in all of his works. Like his approach towards Provence's topography, rivers and storms are presented as fearsome and powerful, cultivating a tension that contributes to the suspense that is integral to his preferred literary genres of murder mysteries and gothic novels. I consider Magnan's treatment of river and storm imagery together because he approaches them in similar ways. Magnan's rivers and storms are destructive and noisy, and these two characteristics, like his treatment of Provence's rough ground and flora, serves to create a sense of place which evokes feelings of danger and a recognition of human insignificance. Furthermore, Magnan typically relates the power of rivers to storm systems by emphasizing the links between precipitation and floods (e.g., Magnan 1999, 9; Magnan 2005, 10) and, conversely, he notes that in times of drought even the largest rivers can have nearly dry riverbeds (e.g., Magnan 2005, 70).

Magnan's works make frequent reference to two rivers: the Durance and the Bléone (e.g., Magnan 1977; Magnan 1999; Magnan 2005), and these rivers are capable of drastically reshaping the earth through erosion:

Ils s'éloignaient de plus en plus de la ville [Digne]. La Bléone en crue était toute proche. Resserrée entre ses berges, on l'entendait rouler ses agrégats comme tombereaux de pierres.

They moved farther and farther from the city [Digne]. The Bléone in flood was close. Confined between its banks, one could hear it rolling its stones like trucks [carrying] stone (Magnan 1977, 218, my translation).

J'ai pris conscience de l'érosion devant la Durance, lorsque j'avais dix ans. Mon grand-père avait une pièce de vigne au bout d'une courbe du torrent et tous les cinq ans, à peu près, lors d'une grande montée des eaux, il perdait quelques ceps, emportés par la crue. ... La Durance n'était pas une amie.

I took consciousness of erosion from the Durance, when I was ten years old. My grandfather had a vineyard at the curve of the river and every five years or so, with a rise in the water, he lost some vines, carried off by the flood. ... The Durance was not a friend (Magnan 2005, 70, my translation).

These passages illustrate several common traits to Magnan's representations of rivers. First, the power of rivers is reflected in their ability to move earth, and this power is evident both audibly and visually. Furthermore, in keeping with the theme of nature being an entity that is indifferent or malevolent towards human affairs, it is significant that Magnan notes that the rivers carry off arable land, destroying valuable vineyards in the process.

Magnan's representations of storms emphasize their force and showcase the extremes of Provençal weather. They frequently occur at night, darkening the skies with clouds, and nearly always arrive with heavy winds that have the power to shake the walls of buildings or set a grown man to stumbling (e.g., Magnan 1999). In *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre*, Magnan remembers one particular day when, experiencing *la montagnière* (a transalpine wind that blows from the north, as compared to the northwest of the mistral), he realized its full power:

Je le voyais chargé de toutes les catastrophes naturelles dont je rêvais, de tous les orages, de toutes les érosions qui se poursuivraient...

I saw it [the wind] loaded with all of the natural catastrophes of which I had dreamed of, of all the storms, of all the erosion that would follow... (Magnan 2005, 43, my translation).

Magnan's storms are always accompanied by strong winds; their precipitation, however, varies widely according to the season, and this diversity serves to develop the idea of Provence's harshness. Magnan's descriptions of spring and summer precipitation range from sheets of rain (e.g. Magnan 1977, 163) to cherry-sized hailstones accompanied by lightning which destroys crops and threatens Magnan's characters with hypothermia or death:

There was a small flash of lightning further away over the reeds of the Iscles [little islands and clumps of water-willows in the Durance River] and immediately a strange noise descended on them. It was as if their ears were deafened by a load of gravel someone had tipped out right next to them. ... Hailstones as big as cherries whipped around his ears. ... Burle was already scrambling up the slope as fast as his short legs would carry him. The lightning was literally pushing him from behind. It ricocheted along the ground with that awful noise of tin pots being dragged over pebbles, a noise only recognized by those who have had a narrow escape. Drawn there by the air currents, it rushed into the green tunnel of the holly-oaks, literally encircling the two men. Whipped about the ears by the solid deluge of hail, they opened their mouths choking, wanting to cry out in pain but not daring to (Magnan 1999, 21).

His winters, meanwhile, are characterized by bitter cold temperatures, ice, and snow (e.g., Magnan 1977, 108), or, on more mild days, a wintry mix so dreary that it sours the moods of the Provençaux who experience it:

L'hiver les maudissait en conscience par une pluie indecise qui tournait a la neige pendant cinq minutes, revenait a la pluie, tombait sur du verglas et de la veille neige fondante. Des corbeaux...claquaient lamentablement des ailes à traverse ce ciel déjà obscur à deux heures de l'après-midi.

Winter cursed their [Laviolette's and Judge Chabrand's] consciences with an indecisive rain that turned to snow for five minutes, returned to rain, and fell on the slush and old snow [of past storms]. Ravens... miserably flapped their wings through a sky already darkened at two in the afternoon (Magnan 1977, 138, my translation).

This passage highlights both the way that Magnan creates a mood appropriate to his literary genre as well as contributing to the idea that Provence is a region defined by harsh weather which shapes the way that the Provençaux interact with their landscape. This is further explored in *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre*, when Magnan describes the seasonal patterns of transhumance as being inextricably linked with snow, rain, and mud, as the onset of winter weather drives the shepherds to lower-altitude pastures:

C'étaient les conditions extrêmes qui les avaient poussés hors les alpages, en catastrophe, en une retraite commencée sous la neige, poursuivie sous la pluie... toute ce monde arrivait à Manosque vers le 20 octobre par pluie battante et feuilles de platanes froissées dans l'air...

It was the extreme conditions which had pushed them out of the alpine pastures, in catastrophe, in a retreat begun beneath the snow, continued under the rain... all [of the *scabot*, or flock] arrived at Manosque around the 20th of October, through battering rain and crumpled plane leaves in the air... (Magnan 2005, 45, my translation).

A Landscape View

Magnan's use of nature imagery serves to heighten the emotional tension of his works so essential to the development of a mystery or gothic novel. He commonly presents landscapes in a way which conveys a sense of danger or foreboding and promotes a theme of nature's indifference towards human affairs. One of the more important ways that Magnan approaches his landscape description, however, is that he blends descriptions of the terrain, flora, and weather to craft a sense of place. Magnan's winds, for example, cannot occur without reference to the forests which give them a voice, nor can his mountains be fully realized without considering the links between earth, water, and plant life:

The torrent that ate into the mountain and ploughed it down to the sea was tearing through the corridors of the night. Its noise even dominated the howl of the squall that whipped up the holly-oak forests from the slopes of Ganagobie to the Lure foothills, over there on the Mallefougasse peaks. You could only guess what was happening from seeing the foliage on the trees being suddenly sucked up towards the moon as if they were raising their arms to heaven (Magnan 1999, 12).

The torrent eating and tearing at the mountain slopes, the howling and whipping of the squall through the holly-oak forests: taken singly, each of these images characterizes Provence's weather, rivers, mountains, and forests as fearsome and malevolent and suggests that they assault sensory experience with force. Incidentally, Magnan's view of natural landscapes reflects one of the ways that Meinig identified as a way to perceive the landscape:

The "vault of heaven," the "rock of ages," the "everlasting hills," are old metaphors which tell us that if we really ponder the landscape, it is nature that controls. The sky above, the ground beneath, and the horizon binding the two provide the basic frame, holding within the lay of the land, its contours and textures; the weather and the light, ever-changing with the hours and the seasons, affecting all our perceptions; and at all times some display of the power of nature, its quiet inexorable rhythms, the power of growth, of moving water, the immense power of storms. Amidst all this man is miniscule, surficial, ephemeral, subordinate. Whatever he does upon the surface of this earth [is] mere scratchings on the skin of Mother Earth (Meinig 1979, 34).

Of the various aspects of Magnan's natural landscapes, storm systems and wind emerge as the strongest influences in the development of Provence as a landscape imbued with force, while his descriptions of Provence's rough terrain and rivers emphasizes human insignificance and implies that the landscape itself is timeless:

Laviolette spent some time contemplating the elements of this stone enigma where sounds, colors, and shapes combined with the noise of the river to make a man understand what cold eternity might be like (Magnan 2008, 73).

Considering Nature Imagery

Both Mayle and Magnan write using extensive nature imagery, and do so in a way that subtly contributes to a reader's experience of Provence. For Mayle, nature largely serves as a way to convey the healthful, positive qualities that come from living in Provence. Mayle relies heavily on descriptions of Provence's blue skies, sun and summer imagery, and rough, wooded topography, all of which highlight the idea that Provence's nature helps promote a sense of remoteness, rejuvenating solitude, and tranquility. Mayle's nature imagery develops Provence as a region with a therapeutic landscape, offering positive benefits for those who experience it.

Magnan's nature imagery overlaps with Mayle's, but he uses nature imagery to develop Provence's natural landscape as a powerful entity which has a sometimes negative shaping influence on Provence's people. Magnan's use of rough topography and wooded landscapes highlights nature's ubiquitous presence in the landscape. Unlike Mayle, his landscapes are not a retreat, but rather an inescapable and powerful presence. Descriptions of the landscape as dynamic, particularly in descriptions of rivers, floods, and harsh storms, all contribute to the idea of nature's raw power. Finally, Magnan presents nature as powerful and enigmatic through his use of time scales which parallel deep time. Given Magnan's descriptions of nature as eternal, Magnan's Provence is imbued with a sense of mystery.

For both authors, nature imagery helps develop a sense of place, but any consideration of a sense of place for Provence lies incomplete without reference to the

way that Mayle and Magnan choose to present Provence's culture imagery. Chapter 5 explores how Mayle and Magnan develop Provence's culture and its people.

Chapter 5 - Settled Places, People, and Time

Arles's Roman Theatre

Arles is a palimpsest of humanity. Its parchment is writ over by streets and buildings that tell a story, or, rather, a series of stories, with traces of the past still influencing the present. Arles's Roman origins, for example, still play a central role in the cultural life of the city.

During our classical archaeology course fieldtrip, we paused at the ruins of the theater and sat on its lowest tier, closest to where the stage would have been, and we listened to Professor Guillaume wax on about the history of the stone and mortar around us. Guillaume was a theatrical lecturer: gesturing widely with his hands, making faces at us, and punctuating his rapid fire French with a liberal dose of English curses (he found English curse words to be more eloquently crude than those in French, and delighted to show off his repertoire), he poked and pointed and gesticulated through two thousand years of the theater's history.

Guillaume explained the theater's seating arrangements. Where we were seated, spread out and lounging on the stone benches of the *cavea* and baking in the sun, that was the patricians' section. Part of the rationale of their proximity to the stage was practical. They had paid for the theater's construction, paid for the players, and paid for the free refreshments that were typically distributed on theatre-days, so they deserved a better view, no? (Guillaume smirked). The other reason was more symbolic: seated at the front, they would be visible to the ranks of the poorer classes seated above, acting as a living

reminder to their own generosity (Guillaume waggled his eyebrows). He indicated a break in the lecture by opening a pack of cigarettes and lighting up.

As Guillaume chain smoked his way through the pack, I traveled *up*, imagining as I did so the changes that would have been evident in the audience, changes indicative of their social statuses—silk and fine cotton togas giving way to simpler tunics, perhaps of rough spun cotton or wool—and finally skins and furs at the top level, where the poorest citizens of Arles (*Arelate*, I reminded myself, thinking of the Roman name) would have strained to see and hear the action of the play below. I stopped just short of this level—when new, the theatre could have held 10,000 on its thirty-three tiers, but in my climb to the top I had only traversed some twenty tiers; the missing tiers had long since crumbled or been carried away. I sat on a middle-class bench, looked across at the ruin (Figure 9), and thought a bit about what else I had learned that morning.



Figure 9: Arles Roman Theater, summer 2012. Roman and medieval ruins share space with contemporary construction. Photograph by the author.

After the Roman era, Provence was in turmoil; Arles itself was sacked by barbarians in 480 CE, and the city weathered the subsequent social and political insecurity by contracting in on itself. Soon after the sack, Arles's smaller population built homes and religious buildings directly on the steps of the theatre, taking advantage of its imposing architecture by incorporating it into their defensive plans. The medieval population took advantage of the theater's stones in other ways, too, by carrying off bits and pieces to strengthen their homes or bolster their defenses where the original structure was not sufficient. Off to my left I saw the Tower of Roland, the last remaining example

of the three towers built to protect the several hundred people who called the interior of the theatre home (UNESCO 2015).

In 1834 the buildings inside the theater were finally torn down and efforts at conservation and preservation of the Roman ruins began—and since then, the theater has returned to its former purpose. I looked down at the stage area once more before realizing that Guillaume had finished his break and was ready to move on to the amphitheater. I leapt down the steps, rejoining the other students. On our way out I smiled at what I had thought of as the cyclic flow of the theatre's time, because, sure enough, a temporary stage constructed of black metal and wood was stark against the bleached Roman stones, its light fixtures and speakers standing ready for an evening performance. It somehow felt right.

Peter Mayle: A Cultural Mosaic

But very seldom, as I peer over the artistic shoulder, do I see an aspect of Provence that—for me, at least—is as picturesque as any vista, and often as solid and monumental as any ancient building: the human scenery (Mayle and Loxton 1993, 4).

Peter Mayle's images of Provence's culture is best thought of as a mosaic. Mayle's cultural images are diverse, akin to the separate tiles of a mosaic floor, but their people are linked by a common set of cultural values, including an emphasis on a traditional lifestyle, the importance of social connections in daily life, and the development of a food culture that provides a backdrop for all of Mayle's texts. For Mayle, Provence's culture is vibrant and rich in the trappings of a simpler lifestyle, either rural or urban, but also dynamic in that it is evolving and is firmly in the present by

making use of modern technologies and by becoming increasingly connected to the outside world via the growing tourism industry.

Mas, Neighbors, Field, and Vine

Central to Peter Mayle's representations of Provençal culture are his depictions of rural life and landscapes. (See Figure 10 for a visual representation.) Mayle's emphasis on agricultural lifestyles, particularly those of Mediterranean landscapes, helps cultivate Provence as a region imbued with the rural idyll. Mayle expands on his idyllic Provence by his development of a French, particularly Provençal, food culture and his repeated treatment of daily time as an elastic concept in *la vie quotidienne*, or daily life, of those living in Provence.

Many of Peter Mayle's texts are replete with images of rural and agricultural landscapes. In *A Year in Provence*, for example, Mayle specifically notes that his home is a former farmhouse, and his description of its construction marks it as a Provençal farmhouse:

It was a *mas*, or farmhouse, built from local stone which two hundred years of wind and sun had weathered to a color somewhere between pale honey and pale gray. It had started life in the eighteenth century as one room and, in the haphazard manner of agricultural buildings, had spread to accommodate children, grandmothers, goats, and farm implements until it had become an irregular three-story house (Mayle 1989, 4).



Figure 10: Agricultural landscapes in the valley below Lacoste, summer 2012. Note Bonnieux, another medieval *ville perchée*, at top right. Photograph by the author.

Mayle's descriptions of his and others' homes (e.g., the "French peasant" Massot's home in *A Year in Provence* and *Toujours Provence*) emphasize the *mas* as a place-defining part of the Provençal rural landscape. Its age suggests that it has been a part of the landscape for some time, and its continued use implies that it will remain an essential image of Provence's culture. Furthermore, Mayle ties the *mas* to both Provence's culture and natural environment by noting that its design is at least partly influenced by the agricultural lifestyle of its occupants, as well as shaped by the

environment. Built of local stone, the *mas* is designed to withstand the extremes of Provençal weather, including the heat of summer and the forceful *mistral* winds:

Normally, the *mas* faced south or was angled toward the east to keep its back to the mistral. To the north, closely planted rows of cypresses formed a buffer against the wind; to the south, plane trees provide shade. ... [The *mas*] blends in with the surrounding countryside, almost as though it had grown out of the rocky earth. Like so much else in Provence, it is seductively picturesque. The very name conjures up an idyllic rural life surrounded by the majesty of nature (Mayle 2006, 169).

Although Mayle's home is described as secluded, his daily life is not isolated, and he frequently makes reference to his neighbors:

Neighbors, we have found, take on an importance in the country that they don't begin to have in cities... In the country, separated from the next house though you may be by hundreds of yards, your neighbors are a part of your life, and you are a part of theirs (Mayle 1989, 6).

The above passage introduces the role that rural Provençaux play in defining Mayle's Provence. The personal connections Mayle makes with his neighbors and those that occur between his characters is one way that that he develops Provence's cultural values, among them an emphasis on a food culture, a more traditional agrarian lifestyle, and the value of being open to one's neighbors. Mayle and his neighbors, for example, frequently share meals and the produce of their gardens, orchards, and vineyards, or exchange labor and knowledge, offering advice and insights to each other time and again (e.g., Mayle 1989, 6, 13 for meals; Mayle 1989, 85 for produce; Mayle 1989 7, 11, 48 for labor). Furthermore, his neighbors are identified as farmers, peasants, or laborers, who see little need to travel beyond Provence or adopt a new way of life:

He [Faustin, a farmer] had been born in the valley, had spent his life in the valley, and he would die in the valley. His father, Pépé André, who lived next to him, had shot his last boar at the age of eighty and had given up

hunting to take up the bicycle. ... They seemed to be a contented family (Mayle 1989, 7).

Faustin is an archetype of Mayle's rural Provençaux in his quirks and personality. Faustin speaks in the "rich, soupy patois" that Mayle identifies as distinctly Provençal (Mayle 1989, 6), and in many of his introductions to other characters he notes whether or not they are Provençal through their accents⁶ (e.g., Mayle 1989, 66, 152, 175; Mayle 1992, 19, 77; Mayle 2005, 79; Mayle 2009b, 61). Furthermore, Faustin is representative of what Mayle thinks of as a rural Provençal personality: though pragmatic (e.g., Mayle 1989, 47), proud (e.g., Mayle 1989, 20) and at times pessimistic (e.g., Mayle 1992, 89, 95; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 4; Mayle 2005, 54), beneath the gruff and reserved exterior Mayle's rural Provençaux are warm, friendly, and willing to offer advice or help as needed (e.g., Mayle 1989, 48; Mayle 1992, 89, 91; Mayle 2005, 168).

Another set of rural images which appears time and again in Mayle's works are agricultural landscapes. Olive and cherry orchards, melon fields, and lavender fields all feature heavily in his texts (e.g., Mayle 1989, 75, 89; Mayle 2009a, 47 for olive and cherry orchards; Mayle 1989, 47; Mayle 1992, 205; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 4, for melon fields; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 6, 44; Mayle 2009a, 101 for lavender fields) and he notes the essential role agriculture plays in the rural economy's development, from the

⁶ Mayle identifies his Provençaux accents by suggesting they have a 'twang,' and that the cadence of the spoken word is fast-paced. He notes, for example, that *demain* [tomorrow] becomes *demang*, *vin* [wine] becomes *vang*, and *maison* [house] becomes *mesong* (Mayle 1989, 6).

ubiquitous nature of farmers' fields to the high visibility of local produce in open air markets (e.g., Mayle 1989, 71, 93; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 44).

A particularly visible agricultural landscape and related product are vineyards under cultivation (Figure 11) and local wines:

For once, there was no sign of Roussel and his tractor, and the vines—*his* vines, he reminded himself with a sudden prickle of excitement, extended in an unbroken sea of green in every direction. ... He moved on into the rows of vines, his feet kicking up puffs of dust. The soil was thin and dry, marked by a network of fissures, but the vines looked healthy enough, with bunches of grapes beginning to form in pale clusters (Mayle 2005, 89).



Figure 11: A working vineyard at the Chateau Margüi, near the commune Le Val. Photograph by the author, summer 2012.

Mayle's home in *A Year In Provence* was attached to six acres of land devoted to agriculture, most of which was planted vines and cultivated by his neighbor under a traditional system of *métayage*, where the land owner provides the funds to cover operations, a farmer puts in the labor, and the profits of each harvest are split between the two (e.g., Mayle 1989, 7; Mayle 2005, 70). His other works also feature vinicultural landscapes as a central part of their narratives: *Toujours Provence* devotes an entire chapter to a description of a Chateauneuf wine tasting (Mayle 1992, 59-72), and *Provence A-Z* contains entries on both wine-tasting and Provençal wines (Mayle 2006, 78-80, 274-278). *A Good Year's* plot is centered around the improvement of the protagonist's newly inherited vineyard (Mayle 2005), and in *The Vintage Caper*, the theft of a wine collection leads the protagonists to Marseille, where they find the theft has been committed by a Marseillais who wanted to keep French wines in France (Mayle 2009b). Smaller passages throughout his work discuss the process of wine tasting, food pairings, or planting vineyards, which Mayle notes is still done by hand:

Two days later the planting team arrived—five men, two women, and four dogs, under the direction of the *chef des vignes* Monsieur Beauchier, a man with forty years experience of planting vines in the Lubéron. ...the new vines, about the size of my thumb and tipped with red wax, were unloaded from the vans while Monsieur Beauchier inspected his planting equipment. (Mayle 1989, 48).

Even when wine and viticulture do not play a prominent role in Mayle's plots, wine and vineyard imagery act as a backdrop to his stories. Anecdotes from Mayle's friends and acquaintances are told over wine (e.g., Mayle 2009a, 27); glasses are raised between rounds of *boules* (e.g., Mayle 1989, 129; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 54); and Mayle's descriptions of lunches or dinners are invariably accompanied by a well-paired

bottle or two (e.g., Mayle and Loxton 1993, 39; Mayle 1994, 227; Mayle 2005, 107).

Mayle's heavy emphasis on vineyards, wine production, and the social aspects of wine consumption showcase the interconnections between the land, agrarian practices, and the cultural values that help define Provence.

Village Life: Social Connections

Mayle further explores Provence's culture through his descriptions of rural villages, which he often notes are medieval *villes perchées*, straddling a hill-top and commanding views of the local countryside (e.g., Mayle 1989, 4; Mayle 1992, 110; Mayle 2006, 273). His images of local village businesses in particular highlight the village's role as a social hub, and his repeated descriptions of the vibrancy of village life helps develop the rural village as an essential part of the Provençal cultural landscape. Among the local businesses which Mayle frequently alludes to are the butcher's shop, the bakery, and the café. Mayle's repeated references to these businesses suggests that they are a constant and place-defining presence in Provence's villages, and the café in particular stands out in its ability to convey images of Provence's social fabric:

[The café is] a quintessential Provençal sight. A couple sit at a wrought-iron table, while the *patron* prepares to pour the essential *apéritif*. There will be serious discussion of the various dishes of the day (Mayle and Loxton 1993, 50).

Once you've ordered [at the café], you have rented your seat for as long as you wish to occupy it... Another wonderful amenity provided by every good café, regardless of size, is free entertainment of the old-fashioned, nonelectronic kind. Sit for long enough, pretending to read, and you will be treated to an amateur variety show. The cast will be mainly local, with occasional guest appearances by visitors. ... If, like me, you find people more interesting than television, then here, as a fly on the café wall, is the place to watch them (Mayle 2009a, 59).

Mayle's descriptions of the café's amenities highlight the role it plays as a central social place in rural Provençal villages, as it is where locals and tourists alike come together to exchange news, stories, and local gossip. This role is further implied by his descriptions of café proprietors, who more often than not are the center of a web of local information and gossip (e.g., Mayle 2005, 61; Mayle 2009a, 63), and by the gregarious nature of café customers (e.g., Mayle 1989, 84, 106; Mayle 1992, 49, 140, 153; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 17). His descriptions of Provençal cafés often emphasize aspects which are unique to the region, such as locals speaking with thick Provençal accents (e.g., Mayle 1992, 61) drinking pastis (e.g., Mayle 1989, 92; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 33, 38; Mayle 1994, 173), or the café as a meeting place for truffle-hunters, a major blackmarket industry:

The truffle world is secretive, but strangers can get a glimpse of it by going to one of the villages round Carpentras. There, the cafés do a brisk trade in breakfast jolts of *marc* [an eau-de-vie liquor] and Calvados [an apple brandy], and an unknown face coming through the door brings conversations to a sudden stop. Outside, men stand in tight, preoccupied groups looking, sniffing, and finally weighing wart-encrusted, earth covered lumps that are handled with reverential care. Money passes, fat, grimy wads of it, in 100-, 200- and 500- franc notes (Mayle 1989, 57).

In describing his experiences at a café, Mayle often refers to snippets of conversation between café customers or recalls stories that friends and strangers tell him, and these anecdotes imply Provençal cultural values. Mayle uses descriptions of the café to emphasize community solidarity and the idea that village life is a public one (e.g., Mayle and Loxton 1993, 6, 34), where gossip and knowledge about others' goings-on have an impact in the way that life in the village takes place. Notable examples include conversations which highlight differences in community identity between two

Provençaux (Mayle 2009a, 54), and a murder tale which drives home the lesson that in a small village, everyone knows everything about everyone else, and not always for the better (e.g., Mayle 1994, 183; Mayle 2005, 67; Mayle 2009a, 23-37, 65-67). Finally, through constant reference and recording of stories and conversations that occur in cafés and other social places, Mayle develops Provençal culture as one that values storytelling and exaggeration, a trait which he touches on time and again as a characteristic of both rural and urban Provence (e.g., Mayle 1989, 9, 21, 24; Mayle 2009a, 26, 63, 86-87).

Provençal Time-Consciousness

Mayle's café experiences also introduce the way that time can influence a sense of place. Although the practice of "renting" a seat at a café through purchasing food or drink is one common to all of France (e.g., Mayle 1992, 59), cafés' treatment of time is linked to Mayle's discussions of the Provençal concept of time as unique in its informal and fluid nature:

[on drinking pastis at a café] I cannot imagine drinking it in a hurry. ... There has to be heat and sunlight and the illusion that the clock has stopped. I have to be in Provence (Mayle 1992, 40).

We learned that time in Provence is a very elastic commodity, even when it is described in clear and specific terms. *Un petit quart d'heure* means sometime today. *Demain* means sometime this week. And, the most elastic time segment of all, *une quinzaine* can mean three weeks, two months, or next year, but never, ever does it mean fifteen days (Mayle 1989, 45).

I once had a theory that the slower pace of life in Provence could be simply explained by the landscape and the climate... But I think it goes deeper than that. For many generations, the principal occupation of Provençaux was tied to the land and the rhythm of the seasons—the raising of sheep and goats, the cultivation of vines and olives—and impatience was pointless. Nature, not man, dictated the timetable. Over the centuries, I'm sure that this must have had an effect on the Provençal character (Mayle 2006, 268).

Mayle's discussions of time as an elastic commodity defines Provence because it links Provençal time-consciousness to that of pre-industrial, agrarian societies rather than post-industrial societies. As E.P. Thompson notes, pre-industrial conceptions of time are task-oriented, and imply a host of cultural values and practices:

Three points may be proposed about task-orientation. First, there is a sense in which it is more humanly comprehensible than timed labour. The peasant or labourer appears to attend upon what is an observed necessity. Second, a community in which task-orientation is common appears to show least demarcation between "work" and "life". Social intercourse and labour are intermingled - the working day lengthens or contracts according to the task - and there is no great sense of conflict between labour and "passing the time of day". Third, to men accustomed to labour timed by the clock, this attitude to labour appears to be wasteful and lacking in urgency. (Thompson 1967, 60).

Mayle touches on all three aspects of task-orientation in his representations of Provence's people and culture. He notes, for example, that despite the uncertainty of knowing when the renovations on his farmhouse will be completed by the Provençal laborers, he does know that the work will be high quality and worth the wait (Mayle 1989, 46). Throughout *A Year In Provence*, Mayle touches on the intermingling between work and life when he narrates his developing friendship with the workmen, particularly the plasterer, plumber, and foreman. Finally, he often contrasts Provençal time-consciousness with that of people who "work by the clock," notably London businessmen, and he invariably puts Provence's in a more positive light (e.g., Mayle 1989, 46, 65; Mayle 1992, 232, 235; Mayle 2006, 268; Mayle 2009a, 11, 12).

Provençal time-consciousness and the intermingling of work and life is also readily apparent in open-air markets, another place-defining image in Mayle's work that is inextricably linked to village and city life:

I have never found a more pleasant way to go shopping than to spend two or three hours in a Provençal market. The color, the abundance, the noise, the sometimes eccentric stall-holders, the mingling of smells, the offer of a sliver of cheese here and a mouthful of toast and *tapenade* there—all these help to turn what began as an errand into a morning’s entertainment. . . .there is no such thing as a nonmarket day in Provence (Mayle 2009a, 45).

Mayle notes that every town and village has its own market, from the sprawling and chaotic produce, fish, and meat markets of cities like Arles, Apt, and Marseille (e.g., Mayle 1992, 195; Mayle 2006, 20; Mayle 2009a, 89) to the tiny village markets that are “often no more than half a dozen stalls selling flowers and fruit and vegetables and local honey,” (Mayle and Loxton 1993, 31). Provençaux expect market days to be vibrant social events where gossip and local knowledge are exchanged with each bartered purchase (e.g., Mayle 2006, 163). Finally, Mayle’s descriptions of open-air markets further develops Provençal food culture because it highlights the way that the Provençaux approach food shopping:

She [a Provençal chef] moved regally among the stalls, prodding, sniffing, rejecting. Most of the stall holders knew her and were loud in praising their produce, offering lettuces and cheeses for her inspection as though they were works of art (Mayle 1994, 230-231).

In describing locally grown and produced food like “works of art,” Mayle helps establish the idea that Provence is marked by a food culture which underpins nearly every aspect of Provençal life. From the laborer in the field who seeks to grow the best possible produce (e.g., Mayle 2006, 163; Mayle 2009a, 145), to the chef, baker, or butcher proud of his or her work (e.g., Mayle 1989, 15; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 47; Mayle 1994, 235), to the Provençaux who sit down to Sunday lunches which last several hours (e.g., Mayle 1989, 1, 127; Mayle and Loxton 1993, 6), Mayle’s works drive home the idea that

“[g]ourmets are thick on the ground in Provence,” and that for those living in Provence, eating is a serious business (Mayle 1989, 16).

Dynamic Tradition

Mayle’s emphasis on Provence’s rural culture, small village life, and pre-industrial time consciousness all point to the idea of Provence as a region steeped in tradition, but he tempers this view with his descriptions of how the region is changing from the influences of modern technology and pop culture, and, more significantly, tourism.

Mayle frequently comments on the use of modern technology and the introduction of pop culture in Provence. He notes in passing that even the most traditional of farmers, working their fields by hand, call home with their cell phones (e.g., Mayle 2009a, 85) or look forward to ending the day with an episode of a popular American soap opera (e.g., Mayle 1989, 49), and festivals and parties are more likely to have rock and rap than traditional Provençal music (e.g., Mayle 1989, 138; Mayle 2005, 231). Mayle also writes that the typical amateur hobbyist in Provence tends to acquire all of the most cutting edge equipment, from cyclists purchasing carbon bicycles and lycra tights to hunters buying .44 Magnums with electronic sights (Mayle 1989, 155). Mayle’s general view of modern technology’s and pop culture’s increasing visibility on the Provençal landscape, however, is that they are a patina over an unchanging Provençal cultural identity:

...sometimes I have the feeling that Provence is attempting to do the splits, with one foot in the past and the other testing the temperature of the future. But I don’t see much in the way of fundamental change since the first time I came here more than twenty years ago. ... Unlike so many other beautiful parts of the world which progress and ease of access have made noisy, predictable, and bland, Provence has managed to retain its individual flavor and personality. (Mayle 2009a, 83-84).

While Mayle contends that the changes brought to Provence by modern technology and pop-culture are largely superficial, his descriptions of tourism in Provence underpin many of his narratives and offer a distinct set of images which shape Provence's sense of place. Mayle writes that Provence has an increasingly extensive tourist season, and during this time the character of Provence changes:

[in summer] Most of the invaders passed us by on their way to the coast, but there were thousands who made their way into the Lubéron, changing the character of markets and villages and giving the local inhabitants something new to philosophize about over their pastis. (Mayle 1989, 135).

During the summer months Provence's population becomes much more diverse. Mayle frequently touches on the different nationalities who visit Provence, among them Germans, English, American, Belgians, Swedes, Swiss, Dutch, and visiting French, particularly Parisians. He notes, too, the changes that tourism brings to the landscape, for good or ill:

We first saw Gordes 16 years ago... There was a Renaissance chateau, narrow streets cobbled in rectangular stone, and the modest facilities of an unspoiled village: a butcher, two bakers, a simple hotel, a seedy café, and a post office [...] Today, Gordes is still beautiful, from a distance, at any rate. But as you reach the bottom of the of the road that leads up to the village, you are greeted by a ladder of signs, [advertising] every comfort and attraction for the visitor (Mayle 1992, 111).

Reactions to the seasonal tourist influx among Provençaux vary, from hostility to humor at tourist stereotypes to excitement at the prospect of increased business (e.g., Mayle 1989, 118 for hostility; Mayle 1989, 118, 120, 134 and Mayle 2006, 29-30, 197-198 for stereotypes; Mayle 1992, 112; Mayle 1994, 182 for increased business). As a

general rule, Mayle describes tourists as polite and unobtrusive (e.g., Mayle 2006, 262; Mayle 2009a, 61), making Provence “a more lively, stimulating place than [the] Provence of yesterday” (Mayle 2006, 263). Mayle’s texts generally present the tourist in a humorous light, and he uses images of the tourist to poke fun at himself as well, as he identifies himself as a perpetual tourist (e.g., Mayle 2006, 17, 261; Mayle 2009a, 43). Furthermore, he decries the oft-derogatory nature of the word, noting that it is generally tourists who complain about the actions of other tourists, and, as he writes in *Hotel Pastis*, “[t]ourism is a fact of life. It can be handled well or badly, but you can’t ignore it and hope it will go away” (Mayle 1994, 292).

The impacts of tourism include second home ownership and the rise of expatriate communities in Provence, both of which Mayle cites as having raised property prices (Mayle 1992, 112), as well as having contributed to some of the controversy about tourism and its impacts. Mayle cites second home ownership as the principle cause of the growing real-estate market in Provence, and discusses and describes other economic benefits of seasonally occupied homes. He writes that peasants are able to sell their unused land (e.g., Mayle 1989, 170), that many Provençaux find work in a variety of auxiliary fields, from hospitality jobs to work related to construction and home improvement (e.g., Mayle 1992, 112); he also wryly notes that second home ownership has led to a rise in Provence’s burglary rates and home security businesses (e.g., Mayle 1989, 147; Mayle 1992, 158; Mayle 2006, 47-49).

Mayle’s awareness of expatriate communities also contributes to Provence’s imagery. English expatriates are of three types: the first type is “happy to just fit in,” speaking in French, taking advice from the locals, and observing local customs. The

second group is insular, and tends to gravitate to other English expatriates in enclave communities, and the third group attempts “to become more French than the French themselves” (Mayle 2006, 15-17). Mayle’s imagery of the three groups ranges from self-effacing humour to outright disdain, with the second group of English expatriates taking the brunt of his negative commentary: in one notable example, an English journalist fitting into the second group is identified as hypocritical, dishonest, and an enemy of the protagonist who is trying to establish a successful hotel business in a small Provençal village (e.g., Mayle 1994, 250, 292).

For Mayle, Provence’s culture features a lifestyle that is simpler than its post-industrial counterpart in cities such as London, Paris, or New York, and its traditional practices are based on the cyclic nature of the seasons and ebbs and flows of agrarian work. In the countryside, neighbors are friendly and willing to work together on projects ranging from moving a stone table to planting and harvesting a new vineyard (e.g., Mayle 1989, 47, 55). Images of agricultural landscapes, vibrant local markets, and references to plentiful and delicious local produce and foodstuffs, and the development of a food culture that finds its focus in lavish meals and free-flowing wine all contribute to the image of Provence as a region imbued with sensory idyll.

Pierre Magnan: La Provence Profonde

Cette terre est d'une pauvreté inouïe, et les gens qui y vivent sont des gens économes de tout: économes de paroles, de nourriture, d'argent bien entendu... C'est un peuple très dur, très âpre.

This earth has an incredible poverty, and the people living there are thrifty with everything: thrifty with words, thrifty with food, and, of course, thrifty with money...They are very hard, very bitter (Gallimard 2004, my translation).

La France profonde, or deep France, is often defined as regions within France that are rural, practice traditional lifeways, and are far removed, both physically and psychologically, from the controls of the national government in Paris (Baker 2012). Pierre Magnan's use of cultural imagery shows clear links to the concept of *la France profonde* in that he presents images of towns and villages that are representative of rural life throughout France. He further develops *la France profonde* through reference to historical events such as the French Revolution, World War I, and the French Resistance, which are integral parts of a larger French rural identity. In this way, Magnan's cultural images craft a distinctly Gallic sense of place, set in the past and imbued with a sense of impending loss because of encroaching modernity and connections to places outside of *la France profonde*. Magnan, however, is a self-proclaimed regional writer of *Provence*, and his references to regional industries and practices as well as his use of vernacular language and an adoption of older, more archaic vocabulary and allusions to classical Greek history and mythology serve to move his images of Provence's culture away from representations of *la France profonde* and instead makes them representative of *la Provence profonde*.

Magnan's Provençaux

Like Mayle, Pierre Magnan sets many of his texts in rural Provence; one of his central images is the small, rural village of the Basses-Alpes and images of its villagers, both of which serve a similar role to Mayle's equivalent images in that they convey the ebbs and flows of daily life and, in doing so, help develop what Magnan considers Provence's cultural values.

Magnan's texts are populated by characters living traditional lifestyles. In the village, businesses such as the café or bar and bakery serve local clients (e.g., Rosemonde Burle's bar in *Death in the Truffle Wood* and Céléstat Dormeur's bakery in *The Murdered House* and *Beyond the Grave*). Many of the people Magnan writes about depend on nature for their living, either through traditional agricultural practices such as viticulture, olive cultivation, and shepherding, or by gathering and selling mushrooms, particularly truffles and morels (e.g., Magnan 2003, 186; Magnan 2005, 36, 52, 70; Magnan 2006, 10; Magnan 2008, 1, 6, 37; Magnan 2010a, 37, 61, 179, 181). Itinerant doctors, priests, gypsies, and salesmen travel in circles, offering their wares and services from village to village (e.g., Magnan 2005, 32; Magnan 2006, 72-73). Magnan's villagers live a cyclic life, with work and practices linked inextricably to the cycles of harvest and the seasonal changes to the weather:

It was a fortnight before St. Catherine's Day. The harvest had been brought in, the ploughing had been done, the grapes have been picked. Every year it was the same story... (Magnan 2010a, 181).

This passage highlights the cyclic and agrarian nature of village life, and it also touches on the idea of historical continuity: in suggesting that every year has the same story, Magnan makes it clear that the cyclic ebbs and flows of village life continues, unabated, across generations.

Magnan's images of rural lifestyles linked to the landscape are not idyllic. The reality of work, even among the more prosperous of Magnan's villagers, is that it is hard labour, as his own experiences with restoring an olive orchard reflect:

Le lendemain, armés de deux couteaux-scies et de notre salive pour les redemarrer lorsqu'ils coïnciaient, et ensuite durant tous nos congés, obsédés, vaillants, n'ayant plus qu'un seul but dans la vie, nous avons

débarrassé les quarantes oliviers de ces genêts envahissants qu'on entassait en immenses feux de la Saint-Jean ... j'ai "fait le rond" une fois, dix fois, autours de ces oliviers pour aérer les racines, avec la bêche, avec la pioche, extirpant des mères de chiendent qui pesaient trente kilos...

The next day, armed with serrated blades and our spit so that we could loosen them when they were wedged [in wood], and then during all our holidays, obsessed, stubborn, having no other goal in life, we rid the forty olive trees of invading broom shrubs and piled them in the immense fires of Saint-Jean [the 24th of June] ... I "made the rounds" one time, ten times, around these olive trees, to aerate their roots with the hoe, with the pickaxe, and extracting grasses whose root systems weighed thirty kilos... (Magnan 2005, 53-54, my translation).

Provence's extreme weather and harsh landscapes mean that even the best of workers have no certain returns for their labor (e.g., Magnan 2005, 51; Magnan 2010a, 35, 179, 181). One of Magnan's truffle hunters reflects on the nature of a traditional agrarian lifestyle:

There are problems all around us here: one year honey is scarce, the next there's a glut, but it's almost black because the bees have gathered too much pollen from the oak trees. Then the people from Marseilles don't want it. We know that lavender essence can only be sold one year in five and you have to be patient... We know that there are payments due to the Crédit Agricole bank... (Magnan 2008, 38-39).

In another passage, Magnan touches on the fortitude necessary to eke a life out of the landscape, specifically the trials of a shepherd during the cycle of transhumance between mountain pastures and the valleys:

C'est de lui [a shepherd] que je connais la transhumance ... si je parle de pluie c'est parce que cette homme qui parcourait deux fois par an, de Moulières au Lauzanier, le lit de la Durance puis de l'Ubaye puis de l'Ubayette, il semblait que la symphonie de sa vie n'eut jamais été orchestrée que sur le tempo de la pluie. Son visage n'était jamais tendre, il y avait garde toute la défiance de l'homme envers les coups bas de la nature.

It was him [a shepherd], from whom I came to know transhumance. ... If I speak of rain it is because to this man who traveled two times a year, from Moulières to Lauzanier, along the bed of the Durance, then the Ubaye, then the Ubayette, it seemed that the symphony of his life was orchestrated by nothing but the tempo of the rain. His face was never tender; in it was all the defiance of man against the low blows of nature (Magnan 2005, 40-41, my translation).

The hard nature of Magnan's villagers appears time and time again in his texts (e.g., Magnan 2005, 36; Magnan 2008, 38; Magnan 2010a, 6, 11, 26). Often their tough character is paired with a sense of stoicism (e.g., Magnan 2003, 169), mistrust, especially towards strangers (e.g., Magnan 2003, 18; Magnan 2008, 38, 41, 62, 160), and thriftiness (e.g., Magnan 2003, 251; Magnan 2008, 160, 161). The thriftiness of Magnan's Provençaux is sometimes corrupted into avarice, which drives their thoughts and actions. In *The Murdered House*, the master-carter Moungé l'Uillaou ("Lightning Monge") embodies many of these traits: hard hearted, cunning, and sharp, he is also described as "so tight-fisted that if you threw him in the air, he'd cling to the ceiling," and while he is not well liked by any of the other characters, his hard demeanour and physical toughness is spoken about with grudging awe (Magnan 2010a, 26). Moungé l'Uillaou might be recognized by his fellows as especially tough and hard hearted, but the character of Magnan's average villager shares the same tight-fistedness, as this description of a late November olive harvest and oil pressing shows:

They [the olive pickers] stood there waiting for the oil to flow, staring suspiciously like discoverers of treasure. They would have drunk it as it came out of the shallow baskets if they had been allowed. ...as soon as the demi-johns were full, two people rushed them to the barrows and carts. The child formed a rear-guard defending their retreat; the grandfather stayed with the bottles yet to be filled, as though the miller were a thief, as though all of the neighbours and friends who were waiting their turn were capable of pilfering with a demi-john or two (Magnan 2010a, 181).

Suspicion and avarice among villagers runs especially high when money is involved, especially gold (e.g., Magnan 2003, 258, 385):

S raphin had no difficulty opening the lid. The box was full to the brim with twenty-franc gold pieces. ... If the people of Peyruis had been able to see this road mender seize the box, open it, and look at the warm color of so many glittering gold louis – for no more than five seconds and without the slightest thrill of joy – they would have felt shivers down their spines (Magnan 2010, 84).

Despite some of the negative connotations associated with the character of his villagers, Magnan recognizes that their personalities and the way that they live their lives is inextricably linked to the Provence’s natural landscapes; their strength in the face of nature’s adversity is uniquely Provenal:

When he [Laviolette] was there, he felt how unsurpassed the people of his race had always been in the face of isolation, permanent poverty, and endless adversity (Magnan 2006, 71).

Even in the midst of war, Magnan’s Provenaux continue to live and die by the cycles of agrarian life, struggling to feed themselves and their families because that is what they have always done and will always do:

The man [a farmer] was neither a torturer nor a victim. He did not lean towards either side. All he wanted was to make sure he could keep some food for himself or for others whenever possible. The way he went about things was simple and unaffected. ... Yet his wife must have said to him,

“Do you really think this is the right time to go and water the melon bed?”

“It needs it,” he replied.

That was reason enough. What did the Germans, the *maquis* [Resistance fighters], and the endless sea of planes matter? The melon bed needed water, full stop (Magnan 2003, 354).

Village Life: Insularity

The villages in which Magnan set the majority of his texts have tiny populations. In *The Messengers of Death*, Barles during the 1970s has a population of less than one hundred; in *Death in the Truffle Wood*, the population of Banon is around nine hundred (Magnan 2008, 47); at the outset of *The Murdered House* and its sequel *Beyond the Grave*, the village of Lurs is around five hundred. As the commissaire Laviolette notes upon his arrival to Banon in *Death in the Truffle Wood*, these villages are so small as to be fully explored in moments:

Laviolette sized up the village in three glances. The first took in the cypress in the corner of a terraced garden, the last of the 150 that the monks had planted in the eighteenth century to occupy the time between prayers and to ornament the embankments. The second registered the three odd buildings with small round windows, which looked so out of place that one wondered whether they had grown out of the ground or had simply been dropped there. ... Laviolette knew immediately that this Banon held no mysteries and did not concern him. His third look, however, revealed another Banon altogether – in the person of an old man in a Basque beret who was crossing over to the fountain, his feet at right angles as a bulwark against the mistral (Magnan 2008, 32-33)

Laviolette's sizing up of a village like Banon touches on several of the themes which Magnan develops in his imagery of Provence's culture. First, Provence's cultural identity is found in its rural villages. Second, the age of the planted cypress tree suggests that Provence's culture is an old one; however, its status as the last example of a number of trees implies a sense of impending loss.⁷ Similarly, the older man wearing traditional clothing is indicative of Provence's culture being firmly rooted in the past, but, like the

⁷This sense of loss is further implied by the tree being a cypress, long associated in Western culture with mourning.

tree, the man's advanced age suggests that this culture is in peril of disappearing from the landscape. Finally, an underlying theme in this passage is that villages like Banon hold no mysteries for those who live there, and that to truly understand Provence, one must be Provençaux. This theme is made explicit at the end of *Death in the Truffle Wood*, when Laviolette tries to flush out the killer from a group of local truffle hunters:

“And yet, living together for such a long time, you must know who owns the cobbler's knife? You must know who owns the key to the Protestant's tomb. You must know who had big enough money worries to grow a few cannabis plants in his spare time to sell to passing hippies. And above all, you must know which of you owns a spell-caster's veil ... Now gentlemen, if I wasn't born in the Basses-Alpes myself, if I hadn't had a grandmother who was a walking encyclopedia, I would never know that!” (Magnan 2008, 163).

Laviolette is proud of his Provençal, and particularly Bas-Alpin, heritage (e.g., Magnan 1977, 85; Magnan 2006, 70; Magnan 2008, 35; Magnan 2010b, 62); Magnan is proud of this heritage as well, and recognizes that it helps him, and others, understand Provence (e.g., Magnan 2005, 7, 9, 119, 162).

Although many of Magnan's texts are set in small villages, several touch on large town life. The plots of *Le Sang des Atrides* and *Le Tombeau d'Hélios*, for example, take place during the 1970s in Digne-les-Bains and Manosque, respectively, both of which at the time had populations higher than 15,000. Despite their larger populations and more urban nature, Magnan treats these towns in the same way that he treats villages, and touches on the role that social connections play within the village. Like Mayle's villages, Magnan's villages are small enough that everyone knows everyone else, and this holds true even in a town the size of Digne:

As debris from an old shipwreck one day comes together in the backwaters of a gulf, so the wrecks of a day's existence in Digne gathered

at that bar... The dance came to an end... Ambroisine and her partner went back to their bar stools and looked each other full in the face at last. Of course each of them knew who the other was - in fact they knew who their fathers and grandfathers were – and had come across each other several times in Digne. (Magnan 2006, 101).

Inextricably linked to the social dynamics of Magnan's towns and villages is gossip, as furtive talk and curiosity about villagers' private goings-on play a central role in daily life:

Every three months or so a police van would park for more than an hour in front of Fondère's villa. The locals would watch those gendarmes, and as they were leaving would just happen to find themselves in their way; they'd work out little ruses to keep the policemen there: talk about stolen chickens, two-legged foxes, strange noises in the ruins of farmhouses. In short, they did what they could to find out what was going on. (Magnan 2006, 11).

We people of Lurs, one or other of us, at some time over the years came and stood...trying to get some clue to the mystery of that family. ... All we ever had gleaned about the story were bits and pieces of various importance, scraps we had to piece together labouriously using our imagination. This wasn't easy. It was only when we were in a group expressing our frustration, when one of us was asserting something false to ferret out the truth... [that] we would suddenly find some vital piece of information issuing from our usually tight lips. (Magnan 2003, 86).

Magnan's use of point-of-view in his texts drives home his development of a gossip culture. He often makes use of the first person plural pronoun in his narration ("we"), and when he does so, it is in reference to the villagers of the community in which the plot is set. This form of narration suggests a collective pool of knowledge, and the often intimate nature of the knowledge being shared implies that gossip underpins the narrators' nearly omniscient view. Similarly, when Magnan uses a third person narrator, that character is often privy to information that could only have been acquired through village gossip (e.g., Magnan 2006, 41-44).

Outsiders are not privy to this source of community knowledge, and are often an object of gossip as well as generally mistrusted. In *Les Sang des Atrides*, for example, aspects of police investigations are impeded because of the mistrust the Dignois have for outside interference:

Vos hommes et les gendarmes ne sont pas des bonshommes, vous comprenez ! ... Oh ! question de recevoir, on les reçoit bien ! On offre café, pastis... Mais dire ? Pardieu pas ! ... Moi, je suis Bas-Alpin ! Et, entre Bas-Alpins, il y a des choses qu'on se dit qu'on ne dit pas aux autres !

Your men and the police aren't our fellows, you understand! ... Oh, one'll receive them, one'll receive them well! One'd offer them coffee, pastis...but talk to them? By God, no! ... Me, I'm Bas-Alpin! And, between Bas-Alpins, there are some things that one can say that one wouldn't say to others! (Magnan 1977, 77, my translation).

Similar to the individual Provençal villager, collective mistrust towards outsiders is a theme common to Magnan's villages, and any new arrival is marked, gossiped about, or treated as marginal (e.g., Magnan 2003, 17, 30; Magnan 2006, 10, 12, 14; Magnan 2008, 33; Magnan 2010a, 1, 30, 37). A particularly notable example of the way that outsiders are marginalized in village life is at the beginning of *The Murdered House*, when three Herzegovinians are accused of having committed several murders despite obvious evidence that suggested the crimes were done with a *tranchet*, a style of a knife which "comes from these parts [Provence]" and is carried by locals to perform daily tasks. The Herzegovinians, however, become deliberate scapegoats and are executed (Magnan 2010a, 32). Less drastic discrimination occurs in *Les Sang Des Atrides*, when two sanitation workers of Arabic descent find a body and hesitate to report it, knowing that the local police will suspect their involvement in the crime because of their status as immigrants (Magnan 1977, 12).

For Magnan, Provence's culture is shaped by rural villages and villagers who are themselves defined by their insular social interconnectedness and tendency to gossip. Village life is cyclic, agrarian, and often difficult when the harsh landscape and weather of Provence does not work in favor of a successful harvest. In response to the conditions of their lives, Provençal villagers are themselves hard: hard-hearted and hard-working, there is little room for generosity or friendliness in their lives, and mistrust and suspicion towards others is common. Outsiders, tourists or otherwise, are rare, and when they arrive they, too, are the target of gossip and suspicion.

Time and Identity in Provence's Landscape

In his discussion of folklore and sense of place, Kent C. Ryden notes that a sense of place is crafted from a "deeply known and felt awareness of the things which happened there" (Ryden 1993, 63), and goes on to suggest that history can "live simultaneously on a number of levels" (Ryden 1993, 64) (Figure 12). Magnan's texts illustrate the role that history plays in the development of a sense of place because they treat time at a variety of temporal scales, all of which converge and overlap as the plots of his texts unfold. Exploring the way Magnan's deeply felt awareness of human history is inscribed in his characters' thoughts and actions and on the landscape is an essential part of understanding what it means for Magnan to be in Provence.



Figure 12: History living simultaneously at multiple levels, or, time's passage and cultural identity written in stone. Here, a ruined *mas* rests in the middle of active wheat and lavender fields near Valensole. Photograph by the author, summer 2012.

In his 1975 article “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory,” David Lowenthal writes that a sense of historical continuity anchors human identity:

Life is more than separate events; it incorporates the quality of duration, of passage through time. Buffeted by change, we retain traces of our past to be sure of our enduring identity (Lowenthal 1975, 9).

If historical continuity contributes to self-identity, it can also contribute to place identity, and Pierre Magnan illustrates the concept of historical continuity throughout his texts. Four distinct time periods stand out in Magnan’s writing. His *Séraphin Monge*

series finds its temporal focus in the first half of the twentieth century. In *The Murdered House*, the action takes place during the immediate aftermath of World War I (1918-1921), and *Beyond the Grave* picks up after 1921 and follows through the years leading up to the liberation of the south of France in 1944. While the Séraphin Monge series' temporal setting is made explicit at the beginning of its major plot points, Magnan's other works have temporal settings that are more difficult to establish. His Laviolette mysteries are generally set in the late twentieth century, but the reader has to use minor contextual clues (e.g., Magnan 1977, 148, 175; Magnan 2008, 137) to fix their temporal setting in the 1970s and 1980s.

World War I, World War II and the French Resistance, and the 1970s and 1980s are all within living memory of many of Magnan's characters. Séraphin Monge, for example, is a veteran of World War I, and the consequences of the war linger on in social memory because of the absence of young men, the extended mourning of families who had lost men, and the horrific physical scars left on many of the veterans (e.g., Magnan 2010, 37, 39, 62). In the Laviolette series, many Provençaux who are old enough to have lived through World War II remember the actions of the Resistance (e.g., Magnan 2003, 316-335). Furthermore, Laviolette is a veteran of the Resistance, and his experiences are repeatedly touched on throughout Magnan's texts (e.g., Magnan 1977, 17, 214; Magnan 2003, 324-335; Magnan 2008, 78, 132).

Magnan's treatment of temporal setting is made more complex by frequent allusions to history far beyond the living memory of his characters. Particularly important to his texts are references to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These references lengthen the historical continuity of Magnan's Provence; furthermore, this historical

continuity is often integral to his plot development. Wealth gained from the murder of an 18th century royal courtier, for example, drives the motivations behind characters a century later, and the same wealth is finally spent on property during the 1950s (Magnan 2003; Magnan 2010). In *The Messengers of Death*, the murderer kills his victims to acquire four nineteenth century stamps worth 300,000 francs, and at one point wears a Napoleonic sapeur's uniform to disguise himself (Magnan 2006). Even when Magnan's plots do not draw their impetus from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, numerous references to these centuries makes a palimpsest of his representations of Provence's contemporary culture. Judge Chabrand, for example, is repeatedly described as looking like "Robespierre *mal poudré* [poorly powdered]" (Magnan 1977, 27) and tends to wear a nineteenth century carrick coat (e.g., Magnan 2006, 50, 260). In another instance, Laviolette and Chabrand are described as moving through the snow covered streets of Digne like soldiers at the Battle of Berenzina, which occurred during Napoleon's ill-fated 1812 Russian campaign (Magnan 1977, 115). To an informed reader, historical allusions deepen an understanding of what it means to be in Provence.

Cultural Loss Writ in the Landscape

In Magnan's Provence, culture is linked to and enriched by the past. Continuity in the ebbs and flows of village life and in the greater historical context help anchor Provence's identity. His references to Provence's history and human relationships with its harsh landscapes, however, also evoke a sense of cultural loss, with the trappings of culture left abandoned and ruined on the landscape:

Everything spoke to him of love from the depths of this poor, harsh countryside: four gnarled apple trees in an abandoned garden, old hay spilling out of a barn, which no longer had a flock to feed. Sometimes it

would be a hillside farm still being worked... Sometimes he would feel it going through a hamlet plunged in deep shadows... They were the feeble signs of life in a land that had slowly gotten the better of its inhabitants one after the other – it may have taken a thousand years – through bad harvests, bad treatment, landslides, flooding... A land that tried to get rid of the most obstinate of them like unwelcome lice, through misfortune, death, too many children (Magnan 2006, 70).

This passage illustrates the idea that Provence's culture is in decline, and introduces images of Provençal ruins. Abandoned buildings, hamlets, fields, and ruins are ubiquitous in Magnan's Provence. Homes are left vacant after their owners have died or moved away (e.g., Magnan 2003, 35, 316, 319, 370; Magnan 2006, 15; Magnan 2010a, 16). Abandoned or underutilized fields and orchards are likened to the tattered shreds of an ancient Greek cloak (Magnan 2006, 71), and are choked with broom, weeds, thistles, and box bushes (e.g., Magnan 2003, 379; Magnan 2005, 52; Magnan 2006, 165). Ruined churches and farmsteads linger on in the hills (e.g., Magnan 2005, 13, 165, 195; Magnan 2006, 165; Magnan 2008, 56), and stands of forest are crossed by crumbling walls and rusted iron gates (Magnan 2008, 12). The prevalence of ruins on the landscape is creatively implied in a passage in *Beyond the Grave*, where the stones of a ruined farmhouse narrates the "life" of a Provençal ruin. The ruin is a witness to the lives, secrets, and work of Provence's people:

The only thing still intact from the farm that I used to be is the big wash trough, the *bugadière*. ... I can remember. I can still see the last time the last woman piled all her winter sheets behind these planks to do her washing. We would whisper to each other on the wind at night, from one ruin to another... Listen to me! I've seen them [the people and their stories] all. (Magnan 2003, 198).

In giving ruins the ability to converse, Magnan implies a network of ruins across the landscape; more powerful, however, is the suggestion of that a distinct Provençal

culture is slowly fading away. The description of the last woman washing her linens in a Provençal manner (*bugadière* is a Provençal word for a stone wash trough, common to the region) in a now-ruined farmhouse suggests that the cyclic nature of traditional life in Provence is dead.

A sense of loss is further developed through repeated references to the dead, to memorials, and to cemeteries (e.g., Magnan 2003, 42, 247, 301; Magnan 2006, 1-4, 68, 77-78; Magnan 2008, 109), and through Magnan's use of archaic French and Provençal words (e.g., Magnan 1977, 176; Magnan 2003, 198; Magnan 2008, 29, 119; Magnan 2010, 25, 26, 32, 197), which Gradelier (2001) suggests is a technique used to create an air of mystery and add realism to Magnan's texts. Gradelier's interviews with Magnan confirm this, but his elaboration on his use of Provençal in his texts offers a link between language and culture and drives home the idea of Provence's culture as one that is both ancient yet in decline:

Quand ma generation sera morte...Les gens qui aujourd'hui ont cinquante ans ne parlent plus le provençal.

When my generation dies...People today who are fifty years old no longer speak provençal. (Gradelier 2001, 117, my translation).

Provence's cultural loss is perhaps most explicit in Magnan's introduction to *Ma Provence d'Heureuse Rencontre*: titled "Élégie," he touches on what he believes to be the fate of Provence and its culture:

Ton destin va être, par le fer ou par le feu ou par d'insidieuses interpénétrations, de te fondre dans le grand tout comme la mer dissout les fleuves. On ne trouvera plus de toi que des découvertes archéologiques bonnes pour le musée ; que des strates entre tant d'autres couches métamorphiques.

Your destiny will be, by blade or by fire or by insidious penetration, to melt in the larg[er world] like rivers dissolved by the sea. One will no

longer find anything of you but archaeological discoveries fit for a museum; nothing but strata among so many other metamorphic layers. (Magnan 2005, 7, my translation).

Although the way of life that defines Magnan's Provence may be in peril, Magnan's culture will never be completely lost. As the above passage suggests in its description of Provence's culture becoming a museum piece, as well as Magnan's references to ruins and places imbued with memory, vestiges of Provence's culture will remain on the landscape long after the people who embody it are dead and gone.

Considering Culture Imagery

Peter Mayle's and Pierre Magnan's culture imagery both focus on Provence's rural landscapes. Traditional life in small villages revolves around the ebbs and flows of agrarian lifeways, and both authors use this framework as a way to define Provence's people and their habits. For Mayle, the framework of small village life and agrarian lifeways promote a healthy lifestyle. Mayle's development of a food culture, vibrant social hubs, and a distinct Provençal time-consciousness all emphasize the role that "traditional" lifestyles bring small pleasures which are essential to a feeling of well being. Mayle tempers his descriptions of rural life, however, with references to tourist industries and expatriate communities, which serve to highlight Provence's contemporary dynamism and root his descriptions firmly in the present.

Conversely, Magnan uses the framework of agrarian lifeways and small village life in a way that highlights the difficulties of life in rural Provence. The harsh realities of agrarian lifeways such as the risks of failed harvests and times of struggle shape the behaviors and attitudes of the rural Provençaux. Their social circles are closed to

outsiders and mistrustful of each other; this mistrust contributes to Magnan's images of rural Provençaux as hard-hearted, and the difficulties of eking a living out of the landscape over generations encourages them to be frugal. Unlike Mayle's cultural images, which are set firmly in the present through references to a strong tourist industry, Magnan's images are also linked to a strong sense of historical continuity that comes from references to historical events as well as a long "living memory" of his texts' settings, in which the actions of the text span most of the twentieth century. Magnan, also represents this historical continuity as fragmented, as he makes frequent references to ruins and lost cultural practices. Mayle's and Magnan's use of culture imagery in their texts drives much of their development of their Provençalian senses of place, which will be more fully explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 - A Sense of Provence

Struggling for Sense

As my thesis research closes, I can't help but wax a bit self-reflexive on my experiences with Provence, and think of what it means for me to be in Provence. After reading so much about the region, I am struck once more about how inadequate my own experiences are at defining Provence to anyone but myself.

The images I have locked in my head of Provence's nature in and around Aix are of hot and bright days, dusty air, rocky soil clinging to hills that seemed scabbed over with tough little scrub pines and sharp-edged shrubs, and an earth whose colors are bleached pale from the sun. But then there are contrasts which fly in the face of all those images. I remember my time in the Lubéron was marked by a lush and verdant green and cooling breezes, and I remember how I closed my excursion with a swim in the near-turquoise and refreshingly cool water of the Verdon Gorge. I remember any break in the sunny weather was breathtaking in its intensity and the sheer amount of water pouring in buckets from the sky. I remember the exhilarating feeling I had when I climbed Lacoste's steep streets to its ruined castle, and stood looking out over the sprawl of vineyards and orchards that lay below; I remember the quiet contentment I felt when the hike through the mountain oak-grove to La Grotte de la Sainte-Baume culminated in views of low mountain ridges, one after another, as far as the eye could see.

Then, there are my images of Provence's culture, and these too are often in conflict, or so diverse I know not how to categorize them. I remember sitting at a café table in the afternoon with a book in hand, or simply watching the people pass to-and-fro in their daily business, and in moments like those I felt time passing me by... But I also

remember my walks to class during what must have been the rush-hour of the morning commute, where I had to constantly dodge mopeds and cars pushing their way into cobbled streets too narrow to deal with motor traffic, or be shouldered aside by pedestrians, with irate iPod carrying businessmen who wore power suits or tourists in shorts and polos. I remember the time I realized that it was not my spoken French, but instead the way I dressed, which affected the way that Aixois dealt with me—and I remember the snootiness of a waiter who, when I was wearing shorts and a t-shirt, could not comprehend my order, yet a mere two days later could not only understand me perfectly but brought my drink with a smile, and to this day I think it was because I was wearing a tucked in shirt and jeans despite the 85 degree Fahrenheit day. I remember the appreciation I had of the tiny stone carvings and the brass faces of the door-knockers I passed as I wandered the streets of the *centre-ville*, and I remember the dawning realization during a hike on the grounds of an old hill-fort that I was not walking on stones, but instead on shards of Celto-Ligurian pottery...

I remember Andrée's unfailing generosity as she served yet another wonderful meal or taught me how to make *aioli*. I remember how profoundly lonely I felt after day-after-day of speaking a language I struggled to learn, of no-one passing me in the street making eye contact—or if they did, their eyes were hooded with suspicion, probably because I was a *jeune homme* and not to be trusted, which confused me until I encountered the gangs of young men who roamed the streets at night, catcalling young women and generally making a racket. I remember the elderly woman who sat next to me on a stone bench beneath a plane tree's shade while I was having my lunch (bread and

goat cheese and apples), and her smile as she offered me her tiny pint basket of raspberries, warm to the touch and heavy with juice.

And now, too, I have locked away in my head images of Provence from other perspectives: from Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan, of course, but also from Jean Giono and Marcel Pagnol and Frédéric Mistral, from Andrée and Guillaume, from Cézanne and Van Gogh, from films and postcards, and from others with whom I have discussed my research. These conversations—for they are all conversations, an exchange between myself and another, whether they take the form of spoken words and smiles, or text on a page, or images on a screen, or oil on canvas—these conversations have all contributed to my experiences of Provence, added to and shaped to the way I think about the region. And all of these images, all of these experiences and emotions I’ve developed towards Provence—what do they do to contribute to my sense of place for Provence?

Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) writes that a sense of place is created out of the modest hordes of sensory and emotive experiences which humans have vis-à-vis place, and that a sense of place evolves and grows over time. If that holds true, then my (certainly modest) hordes of direct experience should be sufficient to craft a sense of Provençal place, yet I find myself struggling to articulate it. Perhaps my experiences are too modest, and I have simply not been there long enough to have developed a firm sense of place. In my attempts to define Provence and imbue it with my own sense of place, I find myself relying on fragmented memories, a thousand words scrawled in a journal, and a couple hundred photographs—is that enough? Or, perhaps the difficulty in crafting a sense of place comes from the fact that my modest experiences are too ephemeral and prone to change. Between the times I scrawled those words or snapped those photographs and

now, typing out these words, my subsequent experiences have irrevocably shaped my memories and reactions towards Provence and will continue to do so. Perhaps during my research I've conversed with so many voices about Provence that the sense of place I am trying to develop may be evolving too fast to be articulated effectively. The glut of imagery that comes from the research process and from too many sources offers images and words which I have not fully categorized and refined, and as a result a Provençalian sense of place continues to elude me, slipping away as I grasp at it. I think it is this speedy evolution which makes my own articulation of a sense of place so difficult. I've found that only through recording my experiences into writing can I even begin to "pin down" and establish a personal sense of place for Provence—and I realize that it still lies incomplete, and will remain so unless I continue to develop and refine the images that I choose to remember and record.

The realization that I have to write my experiences down to better develop a sense of place has driven home literature's importance in sense of place studies. The act of *writing place* has the ability to crystallize and communicate a set of imagery which memories and spoken words cannot match—and in communicating imagery, literature has the ability to convey an author's sense of place to a reader, who then interprets and shapes it according to his or her own experiences. This conversation between experiences, between those of the author and those of the reader, is at the heart of place-definition. Both Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan, through long association with Provence and through the act of writing Provence into their texts in a consistent and self-conscious way, have, unlike me, proven themselves capable of crafting powerful, but differing, senses of Provençal place.

Peter Mayle

Revisiting Mayle's Imagery

Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* set forth a set of regional imagery and began to develop a sense of place for Provence, both of which he would further expand on and deepen in his subsequent texts. Two broad categories of regional imagery play a role in the development of his sense of Provençal place: nature imagery and culture imagery.

Mayle's descriptions of Provence's nature offers a backdrop for many of his texts. His descriptions of weather patterns touch on Provence's weather year round, and in doing so he describes the extremes of Provence's climate and weather, as well as their consequences, and these descriptions range from *mistral* winds and cloudbursts that damage houses to drought and wildfires that threaten harvest and home. Generally, however, Mayle's nature imagery describes Provence's nature in ways that emphasize its wild and remote beauty, particularly in the rugged forested hills of the Lubéron region. Even if Provence's climate and weather has its extremes, Mayle's descriptions tend to depict Provence as sun-drenched and hot, with clean air, all of which encourages its people to adopt an outdoor lifestyle. Overarching the landscape is an ever-present and expansive clear blue sky.

Mayle's descriptions of Provence's culture include an emphasis on rural and village life, particularly the small *villes perchées* of Provence's interior. Mayle's descriptions of agricultural landscapes planted with Mediterranean trees and crops such as melons, olives, cherries, and most notably vineyards, develops Provence's culture as a traditional one, firmly grounded in agrarian lifeways. This grounding in an agrarian lifestyle is further developed through descriptions of the Provençaux themselves, who are

often farmers, and through descriptions of open air markets, lavish meals which use local ingredients available with the season, and the perception of time as a fluid commodity, as well as descriptions of a rural gossip culture. Social gatherings occur in places associated with food, whether it be in the café, at the market, or at the table, and a focus on the image of the Provençaux as serious gourmets who take pride in and take pleasure from their food helps further emphasize Provençal food culture as a central component of the region's identity.

Mayle's Provence, however, is not entirely defined by its traditional way of life. Modernity, and more importantly, tourism, are major shapers of Provençal culture. In Mayle's Provence, tourists arrive craving hot weather, sunny days, delicious food, and relaxation, and their arrival, as well as a strong expatriate presence in Provençal villages, diversifies Provence's society. The summer influx of tourists from other parts of France and abroad has made an otherwise traditional culture cosmopolitan. While Mayle's descriptions of Provence's culture vis-à-vis tourism touches on the industry's negative impacts, such as changes to the landscape made to cater to tourists, his general treatment of Provence's tourist flows is good-humored and recognizes the benefits that tourists bring to the region.

Mayle's Sense of Place

Taken together, Mayle's descriptions of Provence's nature and culture imbue Provence with an overwhelmingly idyllic sense of place. "Idyllic," however, is a word with a meaning that is difficult to pin down, and so to describe something as idyllic requires further explanation. "Idyllic," derived from "idyll," is a term which might be used in a variety of contexts, including a way to categorize paintings, poetry, and novels.

As Shackford (1904) noted in her discussion of the idyll as a literary genre, the term is often (and sometimes erroneously) used interchangeably with “bucolic,” and “pastoral,” and so is best approached through recognizing the emotions it evokes. Shackford proposes that these emotions include quiet contentment, feelings of tranquility and peace, and a simple source of happiness that comes from a lack of tragedy, no demands from “great endeavors,” or “lofty motives,” and that the idyll is a “presentation of the chosen moments of earthly content,” (Shackford 1904, 587).

Based on Shackford’s insights about the nature of idyll as a literary genre, it is clear that Mayle’s texts convey emotions characteristic of idylls through his descriptions of Provence’s nature and culture. Mayle and his characters frequently find themselves content and free from the pressures and demands of lofty motives or great endeavors as his texts repeatedly refer to the unhurried rhythms of days centered around the “small disciplines of country life,” where moments of earthly content arrive most often in the simple pleasures of good food and wine, good company, and good health (Mayle 1992, 233). Mayle himself seems self-conscious in his development of Provence as a region imbued with rural idyll, as he titles his final chapter of *Toujours Provence* “Life Through Rosé-Tinted Spectacles,” and comments on the gradual changes which living in rural Provence has brought to his life, including better health, a simpler lifestyle removed from the trappings of modernity and pop-culture, and he remarks that “there is a warmth to everyday life that is not just the sun” (Mayle 1992, 241).

Studies in rural geography and sociology recognize that the concept of a rural idyll is a common and perennial perception of rural areas (e.g., Swaffield and Fairweather 1998, Short 2006). Rofe (2013, 263) notes that the idea of rural idyll is “deeply

entrenched in the modern psyche,” but Short’s exploration of the rural idyll’s evolution over time, like Shackford’s discussion of the evolution of idyll literature, reveals that “rural idyll is a contested term” (Short 2006, 144). Little and Austin (1996) and Short (1991), however, both offer definitions of rural idyll which find parallels in Mayle’s descriptions of Provence:

Rural life is associated with an uncomplicated, innocent, more genuine society in which traditional values persist and lives are more real. Pastimes, friendships, family relations, and even employment are seen as somehow more honest and authentic, unencumbered with the false and insincere trappings of city life or with their associated values (Little and Austin, 1996, quoted in Woods 2005, 13).

[the countryside] is pictured as a less-hurried lifestyle where people follow the seasons rather than the stock market, where they have more time for one another and exist in a more organic community (Short 1991, quoted in Woods 2005, 13).

David Bell (2006), meanwhile, writes that rural idyll is an umbrella term, and suggests that an understanding of constituents of a rural idyll might be better refined through considering the distinctions between a pastoral idyll and a wild idyll. According to Bell, a pastoral idyll is one with a distinct orientation towards a region’s culture, and emphasizes a simpler, more traditional way of life grounded in agrarian lifeways, and, furthermore, is linked to the idea of bountiful harvests. A wild idyll, meanwhile, is more strongly associated with depictions of untrammelled nature, nearly devoid of human signs. A sense of place may incorporate aspects of both the pastoral idyll and wild idyll, and Mayle’s works clearly depict images which might be associated with both types of rural idyll.

The strongest imagery associated with Bell’s wild idyll include Mayle’s descriptions of the Lubéron’s wild, rugged landscapes and Provence’s bright, clear days.

Time and again, Mayle's descriptions of the landscape are associated with feelings of solitude and remoteness; which are in turn linked to a sense of personal tranquility and peace of mind. The therapeutic qualities which Mayle associates with experiencing solitude in the Lubéron's hills fits well with Bell's suggestion that the wild idyll is "a restorative resource, a place to go touch nature (and maybe God), to find peace, to gaze and mediate" (2006, 151).

Mayle's development of a pastoral idyll are more extensive than his imagery associated with wild idyll. The less-hurried lifestyles of Mayle's Provençaux find their seasonal rhythms in the harvest of olives and the vines, which evokes images of an agrarian lifestyle. Mayle's treatment of Provençal time as a fluid concept in day-to-day interactions further alludes to this lifestyle. Facets of traditional culture such as the role of gossip and social networks support the idea of a simpler lifestyle which finds its focus in "small" human interactions which evoke quiet contentment. Such interactions help define Mayle's experience of Provence's culture, particularly because they occur in a Provençal context: friendships form and stories are told during games of *pétanque*, in cafés serving local wines or pastis, and the hubbub of local gossip occurs in the "twangy" accents of southern France. The traditional, agrarian nature of Provence is further developed through frequent references to food and wine, which supports the idea of Provence as a bountiful region that is essential to Provence's image as a region imbued with pastoral idyll. Similarly, copious meals, painstakingly prepared from local and seasonally available produce, meats, and cheeses, serve to drive home the sense that Provence is a region of bounteous agricultural wealth.

Using the framework of Bell's distinctions between wild idyll and pastoral idyll, I suggest that Mayle's blending of aspects from both types to craft an idyllic sense of place. Although imagery associated with Provence's nature establish clear links to the idea of wild idyll and imbue Provence with therapeutic qualities, the descriptions of Provence's nature plays a secondary role to descriptions of its people and culture. Mayle is an observer and writer of Provence's people, and his use of regional imagery which describes time and again the peculiarities of life in Provence in relation to its traditional culture transforms what would otherwise be a generic rural idyll into a distinctly Provençal rural idyll.

Globalizing Provence?

Mayle's Provence may strongly reflect rural idyll in the development of its sense of place, but the cosmopolitan nature of Provence's culture plays a critical role in further expanding on Provence's sense of place and deepening the region's place-definition. Mayle's Provence hybridizes the traditional aspects of the rural idyll with images of a globalized countryside. Woods (2007) suggests that a global countryside might be defined as a rural area which experiences aspects of globalization, one of which is tourist flows, and Mayle's repeated references to Provence's tourist industry and its contributions to Provençal life make it clear that Provence is more socially and economically diverse than what would be expected of a traditional agrarian society. Mayle's Provençaux characters, for example, welcome tourism for the economic benefits it brings into the region, including the growing real-estate and service sector industries.

In linking Provence to the rest of the world through his descriptions of tourists and expatriates, Mayle emphasizes globalization at work in Provence, and implied in this

process is a shaping of Provence's sense of place. I view Mayle's emphasis on Provence's tourist industry as one way in which he moves away from the classic image of the rural idyll and, in doing so, imbues Provence with a sense of social dynamism. Mayle, however, expects that despite the inevitable change which tourism will bring to the region, Provence will retain its character: traditional, agrarian, bounteous, and idyllic.

Pierre Magnan

Revisiting Magnan's Imagery

Like Mayle, Magnan relies on an array of nature and culture imagery to craft a sense of place for Provence. Magnan's nature imagery emphasizes the power of nature over human activity. Rough terrain marked by steep mountain slopes, extensive forests, and rivers are ubiquitous in Magnan's texts, and all are described in terms of their power and ability to permanently change the lives of the Provençaux who live on the land. When in full flow, Magnan's rivers carry stones and tear away at arable land. Magnan's mountains, meanwhile, are often described in terms of their continuity through time, at scales far beyond that of human life. The earth itself is dynamic, changing its shape in the event of landslides, wind, and water erosion. Wild lands in Magnan's texts are generally forested, and military terms describe their immensity. Magnan's representations of Provence's seasons and weather patterns are year-round, yet tend to emphasize powerful storm systems which cause floods and can affect the moods of his characters, as well as powerful winds, which give voice to Magnan's descriptions of nature: the wind's passing causes trees to moan, and during storms rivers roar with floodwaters.

Magnan's views of Provence's nature is akin to one of the views expressed by Donald Meinig in his 1979 exploration of idealized American communities. Where

Meinig's view of human insignificance conveys an image of nature as more powerful than humans yet neutral towards them, Magnan's descriptions of storms and the land are linked to force and hostility, particularly towards humans and their work. Magnan's view is that nature is a holistic entity that exists on a temporal scale beyond the ken of human experience, and, by extension, develops the idea of human insignificance.

Magnan's culture imagery is centered on rural village life, its traditional and cyclic nature, and the character of rural Provençaux. Life in Magnan's villages are marked by a gossip culture, which places great importance on local knowledge, and agrarian lifeways that center on viticulture, olive cultivation, shepherding, and, notably, mushroom and truffle hunting. Businesses in the village serve local clients, and specialized services are itinerant and move from town to town to meet villagers' needs. Outsiders are few, and their arrival is noted and remembered by locals. Mistrust of perceived outsiders is common; even within local social circles, however, mistrust of others reigns.

Life in Magnan's Provence is difficult. Magnan's Provençaux struggle to eke out a living in the face of nature's adversity, and their character reflects this struggle. Often described as hard-hearted, suspicious of outsiders, and frugal, the Provençaux who inhabit Magnan's rural villages are rarely idealized, yet their persistence in the landscape is, in Magnan's words, "unsurpassed," and a trait to be proud of.

The persistence of Provence's people in the landscape is further illustrated by Magnan's heavy use of historical allusions. These allusions link past to present, and this historical continuity develops a stronger sense of regional identity, but also ties Provence to a larger French identity. While the past's ability to shape the present is readily apparent

in Magnan's culture imagery, it also conveys a sense of loss, which is writ concretely into the landscape with repeated descriptions and references to ruins, cemeteries, and death; this cultural loss is further developed through Magnan's use of archaic French and Provençal vocabulary in his texts. Cultural loss, although an ongoing process and possibly irreversible, will never be fully complete, as traces of Provence's people will remain in ruins strewn over the landscape.

Magnan's Sense of Place

The sense of place for Provence which emerges from Magnan's use of nature and culture imagery is multifaceted. Nature's power, at times destructive and never benevolent, translates into a sense of threat and uncertainty for human security. Bad harvests, floods, landslides, and random misfortunes are never far away from the lives of Magnan's Provençaux. Threat and uncertainty develops from the culture imagery of Provence as well. Magnan's representations of village life and the character of the Provençaux highlight the negative aspects of life in rural Provence. Frugal living, hard labor, and, more importantly, the insularity and intrigues associated with a gossip culture motivate Magnan's Provençaux to be suspicious of one another; villages are subsequently imbued with a sense of latent hostility. To be "in Provence," is to be challenged, time and again, by nature's adversity and the realities of a traditional agrarian way of life that does not grant favors nor easy living. Magnan's descriptions of wild landscapes devoid of comfort, descriptions of powerful storms, of frugal living, and of hostile Provençaux all serve to emphasize Provence as a region inextricably linked with struggle, and helps develop the image of Provence as a harsh and poor land. To define Provence as simply harsh, however, is to leave Magnan's sense of place underdeveloped and unfinished.

Magnan's nature imagery is powerful not only in its ability to destroy, but also in its vastness. According to Keltner and Haidt (2003), an entity has a sense of vastness if it is perceived by an individual as larger than the self. Magnan's works represent Provence's vastness in two ways. First, there is physical vastness: Provence's mountains, rivers, forests, and hills are ever-present in his texts and are described in terms which imply force, and Magnan's characters can never "get away from the noise of all those crushing forces of nature" (Magnan 2003, 28). Second, there is temporal vastness: through making allusions to both deep time and historical events that have a historical continuity far beyond the lifespan of a single individual, Magnan depicts Provence's temporal scale as vast.

Nature's power, its vast and persistent presence, its indifference or malevolence toward human affairs, and its association with deep time gives Provence an enigmatic quality, which Magnan links inextricably with what it means to experience the region:

L'essentiel du pays, comme pour l'amour, ce pourquoi il est plus envoûtant qu'un autre, c'est le mystère.

The essential [quality] of [Provence], just as with love, and what makes it more captivating than another [region], is its mystery. (Magnan 2005, 19, my translation).

A sense of mystery is not only restricted to Magnan's nature imagery. Provence's culture imagery has mysteries which run deep and are sometimes fearful. Magnan's depictions of a gossip culture emphasizes the idea that every Provençaux has secrets which are often dark; furthermore, in their reticence and mistrust of outsiders, villagers' local knowledge takes on a mysterious air. Even locals, however, are fearful about peripheral and mysterious cultural practices:

Until about the 1860s, those who passed the valleys often reported that somewhere between earth and sky – they couldn't exactly say where – a fire for burning heretics at the stake was blazing away, with crackles, muffled explosions and sudden showers of sparks they couldn't locate... Of course, since the very real and explainable horrors of modern times have dispelled these imaginative fears which so easily deluded the simple minded folk of yesteryear, but the fact that things are not spoken about does not mean that they no longer exist. (Magnan 2003, 72-73).

Nature and culture imagery that evoke a sense of power, of harshness, of vastness, of eternity, and of mystery—considered together, they imbue Provence with the sublime.

The concept of the sublime has its origins in antiquity. The ancient Greek writer identified as Longinus⁸ wrote a treatise which discussed *ὑψος*, which is sometimes translated as “height,” and at other times translated as “sublime” (Russell 1964, ix; Hill 1966). The treatise defined the sublime as a certain quality of writing that “does not persuade, [but instead] carries [the reader] away irresistibly, and there is no question of choosing whether to let it affect [the reader] or not” (Russell 1964, xi). Though Longinus never fully defines the sublime in his work, the treatise proposes some of the sublime's qualities, including the idea that the sublime is associated with emotional intensity (Boulton 1958, xlvi). Longinus's work was copied and translated into other languages during the 15th and 16th century, but its most notable translation was by French critic Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, who published *Traité du Sublime* in 1674 (Russell 1964, xliv). Boileau's translation included a preface which summarized Longinus's sublime as emotive writing, marked by a sense of the extraordinary, of marvelousness, and of

⁸ The identity of the author of the treatise and the date of its creation are unknown. Scholarship which sought to identify who wrote the treatise identified Cassius Longinus, a third century scholar. This identity was accepted until the 19th century, when further analysis of the treatise's writing style cast doubt onto a positive identification (Russell 1964). Today, it is generally accepted that the treatise was written by an unknown author around 50 CE (Hill 1966, 265).

surprise, and he stated that sublime writing is “captivating” (Boulton 1958, xlvii). These ideas took hold in philosophical discussions about the sublime, most notable among them Edmund Burke’s 1757 publication *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Boulton 1958).

In his 1757 treatise Burke moves beyond Longinus’s discussion that the sublime is a quality of writing and introduces the idea of the sublime as a mode of aesthetic experience. An aesthetic experience might be thought of as an experience with a dual nature, embodying both positive and negative aspects, and these aspects themselves are often of a dual nature. For example, Burke asserted that the sublime includes feelings of awe, an element of terror, and a sense that the object perceived is vast yet obscure. For Burke, to experience an object as sublime means that it entirely fills an individual’s mind, denying the individual the ability to reason about the object, and that this domination of the mind also imparts a sense of subtle horror, because the individual recognizes that the object which they perceive has power over them (Burke 1958 [1757]). Burke’s development of the sublime shows clear parallels with the sense of place which emerges in Magnan’s works.

Magnan’s sublime Provence is made more complex by an overlapping sense of melancholy. Melancholy itself is a complex emotion, evoking both feelings of pleasure and displeasure. Brady and Haapala (2003) suggest that melancholy’s ability to evoke loneliness, sorrow at loss, emptiness, and fear or dread that sometimes comes with longing are melancholy’s central displeasures; such emotions are readily apparent throughout Magnan’s texts, and are primarily linked to his culture imagery. Images of cemeteries and ruins, for example, evoke a sense of loss, as do references to events and

practices in the past which no longer exist, save in his characters' thoughts and psyches. Further implying a sense of loss is Magnan's use of archaic language and Provençal vocabulary, for in their obscurity of meaning comes a recognition of lost language and lost knowledge.

Melancholy's pleasure is found in its contemplative and reflective aspects (Brady and Haapala 2003). Contemplation is deep thought or close observation—and Magnan's extensive use of nature imagery offers the chance to do both vis-à-vis Provence, as this passage describing the Bès valley illustrates:

The Bès accompanies [the road to Barles], intertwining with it under all sorts of oddly shaped bridges, as the crystal-clear waters flow in an anthracite-coloured bed ten times too big for it. The air that travels over these prodigious deposits of gravel and alluvium has the hollow resonance of a deep cave; the wind that moans over them, the funereal sound of the dark forests weaving through the valley. The valley is as one with the river. It has just one season: autumn. It has its spring when the leaves are ready to die. It smiles when all the rest weeps (Magnan 2003, 70).

Magnan's culture imagery, too, invites contemplation. While Magnan's descriptions of ruins, cemeteries, and historical allusions can convey a sense of loss in that they are fragmented reminders of past lives, events, and practices, they also tempt the imagination, imploring the reader at rebuild the narratives which have been lost to the passage of time.

Reflecting on Research and Lessons Learned

A Comparative Approach

This thesis uses a comparative approach throughout its analysis of Peter Mayle's and Pierre Magnan's imagery. Though not a well-developed approach in literary geography, comparative approaches have been successfully developed in other fields of the humanities and the social sciences, most notably literature and anthropology, but it is

also emergent in history (e.g., Frederickson 1997). The emergence of comparative history means that historians practicing comparative approaches must defend their decision; in doing so, they highlight the utility of comparative approaches:

The objective of comparative history in the strict sense is clearly a dual one: it can be valuable as a way of illuminating the special features or particularities of the individual societies being examined—each may look different in light of the other or others—and also useful in enlarging our theoretical understanding of the kinds of institutions or processes being compared, thereby making a contribution to the development of social-scientific theories and generalizations (Frederickson 1997, 24).

Frederickson's insights about the objectives of comparative approaches in historical studies find their equivalent in comparative literary geography, and this thesis illustrates the idea that an individual author's regional imagery may look different in light of another's works. Discussions within anthropology about different types of comparative methodologies give further insights into how literary geographers might go about comparative studies (e.g., Rohner 1977). There are few precedents for comparative approaches within literary geography, though what work which has been done offers rich possibilities (e.g., McManis 1978 and Hart 1986), and I believe that if properly applied, a comparative approach can enrich our understandings of regional imagery and sense of place in literature.

This thesis sets out some guidelines to comparative approaches in literary geography which strive after place-definition through an exploration of regional imagery and sense of place. This thesis draws heavily from literary formalism in its approach, for during my analysis of the text I relied most heavily on the texts themselves for my understanding of each author's use of regional imagery and the development of a sense of

place. Letting the text “speak for itself” is a central idea to the formalist perspective (Tyson 2006). Though both Mayle and Magnan have differing first-hand experiences of Provence that must be acknowledged and recognized, their broad similarities in their texts’ production and reception makes a formalist approach appropriate. First, I suggest that analysis should be based on authors who produced (and disseminated) texts contemporaneously to one another, or at least should have some temporal overlap in the production of their works. Mayle and Magnan’s overlapping temporal periods during which they produced literature suggest that their regional imagery and sense of place reached audiences at approximately the same time, thus shaping place perception simultaneously. Furthermore, and more importantly, each author should share one or more characteristics of a place-defining novelist as outlined by Shortridge (1991), because fulfilling these characteristics suggests that both authors are likely shaping perceptions toward the regions about which they write. Based on Shortridge’s criteria, I suggest that authors should enjoy comparable levels of critical acclaim and that their texts are read by a large audience, which I argue is indicative of their ability to shape popular perception of a place. They should also both enjoy local popularity within the place about which they are writing. Though such popularity is sometimes difficult to assess, high approval amongst locals implies that the content of an author’s text has some degree of verisimilitude in its regional imagery and sense of place.

Tempering this largely formalist approach to each author’s texts are insights drawn from discussions in cultural geography about researcher positionality (e.g., Rose 1997), and from parallel discussions within literary criticism which assert that text interpretation will vary between readers. Cultural Poetics, New Criticism, and New

Historicism are three theoretical movements within literary scholarship which aim to put the literary critic's positionality vis-à-vis the textual analysis in the limelight (Bressler 1994), and this research aligns itself with the position espoused by these trends in literary scholarship because it recognizes my own positionality vis-à-vis Mayle's and Magnan's texts throughout the analysis.

After setting forth these tentative criteria for studies in comparative literary geography, I recognize that there is potential to further refine and expand the subfield, and comparative approaches to literary geography might find applications beyond the reaches of this study. Provence itself offers rich possibilities for further formalist approaches beyond studies of Mayle and Magnan; both Jean Giono and Marcel Pagnol, for example, wrote contemporaneously to one another and each author reflected some of the criteria of a place-defining novelist. A historical approach which considers how their works were received by their contemporaries might yield insights into the way that they shaped popular perceptions of Provence. There are, however, opportunities for comparative literary geographies that move beyond a formalist approach that considers two authors who embody Shortridge's (1991) place-defining qualities.

An author does not need to be widely read to write in a way which conveys a set of regional images or a sense of place, and literary perspectives exist which could be applied to recognize this fact. Postcolonial, Marxist, or feminist literary theories all, at their core, seek to give voice to non-dominant perspectives in literature and explore the way that social and economic frameworks are represented within texts. Postcolonial literature, for example, seeks to redirect the focus of cultural inquiry from a western perspective through considering the marginalized perspectives represented in a text.

Marxist perspectives highlight class conflicts and class reinforcement which emerge through the medium of literature, and feminist perspectives ask questions about the way that gender intersects with culture through a literary medium (Tyson 2006, 53, 83, 417). Such approaches offer myriad possibilities when paired with comparative literary geography, and these approaches may draw insights from one another to further refine an exploration of multiple authors and their uses of regional images. This thesis parallels the goals of comparative history and uses an idiographic-comparative approach to illuminate the special features of Peter Mayle's and Pierre Magnan's regional imagery and sense of place which define their visions of Provence.

Lessons Learned: Mayle and Magnan

The use of a comparative approach between Peter Mayle's and Pierre Magnan's works reveal that the two share regional imagery, both of Provence's nature and culture. Their common images include rough topography, and a society grounded in rural, agrarian, and traditional lifeways. Both Mayle and Magnan also highlight Provence's linguistic quirks, though for Mayle these quirks are attributed to an accented standard French, while Magnan's is more strongly associated with a distinct Provençal dialect. Both authors use aspects of time as a place-defining part of Provence, as well, though here their foci are more strongly divergent. Mayle's use of time emphasizes the way that Provençaux treat time as an elastic commodity in the present, whereas Magnan uses time to highlight history's role in shaping Provence's identity. Both authors also have sets of imagery which are uniquely their own. Mayle's development of a food culture, for example, is nearly non-existent in Magnan's work, and Magnan's culture imagery associated with cultural loss is absent from Mayle's work.

Both authors develop a distinct sense of place which has overlap with each other. **Mayle's Provence is imbued with an idyllic sense of place.** His overwhelmingly idyllic Provence is grounded most strongly in his development of culture imagery, which emphasizes a traditional, agrarian way of life that is centered on the simple pleasures of good food, outdoor living, and good health. Mayle's descriptions of village life are characterized by a vibrant social network that finds its hubs in the cafés and open-air markets, and while he develops a gossip culture, it is largely one that is represented as harmless, amusing, and contributing to a cohesive social atmosphere. **Magnan's Provence, meanwhile, is imbued with a melancholic sublime.** Magnan's nature imagery is central to his development of a sublime Provence; nature's power, vastness, associations with deep time, and mystery provide the foundations to a sense of the sublime, which is further accentuated by culture imagery that emphasizes the historical continuity inherent to Provence's culture. Provence's melancholic quality is borne partly out of highly descriptive passages of nature imagery which invite contemplation, but melancholy is more strongly developed with Magnan's use of culture imagery, which emphasizes a Provence that Magnan's writings suggest is disappearing. On the one hand, melancholy's associations with sorrow and loss are effectively conveyed through images which depict cultural loss, principle among them ruins, but these physical reminders of Provence's past also invites the reader to meditate on Provence's history, and, through imaginative reconstruction of the past, give voice to a culture that Magnan contended is fading away. **Magnan's development of a melancholic sublime highlights the role that time plays in the development of a sense of place.** Though often overlooked in studies of sense of place, time is important because both the sense of melancholy and the

sense of the sublime associated with Provence hinge on Magnan's use of allusions to deep time, his use of historical continuity, and his descriptions of cultural loss as a product of time's passage.

Peter Mayle and Pierre Magnan are clear examples of place-defining writers of Provence. Their chosen regional imageries and senses of place may diverge, but that does not necessarily make one author more authentic than another in his representation of Provence. This thesis illustrates that **the complexities of capturing a sense of place through literature leaves room for polyvocality, from multiple authors who have different experiences of and ways of writing about place.** While Mayle and Magnan each capture aspects of Provence's sense of place through their writing, the task remains Sisyphean, as Magnan suggests in *The Messengers of Death*:

Do you think that a land lapped only by the sky is unremarkable? It's not easy to capture. It slips through your fingers like an adder still soapy after shedding its skin. Ten writers and sixty poets have never succeeded in opening its belly to their imagination (Magnan 2006, 71).

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