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One-Hundred Million No Longer: Learning to Be French in the Era of Decolonization,
1944-1992

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M.A., Emory University, 2008

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

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By John Kevin Dunn

This study examines the ways in which schoolchildren in France were taught what it meant to be French in the “era of decolonization.” The loss of the colonial empire was a crucial source of the instability of French national identity in the decades after the Second World War. This dissertation argues that schools in general and history education in particular were central to the French state’s efforts to contend with this instability. While universal education’s role in constructing national identity during the Third Republic (1870-1940) is well-established, few have interrogated education’s role in *re*-constructing national identity at this later moment when Frenchness seemed profoundly in doubt.

Throughout the late-colonial period, history curricula for French pupils went to great lengths to accomplish a double move: placing imperialism in the republican tradition and persuading students to see themselves as imperial citizens. In the wake of colonial independence, textbooks adopted and proffered deterministic narratives of decolonization and modernization. Both narratives were instrumental in allowing French pupils to compartmentalize the events of the previous decades and to resurrect French *grandeur* in new guises. And yet, even within these discourses, textbook authors redeployed colonial tropes in subtle (and not-so-subtle) ways. Postcolonial theory suggests that decolonization is a process that takes place in the societies of the colonizers as well as those of the colonized. This dissertation both examines the process by which that decolonization has been carried out and exposes just how much remains to be done.

Meanwhile, throughout the postwar period, educational reformers—such as those associated with Célestin Freinet’s Modern School movement and with interculturalism—tried to imagine alternatives to apparently hegemonic discourses of national belonging. The surprising frequency with which these reformers acquired the outright support, or at least the benign neglect, of state officials confutes traditional narratives of the French educational system as a monolithic leviathan. The successes and failures of these reformers illuminate just what was “thinkable” or possible within their historical contexts, exposing the edifices and assumptions of state power along the way.

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Words of gratitude seem like poor compensation for the mountain of debts one acquires in a project like this. Yet, as scholars, we have little else to give.

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Abbreviations

AAE	Amicale des Algériens en Europe
ACHAC	Association pour la Connaissance de l'histoire de l'Afrique contemporaine
ADRI	Agence pour le développement des relations interculturelles
ANMT	Archives nationales du monde du travail
B.O.	<i>Bulletin Officiel</i>
CE	Cours Élémentaire
CEL	Coopérative de l'Enseignement Laïc
CGP	Commissariat Général du Plan
CM	Cours Moyen
CNASTI	Comité nazairien d'accueil et de soutien aux travailleurs immigrés
DATAR	Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale
FEN	Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale
FIMEM	Fédération Internationale des Mouvements d'École Moderne
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
MNE	Musée national de l'Education
OAS	Organisation de l'Armée Secrète
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
SNI	Syndicat National des Instituteurs
TGV	Train à Grand Vitesse
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens
UMP	Union pour un Mouvement Populaire

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ZEP Zones d'Education Prioritaire

INTRODUCTION

I had been taught at school that Algeria was part of France, that it was a province like the others, and that it was made up of three French departments each with its chef-lieu and sous-prefecture, whose names—after those of all the others—we had to recite by heart.

Robert Davezies, *Worker-Priest with the Jeanson Network*¹

Generation upon generation of French children have been taught at school—and the lesson has sunk in—that the Republic had founded a great colonial empire, bringing civilization and prosperity to the *poor Savages*, to the Vietnamese, or the Tonkinese as they were called—as well as to the Algerians. This being the case, people have been genuinely at a loss to comprehend why the ungrateful recipients of the advantages and benefits lavished upon them by France should rise up in revolt!

Maurice Thorez, “Closing Speech to the Central Committee”²

In 1949, an eight-year-old girl named France “Anne” Preiss moved from French Polynesia to Alsace, from one of France’s margins to another. Her Protestant missionary parents believed firmly in France’s civilizing mission in the colonies but were troubled by their daughter’s fondness for her Tahitian playmates. Upon her arrival in Alsace, Preiss would later recall, her classmates treated her like a savage because of her poor pronunciation. Recounting her schooling years later, she claimed she instinctively rejected the colonialist rhetoric she learned in the classroom: “I remember my immediate reaction to reading [a chapter about colonialism]: my whole body seized up.... It was as if I was a native islander reading this glowing account knowing it to [be] untrue.”³

In 1959, Anne Preiss joined the Lyon Network supporting the *porteurs de valises*. These “suitcase carriers” transported money for the Algerian National Liberation Front

¹ Quoted in Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War, 1954 - 1962* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 102.

² L’Humanité, 10 October 1959, p. 1; Quoted in Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*.

³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 118, Brackets mine.

(FLN) which was then battling the French military. Preiss would later join the French Communist Party (PCF), but her involvement with the anticolonial struggle was not principally an outgrowth of her politics. Frankly, the Communist Party was slow to support Algerian independence, as were the other political parties of the Fourth Republic. Political commitment *is* what drove her network organizer, Jean-Marie Boeglin, however, whose anarchism and contempt for authority compelled him to urinate on congregants from the local church steeple and blow open the gates of prisons.⁴ Yet, Preiss and Boeglin did have one motivation for their activism (others would call it treason) in common. They agreed that they were defending the “true” France: the France of the anti-Nazi resistance (in which both of their families had been active); the France of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*; the France that Preiss did not recognize in colonialism or in her schoolbook.⁵

While for some, like Preiss and Boeglin, republicanism and colonialism existed in tension—a tension that came to a head with decolonization—for most French people, republicanism and colonization were entirely compatible. Indeed, “France’s colonial enterprise and the Third Republic were born in the same moment,” Blanchard et al. remind us.⁶ Likewise, the republican government sponsored the 1931 Colonial Exposition, the event that began “the three-decade period ... [in which] France was awash in the height of imperial culture ... [which was] a mainstay no matter the political

⁴ Ibid., 67.

⁵ I borrow this notion of “True France” as an object of the “wars over cultural identity,” from Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

⁶ Pascal Blanchard et al., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 3.

regime.”⁷ Even resisting the Nazis and their continental empire was no guarantee of anticolonial sentiment; Charles de Gaulle’s ambivalence about keeping Algeria French makes that clear. The empire rallied to de Gaulle earlier than most metropolitan French, beginning with Chad under Félix Eboué, who was himself from Guadeloupe and was France’s first black colonial governor. As with the colonial soldiers who served in the First World War, did not Eboué’s actions signal support for the French imperial project? Likewise, the PCF’s thorough embrace of republicanism after World War II colored their interpretation of the events in Algeria. The Communist Party argued Algeria could best achieve “liberty” within the French Republic; it rejected the ethnic and religious foundations of nationalism claimed by the FLN; and it would not support the FLN’s methods, which the former saw as what Lenin called “blind terror.”⁸ These moments in which imperialism’s assumptions rose to the surface suggest that for Anne Preiss, in her defense of “true” France during the Algerian War, and for those who found Preiss’s actions traitorous, decolonization was about France as much as it was about the colonies. How were narratives of true France capable of incorporating imperial power instituted among most French people? How did the state use the educational system to formulate those narratives of true France and the identities those narratives implied? How did these narratives survive decolonization’s upheavals? Did they at all? And, for those who rejected these interpretations of France’s identity, what was the content they had to contend with and rework?

⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁸ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 78–81; See also Danièle Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Emmanuel Sivan, *Communisme et nationalisme en Algérie, 1920-1962* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1976).

This dissertation is an examination of the ways in which French pupils were taught what it meant to be French in a period that I have termed the “era of decolonization,” an era that spanned the French Fourth and Fifth Republics, bridging the late-colonial and postcolonial periods. This is not, however, a “history of education” in the usual sense of the term. This study views schools and the teaching of history as privileged spaces in which to study the inculcation of ideologies and values among a wide swath of the French public. That privilege was a result of a number of factors, such as the historical connection between France’s compulsory education system and the state’s efforts at nation building since the Ferry Laws of the 1880s, the universal access of that system to French young people during their formative years, and the importance of a historically grounded notion of French culture and values to the French national identity. I am, thus, not much concerned with the institutional history of the French school system—which has been capably written by others—except insofar as institutional changes markedly influenced history content or pedagogy, or drew significantly on debates about national identity or the role of history in France.

I argue that decolonization was a crucial source of the much-discussed instability of French national identity in the decades after the Second World War. Such a fundamental change in the understanding of France’s imperial role (especially in Algeria) would have reverberated in the educational sphere. Under previous regimes, the state, officials, and authors had made use of the history curriculum and the history textbook to imagine “France.”⁹ Indeed, in his classic work *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argues that among “the policy levers of official nationalism” were “compulsory

⁹ On nation-states as “imagined communities” see: Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

state-controlled primary education” and “official rewriting of history.”¹⁰ In France, national control of curriculum and centralization of the education system meant that the state was more capable of pulling those levers than in locally controlled systems (though the Ministry of Education’s control was far from absolute). In the era of decolonization, officials and textbook authors relied on history education again to reimagine the nation. At the same time, the ostensible weakening of the nation-state’s viability as a political formation—overcome as the latter seemed to be by forces ranging from globalization to regionalism, from decolonization to immigration—inspired zealous defense of France’s values and historical identity.

Looking at the waning days of Empire, I assert that, right up until the end of the colonial Empire, history curricula went to great lengths to accomplish a double move: historicizing the imperial project within the republican tradition and persuading students to see themselves as imperial citizens by encouraging them to identify with colonial heroes. In the wake of colonial independence, textbooks gradually adopted and proffered deterministic narratives of decolonization and modernization. Both of those narratives were instrumental in allowing French pupils to compartmentalize and explain the events of the previous decades and to resurrect French *grandeur* in new guises. And yet, as authors wrote these narratives into France’s historical tradition, they borrowed and redeployed colonial tropes and modes in subtle (and not-so-subtle) ways. Across this period, any number of reform movements—two of which I study here—tried to imagine alternatives to apparently hegemonic discourses and notions of national belonging. The

¹⁰ Ibid., 104.

successes and failures of these reformers illuminate just what was “thinkable” or possible within their historical contexts, exposing the edifices of state power along the way.

During the French Revolution, the Jacobins recognized that, while nationalism assumes the presence of a nation that predates it, in fact “a nation had to be built where none had previously existed.”¹¹ The Jacobins ironically adopted the missionary zeal of the post-Reformation Jesuits; where the missionaries had won souls for the Church, the Jacobins would win them for the Republic. As the Jacobins lacked the resources and the longevity to carry out their plans, it was under the Third Republic that the making of “peasants into Frenchmen” first experienced any real success. As Eugen Weber argued in his now classic study, the nationalization (or Frenchification) of the French countryside was carried about by three institutions especially: the railroad, the army, and the school.¹² With the Ferry Laws, which mandated the first universal, compulsory, and free primary education system in France, the “black Hussars of the Republic” ventured out into the provinces to wrest control of education from the village priests.

One of the foremost scholars of French education, Antoine Prost, describes the ways that the disciplinary conventions of primary school classes encouraged national identification. Learning the language of geography, for instance, necessarily leads to “a desacralization, a de-romantization of space ... but at the same time it moves towards the resacralization of one part of space—the national territory. Geography as it is taught, within a conceptual framework valid for the whole world, is that of France, the country

¹¹ David A. Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 15.

¹² Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

on the map on the wall of every classroom.”¹³ Historically, then, the French state and much of the French public imagined the republican school as central to the inculcation of republican values, French culture, and national identity among young citizens. The school was the great cog in the giant machine of nationalism, the forge of citizens.

The civilizing mission in the empire, of which Jules Ferry was also the most important proponent, ran parallel to attempts to spread “French” culture and values among provincials in France. The belief that French civilization was universal, that through acquisition of French culture and values people could become French, is what made it conceivable to French policymakers that both German-speaking Alsace and colonial Algeria could be (and were) part of France. The contention that the republican school was among the most important “civilizing” institutions in the Empire, as it was in the metropole, has led to a significant body of scholarship on schooling in the colonies, as researchers probe the spaces of interaction between the French state and colonial peoples. This research, however, has uncovered the limits of the assimilationist, civilizing mission discourse in colonial schools. Because colonial administrators recognized the threat that an assimilated and educated colonial population posed to the colonial order, they attempted to install (often vocational) educational curricula specifically adapted to creating a compliant native elite. In the end, many within the indigenous populations and the teaching corps, who saw metropolitan-style education as the pathway to social mobility, resisted these attempts.¹⁴

¹³ Antoine Prost, *Republican Identities in War and Peace: Representations of France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2002), 74.

¹⁴ Bob W. White, “Talk about School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa, (1860-1960),” *Comparative Education* 32, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 9–25; Gail Paradise Kelly, “Conflict in the Classroom: A Case Study from Vietnam, 1918-38,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 8, no. 2 (January 1, 1987): 191–212; Spencer D Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul: French Education,*

Those who opposed the state's nationalizing tendencies also saw similarities between the actions of schools in the metropole and those in the colonies. In 1970, Breton nationalist and journalist Morvan Lebesque described these attempts by the state to propagate a single French history:

Lobotomized by official History, millions of little Bretons, Basques, Occitans, Catalans—and for a time, Africans, Algerians, Indochinese—were transformed into one block of adopted children, with Clovis as their grandfather and Jeanne d'Arc as their older sister. [...] My ancestors were not your Gauls; but they would have me born of Vercingétorix, and crying over Alésia; one fictional lineage after another, from Merovingians to Carolingians, from Capetians to Valois. [...] I patiently recited a genealogy that was not my own.¹⁵

From an analytical perspective, thinking of “internal colonialism” as analogous to colonialism runs the risk of reductionism, of flattening historical specificity. It is, however, important to remember that historical actors, like Lebesque, thought in terms of that analogy.

Scholars of the Third Republic have long considered the school a significant vantage point from which to study the state's inculcation of values. Some historians have traced the nationalist drive through explication of canonical school texts like G. Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* or the *Petit Lavis*.¹⁶ Another group of scholars has examined the ways in which Third Republican schools and the teachers who staffed

Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912-1956 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Gail Paradise Kelly, *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, ed. David H Kelly (New York: AMS Press, 2000); Tony Chafer, “Teaching Africans to be French?: France's ‘civilising mission’ and the establishment of a public education system in French West Africa, 1903-30.,” *Africa*. 56 (2001): 190–209.

¹⁵ Quoted in Suzanne Citron, “The Impossible Revision of France's History (1968-2006),” in Blanchard et al., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, 411. Brackets and suspension points in original.

¹⁶ Jacques and Mona Ozouf, “Le Tour de France par deux enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic,” Pierre Nora, “Lavis: The Nation's Teacher,” in Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Krizman, eds., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Traditions*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 2. *Traditions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 125–150, 151–187.

them inculcated other values, such as gender roles, in students. Linda Clark, in one of the first texts to engage seriously with textbooks, demonstrated the ways in which classes for girls inculcated notions of domesticity and tied women's duties in the home to their duties toward the nation.¹⁷ A third group of historians has complicated various aspects of Weber's framework of nationalism, usually by directing its lens toward the French periphery. Robert Gildea's comparative study of education in three departments showed early on that the Third Republic's educational reforms were marked by (and occasionally stymied by) the local conditions they encountered. Likewise, Stephen Harp has demonstrated that the strong regional identity of Alsace forced both French and German policy-makers to make concessions on their desire to integrate the provinces linguistically, culturally, and historically. Caroline Ford, moreover, has challenged the core-to-periphery direction of nationalism and modernization, finding that these processes just as frequently originated in Brittany, often at the instigation of Catholic notables. Finally, Sarah Curtis's study of religious schooling in Lyon has shown that Third Republican educational reforms owed a great deal to advances in Catholic schooling made in the previous decades. In sum, this work has laid bare the inner workings of the republican school's nationalization efforts, which emerge from these analyses appearing much more negotiated and multidirectional than Weber's paradigm had suggested.¹⁸

¹⁷ Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne: Textbooks and the Socialization of Girls in Modern French Primary Schools* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984); Also on gender socialization in rural schools is Laura S Struminger, *What Were Little Girls and Boys Made of?: Primary Education in Rural France, 1830-1880* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1983); On the role of gender among the teaching corps, see: Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame Le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹⁸ Important studies complicating the Weber orthodoxy are: Robert Gildea, *Education in Provincial France, 1800-1914: A Study of Three Departments* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: Clarendon Press ;

According to the popular press and the public intellectual class, French identity is today in a “funk,” wracked by the powerful cultural, social, economic, and political shifts of the postwar period.¹⁹ The French, according to these authors, are no longer certain of what unifies them or of the power and universality of their culture. This apparent moment of national crisis demands that scholars historicize these developments and locate the processes by which the nation-state has attempted to counter its demise, much as an earlier generation of scholars interrogated the interactions between the nation and supposedly fading local cultures. Historians must interrogate the reconstruction of national identity during France’s struggle with decolonization, a seminal moment in which the state’s capacity to assimilate “the other” was thrown into serious doubt. Though recent research has sought out the nexus between French identity and decolonization in other venues—such as popular culture or legal and political discourses—the lack of attention to the French elementary school seems to miss two key considerations: the predominant (if sometimes mythologized) historical role of the school in fashioning national identity and the unparalleled access of schools to the youngest and most impressionable segment of the French population.

Oxford University Press, 1983); Caroline C. Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998); Sarah Ann Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000); See also Deborah Reed-Danahay’s ethnography of schooling in rural Laval in the 1980s: *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996); For a discussion of the state of this research, see: Benjamin J. Lammers, “National Identity on the French Periphery: The End of Peasants into Frenchmen?,” *National Identities* 1, no. 1 (March 1999): 81.

¹⁹ Alain Riding, “The French Funk,” *New York Times Magazine*, 21 March 1993, referenced in Richard F. Kuisel, “The France We Have Lost: Social, Economic, and Cultural Discontinuities,” in Gregory Flynn, ed., *Remaking the Hexagon: The New France in the New Europe* (Boulder, CO, 1995).

Two factors seem central to explaining why educational scholars have eschewed postwar France in their analyses of how schools ensure national identification. First, many studies of national identity and education appear to rest on an implicit belief that "nationalist historiography ... [is] a temporary phenomenon related to an initial phase of state and nation-building."²⁰ This "evolutionary model," as Jan Jarmaat calls it, may account for the prevalence of studies of citizenship and history education in former colonies, post-Soviet Eastern Europe, and ethnic conflict zones. The second factor working against the study of postwar national identity is the sense that the nation-state itself has become *passé*, a relic or an anachronism in a globalizing world.²¹ A number of scholars have therefore turned their gaze to attempts by schools to instill other kinds of identities, such as the "trans-national, non-national, hybrid history" favored by the first Franco-German history textbook in 2006.²² There is much to be said for research into the ways in which history education might help to fashion alternative, less exclusive political communities than the nation-state; indeed, this dissertation analyzes similar attempts and, at times, advocates explicitly for them. And yet, the construction of a shared national past and the differentiation between insiders and outsiders remains an essential function of the republican school.

²⁰ Jan Germen Janmaat, "History and National Identity Construction: The Great Famine in Irish and Ukrainian History Textbooks," *History of Education* 35, no. 3 (2006): 349, doi:10.1080/00467600600638434.

²¹ See Gregory Flynn, "Remaking the Hexagon," in Gregory Flynn, *Remaking the Hexagon: The New France in the New Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

²² Mona L. Siegel and Kirsten Harjes, "Disarming Hatred: History Education, National Memories, and Franco-German Reconciliation from World War I to the Cold War," *History of Education Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2012): 370–402, doi:10.1111/j.1748-5959.2012.00404.x; Pierre Monnet, "Un manuel d'histoire franco-allemand," *Revue historique* n° 638, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 409–22, doi:10.3917/rhis.062.0409; Étienne François, "Le Manuel Franco-Allemand D'histoire: Une Entreprise Inédite," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'histoire*, no. 94 (April 1, 2007): 73–86; Emmanuel Droit, "Entre histoire croisée et histoire dénationalisée: Le manuel franco-allemand d'histoire," *Histoire de l'éducation* n° 114, no. 2 (May 1, 2007): 151–62.

The fact that the nation-state appears to be in decline, “threatened by global flows and transnational networks” is, as Gyanendra Pandey and Peter Geschiere contend, “precisely its importance” for scholars.²³ The death of the nation-state, moreover, has no doubt been exaggerated, especially when one considers education. “Educational systems with a long historical tradition,” Zanten and Robert argue, “such as the French system, have a strong capacity to resist external pressures.”²⁴ It seems imprudent to write off the nation just yet. Researchers should make the apparent nadir of the nation-state a point of departure rather than calling it a *fait accompli*.

Mona Siegel’s examination of pacifist education in the interwar period, *The Moral Disarmament of France*, topically differs from my own work a great deal. Siegel proves that interwar schoolteachers drew on their experiences of the Great War and their belief in pacifism to create non-militaristic versions of the Great War. And, yet, those same teachers continued to inculcate patriotism in their charges, thus absolving those teachers of responsibility for “the strange defeat.” Differences in subject matter aside, Siegel’s methodological approach will be influential in this dissertation. First, she expertly ties the textbook narratives of republican citizenship during the 1920s and 1930s to social and political debates beyond education. Pacifist teachers attempted to cope with the memory of World War I, participated in debates about relations with Germany, and struggled with the ideological challenge of a fascist civil war in Spain.²⁵ Second, she

²³ Gyanendra Pandey and Peter Geschiere, “The Forging of Nationhood: The Contest over Citizenship, Ethnicity and History,” in Gyanendra Pandey and Peter Geschiere, *The Forging of Nationhood* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 8.

²⁴ Agnes Van Zanten and Andre Robert, “‘Plus ca Change...’? Changes and Continuities in Education Policy in France,” *Journal of Education Policy* 15, no. 1 (2000): 1, doi:10.1080/026809300285953.

²⁵ Siegel, *Moral Disarmament*.

focuses on the attempts by this group of instructors—many associated with the Socialist teacher’s union—to counter nationalist discourses and thereby eliminate “the mental arsenal of beliefs that made war imaginable and, ultimately, acceptable.” This influenced my examination of the role of educational reform movements in postwar France, as I sought to illuminate the realm of discursive possibility. Ultimately, Siegel’s teachers were successful at changing the content of national education (though not at preventing war) to an extent to which the reformers I studied could not dream. Nonetheless, that success is a useful caution against teleological understandings of history, a reminder to take seriously the paths not taken.

How should we theorize the role of school in the modern nation state? In his writings on "Ideological State Apparatuses," Louis Althusser argued the Marxist classics had well theorized the function of the repressive state apparatus and yet had left undeveloped a theory about the other heterogeneous institutions used by the ruling class to maintain the status quo, among which are "Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, [and] cultural ventures." The role of these latter institutions, in Althusser’s view, is to steep people in the ideology necessary to maintain the conditions of production. Indeed, Althusser claimed, despite the awesome repressive power of the modern state, "To my knowledge, *no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses.*"²⁶ For Althusser, moreover, the modern bourgeoisie had turned to education to replace the Church as the "dominant ideological State apparatus." The

²⁶ Louis Althusser and Ben Brewster, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 98, emphasis in original.

school's advantage is that, unlike other institutions, it "has the obligatory ... audience of the totality of the children."²⁷

Their heterogeneity, relative autonomy, and ability to operate in the private sphere made these ideological state apparatuses absolutely essential to the bourgeoisie. Yet the ideological effectiveness of schools relies on the fiction that they are autonomous.²⁸

Althusser describes the state's obfuscation:

[The bourgeois ideology is] an ideology which represents the School as a neutral environment purged of ideology (because it is ... lay), where teachers respectful of the "conscience" and "freedom" of the children who are entrusted to them (in complete confidence) by their "parents" (who are free, too, i.e. the owners of their children) open up for them the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their "liberating" virtues.²⁹

Autonomy, which permits the state to mask its influence, also allows space for opposition; the qualities that make the ideological state apparatuses so useful make them much more difficult to control. For Althusser, teachers who oppose the state are heroes because they "attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they 'teach' against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped."³⁰ One of the disadvantages of a study like this is the inability to be in the classroom itself, to observe the methods and content employed by individual teachers, to see the extent to which they taught the content given them by government programs and

²⁷ Ibid., 105.

²⁸ Althusser does not discuss the fact that the French educational system is more centralized than the systems of many other countries, in which local control is more determinative, though it is clear that he is basing his observations on the French case. Nor does he make meaningful distinctions between "centralized" or "decentralized" systems in general. Regardless, it is unclear whether the distinction would have been particularly meaningful for Althusser, as he sees the relative lack of centralization in the ISAs (in contrast with the institutions of the "Repressive State Apparatus") as central to their effective inculcation of ideology.

²⁹ Althusser and Brewster, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, 105–106. Ellipses in original.

³⁰ Ibid., 106.

textbook authors. The small set of reformers I examine are therefore proxies for this kind of investigation, given that they were more likely to discuss publicly their pedagogy and that of "traditional teachers" (even if only to oppose it).

The primary set of sources for this study will be the history textbooks designed for students in the *cours élémentaire* (CE, ages 7-8) and *cours moyen* (CM, ages 9-10) levels of the French primary school system. As Eugen Weber argued of the Third Republic, "There were no better instruments of indoctrination and patriotic conditioning than French history and geography, especially history, which 'when properly taught [is] the only means of maintaining patriotism in the generations we are bringing up.'"³¹ There are a number of reasons for choosing these grades. First, for most of this period, history education at the elementary level was taught concentrically; children learned the entire span of history in the CE and then built on it again in the CM. In later grades, history was more often taught chronologically, with each year devoted to new material. Second, curricula became more unpredictable in later years, as students were tracked into different courses of study or left school. In the early years of the postwar period, obligatory schooling ended at the primary level. I will occasionally, however, refer to these later materials and curricula in order to make comparisons. Third, and most importantly, students in the CE and CM years were encountering for the first time the history of their country. The narratives of the past (and sometimes the present) they would learn in these years were the narratives on which all their future teachers would build, against which all their future teachers would contend.

³¹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 333.

Many historians have avoided sustained use of textbooks because they seem to be, on the one hand, difficult to classify and extraordinarily complex and, on the other, numbingly formulaic and transparent. Yet, as John Issitt argues, this contradiction between real complexity and apparent simplicity is an artifact of textbooks, qua textbooks, and can be turned to the historian's advantage:

It is precisely because [textbooks] slip over and escape standard disciplinary, genre and analytic categories that they are so rich. In their creation they take their impulses from a mix of sources including the configuration of dominant ideas and social values, the commercial impulses of the publishing industry, particular academic disciplines and conventions of authorship, and from the progressive technologies of media production. Once created, they assume a position within the spectrum of genres and they achieve a temporary status as a legitimate form of knowledge by virtue of a synthesis of these factors. The definitional issues are acute and revealing because textbooks themselves lay a definitional claim to the knowledge they contain—they claim that “this is certain knowledge and this is the knowledge you need.” Embedded in textbooks therefore is a foundational epistemological assumption—that they have a status, a bona fide status with a potential for universal application.³²

Throughout this work, I will view textbooks through three lenses, all of which must be considered together to grasp a complete picture of textbooks' functions, the ways in which they change, and particularly how they influence national identity. In the first lens, textbooks are an extension of the educational ideological state apparatus. In this interpretation, textbooks serve the state's functions of governmentality by (overtly or covertly) creating identities and national histories, historicizing the status quo, socializing, and drawing distinctions between insiders and outsiders. This approach is informed by scholars of critical educational theory who have applied sophisticated theoretical tools to the study of school curriculum. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's notions of hegemony and domination by consent, these scholars have posed the question

³² John Issitt, “Reflections on the Study of Textbooks,” *History of Education* 33, no. 6 (2004): 685, doi:10.1080/0046760042000277834.

“whose knowledge is of most worth?”³³ These works demonstrate how Raymond Williams’s “selective tradition”—the selection of what has cultural value and thus may be included in a textbook—is the product of relations of cultural power.³⁴ These features were especially significant in the French case, where the influence of state-constructed curricula on the content of texts was especially heavy. In the second lens, textbook narratives are products or artifacts of a particular profession, in this case history and history writing. This feature of textbooks influences these sources in ways both subtle and profound. Especially significant in this dissertation, for example, is the belief that a certain amount of temporal distance is necessary before an event becomes “history.” Waiting for temporal distance seems to have been a factor in whether recent events were included in texts, in what narratives and chronologies could be constructed, and in the pace of change. Finally, one must consider textbooks as a genre of writing, beholden to and affected by particular conventions. As a result, radical changes in textbooks tended to occur only after reforms at the ministry level, though occasionally discursive strategies seemed to become popular through imitation, as when authors explained postwar technological change by invoking fictional families. The work of literary scholars, like that of Paul Ricoeur and Roland Barthes, on narrativity, emplotment, and myth making has been useful for exposing the discourses embedded in individual texts.³⁵

³³ Michael W. Apple, “The Text and Cultural Politics,” *Educational Researcher*, 27, no. 7 (Oct. 1992): 4.

³⁴ See John Storey’s discussion of the selective tradition in his *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, (Athens, GA, 2001), 167.

³⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1990); Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972); Hans Kellner, “Narrativity in History: Post-Structuralism and Since,” *History and Theory* 26, no. 4 (December 1, 1987): 1–29, doi:10.2307/2505042; Michael Lane, ed., *Introduction to Structuralism*. (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

This study allies itself with those of a number of recent scholars who have taken to heart the imperative of postcolonial history to link colonizing and colonized societies with more than just unidirectional relations of domination. Drawing on the insights of theorists like Edward Said, who has argued that “the Orient has helped to define Europe ... [it] is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture,”³⁶ these authors examine the ways in which the empire influences the metropolitan centers. They signal a shift from a Europe-driven story of historical development to one that locates complex interactions between metropolises and their peripheries in the construction of common pasts and linked presents. These recent attempts to “treat metropole and colony in a single analytic field”³⁷ suggest ways in which the seemingly disparate questions of decolonization, Cold War European and world politics, modernization, multiculturalism, and French national identity can be woven into a common analysis, as I have done here.

Research into colonial and postcolonial influences on France has lagged significantly behind scholarship on the British Empire, with scholars of the era’s second-largest colonial empire often taking their cues directly from scholars of the largest. It is also widely accepted that, among scholars of France, the historiography of the French

³⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 1–2, emphasis Said’s.

³⁷ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4; Examples of work in this vein include: Gregory Mann, “Locating Colonial Histories: Between France and West Africa,” *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 409–34; Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Eric T. Jennings, *Curing the Colonizers: Hydrotherapy, Climatology, and French Colonial Spas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2006); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); On the trajectory of histories of colonialism, see: Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chap. 2.

empire and of the empire's effects on metropolitan France has been driven by Anglophone historians rather than those working in France.³⁸ In the main, French scholarship has held to the “traditional argument,” associated with classic studies by Raoul Girardet and Charles-Robert Ageron, that “in its depths, France was not colonial in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries when it conquered and organized an Empire.... France was dragged into it by the colonial lobby.”³⁹ Recently, however, there has been a growth in French scholarship that argues for the importance of the colonial in modern France, much of it associated with the *Association pour la Connaissance de l'histoire de l'Afrique contemporaine* (ACHAC), which has produced a number of edited collaborations of international scope.⁴⁰ Understandably, much of the English-language work on colonialism's domestic impacts has privileged the empire's Third Republican heyday rather than the period of its demise or the years that followed, with important

³⁸ Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, for instance, applied John MacKenzie's work on British imperial propaganda (which itself drew heavily on Edward Said) to France: Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2002); John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion (1880-1960)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); On differences in colonial historiography in France and Britain, see: Jennifer M. Dueck, “The Middle East and North Africa in the Imperial and Post-Colonial Historiography of France,” *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 2007): 935–49; Eric T. Jennings, “Visions and Representations of French Empire*,” *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (September 2005): 701–21, doi:10.1086/497721.

³⁹ Charles-Robert Ageron quoted in Jennings, “Visions and Representations of French Empire*,” 701.

⁴⁰ Among the collections of the ACHAC: Blanchard et al., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*; Pascal Blanchard, *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008); Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005); Pascal Blanchard, *Le Paris arabe: deux siècles de présence des Orientaux et des Maghrébins* (Paris: La Découverte ; Génériques ; Achac, 2003); Pascal Blanchard, *De l'indigène à l'immigré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

work being done on subjects as diverse as colonial propaganda, the 1931 Colonial Exhibition, cinema, scientific knowledge, and urban planning, to name only a few.⁴¹

In her essay “Colonizing, Educating, Guiding: A Republican Duty,” Françoise Vergès poses a number of the questions that animate the present study:

Could the Empire, such as it was depicted for years to children and adults, have disappeared, have been miraculously erased by simple decree? Are we to believe that the notion of a “civilizing mission” died on a night in March 1962, when the last French colonial war came to an end? . . . It is difficult, but we must work to understand how, though indirectly and without our having any immediate contact with colonization, colonial ideology has shaped dispositions, mentalities.⁴²

Historians have turned the insights of these studies of imperialism’s links between metropole and colony to decolonization and its aftermath. In so doing, they attempt to elucidate the processes by which decolonization took hold in France; to examine the degree to which political decolonization erased colonial systems of power, techniques of governance, and forms of culture; and to analyze the extent to which “the postcolonial” describes merely a chronological moment or an analytical category. Todd Shepard’s excellent *The Invention of Decolonization*, for instance, probes legal and political discourses to explain how, during the Algerian War, the French excised Algeria from its status as part of France. In the process, Shepard concludes, fundamental concepts of

⁴¹ On propaganda: Chafer and Sackur, *Promoting the Colonial Idea*; On the 1931 Exposition: P. A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); Panivong Norindr, *Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), chap. 1, 3; Lebovics, *True France*, chap. 2; On film: David Henry Slavin, *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Norindr, *Phantasmatic Indochina*; On scientific discourses: Daniel J. Sherman, “‘Peoples Ethnographic’: Objects, Museums, and the Colonial Inheritance of French Ethnology.,” *French Historical Studies* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 669–703, doi:Article; On architecture and urban planning: Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁴² Françoise Vergès, “Colonizing, Educating, Guiding: A Republican Duty,” Blanchard et al., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, chap. 17.

citizenship within the metropole were unseated.⁴³ In *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, Kristin Ross turns to popular culture to demonstrate how the “effort that once went into maintaining and disciplining a colonial people and situation” was then spent on modernization and consumption in the postcolonial period. For Ross, this sublimation of colonialism into everyday life explains the juxtaposition of the peak period of French economic and social change with the crumbling of the French Empire in the decade preceding 1968.⁴⁴ Herman Lebovics, furthermore, has analyzed the nexus of decolonization and regionalism. On the one hand, the end of empire brought colonial methods (and indeed colonial officials) to the French provinces. André Malraux’s Ministry of Culture, for example, hired extensively from among the unemployed colonial administrators, and academic ethnographers turned their attention to the French peasantry. On the other hand, peasant-led regionalist movements, like that in Larzac in southwestern France, found common cause with antiglobalization forces and Third-Worldist/anticolonial movements in their resistance to the construction of a military installation, and the heavy-handed state it represented.⁴⁵ These are but three examples of a rapidly growing and diverse literature.⁴⁶

⁴³ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*.

⁴⁴ Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

⁴⁵ Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁴⁶ Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, “Race” and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); Alec G. Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2007); Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Daniel J. Sherman, *French Primitivism and the Ends of Empire, 1945-1975* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2011); Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

A small but growing cadre of Francophone historians and education scholars have begun to trace education about colonialism and decolonization into the postwar period, though they typically deal with the colonial question as a side note to broader educational reforms. Or these scholars tend to break the era of decolonization into two periods. They trace colonialism until the end of the Algerian War (or immediately thereafter) or else deal with decolonization in the period after 1962, rather than working across the entire period and reading these narratives against each other.⁴⁷ There are some exceptions to this trend. Yves Gaulupeau, in an article based on his master's thesis, tabulated and analysed images of colonialism and decolonization in more than three hundred primary level textbooks from 1880 to 1989. This article has been exceptionally useful in contextualizing the imagery in the works I have studied and in measuring representativeness. Nonetheless, such a short piece can do little more than thematizing, and the emphasis on images is limiting.⁴⁸ Very sophisticated research by Françoise Lantheaume traces the history curriculum on colonization and decolonization since the 1930s. Looking at textbooks and curricula for the *lycée* level, she shows the ways that colonial narratives were influenced not only by national identity but also by the changing nature of textbook authorship and history writing. She finds, moreover, that these influences often worked at cross purposes; critical approaches to history in the 1980s were often stifled by greater use of teams of authors which created polyphonic-narratives

⁴⁷ Nicolas Bancel, Daniel Denis, and Youcef Fatès, *De l'Indochine à l'Algérie: La jeunesse en mouvements des deux côtés du miroir colonial, 1940-1962* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003); Jacqueline Freyssinet-Dominjon, *Les manuels d'histoire de l'école libre, 1882-1959: De la loi Ferry à la loi Debré*. (Paris: A. Colin, 1969); Antoine Prost, *Éducation, société et politiques: Une histoire de l'enseignement en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992).

⁴⁸ Yves Gaulupeau, "Les Manuels Par L'image: Pour Une Approche Sérielle Des Contenus," *Histoire de L'éducation* 58 (May 1993): 103–35.

that undermined the construction of meaning.⁴⁹ I hope to extend her refined analysis of these trends to primary school texts and also to use the nexus of national identity link issues of colonialism and decolonization to other important narratives of the period.

What emerges from this body of scholarship is that decolonization was almost never only about the Empire; it was always already about France. The division between the empire and the nation was always a tenuous one, a fact embodied in the popular colonial-era phrase “one-hundred million Frenchmen.” This phrase suggests the peculiarly French understanding of the empire as somehow part of the nation, rather than the reverse. Apparently, the empire existed in a liminal space between inclusive and exclusive notions of the French nation, a space likewise occupied by the colonial subject and later the postcolonial immigrant. With the end of empire went a distinctive concept of the French nation. One set of scholars on French colonialism contend that France truly became a nation-state only after decolonization, and that, prior to 1962, terms that more accurately represent the intertwining of colonial empire and French nation are necessary.⁵⁰ Thus, the question that bears asking is: was decolonization subtraction or division? And, this research demonstrates, France was an “empire-nation” in more than just a political sense; the colonies and the colonized were an integral part of the cultural and social universe of the French citizen, in ways both overt and covert. Furthermore, as will be evident in the work to follow, colonial motifs, tropes, myths, and discourses

⁴⁹ Françoise Lantheaume, “Manuels d’histoire et colonisation,” *Lidil. Revue de linguistique et de didactique des langues*, no. 35 (March 26, 2009): 159–75; Françoise Lantheaume, “L’enseignement de l’histoire de la colonisation et de la décolonisation de l’Algérie depuis les années trente” (Ph.D. diss, École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2002).

⁵⁰ Frederick Cooper chooses the term “empire-state” in *Colonialism in Question*, 153; Blanchard et al. argue that “the concept of empire-nation ... was central to the way in which citizenship was constructed” in *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, 20; Wilder chooses the term “French imperial nation-state” in *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005).

continued to be prominent in the (superficially unrelated) discourses of the postcolonial period: modernization, immigration, and globalization, for instance. The sublimation of colonial frames of mind into postcolonial worldviews was especially evident in the narratives presented to students in their schoolbooks. In other words, Phillip Naylor argues, “The colonial myth may have been ‘decolonized,’ but not necessarily ‘demythified.’”⁵¹

The mandate of postcolonial scholarship—to examine how colonialism shapes and constructs metropolitan identities—suggests another perspective on French schools during colonialism: French schools not only taught student *about* the Empire, they taught students how *to be imperial*. As Nicolas Bancel and Daniel Denis argue, “*Imperial culture*, through targeted means of forming and educating the youth, was a major factor in the creation of a ‘Homo imperialis’ in metropolitan France.”⁵² In this dissertation, I unpack the ways in which history texts implicated students in the colonial order. This requires attention to what Richard Venezky calls the “manifest curriculum” and the “latent curriculum” of textbook narratives.⁵³ Uncovering the latent curriculum requires applying to texts the methods of literary criticism, reading educational practices against the narratives and methods of reformers, and contextualizing textbooks in broader discourses. In what overt and subtle ways did historical narratives encourage young people to view France and French people as worthy of rule over others? How were

⁵¹ Phillip Chiviges Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 52.

⁵² Nicolas Bancel and Daniel Davis, “Education: Becoming ‘Homo Imperialis’ (1910-1940),” in Blanchard et al., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, 276.

⁵³ Nancy Popson, “The Ukrainian History Textbook: Introducing Children to the ‘Ukrainian Nation,’” *Nationalities Papers* 29, no. 2 (2001): 326–327, doi:10.1080/00905990120053764.

students expected to make sense of the dramatic loss of the Empire? Did the Homo imperialis worldview remain, directed into new contexts?

In Chapter One, I examine the history textbooks of the *cours élémentaire*, the first two years of French primary schooling, in the quarter century following the end of Second World War, the period of colonialism's twilight. The narratives on imperialism employed by these texts were remarkably consistent, in keeping with the predominant influence of state-determined curricula on textbook authorship. Textbook chapters on the empire were structured around the heroic biography of the conquering leader or colonial administrator. Analysis of both the texts and the images show that these chapters committed "symbolic violence" against the historical record of imperialism and the colonized people who were made objects of their own history. Authors generally obscured the violence inherent in colonial conquest and created a set of Janus-faced images of native peoples typical of Orientalist discourses. As colonial histories constructed particular notions of what it meant to be a colonized "other," they also constituted what it meant to be French. This process encouraged young students to identify with and imagine their own place in the colonial system. Textbooks, therefore, were used to inscribe colonial rule on the minds of France's youngest citizens. These textbook narratives remained remarkably consistent throughout this period despite the profound changes occurring throughout the empire. Textbook narratives changed significantly only when methodological reforms in history education at the primary level largely eliminated narrative history from the *cours élémentaire* around 1969. As later chapters of the dissertation will show, however, the discursive elements of these heroic

epics survived into later narratives as French authors tried to imagine the character of postcolonial France.

Chapter 2 is the first of two chapters in this dissertation that explores counter-narratives to the discourses employed by textbook authors, politicians, and officials. I investigate the work of contemporary "progressive" reforms and reformers in an attempt to sketch out the realm of what reforms were "thinkable" in particular historical contexts. The chapter considers the educational reforms of Célestin Freinet's *Écoles Modernes* movement. The Freinet movement encouraged student production of texts in ways that inverted the top-down educational practices of the state. The French education system was far from the monolithic Leviathan it is usually imagined to be. Officials sometimes gave considerable latitude to the reformers, though that leeway frequently depended on the good graces of individual administrators. Though these methods reversed the direction of knowledge production in traditional education, the rural strength of the movement and Freinet pedagogy's emphasis on students' daily lives led to surprising results. On the one hand, comparison of the student-produced *Le Tour de France de Gutric* and the classic textbook *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* by G. Bruno demonstrates that children fashioned materials that seemed strikingly traditional on the surface. Likewise, texts emanating from the Empire could smack of exoticism. These criticisms were at the heart of the Communist Party's criticisms of fellow-traveler Freinet. Communist educational policy advocated the traditional delivery of progressive to ensure message discipline, whereas Freinet's emphasis on methodological reforms and student-centered pedagogy made control of content difficult. On the other hand, the Freinet method permitted students to create alternate visions of national belonging, to

write about topics like modernization and decolonization more critically than many textbooks, and allowed colonial students to write back to the metropole, reversing the colonial gaze.

In the last years of the colonial empire, the French educational system devoted considerable resources to convincing French students that imperialism was necessary—even beneficial—and to encouraging youngsters to see themselves as imperial citizens with responsibilities to the colonial system. In Chapter 3, I examine textbooks for *cours moyens* students (nine and ten-year olds) to explain the process by which authors replaced this rhetoric with narratives of decolonization. To deal with the profound loss of the empire, authors absorbed the concept of “decolonization” as part of the “tide of history” leading inexorably toward its predetermined end: independence. While Todd Shepard argues the broader public sphere embraced this narrative almost immediately, I find that institutional and disciplinary factors slowed considerably the adoption of the decolonization narrative in school texts. The result was a slow and messy process by which authors created foundational myths of decolonization, situated them historically, and probed them for lessons about France's past, its present, and its future.

The discourse of modernization, which became increasingly prominent in postwar textbooks for young students, is the subject of Chapter 4. A consensus among authors developed that modernization would allow a France of “modest dimensions”—reduced in size, weakened internationally, and chastened by anticolonial conflicts—to act like a great power once again. Modernity became the new barometer of French grandeur, as imperial power (political, military, and economic) was reconstituted as economic power in the metropole. Then, in turn, the success of French modernization became a reason for

France to reassert its influence overseas, especially in the former colonies. The fatalism of postwar modernization engendered anxiety and excitement. Like decolonization, modernization seemed teleological, a global process that France had to adapt to (or ideally lead) lest the country be left behind in "bitter mediocrity" or even be colonized itself. In constructing these narratives of French technological superiority, textbooks borrowed notions of conquest, heroism, *mise en valeur*, and the civilizing mission at the heart of imperialism.

Decolonization and the labor requirements of modernization conspired to bring formerly colonized people closer to the metropole than they had ever been before, as large-scale immigration from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia became a feature of postwar life. Thus, the contradictions between integration and differentiation at the heart of the colonial enterprise were recreated within the nation-state. As Chapter Five shows, in the 1970s and 1980s, reformers in teachers' unions, classrooms, and community organizations experimented with interculturalism—a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the acceptance of difference, the inclusion of non-dominant cultures, and the importance of non-discrimination and social justice—to address the integration of immigrant communities into French society. They did so largely, as did the Freinet teachers, out of conviction that these reforms were necessary to the practical success of their charges. Though interculturalism has typically been thought anathema to the French case, reformers working with immigrant populations in this period often found a sympathetic state, or at least a benignly neglectful one. Yet, when state discourses about immigrants and multiculturalism became harsher with the headscarf affairs in 1989, it

became clear that the practicality of reformers had failed to translate into a national debate that might decouple the discourses of assimilation and integration.

The Epilogue, in lieu of a conclusion, moves beyond of the realm of education to explore some of the prominent ways in which the legacy of colonialism and decolonization continues to influence debates about French national identity into the twenty-first century. I look particularly at three domains: government legislation of interpretations of the French past and public presentation of Muslim women, the periodic civil unrest by largely minority youths in the *banlieues*, and France's foreign policy and response to globalization. The kinds of discourses about French identity instilled in schools over the previous half-century resurface in often surprising ways within all of these domains. Indeed, at times, the state, the French racial majority and minorities, and even the governments of the global South appear locked in a kind of postcolonial theater in which each actor has a role to play, a role it has not entirely chosen for itself. Understanding these roles requires looking to the ways in which French identity in the second half of the twentieth century is shot through by vestiges of France's colonial past.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE OF THE HEROIC NARRATIVE: COLONIAL
CONQUEST IN *COURS ÉLÉMENTAIRE* TEXTBOOKS, 1944-1985

A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present ... these are the essential conditions for being a people.

Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*

The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time does it ever endeavor to cover up this nature of things. Every statue of Faidherbe or Lyautey, Bugeaud or Blandan, every one of these conquistadors ensconced on colonial soil, is a constant reminder of one and the same thing: “We are here by the force of the bayonet ...”

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

As Frantz Fanon argues in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the colonial regime constantly inscribes the violence of its conquest on the conquered’s territory. The statues of colonial heroes like Lyautey and Bugeaud were “constant reminder[s]” of the colonized’s subject status and the means by which such status might be retained. Moreover, according to Fanon, this concern with testing the bounds of hierarchy becomes a sort of paranoia for the colonizer; the result of this paranoia is the seed of colonialism’s destruction. One might ask, then, a complementary question to Fanon’s: in what ways do colonial metropolises inscribe their rule over colonial subjects on the minds of those at home?

This chapter analyzes textbook narratives about colonial history that were directed at some of the youngest students (ages seven and eight) in France, those of the *cours*

élémentaire, during colonialism's twilight.¹ It argues that these colonial histories were not just descriptive but constitutive. They implanted on pupils' minds particular narratives that supported the colonial system, established colonial roles for France and for indigenous people, and implicated young children in imperialism by encouraging them to identify with colonial heroes and to imagine themselves as imperialists. These textbooks accounts changed very little until late in the postwar period, when a set of reforms in the 1970s and 1980s began to unsettle history education at the primary level. Despite this inertia, later discussions of postwar France (particularly of decolonization and modernization) would be conditioned by and would borrow from these colonial narratives.

Textbooks always contained entries on colonialism, and the topics covered were remarkably consistent: the capture and loss of India and Canada, the conquest of Algeria, and Third Republican imperialism, particularly in Morocco. Furthermore, the texts were

¹ The textbooks examined for this chapter were: André Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, Cours Gauthier-Deschamps (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1956); Antoine Bonifacio and Paul Maréchal, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire et moyen*, Classiques Hachette (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1956); Eugène Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France: cours élémentaire classes de 9e et 8e des lycées et collèges*, France et civilisation (Paris: Bibliothèque d'éducation, 1947); Martial Chaulanges and Simone Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France: cours élémentaire, classes de 10e et 9e*, Cours d'histoire M. et S. Chaulanges (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1958); Martial Chaulanges and Simone Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France: cours élémentaire, première année, classe de 10e*, Cours d'histoire M. et S. Chaulanges (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1969); Martial Chaulanges and Simone Chaulanges, *L'éveil à l'histoire: cours élémentaire*, Nouv. éd.. (Paris: Delagrave, 1975); Martial Chaulanges and Simone Chaulanges, *Premières images d'histoire de France: cours élémentaire, Ire année* (Paris: Delagrave, 1958); J Fuster, *Premier Livre D'histoire de France: Cours Élémentaire et Classes de 10e et 9e*. (Paris: A. Michel (Impr. de P. Dupont), 1949); Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt and Edmond Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France: pour le cours élémentaire et les classes de 10e et 9e*, 7e édition. (Paris: Librairie A. Colin, Editions Bourrelrier, 1967); Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt and Edmond Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France: pour le cours élémentaire et les classes de 10e et 9e* (Paris: Ed. Bourrelrier, 1955); Henri Grimal and Lucien Moreau, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire* (Paris: F. Nathan, 1967); Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire*, Nouvelle édition, 49e édition. (Paris: A. Colin, 1957); Joseph Plothier and Ch. Triaud, *L'Histoire de France vivante: des origines à la Libération cours élémentaire Ire et 2e année, cours moyen Ire année*, 13th ed., Collection Edsco (Chambéry: les Éditions scolaires, 1949); Henri Pomot and Henri Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français: cours élémentaire* (Paris: Imprimerie Georges Lang, 194AD); Philippe Rambaud, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire Ire et 2e années* (Maisons-Lafitte: Seder, 1974).

generally presented as a heroic biography of the conquering leader or colonial administrator. For instance, the titles of entries on the first colonial empire more often referenced the military leaders “Montcalm” and “Dupleix” than the territories they conquered, “Canada” and “India,” respectively. Similarly, entries on the imperialism of the Third Republic were most often associated with the men who conquered and administered those colonies: Lyautey, Brazza, and occasionally Gallieni. The texts on the conquest of Algeria were the least identified with individual action, though the Duc d’Aumale and Bugeaud figured prominently. The consistency of the content is also evident in what is *not* discussed. Textbook almost never included what would be the longest-held part of France’s first colonial empire, the islands of the Caribbean.² And only the most cursory references were made to some of the more important jewels of overseas France, such as Indochina or Senegal.³

In the early postwar period, history textbooks remained very conservative; they changed very little in their approach to national identity from the textbooks of the late nineteenth-century period of nationalization. Scholars of the French education system and of French nationalism have posited that the historical narratives taught in French schools retained a certain nineteenth-century quality well into the twentieth. The textbook written by Ernest Lavissee, whom Pierre Nora included in his seminal *Lieux de Mémoire* as “the nation’s teacher,” was published in new editions into the mid-twentieth

² Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*; and Jean-Claude Hinnewinkel, Jean-Michel Sivirine, and Anne Duchesne, *Histoire, géographie, éducation civique, C.E.: conforme aux instructions officielles de 1985* (Paris: Nathan, 1985) are the exceptions.

³ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*; Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*; Fuster, *Premier Livre D’histoire de France*; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956; Lavissee, *Histoire de France*; Rambaud, *Histoire de France*.

century and its influence on later texts was felt long after.⁴ In her polemical *Le mythe nationale*, Suzanne Citron argued that the French educational system and the discipline of History were guilty of reifying an oppressive and hegemonic concept of the French nation.⁵ As Ann-Louise Shapiro contends, “In practice, the ideal of history as a legacy between generations was often quite real, as elementary school texts remained largely unchanged from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1960s, with children typically using the schoolbooks of their parents and, in poorer areas, those of their grandparents.”⁶

Some scholars have argued that, as Fanon suggests in the opening passage, the violence carried out by imperial powers had an educative dimension. As James Hevia puts it, in his work on China after the Boxer Rebellion, Europeans engaged in “symbolic warfare,” which had two faces—“the retaliatory and the pedagogical”—by “assault[ing] ... what they understood as important symbols of Chinese sovereignty.”⁷ In this chapter, however, I argue that the inverse is also true; particularly (though by no means exclusively) in the context of imperialism, pedagogy can be violent.

The violence embodied in these textbook narratives, however, is not physical violence, but the kind of “symbolic violence” that comes with the reification of relations of power. As Bourdieu and Passeron contend, “All pedagogic action (PA) is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary

⁴ Pierre Nora, “Lavisser, The Nation’s Teacher,” Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory*, 2. Traditions: 151–186.

⁵ David A. Bell, “Review: Recent Works on Early Modern French National Identity,” *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 100.

⁶ Ann-Louise Shapiro, “Fixing History: Narratives of World War I in France,” *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 113.

⁷ James L. Hevia, “Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement,” *Modern China* 18, no. 3 (July 1, 1992): 304–305.

power.”⁸ Pedagogic actions include, on the one hand, methodological practices that favor the dominant classes and exclude subordinated social groups (or, more insidiously, encourage subordinated groups to self-exclude). More significantly for our purposes, on the other hand, pedagogic actions include the content of the dominant culture, a culture seen as legitimate, authoritative, and value-neutral and a culture to which dominant groups possess greater access. Following on Bourdieu’s insights, educational theorists and scholars argue that the processes of determining “whose knowledge is of most worth” (and, thus, is included in textbooks) are riddled by power, politics, and cultural hegemony. “Such battles,” claim Michael Apple and Kristen Buras, “we must understand, are constitutive; they create insiders and outsiders and reveal the often tense relationship between ‘popular’ and ‘official’ understandings.”⁹ In much the same way, Gyanendra Pandey describes the “routine violence” that undergirds nations, histories, identities, and social categories:

There is a violence written into the making and continuation of contemporary political arrangements, and into the production and reproduction of majorities and minorities, which I have called *routine violence*. The present study is concerned with the routine violence of our history and politics. It is about the enabling conditions of what is commonly seen as violence, but suggests that these conditions—political stipulations, history writing, the construction of majorities and minorities, the education of marginalized and subordinated groups and assemblages—are themselves shot through with violence.¹⁰

An important feature of the symbolic violence of pedagogic action is the disguise of the violence itself and of the arbitrary power relations that undergird the culture being

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (London: SAGE, 1990), 5.

⁹ Michael W. Apple and Kristen L. Buras, *The Subaltern Speak: Curriculum, Power, and Educational Struggles* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

¹⁰ Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 1.

transmitted. For Bourdieu and Passeron, this “misrecognition of the objective truth of cultural arbitrariness” is vital to process by which learners come to see certain cultures as “legitimate.”¹¹ In summarizing Bourdieu’s and Passeron’s views, Lakomski points out that the authority of pedagogy “exists precisely to the extent that neither its dependence on the power structure nor the nature of the culture to be imposed is recognized ‘objectively.’ Indeed, it is constantly misrecognized because pedagogic authority entails a conception of education as ‘mere communication’.”¹² How, then, did textbook authors encourage the misrecognition of the symbolic violence of textbooks and produce the illusion of mere communication? How did they obscure the ways in which textbooks drove young people to construct the causal connections, habits of mind, and cultural assumptions necessary for those children to identify with French imperialism?

I argue that the answer to these questions can be found in the narrative mode used in this period to write history textbooks. It is clear that both state officials and textbook authors thought of themselves as purveyors of narratives. The program of 1945, which with minor revisions governed *cours élémentaire* curriculum throughout the period of these textbooks, informed teachers and authors that

history will be reduced to some simple and concrete narratives devoted to great figures and to the most outstanding episodes of our national life and to commentaries on some original documents or representative engravings of great monuments and of famous men. The narratives may furnish the occasion to draw an elementary picture of the material life and the social life of the different epochs of history.¹³

¹¹ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, 22.

¹² Gabriele Lakomski, “On Agency and Structure: Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron’s Theory of Symbolic Violence,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 14, no. 2 (1984): 154, doi:10.2307/3202178.

¹³ Bulletin officiel de ministère de l’Éducation nationale, n^o 52, 1945, p. 3,486, quoted in Patrick Garcia and Jean Leduc, *L’enseignement de L’histoire En France: De L’ancien Régime À Nos Jours* (Paris: A. Colin, 2003), 179.

The cover of Ernest Lavissee's elementary level of the *Histoire de France* heralded this narrative bent. An image of an old man surrounded by young children accompanies a short notice by Lavissee: "The teaching of history to the little ones should be a succession of stories like those told by grandfathers to their grandchildren."¹⁴ Both the 1945 program and Lavissee's text echo the view of culture as objective that Bourdieu claimed was so vital to the misrecognition of symbolic violence: historical narratives are "simple," "concrete," and "elementary," and they recall no less a natural authority figure than the student's father or grandfather.

Yet, even in the sparse and prosaic sounding history texts for such young children, these textbook narratives are more than just disjointed lists of events or even the quaint sounding "succession of stories" described by Lavissee. Literary theory and philosophy demonstrate the ways that narrative discourse and history discourse are intertwined. Narratives, especially historical narratives, provide meaning to individual events just as the succession of events provides implicit meaning to the narrative. For philosopher Paul Ricoeur, narrative is the essential paradigm by which humans interpret their lives and construct their personal histories: "As a consequence, an event must be more than just a singular occurrence. It gets its definition from its contribution to the development of the plot... In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession."¹⁵ Likewise, in *Historical Discourse*, Roland Barthes has argued, "In fully constituted 'flowing' discourse the facts function irresistibly

¹⁴ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*.

¹⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, 65.

either as indexes or as links in an indexical sequence.”¹⁶ Even for narratives that appear to be such simplistic series of events as to be value-free and transparent, theorists suggest that narratives are so familiar to us and so integral to our understanding of the world that we as readers supply causality and meaning. Readers seek out the familiar elements of stories, such as “logical coherence” and “an inversion of situation, a change of fortunes—from good to bad, from bad to good, or ... just an ‘after’ different from ‘before’.”¹⁷

Narrative, in summation, is a vital concept for understanding how a textbook could enact symbolic violence. “Narratives establish causal connections and map lessons and truths from the actions of their characters,” anthropologist Danny Hoffman writes. “Beyond simple representation or performance, narrativity implies a symbolic reconstitution of disparate elements into coherent (if not entirely transparent) form.”¹⁸ Historical narratives, then, are not (despite their pretensions to transparency) “simple representation[s]” of the past, but rather strategic constructs meant to communicate, to establish causality, and to make truth claims. In fact, this chapter will attempt to problematize even attempts to “represent” the imperial past, including the use of images. Thus, this chapter will lay bare authors’ attempts—both explicit and implicit—to use narrative to create meaning and identities under the guise of simple representation.

In their attempts to justify and naturalize French imperialism abroad, textbook authors drew from a remarkably consistent set of historical events and images and of

¹⁶ Roland Barthes, “Historical Discourse,” in *Introduction to Structuralism*, ed. M. Lane (New York, 1970), 153, quoted in Kellner, “Narrativity in History,” 3.

¹⁷ Roberto Franzosi, “Narrative Analysis-Or Why (And How) Sociologists Should Be Interested in Narrative,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (January 1, 1998): 520–521. Though these criteria apply to the kinds of historical narratives under examination here, other narrative forms—surrealism, for example—do reject many of these conventions and were artistically significant at the time.

¹⁸ Danny Hoffman, “West-African Warscapes: Violent Events as Narrative Blocs: The Disarmament at Bo, Sierra Leone,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 333.

narrative tropes and strategies: 1) Indigenous people were held responsible for their own colonization because of some social deficiency, typically internal warfare, piracy, or slavery; 2) Colonial heroes were uniquely able to know and understand the natives and to use that knowledge to achieve imperial success; 3) For all the emphasis on biography, with the exception of Abdelkader¹⁹ in Algeria and Makoko in the Congo, indigenous leaders went unnamed; 4) Violence was obscured, but only the violence of the colonizers; 5) French attempts to bring civilization, modernity and economic development to the colonies were stressed; 6) Colonial subjects became “friends” of the French, and French influence (particularly linguistic influence) continued into the present; 7) Visual imagery was almost never photographic and yet the texts treated the images as real. That the basket of material from which authors drew changed very little over this period speaks to the relatively slow pace of change in educational materials. Nonetheless, as will be evident in later chapters of this dissertation, this set of colonial discourses would be influential in the texts of later eras.

To what extent are the texts under discussion here representative, either of the larger corpus of textbooks directed at students of similar age or of all narratives of colonial history taught in schools during the period? Admittedly, this chapter is not overly concerned with representativeness; the task of this chapter is rather to illuminate the ways in which textbook authors used narrative to make surprisingly consistent claims about France’s colonial history. This task requires a microscopic rather than a panoramic lens. In fact, given the powerful influence of the nationally-created curriculum over the content of textbooks in France, it seems unlikely that a broader approach would have

¹⁹ For the sake of clarity, I will use the common English rendering “Abdelkader” throughout, except in cases where other transliterations are found in the sources.

yielded significantly different results. In favoring depth over breadth, I have chosen a limited sample of textbooks, and the number of entries on colonialism within each text is small. Indeed, the section on Lyautey's Morocco takes an intentionally non-representative bent, focusing primarily on a single textbook narrative (despite its being in some ways atypical) because it so richly expressed the Lyautey myth.²⁰

Regardless, more broadly based research, like Yves Gaulupeau's excellent analysis of the visual representations of colonialism in textbooks from 1880 to 1969, suggests that the sources under discussion here were not significantly unlike others from the period directed at students in the elementary grades. Gaulupeau argues that French textbook narratives were, consistent with the program of 1945, especially concerned with the "colonial epic," in which the heroic officer features prominently:

From 1880 to 1969, the major fact resides in the massive predominance of themes linked to the conquest of the Empire, in other words to the colonial epic. In effect, if it was most predominant during the first period [1880-1918], contemporaneous to the act [of conquest], it only declined very slowly over the course of the following two periods [1919-1944 and 1945-1969]. Henceforth, what was at issue, was less the effect of current affairs than the formation and the consolidation of a myth, in which the central hero remains, unperturbed until the bitter end of the empire, the colonial officer, at the head of his zouaves, of his spahis or of his tirailleurs sénégalais (or Annamese): a stereotype sufficiently well

²⁰ Lyautey was not the only colonial hero represented in textbook entries on the Third Republic. Gallieni and Brazza were also popular choices. Lyautey was represented more heavily in the 1940s and 1950s, with Brazza and Gallieni gaining ground in the late 1950s and 1960s. Nonetheless, entries focusing on other Third Republic colonizers fashioned similar "heroic narratives" as those on Lyautey. I have chosen to focus on "Lyautey, the builder" because it exposes so many of the underlying themes of heroic colonial narratives. Furthermore, there was a distinction between textbooks for students in only the first year of the *cours élémentaire* and textbooks meant to be employed in both years. The latter tended to emphasize the heroic individual (the great man), whereas the former generally took a broader, more thematic approach, with lessons on "France d'outre-mer." Nonetheless, the overwhelmingly positive view of French imperialism was just as evident in both formats.

established, as it happens, to resist so many assaults caused by the history-battle of which it constitutes one of the jewels.²¹

Furthermore, Edward Berenson's recent monograph *Heroes of Empire* shows convincingly that "from 1870 to 1914, what attracted ordinary citizens in Britain and France to empire were stories by and about the charismatic individuals who gave imperialism a recognizable, human face."²² At least for *cours élémentaire* students, colonial heroism remained the dominant form in which textbooks recounted French imperial history until the early 1970s.²³

Finally, this chapter is not an attempt to determine whether textbook histories were accurate or "true." Scholars of nationalism have long recognized the complicated relationship between discourses about the nation—discourses in which textbook narratives obviously participate—and truth. Hence the terminology often used to express the sense of national belonging: "imagined community" or "the invention of tradition," for example. In one of the earliest classic statements of nationalism, Ernest Renan poignantly argued that "forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a

²¹ Gaulupeau, "Les Manuels Par L'image: Pour Une Approche Sérielle Des Contenus," 112. Though Gaulupeau's study centers explicitly on textbook images as opposed to text, he argues that there was "profound coherence which, from the point of view of theme, unified text and image," 106.

²² Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 2.

²³ The role of the "hero" in history is a subset of a much larger question about the role of human agency as opposed to deterministic social forces (or even supernatural forces?) in historical events. This historiographical debate was, of course, occurring during the period under study here, including in France itself, between traditional history focused on "great men" and Marxist social history or the *Annales* School, which looked for historical causality in class structures, economic developments, or even the environment. The curricular reforms I examine later in this chapter, in fact, owed a great deal to the influence of these new varieties of history. Sidney Hook, draws a distinction between the "eventful man" whose influence on history largely results from "accidents of position" and the "event-making man" whose influence is a result of "outstanding capacities" in *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 98–99.

crucial factor in the creation of a nation.”²⁴ And, yet, in his work *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson warns against too easily “assimilat[ing] ‘invention’ to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity,’ rather than to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’.”²⁵ Bourdieu and like-minded scholars do argue that the omission of material deemed illegitimate or unworthy by those in power is an important dimension of the symbolic violence carried out in schools. Yet, given that invention, imagination, forgetting, and historical error are at the heart of discourses of national (and imperial) identification, scouring particular textbook narratives for examples of falsification and omission seems like pursuing a forgone conclusion. Therefore, when I do cite cases of falsification and elision, the purpose will be to use these exclusions to help to elucidate the ways in which authors created particular kinds of meaning and particular truth claims. In other words, there seem to be more pointed questions to ask about textbook narratives: With what “truth” about the overseas empire were France’s youngest students presented? What sense of the role of the French and of indigenous populations in imperial expansion might those narratives have implanted in children’s minds? How did textbooks and the narrative modes they employed create this sense of truth?

France’s First Colonial Heroes: Dupleix and Montcalm

When students were introduced to the pantheon of French colonial heroes in their textbooks, they would first encounter Dupleix and Montcalm, the officers responsible for conquering India and Canada, respectively. Across the numerous versions of elementary

²⁴ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation,” trans. Martin Thom, in Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), 8–22.

²⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

textbooks, the narratives of French colonial grandeur in India and Canada changed little. The themes and structures of these narratives were, furthermore, often repeated in the narratives of territorial conquest in North Africa.

Textbook authors usually began by describing the physical and human environment of the two territories. Indian society was portrayed as materially wealthy and politically divided. Orientalist visions of Indian finery were abundant in late-twentieth century textbooks. Consider Henri Pomot's description of the princely palaces of India: "[India's] riches were fabulous. Everywhere, in the palaces of the Hindu princes, or *nababs*, shone marble, ivory, gold, precious stones. The throne was of massive gold, carried by columns of gold."²⁶ But, if India had an original sin, it would seem to have been political disunity. India's divisions, authors claimed, meant that despite Indian princes' vast territorial holdings and material wealth, "they did not get along with each other and continually made war."²⁷ This foreshadowed the opportunity for textbook authors to invoke one of the most common justifications for colonization: pacification of internecine conflicts.

In the narratives of French colonization of both India and Canada, Dupleix and Montcalm used their understanding of indigenous cultures and societies to achieve colonization, often through negotiation rather than violence. Textbook entries on both Dupleix and Montcalm both noted their "cleverness," which seemed to extend beyond military matters to an anthropological sense of indigenous peoples. Vital to Dupleix's anthropological sense and his success in acquiring alliances and territory was his Indian-

²⁶ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 65. See also Fuster, *Premier livre d'histoire de France*, 1949, p. 72: "The Hindu sovereign—the *soubab*—is seated on his throne, under a tent dripping with silk, with *cashmere*, with pieces of embroidery, all dazzling with gems and with gold."

²⁷ *Ibid.*

born wife, who “knew the Hindu language and customs.”²⁸ In these texts, Dupleix’s understanding of and “respect” for native customs prefigures that of later colonial consuls, like Bugeaud and Lyautey, whose knowledge about native societies would earn them the nickname “African.” With his wife’s assistance, Dupleix took advantage of the political rivalries of the “Hindu princes,” offering protection to the princes in exchange for territory.²⁹ Pradel’s 1955 text makes Dupleix’s acquisitions seem more like gifts than the spoils of negotiations: “[Dupleix] knew the country well and he succeeded in becoming a friend of numerous Hindu princes who gave him great expanses of territory.”³⁰ His task was made easier by the “feminine penetrability” that was, in Edward Said’s estimation, central to European visions of the Orient.³¹ In the general textbook narrative, imperialism in India was a necessary response to the material wealth of the territory and the political disunity that prevented native populations from properly exploiting it.

²⁸ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 108.

²⁹ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 68.

³⁰ Marc Vincent and Émile Pradel, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire* (Paris: Société universitaire d’éditions et de librairie, 1955), 65.

³¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 206. See also Valerie Kennedy, *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000), 41–42.



Figure 1.1. “The death of Montcalm.” Source: Henri Pomot and Henri Bessiege, *Petite histoire du peuple français* (Paris: Georges Lang, 194?), 64.

While Indian society, according to textbooks, was marked by social deficiencies, Canada before the European presence appeared to lack any form of the social at all. Indeed, Bonne wrote, “Canada is a very different country from India.”³² “Canada,” according to Pomot, “was a still savage country, with a harsh climate, and covered by immense forests.”³³ The “Redskins” who inhabited the country also could not have been more different from the inhabitants of France’s South Asian possession. Rather than an organized feudal society governed by princes, Native American society was still seen as one of noble savages who “pass their time at war or at hunting.”³⁴ The pictures that graced entries on Montcalm almost always featured him with native chiefs or warriors to emphasize that Montcalm governed Canada with the support of the native populations.³⁵ A drawing titled “The Death of Montcalm,” for example, portrayed a native warrior crying at Montcalm’s side as the French leader died (figure 1.1). Unlike the “Hindus,”

³² Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 69.

³³ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 64.

³⁴ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 69.

³⁵ “Then the Redskins helped Montcalm to resist the English,” Vincent and Pradel, *Histoire de France*, 65.

who “fortunately . . . were not brave,”³⁶ the inhabitants of Canada were warriors swayed to the French cause by Montcalm’s bravery.³⁷ For both Duplex and Montcalm, it was their ability to read the social values of the indigenous society that drove colonization. Textbook language that portrayed indigenous societies as eminently knowable and, more importantly, knowable by the “clever” French, undergirded claims about the legitimacy of the colonial project. As will become clear, this ethnographic sense, which was established by these first narratives of colonialism in each text, would resurface in the narratives of the Algerian conquest and the Third Republic empires that followed. Authors used old conquests to grant legitimacy to newer ones.

Images like that of Native Americans attending to Montcalm’s death raise questions about the use of textbook illustrations. Few textbooks at this level from the period used photographs, even for contemporary subjects, or exact reproductions of high-art paintings. Rather, most used simple illustrations representing subjects from the text; in this, these illustrations are *themselves* narrative texts that cannot be divorced from the accompanying text. Moreover, the illustrations, when examined in conversation with the discussion questions and captions that often accompanied them, reveal that textbook authors and editors intended the illustrations to be read transparently as historical sources contributing to interpretation rather than as interpretations themselves. In other words, illustrations carried out the misrecognition of the cultural arbitrariness. The discussion questions that accompanied such images lay bare the narrative strategies being employed by textbooks. For one drawing in Gautrot Lacourt’s 1955 text showing Montcalm conversing with a native chief (figure 1.2), students were asked, “Were the Redskins

³⁶ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 65.

³⁷ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 69.

friends of the French?” For any student who might have answered the former question in the negative, the latter question would push the student to reconsider her response: “Who offered the pipe to Montcalm?”³⁸ Gautrot Lacourt has closed the circle. Why, after all, would the chief offer Montcalm the pipe if they were not friends? These questions and the intended answers attempted to convince students that the French governed with the consent of the native population.



Figure 1.2. Montcalm accepting a pipe from “the Redskins.” Illustration by Raoul Auger. Source: Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt and Edmond Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (Paris: Bourrelier, 1955), 53.

Just as French “cleverness” legitimized colonial domination, so did the military might of the French army. Textbooks generally made it a priority to recount initial French military success against larger numbers of British troops. A hallmark peculiar to textbook narratives on Indian and Canadian colonization, however, was that a lack of political will in the metropole caused the eventual failure of the colonial project. Louis

³⁸ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (1955), 53.

XV, in particular, was blamed for his unwillingness to send proper reinforcements to Dupleix and Montcalm in their battles against the British. Pradel's 1955 text, for example, drew an explicit contrast between Montcalm's army's success against the British and Louis XV's unwillingness to hold the colonial line: "When the war began between France and England, Montcalm beat the English many times, but he did not have enough soldiers; he asked for more from France, but the king did not send them to him."³⁹ Indeed, Louis XV was often portrayed as weak, ineffectual, and easily duped. For example, textbook narratives argued that Louis XV recalled Dupleix from India at British request, despite the fact that Dupleix was succeeding famously on the ground.⁴⁰

The narratives of Montcalm and Dupleix both end tragically for the military leader. Montcalm's death at the battle of Quebec and often his last words—"I am dying happy, I will not see the English in Quebec"—were recounted frequently in textbook lessons.⁴¹ In addition to providing opportunities to include pictures of indigenous warriors tending to the dying Montcalm, these narratives make Montcalm into a tragic hero who has given everything to the colonial cause and to France. Though Dupleix did not die in India, he did give everything to the empire. After Louis XV "recalled him to France," "this great man died there, in misery."⁴² Later colonial heroes—Lyautey, Gallieni, Brazza—will also be portrayed as selfless men giving their lives to France's imperial mission, though they will not appear as tragic figures. The tragic hero narrative

³⁹ Vincent and Pradel, *Histoire de France*, 65.

⁴⁰ Fuster, *Premier Livre D'histoire de France*, 72.

⁴¹ Vincent and Pradel, *Histoire de France*, 65. See also Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 99; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 122; Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 65; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1967)*, 52.

⁴² Fuster, *Premier Livre D'histoire de France*, 72.

was unique to entries on France's first colonial empire despite the fact that, for example, Lyautey's unceremonious removal from his post as Governor-General during the Riff War might have qualified (if textbooks had covered the Riff War in the first place). Could such narratives be read as an admonishment to maintain the political will for colonization in France's still-existing colonial possessions or the will to fight wars in the wake of the First and Second World Wars?

A central aspect of the French colonial narrative about Canada was that, despite Montcalm's military reversals, the French presence in Canada had not been erased. Though France's political empire in Canada had failed, a linguistic and cultural empire remained, or as textbooks often implied, an empire of friendship. Eugène Bonne, in his textbook from 1947, puts the numbers of this linguistic empire at "several millions."⁴³ After mentioning the English capture of Quebec, Pomot finished his short treatment of France's loss of Canada with the observation that "many Canadians remember their French grandparents, continuing to *speak our language* and *loving our country*."⁴⁴

The willingness of formerly colonized people to fight on the side of French in contemporary conflicts was an important justification for past colonization. Pomot notes further that French Canadians had come to France's defense against Germany during the two World Wars.⁴⁵ This matter-of-fact statement ignores, however, the impact of political relations between Britain and Canada, the overrepresentation of francophone French as deserters during the Great War, and the 1917 and 1944 Canadian Conscription Crises, which in the former case threatened to bring down the Canadian government and

⁴³ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France*, 69.

⁴⁴ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 65 Emphasis in original.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

in which French Canadians were particularly prominent.⁴⁶ Gautrot Lacourt's 1955 textbook, *Premier livre d'histoire de France, CE classes de 10e et 9e*, went still further. Gautrot Lacourt attempted explicitly to draw the students reading his text into that same empire of feeling with their fellow French speakers: "Their [the French Canadians'] children do the same dictations as you. They sing the old songs of France over there in America."⁴⁷

The Conquest of Algeria

As they did with India and Canada, school textbooks attributed the responsibility for Algerian conquest to indigenous populations. An important reason given for the conquest of Algeria was "to punish the pirates who, leaving from that port, pillaged our navy."⁴⁸ Lavissee's 1957 textbook legitimizes aggression by connecting French conquest to earlier actions by the British and the Dutch against Mediterranean pirates: "Since very long ago, pirates, leaving from Algeria, attacked the navies loaded with merchandise that crossed the Mediterranean. The English and the Dutch had already bombed the city of Algiers several times in order to punish these pirates."⁴⁹ The language of "punishment" evident in these quotations was common in many of the textbooks.⁵⁰ Pradel's 1955 text went so far as to link the capture of Algiers to that great late-nineteenth century

⁴⁶ See: Margaret Levi, "The Institution of Conscription," *Social Science History* 20, no. 1 (April 1, 1996): 147–150, doi:10.2307/1171506.

⁴⁷ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1955)*, 52.

⁴⁸ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 173.

⁴⁹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 163; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 96; Rambaud, *Histoire de France*, 49; Plothier and Triaud, *L'Histoire de France vivante*, 126.

⁵⁰ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 163; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1967)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1955)*, 77.

explanation for the necessity of European imperialism in Africa—ending the Arab slave trade. “These pirates were Turks,” he wrote; “it was [in Algiers] that they brought back ... the passengers which they sold as slaves.”⁵¹ Pradel was not the only author to refer to the pirates as Turkish, particularly among earlier textbooks, perhaps in an attempt to cast the French as liberators and to ease potential divides between France and the native Algerian population.⁵² While two textbooks mentioned the Dey of Algiers striking the French ambassador with his fan, only one textbook gave that insult sole causative power, asking “Who would have thought that a fan strike would have such grave consequences?”⁵³ The other text included the story only in a primary document reading from *The Memoirs of General Du Barail*. The textbook narrative itself, however, placed the emphasis on French strategic interest in the port of Algiers and the punishment of pirates.⁵⁴

Illustrations of Algerian conquest and the questions that accompanied them were, like those of Montcalm and Dupleix, apparently meant to elicit students’ “transparent” judgments about the scenes without revealing that the illustrations were themselves narratives. Gautrot Lacourt’s textbook, the only one in the sample with a narrative that revolved around the incident in which the Dey struck the French ambassador, is especially problematic (figure 1.3). In the illustration, the Dey and the French ambassador stand off to the viewer’s left on an open portico. In the distance can be seen

⁵¹ Vincent and Pradel, *Histoire de France*, 81.

⁵² Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 126.

⁵³ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1967)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1955)*, 77.

⁵⁴ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 127. Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79.

the city of Algiers and the harbor, and to the right is an Algerian (a bodyguard perhaps?) leaning on his drawn sword. The first two questions about the illustration seem straightforward enough: “What city can you see?” and “What is the Dey of Algiers holding in his hand?” The final question, however, is more knotty: “Who is angrier, the Dey or the Frenchman?” The answer, given the illustration, is obvious: the ambassador is leaning back away from the Dey, who has his fan raised in one hand and is pointing in the distance with his other hand, apparently telling the ambassador to leave. Moreover, the question can *only* be answered in this way; the French ambassador’s back is to the viewer, and thus his (potentially angry) face is mostly obscured. The question about the illustration encouraged the student to assign blame to the apparently escalating party.⁵⁵

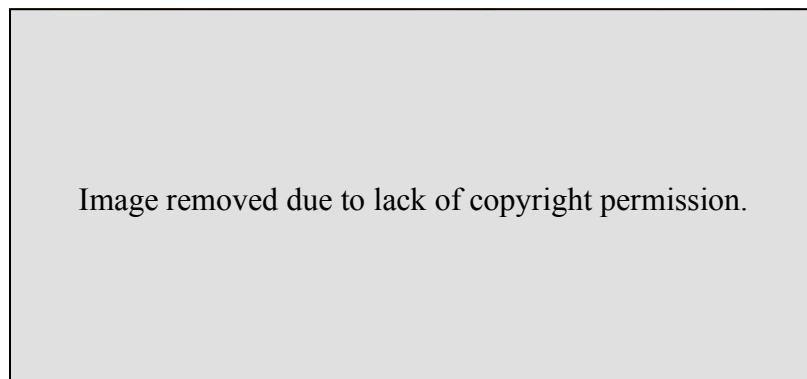


Figure 1.3. The Dey of Algiers striking the French ambassador with his fan. Illustration by Raoul Auger. Source: Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt and Edmond Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (Paris: Bourelle, 1955), 76.

The accompanying narrative reinforced this interpretation:

The French captured Algiers because of a strike of a fan [*coup d’éventail*]. The one who held the fan and who struck was the Dey of Algiers, that is to say the king of the country. The one who received the strike was a Frenchman. He had

⁵⁵ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (1955), 76–77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (1967), 76–77.

come to discuss affairs in the name of France in the palace of the Dey. And there the discussion deteriorated. And there he was struck by a fan on the arm.⁵⁶

The most important sentence in this narrative is the shortest: “And there the discussion spoiled.” Why had the discussions between the French ambassador and the Dey of Algiers descended into violence? Historically, the spoiling relationship between the French government and the Dey of Algiers was the result of a large supply of grain sold by Algiers to France, the debt for which the French government had yet to repay.⁵⁷ In this context, the Dey’s actions might seem more comprehensible and France’s response to the strike more disproportionate. Functionally, the sentence should establish causality for the strike (chronologically, it is the first event in the narrative) but it does no such thing. Because of its almost passive construction—the discussion simply “spoiled”—responsibility for the unfolding events is shifted to the Dey. When paired with the image of the Dey and the question of “who is angrier,” the narrative creates the impression that the angry and irrational Algerian ruler caused the *coup* and subsequent conquest of Algiers. Furthermore, in his study of textbook images, Gaulupeau notes how the combination of images of the *coup d’éventail* and the capture of Algiers into a diptych “privileged the most summary version of events, that of offense and of punishment.”⁵⁸

As with the capture of Algiers, textbooks portrayed the French conquest of territories beyond the port cities as instigated by indigenous Algerians. Lavissee went the furthest in exculpating French conquest: “They [the French who took Algiers] did not

⁵⁶ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1955)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1967)*, 77.

⁵⁷ Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7; Morton Rosenstock, “The House of Bacri and Busnach: A Chapter from Algeria’s Commercial History,” *Jewish Social Studies* 14, no. 4 (October 1, 1952): 355–357.

⁵⁸ Gaulupeau, “Les Manuels Par L’image: Pour Une Approche Sérielle Des Contenus,” 113.

harm the Algerians. But the inhabitants of the country, the Arabs and the Berbers, were discontent to see the French in Algiers and attacked them often.”⁵⁹ Placing responsibility for colonial violence at the feet of the indigenous inhabitants served an important purpose. As James Hevia argues about missionary narratives of retribution against the Chinese after the Boxer Rebellion, “They give legitimacy to what might otherwise be construed as ‘blood and iron’ triumphalism. They have, in other words, an ideological effect—they normalize revenge, transforming it into a reasonable reaction to ‘Chinese brutality’.”⁶⁰

Authors found other ways to place responsibility for conquest with the colonized while also encouraging students to identify with colonial conquerors. Two textbooks reminded students that they “knew well” or were “familiar” with “the Arabs,” since they had learned about them in earlier lessons. Typically, the earlier lessons referred to Charles Martel’s expulsion of the Arabs from France.⁶¹ References like these were problematic for a number of reasons. As they encouraged students to recall that the Arabs had attempted to conquer France and Europe, they also seemed to portray the French as engaged in a traditional struggle against Arab aggression. These discourses, first of all, implicated students themselves in the anthropological sense that was a hallmark of descriptions of French conquerors; students knew “the Arabs” in much the same way as Bugeaud or Lyautey knew them. Second, note the compression of historical time between Martel’s victory in the Battle of Poitiers in 732 and French conquest of

⁵⁹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 164.

⁶⁰ Hevia, “Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement,” 310.

⁶¹ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79; Plathier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 126.

Algeria 1,100 years later. The Arabs were apparently, as Eric Wolf has put it, a “people without history.”⁶² Finally, these discourses flattened the differences within the Arab populations of Algeria and of the Arabic world as a whole.⁶³

Though statues of him, according to Frantz Fanon, may have been prevalent on Algerian soil, Marshal Bugeaud was underrepresented in French textbooks of the period. Bugeaud was the mastermind of the French colonial project, and his reforms of French military practice were responsible for the success of French troops against their more mobile Algerian adversaries. Nonetheless, Bugeaud’s name appeared in only one third of the textbooks under examination.⁶⁴ Even then, Bugeaud’s treatment was rather light. One text, for example, mentioned Bugeaud only in an excerpt from a primary document: “Marshal Bugeaud adapted the army to this rather special combat, which depended above all on rapidity and decisiveness. He equipped his men very lightly and had them operate in small groups.”⁶⁵ In the main text, however, Bugeaud does not figure at all. The other texts’ descriptions of his military exploits were even briefer.

Some of the tactics Bugeaud used in Algeria have been a source of criticism, though neither these tactics nor criticism of French methods in general is raised in the texts.⁶⁶ The most famous and controversial of Bugeaud’s tactics was the *razzia* (raid).

⁶² Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History: With a New Preface.*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 1982).

⁶³ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 127; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 122; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1955)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1967)*, 77.

⁶⁵ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 127.

⁶⁶ Many biographies of Bugeaud have also underplayed Bugeaud’s use of violent methods in the interest of revisionism: Antony Thrall Sullivan, *Thomas-Robert Bugeaud: France and Algeria, 1784-1849 Politics, Power, and the Good Society* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1983); Barnett Singer and John Langdon, *Cultured Force: Makers and Defenders of the French Colonial Empire*, 1st ed. (Madison, WI:

This practice of scorched-earth conquest and economic warfare was adapted from similar techniques used by the Romans during their conquest of North Africa and by the Napoleonic campaigns in Spain, in which Bugeaud had participated.⁶⁷ Even during Bugeaud's lifetime, the use of the *razzia* was criticized by some in the metropolitan government. Lamartine, according to one scholar, "decried the practice of sweeping down on native encampments, appropriating their herds, and striking at their livelihood. He claimed that it was a part of a larger strategy to expel them violently from areas to be farmed by colonists."⁶⁸ Lamartine was not incorrect. As it became clear that Algeria was to be a settler colony, the *razzia* became an essential tactic for colonial officers. In order to achieve the "'terrible fear' that commanders thought would destroy existing social bonds and result in a docile population," Brower contends, "terror became the army's most important weapon in this struggle: kidnapping, summary executions, outright murder, torture, and sexual assaults."⁶⁹ François Guizot, in 1946, argued that Algeria

University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Jean-Pierre Bois, *Bugeaud* (Paris: Fayard, 1997). Singer and Langdon go furthest in trying to recuperate Bugeaud's reputation, seeming to excuse much of the violence of Bugeaud's tactics in balance of his "culture" and "intellectuality," pp. 8, 49-50." The tone of Sullivan's short biography is more even-handed, noting explicitly the disconnect between Bugeaud's rhetoric and his practice. As Benjamin Claude Brower argues, however, Bugeaud was not a "reluctant agent of colonial violence, a true advocate of the moderate 'juste milieu' politics," but rather "one of the most dangerous men ever to have set foot in Algeria," Benjamin C Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 25.

⁶⁷ On the Roman roots of the *razzia* and of French conquest in North Africa, see Patricia M. E. Lorcin, "Rome and France in Africa: Recovering Colonial Algeria's Latin Past.," *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 299-300.

⁶⁸ Peter Benson Miller, "By the Sword and the Plow: Théodore Chassériau's Cour Des Comptes Murals and Algeria," *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 707, doi:10.2307/4134459. Certainly, not all politicians in France disapproved of Bugeaud's tactics in subduing Algeria. The most famous (and most studied) of Bugeaud's metropolitan supporters was Alexis de Tocqueville: Cheryl B. Welch, "Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion: Tocqueville on Algeria," *Political Theory* 31, no. 2 (April 1, 2003): 235-64; Miller, "By the Sword and the Plow," 690; Erik Ringmar, "Audience for a Giraffe: European Expansionism and the Quest for the Exotic," *Journal of World History* 17, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 388; Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 47-48.

⁶⁹ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 22.

required “more violent and sometimes harsher methods” because—as in India and North America before it—the country’s inhabitants “are half-savages.”⁷⁰ Edmund Burke III claims that France also engaged in symbolic violence—a veritable “*kulturkampf*”—in Algeria, by attacking Islamic institutions.⁷¹ Prominent supporter of Algerian conquest, Alexis de Tocqueville admitted as much: “Once we have committed that great violence of conquest, I believe we must not shrink from the smaller violences that are absolutely necessary to consolidate it.”⁷²

Bugeaud has also been criticized for another particularly violent episode that occurred during the conquest of Algeria, the Dahra asphyxiations. In June 1845, Colonel Aimable Jean Jacques Pélissier chased a group known as the Ouled Riah into the Dahra Mountains. When the Ouled Riah hid in a deep cave, Pélissier ordered a huge fire to be built at the cave’s mouth. By morning, nearly one thousand men, women, and children had died.⁷³ Some of the officers in Algeria had no difficulty outwardly advocating mass extermination, such as Lieutenant Colonel Lucien-François de Montagnac: “Kill all the

⁷⁰ Quoted in Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 47.

⁷¹ Edmund Burke III, “The Terror and Religion: Brittany and Algeria,” in *Colonialism and the Modern World: Selected Studies*, ed. Gregory Blue, Martin P. Bunton, and Ralph C. Croizier (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 48.

⁷² Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 47–48; Originally quoted in Edmund Burke III, “Theorizing the Histories of Colonialism and Nationalism in the Arab Maghrib,” in *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2000), 19.

⁷³ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 22; Welch, “Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion,” 237; Tassadit Yacine and Roland Racevskis, “Is a Genealogy of Violence Possible?,” *Research in African Literatures* 30, no. 3 (October 1, 1999): 26. According to Valérie Budig-Martin, the incident has even entered into contemporary popular culture through Assia Djebar’s 1985 novel *L’amour, la fantasia*: Valérie Budig-Martin, “Writing and Filming the Cries of Silence,” *World Literature Today* 70, no. 4 (October 1, 1996): 899–900. Even the most sympathetic, revisionist treatment of Bugeaud by Singer and Langdon does mention the incident, though it argues that the caverns were actually grottos and that the man responsible was a subordinate rather than Bugeaud, who was not in the area. Brower’s view is more negative, noting that asphyxiation was intentional and that, while Bugeaud did not personally carry out the massacre, it was consistent with his larger approach to military conquest. See Singer and Langdon, *Cultured Force*, 22.

men down to the age of fifteen, take all the women and children, put them on boats and send them to Marquesas Islands, or somewhere else: in a word, annihilate all who will not grovel at our feet like dogs.”⁷⁴ Bugeaud, however, was more circumspect. Though he led violent raids and intensified violence, which he defended as “a cruel extremity” that was nonetheless necessary as “a horrifying example . . . to strike terror among these turbulent and fanatical montagnards,” he recognized that extermination was impractical.⁷⁵

It was in the realm of colonial development that Bugeaud was most often (and fondly) remembered in textbooks. Bugeaud’s combination of military success and local development prefigured that of colonial heroes like Lyautey, extending the latter’s blend of “pacification” and *mise en valeur* back into the earliest days of France’s second colonial empire.⁷⁶ Some textbooks took great care to demonstrate the ways in which military conquest and colonial development were intertwined. One alluded to Bugeaud’s belief that soldiers should be the engine of agricultural and industrial improvement: “Later they occupied all of Algeria thanks to General Bugeaud. Between two battles the soldiers built roads, constructed bridges, [and] cultivated the fields.”⁷⁷ Texts did not, however, recognize just how ambivalent Bugeaud was about the prospect of civilian colonization. As Bugeaud argued in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies in 1845, “I would compare those who live along the coast under the civilian regimes to badly-raised

⁷⁴ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 22.

⁷⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁶ The only text, however, to use the term “*mise en valeur*” explicitly was Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97.

⁷⁷ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1955)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1967)*, 77.

children, and those who live in the interior under military rule to well brought-up ones.”⁷⁸

Instead, textbooks cast the immigration of French *colons* as simply the fruition of Bugeaud’s Algerian vision.⁷⁹

The most prominent heroic figure in textbook narratives of the French conquest of Algeria was not French at all. Abdelkader, the leader of the Arab resistance to French rule, dominates the pages of textbooks.⁸⁰ The language used to describe him is striking, mimicking in every way that used for colonial heroes like Duplex and Montcalm. The most common adjective used to describe Abdelkader was “brave.” Pradel described him as “a young, intelligent and brave chief.”⁸¹ Martial Chaulanges’s 1958 textbook extended to Abdelkader the same distinctive adjective used in entries on Montcalm and Duplex, *habile* or “clever.”⁸² But why was Abdelkader so visible in textbook accounts when other indigenous leaders were so conspicuously absent? And why did textbook writers extend to Abdelkader the terminology usually reserved for the French?

Abdelkader seems to hold a special place in textbook narratives because he is rendered harmless by his eventual surrender and his supposed adoption of the French

⁷⁸ Singer and Langdon, *Cultured Force*, 74–75. Singer and Langdon argue that, using his anthropological sense of Arab society, Bugeaud felt that Arabs would accept military colonization as the price of defeat in battle whereas civilians “might be perceived as plain property thieves,” 80.

⁷⁹ Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 122.

⁸⁰ Fuster, *Premier Livre D’histoire de France*, 81; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79; Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 126; Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 92; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 122; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*, 82; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97; Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 164; Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 79.

⁸¹ Vincent and Pradel, *Histoire de France*, 81. The term “brave” is also used in: Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 92; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*, 82; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97.

⁸² Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*, 82; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97.

cause. His bravery and the length of his struggle lent greater power to his eventual submission, effected primarily by the flexibility and adaptation of the French military to the realities of war in North Africa—the elimination of heavy artillery, the use of shorter columns, and the practice of living off the land. Especially given portrayals of Algerian society in the hinterlands as tribal and politically fractured, Abdelkader’s submission only renders Algerian resistance harmless if he is seen as the legitimate leader of a unified Algerian resistance. Abdelkader must be portrayed as an enlightened, effective and legitimate leader if his surrender is to constitute the surrender of Algeria proper.

Textbook authors Pomot, in the 1940s, and Chaulanges, in 1958, even used the same terminology to describe Abdelkader’s conversion to the French cause: “He became ... a faithful friend [*un fidèle ami*]” to France.⁸³ These texts demonstrate the powerful symbolism of Abdelkader and the consistency of interpretations of him throughout the late-colonial period. In Joseph Plothier’s 1949 textbook, Abdelkader’s promise never to take up arms against the French again flows seamlessly into the observation that the Arab resisters’ “descendants served, in the end, in the French army.”⁸⁴ Much as commentators would argue during the World Wars that France’s colonial populations rising to its defense was evidence of support for the colonial mission,⁸⁵ Plothier’s observation implies that Abdelkader’s surrender is reconfirmed by every ethnic Algerian who takes up arms for the French. Yet, Abdelkader was such a safe symbol only in a metropolitan context. As Hédi Abdel-Jaouad explains, “Back in Algeria the mere mention of Abd al Qadir

⁸³ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*, 83.

⁸⁴ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 127.

⁸⁵ Joe Lunn, “Remembering the Tirailleurs Sénégalais and the Great War: Oral History as a Methodology of Inclusion in French Colonial Studies,” *French Colonial History* 10 (2009): 125–49.

[Abdelkader] was tantamount to a rebellious and subversive act, and was therefore considered anathema by the Colonial Administration.”⁸⁶ In post-World War II Algeria, Abdelkader’s surrender could embody a very different meaning, that of a “necessary prelude to the future rebirth and renewal ... [of] lost nationhood.” That meaning came to fruition when, after independence, Algerians rejected the symbolic violence of the colonial regime by tearing down the statue of Marshal Bugeaud and replacing it with one of Abdelkader.⁸⁷

French military success against greater numbers in Algeria was an important part of textbook narratives. Unlike in India and Canada, however, French military successes in Algeria did not come against the British but against the Algerians themselves. The most commonly told story of Algerian conquest was the capture of Abdelkader’s smala, the traveling camp that housed his retinue, on May 16, 1843. The heroic figure in this episode is the “Duc d’Aumale, a twenty-one year-old general, son of Louis-Philippe” and close friend and admirer of General Bugeaud who led the surprise assault on the emir’s forces. In fact, given the importance granted to the capture of the smala in narratives of Algerian conquest, the Duc d’Aumale was the most frequently referenced person after Abdelkader. Pomot’s 1940s textbook claims that 600 French cavaliers surprised a smala of 5,000, whereas Fuster, in 1949, put the numbers at 900 cavaliers and “60,000 souls, of the Arab Emir Abd-el-Kader.”⁸⁸ The success of the Duc d’Aumale’s troops in taking the

⁸⁶ Hédi Abdel-Jaouad, “The Sands of Rhyme: Thackeray and Abd Al Qadir,” *Research in African Literatures* 30, no. 3 (October 1, 1999): 203.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁸⁸ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79; Fuster, *Premier Livre D’histoire de France*, 81.

smala seems to reaffirm Bugeaud's military reforms, reforms that made French forces lighter, more mobile, and better able to pursue Abdelkader.

The quickness of the French attack was evident in the chaotic artistic representations of the battle scene that usually accompanied the narratives.⁸⁹ Often, it was Horace Vernet's 1845 painting *The Capture of the Smala of Abd-el-Kader by the Duc d'Aumale at Taguin on 16 May 1843*, or an illustration bearing close similarities to Vernet's work, that accompanied the textbook narrative (figure 1.4).⁹⁰ Hélène Gill analyzes wonderfully the hegemonic and non-hegemonic discourses embedded in *The Capture of the Smala*, though the hegemonic discourses would seem to account better for the inclusion of this particular representation of Algerian colonization in textbooks. As Gill notes, "The picture has overwhelmingly been read as a cry of imperial triumphalism, an assertion of France's right to dominate other nations through military conquest sanctioned by her assumed cultural superiority over 'Barbarians'."⁹¹ According to Gill, the orderly French column entering the painting from the left and the movement of the disorderly Algerian camp from left to right "makes no doubt: the French soldiers will win the day and create order out of chaos.... Accordingly, Vernet's picture can be deconstructed along the familiar dichotomies: orderly/efficient/purposeful French

⁸⁹ In the period from 1945-1969, the plurality of images of the colonial epic were of Algeria (48.5% for all primary levels). Despite falling from 57% in the interwar period, the next closest region was Morocco at only 22%. Of those images of Algerian conquest, the most frequent scene was of the capture of the smala, more than two times the number of images of the next most common scene, the capture of Algiers. Gaulupeau, "Les Manuels Par L'image: Pour Une Approche Sérielle Des Contenus," 113.

⁹⁰ Fuster, *Premier Livre D'histoire de France*, 81; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79; Plathier and Triaud, *L'Histoire de France vivante*, 126; Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France*, 92; Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 79. It is worth noting that, with the exception of Grimal and Moreau's text, the images of the *prise de la smala* all appeared in textbooks from before 1950.

⁹¹ Hélène Gill, "Hegemony and Ambiguity: Discourses, Counter-Discourses and Hidden Meanings in French Depictions of the Conquest and Settlement of Algeria.," *Modern & Contemporary France* 14, no. 2 (May 2006): 160.

soldiers versus anarchic/clue-less/excitable Barbarian horde.”⁹² Moreover, French viewers “were invited to gape at all the exotic objects and peoples captured by the French troops ... confirming the inter-changeability between military and discursive hegemony.”⁹³



Figure 1.4. The sapture of the smala of Abd-el-Kader. Illustration by Cl. Juillard. Source: Eugène Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France* (Paris: Bibliothèque d'Éducation, 1948), 92.

Yet, as Gill points out, there are discursive gaps and competing messages raised by Vernet's painting. Those gaps were also present in the use of the *Capture of the Smala* as the triumphal moment in later textbook narratives. First, Gill notes, the attack “was in fact a hollow, provisional victory,” as Abdelkader was not there at the time. On this point, there was a great deal of disagreement between textbooks. Some claimed that Abdelkader was simply not captured, others that he escaped, others that he was captured with his smala, and still others merely implied that Abdelkader remained free to surrender

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 161.

four years later. Second, the rebellion itself would continue until Abdelkader's eventual surrender in 1847, four years after the battle and two years after Vernet's work was first displayed. Finally, Gill notes, the capture of the smala "was by any account a massacre—mostly of civilians, rather than a proper battle," with twenty French casualties to 300 Algerian deaths.⁹⁴

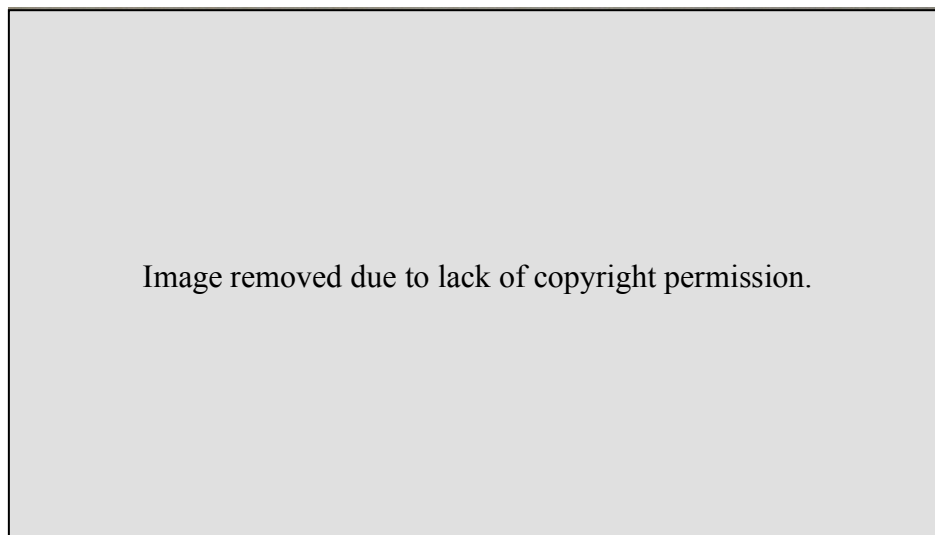


Figure 1.5. "The capture of the smala of Abd-el-Kader." Source: J. Fuster, *Premier livre d'histoire de France* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1949), 81.

Textbooks varied in how they portrayed the violence of the Duc d'Aumale's attack on the smala. While narratives of the attack mentioned that the smala itself was comprised of men, women, children, and animals, most gave little indication that the attack might have affected the civilian population. Bonne's textbook was the most open: "The Arab women, terrified, threw themselves at the knees of the French cavaliers to beg them to let them live. The panic-stricken children cried."⁹⁵ Indeed, the images of the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France*, 93; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 79.

battle almost always placed the supplicating female at the center of the image (figure 1.5). The kneeling women were part of Vernet's original painting, though one might wonder why textbook authors would choose to retain this reminder of the civilian population. According to art historians, the pose of the supplicant kneeling with arms outstretched, actually has two meanings in religious iconography. In addition to begging for mercy, that pose is understood as a sign of devotion.⁹⁶ In other words, while such images express the chaos and fear of the civilian population at the approaching French army, they make clear that France will eventually be victorious, not only over armies but over hearts and minds.

Textbooks typically ended their chronology of Algeria's colonization with Abdelkader's surrender to General Lamorcière in 1847, a decision that engendered a particular narrative of Algerian colonization. While most texts simply ended their narratives in 1847—leaving it to students to infer that Abdelkader's surrender effected Algerian colonial conquest—others were explicit. Just as Bonne's 1947 text stated that "After Abdelkader's departure, war ended in Algeria," Henri Grimal's 1967 tome claimed that "Four years later, [Abdelkader] surrendered. *The war was over.*"⁹⁷ Ending the narrative with Abdelkader's surrender, moreover, lends itself to Bugeaud's rhetoric of colonial violence, that violence was merely "a cruel extremity" necessary in the short term to allow "peaceful penetration" and development in the ensuing years. Colonial conquest and war, however, continued long after 1847, as Brower's excellent work on the conquest of the Algerian Sahara demonstrates. Though Bugeaud was no longer in the

⁹⁶ Susan Solway, "A Numismatic Source of the Madonna of Mercy," *The Art Bulletin* 67, no. 3 (1985): 364, doi:10.2307/3050956.

⁹⁷ Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 79 Emphasis in original.

country, these were some of the bloodiest years of France's Algerian adventure. The suppression of resistance in Laghouat in 1852 has been called a "butchery" by the historian Charles-André Julien.⁹⁸ Brower notes that "soldiers had used their weapons to a deliberately murderous effect," as was apparent from the number of wounded in the city.⁹⁹

Unsurprisingly, French texts took care to draw students' attention to the legal status of Algeria as an extension of France rather than a colony per se. Plothier's insistence in 1949 that Algeria "is no longer today considered a colony but as the prolongation of France itself" was echoed by Lavissee's 1957 assertion that "now, Algeria is another France on the other coast of the Mediterranean."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Algeria was an extension of the metropole because the French had cultivated it, built it, and educated it. Most texts discussed the agricultural development of Algeria by the French *colons*, "the cultivation of vast fertile terrains."¹⁰¹ The mention of agricultural development was specific to texts about Algeria, no doubt because French colonial emigration to India, Canada, and Morocco paled in comparison. Lavissee even faults Abdelkader's resistance for delaying the benefits of French cultivation by preventing the French from coming to Algeria "to cultivate the vine, wheat, and fruit."¹⁰² While the emphasis on agriculture was peculiar to narratives of Algerian conquest, other forms of development were

⁹⁸ Quoted by Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 86.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Plothier and Triaud, *L'Histoire de France vivante*, 126; Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 163.

¹⁰¹ Plothier and Triaud, *L'Histoire de France vivante*, 126. See also: Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France*, 93; Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 122–123; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 97; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1955)*, 77; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1967)*, 77; Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 164.

¹⁰² Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 164.

common across colonial histories. In particular, texts emphasized “roads, ports and cities where they opened hospitals and schools.”¹⁰³ Emphasis on development would be equally important in the narratives about the Third Republic’s colonial conquests, particularly those about Morocco.

“Lyautey, the Builder”

One textbook emphasized this development of a colony’s built environment in a chapter called “Lyautey, the builder”¹⁰⁴ that appeared in multiple editions. This textbook’s narrative on Lyautey exhibits many of the characteristics and themes common in other textbook discussions of Morocco and, in particular, of Lyautey’s role in its colonization. This section will use “Lyautey, the builder” as a lens by which to explore these narrative structures. The narrative began with an episode from Lyautey’s childhood, in which he played in a garden sandbox, constructing cities. “He said: ‘When I grow up, I will build real cities’,” the textbook tells the reader. It then describes the conquest of Morocco, where the French were in danger because “some Moroccans would want to chase the French and begin to massacre them. Lyautey arrived at a Fez in full revolt.” Lyautey pacified the country by “compel[ling] the rebels to remain calm.” Lyautey then changed the built environment of the country, “having constructed roads in place of bad paths covered with rocks,” “having planted olive and orange trees where there were none,” and “having built all white houses in gardens full of flowers, along roads lined by palm trees.” Finally, the entry returns the reader to Lyautey’s “childhood

¹⁰³ Quotation from *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1955)*, 93; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France (1967)*, 93. One other text referred to Lyautey as “a builder of Empire [*bâtisseur d’Empire*]”: Fuster, *Premier Livre D’histoire de France*, 89.

promise” to be a builder: “[Lyautey] liked to repeat: ‘Everywhere I went, I grew [*ai fait pousser*] cities’.”

Childhood stories about Lyautey were rather uncommon in textbook accounts. Lyautey’s youth was discussed in two textbooks in the sample. These references to Lyautey as a child might have allowed children to identify with the Governor-General. “Lyautey, the builder,” described Lyautey engaging in a common childhood pastime, playing in the sandbox. The accompanying image showed young Lyautey planting a French flag over a sandbox city. Apparently, even his childhood play had a nationalist character. The quotation which the entry attributes to Lyautey—“When I grow up [*Quand je serai grand*], I will build real cities”—recalls lessons that asked students to respond to the same prompt. “*Quand je serai grand ...*” was common in French classrooms in the period. Another textbook recounted the more famous anecdote of Lyautey’s fall from a balcony as a baby that left him chronically injured. Despite Lyautey’s aristocratic manners and monarchist politics, stories like these made Lyautey comprehensible as a republican hero. As Berenson puts it, “Heroes could ... appear to exemplify their nations, precisely because they had come from the common stock. In a democratic age, exceptional individuals paradoxically owed a measure of their standing to being like everyone else.”¹⁰⁵

Broader attempts to encourage students to identify with colonization on a personal level, however, were not uncommon. Textbooks typically related colonialism’s educative mission. André Aymard’s 1956 textbook, for example, featured a large

¹⁰⁵ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 5. Berenson also notes that, because “republicanism and empire had long gone hand in hand” in France, the governments of the Third Republic were willing to ignore the rightist political ideologies of figures like Lyautey and Marchand in order to co-opt them for colonial ends, 268.

illustration of a “sergeant teacher” instructing a group of native children in Madagascar. The pith-helmeted teacher instructs the students on the difference between “*lapin*” (rabbit) and “*le pain*” (bread) as Gallieni and Lyautey look on.¹⁰⁶ Another textbook executed a surprising twist on the colonialist-as-educator image, describing Lyautey as a teacher to his soldiers. The soldiers’ spare time, according to the quotation from Lyautey, “should be, for them, as agreeable and as instructive as if they were in school.”¹⁰⁷ These paternalist notions of military service echoed Lyautey’s own famous essay “The Social Role of the Officer,” in which he argued that military officers could use the army, with its universal conscription, to repair France’s social divisions and with them France itself.¹⁰⁸ As Paul Rabinow puts it, for Lyautey, “The true role of the army was education, not war.”¹⁰⁹ Reassurances that students in the colonies were “*taught by teachers coming from France*”¹¹⁰ and that they were learning the same lessons as French students convinced students that colonialism benefited the natives.¹¹¹ These lessons and narratives also served to shorten the conceptual distance between France and its empire.

As it had been in India, Canada, and Algeria, it was vital to establish that the Third Republic’s colonial territories needed French intervention. The problems endemic to the indigenous society could apparently be excised only from without, by a

¹⁰⁶ Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 125.

¹⁰⁷ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 106.

¹⁰⁸ Hubert Lyautey, *Le rôle social de l’officier* (Paris: Bartillat, 2009); For more on Lyautey’s view of the army’s role in society, see Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), chap. 4; On Lyautey in Morocco, William A. Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁹ Rabinow, *French Modern*, 123.

¹¹⁰ Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 89 emphasis in original.

¹¹¹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 165. Lavissee’s textbook included a whole section on the schooling of Algerian children, the illustration of an Algerian class featured students of European descent on one side of the class and students of native descent on the other.

disinterested French government that could maintain the peace and bring modernity. Aymard's 1956 text is an excellent case in point: "Everywhere France brought good order and peace: brigandage, slavery and massacres ceased."¹¹² The conquest of Sudan by Gallieni—Lyautey's former commander and mentor—is similarly portrayed in Chaulanges's 1975 textbook as an incursion into the heart of darkness to bring peace to the warring tribes: "It was an immense country covered by large grasses and forests where the Black tribes pillaged among themselves, continually waging war."¹¹³

Lyautey's conquest of Morocco both used and rectified the political divisions of the country. Pomot claimed that there were "many lords who refused to obey this leader [the Sultan]."¹¹⁴ "Lyautey, the Builder" argued that "Fez was in full revolt."¹¹⁵ As William Hoisington has put it, Europeans at the turn of the twentieth century believed Morocco was "a ramshackle state—medieval in aspect, in organization, and in savage brutality—whose days were numbered."¹¹⁶ This interpretation seems not to have changed significantly in the second half of the twentieth century. According to textbooks, Lyautey rectified Morocco's medieval organization "little by little" by getting the lords to obey the Sultan, for which Lyautey "became the best friend of the Sultan. The latter had total confidence in Lyautey who did, in Morocco, some great things."¹¹⁷

¹¹² Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 124. References to brigandage, looting, and slavery in native societies were common: Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l'histoire de France*, 107; Lavis, *Histoire de France*, 166; Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 88.

¹¹³ Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *L'éveil à l'histoire*, 89.

¹¹⁴ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

¹¹⁵ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1955)*, 92; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1967)*, 92. See also Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 105.

¹¹⁶ Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82. See also Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 105.

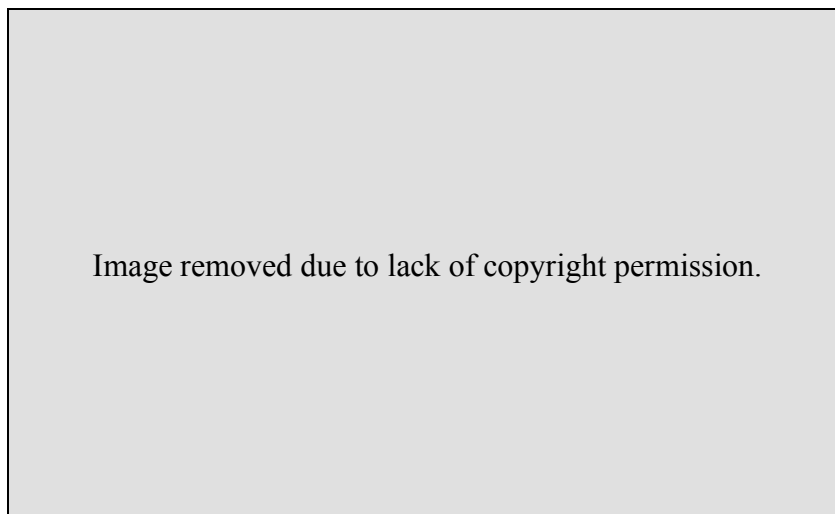


Figure 1.6. “Marshal Lyautey in Rabat.” Source: J. Fuster, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1949), 89.

Language that cast Lyautey as a “friend” of the Sultan or the Moroccan people is endemic in textbooks from the period and echoed Montcalm’s and Dupleix’s friendships with the Native Americans and Indians; consistent with republican principles, Lyautey apparently governed Morocco with the consent of the governed. “Lyautey won the confidence and even the affection of the Moroccans,” according to one 1947 textbook.¹¹⁸ An image included in Fuster’s text, however, makes clear the multiple ways that one might interpret these narratives (figure 1.6). As Marshal Lyautey rides into Rabat at the head of his column, a Moroccan man in the foreground looks on with his hand raised to his brow. Is he shielding his eyes from the sun as he looks on at Lyautey or is it a salute? The accompanying text, rather than resolving this tension, only replicates it: Lyautey “acquired the esteem of all [Morocco’s] inhabitants, who greeted [*saluent*] him respectfully.”¹¹⁹ *Saluer* has a double meaning, to greet someone or to salute, though

¹¹⁸ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 107.

¹¹⁹ Fuster, *Premier Livre D’histoire de France*, 89.

Lyautey's direct gaze at the Moroccan man suggests that in this case it is a salute. Even after Moroccan independence, the language of "Lyautey, the Builder" had not changed: "Next, [Lyautey] wanted to show the Moroccans that France is their friend."¹²⁰

In these passages, the Lyautey myth—"that Morocco was conquered with a minimum of force and a maximum of charm, with Lyautey's enlightened policies smoothing the transformation of this Muslim Shangri-la into a modern society"—was alive and well.¹²¹ These narratives ignored the role of the French, and indeed of Lyautey himself, in much of the political disunity in Morocco. First, by beginning accounts of Lyautey's regime in Morocco with the official protectorate in 1912, textbooks were able to ignore French actions on Morocco's border with Algeria in the decades before. These actions to suppress incursions across the border by Moroccan tribes severely weakened the legitimacy of Sharifate dynasty. Lyautey was himself instrumental in these military actions, often crossing the Moroccan border against the wishes of his superiors in the metropole.¹²² Second, unlike Makoko and Abdelkader, the sultan goes unnamed in these textbook accounts, perhaps because naming him would have raised the specter of a difficult history that would undercut French legitimacy and the myth of indirect rule in the Moroccan protectorate.

¹²⁰ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1955)*, 93; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d'histoire de France (1967)*, 93.

¹²¹ Edmund Burke III, review of *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, by William A. Hoisington, *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1, 1997): 863, doi:10.2307/2171621.

¹²² Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, 34. Hoisington's excellent text on the conquest of Morocco lays bare the inconsistencies between the reality of Lyautey's actions and the stories he told about his activities in the area. Hoisington contends that Lyautey's small, flexible units experienced only limited success against guerrilla resistance and that, to combat large-scale resistance, he had to rely on "large numbers of regular troops, supplied with the modern weapons of war."

Lyautey's actions in Morocco, and those of the French more generally, had weakened the legitimacy of the sultanate. Before Lyautey's involvement in Morocco, the French had used Moroccan indebtedness to the French to seize territory and install French "advisors." In 1906, the French government ordered Lyautey—then stationed in Algeria—to occupy the Moroccan city of Oujda as punishment for the murder of a French medical missionary. The Sultan Abd al-Aziz's inability to recapture the city militarily and his capitulation to French demands "seemed to confirm [to the Moroccan population] his apparent betrayal of Islam to the Christians and stripped him of what little legitimacy he had left."¹²³ A number of pretenders vied for the throne using the expulsion of the French invaders as a rallying cry. In 1908, one of those pretenders forced al-Aziz to abdicate the throne. It was this new sultan, Abd al-Hafiz, who signed the treaty that made Morocco a French protectorate. When word of the treaty leaked out and the French tried to reorganize the Makhzan army, the military mutinied and then attacked the European residents of Fez. As "Lyautey, the Builder" put it, "Fez was in full revolt." Al-Hafiz, after signing the treaty that caused the revolt, attempted to negotiate the impossible position that French intervention had put him in by siding with the rebels, which led the French government to seek an experienced military officer to put down the revolt; the government sent Lyautey.¹²⁴ Contrary to the textbook narratives, William Hoisington shows that Abd al-Hafiz was obstinate in his refusal to assist the French in governing the territory or subduing rebellious tribes; Lyautey called it "going on strike." Lyautey went shopping for his own sultan, al-Hafiz's younger brother, Moulay Youssef, a moderate

¹²³ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 243.

¹²⁴ An account of the early years of French conquest, leading up to Lyautey's arrival in Fez can be found in *ibid.*, 240–244, 254–262.

and a French supporter. After Lyautey forced his abdication, al-Hafiz symbolically demonstrated that he would be the last legitimate sultan of the dynasty by destroying the imperial seal and the parasol that symbolized the sultan's legitimacy.¹²⁵

Though Lyautey's method was predicated on indirect rule, the French protectorate was anything but indirect. The very nature of the protectorate meant that the administrative functions of the Sultanate had to be curtailed: the French took control of foreign affairs and war, for example. Lyautey's regime also invented new administrative functions for the Sultan's government where none had existed, according to Lyautey's own sense of native culture and indirect rule—departments for Muslim justice and religious property were created, for example.¹²⁶ Moreover, whatever the rhetoric, in practice, French officials had difficulty granting independent action to native elites.¹²⁷ Thus, while an essential part of the "Lyautey method" was the support of indigenous institutions of power, in particular the sultan, Lyautey had perhaps done more to weaken those institutions than anyone.

As under Montcalm, Dupleix, and Bugeaud during previous regimes, Third Republican imperialism depended on "the cleverness [*habileté*] of their leaders."¹²⁸ Like that of his predecessors, Lyautey's effectiveness came from his ability to comprehend the indigenous society and to use that comprehension to achieve conquest. Lyautey argued in his essay "The Colonial Role of the Army" that successful colonization required "the right person in the right place," a single person who would oversee the military and,

¹²⁵ Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, 44–45.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48–49.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹²⁸ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

importantly, the political governance of the colony with near-absolute freedom.¹²⁹

Plothier's text expressed this vision: "[France] left him free to organize Morocco as he saw fit."¹³⁰ One can deduce that, given Lyautey's vision of indirect rule, such a person would need to have an excellent understanding of native society.

Lyautey fostered the image of himself as just such a man. By all accounts, he was an astute student of Moroccan culture and local politics and was fluent in the language. As in the case of Duplex and Montcalm, however, anthropological sense was not only about understanding native society but also about exploiting that knowledge to woo the natives to the French cause. The language textbooks used to describe Lyautey's governance in Morocco cast natives as child-like. In one example, the textbook notes that "Lyautey knew [how] to speak to the Moroccans with firmness and gentleness."¹³¹ Lyautey's paternalism toward the indigenous populations of Morocco mirrored his paternalism toward his own army.¹³² It was due to Lyautey's conviction in his anthropological sense of Moroccan culture that he could claim of his chosen sultan Moulay Youssef, "Perhaps we will be able make him the most traditional, the most Muslim sultan that Morocco has known for a long time."¹³³

Warfare had been an important element of textbook narratives of earlier colonial interventions. In narratives about Algeria, while the violence was sanitized somewhat, the defeat of Abdelkader's *smala* and his eventual surrender were essential elements of

¹²⁹ Quoted in Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 229.

¹³⁰ Plothier, Joseph and Triaud, Ch, *L'Histoire de France vivante: des origines à la Libération cours élémentaire Ire et 2e année, cours moyen Ire année*, Edition entièrement refondue. (Chambéry: les Éditions scolaires, 1948), 135.

¹³¹ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

¹³² Lyautey, *Le rôle social de l'officier*.

¹³³ Quoted in Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, 48.

the establishment of French legitimacy in Algeria. In accounts of India and Canada, French bravery in wars against the British was essential in achieving indigenous allies who respected only bravery in battle. Lyautey agreed with this sentiment. During the Riff War that would mark the end of his tenure in Morocco, Lyautey argued to Prime Minister Paul Painlevé that failure to respond militarily to the Riffians would signal French weakness and drive tribes allied with France into the arms of the rebels. “In truth the Muslim, the Moroccan understands and respects only force,” argued Lyautey, “and by observing that up until now we have not responded effectively, he will soon be persuaded of our powerlessness and weakness, if this has not already happened, and the situation will be completely compromised.”¹³⁴

In contrast with Lyautey’s belief that Muslims understood only the language of force and with his willingness to use it, postwar textbooks replicated this narrative that Moroccan conquest occurred peacefully. Violence by the French military in Morocco was seldom found. Rather, Lyautey “only made war against the Moroccans when he could not do otherwise”¹³⁵ and “after 1912, rapidly reestablished peace.”¹³⁶ For textbook author Bonne, however, Lyautey used violence only in defense of Moroccan civilians, protecting workers from pillagers, whom he “punishes severely.”¹³⁷ Textbooks, in fact, replicated the very myths that Lyautey fueled through his writings for the public back in France. French forces in Morocco, and Lyautey especially, were adept at the use of euphemistic language. “Conquest” therefore became “pacification” or “peaceful

¹³⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, 199.

¹³⁵ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

¹³⁶ Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 105.

¹³⁷ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 107.

penetration.” Lyautey understood that the citizens on the home front wanted colonies but they wanted them on the cheap, with minimal bloodshed, and in keeping with French values.¹³⁸

The Lyautey myth of pacification and indirect rule was powerful but, as William Hoisington argues, ultimately false: “Lyautey’s method of pacification in Morocco differed in practice from what he proclaimed it to be and indirect rule failed to live up to its name. Neither succeeded in ending Moroccan resistance to France and neither achieved the Franco-Moroccan partnership that Lyautey said was his goal.”¹³⁹ Lyautey was himself instrumental in fostering understandings of the French presence in Morocco as peaceful and non-invasive. He was a prolific writer, according to Edward Berenson, contributing important articles on colonial administration to influential journals and keeping up a beguiling amount of personal correspondence with individuals in the metropole, all of which extended the reach of his celebrity and his authority on colonial matters. Not since, perhaps, Henry Morton Stanley had a colonial hero been so instrumental in the formation of his own legend.¹⁴⁰

If colonization of Morocco was accomplished by bringing native elites into line behind the Sultan, it was solidified by development. Textbook entries on Lyautey widely credit him with the *mise-en-valeur* of Morocco. The focus on economic development—especially the cultivation of the land—was an important part of narratives on Algeria, but entries on the colonies of the Third Republic trumpeted development above all else. Half

¹³⁸ Douglas Porch, review of *French Military Rule in Morocco: Colonialism and its Consequences*, by Moshe Gershovich, *Middle East Journal* 54, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 654. Porch argues that “one may ask if Lyautey’s vision was ever anything more than propaganda calculated to seduce the French people, rather than reflect Moroccan realities.”

¹³⁹ Hoisington, *Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco*, vii.

¹⁴⁰ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 20, 232.

a page in the “Lyautey, the builder” entry is taken up by an illustration that represents Lyautey’s sense of *mise en valeur* (figure 1.7).¹⁴¹ In the foreground is Lyautey in full military regalia, wearing his burnous (a hooded cloak worn by Arabs and Berbers), eyes fixed at the viewer. In the distance behind Lyautey—as though Lyautey is on a hill—is a Moroccan city. The part of the city to Lyautey’s right appears traditionally North African, as there are minarets, domed buildings, and palm trees. To Lyautey’s left is the modern part of the city and the port. In the foreground of the modern section are a bus, a locomotive, scaffolding, and a crane; in the middle ground are the low, regularly shaped buildings of a French metropolitan city; and in the background is the port, with ocean liners, smaller ships, and shipping cranes. Lyautey’s right hand points to a “map of the city” in the foreground with his field marshal’s baton, while his left hand indicates the port in the distance.



Figure 1.7. Lyautey displaying a Moroccan city. Figure 1.2. Illustration by Raoul Auger. Source: Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt and Edmond Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (Paris: Bourrelier, 1955), 93.

¹⁴¹ Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (1955), 93; Gautrot Lacourt and Gozé, *Premier livre d’histoire de France* (1967), 93.

Closer examination of this illustration's imagery renders visual the pedagogical representations of *mise en valeur* common in textbook narratives and, more importantly, demonstrates the influence of the Lyautey myth on those narratives. Consider Lyautey's military wardrobe. Illustrated representations of Lyautey always featured him in military dress. Contrast that with representations of Brazza, the next most popular Third-Republican colonialist in the textbooks of the period. Textbook illustrators were obviously unsure of how to represent Brazza, as he variously appears in military garb, the bourgeois clothes of the metropole, the whites and pith-helmet of the colonist, and a nomadic-style head wrap. The prevalence of the burnous in pictures of Lyautey also suggests an unproblematic unification of Lyautey the officer and Lyautey the "African."¹⁴² There is also no contradiction between Lyautey the officer and Lyautey the builder in this illustration. Rather, the representation is very much in keeping with the Marshal's own understanding of colonial penetration in which a soldier in the colonial army was to be an agent both of war and of development. This dual role would seem also to be symbolized by Lyautey's use of his marshal's baton and the map of the city.

While Lyautey's baton points at the map of the city, his other hand points to the "European" half of the image. In combination with his gaze toward the viewer, the gesture implies that Lyautey is indicating for the reader the location of a point on his map in the city itself. He seems to invite us to survey his handiwork, to accept him as our guide, and, moreover, to consider his own role in its creation: he has seen the development of Morocco from plan to reality. Furthermore, his gesture toward the

¹⁴² "L'Africain" was an appellation sometimes given to famous colonial officers operating in Africa, such as Lyautey, Marchand, or Bugeaud. It denoted not only their field of operation but also their familiarity with native societies (including languages) and adoption of "native" tactics in warfare.

European side of the image indicates that it is *this* part of the city for which Lyautey is responsible. We are asked implicitly to compare this European part of the city with the traditional sector with which it is paired. So, let us make that comparison.

The European sector of the city is a mélange of signs of modernity and development. French commerce in north Africa is symbolized by the busy port and shipping cranes in the distance. In the foreground are representations of the two major forms of transportation credited to the French: automobiles and the railroad. But, it is truly the middle ground which is most interesting. In the European city, only three buildings are labeled: the post office, the *lycée* (high school), and the hospital. The reader's attention, moreover, is to these buildings by the questions accompanying the image. These three institutions, particularly the school and the hospital, were among the most frequently cited elements of the French *mission civilisatrice* in textbook narratives.¹⁴³ Finally, the presence of cranes and scaffolding in the cityscape implies that the French project of development is incomplete. This image is indicative of a discursive strategy used in textbooks of the period. Most textbooks recounted the laundry list of colonial development, simply listing the numerous “benefits brought by the French to the indigenous.”¹⁴⁴ These lists of the trappings of modernity—schools, hospitals, ports, roads, railroads—brought by the French not only painted French governance in a positive light but also allowed for implicit connections with Third Republican development in the metropole.

¹⁴³ See, for instance, Lavis, *Histoire de France*, 164; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82; See, for instance: Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France (1958)*, 89.

¹⁴⁴ Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 125.

In the same image, the European section of the city dwarfs the traditional section considerably; the European section takes up about half of the image, while the traditional section fills less than a quarter of the image over Lyautey's right shoulder. Indeed, Lyautey's body divides the two sections. As such, the image provides a perfect visual representation of Lyautey's ideal of indirect rule and the preservation of a "traditional" Moroccan society free from European influence. In fact, Lyautey's body appears to open on the modern section of the city, while the traditional section appears almost obscured at his back. Unlike the labeled buildings in the European section, the buildings in the traditional section are nondescript. The only distinctive feature in the Moroccan city is the minaret, which seems to speak to Lyautey's particular fondness for retaining Islam's place in indigenous life, and yet there are no apparently religious buildings in the European city. Finally, in the foreground in front of the traditional city, palm trees seem to signal a natural, organic quality of the city that contrasts with the complete lack of natural elements (other than the water of the port) in the European city. Strangely, this contrasts with the unusual emphasis on natural elements in Lyautey's development of Morocco that were mentioned in the image's accompanying narrative. The "all white houses" built by Lyautey, according to the text, were "in gardens full of flowers, along roads lined by palm trees."

Yet, despite this apparently discursive slippage between image and text, the image itself is quite consistent in representing Lyautey's attempts at *mise en valeur* as part of larger French efforts to modernize its empire. And, in quite creative ways, it also rendered Lyautey's own mythologized version of colonialism, in which the soldier is developer and in which traditional native society—characterized as religious,

organic/natural, and obscure—is retained alongside a modern Morocco. A number of authors also made textual reference to Lyautey’s attempts to retain Islamic culture within a modern Morocco. Plothier, however, put it most forcefully: [Lyautey] brought them the benefits of modern civilization and jealously safeguarded the originality of Muslim civilization.”¹⁴⁵

France’s willingness to bring the benefits of modern civilization and to protect indigenous society encouraged the positive relationship between France and its empire to continue. This interpretation was present in every textbook. No text was as sanguine, however, as Plothier’s 1949 textbook, which described the “great work” of Third Republic colonialism. Europeans, he argued, were bringing the benefits of civilization to these “still primitive” people, whose countries are “still little civilized in the sense in which we understand our civilization.” Yet he also made a distinction between “good” colonizers (like Ferry, Lyautey, and Brazza) and “bad” colonizers, who “profit from the ignorance and the weakness of these primitive populations in order to take away the riches of their countries.” Though he referenced the understandable desire of educated and civilized people to revolt against bad colonizers, Plothier seems optimistic because “France, among all the nations, can pride itself on having had a great number of good colonizers.”¹⁴⁶

Plothier’s text, moreover, referenced the recently concluded Second World War as a sign of Morocco’s fidelity toward France and attributed it to Lyautey, who “inspired

¹⁴⁵ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 135; See also: Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 107; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

¹⁴⁶ Plothier and Triaud, *L’Histoire de France vivante*, 134.

the Moroccans for France.”¹⁴⁷ Other 1940s texts referenced World War I as evidence that France’s efforts in North Africa were well received. Bonne notes that Lyautey had worried that, after sending soldiers off to fight in Europe, he would be unable to suppress a revolt. The Moroccans, however, did not revolt, even in France’s moment of weakness.¹⁴⁸ Pomot argues, further, that “when Germany attacked us, a number of Moroccan soldiers came to fight on our shores.”¹⁴⁹ Surprisingly, while all of the textbooks from the 1940s proclaimed Moroccan loyalty in the context of the World Wars, none of the texts from after 1950 did. Though it does not seem unusual to see these references so soon after the conclusion of hostilities, it is remarkable how quickly they faded.

Many entries on the colonialism of the Third Republic referenced the contributions of the empire to France, particularly to its population and its *grandeur*. Aymard’s text for students in the first year of the *cours élémentaire*, for example, mentioned that “France attached to its 40 million inhabitants 60 million indigenous people dispersed over territory twenty times larger than the soil of the *Patrie*.” Aymard was also the only author to mention explicitly the policy of assimilation: “In *France d’Outre-Mer* life became better, and the indigenous more and more capable of being French citizens.”¹⁵⁰ The calculation of the size of the empire compared to France was, for many besides Aymard, an important element in the colonial narrative, particularly in earlier texts. Lavissee cited the empire’s seventy million inhabitants and the fact that the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹⁴⁸ Bonne, *Grandes figures et grands faits de l’histoire de France*, 107.

¹⁴⁹ Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 82.

¹⁵⁰ Aymard, *Histoire de France. Premier livre*, 124.

territory of the empire was twenty times the size of France, while Bonifacio noted that France's sub-Saharan African possessions were fifteen times larger than France.¹⁵¹ Chaulanges's 1969 text for students in the first year, published after decolonization, redeploys this trope in terms of France's linguistic influence: "There are today *6 million people* [in Canada] who speak our language. In the world, French is the maternal language of *150 million people*, the official language of *24 nations*."¹⁵²

To what extent did these textbooks change with the acquisition of independence by France's colonies? The record was mixed. The Chaulanges text from 1969 mentioned above did explain that Morocco had become "an independent state," but its inclusion seems intended only to make another point, that "in fifty or one-hundred years, the French accomplished a considerable task there."¹⁵³ The lesson also, however, included a more oblique reference to the changed state of France's overseas involvement: The title of the equivalent lesson in 1958 had been "*La France d'Outre-Mer*" (Overseas France), but in 1969 the title was "*Les Français outre-mer*" (The French Overseas).¹⁵⁴ In Chaulanges's texts from 1958 and 1975 for students in both years of the *cours élémentaire*, the entries on General Gallieni remained unchanged. And, even the additional chapters on the postwar period in the 1975 version did not mention decolonization (though the book did have a section on world hunger). Grimal's 1967 textbook also featured only a brief reference to "these countries bec[oming] free and independent," before arguing that "their inhabitants are still friends of France ... [who]

¹⁵¹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, 168; Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1956, 104.

¹⁵² Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France (1969)*, 50.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Premières images d'histoire de France*, 57; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France (1969)*, 50.

taught and cared for [soignés] *them*.”¹⁵⁵ The only textbook even to hint at the contentious process of decolonization was, in fact, the 1975 textbook with the religious bent. In his lesson on “The Postwar (1945-1974),” Philippe Rambaud wrote, “The colonial empire disappeared in often bloody dramas, as in Algeria.”¹⁵⁶

Les Activités d’Éveil and the Disappearance of the Heroic Narrative

In England and France, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the ascendance of “new” history, an approach to history teaching that advocated students’ use of primary sources to construct actively historical understanding, over more traditional approaches that favored memorization of a historical chronology centered on the nation-state. French reformers, influenced by the theories of Jean Piaget and the spurning of *histoire événementielle* by Annales historians, had moved away from the traditional “dictation” approach of the national curriculum. These critics panned traditional historical pedagogy as mechanical and repetitive. As this new history took hold, it was supported and driven by influential members of the National Institute of Pedagogical Research and Documentation (INRDP) and the Inspectorate of National Education, both of which fell under the direction of the Ministry of National Education.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1967, 89. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁶ Rambaud, *Histoire de France*, 60.

¹⁵⁷ Abby Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” *History Workshop Journal* 68 (2009): 206; Also on the reforms of the Awakening Activities, see: Alain Decaux, *Des enfants sans histoire: Le livre blanc de l’enseignement de l’histoire*, ed. Jean-François Fayard, 1 vols. (Paris: Perrin, 1984); Wayne Dumas and William B. Lee, “Joan of What? The History Crisis in French Schools,” *The History Teacher* 18, no. 4 (1985): 543–53, doi:10.2307/492844; Hubert Tison, “Verdun Dans Les Manuels de L’enseignement Primaire (1920-1995),” *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 182 (April 1, 1996): 57–75, doi:10.2307/25732328; Jean Berbaum, Charles Adam, and Marie-Odile Roussel, “La Conduite Des Activités D’Éveil,” *Revue Française de Pédagogie* 64, no. 1 (1983): 21–34, doi:10.3406/rfp.1983.1896.

In 1969, school subjects were regrouped into two new categories: “fundamental disciplines”—particularly French and mathematics—and “awakening activities” (*activités d’éveil*). History fell into this latter category, which also included geography, civics, sciences, drawing and singing, and was eliminated as an independent subject in primary schools, and was subsumed into a broader social science discipline along with geography and civic education.¹⁵⁸ It suffered, of course, the consonant reduction in all-important classroom hours.¹⁵⁹ As a result, of the twenty-seven hours per week of instructional time at the *cours élémentaire* level, only six were devoted to *activités d’éveil*. The amount of time spent teaching history had already declined significantly before the 1969 reforms. In 1887, the amount of time devoted to history in the *cours élémentaire* was two hours and thirty minutes per week. After 1945, thirty minutes per week were spent on history, and by 1956 that figure was down to twenty minutes per week.¹⁶⁰ According to the instructions, “It was no longer necessary, for 6 to 11 year olds, to bring to the child any indispensable knowledge in matters of history, geography, sciences.”¹⁶¹ Rather, as researchers at the time put it, these new disciplines were “considered opportunities to interest students in the world around them, to inspire communication and foster students' expression.”¹⁶² As such, teachers were encouraged to

¹⁵⁸ Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne*, 152.

¹⁵⁹ Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” 207.

¹⁶⁰ Garcia and Leduc, *L’enseignement de L’histoire En France*, 180–181. This figure does not include the time spent on geography, a course that in the French educational system is strongly tied to history. Time spent on geography was one hour in 1945, and forty minutes in 1956.

¹⁶¹ Originally cited in Jean-Noël Luc, “Une réforme difficile: Un siècle d’histoire à l’école élémentaire (1887-1985),” *Historiens et géographes*, no. 306 (October 1985); quoted in Tison, “Verdun Dans Les Manuels de L’enseignement Primaire (1920-1995),” 66.

¹⁶² Berbaum, Adam, and Roussel, “La Conduite Des Activités D’éveil,” 23.

center lessons on students' "investigations" into their daily lives and the resources of their community.

Determining how the new methods changed practice in the classroom is rather more difficult. Many observers talked of crisis in the ranks of "disoriented" teachers caused in part by the limited instructions provided by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶³ Researchers studying the reforms at the time noted the difficulty of evaluating the effectiveness of the new methods. Teachers, especially those who felt unsure of their success at implementation, were hesitant to allow researchers to observe their practices.¹⁶⁴ According to interviews conducted with teachers at the *élémentaire* and *moyen* levels by Jean-Noël Luc in 1975, "One could say that at least 25% of teachers no longer do any history, that 25% devote one episodic period to it (once every two weeks) and that 50% introduce it more regularly in their teaching, at least once per week."¹⁶⁵

When Giscard's Education Minister René Haby tried, in 1977, to apply the awakening activities approach to the *collèges*, the reaction was swift and vocal. There was strong reaction to the new history by those who feared that students were failing to receive not only historical content knowledge but (more importantly) the sense of national belonging that had long been the goal of the history teacher. The consensus across the political spectrum was equally remarkable, with tirades against the education ministry coming from the political left and right. Among the criticisms leveled most vociferously against the interdisciplinary approach to history by commentators in the 1980s were that the competition for time among the disciplines gave short shrift to

¹⁶³ Tison, "Verdun Dans Les Manuels de L'enseignement Primaire (1920-1995)," 66.

¹⁶⁴ Berbaum, Adam, and Roussel, "La Conduite Des Activités D'éveil," 22.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Garcia and Leduc, *L'enseignement de L'histoire En France*, 200.

history and especially to the learning of basic chronology, that the emphasis on student-centered methods sacrificed the history that students should learn for the history they wished to pursue, and that “the grey areas which expanded in proportion to historiographic reflection were to have no place in the comforting black and white of the classroom.”¹⁶⁶

The most powerful statement against the reforms came when, in 1982, Minister of Education Alain Savary instructed René Girault, a noted historian of international relations, to study the effects of the recent reforms on history education in elementary schools and the *collèges* (middle schools). He concluded that at the end of elementary education “students ... possess little knowledge of history” and upon leaving the *collèges* they “lack the foundation for more advanced studies in history.”¹⁶⁷ Even the *Annales* historian Fernand Braudel, whose historical approach had inspired the new pedagogy, declared the *activités d'éveil* “a primary error.”¹⁶⁸

The combination of the Girault report’s findings with the evidence that history was being taught by few teachers would seem to suggest that one could not learn the subject using the new approach. Advocates of the *activités d'éveil*, on the contrary, argued that critics had misread the situation. Francine Best, François Cullier, and Anne Leroux claimed that critics of reform were nostalgic for a period that never existed; traditional history education based on memorization and direct-instruction had not been

¹⁶⁶ Quotation from Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” 211.

¹⁶⁷ Cited in Dumas and Lee, “Joan of What?,” 546.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” 210–211; Stefan Berger discusses Braudel’s turn back toward national history in the 1980s in “A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present,” *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (2005): 654–655.

effective either.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, Best et al. argued that, when the reforms were initiated in 1969, inadequate instructions were given to teachers. The Ministry of Education did not release clearer programs until almost a decade later. The result was the apparent anarchy Luc had found, in which “Some (teachers), very few (...) continue to do history lessons. Some others, still fewer themselves, authentically practice the *activités d’éveil* (...) some others, finally, and this is the great majority, superficially include the *activités d’éveil* as a kind of junk-room [*fourre-tout*] of diverse approaches and without great coherence.”¹⁷⁰

Textbook narratives from the 1970s seem to bear these observations out. As mentioned above, Chaulanges’s textbook from 1975 is almost a word-for-word reproduction of his 1958 version. The heroic narratives of Gallieni and Jacques Cartier remain unchanged, although the 1958 version’s chapter on Sid-Brahim and the conquest of Algeria has been removed and replaced by chapters on the postwar period. One might assume that the new text is a simple reissue that has not taken into account the new program, but the title of the text has been changed to include the term “l’éveil” and, in the forward, the author makes the case that this text is an example of the new methods.¹⁷¹ Rather, this text speaks to the sense of uncertainty in the 1970s about what constituted the new history, a point on which both critics and advocates of the reforms appeared to agree. Rambaud’s 1974 text is even more traditional, perhaps owing to its religiosity. It includes a lengthy page on the conquest of Algeria that, with its discussion of

¹⁶⁹ Francine Best, François Cullier, and Anne Leroux, *Pratiques d’éveil en histoire et géographie à l’école élémentaire* (Paris: A. Colin-Bourrelie, 1983), 21.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Odile Dauphin, Rémy Janneau, and Nicole Perron, *L’enseignement de l’histoire-géographie de l’école élémentaire au lycée: Vecteur de propagande ou fondement de l’esprit critique?* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2009), 41. Ellipses and parentheses in original, brackets mine.

¹⁷¹ Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *L’éveil à l’histoire*; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d’histoire de France (1958)*.

Abdelkader, Bugeaud, and the Duc d'Aumale (not to mention an illustration of the capture of the Smala), would not have seemed out of place twenty years prior.¹⁷² The paragraph on Brazza, moreover, describes the “admirable explorer[’s]” negotiations with the indigenous people, the liberation of slaves, and the creation of a “magnificent colonial empire.”¹⁷³

The new history earned public condemnation in both France and Britain in the 1980s. Surprisingly, it was in conservative Margaret Thatcher’s England that attempts to return to “traditional” history faced strong resistance, whereas a political consensus around the restoration of national history was achieved quickly in Mitterrand’s Socialist France.¹⁷⁴ In France, in which all the major parties were staunchly republican, education was still imagined as a preeminent guardian of national identity and an avenue for nation building, as it had been since the Third Republic’s famed “black hussars of the Republic” had fanned out into the provinces to turn “peasants into Frenchmen.”¹⁷⁵ The outcry spanned the ideological spectrum. Communist and Socialist representatives and intellectuals decried the attempts, as Socialist education delegate Louis Mexandeau put it, to “abolish the memory of our people.” Historian and public intellectual Alain Decaux’s article in the conservative *Figaro Magazine*, “Parents, we are no longer teaching your children history,” became the clarion call to return to a more narrative history.¹⁷⁶ It was

¹⁷² Rambaud, *Histoire de France*, 50.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁷⁴ Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” 199.

¹⁷⁵ See: Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

¹⁷⁶ Waldman, “The Politics of History Teaching in England and France during the 1980s,” 207.

this ideological consensus that allowed history Professor Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie to claim that “concern for collective memory is neither revolutionary nor reactionary.”¹⁷⁷

On August 31, 1983, Mitterrand announced to his Council of Ministers that he was “scandalized and anguished by the loss of collective memory” among French youth and promised to reform history teaching.¹⁷⁸ The Ministry of Education convened a commission headed by noted medievalist Jacques Le Goff and including Girault. The commission worked out a set of standards that would compromise between activities that promoted student discovery and traditional teacher-directed instruction. Those opportunities for student-centered learning, however, were subordinated to the chronological curriculum.¹⁷⁹

Paradoxically, the new textbooks written to conform to the standards of the mid-1980s, such as those released by Hinnewinkel and by Wirth in 1985, evidence the most drastic shift in the teaching of the colonial empire. Textbooks at the *cours élémentaire* level, first, turned toward the metropolitan history of France. Second, the textbooks were much more likely to eschew narrative in favor of the documentary approach favored by the reformers of the previous decade. Third, textbooks’ coverage of the postwar period was much more far-reaching. These three changes combined to produce a drastic reduction in the discussion of the colonial empire in textbooks at this level. Hinnewinkel, for example, devotes a single sentence to the nineteenth-century empires and a brief mention of Algeria in his chapter on Charles de Gaulle.¹⁸⁰ In Wirth’s text, colonialism is

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, 208.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Dumas and Lee, “Joan of What?,” 547–548; Tison, “Verdun Dans Les Manuels de L’enseignement Primaire (1920-1995),” 67.

¹⁸⁰ Hinnewinkel, Sivirine, and Duchesne, *Histoire, géographie, éducation civique*, 32, 40.

all but absent, save his mention of the “large Algerian crisis” that led to de Gaulle coming to power in 1958.¹⁸¹ Finally, the narratives that are included take a much more critical tone. Hinnewinkel devotes his longest discussion of colonialism to the Indies—itsself a shift in content—and is very forthcoming about the slave trade and France’s role in it.¹⁸² In the end, the rollback of reforms destroyed the heroic narrative much more significantly than did the reforms themselves, no doubt thanks to better instructions from the Ministry of Education.

Conclusion

One of most important contributions of postcolonial theory and of recent approaches to colonial history is the recognition that colonial relationships were mutually constitutive. Thus, these textbooks constructed not only particular notions of what it meant to be a colonized “other,” but also what it meant to be French. In other words, the narration of colonial history within textbooks made students—students in this case as young as seven—into imperialists, creating particular images of France’s colonial world and of France’s and the students’ place in it. As one might expect, the images created of natives were Janus-faced: native societies were socially deficient but (especially in the case of Morocco and Islam) in need of protection, natives were knowable but went largely unnamed, and native societies were politically disunited (except, as in the case of Abdelkader, when political unification served narratives of colonial legitimacy) but culturally undifferentiated. The textbook images of French colonial heroes were very

¹⁸¹ Pierre Wirth, *Le livre d'histoire: cours élémentaire*, Cours P. Wirth 2 (Paris: Delagrave, 1985), 113.

¹⁸² Hinnewinkel, Sivirine, and Duchesne, *Histoire, géographie, éducation civique*, 27.

much in keeping with the images that they created of themselves, as peaceful colonizers who brought civilization and development by way of their understanding of native societies. The violence that was, in fact, an integral part of colonial conquest was, in keeping with colonial mythmaking, obscured in textbook narratives or cast as merely a necessary precondition to peace. Ironically, these textbook narratives fashioned this relationship at precisely the same moment that large parts of the French empire began to reject it.

According to Paul Ricoeur, narratives bring into tension two notions of time, “one chronological and the other not,” that raise interesting questions about what the effect of these textbook narratives might have been on children. Because plot is a fundamental aspect of narrative, the events of narratives are plotted in time, showing chronological development (even if the story itself is not told chronologically). Yet, stories and narratives also possess an “‘end point,’ which, in turn, furnishes the point of view from which the story can be perceived as forming a whole. To understand the story is to understand how and why the successive episodes led to this conclusion, which, far from being foreseeable, must finally be acceptable, as congruent with the episodes brought together by the story.”¹⁸³ For Ricoeur, therefore, the end of the narrative attributes meaning “to the episodes which are themselves known as leading to this end.”¹⁸⁴

If one recalls the conclusions of the narratives of colonial history recounted in *cours élémentaire* textbooks—French subjects and former subjects tied in empires of friendship with the metropole—then one can appreciate how these episodes might have

¹⁸³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, 67.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 67; See also: Douglas Ezzy, “Theorizing Narrative Identity: Symbolic Interactionism and Hermeneutics,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April 1, 1998): 245.

acquired particularly positive meaning in the minds of students. Given the ages of the students, it should be remembered that these narratives would likely be the students' first encounter with their nation's colonial history (and perhaps its colonial present). Furthermore, given the scaffolded nature of elementary history education for much of this period, the students' *cours moyen* years would build on this same material.¹⁸⁵ Finally, until the creation of universal middle schools in 1963, primary education was all the formal education that most French young people would ever receive.¹⁸⁶ Would these be the narratives with which all future understandings of France's colonialism would have to contend? A satisfactory answer to that question would no doubt require an engagement with reception theory and perhaps even child psychology that is beyond the scope of this chapter. To return to Fanon's quotation from the beginning of the chapter, "Every statue of Faidherbe or Lyautey, Bugeaud or Blandan ... is a constant reminder of one and the same thing: 'We are here by the force of the bayonet'." For the students of the *cours élémentaire*, however, one imagines that those statues would have meant something entirely different. There is symbolic violence in both situations.

¹⁸⁵ Garcia and Leduc, *L'enseignement de L'histoire En France*, 179.

¹⁸⁶ Kathryn M. Anderson-Levitt, Régine Sirota, and Martine Mazurier, "Elementary Education in France," *The Elementary School Journal* 92, no. 1 (1991): 84.

CHAPTER TWO:

“WE, AT THE SCHOOL, KNOW GUTRIC WELL”: WRITING NATIONAL AND
 IMPERIAL IDENTITIES IN CÉLESTIN FREINET’S *ÉCOLES MODERNES*, 1953-
 1962

Around 1924, Célestin Freinet, a teacher at a little school in Southern France, bought a small printing press, thus introducing the reforms and techniques for which he would become most known. Freinet engaged the students in exercises called *textes libres* (free writings), in which the students would write about the events of their daily lives or other topics that drew their interest. The students would present their writing, usually with Freinet copying the text on the board, and then discuss and edit the work as a class. A group of students would then print the text on the printing press and each student would place a copy in his or her *livre de vie* (book of life). By 1926, the students were exchanging copies of their work, collected into *journals scolaires* (school newspapers), with other classes associated with Freinet’s *Écoles Modernes* (Modern Schools) movement. That process, which Freinet called *correspondence scolaire* (school correspondence), began with a regular exchange with René Daniel’s class in Brittany. The correspondence networks expanded rapidly in France and overseas, with individual schools often trading *journals* with a number of schools, depending on their means.

These activities were neither ancillary nor diversions from the normal functions of the classroom. Rather, in service of the movement’s progressive vision of education, the teacher became a facilitator, the pupils directed their own learning, the children collaborated with the students in their classroom and in classrooms around the world, and

the textbook—repository of official discourse—was replaced by student writing collected in “books of life” and classroom libraries. Freinet’s campaign against textbooks became one of the most well-known of his pedagogical positions. Textbooks, he thought, “answer[ed] only accidentally” to the needs of proletarian students preparing for the twentieth-century economy.¹

In ensuing years, the movement established serial publications, which selected articles from the *journals scolaires* of the member schools and published them for distribution. From 1953 to 1954, one of these serial publications, *La Gerbe*, published a number of essays written by the students of member schools under the serial title *Le Tour de France de Gutric* (Gutric’s Tour of France). The essays all featured the fictional main character, Gutric, a boy from Trégastel in Brittany, as he worked his way around France, visiting Modern School students along the way. In nearly every case, he is awaited at his arrival by the students at the local school. In one such entry, by the students in Beauvoir-en-Lyons, a young boy asks his friend Michel whether Gutric has arrived. The boy’s father, who has overheard the conversation and does not recognize the name Gutric, asks whether he is an “automotive bandit.” The boy responds to his father, “You do not know anything about him.... We, at the school, know Gutric well.”²

¹ Quoted in Madeleine Freinet, *Élise et Célestin Freinet: Souvenirs de notre vie, tome i, 1896-1940* (Paris: Stock, 1997), 83; Freinet certainly saw himself as an educator of the “proletariat,” as evidenced by the name of the journal *L’Éducateur prolétarien*, though proletarian was not a term reserved for urbanites. Freinet was himself a provincial teacher and his movement seems to have been particularly strong in the provinces. Indeed, Freinet’s journal often included special sections on urban teaching and the problems associated with it, apparently in an effort to bridge a perceived disconnect between the movement and urban issues, such as greater supervision and disciplinary problems. In 1961, a movement of Paris-based Freinet teachers left to start an organization centered on the delinquency problems of urban areas. See William B. Lee and John Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 1st edition. (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 2000), 76.

² “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Beauvoir-en-Lyons (Seine-Inférieure),” *La Gerbe* 8 (January 15, 1954): 3.

In this chapter, I will investigate the idea that the students of the *Écoles Modernes* “[knew] Gutric well.” On the most prosaic level, of course, the children of the Modern Schools *did* know Gutric well: stories of his escapades appeared in every issue of the magazine. This quotation penned by children about their fictional companion, however, points to the very foundation of modern national identity. As Benedict Anderson writes, “The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”³ Creating this communion is at the heart of what schools are meant to do. It is evident that the role of schooling in national identity formation is often to ensure that students “know” certain things deemed essential to the participation in the national community. On the one hand, states make sure that students acquire certain content, touchstones of national history, of culture, and of civics. In large part, this accounts for the creation of educational programs, the establishment of literary canons, and the consistency of textbook narratives. In the 1950s, for example, few French pupils could have avoided learning about the Gauls, Louis XIV, the conquest of Algeria, or Louis Pasteur. On the other hand, the process of schooling—not least the use of the national language as the language of instruction—is meant to instill a sense of national identity and citizenship in students.

This chapter considers the means by which a self-professed progressive network of schools (a network opposed to the traditional techniques of schooling) used pedagogy to create a sense of common identification among its students. The use of free texts, scholarly newspapers, and school correspondence by Célestin Freinet’s *Écoles Modernes*

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

movement reversed the direction of knowledge production of traditional education by allowing students to produce their own narratives of their lives and their *milieu* for consumption by their fellow students. In so doing, the movement's teachers unseated the relations typical of state-directed education and of that advocated by the Communist Party in the period after World War II, both of which favored more traditional methods centered on direct instruction. In short, I ask, how did the reformist methods of the *Écoles Modernes* encourage students to know Gutric and, thus, to know each other? This chapter will begin with a brief introduction to Freinet's biography and to his movement. This section is based on the small secondary literature on Freinet, which has been generally limited to his biography, the institutional biography of his movement, his pedagogical ideas, and his conflicts with the twentieth century French left.⁴ I wish, however, to move beyond the story of the man, his movement, and his pedagogy, to analyze in depth the materials produced by the movement's students. This chapter will compare *Le Tour de France de Gutric* with G. Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, an iconic school reader in use since the early Third Republic. Both of these texts use children making their way across France as their central narrative device. Though Gutric only toured France and the French Empire, the Freinet movement did have member schools in the colonies and these schools frequently contributed to *La Gerbe*, as did their counterparts in France. I examine how these entries reversed the colonial gaze

⁴ Victor Acker, *Célestin Freinet* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000); Victor Acker, *The French Educator Célestin Freinet (1896-1966): An Inquiry into How His Ideas Shaped Education* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*; Freinet, *Elise et Célestin Freinet*; Hélène Gresso, "'Déplacer les lignes': Les enseignants Freinet, citoyens et pédagogues républicains" (Ph.D. diss, The Pennsylvania State University, 2006); Henri Peyronie, *Célestin Freinet pédagogie et émancipation* (Paris: Hachette éducation, 1999); Michel Barré, *Célestin Freinet, un éducateur pour notre temps* (Mouans-Sartoux [France]: PEMF, 1995).

of traditional textbooks, allowed colonial populations to narrate their lives, and brought the empire home to the metropole.

The results of this reversal of knowledge production are surprising. Despite the fact that Freinet was a committed Marxist and a champion of Soviet educational reforms, the entries in *La Gerbe* often seemed strikingly traditional, provincial, and pastoral. Indeed, the Communist Party periodical *L'Humanité*, in a series of vitriolic editorials, attacked Freinet's pedagogy as "reactionary" and bourgeois.⁵ Therefore, this chapter must consider the interaction between the two main methods by which schools instill national identification: practice and content. In this case, a number of features of the Freinet movement, such as the preference for practical reforms over doctrinal purity, the strength of the movement in rural areas, and the belief that effective pedagogy must be child-centered and related to daily life, converged to produce both progressive practice and (at least superficially) traditional content. Analysis of the student work produced in *Écoles Modernes* classes allows us to sketch the possibilities of educational reform in the period: when teachers encouraged liberating and child-directed pedagogy, ceding control meant that content would be conditioned by the social and discursive universe inhabited by the students.

From Gars to Vence: The Trajectory of a Reformer

In 1914, Célestin Freinet was an average teacher at best, showing little of the reformer's tenacity or passion that would make him an important pedagogical force over the middle of the twentieth century. Freinet had not yet completed his third year of study

⁵ Georges Snyders, Interview with Pierre Boutan, January 1997, quoted in Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 96.

at the École Normale when he was sent to a village to replace a teacher who had been mobilized for the war. On October 26, 1914, only ten days after his eighteenth birthday, the young educator from the village of Gars, near the Italian border, received his first inspection report. His lessons were typical of primary education at the time: grammar, calculation, and dictation. The inspector reported that Freinet needed to improve in writing, intonation, and organization of class time. The young teacher, the inspector argued, “did not know how to interest the students who are not at the board.” Nonetheless, Freinet was “not bad considering the circumstances,” the circumstances being those of a young substitute teacher placed in charge of his own class by the necessity of war.⁶

In 1915, Freinet himself was mobilized. He served in the trenches as an officer cadet. He was wounded leading troops in an assault during the battle of Chemin-des-Dames in 1917, a battle in which 187,000 French soldiers died and which was largely responsible for the mutinies of 1917.⁷ A bullet passed through his lung, lodging permanently in his shoulder; he received an official disability of seventy-percent.⁸ Freinet spent his time as a convalescent engaging with the works of French and foreign pedagogical reformers.⁹ While in the hospital, he began writing for the journal *l'École Émancipée*, an organ of the oldest French teachers' union. Far more radical than the associations (*amicales*) of teachers prevalent at the time, the prewar *l'École Émancipée*

⁶ Rapport d'inspection, 26 octobre 1914, cited by Freinet, *Elise et Célestin Freinet*, 36–37; See also Gresso, “‘Déplacer les lignes’: Les enseignants Freinet, citoyens et pédagogues républicains,” 273.

⁷ On the mutiny of 1917: Leonard V. Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division During World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁸ Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 63.

⁹ Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 90.

movement had been considered so far to the left as to be a “counter-culture” of the French teaching force. The movement further counted feminists and anticolonialists in its ranks. Indeed, the journal and the movement refused to rally to the war effort and its official pacifist stance led officials to ban the journal for the duration of the war. Yet, by war’s end, the mainstream had shifted toward the political left, and the movement capitalized on that shift.¹⁰ Freinet was not alone among the many mobilized *instituteurs* who embraced pacifism upon their return from the front and found an ideological home in the pacifist periodical.¹¹

Due to his conscription and lengthy convalescence, Freinet did not begin his full-time teaching career until 1920, at an elementary school in Bar-sur-Loup, a village of about 1,500 people in the Alps near the Mediterranean. At Bar-sur-Loup, Freinet introduced his major school reforms—including free writings, group editing, school newspapers, and school correspondence—after he purchased the printing press for his class in 1924. In 1928, a group of teachers using Freinet’s techniques came together to form the *Coopérative de l’Enseignement Laïc* (CEL), which then began publishing its own journal, *L’Éducateur prolétarien*, as well as a number of collections of student-created materials for use in classrooms instead of textbooks. Some have suggested that Freinet’s war wound, which made it difficult for him to speak for long periods of time, was at the root of his educational reforms. But Freinet’s purposes went beyond the physiologically expedient; Freinet believed that his students would devote more effort

¹⁰ Gresso, “‘Déplacer les lignes’: Les enseignants Freinet, citoyens et pédagogues républicains,” 282–283; Olivier Loubès, *L’école et la patrie: Histoire d’un désenchantement, 1914-1940* (Paris: Belin, 2001).

¹¹ On postwar pacifism among teachers in the interwar period see Mona L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 93.

and care to their work if they knew that it would be published for an audience.¹² The extensive correspondence networks that developed between Freinet schools demonstrate that a growing number of teachers agreed with Freinet's assessment. By 1962, the 9-10 year olds at the boys' school in Lavéra, near Marseille, were exchanging journals with Correze, Tarn and Garosine, Drome, Pyrénées Orientales, Pas-de-Calais, and Bantzenheim.¹³

By all accounts, Freinet's efforts at reform were well received in Bar-sur-Loup. In 1928, however, Freinet moved to the town of Saint-Paul, a somewhat larger town with a more socially diverse population. At Saint-Paul, his techniques garnered him a degree of notoriety; in particular, his destruction of the teacher's rostrum—that iconic Third Republic symbol of the authority of the teacher—to build a table for his printing press met with disapproval. Freinet and the town mayor had a particularly strained relationship, thanks to Freinet's letter writing campaign to force the mayor to provide money to improve the school's facilities. Mounting conflicts in France between the right and the left exacerbated this discord as local employers pressured their employees to withdraw their children from Freinet's school. The clash came to a head on April 24, 1933 when the mayor of Saint-Paul led a public demonstration at the school. Freinet reportedly brandished a pistol to hold the demonstrators at bay. Meanwhile, Freinet was countering investigations into his teaching methods and international relationships by the Ministry of Education and the government. Freinet was placed under surveillance by the local police inspector, who was suspicious of his relationships with foreign (especially

¹² Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 49–50; Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 9.

¹³ "Notre Correspondants," *Journal scolaire Freinet. De l'étang à la mer*, Ecole de Garçons de Lavera, Cours Moyen 1, 1962. MNE 2.2316.

Soviet) pedagogues. As his situation in Saint-Paul was becoming untenable, the mayor of Bar-sur-Loup offered to allow Freinet to return to his town. Yet, Bar-sur-Loup's isolation would have unduly hindered the efforts of the CEL, so Freinet took an early retirement from the public system.¹⁴

Though the education hierarchy had all but expelled Freinet from his position at Saint-Paul, the Ministry of Public Instruction's attitude toward Freinet-inspired teachers was, in reality, quite mixed. The standard view of the French educational apparatus is one of a centralized Leviathan, but individual teachers had opportunities for pedagogical independence. Inspection of any one school was sporadic. Therefore, the success of Freinet pedagogy in any particular school was, at least in part, predicated on the good graces, or "the benevolent and active collaboration," of sympathetic inspectors.¹⁵ Some inspectors appear to have been naturally disposed to the new methods being advocated in publications like *L'Éducateur*. The journal occasionally received letters from supportive inspectors like that of M. Thierry of the Academy of the Loiret, who praised the writing and editing skills of students in a Freinet school he inspected, holding out special praise for the "poetic sense" expressed in one eleven-year-old girl's poem about hearing of the death of her aunt.¹⁶ Sympathetic inspectors occasionally wrote in to *L'Éducateur* with advice on making the case for new educational methods to inspectors.¹⁷ And two of the

¹⁴ Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 66–68.

¹⁵ Célestin Freinet, "Le Point Pédagogique: Une organisation pédagogique complexe à l'image de la vie," *L'éducateur: revue pédagogique bimensuelle de l'Institut coopératif de l'école moderne et de la F.I.M.E.M.* (October 1, 1948): 2.

¹⁶ Institut coopératif de l'école moderne (ICEM) and Fédération internationale des mouvements d'école moderne (FIMEM), "Homage officiel a nos techniques," *L'éducateur: revue pédagogique bimensuelle de l'Institut coopératif de l'école moderne et de la F.I.M.E.M.* 22, no. 3 (November 1, 1949): 53.

¹⁷ Célestin Freinet, Institut coopératif de l'école moderne (ICEM), and Fédération internationale des mouvements d'école moderne (FIMEM), "Les Nouveaux Horaires tournent-ils le dos à la

authors of *Le Cirque Brocardi*—a reader with entries from Freinet classes about a circus passing around France—were themselves elementary inspectors.¹⁸

Teachers dealing with more traditional and skeptical inspectors were advised to emphasize points of convergence between the Freinet pedagogy and official directives. Moreover, he counseled, inspectors would often look favorably on the teacher's efforts if he or she could prove that students were learning the curriculum more effectively than their counterparts in traditional classes.¹⁹ Yet, there were also veiled criticisms of the inspectorate. In the student-produced serial in *La Gerbe*, "Gris, Grignon, and Grignette" about three rats who make their way around France, visiting Freinet classes along the way, the rats are recounting their trip and all the places they have been. The students are following the rats' exploits on an electronic map when the students then hear a knock at the door, which the narrator assumes is "one of the door-to-door salesmen that the teacher always sends away." It is, in fact, the inspector and, upon his arrival, the rats hide in his briefcase and are not seen by the students again.²⁰ The inspector is a disturbance who causes an effective form of instruction to go immediately underground.

The next stage of Freinet's career was one of relative independence. Freinet opened a private boarding school in the town of Vence, not far from Saint-Paul, which he ran with his wife Elise, who was also a teacher. Though the school was fee-paying, Freinet made every effort to ensure that it remained a proletarian school. The fees were

modernisation de l'École?," *L'éducateur: revue pédagogique bimensuelle de l'Institut coopératif de l'école moderne et de la F.I.M.E.M.* 29, no. 16 (February 30, 1957): 37–38.

¹⁸ Lucien Gérard, H. Guenot, and Charles Clap, eds., *Le Cirque Brocardi: le beau voyage d'un enfant autour de la France entièrement raconté et illustré par des enfants pour la joie de leurs camarades*, 1 vols. (Paris: Librairie Delalain, 1950).

¹⁹ Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 106.

²⁰ Coopérative de l'enseignement laïc (Cannes, Alpes-Maritimes), ed., "Gris, Grignon, Grignette à Dombasle-devant-Darney (Vosges)," *La Gerbe*, October 15, 1953, 13–14.

low and, just one year after opening in 1935, the school took in a number of refugees from the Spanish Civil War. The CEL similarly moved toward greater independence, though not entirely of its own choosing. The larger New Education movement, fearing backlash from the Saint-Paul affair, loosened its ties with Freinet's movement. The teachers' unions, moreover, found the CEL to be too lax in its membership requirements. The CEL, from then on, ceased to hold its congresses in concert with any of the unions. Yet, even after World War II, delegates from the major teachers' unions and educational movements were often present at these congresses.²¹

Anticipating the rising threat of fascism and reactionary politics in France and abroad, the CEL journal *L'Éducateur Proletarien* dropped the word "proletarian" from its title. The revision was not enough. Freinet was imprisoned at a camp for political dissidents in 1940. On a tip from a sympathetic friend, Elise Freinet escaped to her family's home in Vallouise just before the school in Vence was to be raided. In 1941, Freinet was placed under house arrest in Vallouise. While there, he was able to expand his lectures and articles into three of his most important monographs. In 1944, however, Freinet left Vallouise to join the resistance in Briançon, in the High-Alps region, near the border with Italy. During the resistance, Freinet would use the organizational and networking talents he had developed with the CEL to manage provision of materials to resistors and their sympathizers.²² After the Liberation, Freinet returned to Vence to

²¹ In 1957, for example, representatives were present from the Syndicat National des Instituteurs, the Ligue de l'Enseignement, and Force Ouvrière: Institut coopératif de l'école moderne (ICEM) (Cannes) and Fédération internationale des mouvements d'école moderne (FIMEM), "XIIIe Congrès de l'École Moderne, Séance inaugurale, Mardi 16 avril, à 9 heures, au Théâtre Graslin," *L'Éducateur : revue pédagogique bimensuelle de l'Institut coopératif de l'école moderne et de la F.I.M.E.M.* 29, no. 24–25 (May 20–31, 1957): 28.

²² Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 70–71.

continue his work with his wife Elise. Soon, however, Freinet would have to contend with yet another shift in the political climate, this time on the left.

Though Freinet always considered himself a Communist, and continued to speak well of the Soviet Union (especially its educational practices), he can best be understood as a fellow-traveler. He officially joined the French Communist Party (PCF) only in 1926, likely with considerable influence from his very committed wife, Elise.²³ By the 1930s, Freinet had broken many of his attachments with the teachers' unions and, in 1948, he and his wife allowed their party memberships to lapse. After 1947, the PCF was politically isolated by the Socialists and anti-Communists. This isolation, according to Irwin Wall, pushed the PCF toward closer relations with the Soviet Union and a more doctrinaire Stalinism.²⁴ As a result, the Communist Party was loath to tolerate any rivals and began to enforce greater ideological purity. Freinet's membership in the PCF ended not long after this inward turn.

The Communist Party launched a spate of attacks on Freinet from 1949 to 1954 in two of its publications, *La Nouvelle Critique* (*The New Critique*) and *L'École et la Nation* (*The School and the Nation*). The attacks, according to Victor Acker, "took the wind out of [Freinet's] sails and resulted in diminishing any significant intellectual output."²⁵ The attacks on Freinet corresponded to what David Caute has called "the coldest years of the Cold War," when the Communist Party, both in France and in the Soviet Union, retracted

²³ Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 92; Freinet, *Elise et Célestin Freinet*, 127. Madeleine Freinet's biography of her parents dates Freinet's adherence to the Communist Party to around 1926, whereas Victor Acker argues the move was made in 1929. There is also a difference of opinion as to the role of Elise Freinet in Célestin's conversion to the PCF. Madeleine Freinet attributes the adherence of her parents to strong ideological conviction, whereas other sources have credited Elise with influencing Freinet.

²⁴ Irwin M. Wall, *French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945-1962* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983).

²⁵ Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 12.

the *main tendue* (outstretched hand) “and mere sympathizers [were] treated with a suspicion verging on contempt.”²⁶ Freinet’s most vociferous opponent was Professor Georges Snyders, who later claimed that he was pushed to criticize Freinet by the editor of the Communist Party periodical *L’Humanité*.²⁷

Snyders’s and Freinet’s disagreements more often than not centered on the relative importance of content and practice in proletarian pedagogy. They, therefore, highlight for us a perpetually significant division among progressive educators. Snyders discredited the individual freedom of the Freinet method for lacking “any politics, and without the party taking any action” and “for feeding the vivid imagination of the children, diminishing and even discrediting the teacher’s role.” The result, Snyders claimed, was that the Freinet pedagogy failed to help “the child [take] conscience of his solidarity with the work of man struggling to triumph over nature and breaking the social rules oppressing them.”²⁸ In 1921, however, Freinet had argued that individual freedom in practice would create students who would lead the ongoing communist revolution: “Even Lenin said that it was dangerous to refer to ‘completing the revolution’ only in terms of political gains. This revolution was going to last a few generations and it needed ‘benevolent dictators’ to direct men who would be incapable to be free.”²⁹ Indeed, he remained convinced that it was the practice of education rather than its content that would inculcate the spirit of Marxism. Freinet, quoting Mikhail Kalinin, argued, “It is in

²⁶ David Caute, *The Fellow-Travelers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 8.

²⁷ Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 95.

²⁸ Georges Snyders, “Où va la pédagogie ‘nouvelle,’” *La nouvelle critique: revue du marxisme militant*, no. 15 (April 1950): 82–89; quoted and translated in Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 94.

²⁹ Quoted in Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 90.

practical work that Marxism always finds its justification. When we solve practical problems based on a real integration of the essence of Marxism and Leninism, we follow the precepts of a real Bolshevik school.”³⁰ In uncharacteristically acerbic language, Freinet further questioned the authority of a “university professor in his middle-class aristocratic citadel of false intellectualism” criticizing “what an elementary school teacher started and builds in more than thirty years.”³¹ Both Freinet and more doctrinaire communists battled over the discursive field of Marxism.

Freinet’s movement, from its inception, had rejected indoctrination as anathema to its ideals of freedom in the classroom, a freedom embodied in such methods as the *textes libres*. As article two of the movement’s charter put it:

We are opposed to all indoctrination. We do not pretend to define in advance what the child that we educate will be; we do not prepare him to serve and to continue the world of today but to construct the society that will best guarantee his blossoming. We refuse to bend his spirit to an infallible and pre-established dogma, whatever it may be. We apply ourselves to make of our children conscientious and responsible adults who will build a world where war, racism, and all forms of discrimination and exploitation of man are proscribed.³²

Furthermore, Freinet believed that “to situate himself in relation to others ... is already an alienation.”³³ In the early days of the movement, Freinet’s lack of party affiliation was the basis of his authority on educational questions. When Freinet published an essay on the Soviet education system for a 1925 issue of the Maritime-Alps teachers’ union bulletin, the editor wrote that “being beholden to no party, [our colleagues] should not

³⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, 102.

³¹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 98.

³² Quoted in Gresso, “‘Déplacer les lignes’: Les enseignants Freinet, citoyens et pédagogues républicains,” 261–262.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 258; originally in Barré, *Célestin Freinet, un éducateur pour notre temps*.

doubt his impartiality.”³⁴ As David Caute, the graceful support of an impartial observer for a particular policy was often more of a boon to the Communist Party than the passionate espousals of committed party members. As such, the PCF sought out endorsements from high-profile fellow-travelers.³⁵

From a practical standpoint, Freinet also likely feared that tying his movement too closely to a political party would risk alienating members. As William Lee and John Sivell explain, the movement’s members were divided between *politiques* and *pédagogues*. The former believed the Freinet movement’s techniques could change the broader social and political situation of children while the latter felt that the techniques made for more effective pedagogy.³⁶ Tending too closely to a particular party line might alienate the more classroom-centered *pédagogues* and might also have split the *politiques*, whose political allegiances were broad. One of Freinet’s friends, for example, left the movement in 1927 when Freinet joined the PCF, claiming that his “pedagogy, made to liberate the child, to liberate the man” was “an absurdity ... for a totalitarian party.”³⁷ Finally, as Helene Gresso rightly argues, while for the Communist Party the school was a tool in a more important political struggle, for Freinet “the school is a political struggle in itself.... Consequently, it cannot become an object or a means for the objects (stated or supposed) of the Communist party, whatever the convergences between these objectives and Freinet’s ideas.”³⁸ In the final analysis, then, a diverse set of factors

³⁴ L. Spinelli, “L’École en Russie Soviétique,” *Notre Arme* 38 (December 1925) quoted and translated in Acker, 91.

³⁵ Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers*, 8–9.

³⁶ Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 81–82.

³⁷ Quoted in Freinet, *Elise et Célestin Freinet*, 136.

³⁸ Gresso, “‘Déplacer les lignes’: Les enseignants Freinet, citoyens et pédagogues républicains,” 418.

converged to produce a pedagogical approach that privileged progressive practice, whatever the potential costs for classroom content. Among those factors were Freinet's pedagogical ideals and his biography, the broad political positions of the movement's members, the political environment of the postwar left, and the vagaries of the state controlled education system.

Le Tour de France de Gutric: Working and Learning in Provincial France

The entries that make up the series *Le Tour de France de Gutric* were solicited from Freinet schools across the country. The entries that were included, however, came predominantly from the north of France. The student essays tended to follow a particular pattern. Gutric, a student from the Breton town of Trégastel, would arrive in a town, where he is greeted by the students of the local Freinet school. Gutric would tell the students he met where he had been—though they had already been following his exploits in *La Gerbe*—and the children would help Gutric locate work, typically at the workplace of a child's family member. Gutric and the students would then bid farewell with promises to write. In writing about their town, the pupils tended to emphasize the hard work and solidity of the town's residents, the gifts of local produce, and the strength and welcoming nature of communal bonds.

Georges Snyders's blistering attacks on the rural and agrarian focus of the materials produced by the *Écoles Modernes* echo Daniel Halévy's earlier critiques of the most iconic Third Republic textbook, *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, by G. Bruno. Snyders claimed, according to Helen Gresso, that the Freinet movement's materials were characterized by “the opposition between the countryside (where all is

well) and the city (where life is miserable).”³⁹ Similarly, in his 1937 critique, Halévy took Bruno to task for her omission of (or at least her failure to include in any depth) proletarian labor and large-scale industry. He found the work addressed to a particularly agricultural and rural France, a nostalgic vision of France that was receding into the past.⁴⁰

By comparing *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* and *Le tour de France de Gutric*, one may begin to unpack many of the quandaries that underlay Freinet’s movement and the Communist Party’s assault on it. Why did the work of a passionate educational reformer in the 1950s bear so much resemblance to a school manual from the late nineteenth century? Why would the materials produced by a committed follower of the political left tend to eschew the urban proletariat for traditional production and provincial life-ways? In the process of this comparison, it will become clear that the provincial nature of these works was largely a result of their means of production. Furthermore, by probing *Le Tour de France de Gutric*, one discovers that, beneath the traditional veneer of their work, the students of the *Écoles Modernes* commented explicitly on many of the changes besetting modern France.

The child of a rural town in the mountains near Marseille, Freinet never wavered in his underlying idealism for rural life. Even in his bearing, Freinet remained a man of the countryside. He wore casual shirts in place of the high collars of Third Republican teachers because he linked casual dress with the collaborative atmosphere of his

³⁹ Ibid., 409.

⁴⁰ Jacques Ozouf and Mona Ozouf, “Le Tour de La France Par Deux Enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic,” in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Traditions*, ed. Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, vol. 2. Traditions (Columbia University Press, 1997), 132.

classroom; he was even known to work shirtless in the garden or while baking bread with his young students. Rural France's simplicity and steadfastness accorded nicely with his "common sense" approach to his pedagogy. Due to that common sense approach, he preferred to call his reforms "techniques" rather than a "method." In *The Wisdom of Matthew*, which was being serialized in *L'Éducateur* at roughly the same time as Gutric was making his travels in *La Gerbe*, Freinet idolized the experienced shepherds of the mountain regions who allowed their sheep to find their own paths up the mountains to pasture. In contrast, he compares ineffective teachers to novice shepherds who create passive sheep by penning them in with dogs and to industrial farmers running modern "concentration camps" for chickens.⁴¹ Freinet's affinity for a simpler, rural life, however, was not a rejection of modernity, as the movement's name suggests. Modern methods provided a reprieve from the old, staid methods of education prevalent under the Third Republic. He also welcomed the arrival of radio, television, cinema, and other forms of popular culture as democratizing and engaging pedagogical tools.⁴²

Indeed, what mattered most to Freinet were not dichotomies like traditional versus modern, or rural versus urban. Rather, Freinet decried all forms of pedagogy or social relations that robbed work of its meaning. In *The Wisdom of Matthew*, one of Freinet's most common motifs was that of a soldier doing kitchen duty, peeling potatoes; in the context of the army, the work was mindless drudgery, but when the soldier returned home he relished doing the labor that would contribute to the livelihood of his family. This

⁴¹ Célestin Freinet, *The Wisdom of Matthew: An Essay in Contemporary French Educational Theory*, trans. John Sivell (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1990).

⁴² Issues of *Écoles Modernes* periodicals often included bibliographies for media to be used in the classroom. Additionally, there were often advertisements for media technologies like projectors and radios, and occasionally instructions that would allow teachers or classes to build their own.

sense of restoring meaning to work was central to Freinet's method, which he called "education of work" (*l'éducation du travail*). Freinet believed that successful pedagogy nourished the natural exploratory impulses of children by engaging them in the questions and problems that interested them and accorded meaning to their labor by having them produce something permanent (like a *journal scolaire*) and contribute to the education of fellow students.⁴³

The tales of Gutric seem to have been prime opportunities for the students to boast about their town and its contributions to the national community. These boasts were examples of the same "local chauvinism" that Jacques and Mona Ozouf have claimed was a central feature in Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*. They demonstrate that the nostalgia of the text was meant to render the diversity and difference of provincial France harmless. As such, the work is replete with "quiet exoticism," in which "all of France is basically similar." "At a deeper level," they contend, "it presents regional differences as gifts to the nation: local chauvinism prides itself on the boons that each regional temperament contributes to France in general, on the original contribution of each locality."⁴⁴ For example, while the Vogel brothers, André and Julien, the two children of Bruno's text, are traveling on a merchant vessel, for example, an argument breaks out among the sailors about which of their *petites patries* (small fatherlands) is the most beautiful. When one sailor argues that "the place where one is born is always the first of the world," André replies in an attempt to foster agreement that "let us say that

⁴³ Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 4; Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 56–57; Freinet, *The Wisdom of Matthew*.

⁴⁴ Ozouf and Ozouf, "Le Tour de La France Par Deux Enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic," 129.

France in its entirety, the *patrie*, is for us all the dearest in the world.”⁴⁵ The threat posed by regional diversity to national unity, the Ozoufs argue, was being obviated by the very processes that the book advocated: education and travel. The backwardness of provincial France and divisions within France, Bruno imagined, would be eliminated through “further progress in education.”⁴⁶ The cause of the local chauvinism in the Freinet movement’s texts, however, was an outgrowth of the work’s production rather than a carefully considered political or intellectual project.

The students did not boast about the *ease* of life in Rocheville, Croisy, or any of the other towns Gutric visited. The difficulty of manual labor was not effaced by the students of the Freinet schools, for whom manual labor was an integral part of daily life. Gutric struggles to uproot beets on a farm in Rocheville, where he gives one hard tug and “crash, there he is sprawled on his back.” Similarly, he is struck by falling fruit while attempting to collect picked apples.⁴⁷ In the mines of Saint-Remy, Gutric marvels at “the men who must fill and roll 18 to 20 wagons a day,” while he struggles to push only one.⁴⁸ In the original *Le Tour de la France*, on the other hand, industrial labor is largely ignored and agricultural and artisanal production is idealized. The Vogel brothers do not see the industrial labor of the national arms manufacturing center in Saint-Étienne; its only evidence is the massive smokestacks, the black soot that coats the city, and the workers who all exit the factory en masse at the end of the day. At the same time, M. Gertal’s

⁴⁵ Alfred Jules Émile Fouillée, L. C Syms, and G Bruno, *Le tour de la France* (New York; Cincinnati: American Book Co., 1902), 123–124.

⁴⁶ Ozouf and Ozouf, “Le Tour de La France Par Deux Enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic,” 130. See also, Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

⁴⁷ École de Rocheville, “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Rocheville (Manche),” *La Gerbe* 3 (Cannes: November 1, 1953): 4-5.

⁴⁸ École de filles de St-Rémy-sur-Orne, “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Saint-Rémy,” *La Gerbe* 4 (November 15, 1953): 4.

purchase of silk, ribbons, and velvet affirms the continued importance of artisanal production even in France's newest and most industrialized city.⁴⁹ Strangely, though we are told that André, the older and stouter of the two Vogel brothers, has worked throughout the journey across France, we see little of his labor. His work on the barge that takes him and Julien on the canal across France takes place out of the view of the narrator, who chooses to focus instead on Julien's visions of France and on the great men whose lives are recounted in Julien's book.⁵⁰

The focus on labor should not be surprising; Freinet, a committed Marxist, believed that production was at the center of self-identification. In 1957, for example, Robert Lagrave, a Freinet teacher working in the colonies, planned a pamphlet for students that would discuss the influence of geography, especially agricultural production, on human societies by comparing North Africa, Normandy, Languedoc, Landes, and Borinage.⁵¹ Thus, the request for entries in *La Gerbe* asked specifically for the kinds of work that Gutric would do in each town.⁵² The cumulative effect of the stories of difficult work in *Le Tour de France de Gutric* evolved into a kind of competition as each class showed the others how hardworking the people of their commune were. The children of Rocheville wrote that Gutric found their "trade difficult and that, all considered, he loves as much the adventure of the sea"; he had worked on the sea in his hometown of Trégastel.⁵³ The students of Saint-Remy, however, concluded

⁴⁹ G Bruno, *Le tour de France par deux enfants: devoir et patrie, livre de lecture courante* (Paris: Belin, 1884), 102–104.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 23–24.

⁵¹ *L'éducateur* (February 30, 1957): 61.

⁵² "Amis lecteurs!" *La Gerbe* 3 (November 1, 1953): 5.

⁵³ École de Rocheville (Manche), "Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Rocheville (Manche)," *La Gerbe* 3 (November 1, 1953): 5.

that Gutric, after his experience in the mines, “prefers work in the outdoors [like the work he had done in Rocheville] to those where one is buried in a cave.”⁵⁴ The gradual spread of economic reforms, however, was in the process of changing agricultural labor in the provinces and the accompanying social relations.

In the wake of the Second World War, French politicians, intellectuals, and economists entered into a grand discussion about how to increase economic development and counterbalance a mounting trade deficit with the United States. Among the earliest and most important volleys in the debate came from Jean-François Gravier, who had trained Vichy propagandists and was a geographer for technocrat Raoul Dautry during the Liberation.⁵⁵ His work, *Paris et le Désert français*, argued that the administrative, intellectual, and especially economic centralization of France had inhibited the development and diversification of the French provinces. As a remedy for that centralization, he suggested regional economic councils.⁵⁶ Gravier’s observations were at the heart of both regional and national attempts at provincial development. Jean Monnet’s *Commissariat Général du Plan* (General Planning Commission), which had responsibility for approving regional expansion and for arranging finance for regional development, was a case in point. By 1963, the *Délégation à l’Aménagement du Territoire et à l’Action Régionale* (Delegation for the Development of the Territory and

⁵⁴ École de filles de St-Rémy-sur-Orne, “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Saint-Rémy,” *La Gerbe* 4 (November 15, 1953): 5.

⁵⁵ Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 186.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 187; Jean-François Gravier and Raoul Dautry, *Paris et le désert français: Décentralisation, équipement, population* (Paris: le Portulan (Impr. des Impressions modernes), 1947). The title of Gravier’s book hinted at the specter of America; “desert” was a term generally used to refer to undeveloped or wild land—the kind idealized by Americans as a result of their history of manifest destiny—as opposed to the cultivated land thought so beautiful by the French peasant nation. On this point, see Robert O Paxton, *French Peasant Fascism: Henry Dorgères’s Greenshirts and the Crises of French Agriculture, 1929 - 1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 182.

for Regional Action—DATAR) took over the Commissariat's regional mandates and attempted to modernize the most underdeveloped areas of France as quickly as possible.⁵⁷

Yet, the modernization of rural France did not mean that France would give up its primarily agricultural character in favor of heavy industry. Rather, leaders saw France's agricultural potential as the key to economic superiority. They hoped France would become, as French right-wing agitator Henry Dorgères had suggested in 1941, "the garden of Europe."⁵⁸ Attempts to reach that goal were, at least superficially, Janus-faced. On the one hand, the expansion of French agriculture did not mean, as Dorgères likely intended, the return of the small-holding peasant farms that had been gradually disappearing under the weight of urbanization. The intellectual and political leaders behind the cause instead imagined the application of modern and mechanized farming techniques, the end of multiple crop fields in favor of growing single crops for export, and the combination of smallholdings into medium- and large-sized agricultural concerns.⁵⁹ On the other hand, as Richard Kuisel has demonstrated, French planners were wary of overly implementing the mass-production techniques they had witnessed on trade missions to the United States, feeling that despite their success the methods would be ill-suited to French culture. Many planners continued to argue that the strength of French trade would lie in the production of quality over quantity.⁶⁰ French farmers themselves helped to shape the face of French rural development and market orientation as well. Farmers engaged in large-scale strikes in 1953 and 1961-1962 with mixed

⁵⁷ Gildea, *The Past in French History*, 187.

⁵⁸ Paxton, *French Peasant Fascism*, 177.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 177-178.

⁶⁰ See Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

results. The farmers forced the Fourth Republic to return to market management and price indexing, but had much less success pushing the Fifth Republic to reject the Common Market or to remove trade barriers.⁶¹

Correspondance scolaire situated students in this postwar French economy. In addition to the letters and *journals scolaires*, classes commonly exchanged packages with their correspondents across France and abroad. The packages contained the local foodstuffs and artisanal products that French politicians and economists believed would form the backbone of the French economy as it faced the American behemoth. Sending packages of local products became such a common part of *correspondance scolaire* that the students from Dombasle-devant-Darney in the Vosges region used a package as a narrative catalyst. In their entry for the *La Gerbe* serial “Gris, Grignon, Grignette,” which also used the motif of a “tour of France”—though with three fictional, eponymous rats—the students received a package with great excitement from their correspondents in Bas-Ucha. But, upon opening the package, they found the three rats eating the honey, sausage, and sheep’s cheese within. Believing that a joke had been played on them, they cried out, “Nasty Bernais people, you said that this was a packet of treats, but it is some rats.”⁶² Freinet recalled in a 1947 essay the effect his students’ receipt of a package from their correspondents in Trégunc had not only on the class but on their families as well:

After twenty years, I still remember the day when we received from our correspondents from Trégunc a little mailed package which contained some carefully folded Breton crêpes, as fine as muslin, deliciously buttered. The partition was made: three crêpes for each, the teacher included, of course. And if you had seen the children leave for their homes, carrying for their siblings or their parents the remainder of their little part! That night, the children arrived saying:

⁶¹ Paxton, *French Peasant Fascism*, 169, 178.

⁶² “Gris, Grignon, Grignette à Dombasle-devant-Darney (Vosges),” *La Gerbe* 1 (October 1, 1953): 13.

“My papa said that it was necessary to send ‘them’ some oranges and some figs.”⁶³

Ironically, the celebration of local chauvinism by the children of Vence and their families eliminated the centrifugal threat that regionalism posed to national unity. By replicating the French agricultural market through the mail, the students’ correspondence proclaimed the contributions of their *petite patrie* to the nation and drew the regions of provincial France closer than ever.

Just as *Le Tour de France de Gutric* did not ignore industrial production, neither did it disregard the modernized agriculture that was beginning to make inroads into the provinces. The various agricultural activities undertaken by Gutric made clear to students the still uneven degree of agricultural modernization. The class in Beauvoir-en-Lyons, just fifty kilometers east of Rouen, drew an explicit contrast with an earlier entry by the students at the École de Rocheville, in the heart of Normandy. When a student from Beauvoir-en-Lyons invites Gutric to his family farm, where they are in the process of milking the cows, Gutric responds with enthusiasm because he had milked “two cows at Rocheville, in the Manche!” The student responds, however, “Yes, by hand. At my house, we have an electric milking machine.”⁶⁴ Nonetheless, though this text is followed by a small photograph of a milking machine, the photograph at the beginning of the

⁶³ H. Alziary and C. Freinet, *Les Correspondances interscolaires*, Brochures d’Education Nouvelle Populaire 32 (Novembre 1947), <http://www.icem-freinet.net/~archives/benp/benp-32/benp-32.htm>.

⁶⁴ École de Rocheville, “Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Rocheville (Manche),” *La Gerbe* 3 (November 1, 1953): 3-5; “Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Beauvoir-en-Lyons (Seine-Inférieure),” *La Gerbe* 8 (January 15, 1954): 4.

narrative—a small boy in overalls kneeling next to a cow and drinking straight from the udder—is a picture of rural simplicity and idealized pastoralism (figure 2.1).⁶⁵

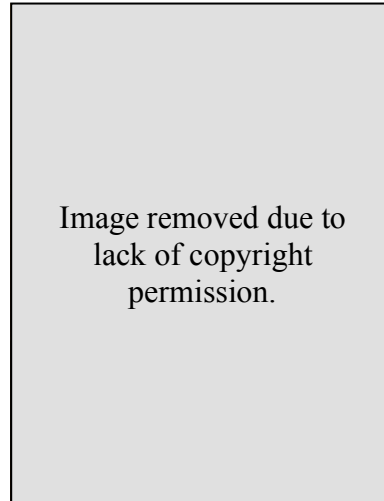


Figure 2.1. Image of a boy drinking milk from a cow’s udder from “Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Beauvoir-en-Lyons (Seine-Inférieure).” Coopérateur de France. Source: *La Gerbe* 8 (Cannes: Editions de l’École Moderne, 15 Janvier 1954), 3.

The transition to modern agriculture that would be emblematic of Jean Monnet’s five-year plans is no more evident than in the entry submitted by the École de Boullay-Mivoie in the Eure-et-Loire region. The beginning of the text emphasizes the small and close-knit character of the town, not far from where André and Julien settled in the original *Tour de la France par deux enfants*. Gutric is immediately recognized as an outsider: “What is this stranger doing in our village?” Yet, soon thereafter, as at Beauvoir-en-Lyons and Croissy, Gutric is recognized by a Freinet student and is asked to “become acquainted with our milieu.” Because the winter weather has rendered the roads and countryside unappealing, the student asks Gutric to come with him to the town hall “to contemplate the entire commune on paper” by looking at the town land register. In a

⁶⁵ “Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Beauvoir-en-Lyons (Seine-Inférieure),” *La Gerbe* 8 (January 15, 1954): 3.

prototypical example of the Freinet method of living history (*l'histoire vivante*), Gutric is asked to consider the land registers from before and after the “*opérations de remembrement*” (land consolidation operations). “You can easily imagine the benefits of this *remembrement*,” Gutric is told, including increased access to “roads for exploitation” and the use of “motorization which is only possible on large plots.” As a result, Boullay-Mivoie has seventeen tractors, which Gutric is excited to ride.⁶⁶

One is immediately struck, in this entry and in the *Tour de France de Gutric* as a whole, by the coupling of a vision of rural France as a communal space in which outsiders are immediately recognized with that of a rapidly modernizing space of increased production, social change, and market orientation. As scholarship on rural France in the immediate postwar period makes clear, however, these two visions of France were not mutually exclusive and were occasionally mutually supportive. Small towns, hard-hit by the accelerating rural exodus of the 1950s and failing to compete with modernizing neighboring villages, often believed turning inward and strengthening bonds of community was the way to cope. Gordon Wright recounts an incident when the mayor of a rural commune, left almost vacant by rural exodus, “was asked whether his constituents would consider fusion with an adjoining commune, whose chief town was two miles distant.” The mayor replied that “we want nothing to do with foreigners.”⁶⁷ Communal relations in many rural regions were vital as peasants attempted to join the modernizing trend without sacrificing local culture. In the extreme, Susan Carol Rogers

⁶⁶ École de Boullay-Mivoie, “Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric au Boullay-Mivoie (E.-et-L.),” *La Gerbe* 11 (March 1, 1954): 3-6.

⁶⁷ Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964), 15. Although, Wright argues, “the suspicion and jealousy of neighbor toward neighbor” sometimes prevented grass-roots leadership from taking hold, pp. 15, 189.

makes clear in her study of a small village in the Aveyron that some peasants occasionally fabricated local relations, creating machine cooperatives that existed only on paper to take advantage of the state subsidies. As Rogers shows, however, even when villagers did reject communal ties, they could do so because the increased availability of material prosperity and state-sponsored support institutions—such as old-age pensions and crop and livestock insurance—allowed for greater individualism.⁶⁸

Regardless of Gutric's exercise in living history in Boullay-Mivoie, the pedagogical purpose of Gutric's trip lies far beneath the surface. Gutric's own education is hardly addressed in the serial text.⁶⁹ This is a far cry from *La Tour de la France par deux enfants*, in which Julien's education, which is both formal and informal, is always at issue. In Epinal, the old woman with whom he and André stay requires him to attend school, and André goes to an adult class (*cours d'adultes*) after his apprenticeship with the local locksmith.⁷⁰ While Julien is on the road, on the other hand, his book of the lives of great men of France is supplemented by the local knowledge of those with whom he travels. Most importantly, however, the journey is itself Julien's greatest geography lesson. As Jacques and Mona Ozouf correctly assert, "Julien is sure that when his adventure is over he will be first in his class, because he will have absorbed knowledge of 'his' France through the soles of his shoes."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Susan Carol Rogers, *Shaping Modern Times in Rural France: The Transformation and Reproduction of an Aveyronnais Community* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 108.

⁶⁹ One exception to the absence of Gutric's education is that students from Paris write that he takes copious notes during a visit to the Musée de l'homme to tell his classmates in conference when he returns to Trégastel: École de Genevilliers (Seine), "La Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Paris," *La Gerbe* 15 (May 1, 1954): 5.

⁷⁰ Bruno, *Le tour de France par deux enfants*, 43–45.

⁷¹ Ozouf and Ozouf, "Le Tour de La France Par Deux Enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic," 128.

Implicit in *Le Tour de France de Gutric*, however, is a critique of the traditional means by which French students learned the history and geography of their country. Maps are entirely absent from the text. Indeed, maps seldom make their way into any of the entries in *La Gerbe*. Bruno's *La Tour de la France par deux enfants*, on the other hand, included a map on the first page with André's and Julien's route outlined. Freinet himself was doubtful of the usefulness of geography textbooks and maps. While he believed they had been useful at the turn of the century because the world (especially Africa and Asia) was so little known, he claimed that, by 1964, maps and charts were unable to keep up with the rapid pace of changes in geographical knowledge. Furthermore, he believed that modern technology increased the availability of geographic knowledge through television, radio, cinema, and most importantly the materials sent by the movement's correspondents. "The geography manuals can disappear today," he wrote; "[w]e will replace them advantageously and at a better price."⁷²

Le Tour de France de Gutric touts the capability of the movement's methods to build links and networks among students from diverse areas through the method of correspondence. These networks among students within France and abroad, on the one hand, complement the emphasis of *La Gerbe*'s texts on the local and, on the other, are posited as more real and vital than the national and international connections built by maps and books. In her text, Bruno seems to come to the defense of the traditional tools of the republican school. As André and Julien prepare to leave Alsace-Lorraine, André dutifully studies a map of the region to learn the route they must follow at night. He has

⁷² C. Freinet, "Plus de manuels scolaires! Plus de leçons!" *Dossier pédagogique de l'École Moderne* 7, Supplément au numéro 6 du 15 novembre 1964, <http://www.icem-pedagogie-freinet.org/icem-info/publications/archives/plonelocalfolderng.2006-02-23.4990464768/dpe/dpe-7/dpe-7.htm>

studied it so thoroughly, Bruno tells us, it is as if “he had already passed there.”⁷³ Yet, despite André’s studying, the danger is ever-present in the narrative; they must rely on the goodwill of strangers or the friendships and commercial relationships established by their father and uncle to make their way. There is little danger or difficulty in Gutric’s journey, however, because he is readily recognized at every stop. One such case is the observation by the students in Beauvoir-en-Lyons that they already “know Gutric well.”⁷⁴ In the entry written by students in Croissy, moreover, Gutric is recognized in passing as he takes a boat through the locks at Bougival.⁷⁵ The message is clear: the methods of the *Écoles Modernes* allow for the creation of an imagined community much deeper than that gleaned from study of maps, pictures, and histories.

In Bruno’s *La Tour de la France par deux enfants*, according to Jacques and Mona Ozouf, leaving a place is “always wrenching.”⁷⁶ Indeed, every departure from the places André and Julien have discovered and the people they have met “reminded [Julien] of the preceding departures,” particularly his original escape from Phalsbourg, his *petite patrie*, after the transition of Alsace to the Germans after the France-Prussian War.⁷⁷ The underlying motivation for André’s and Julien’s journey is to settle down, to find a home, to locate their uncle Frantz and their “mother” France. Each time André and Julien leave the people they have met, it is their original escape from Phalsbourg reenacted in miniature. Because the ultimate goal of the narrative is stasis rather than

⁷³ Bruno, *Le tour de France par deux enfants*, 17, 19.

⁷⁴ “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Beauvoir-en-Lyons (Seine-Inférieure),” *La Gerbe* 8 (January 15, 1954): 3.

⁷⁵ “Le Tour de France de Gutric, Gutric à Croissy,” *La Gerbe* 13-14 (April 1 and 15, 1954): 3-4.

⁷⁶ Ozouf and Ozouf, “Le Tour de La France Par Deux Enfants: The Little Red Book of the Republic,” 130.

⁷⁷ Bruno, *Le tour de France par deux enfants*, 162.

movement, Bruno must, as Patrick Cabanel describes, contrive difficulties for the young children to push the story on: they arrive at their uncle's house in Marseille only to find out he has gone toward Besançon, when they find him they learn that his money has been lost in a loan gone sour, and they must return to Phalsbourg to file papers for French citizenship. Bruno's moralizing on the virtues of travel comes in the voice of M. Gertal, who responds to Julien's comment that he would like to travel as though he had means by asking whether a life of constant travel is as wonderful as it seems. The message of the epilogue is a clear "no"; the boys live with their uncle and Guillaume's family at a farm outside Chartres, in a picture of rural stability.⁷⁸

There is little of the sadness associated with leaving in *Le Tour de France de Gutric*. Although most entries end with an obligatory mention of how much Gutric would like to stay longer, "[He] must leave, [his] Tour de France is not finished."⁷⁹ Gutric's tour is not an attempt to find a place to settle down, as is the journey of André and Julien; Gutric does not labor to survive but rather works his way around France simply to fund his desire to see it. And yet, Gutric does little of what one would call sightseeing. That most of the entries from correspondents included few tourist attractions should not be particularly surprising as the request for entries from *La Gerbe* asked specifically for students to discuss the kinds of work Gutric would do in their locality.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, *Le Tour de France de Gutric* both was conditioned by and sprang from a spreading industry of mass tourism that was gradually making its way into the provinces. Some entries did, however, touch on the local patrimony that the writers thought might be

⁷⁸ Ibid., 306–308.

⁷⁹ École de Villers-Cotterets (Aisne), "La Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Villers-Cotterets," *La Gerbe* 10 (February 15, 1954): 3.

⁸⁰ "Amis lecteurs!" *La Gerbe*, 3 (November 1, 1953): 5.

of interest to their fellow students. In Beauvoir-en-Lyons, Gutric visits the local church which has been constructed in multiple styles over the course of centuries while in Allençon he is given the opportunity to work in the printing office, which is famous for printing Baudelaire's first poems.⁸¹ Finally, a class from Paris used the excuse that Gutric was "too young" to work in the factories to allow Gutric to take a tour of the capital city.⁸²

The "Authentic" Empire: Writing Indigenous Society for the Metropole

In the January 1957 issue of the Freinet movement periodical *L'Éducateur*, Freinet personally reviewed the film "La plus belles des vies" (The Most Beautiful of Lives), about a teacher in Guinée Française. Though indirect, it was one of Freinet's few writings on colonialism. In the review, he lauded the film for its powerful representation of the French mission in the colonies and, in particular, of the teacher's role in that mission. He systematically rejected many of the arguments that had been at the heart of the colonial project from its inception: spreading French culture, exporting manufactured goods, and religious conversion. "True civilization," Freinet argued, did not mean "importing new conceptions of life, new social structures," getting natives "to recite the catechism," "selling sunglasses," or even building infrastructure. Colonialism should rather seek to teach natives to use more effectively their natural resources in order to ameliorate their daily lives. Unsurprisingly, the teacher would be an important force for the reform of colonialism, which he realized could be both condescending in requiring

⁸¹ École de garçons Allençon-Monsort, "Le Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Allençon," *La Gerbe* 9 (February 1, 1954): 5.

⁸² École de Genevilliers (Seine), "La Tour de France de Gutric: Gutric à Paris," *La Gerbe* 15 (May 1, 1954).

native societies to change their traditional cultures and superficial in providing only roads and sunglasses at the expense of the knowledge for sustained and independent development. As such, Freinet romantically recalled one of the movement's own teachers, Robert Lagrave, a frequent contributor to *L'Éducateur* and *La Gerbe*: "If we have thought, all throughout this beautiful film, of our comrade Lagrave, it is that we imagine that his life, in the brush of Cameroun, must strangely resemble that of the teacher in Guinée."⁸³

The materials found in *La Gerbe* differed from traditional textbook narratives in one important way: their methods of production reversed the colonial gaze, allowing colonial subjects to narrate their histories and their lives and bringing the empire into the metropole. Because *La Gerbe* solicited entries from Freinet schools in the colonies, the *journaux scolaires* combated the traditionally Paris-centered textbook industry. Though textbooks for colonial subjects were beginning to be produced in colonial capitals, most of the textbooks from the major publishing houses still emanated from Paris. Freinet pedagogy was especially progressive in its approach to colonial populations; a Commission on Franco-Arab Schools advocated for the use of two teachers in a class, thus allowing for bilingual education, and a *journal scolaire* from a school in North Africa was published in French and Arabic on opposing pages.⁸⁴ Moreover, while Parisian-made textbooks were regularly used in the colonies, textbooks of colonial origin were seldom if ever used in the metropole. Despite the reversal of the orientalist gaze, however, one is surprised to find that the content of these student-produced texts

⁸³ Célestin Freinet, "La plus belle des vies," *L'Éducateur, revue pédagogique de l'Institut Coopératif de l'École Moderne*, Edition Culturelle 29, no 12-13 (January 20-30, 1957): 75.

⁸⁴ "Commission des Écoles Franco-Arabes," *L'Éducateur : revue pédagogique bimensuelle de l'Institut coopératif de l'école moderne et de la F.I.M.E.M.* 19: 424

coincided in many ways with the increasingly prevalent official colonial ideologies of association or colonial humanism. Though there is little evident racism to speak of in the entries, having students write about their daily lives coupled with the strength of the movement in less urbanized areas, led, much as was the case with rural schools in the metropole, to narratives that were as centered on indigenous lifeways and traditional culture as was colonial policy in the postwar period.

Though the narratives of *La Gerbe* had much in common with colonial portrayals of an exotic empire, this study agrees with recent scholarship that has drawn distinctions between exoticism, with its multiplicity of narrative relations, and discourses of Orientalism with which exoticism has frequently been conflated. Ron Shapiro, for example, has argued that “some degree of exoticism is intrinsic to the cognition of otherness since otherness is, by definition, constructed from a single position.”⁸⁵ Charles Forsdick claims, therefore, that the concept of exoticism should emphasize what “Santaolalla casts as its ‘multidirectional and polyvalent’ potential” over the “specifically colonizing, assimilative, one-way form of the process” that is indicative of Orientalism.⁸⁶ In other words, those who conflate all exoticism with Orientalism flatten the variation of colonial discourses and ignore the ideological distance between individuals who used common languages. Furthermore, in the case of *La Gerbe*, too readily ascribing these narratives about indigenous French subjects to the same categories as colonial-era films or travel narratives ignores their unique conditions of production; they were produced by the indigenous subjects themselves for their metropolitan counterparts.

⁸⁵ Charles Forsdick, “Revisiting Exoticism: From Colonialism to Postcolonialism,” in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003), 50.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 50, 52.

Indigenous life in the colonies as portrayed in the materials in *La Gerbe* was marked by religious celebrations and folkloric festivals. Given the wealth of material produced in North Africa, especially in Algeria and Tunisia, the observances of Islam, both everyday and infrequent, were a common topic. Indeed, that the students wrote so prolifically on Islamic observances or that the editors of *La Gerbe* selected these materials may have been part of a concerted effort to demystify Islam for French students. As was common with many entries in *La Gerbe*, “The Lion and the Grasshopper on Pilgrimage to Mecca,” for example, relied on animals as protagonists. In the narrative, the two companions make the pilgrimage to Mecca from the Atlas Mountains in North Africa. The story of the pilgrimage is at once modern and timeless, realistic and fantastic. While the story begins with the “once upon a time” indicative of the fairytale genre, the characters return from Mecca in an airplane. The purpose of the story, however, is obviously the explanation of the rituals, traditions, and responsibilities of Muslim worship, especially the act of pilgrimage.⁸⁷

The majority of entries about Islam, however, centered on everyday observances and how those observances ordered the rhythms of life in North Africa. The École de Zénouna in Constantine’s entry on “My Father,” for instance, described the life of an Algerian store owner, whose work day is interrupted only by meals and prayer, including the trips to the local mosque at sunrise and sunset.⁸⁸ Aspects of Muslim life that might have been seen as strict by French children were not effaced in the materials emanating from the colonies. The boys’ school in Guémar (Algeria) discussed the effects of Muslim

⁸⁷ “Le Lion et la sauterelle en pèlerinage a la Mecque,” *La Gerbe* 6-7 (December 15, 1953-January 1, 1954): 24-27.

⁸⁸ École de Zénouna (Constantine), “Mon Père,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 16 (May 15, 1955): 11-12.

observance on women's roles, noting that women can only leave the house completely covered for a circumcision, marriage, or birth among the neighbors.⁸⁹ Other materials described forms of corporal punishment used in religious schools on children learning the Koran.

According to most scholars, one of the harshest effects of the appropriative and domesticating exoticism of colonialism was the failure to acknowledge the consequences of colonialism on indigenous societies. As Charles Forsdick argues of the colonial exposition of 1931, "Colonial cultures were not presented as they were—divided, hybrid, unevenly developed, combining acculturated 'évolués' [literally, those who had 'evolved'] with subjects whose contact with the 'mission civilisatrice' [civilizing mission] was limited or non-existent—but as colonial propaganda demanded they should be."⁹⁰ The student work in *La Gerbe*, however, did not smooth away the uneven development of the colonies, just as the patchy modernization of rural France was an important part of *La Tour de France de Gutric*. A photographic excerpt from the Bibliothèque de Travail, "Sounoufou, enfant de fleuve africain" (Sounoufou, Child of an African River), juxtaposes starkly modern shipbuilding with traditional forms of maritime commerce used by natives, as a group of three African men row a canoe away from the harbor in the imposing shadow of cargo ship's hull (figure 2.2).⁹¹ The

⁸⁹ École de garçons, Guémar (Algerie), "Ma Mère," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 17 (June 1, 1955): 6. Islamic rituals and celebrations in North Africa were not the only ones considered, there were similarly entries describing the Têt festival in Vietnam and the Tonkinoise festival in New Hebrides, for example: "Le Têt," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 12-13 (March 25-April 10, 1956): 45-47; École de Port-Vila (Nouvelles-Hébrides), "Mon Beau Village," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 3 (November 10, 1955).

⁹⁰ Forsdick, "Revisiting Exoticism: From Colonialism to Postcolonialism," 48–49. Brackets in original.

⁹¹ "Un beau cliché extrait du dernier numéro de la collection Bibliothèque de Travail: 'Sounoufou, enfant du fleuve africain,'" *La Gerbe* 4 (November 15, 1953): 18.

photograph shows the continued existence of traditional economies even within the port cities lauded by most French propaganda as at the center of French colonial modernization. In contrast, a photograph of native boys in loincloths using a canoe to transport grain accompanied an article on Cameroon written by a student from the metropolitan Department of the Aube. This photo lacks any hint of modernity. Moreover, the bank of the river lies outside the photograph's depth of field, making it impossible to tell the modernization or population density of the area (figure 2.3).⁹²

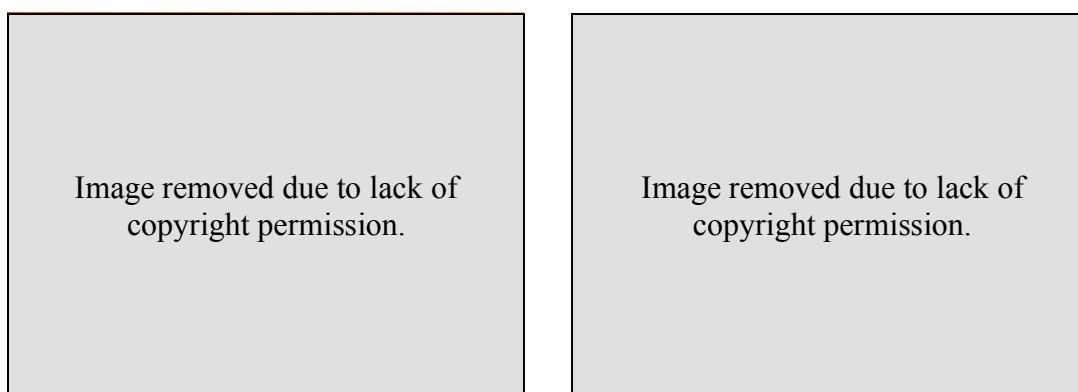


Figure 2.2. *Above left*, Image from “Sounoufou, enfant de fleuve africain.” Source: *La Gerbe* 4 (Cannes: Editions de l’École Moderne, 15 Novembre 1953), 18.

Figure 2.3. *Above right*, Image of boys canoeing from “Le Cameroun.” Source: *La Gerbe* 8 (Cannes: Editions de l’École Moderne, 15 Janvier 1954), 15.

The students contributing to *La Gerbe* made clear the growing integration of the colonies into the market economy. And, as one might expect from a movement with roots in the left, the traditional Marxist narrative of colonialism as the expropriation of primary materials and the expansion of markets for the sale of secondary goods lies just below the surface. Soap, for instance, represents the entrance of French products into

⁹² Denise Maitre, École de Fontaine-les-Grès (Aube), “Le Cameroun,” *La Gerbe* 8 (January 15, 1954): 15.

colonial markets. The student from Ghat washes his hands with soap after meals.⁹³ The use of soap and the hygienic discourses that accompanied it, according to Timothy Burke, were central to the colonial impositions of domesticity, revised native understandings of cleanliness and health, and exemplified the extension of European commodity markets into the colonies. A class trip to the “model [soap] factory of Haubourdin” in Congo ends with each student being given “a brochure on the factory and a box of ‘Sunlight’.”⁹⁴ The photograph that begins the entry conveys just how far colonial notions of cleanliness (and the products that accompanied those notions) extended into native societies; an African woman scrubs her child with a bar of soap in a river, as a child in a loincloth looks on (Figure 2.4).⁹⁵ The extension of French hygienic discourses into the colonies through soap elicited nary a word of reproach; the writers concluded about their trip to Haubourdin that “we took the bus back, very happy with our morning.”⁹⁶

Rarely did entries in *La Gerbe* overtly criticize the expansion of colonial markets, despite the movement’s leftism and Lenin’s powerful critiques of imperialism as “the highest stage of capitalism.”⁹⁷ Evidence from Freinet’s examinations for a correspondence course suggests that he was personally very knowledgeable about the colonies and doubtful of the usefulness of colonies to economic success. In his essay on

⁹³ École de Ghat (Constantine), “Ma Maison,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 5 (December 1, 1954): 20. On the meanings of soap and other consumer products for indigenous cultures under late colonialism, see Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

⁹⁴ “Voyage-Enquête,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 17 (June 1, 1955): 27; Sunlight, as Burke contends, was the flagship soap of the Lever Brothers company. Burke argues that soap factories were usually among the first goods manufactured in industrializing economies because of the ease of manufacture and relatively low capitalization requirements: *Ibid.*, 92–93, 153–155.

⁹⁵ “Voyage-Enquête,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 17 (June 1, 1955): 26.

⁹⁶ “Voyage-Enquête,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 17 (June 1, 1955): 27.

⁹⁷ Vladimir Il’ich Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin: “What Is to Be Done?” And Other Writings*, ed. Henry M Christman (New York: Dover Publications, 1987).

“the colonial expansion of Germany before 1914” Freinet concluded that “Germany will start again to live without colonies, and perhaps prove that current commerce can prosper without them.” The grader, however, was less convinced, arguing that Germany would retain “the best [colonies],” especially “those that do not have the name of colonies, but are crammed with German immigrants.” In his assignments, Freinet’s received his highest marks on questions about colonialism. For example, the grader for his twelve-page essay on “the colonial expansion of France from 1815 to the present” commented he had done “rather good work; serious study.”⁹⁸ Perhaps Freinet, always wary of taking potentially divisive stances in the name of the movement, was unwilling to criticize such a divisive issue as colonialism, especially in a periodical for students.

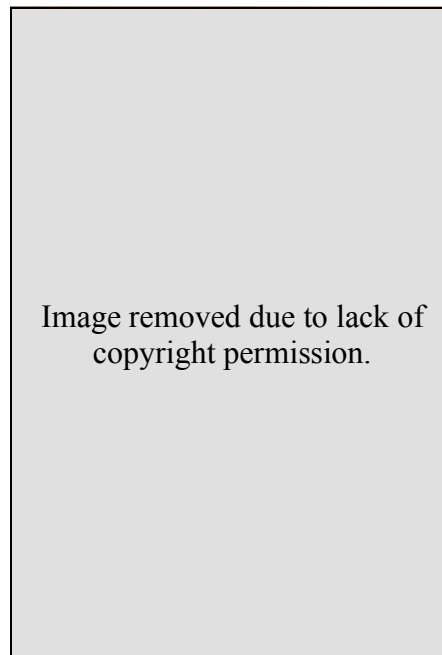


Figure 2.4. Image of African toddler being bathed in a river from “Voyage-Enquete.” Source: *La Gerbe Enfantine* 17 (Cannes: Imprimerie Aegitna, 1 Juin 1955), 26.

⁹⁸ Cited in Freinet, *Elise et Célestin Freinet*, 79.

The École de Guémar's entry in *La Gerbe* on a festival in the neighboring town of El-Oued demonstrates the extent to which the trappings of modernity—including a bicycle race, a film, a football match, and a lottery—had made their way even to this Saharan oasis near the Tunisian border.⁹⁹ Yet few students made explicit reference, at least in these published entries, to the chasm separating most indigenous residents of the French colonies from their French contemporaries. The École de Ghat, located at an oasis in Libya near the Algerian border, was one exception. The student from Ghat writes that he “does not have beds as do the French. [He] does not have lots of things as in the houses of the French.”¹⁰⁰ “If [he] was rich,” however, he would “buy a truck” and go to Tripoli, where he “would also buy a bicycle and many things because, when [he] returned to Ghat, [he] would open a store for [his] father.”¹⁰¹ The boys' school in Ouargla (Constantine) further notes that on New Year's Day, when the Europeans receive presents, the poor of the village wait outside “to wish the Europeans a good year to receive some coins or a bit of food.”¹⁰² These students, who all happened to be from areas far from the major urban centers, in which one might expect French products to become available relatively late, were among the few to discuss critically the economic divisions between natives and French.

⁹⁹ École de Guémar (Sahara), “La Fête à El-Oued,” *La Gerbe* 9 (February 1, 1954): 17.

¹⁰⁰ École de Ghat (Constantine), “Ma Maison,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 5 (December 1, 1954): 19. It is unclear from the entry whether the students are referring to their French correspondents in the metropole or to French people living in the area.

¹⁰¹ École de Ghat (Constantine), “Si j'étais riche,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 5 (December 1, 1954): 25. Interestingly, the drawings that accompany these entries from Ghat were reproduced from a *Journal Scolaire* written by the École de Sekasso, in present day Mali.

¹⁰² École des garçons, Ouargla (Constantine), “Echos d'Ouargla,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 12 (March 25, 1958): 3.

In addition to the marketing of secondary resources from the metropole into the colonies—such as soap, bicycles and films—an even greater number of entries focused on the expropriation of primary materials from the colonies. In 1954, *La Gerbe Enfantine* published an extensive article on Algeria. In a section of “Practical Documents” it discussed the agricultural production of Algeria, in particular viniculture. Wine, it noted, had become Algeria’s largest resource with an annual production of about 17,000,000 hectoliters. Furthermore, by 1954, wine represented half of Algeria’s total exports.¹⁰³ The significance of this development cannot be overstated. Prior to European colonization, wine production was unheard of in Algeria because the consumption of wine violated the Koran. During colonialism, vineyards replaced native wheat fields and the production of wine was confined almost exclusively to European settlers producing for French tables.¹⁰⁴ Again, however, the material fell short of an overtly critical response. In fact, the earlier section of the article painted Algeria as a mixture of exotic native culture—“you have without a doubt wished to travel in this mysterious land ... in which the inhabitants do not dress like us”—and Algiers, “a grand modern city.”¹⁰⁵

Though the entries from colonial schools made up the bulk of the colonial material in *La Gerbe* from 1950 to 1962, a subset of Freinet school production about the colonies came from metropolitan students who had traveled to the colonies. As one might expect, these students emphasized the practice of tourism. In the entry “Paris-Saigon en Avion” (Paris-Saigon by Plane), the students of the École de Clauriat in the

¹⁰³ “L’Algérie” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 5 (December 1, 1954): 12.

¹⁰⁴ See Wally Jansen, “French Bread and Algerian Wine: Conflicting Identities in French Algeria,” in *Food, Drink and Identity Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001).

¹⁰⁵ “L’Algerie,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 5 (December 1, 1954): 8-12.

Puy-de-Dome recount in great detail the intricacies of “16,000 km., 5 days of travel”: including such mundane details as the narrator’s need to fasten his or her seatbelt before take-off and the plane’s airspeed, 550 kilometers per hour. Saigon itself, however, is not described at all, especially surprising given the author’s devotion of an entire column to the two-day stop-over in Calcutta.¹⁰⁶ The letter that the École Vauban received from a correspondent near Montreal, who had traveled to a nearby Native American reservation, paints a picture of an indigenous society well situated in a modern tourist economy. Their correspondent attends a camp museum, which housed animal pelts, wolf and bear-tooth necklaces, and the scalps of enemies. Moreover, the chief places his feathered headdress on the student’s mother’s head for a photograph and allows the student to take part in tribal dances. As suggested by this entry, French students going to the colonies emphasized the “traditional” aspects of indigenous life and took part in constructed versions of native life.¹⁰⁷

The materials of the Freinet movement bore a striking resemblance to discourses about traditional native societies that undergirded the rhetoric of cultural particularism, which colonizing societies used to deny citizenship to indigenous peoples. French law since the interwar period had circumvented granting French citizenship even to the most educated and Francophile of the colonial *évolués* by creating separate political categories—such as “*indigène d’élite*” (native elite)—that affirmed that colonial elites were nearly French, but not quite. The decision by Félix Eboué, the Governor General of Chad and an *évolué* from Guyana, to rally early on to de Gaulle’s Free French after the Nazi invasion led de Gaulle to declare another intermediate category, “*notables*

¹⁰⁶ École de Clauriat (P.-de-D.), “Paris-Saigon en avion,” *La Gerbe* 4 (November 15, 1953): 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ École Vauban, Givet (Ardennes), “Les Indiens,” *La Gerbe* 13-14 (April 1-April 15, 1954): 21.

évolués.¹⁰⁸ Algeria was, as usual, a special case, with Algerian Muslims gradually given limited rights between 1920 and 1962 but without the extension of full nationality. Interwar attempts by the government and members of parliament to extend nationality to the Muslim population were resisted at every turn by Algeria's settler population, which believed the extension of rights would be "the transgression of the principle on which the colonization of Algeria rested: the distinction between French citizens and Muslim subjects."¹⁰⁹ Increasingly, Muslim organizations rejected proposed half-measures in favor of Algerian independence. By the time the government got serious about granting rights to indigenous Algerian, particularly in the late-1950s, military and political events in Algeria had already gotten away from the government and were headed toward independence.¹¹⁰

Each of these linguistic apparatuses and half-measures reaffirmed colonial difference for even the most educated colonial subjects while simultaneously blurring the neat divisions of what Mahmood Mamdani has called the "bifurcated world" of citizens and subjects.¹¹¹ It appears that the Freinet movement's coterminality with these discourses came less from an ideological commitment to colonial difference than from a combination of a reformist attitude toward colonialism and a belief that student-produced narratives should emphasize the immediate world of the student. That immediate world,

¹⁰⁸ James E. Genova, *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), chap. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789*, trans. Catherine Porter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2008), 223.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 223–225.

¹¹¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 61.

like that of colonial students' rural counterparts in the metropole, was still quite traditional.

After the Second World War, colonial reformers and anticolonial movements proved adept at redeploying rhetoric about native traditionalism for their own ends.¹¹² Eric Jennings, for example, has demonstrated that Vichy used traditional narratives of the colonies to bind the empire more closely to its vision of rural France. Anticolonial and nationalist movements, however, “transformed an almost caricatured Vichyite vision into the viable basis for a new national identity.”¹¹³ By privileging the touchstones of native culture, the Vichy government had unwittingly planted the seeds of nationalism and fostered a malleable rhetorical space for anticolonial activists. In French West Africa (AOF), James Genova argues, the Fourth Republic's conversion of the French empire into the French Union ensconced “traditional” notions of African society by granting rural authority to native chiefs. Much as in Indochina, however, colonial leaders like Léopold Senghor and Félix Houphouët-Boigny used narratives of African particularism and the French commitment to preserving African society to gain political power and, eventually, West African autonomy. Senghor, for example, argued convincingly that the colonial government's practice of appointing native chiefs was an affront to the democratic traditions of African tribal culture and to the French commitment to *liberté*,

¹¹² See Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*; Genova, *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956*; On the importance of Republican notions of colonial subjects in the formulation of anticolonial rhetoric, see *ibid.*; Eric T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Eric T. Jennings, “Conservative Confluences, ‘Nativist’ Synergy: Reinscribing Vichy's National Revolution in Indochina, 1940-1945,” *French Historical Studies* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 601–35.

¹¹³ Jennings, “Conservative Confluences, ‘Nativist’ Synergy,” 624.

égalité, fraternité.¹¹⁴ Though perhaps placing Freinet at odds with the Communist party, the emphasis on traditional life in materials produced by the *Écoles Modernes* dovetailed nicely with the rhetoric of *évolué* leaders in the colonies.¹¹⁵

“The Principal Artisans of Peace”: The Écoles Modernes and Decolonization

What were the limits of the Freinet movement’s support of colonial reform? In spite (or perhaps because) of the movement’s strength in the colonies, it seemed unwilling to support colonialism in the face of demands for autonomy or independence from indigenous peoples. Freinet further believed that at the heart of being an educator was pacifism: “It is natural that educators be above all the principal artisans of Peace.”¹¹⁶ Thus, one would certainly expect Freinet to reject the maintenance of colonialism at the point of a gun. At the movement’s 1957 congress at Nantes, the Tunisian delegate, Chabaane, discussed the independence movements then in full swing in the colonies and thanked the movement for “safeguard[ing] human dignity” and for “its shining proof of solidarity” with the recently concluded independence movement in Tunisia. He further asked the attendees to think of the events in Algeria, where “our brothers and your brothers are killing each other, tearing each other up, the one group thirsty for liberty and dignity, the other group thirsty for domination and exploitation.”¹¹⁷ Chabaane’s language does not seem to have been edited to avoid offending the sensibilities of his mostly French audience. Thus, one could conclude that he expected a favorable reception from

¹¹⁴ Genova, *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956*. On the rhetorical politics of authenticity used by Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny, see chapter 6 in particular.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹¹⁶ “La Paix,” *L’éducateur* 11: 248

¹¹⁷ *L’éducateur* 24-25 (May 20-31, 1957): 28.

his audience, an audience largely in agreement with his anticolonial views. Moreover, the delegate from Senegal, M. Diop, found symbolism in being in Nantes, from which “the slave traders left,” at the moment when the Senegalese were “in the process of obtaining in part [their] autonomy and of demanding [their] independence.”¹¹⁸

Materials in support of anticolonial movements only infrequently made it into periodicals destined for children. Those rare discussions of colonial conflict, however, appeared almost immediately as a result of the dedication of the *Écoles Modernes* movement to the free production of texts by students. Swift response to war in the pages of the *Écoles Modernes* was not unprecedented. Entries discussing World War II were commonplace in movement periodicals soon after the journals returned from their censorship after Vichy. In March of 1945, the Coopérative scolaire des Molières issued a *journal scolaire* titled “June 1940-August 1944,” recounting the experiences of wartime and occupation from the perspectives of a number of the children. The topics covered were usually quite personal, such as an entry that described five “*boches*” (an offensive term for Germans, especially soldiers) that occupied one student’s grandmother’s house, while she moved in with a neighbor. Students also recalled in great detail the exodus of families before the invading Germans, bombings of the Renault factory on the edge of the city in Billancourt—at least one student’s father worked there—and the advancing American army and eventual liberation.¹¹⁹ In a 1950 issue of *L’Éducateur*, in another instance, three *fiches* (one-page study guides on a limited topic) appeared on war, though on the Second World War rather than colonial conflicts. One *fiche*, “The Folly of War,”

¹¹⁸ *L’éducateur* 24-25 (May 20-31, 1957): 34.

¹¹⁹ “Boches” was a pejorative term used to refer to Germans. Coopérative scolaire des Molières (S&O), *Juin 1940-Août 1944*, Imprimerie spéciale de l’École.

listed the monetary expenses of the Second World War for the participating countries, while “The Horrors of War” listed the human costs. The third *fiche* was entitled “The First Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima (recounting of a survivor).”¹²⁰ Another entry took the pacifist stance through a poem titled “To America” that portrayed in horrific language the outcome of the “criminal bombs” dropped on Hiroshima.¹²¹

That colonial wars, and particularly the war in Algeria, were discussed so soon in the pages of *La Gerbe* is surprising given the prevalence of what many French historians have called the “Algeria syndrome.” Seemingly an extension of the wartime language of the Algerian War as a police action or internal disturbance, the “Algeria Syndrome” obscured the nature of the conflict through at least the twenty years following 1962.¹²² Benjamin Stora’s oeuvre has dominated the debates of the last fifteen years on the memory of the Algerian War. In his most important work, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, Stora argues that both France and Algeria have been irreparably marked by the founding events of the Algerian War. Each has acquired a respective neurosis—France one of repression and amnesia, Algeria one of a festering sore—that has had profound effects on the current affairs in each country.¹²³

¹²⁰ “La Folie de la Guerre” Fichier Scolaire Coopératif, Cannes (A.-M.), No. 4055, “Les Horreurs de la Guerre,” Fichier Scolaire Coopératif, Cannes (A.-M.), No. 4056, “La Première Bombe Atomique lancée sur Hiroshima (Japon) (*recit d’un survivant*),” Fichier Scolaire Coopératif, Cannes (A.-M.), No. 4057, in *L’Éducateur*

¹²¹ *L’Éducateur* 9: 177

¹²² Anne Donadey, “‘Une Certaine Idée de La France’: The Algeria Syndrome and Struggles over ‘French’ Identity,” in *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Steven Ungar and Tom Conley (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1996), 215–32; Antoine Prost, “The Algerian War in French Collective Memory,” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. J. M Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹²³ Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et L’oubli: La Memoire de La Guerre d’Algerie (Cahiers Libres)* (Paris: La Decouverte, 1991).

Might the early inclusion of the colonial conflicts and the Algerian War in movement periodicals simply have been a product of a more radically antiwar subset of teachers within the *Écoles Modernes* movement rather than an organic outgrowth of the concerns of students themselves? Though pacifism was an important strain of Freinet's thought since his days writing for *L'École Émancipée*, there is little evidence that the teachers allied to his movement were significantly more pacifist or opposed to the Algerian War than the public teaching corps as a whole, especially by the end of the war. As a case in point, the teachers' union *Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale* (FEN) was a key player in the organization of the Paris demonstration on February 8, 1962, against the increased violence by the OAS.¹²⁴ The repression of the demonstration by the Paris police force resulted in the death of eight demonstrators and the injury of many others at the Charonne metro station. The violence triggered an outpouring of support from the local sections of the FEN and its international allies. The local sections, in response, demanded a general strike for the thirteenth of February—the day of the funeral of the eight deceased—which shut down the schools.¹²⁵ According to reports sent in by local sections to the central office of the FEN, response was strong. Though the list of reports was only half-complete, those sections that responded estimated the participation rates of their local strikes at 80-100 percent. In most cases, the departmental sections reported

¹²⁴ Du 8 au 13 février 1962, ANMT 1998 011 2BB 102. On the militancy of student and teacher unions at the end of the Algerian War, see Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 33.

¹²⁵ Réactions immédiats, après la victimes du 8 février 1962, Du 8 au 13 février 1962, ANMT 1998 011 2BB 102

slightly higher participation among primary teachers, though the difference was not overwhelming.¹²⁶

While progressive teachers not associated with Freinet may indeed have discussed the Algerian War with their students, assignment books from the period do not evidence much attention to the conflict in traditional classes. Contrariwise, given the Freinet method's insistence on student-generated texts and on collaborative editing and printing, entries on colonial conflict in *journals scolaires* or reprinted in *La Gerbe* implied that the entire class had considered the subject. Those individual entries, furthermore, had then been circulated to other schools either through the scholarly correspondence of the particular class or through subscriptions to periodicals like *La Gerbe*. In the classrooms of the *Écoles Modernes*, which had largely eschewed textbooks, student reactions to violence in the colonies entered the curriculum quickly and carried the gravity of printed text.

Colonial wars—because of their smaller scale and distance from the metropole—generally entered into the materials of *La Gerbe* only when the war directly impacted the life of a student. Antiwar entries dwelled on the costs of war for metropolitan society, especially the human costs. Student entries in *La Gerbe* emphasized conscription of soldiers and the deaths of neighbors rather than the injustice of war in general, much as public sentiment had turned against Vichy as a result of conscription of workers for Germany rather than ideological opposition to the war and the government. A student from the *École de Nizerolles*, for instance, recounted his cousin Joseph's visit to his family to say goodbye before being sent to Morocco around the time of Muhammed V's

¹²⁶ “grève du mardi 13 février 1962 (26H),” Du 8 au 13 février 1962, ANMT 1998 011 2BB 102

return and the granting of independence: “He [Joseph] thought he would be able to go to Germany. But he received his orders [*feuille de route*] for Meknes. When they knew that he was leaving for over there, his parents and his brothers began to cry. The youngest did not cry anymore in play. Joseph spoke less. But his father and his mother were still more worried than he.”¹²⁷

All of the entries in *La Gerbe* on the Algerian War, furthermore, emanated from schools in the metropole. Because of the extent of conscription, the Algerian War had a far greater presence in the daily lives of metropolitan French citizens than the war in Indochina, for example.¹²⁸ As such, most entries on war were like fourteen-year old Idilio Valdénèbro’s poem “La Guerre.” A stirringly simple example of a young student coming to understand the human costs of war, it demonstrates that opposition to war was most often a result of direct confrontation with a family member or neighbor who had been conscripted or had died. The poem by the youngster from the department of Lot-et-Garonne is worth quoting at length:

I was very young and I was unable
to understand what real war is,
between country and country.

Alone, when it was time for
recreation, with my friends,
I played war.

On one side the good guys
On the other the bad guys.
For me, here was real war.

¹²⁷ École de Nizerolles (Allier), “Les Adieux d’un jeune militaire,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 18 (June 25, 1956): 2.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Martin Evans, “Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran: The Case of French Conscripts from the Algerian War, 1954-1962,” in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Martin Evans and Kenneth Lunn (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 1997).

Today, sadly, I know
 something more about war.
 Close to my house, a neighbor
 cried every day.

I asked my parents, they told me
 that her son had left for military
 service and that she cried
 for the bad luck of her son.

One day, I was doing errands
 for my mother; I saw something like a parade.
 It was not a holiday,
 It was a work day.

Some of [the marchers] carried flags
 others medals, all with a sad air.

I asked what it was, someone
 responded that there was a man dead
 in the war,
 and that some went to look for him at his house.

Since that day, I understand, that
 war should not be a game,
 neither for children
 nor for older people.

And since that day,
 I no longer like war...¹²⁹

The sense of loss, both of loved ones and of innocence, characterized by this entry was matched only by the joy of entries that began to be published as soldiers from the war returned home. Just as students had expressed their experience of war in Algeria in intensely personal ways, so their narratives of war's end centered on the return of fathers, uncles, and brothers.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Idilio Valdénébro, C.C. de Fumel (Lot-et-Garonne), "La Guerre," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 12 (March 25, 1958): 24-25. Ellipsis in original.

¹³⁰ See, for example, "Une Grande Joie," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 10 (July 1, 1962): VIII-IX and "Le Retour de Papa," *La Gerbe Enfantine* 2 (November 1961): 22.

Occasional entries went beyond the personal losses suffered by French families to consider the wider implications of conflict for all of humanity. A class poem by the Maternal School of Saint-Cado (Morbihan) clearly conveyed this concept. The piece, titled “Let’s not speak of that,” asks those who wish to kill in the name of war to:

listen to us
we will send you
a beautiful flower
there are some flowers
which never fade
listen to us
listen to us
lay down your rifles
war
we embrace you all.¹³¹

It was that sense of the connectedness of the human family across continents that informed Alain Deltell’s entry celebrating the signing of the Evian Accords, which ended the Algerian War in 1962. “Peace in Algeria was signed Sunday, March 18,” the student from central France recalled matter-of-factly; “All the world is happy.”¹³²

Conclusion

The attacks by the Communist press on Freinet continued even until his death in 1966, when *L’Humanité* ran a mock obituary once more diminishing Freinet’s pedagogical importance and decrying his “sentimental and anti-intellectual approach to education.”¹³³ Since his death, Freinet has been vindicated. On August 10, 1996,

¹³¹ École Maternelle, Saint-Cado (Morbihan), “Ne parlons pas de ça,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 7 (April 1959): 17. In fact, personal loss was reserved for the same school’s entry on the opposite page, which described mothers listening to the radios of “the papas” fishing at sea, who “sometimes, . . . did not return” École Maternelle de Saint-Cado (Morbihan), “Nous, de Saint-Cado,” *La Gerbe Enfantine* 7 (April 1959): 16.

¹³² Alain Deltell, École de Garçons, Decazeville (Aveyron), “Gerbe Actualités,” *La Gerbe enfantine* 7 (April 1962): n.p.

¹³³ As characterized by Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 75.

Christian Carrère, senior editor of *L'Humanité*, published a new article apologizing for its harsh treatment of the schoolteacher from Gars. Carrère wrote, “It is a shame that, at the time when Freinet was a member of the PCF, the Party found it useful to inject itself in a debate which was more on the level of anathema than criticism.”¹³⁴ What is more, the educational establishment with which Freinet had always had such a tenuous relationship has since turned to a more child-centered approach. At the centennial of Freinet’s birth in 1996, conservative Minister of Education François Bayrou claimed that modern educators were Freinet’s heirs.¹³⁵ Freinet’s international influence—though he is conspicuously little-known in the United States—remains strong. More than twenty-five countries are today affiliated with the International Federation of Modern School Movements (FIMEM).¹³⁶ Finally, Georges Synders, when interviewed by Victor Acker in 1997, likewise regretted the viciousness of his attacks written “in full sectarianism,” though he remained convinced that “there was an enormous contradiction between what Freinet said he wanted to do (create a proletarian pedagogy) and the content of what Freinet taught about the social problems.”¹³⁷ For Freinet, however, the content was largely beside the point.

In the debate between content and method in which Freinet was intensely involved, this chapter agrees with Freinet on the importance of method in assessing the progressiveness of pedagogy. Certainly, the materials produced by the *Écoles Modernes*

¹³⁴ Quoted in Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 107.

¹³⁵ Lee and Sivell, *French Elementary Education and the Ecole Moderne*, 104. Sivell and Lee, 104.

¹³⁶ “International Federation of Modern School Movements - Freinet Pedagogy,” Flyer 2008, http://www.fimem-freinet.org/coope-space-fr-fr/animation-fimem/secretariat/copy_of_presentation-en/prospectus-2008/view?set_language=en

¹³⁷ Quoted in Acker, *Célestin Freinet*, 95–96. Parentheses in original.

movement, at least outwardly, reified certain discourses of “traditional” rural France and of the colonies. There are, however, qualitative differences between narratives produced by a centralized textbook industry straying little from government curriculum and narratives fashioned by children themselves reflecting their daily lives. The strength of the movement in provincial France and its emphasis on active learning made the production of rural-focused texts almost a foregone conclusion.

A deeper look at the content of the *Écoles Modernes* materials reveals that, as students fashioned the narratives of their lives, they opened up rhetorical spaces about the rapid changes occurring in their locales during the period between the end of World War II and the conclusion of the Algerian War. *Le Tour de France de Gutric* was really quite attuned to the rapid yet uneven modernization taking place in local communes. The materials also recognize the challenges that modernity posed to the cohesion of the French nation. The student narratives about Gutric demonstrate the ways in which the *Écoles Modernes* pedagogy created national networks through “local chauvinism” and “correspondance.”

The materials produced by students in the colonies opened up potential readings that were equally mixed. On the one hand, the focus on traditional life played directly into the hands of contemporary colonial apologists who used ethnographic conceptions of “authentic” native societies to bolster the case for attachment in the French Union. Those discourses about “authentic” colonial societies were not restricted to colonial apologists, however, but were also an important part of anticolonial rhetoric. On the other hand, the materials shone a light on the shortcomings of colonial power, such as the unevenness of modernization, the economic distance between the French and indigenous populations,

and the integration of the colonies into the capitalist market. In two particular cases, the movement showed itself to be a force for progressive education. First, materials discussed French military intervention in colonies, and particularly the Algerian War, quite early on. Second, the movement reversed the Orientalist gaze of traditional education by allowing colonial students to write narratives of their lives under French rule and, just as importantly, by allowing metropolitan students to read them.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE FOUNDING MYTHS OF DECOLONIZATION: TEACHING THE END OF
EMPIRE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC

The final lesson of a 1955 history textbook was entitled “French Unity.” In the lesson, the authors Albert Trous and Albert Girard, an instructor general of public instruction and a professor *agrégé* of history respectively, reprised for students the broad strokes of the territorial development of France. They began with the “disappearance of the large fiefdoms” under Charles VII and Louis XI and recalled the “acquisitions of the absolute monarchy.” They wrote glowingly of the “achievement[s] of France” since the Revolution, which had “reinforced the moral unity of France by inviting the inhabitants of all the provinces assembled over the course of the preceding centuries to regard themselves as the children of the same Nation.” The final section on “the French Empire” reminded students that “to the French territory thus assembled was added a colonial Empire twenty times more vast.” After discussing the state of the Empire in 1945, a result of the stages of colonial additions since the Ancien Régime, the authors summed up the moral of the lesson and (it would seem) of the textbook as a whole: “Thus, **the unity of France results from a long past of efforts and of sacrifices.** All the regimes worked to construct it. *It is the duty of all the French to maintain it in the future.*”¹

Trous’s and Girard’s textbook lays bare a number of the interpretive spaces with which textbook narratives of decolonization would have to contend. First, though the

¹ Albert Trous and Albert Girard, *Histoire de la France: cours moyen* (Paris: Hachette, 1955), 130, emphasis in original.

textbook was printed in 1955, it is written to adhere to the official program of 1945. Thus, it exists in two historical moments simultaneously. On the one hand, the text is being read and distributed in the wake of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the loss of a number of overseas possessions, and immediately after the beginning of the Algerian War. On the other, the book explicitly describes the state of the French Empire in 1945, prior to French losses. The text reminds students of their duty to maintain the unity of an already disunified France. This ten-year difference, however, cannot be attributed only to the inertia common in textbooks. The French Union, in existence since 1946, is mentioned briefly in an earlier section of the book, although the French Union was not specifically mentioned in the programs of that period. Thus, there seems to be a conscious decision at work to imagine the “Unity of France” in a previous, less problematic, moment.

Second, the text’s language that “all the regimes” constructed France draws a straight line from a more assured past to the future at a time when the future of French unity is already very much in doubt. It was not uncommon for authors to find the promise of the future in France’s past; as another textbook put it, because the French were proud of their past, they would “view in the present the future with confidence.”² In particular, the text attempts to ground the present in the French Revolution. The author’s image of the French Revolution suggests a France that is not only a physical construction but a moral one as well. As textbook authors over the next few decades constructed narratives of colonial independence, they consistently returned to the French Revolution to explain it. The physical unity of France having been lost, authors drew a bright,

² Antoine Bonifacio and Paul Maréchal, *Histoire de France: cours moyen* (Paris: Classiques Hachette, 1954), 151.

unbroken line from the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the French Revolution to postcolonial France.

The French Union is not viewed in the context of “decolonization” as a process, worldwide and unstoppable. Eventually, it would be. This is the third issue raised by Troux’s and Girard’s chapter. In the years just prior to Algerian independence, “decolonization” ceased to be a descriptive term for the events occurring in the colonies and became a prescriptive term that normalized those events as part of a global process with a predetermined end.³ Indeed, the discourse of decolonization was being “invented” at precisely that moment. Finally, the last lines of Troux and Girard’s text are not set off from the last section of the lesson, the section on the French Empire. Perhaps unintentionally, the ultimate exhortation to the children to maintain the unity of France is tied specifically to retaining the French colonial empire. The French Empire is, moreover, included in a lesson on the unity of *France*. France is both nation-state and, as Frederick Cooper has put it, empire-state: “An empire-state is a structure that reproduces distinctions among collectivities while subordinating them to a greater or lesser degree to the ruling authority.”⁴ France’s empire is both an appendage attached to the nation, which may be lopped off, and coterminous with the nation, a contradiction apparent in the claims by supporters of *Algérie Française* that “Algeria is France.” In other words, the

³ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 6.

⁴ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 27. Later in the text, Cooper argues that the feature of empire-states is that they must “think like an empire,” negotiating the balance between “incorporation” and “differentiation” of their subjects, p. 154. Gary Wilder rejects the use of the term “empire state” in favor of “imperial nation-state,” but both terms suggest the difficult negotiations of difference within imperial space. *The French Imperial Nation-State*; For other authors who attempt to examine French history and imperial history within the same analytical field, see for example: Genova, *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956*; Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France’s Successful Decolonization?*, First Edition (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002); Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics*; Jennings, *Curing the Colonizers*.

text raises perhaps the fundamental problem of decolonization: does the equation France minus its empire equal “France,” or something less?

The Ripples of History: Incipient Discourses of Decolonization, c. 1955-1975

In 1960, French President Charles de Gaulle commented on the unease caused by the events occurring in Algeria and around the globe. In his remarks, he recalled the discomfiture felt by those who are present at the arrival of the advancing modern world: “The spirit of the century ... also changes the conditions of our actions overseas ... leads us to bring an end to colonization ... It is quite natural that one feels nostalgia for what was the Empire, just as one can regret the gentleness of oil lamps, the splendor of sailing ships ... But for what? No policy is worth anything outside of reality.”⁵ De Gaulle’s words indicate how, near the end of hostilities in Algeria, the French state established a new narrative to describe a moment that fundamentally destabilized the relationship between France and its colonies. This “invention of decolonization,” as historian Todd Shepard calls it, framed Algerian independence as part of the “tide of history.” He writes that “French bureaucrats, politicians, and journalists rewrote the history of imperialism and anti-imperialism so that decolonization was the predetermined endpoint.”⁶ In the context of the Algerian War and of independence negotiations, Matthew Connelly argues that such discourses robbed colonized peoples of “individuality and conscious agency” but also “made resistance to their demands appear irrational.”⁷

⁵ Quoted in Martin Evans, *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 284; See also Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 279.

⁶ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 6.

⁷ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, xi.

The discourse of decolonization did important ideological work in the metropole. As imperialism had been largely a republican project, the Algerian War raised thorny problems for the republican values inherited from the Revolution—universalism, the irreducibility of the body politic, individualism, and assimilation. The invention of decolonization allowed for a fundamental shift in the way France understood itself and its relationship with Algeria, arguing for inherent differences between the French and Algerian Muslims and forgetting historical claims that Algeria was France. After the “first dramatic failure” of the French state to assimilate people on French territory, the rhetoric of the tide of history allowed French statesmen, intellectuals, and commentators to ignore the fundamental problems posed by colonial independence.⁸ Rather than dealing with the implications of the failure to assimilate Algeria, French discourses compartmentalized Algeria—temporally, spatially, politically—and elided the challenges to French republicanism.

Shepard has convincingly argued for the invention of decolonization in the political and legal discourses of the Fifth Republic. One would suppose that such a fundamental change in the understanding of France’s imperial role (especially in Algeria) would have reverberated in the educational sphere as well. A school, according to the formulation of Louis Althusser, is an “Ideological State Apparatus” responsible for steeping children in the ruling ideology necessary for the reproduction of the conditions

⁸ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 3–10; On the historical approaches to the legal and national status of Algerians, see Weil, *How to Be French*, 149–167, 224–225; There is a rich historical literature on the French state’s attempts to incorporate and assimilate people within the current metropole, of which the classic statement remains Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; Other works have attempted to complicate Weber’s picture by examining case studies in those areas at the margins or borders of the French state. See, for example: Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France*; Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal*; and Kevin J. Callahan and Sarah Ann Curtis, *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

of production.⁹ Althusser's emphasis on bourgeois production aside, if the state had intended to recast France's colonial history along the lines suggested by Shepard, one place to do so would have been in the benches of the schoolroom. It would be necessary for authors to forget what they had written so confidently only a few years earlier, that maintaining the unity of France and of its empire was "the duty of all the French."¹⁰

To what extent, then, did educational materials in France support this master narrative of the inevitability of decolonization as part of the tide of history? In this chapter, I trace the workings of this process of invention through elementary level textbooks, particularly those of the *cours moyens* (students aged 9 and 10). Whereas Shepard has found that the discourse that decolonization was part of the tide of history became consensus almost immediately at the moment of Algerian independence, to try to establish a single turning point for the educational sphere would seem to do violence to the evidence. On one hand, narratives that connected decolonization to French Revolutionary values redeployed arguments about the French Union and French Community that dated back to the 1950s (when postwar topics first began to be covered by textbooks). They remained important throughout the last part of the century, though they would be inflected by discussions of sovereignty drawn from the United Nations and

⁹ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* [Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2009], 86–111.

¹⁰ Much of the work on the "forgetting" of contemporary conflicts in France has analyzed such issues in terms of trauma and psychoanalysis. The most important approach for the Algerian War is Stora, *La Gangrene et L'oubli*; Stora's account draws on the previous work of Henry Rousso on the "Vichy Syndrome", *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Anne Donadey puts Stora and Rousso in conversation in her analysis of Algerian writers in "'Une Certaine Idée de la France': The Algeria Syndrome and Struggles over 'French' Identity," in Steven Ungar and Tom Conley, *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 215–232; On trauma and history writing, see: Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 1st ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

the anti-Nazi resistance. On the other hand, development narratives seemed to be invented almost out of whole cloth in the 1980s. Yet, they rested on arguments about demographics and agricultural productivity that were significant in other spheres and were present earlier in texts for older children.

While it may be more accurate to think of the many foundational myths on which the “tide of history” was grounded as a series of overlapping narratives developing along separate chronologies, for the sake of clarity, this chapter is divided by a certain broad chronology. This is, in part, to take into account the wave of educational reform that began around 1969 and crested in the early 1980s, that of the *activités d'éveil*. This reform launched a very heated discussion about the role of the educational system, and especially of the role of historical education, in contemporary France. Those reforms helped influence and coincided with other changes in the teaching of decolonization. History textbooks adopted new formats and methods, greater space was devoted to postwar topics like decolonization, and authors included liberation struggles in a much more systematic way. Therefore, I argue that around 1980 the narratives of decolonization reached a level of maturity. Yet, its adolescence was a halting, messy process.

The French Revolutionary Legacy

To connect the events in the colonies to the long tide of history, textbooks frequently made explicit and implicit reference to French Revolutionary ideals. Because revolutionary and republican concepts about citizenship, nationality, and national unity were the foundation of metropolitan government and had been used to support the

colonial empire, they were ready-made but problematic tropes for explaining decolonization. In fact, scholars of the period have demonstrated that the legacy of the Revolution was a hegemonic and strategic discourse used by colonial subjects seeking reforms, and by both proponents and opponents of decolonization.¹¹ As such, textbook authors made the case that late-colonial organizations like the French Union and the French Community were consistent with the promises of the French Revolution and with republican principles. Writing as they were after 1962, authors would need to show that these organizations were a step in the long, inexorable trajectory by which imperialism would lead to self-government rather than rear-guard actions to maintain French influence.

As it traced the development of the French Empire into the French Community, Eugène Audrin's 1964 textbook drew on the French Revolution frequently and in creative ways. At the beginning of a section on the Fourth Republic and the founding of the French Union, Audrin admitted that "the expression *Colonial Empire* translates into a hierarchy between the metropole and the colonies; it evokes conquests and subject peoples." On the contrary, "The expression *French Union*," he argued, "expresses an *association* of interests and of the ideal founded ... on the '*equality of rights and of*

¹¹ Frederick Cooper, for example, makes the case that French efforts to make good on the promises of colonial development after World War II, in combination with discourses of equality between colonies and the metropole, allowed colonial leaders in West Africa to make claims on the state coffers. The result was that the costs of empire became too much for a French state hoping for "empire on the cheap," *Colonialism in Question*, 38; Likewise, Shepard argues that the O.A.S. and other die-hard supporters of French Algeria used the language of republican legalism to oppose efforts to negotiate peace. They claimed, for instance, that violated such republican principles as "the territorial inviolability of the Republic, the irrevocability of citizenship ... [and] respect for the constitution and the laws," *The Invention of Decolonization*, 90.

duties’.”¹² Finally, with the creation of the French Community during the Fifth Republic, “France proposed to the people of the overseas territories institutions founded on a common ideal of equality and fraternity.”¹³

As Audrin subsumed the history of imperialism and especially the recent French Community into the history of republican and revolutionary France, his and his co-authors’ choice of language was instructive. In the passage on the French Community above and in a later passage that claimed that France and the nations of the French Community were “united in the same ideals of justice and of fraternity,” the authors selected only two terms from France’s Revolutionary triad of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is noteworthy that Audrin’s textbook was published in a previous version in 1958, a version that included the French Union but not the French Community. The 1958 version made the same points almost verbatim. The authors referred to both “the equality of rights and duties,” which was a quotation from the Constitution of the French Union, and the “ideal founded on the principles of equality and fraternity.” In this case, however, both constructions were applied to the French Union.¹⁴ It was apparently “equality” and “fraternity” that made late-colonial organizations like the French Union and the French Community comprehensible in republican terms.

As Lynn Hunt has argued in her study of *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, fraternity was the least understood and perhaps most fraught of the republican virtues. “The word,” Hunt argues, “had a political charge that was

¹² Eugène Audrin, Marcelle Dechappe, and Lucien Dechappe, *De l’Antiquité à la France d’aujourd’hui: histoire: classe de transition* (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle et Cie, 1964), 219. emphasis in original.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁴ Eugène Audrin, Marcelle Dechappe, and Lucien Dechappe, *De l’Antiquité à la France d’aujourd’hui: histoire: classe de fin d’études primaires* (Paris, 1958), 239–240.

indissolubly linked with radical revolution.” While the word was used consciously for creating “political solidarities” and “drawing ... political and social boundaries within the community,” it also raised the specter of revolutionary terror and the replacement—on the guillotine—of the King’s paternal authority with the fraternal authority of the Republic.¹⁵ In 1964, Audrin tried to dissuade readers from viewing anticolonial war in the context of French revolutionary violence by closing off those interpretations. There was “fratricidal combat in Algeria, but peaceful emancipation in the French territories of Black Africa and Madagascar,” the latter being the countries that accepted the French brotherhood of the Community.¹⁶ Other textbooks that drew on the French Revolution, however, chose different revolutionary legacies, using the language of equality and liberty, while leaving fraternity aside. As early as 1966, Romain Plandé’s *cours moyen* text argued that “the ideas of liberty developed” out of World War II. Plandé, however, ignored many of episodes that might have cast his interpretation into doubt, such as the fact that many former members of the Resistance could be found in the ranks of the OAS. The emphasis on liberty over fraternity would seem to provide much more space for the interpretation of anticolonial struggles while forestalling more problematic readings.¹⁷ Eventually, liberty and equality would become the dominant terms of the revolutionary legacy in later texts.

¹⁵ Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 12–13.

¹⁶ Audrin, Dechappe, and Dechappe, *De l’Antiquité à la France d’aujourd’hui*, 240. On the limits of revolutionary ideals for rights claims, see: Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Joan Wallach Scott, *Parité!: Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁷ Romain Plandé, Marcelle Dechappe, and Lucien Dechappe, *Histoire de France: cours moyen Ire et 2e années* (Paris, 1966), 139.

The Roots of Postcolonial Development and the Third World

The language that peppered Audrin's text recalled the paternalism and pseudo-evolutionary language of the colonial civilizing mission. In that sense, Audrin drew from a well of discourse that had been dug by authors telling the stories of colonial heroes like Dupleix and Lyautey. The entries were replete with references to childhood; the nations and the people were referred to multiple times as "young" and "the crisis of colonial empires of the 20th century ... [was] that of the *birth* of colonial peoples to political life." The French Union was a union not of "possessions" but of "nations and people who should evolve under our trusteeship ... toward self-government."¹⁸ Audrin's text was consistent with a text by Henri Pomot from almost a decade earlier, at a much earlier stage of decolonization. For Pomot and Besseige, "The most civilized," by which they meant Indochina, Tunisia, and Morocco, "had the tendency to reclaim complete liberty." Their chapter, however, ended with the hope that "these countries ... never forget what they owe to France."¹⁹ Decolonization thus became part of the lifecycle of African and Asian nations as did, by complement, imperialism. In the textbook's prose, decolonization was the necessary fulfillment of the imperial project, not its rejection. The author intended the readers to see the formerly colonized countries as young and only recently matured under French trusteeship and left it to the readers to infer that France's age brought wisdom and guidance.

The relative age of France was not always presented in such positive terms.

Though absent from elementary texts, metaphors of infirmity figured prominently in the

¹⁸ Audrin, Dechappe, and Dechappe, *De l'Antiquité à la France d'aujourd'hui*, 219–221. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹ Henri Pomot and Henri Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français: cours moyen et supérieur, classes élémentaires des lycées* (France: Les presses du Massif Central, Guéret, 1955), 180.

1960 secondary textbook by the prominent historian of Catholicism and the working class, Pierre Pierrard. Sections on the Cold War and decolonization began with epigraphs taken from the works of Tibor Mende, a journalist and author who wrote frequently on the Third World. For Mende, Europe was a “wasteful old man.” “Two world wars have terribly aged Europe,” the epigraphs continued, “only yesterday the mistress of the world.” In the chapter itself, Pierrard went further in his claims that colonial independence was “the principal mark of the weakening of Europe. A conference of poor people like that of Bandung (1955) is the greatest humiliation ever inflicted on the continent.”²⁰ If Pierrard’s pessimism was unusual for textbooks of the period, his sense of postwar Europe as an aged continent in crisis drew on important strands of contemporary discourse that lay at the heart of decolonization.

The language of age and decline was common in other spheres as well during decolonization. Jean-Paul Sartre’s preface to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* claims that “Europe is done for,” a “pale, bloated continent” on the back of which were rising the newly independent countries of the Third World.²¹ For Sartre, the future was with the global South. Though Sartre’s view of decolonization was originally rejected by nearly the entire French Left, around 1960 and 1961 events such as the trial of the “suitcase carriers” and the publishing of Fanon’s work drew many toward Sartre’s Third Worldism; decolonization was viewed as the end of history, in much the way that the Left

²⁰ Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire de France: époque contemporaine, 1815-1960: 3e année*, Manuels d’enseignement technique (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1960), 252.

²¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, Reprint (New York: Grove Press, 2005), xliv, lviii.

had once viewed the proletarian revolution.²² On the other end of the spectrum, the conservative philosopher Raymond Aron saw France as weakened by its colonies. For him, the empire prevented France from dedicating itself to its own progress.²³ While Europeans who, like Sartre, saw Europe's decline as deserved were in the minority, even those who opposed decolonization frequently viewed themselves as "the beleaguered vanguard of civilization."²⁴

At the end of his text, Pierrard found reason for hope in the next, postcolonial generation. Among the "assets of France," he argued, were "youth," including France's very strong birthrate.²⁵ Demographics traditionally featured prominently in French discourses about imperialism and decolonization and were tied to pressing concerns about France's place in the world and in Europe. As such, demographic discourses had many valences and opened deep rhetorical fault lines. French commentators had often blamed the country's low birthrate for French defeat in war, as in 1870, and French

²² Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, 284; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 72. The "suitcase carriers" (porteurs de valises) were people living in France, typically associated with the Jeanson Network, who transported money and papers for the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN).

²³ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 68–70; Connelly argues that de Gaulle's justifications were similar to Aron's, that it was necessary for France to retreat to the metropole so as to better "defend a race-based European identity": *A Diplomatic Revolution*, 285; On intellectuals and the Algerian War see: James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics During the Decolonization of Algeria, Second Edition*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); David L. Schalk, *War and the Ivory Tower: Algeria and Vietnam* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); On Sartre and Aron, see Tony Judt's excellent works: Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron, and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

²⁴ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, 284. Connelly argues that the "idea of decline" was defined primarily as a series of oppositions, to "crass materialism, cultural promiscuity, a naïve faith in progress." These terms of European decline were frequently echoed in criticisms of Americanization. See for example, Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*; Jean-Philippe Mathy, *French Resistance: The French-American Culture Wars*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2000). On the clash of civilizations in more recent guise, see: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

²⁵ Pierrard, *Histoire de France*, 255.

victory in the Great War had come at remarkable demographic cost.²⁶ Thus, in a speech before the Consultative Assembly on March 3, 1945, de Gaulle argued that “the lack of men and the weakness of the French birth rate are the underlying cause of our misfortunes.”²⁷ Traditionally, French commentators had seen the empire as an important strategic population reserve, as the old claims of a nation of “one-hundred million Frenchmen” made clear. As seen in Chapter One, textbooks frequently referred to the size of imperial populations in Africa and Asia and, in the case of Canada, to the number of French speakers. Textbooks of the 1950s often discussed the advantage of colonial populations, especially on the field of battle. Paul Bernard’s 1955 textbook noted how much larger and more populated the empire was than mainland France and the gift of soldiers the empire had given during the World Wars. The empire was an “inexhaustible reserve.”²⁸ Likewise, René Ozouf’s 1960 text lauded the “white, yellow, and black populations of Overseas France who had contributed greatly to the defense of the metropole ... [and] are called more and more to participate in their own government.”²⁹

In the wake of the Second World War, however, France experienced a baby boom that forced observers to shift their concern from the declining birth rate of the metropole to the much higher birthrate of the colonies. At the moment of decolonization,

²⁶ On population politics in the nineteenth century, see: Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Karen Offen, “Depopulation, Nationalism, and Feminism in Fin-de-Siècle France,” *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1, 1984): 648–76.

²⁷ Quoted in Weil, *How to Be French*, 131.

²⁸ Bernard and Redon’s 1955 textbook is consistent with this approach: they discuss how much larger and more populated the empire is than mainland France and the gift of soldiers the empire had given during the World Wars. The authors call the empire a “inexhaustible reserve.” Paul Bernard and Frantz Redon, *Nouvelle histoire de la France et de la civilisation française: cours moyen 2e année* (Paris: F. Nathan, 1955), 289, 306.

²⁹ René Ozouf and Louis Leterrier, *Notre livre d’histoire: cours moyen, cours de fin d’études, préparation au C.E.P.*, Nouveau cours d’histoire (Paris: E. Belin, 1956), 250.

demographic explosion in Algeria was often cited as a cause for both Algerian nationalism and for the need for France to grant independence. The success of French public health efforts for Muslim commoners had increased birthrates in Algeria to among the highest in the world and had led to an extremely large youth population. Observers complained, however, that attempts to improve agricultural yields could not keep pace and were succeeding only in increasing emigration to Europe and breaking bonds of imperial control. Families across the empire still lived the hardscrabble lives of subsistence farmers while market reforms “upset the patron-client relationships” on which control depended. De Gaulle raised the specter of reverse colonization when he asked how “the French body could absorb ten million Muslims, who tomorrow will be twenty million and the day after that forty?”³⁰ Primary textbooks of the 1960s generally did not adopt these narratives like the texts for the *collèges* did. By the 1980s, authors would absorb and combine these narratives of colonial demographic explosion, of agricultural crisis, and of the modernizing tradition of the civilizing mission into discourses that connected decolonization with Third Worldism and development. These new narratives functioned in ways that allowed France to revive its global role.

The Janus-Faced Fourth Republic

The failures of the Fourth Republic in general and, in particular, the inability to contend with the loss of empire was a common narrative in those texts destined for the older students of the *Troisième* almost immediately after the Fourth Republic’s fall. Indeed, the Fourth Republic seldom emerged unscathed in chapters about decolonization

³⁰ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, xi. On the state of agriculture and development in late-colonial Algeria, see page 11.

during the period. Authors blamed the loss of France's colonies in Africa and Asia and, in particular, its violent character on the systemic failures of the Fourth Republic. In his 1960 textbook on the "Contemporary Epoch" that was notable for its literary character and its almost manic sense of Europe's future, Pierre Pierrard was more generous than most: "the Fourth Republic had a difficult life."³¹ The image of a helpless and hapless Fourth Republic arising from Geneviève Désiré-Vuillemin's 1971 history textbook was indicative of this trend. It was "the numerous governments of the Fourth Republic" that were unable to end what she calls the "Algerian Insurrection."³² Nearly a decade later, Jacques Aldebert also blamed political instability in the metropole as "France ... was not able to define under the Fourth Republic a coherent policy, because of a lack of a stable government."³³ Two pages later, Aldebert used the documentary approach so central to the textbooks of this period to emphasize the point, citing Commissioner of Tonkin Sainteny's assertion that "there is no Indochina policy in Paris because the governments only last three months."³⁴

In textbooks for younger students at the elementary level, the Fourth Republic's failures in the colonial sphere emerged only gradually. In most textbooks of the early 1960s, decolonization and the transfer of power to de Gaulle's new government were included as little more than afterthoughts in chapters bearing titles like "France Today," which emphasized the Cold War and technological modernization. A 1964 text did not

³¹ Pierrard, *Histoire de France*, 245.

³² Geneviève Désiré-Vuillemin, Jacques Garnier, and Jean-Paul Roussilhe, *La classe d'histoire en 3e* (Paris: Dunod, 1971), 257–259.

³³ *Histoire géographique: classe de 3e*, Collection publiée sous la direction de Jacques Aldebert et Robert Kienast (Paris: Delagrave, 1980), 110.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

mention decolonization at all, either in its chapter on the colonial empires or in the section on the Fourth Republic. Indeed, the brief statement that “at the beginning of 1959, another constitution created the Fifth Republic,” gave no explanation for the new regime and certainly did not attribute it to the wars in the colonies.³⁵ Two 1960 texts ignored the domestic effects of decolonization entirely. The first mentioned straightforwardly the “lack of stability [that] caused [the Fourth Republic’s] collapse in May 1958.” Decolonization, however, was mentioned only obliquely and tied not to France or the government but to the Pope: “Despite the pacification efforts of Pius XII, justly nicknamed ‘The Pope of Peace,’ wars broke out in many countries: Korea, Indochina, Egypt, the Middle East, Algeria.” In this passage, anticolonial wars became Cold War conflicts and France’s failure became a noble but ultimately unsuccessful effort by the papacy.³⁶ A second 1960 text, after a positive account of the Fourth Republic’s efforts at postwar reconstruction, Social Security, and educational reforms, included decolonization in only the most general terms: “The old colonies became progressively independent states; freedom let them become part of the French Community.” Furthermore, the text includes decolonization only *after* the transfer of power; even the order of the text implies an orderly transfer of power like any other completely separate from the events in Algeria.³⁷

³⁵ Antoine Bonifacio and Paul Maréchal, *Histoire de France: cours moyen Ire année* (Paris: Hachette, 1964), 119.

³⁶ Jean Sage, *Une réunion de professeurs. Histoire de France, cours moyen 1ère année, classe de 8e. [Suivi de: cours moyen 2e année, classe de 7e.] Par Jean Sage et Fernand Davoine.* (Paris: Ligel, 1960), 438.

³⁷ Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt, Edmond Gozé, and Raoul Auger, *Histoire de France: cours moyen et classes de 8e et 7e* (Paris: Ed. Bourrelie, 1960), 125.

In the late 1960s, elementary textbooks began to connect decolonization more explicitly to regime change within France and to discuss the Fourth Republic's challenges in greater detail. Still, the changes were slow and halting. Jacques Dupâquier's 1966 text was unusual in its much longer discussion of the end of the Fourth Republic and of its challenges. The title of this section, "The Fourth Republic is incapable of settling the colonial problems," suggests his interpretation that, not only were the fates of the Empire and the Republic intertwined, but domestic issues were causative. In this text, the weak center-left governments "maintain power with difficulty and must seek support on the Right," leading to the moderate René Coty replacing the Socialist Vincent Auriol. The "ministerial crises" caused by the government's precarious centrist position rendered it incapable of responding to the wars in Indochina and Algeria, all of which led to the collapse of the Fourth Republic and de Gaulle's new constitution in 1958. The language used to describe the wars suggested the difficulty of the moment. The Algerian War "took on an anarchic character," and the pro-French Algerian colonists engaged in "open revolt" against the government of Guy Mollet and later against that of General de Gaulle, once his "intentions [to grant Algerian independence] were clear." The resignation of the Fourth Republican National Assembly and the granting of full powers to de Gaulle was, Dupâquier tells his readers, because of the fear of a "civil war."³⁸

While the challenges posed by the colonial situation to the Fourth Republic seem grave and insurmountable, Dupâquier was, like many of his contemporaries, enthralled by the regime's efforts at postwar reconstruction. As in previous accounts, he lauds the government for its role in restoring economic vitality and building a social safety net.

³⁸ Jacques Dupâquier and Henri Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire: manuel d'histoire destiné au cours moyen Ire et 2e années* (Paris: Didier, 1966), 90–91.

This narrative was surprising so soon after 1958, given the regime's unpopularity at the moment of its collapse. At the time, few wept at the Fourth Republic's death. Rather, the narratives here presage a scholarly reevaluation of the Fourth Republic that took place only in the last few decades. Until Jean-Pierre Rioux's 1980 classic study of the Fourth Republic urged a critical reevaluation of the regime, the Republic was still seen in what Talbot Imlay calls "Gaullist caricature and contempt."³⁹

Though Dupâquier discussed in detail the ministerial crises of the Fourth Republic and the transition to the Fifth Republic, the images included in the chapter suggest continuity, gentlemanliness, and orderliness both within and between regimes. The only two images in such a dramatic chapter both showed transfers of power between French heads of state. The captions were similarly bland and matter-of-fact: "1953: President Auriol transferred his powers to President Coty" and "1958: President Coty transferred his powers to General de Gaulle" (figure 3.1). The daily newspaper *Paris-Press*, however, were more forthcoming (and droll) about the conditions under which de Gaulle assumed power: "The Assembly has confidence in [Prime Minister] M[onsieur] Pflimlin, who has confidence in General Salan, who has confidence in General de Gaulle, who does not have confidence in the Assembly, but expects it to have confidence in him."⁴⁰ Indeed, even the structure of the chapter alluded to continuity in a way that did not correspond to the conflict explained in the text. The narrative begins and ends with de Gaulle. The first section explains the outcome of the Second World War and de

³⁹ Jean-Pierre Rioux, *The Fourth Republic, 1944-1958*, trans. Godfrey Rogers (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Talbot Imlay, "A Success Story? The Foreign Policies of France's Fourth Republic," *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 4 (November 1, 2009): 500.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Robert O. Mead, "De Gaulle's Return: A Chronicle," *World Affairs* 121, no. 3 (October 1, 1958): 70, doi:10.2307/20669557.

Gaule's role in the liberation of 1944 and ends with de Gaulle's new Constitution in 1958. Thus, the Fifth Republic is the legitimate inheritor of not only the Fourth Republic but the antifascist resistance.⁴¹

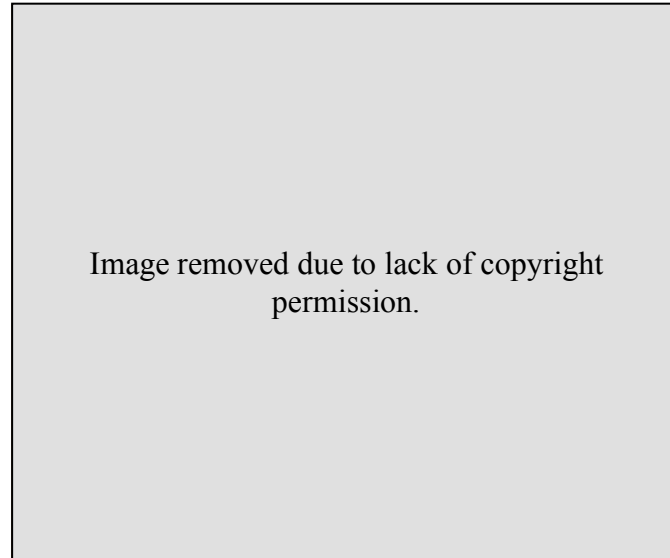


Figure 3.1. "1958: President Coty transfers his powers to General de Gaulle." Photograph by Associated Press. Source: Jacques Dupâquier, *Couleurs de l'histoire: Manuel d'histoire destiné au cours moyen Ire et 2e années* (Paris: Didier, 1961), 91.

In the end, the authors' impressions of the role of the Fourth Republic appear Janus-faced. The regime is inept in the colonial sphere but successful economically. In reference to decolonization, authors apparently attempted to portray the regime as a tragic victim of circumstance, a view which accorded with earlier narratives from the 1950s that saw the French Union and the French Community as gifts of republican France.

Descriptions of the crises that made the Fifth Republic necessary are balanced by attempts to portray the transfer of power from one republic to the other as orderly and

⁴¹ Sudhir Hazareesingh argues that the resistance and, in particular the radio broadcast of the 18th of June, was central de Gaulle's myth. It was, he claims, both a product of conscious effort on the part of de Gaulle and his allies and sui generis to the French populace. See: Sudhir Hazareesingh, *In the Shadow of the General: Modern France and the Myth of De Gaulle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) especially chapters 2 and 4.

routine. In Dupâquier's text, like those of the *Troisième* that it mirrored, the failures of the Fourth Republic are weakness and incapacity: "when the moment came [to fulfill the promises of the Brazzaville Conference], it hesitated, let itself be carried away by the partisans of repression."⁴² In the end, such narratives placed the excesses, the failures, and the obstinacy of those who resisted colonial independence *in* the Fourth Republic but not *on* the Fourth Republic. Either way, those problems were safely in the past.

Imagery was much scarcer in textbook narratives of decolonization in the 1960s and early 1970s than it would be after the late 1970s. Most of the textbooks from the earlier period did not include images of decolonization at all. Rather, the most common subjects were the political leaders of France, as was the case in Dupâquier's text. In the later period, the number of images increased remarkably. French leaders were still among the most common subjects, but nearly as common were colonial leaders, usually Ho Chi Minh or leaders from sub-Saharan Africa. None of the textbooks included images of National Liberation Front (FLN) or of Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GRPA) leaders. French soldiers were eventually common. They were, however, almost always *French* soldiers, with the exception of the rare photograph that included Indochinese porters.⁴³ Warfare itself, on the contrary, was sanitized; soldiers were shown marching and "battle scenes" had no opponents. Mass demonstrations were seldom included and, when they were, they were often of Algerian *colons* or quite small groups of indigenous people. The returning *pieds-noirs* would gradually become a

⁴² Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire*, 91.

⁴³ For example, see the image in Simon Bégué, Raymond Ciais, and Maurice Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, Activités historiques d'éveil* (Paris: Bordas, 1976), 132.

popular subject, while images of the *harkis*—indigenous Algerians who fought with the French army—were nowhere to be found.⁴⁴

What accounts for this remarkable increase in the number and variety of images of decolonization in the late 1970s? The first factor was prosaic. In the 1960s, there were seldom chapters or units of textbooks devoted only to decolonization. Rather, authors and the ministerial programs on which they relied placed entries on colonial independence at the end of chapters on the French Empire or in more broadly conceived chapters on France in the present. This led to the sparse and brief textual entries on decolonization, as has been seen. Equally, given that chapters were usually no more than three or four pages, limited space for images would go to other topics. As decolonization receded into the past, the end of empire increasingly received its own chapter with the consonant space for imagery. The second factor was an educational reform begun in the late 1960s, a reform that would fundamentally reimagine the purpose of history education, its relationship with related subjects, and the role of textbooks in educational practice. This reform would, moreover, cause a controversy in which participants argued that the very fate of the nation and of French national identity was at stake.

National History in Crisis?: The Activités de l'Éveil, 1969-1984

In 1969, history as an independent subject was eliminated in the primary school curriculum and made one of a group of “awakening activities” (*activités d'éveil*).⁴⁵ The

⁴⁴ Mathew Connelly argues that for reasons of national identity the *harkis* were much more problematic than the repatriated *pieds-noirs* or the immigrants who arrived in France after independence. Their existence as stateless people “subverted the authority of nation-states” and, unlike immigrants who chose to emigrate, they could not as easily be instructed to leave their cultures behind and assimilate. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, 285.

shift was backed by influential educational journals, institutions, and members of the inspectorate. As programs, and the school manuals based on them, foregrounded the active learning of students through primary sources, textbooks increasingly became repositories of “documents” first and of historical narrative second. These documents, from which students were to construct their historical knowledge, included charts, graphics, maps, short excerpts from written sources, and, most prominently, photographs. Now, in many textbooks, nearly an entire chapter might be taken up with documents accompanied by explanatory blurbs and captions or questions for the students. Some *cours moyen* textbooks prior to the introduction of the *activités d'éveil* reforms featured numerous images, but they were much more consistent after.⁴⁶ Production values were also noticeably better, pages glossier, images brighter and sharper. The increase in the imagery of decolonization, thus, seems to be a result of two related trajectories that intersected in textbooks at this time. Ministries and authors devoted independent chapters to the end of empire at the same moment that images became a more significant aspect of history pedagogy.

Moreover, the content of such images may have resulted from the new historiographical concerns of the *éveil* approach. New programs directed schoolteachers to devote greater time to the history of the masses and to the history of everyday life, a fact sometimes criticized by opponents of the reforms. This new focus is apparent in the proliferation of photographs of mass demonstrations—such as independence celebrations

⁴⁵ Gaulupeau, “Les Manuels Par L’image: Pour Une Approche Sérielle Des Contenus.” Gaulupeau’s study demonstrates “the brutal disappearance with the achievement of decolonization” of images of colonialism in *cours élémentaire* texts after 1969, going from 14% of all images during the decade from 1960 to 1969 to 1.3% from 1970 to 1989.

⁴⁶ Grimal and Moreau’s 1960 textbook is a good example. Images and explanatory captions take up the entirety of every second page of each chapter. Henri Grimal and Lucien Moreau, *Histoire de France: cours moyen* (Paris: F. Nathan, 1960).

in Algeria in 1962 and of the May 13, 1958, protests in Algiers—and of the repatriation of *pieds-noirs*. One textbook’s “presence of history” section that began the chapter on decolonization featured pairs of colonial and postcolonial stamps and a picture of a contemporary, if dilapidated, Vietnamese restaurant in Paris.⁴⁷ Furthermore, guiding students through the discovery of the history “present” in everyday local items was no doubt meant to prepare them to carry out their “investigations.”

As I showed in Chapter One of this dissertation, it is difficult to determine how the new methods changed classroom practice. Critics and advocates attempted to study the reforms but acknowledged the impediments to evaluating the effectiveness of the new methods, such as unsure teachers who were hesitant to allow researchers to observe them.⁴⁸ In general, however, those on both sides of the issue talked of crisis in the teaching ranks, though they might disagree on the cause.⁴⁹ Teachers’ guides that sometimes accompanied such texts do, however, suggest some of the methods teachers dedicated to practicing the new methods could use in their history classes. The teachers’ guide for Begué’s 1976 text suggested some common approaches to the students’ investigations into their daily lives. “One is always astonished,” the authors argued, with “the number and the variety” of pieces of information students already possessed from their daily lives, their vacations, television, and children’s books. Interviews with parents and grandparents would “permit [the class] to explore directly the previous two or three generations, indirectly the previous four or five generations.” And, of course, the town archives were valuable documentary resources. The authors, however, noted that

⁴⁷ Jacques Grasser, Roger Colet, and Roger Wadier, *Notre histoire: cycle moyen* (Paris: Hachette, 1981), 138, 140.

⁴⁸ Berbaum, Adam, and Roussel, “La Conduite Des Activités D’éveil,” 22.

⁴⁹ Tison, “Verdun Dans Les Manuels de L’enseignement Primaire (1920-1995),” 66.

teachers should adapt the methods for their classes. Some might move from the local community to the textbook's global vision, while others would begin with the text. The authors admitted, however, that for some topics or in some communities local resources would be of poor quantity or quality.⁵⁰ Interdisciplinary efforts were often emphasized, in keeping with the grouping of the disciplines into the *activités d'éveil*. One guide for students in scientific and technical sections began each unit with an experiment, model or project. The unit on the French colonial empires, for instance, included directions for constructing a model of a paddle wheel boat, like the kind that might have been used for travel along the navigable rivers of the colonies.⁵¹

Studies of textbooks from the period of the *activités d'éveil* often lament the dropping of or reduction in material on "vital" subjects covered in greater depth before. For instance, the number of lines devoted to the World War I Battle of Verdun in textbooks of the period was greatly reduced in favor of more general topics and thematic units. In this, scholars have largely repeated the complaints of contemporary critics. They are correct that narrative history was much reduced in textbooks and, no doubt, many previously important topics were cut. In the case of decolonization, however, the criticisms seem misplaced. Between 1969 and 1984, greater attention was apparently paid to decolonization in general and the Algerian and Indochinese Wars in particular. In the case of decolonization, the reductive tendency of the *activités d'éveil* approach was offset by other trends. As the events of decolonization went from current affairs to

⁵⁰ Simon Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques réservées au personnel enseignant*, Activités historiques d'éveil (Paris: Bordas, 1976), 6–7.

⁵¹ Gracia Dorel-Ferré, Michel Dhainaut, and M. Huber, *Techniques et sociétés: histoire pour notre temps*, Les Activités d'éveil au cycle moyen, ISSN 0757-4053 (Paris: Librairie A. Colin, 1976), 137.

history, individual chapters were devoted to the topic.⁵² Moreover, the legacy of May 1968 and the entry of young teachers from that generation into the teaching corps, opposition to the War in Vietnam, the growing presence of students of immigrant origin (particularly from Algeria) in classrooms, and the push to tie in-class learning with students' home lives may have contributed to the growing place of decolonization in textbooks.⁵³

In 1980, the Minister of Education Christian Beullac published new instructions for the *cours moyen*. The instructions were almost schizophrenic; while not entirely rolling back the reforms of the previous decades, they spoke to the concerns of critics. The program delineated the “succession of Great Periods of the history of France,” the last of which was “the current period (since 1945),” that students were to know before leaving the *cours moyen*. The language of the instructions attempted to blend the *éveil* approach with more traditional conceptions of history. Students were to “situate [the great periods] into the chronological framework” but did not have “to enter into detailed knowledge of each” of them. “Each of the great periods,” meanwhile, “will be characterized by some dominant deeds, dates, events, personalities of which the

⁵² Henri Ourman argues that because of the reduction of classroom hours that came with the *activités d'éveil* “the Algerian War will get, in the best of cases, two or three hours, sometimes one hour!” He does not make clear, however, how many hours—if any—the Algerian War would have received prior to the reforms. See his essay, “L’enseignement de la guerre d’Algérie à l’école élémentaire en France,” in Institut du monde arabe and Ligue française de l’enseignement et de l’éducation permanente-Confédération générale des oeuvres laïques, *La guerre d’Algérie dans l’enseignement en France et en Algérie*, ed. Abdeljalil Laamirie, Jean-Michel Le Dain, and Gilles Manceron, 1 vols., Documents, actes et rapports pour l’éducation, ISSN 1159-6538 (Paris: Centre national de documentation pédagogique, 1993), <http://www.sudoc.fr/003985768>.

⁵³ Ourman claims that the number of students of Algerian origin or whose parents had left Algeria in 1962 was not particularly significant and family memory of the conflict was not a factor. His research is from inquiries with teachers in Paris and he admits he is unfamiliar with the situation in Marseille or Montpellier. His comments do, however, seem to reify notions of the Algerian War as a conflict that occurred in Algeria and did not involve metropolitan populations. *Ibid.*, 106; Daniel Lefeuve, in his essay “L’Algérie dans les manuels scolaires d’histoire et de géographie de 1930 à nos jours,” discusses the role played by May 1968 and on opposition to Vietnam. *Ibid.*, 34–35.

importance is recognized in the fabric of the national history.”⁵⁴ In the preface to the teacher’s guide that accompanied their book *Histoire: Découvrir, comparer, connaître* (*History: Discover, Compare, Know*) for the Fernand Nathan publishing house, the authors cited the concerns of educational stakeholders that had led to the changes:

We will not lose sight that this new reform [by Beullac] falls in the middle of the collapse of the teaching of History and that it is the result of three concerns. The first is a concern on the part of adults scared of seeing a generation built not only without a past, but incapable of situating themselves in time as well as in space. There is no more transmission of a patrimony from one age to another, there remain only some isolated and varied studies, certainly not uninteresting, and in many cases the teaching of History is abandoned. The second concern is that of parents who refuse to accept that some important moments of our History, like the seizing of the Bastille or the two World Wars, may be purely and simply disregarded; the parent-child dialogue becomes impossible.... The third is the protest of professors of History of the *premier cycle* refusing to accept these historical illiterates that the primary school transfers to them.

At the end of the preface, however, the authors attempt to set progressive teachers’ minds at ease, noting that “the teacher remains free to choose from these methods as from those facts to study. The textbook has no other purpose than to permit him to work in the best conditions and in favor of the children who are entrusted to him.”⁵⁵

Mature Discourses of Decolonization, c. 1975-1992

The moment of uncertainty and methodological change brought about by the reforms of the 1970s did not stem the increasing inclusion of imperialism’s end in French *cours moyen* textbooks. The influence of new historical models and the increasing space devoted to decolonization did, however, lead to textbooks that took a more critical stance toward the legacies of imperialism and that discussed some features of decolonization

⁵⁴ The instructions were included in Marie-José Hinnewinkel et al., *Histoire: cours moyen, nouveau programme, guide pédagogique*, Découvrir, comparer, connaître, ISSN 0769-5640 (Paris: F. Nathan, 1981), 2–6. The quotations are from page 3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

more openly than had their 1950s and 1960s predecessors. Yet there were limits to these shifts, even as late as the early 1990s. Certain foundational myths of decolonization died hard; certain topics remained obscured. Two dynamics of these narratives seem, in the main, to remain from earlier books. First, authors retained the sense that decolonization was a global process over which France had little control, and that its causes were largely external to France itself. The Fourth Republic's instability notwithstanding, France's failure was the inability to recognize and cope with those processes in a timely manner. Second, authors continued to search the history of decolonization for the oracle bones of France's future. In general, decolonization seemed to signal a new world order in which France would play an important, vital role. Thus, while the terms used, the events included, and the methods employed in the narratives changed, the lessons of decolonization remained overwhelmingly consistent.

To guide my approach to the narratives of this period, I will foreground two textbook accounts of decolonization that were unusual in their format and methodological approach, one from 1976, in the heart of the *activités de l'éveil* period, and one from 1981, as education ministers were beginning to roll back the reforms of the preceding decade. It is my hope that these texts will illuminate the limits of the myths of decolonization and the elements of those myths that had become more or less canonical.

Simon Bégué's 1976 textbook *La France et les Français autrefois (France and the French in the Past)* for the publisher Bordas was released in the midst of the recent reforms. The textbook rejected the traditional narrative approach to rely almost entirely on "documents"; pictures dominated each page and brief introductory paragraphs and lengthy captions with guiding questions were the only text. Indeed, the textbook seemed

little more than a repository of primary sources. The teachers' guide made clear that much of the historical context was to be supplied by the teachers themselves, hence the prevalence of instructions for teachers to "locate" geographical features and to "describe" elements of the photographs. The traditional telling of history was subverted in other ways as well. The units were thematic rather than periodic and the unit on "France and the French in the World" was, like all the other units, arranged with chapters in reverse chronological order, a unique approach among the texts in the sample.⁵⁶ Jacques Grasser's 1981 textbook for the Hachette publishing house, *Our History*, was much more narrative than Bégué's sparser text, though the number of images and excerpts from primary texts were evidence of the influence of the documentary approach. It was unusual, however, in that the textbook included two chapters on some topics from which the teacher could choose. Thus, this text included two versions of Chapter 28 on "Decolonization, France from 1945 to 1962."⁵⁷

Beginning with the reformist period of the *activités de l'éveil*, the "tide of history" narrative became even more influential in textbooks. Bégué treated French history in reverse chronological order, a structure that signaled to students to read France's current state back into history. The first two chapters in the section on "France and the French in the World," which concerned "Lands Previously Colonized, Today Independent" and "Colonial Wars and Independence," seemed to make decolonization and independence the logical and necessary endpoint of France's imperial project. The discourse was not abandoned with the return to more traditional versions of historical narrative in the 1980s.

⁵⁶ Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*: The chapter "France and the French in the World" is on pages 130-139. Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 163-175.

⁵⁷ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 138-141.

The shift was evident in the increased prevalence of the word “decolonization” in latter texts. Bégué used the term only occasionally in the teachers’ guide, in which terms like “ascension to independence” were preferred, and it was not present at all in the text itself.⁵⁸ Both versions of Grasser’s chapter were titled “Decolonization,” the word suggesting a sense of process lacking in more traditional terms. The title of the chapter on decolonization in Monique Benoît’s 1985 textbook, “An Irreversible Movement: Decolonization,” was more obvious about its ideological predispositions than most.⁵⁹ The overwhelming commonality of the term demonstrates the increasing familiarity with and hegemony of the concept of decolonization in *cours moyen* classrooms.

From earlier narratives like those of Dupâquier, authors retained the sense of decolonization as a worldwide process in which France had been caught up, greater than the individual actions of states or politicians. In one of Grasser’s chapters, de Gaulle, after becoming president in 1958, could only “use his increased powers to make decolonization accepted.” One of the documents in the other version was, in fact, a lengthy quotation from de Gaulle himself: “Considering that the emancipation of peoples is consistent ... with the purpose of our great colonizers ... (and) with the irresistible movement that started in the world at the moment of the World War ... I embark on this path ... the policy of France! [*sic*]”⁶⁰ The teachers’ guide by Bégué concurred on the point that the Second World War was responsible for “an explosion of nationalist

⁵⁸ Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 163–173.

⁵⁹ Monique Benoît, *Histoire, CM: images et mémoire des français* (Paris: Hatier, 1985), 182–183.

⁶⁰ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 139, 141, ellipses in original. Also in Marie-José Hinnewinkel, Jean-Claude Hinnewinkel, and Jean-Michel Sivrine, *Histoire: cours moyen, nouveau programme* (Paris: F. Nathan, 1981), 127; Marie-José Hinnewinkel, Jean-Claude Hinnewinkel, and Jean-Michel Sivrine, *Histoire: cours moyen*, Collection Télémaque, ISSN 0297-8431 9 (Paris: Nathan, 1986), 127.

sentiments ... the outcome of which could only be decolonization.”⁶¹ As scholars of the period have argued, however, belief that colonial nationalism required independence was hardly an accepted fact, even among colonial nationalists.⁶² The view held by these authors was as much a product of decolonization as its cause.

The French Revolution continued to be an important touchstone in the long trajectory of decolonization. Both versions of Grasser’s chapter on decolonization made reference to the ideas and legacy of the Revolution. At the beginning of each chapter was a small box introducing the state of affairs in 1945; Revolutionary concepts were featured in this prominent location in both texts. One of the chapters referenced the Revolution implicitly, arguing that after “fight[ing] *equally* alongside the French in two World Wars,” the colonized people found it “difficult to accept afterward not being *free*, not deciding for themselves the future of their country.”⁶³ Later in the chapter, the authors presented a quotation from the *Algerian Manifesto of 1943* in which Ferhat Abbas argued, “The French colony accepts equality with the Muslim Algerian only on a single level, the sacrifices on the field of battle,” and “the Algerian people demand ... the endowment of Algeria with a Constitution guaranteeing the absolute liberty and equality of all its inhabitants.”⁶⁴ The other version of the chapter was even more explicit about France’s failure to live up to the principles of the French Revolution. According to the introduction to the chapter, Africans and Asians had “learned about the French

⁶¹ Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 169.

⁶² This was especially true of the colonies of West Africa: Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*; Genova, *Colonial Ambivalence, Cultural Authenticity, and the Limitations of Mimicry in French-Ruled West Africa, 1914-1956*; Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa*.

⁶³ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 138. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

Revolution, and its ideas of equality and liberty” when they began coming to Paris in larger numbers after 1920. In the chapter itself, the authors explain the “astonishment” of colonized people who discovered that “France, country of the *Rights of Man* in 1789, maintained inequalities between themselves and the Europeans.”⁶⁵ As had textbooks decades earlier, in the midst of the French Union and French Community, authors attempted explicitly to forge links between decolonization and the French revolutionary legacy.

The values of the Revolution had never—even during the Revolution itself—been incontestable. Concepts such as liberty, equality, and fraternity were infinitely deployable ideological containers. Whereas earlier texts tended to privilege equality and fraternity, one notes the popularity of only two terms of the Revolutionary triad—“liberty” and “equality”—in later manuals. Perhaps the previously popular “fraternity” had been rendered too problematic by its association with the now-defunct French Union and French Community. Other authors, such as Monique Benoît, added other concepts to the Revolutionary triad. She argued that colonial elites had studied in the West “where they learned notions of equality, liberty, justice, sovereignty.”⁶⁶ The inclusion of sovereignty among the republican values inherited from the Revolution was quite popular in the other texts of the period. The same argument, linking decolonization to popular sovereignty, was made in Yvon Deverre’s 1992 textbook, which claimed that “the colonized peoples wanted to acquire their *liberty and to decide for themselves* their

⁶⁵ Ibid., 140. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁶ Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 182.

destiny.”⁶⁷ Bégué, on the other hand, explored the implications of state sovereignty in the caption for a document depicting the French President Giscard and President Bokassa of the Central African Republic. Here, the author took special care to note that the country “is a sovereign state,” the reason why it could “welcome ... the leader of the former colonial power.”⁶⁸

Discussions of sovereignty further grounded the process of decolonization in the larger postwar international order. Decolonization became not only the end point for a history of nationalism stretching back to 1789 but also a foundational moment in a post-1945 world of nation-states. For Martial Chaulanges, it was the legacy of the resistance that led “these overseas peoples” to leave the French Union and claim “the independence that de Gaulle had proclaimed in principle during the Second World War.”⁶⁹ Others drew on the United Nations for legitimacy. As Benoît puts it, those ideas “were reinforced by the *declarations of the UN on the ‘right of peoples to self-determination’* [disposer d’eux-mêmes].”⁷⁰ Yet, these narratives did not question the view that liberty, equality, and sovereignty were peculiarly western or French values, acquired only by contact with western states and their institutions.

In earlier textbooks, liberty and equality could be read at the state level as autonomy within the colonial system or at the individual level as the granting of citizenship rights to imperial subjects. During the heady days prior to 1962, when

⁶⁷ Yvon Deverre, Henri Fournols, and Allain Verrier, *Histoire CM: livret 2, Connaître* (Paris: Hatier, 1992), 46.

⁶⁸ Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 131.

⁶⁹ Martial Chaulanges and Simone Chaulanges, *Histoire de France: cours moyen et classes de 8e et 7e*, Cours d’histoire M. et S. Chaulanges, ISSN 0299-1225 (Paris: Delagrave, 1971), 156.

⁷⁰ Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 182.

national independence was not a foregone conclusion, there were certainly colonial leaders who argued for limited reforms on the basis of republican principles. Meanwhile, in the final years of the Fourth Republic and the first years of the Fifth Republic, the French state undertook a new policy of “integration” that, according to Todd Shepard, was “an extension of political rights and economic assistance unparalleled in the history of Western overseas imperialism.”⁷¹ The state intended to legitimize limited difference (including a version of affirmative action for “Muslim Algerians”) to stave off independence.⁷² By the 1980s, on the contrary, liberty and equality stood for national independence, state sovereignty, and equal position in the community of nations. That the ideals of the French Revolution were significant in both versions of Grasser’s text demonstrates the author’s belief that the connection between the French Revolutionary legacy and decolonization was not a matter for interpretation. How that connection functioned, however, was quite debatable.

Other authors viewed decolonization not merely as inspired by contact with western values but rather in paternalistic terms as something *given* by western powers. In one 1981 text by Jean-Pierre Drouet, it was de Gaulle who “pursued *decolonization* by granting our former colonies their independence.” And it was only “after decolonization was realized by the countries possessing colonies (France, Great Britain, Belgium ...), [that] some states became free and independent.”⁷³ In a later version, Drouet argued that French decolonization was inspired by the benevolence of other western powers: “The United States gave the example of *decolonization* in liberating the Philippines (1946); the

⁷¹ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 45.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 43–54.

⁷³ Jean-Pierre Drouet, *Du passé vers l’avenir CM: éveil à l’histoire pour le cours moyen Ire et 2e années réunies* (Paris, 1981), 149.

British imitated them in India (1947).”⁷⁴ The language of gifting, of liberation, and of magnanimity was still quite present in these later texts, as it had been in the 1950s and 1960s. That language was an atavistic holdover that coexisted uneasily with narratives of colonial struggle and of the irreversible currents of history.

In explaining the rise of the colonized countries on the world stage, social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s had attributed the necessity to decolonize to population increase. By the 1980s, *cours moyen* textbooks had adopted these explanations and applied them to discourses of development and modernization. The two versions of Grasser’s text show how development could function as both the cause of decolonization and an outcome requiring French intervention. One version of the chapter, which had a more social history bent, was bookended by discussions of agriculture. It began with a discussion of how African and Asian populations “increased rapidly,” outstripping agricultural production. Meanwhile, the attraction of rural populations seeking work to European-built cities led to the construction of “shanty-towns.” The end of the chapter implied a contrast with its description of “the modernization of French agriculture” as part of “Green Europe.” “The Europeans repatriated from Algeria” were important participants in this “new [agricultural] adventure.”⁷⁵

The challenges of poverty in the formerly colonized world demanded European—especially French—intervention. As Grasser put it, “The majority of the new states are on the ‘path of development.’ They sign accords of cooperation with France that furnish

⁷⁴ Jean-Pierre Drouet et al., *Histoire: CM2*, Collection Drouet, ISSN 0297-8911 7 (Paris: Magnard, 1986), 89.

⁷⁵ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 140–141.

them with economic and sometimes military aid.”⁷⁶ Bégué devoted even more time to issues of development and world inequality. He contended that economic inequality resulting from low rates of return on primary goods as opposed to the manufactured goods of the developed world was one of the fundamental problems of the contemporary world. The inequality would need to be addressed by “more just commercial relationships” and by aid from organizations like the United Nations, which “France had contributed to creating.”⁷⁷ I will consider development and France’s imagined role in it in greater depth in the next chapter, but at this point Drouet’s 1981 text is emblematic:

But these [decolonized] countries, long under the domination of rich powers, remain deprived as much on the economic plane as on the plane of political organization. They blamed backwardness relative to the development of the large industrialized countries: that is *underdevelopment*. The Third World is a poor world because the population does not stop increasing as a consequence of the progress brought by the colonizers (medicine, vaccinations, hygiene). Mortality is decreasing despite an undernourished population.

Here the same population growth that had made decolonization necessary was responsible for Third World poverty. The author raised the image of underdevelopment only to dismiss it. Underdevelopment was what “they blamed” while population growth and the civilizing mission was the cause. Furthermore, underdevelopment theory was neutered of its critical content; it became merely a descriptive term for relative economic

⁷⁶ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁷ Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 139. In the teacher’s guide, Bégué admits to a more capacious and critical view of the economic relationships between the developed and developing world, though also believes that the material would be too abstract for students: “In a work that is meant to be at once an initiation to economic and social life and a preparation for moral and civic attitudes, it is not possible to say nothing about the human consequences of what we call ‘the international division of work.’ We know that the terms of exchange are distorted in favor of the industrialized countries. There is no way to enter into an analysis of the monetary and financial factors that mask the domination of the Third World by the industrialized countries. The children of the cours moyen still cannot reach these abstractions. But get them to understand that it is more advantageous to sell sophisticated products than unmanufactured products, as it is more advantageous to work as an engineer than as an unskilled worker.” Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 164.

power.⁷⁸ The population grew out of the success of France’s civilizing mission in the colonies, and as colonial “backwardness” had justified French intervention in the nineteenth century so it justified western intervention in the late twentieth century. Thus, Drouet called for UN aid, agricultural technicians to address “archaic agriculture,” and teachers.⁷⁹

In 1960, a textbook for the students at the *Troisième* level called the Bandung Conference of 1955 that had established the nonaligned movement and was a foundational moment of Third Worldism “the greatest humiliation ever inflicted” on an old and weak Europe.⁸⁰ After 1970, the Bandung Conference and nonalignment were regularly included in history textbooks for even the younger students of the *cours moyen*, and had taken on very different connotations than in Pierrard’s earlier text.

Nonalignment’s entry into textbooks can be explained in part by changing programs for history courses that granted more time to contemporary history and that included decolonization and the Third World as independent subjects. None of this explains, however, why education ministries felt these topics were important in the first place. Conflicts between the global North and South over development, economic policy, and foreign intervention—not to mention simple “rancor vis-à-vis the Whites who had long held them in trusteeship and sometimes under menacing weight”—would seem on their face to raise problematic issues for French policymakers.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981).

⁷⁹ Drouet, *Du passé vers l’avenir CM*, 155.

⁸⁰ Pierrard, *Histoire de France*, 252.

⁸¹ Quotation in Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 157.

Recent developments in French foreign policy, begun by de Gaulle and continued by and large by subsequent administrations, redirected the critiques posed by nonalignment in ways that were less problematic for French interests and that fashioned a new global role for France. General de Gaulle had pursued a policy of French independence from the Cold War order, especially from France's U.S. patron. For example, he developed and tested an independent nuclear arsenal, pulled France out of NATO's integrated command structure, and recognized the People's Republic of China. De Gaulle also hoped that a strong and more unified Europe could form a third force to counterbalance the two superpowers on its edges and tried to recast France as the champion of the Third World. He publicly supported Québécois autonomy and gave a speech criticizing U.S. actions in Vietnam, France's former colony, the independence of which the French government had resisted for nearly a decade. An example from Benoît's 1985 textbook exposed the apparent similarities between Gaullist Cold War policy and the nonaligned movement in the South: "General de Gaulle affirmed the will for the independence of France, present everywhere but clear of the blocs.... His successors have continued the policy of national independence and reinforcement of presidential power."⁸²

Thus, in an almost complete inversion of decades of worth of language about colonial *grandeur* and the empire as the strategic reserve on which French power was based, textbooks now agreed with a position articulated by the philosopher Raymond Aron during decolonization (for which he was roundly criticized from the Right and

⁸² Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 185; Using similar language, a 1985 textbook by Wirth writes "the new independent states entered the UN where they became the majority. Certain among them wanted to separate themselves from the two blocs and founded ... the non-aligned movement," *Le livre d'histoire: cycle moyen*, Cours P. Wirth (Paris: Delagrave, 1985), 131; On Gaullist "anti-Americanism," see: Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, chap. 6.

Left): France must decolonize to be strong at home and only a France strong at home could be strong abroad. Drouet's textbook put it plainly: "General de Gaulle ... gave our country back the prestige it had lost and he allowed us to play an important world role. He pursued decolonization by granting to our former colonies their independence." The immediate succession of prestige and decolonization here is, I think, an important one. It implies that decolonization itself restored French prestige, which had been lost in the colonial wars in Algeria and Indochina and the near-"civil war" in France that brought de Gaulle to power (these events were described in the previous paragraph of the text). De Gaulle, thus, expiates the sins of colonialism, relegating them to the misadventures of the previous regime.⁸³

According to Gaullists, instability and weakness were largely attributed to the shifting political coalitions, brief governments, and indecision of the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle's recall to power in 1958, and particularly the stronger executive created by the new constitution of the Fifth Republic, had resolved these deficits. In earlier accounts of the Fourth Republic, we saw a schizophrenic approach to the regime—failing in the colonial sphere but successful in the economic sphere—and conflicting desires to demonstrate the crises that made the Fifth Republic necessary while also making the transition seem orderly and legitimate. Later texts continued these conflicting narratives. In general, by the 1980s, the successes of the Fourth Republic in rebuilding France after the Second World War were axiomatic. For Benoît, "Despite the difficulties [of government instability], the balance sheet of the Fourth Republic is positive on the

⁸³ Drouet, *Du passé vers l'avenir* CM, 149; On Aron's views of decolonization: Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 68–70.

economic and social plane: France is rebuilt.”⁸⁴ Pierre Wirth, moreover, listed the Fourth Republic’s successes: “Starting in 1950, industries developed; the use of automobiles, of household appliances, of plastic goods spread among the whole population for whom the standard of living improved.”⁸⁵

There were, however, two broad narratives about the connection between instability in the Fourth Republic and decolonization. Replicating earlier narratives, the first viewed unstable political coalitions as responsible for the drama of decolonization. Marie-José Hinnewinkel et al., for instance, achieved the effect by juxtaposing the two issues in quick succession, implying the causal relationship even when it was not expressly stated. After discussing the adoption of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1946: “From 1946 to 1958, about twenty different governments succeeded each other, while large problems like that of decolonization posed themselves.”⁸⁶ The language in these narratives, like that of Dupâquier in 1966, smacks of incapacity and helplessness. The second narrative tended to separate political instability from the crises of decolonization, often handling them in different chapters; ministerial crises were coterminous but not causal. While in these versions developments in the empire caused the collapse of the Fourth Republic, the government’s ruin stemmed from its inability to read the historical moment. The French government’s false step was not its failure to deal with decolonization; it was its failure to recognize decolonization’s inevitability, to perceive the tide of history. As Benoît claimed of the French response to proclamation of

⁸⁴ *Histoire, CM*, 184.

⁸⁵ Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 124.

⁸⁶ Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Svirine, *Histoire*, 1986, 123.

the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, “France did not accept it and reoccupied its colony. It was war.”⁸⁷ It was not a mistake the Fifth Republic would make.

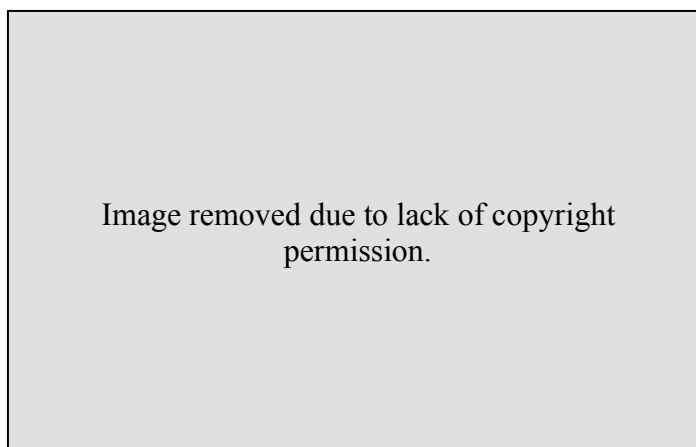


Figure 3.2. “President de Gaulle receiving the francophone African heads of state (1966).” Photograph by Hachette. Source: Jacques Grasser, Roger Colet and Roger Wadier, *Notre histoire: Cycle moyen* (Paris: Hachette, 1981), 139.

France’s new conception of its world role and the contrast with the Fourth Republic could be embodied in the imagery that was so prominent in textbooks after the 1970s. An image of “President de Gaulle receiving the francophone African heads of state (1966)” followed immediately after an excerpt of a speech by de Gaulle describing the “irresistible movement” of the “emancipation of peoples” (figure 3.2). Just after the image, the author noted that “these new states are among the ‘countries on the path of development’” with whom France has signed accords of cooperation and given aid. De Gaulle stood just left of center flanked on either side by a line of African leaders, standing shoulder to shoulder, all dressed in dark suits (with the exception of French Prime Minister Georges Pompidou who stands out in a light color toward the end). The imagery was powerful and, in the context of the surrounding text, apparent. The presence

⁸⁷ Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 182.

of these heads of state in solidarity with de Gaulle affirmed the wisdom of decolonization (and, because these indigenous men led their new countries, the success of the civilizing mission), demonstrated the success of republican values like equality and fraternity, and lent legitimacy to France's claims that postcolonial cooperation was not neocolonial domination.⁸⁸

It is difficult to imagine that students would have viewed this image without noting race. As Todd Shepard has convincingly argued, a product of the discourse of “the tide of history” was that a postcolonial consensus was formed in France that of course colonial peoples were different, not-French, and could never be French. This implied an attention to difference that only a few years before was supposedly anathema to French republican ideals.⁸⁹ Bégue's text explicitly presented the new regime's policies toward difference. The authors constructed a diptych of imagery on a single page that laid bare the racial assumptions of the Fourth and Fifth Republic. Both images featured a French president visiting Africa. The first showed Fourth Republican President Vincent Auriol on a visit to Rufisque, Senegal in 1947. Auriol was dressed, as the teachers' guide made clear, in colonial whites and carried a colonial helmet. The captions to the images were exceptionally rich. “The only flag that one can see is the tricolor flag,” which hangs from the balcony above the scene. “All the members of the official cortege are Whites, military or civil functionaries,” about which the author remarked that in a French colony “all the important posts are limited to the French from the metropole.” Lastly, the caption asked: “Where are the Blacks? What role is reserved for them?” A line of black soldiers lined the street, at attention. In contrast, the second image featured Fifth

⁸⁸ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 139.

⁸⁹ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 82–84.

Republican President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing visiting the Central African Republic in 1975. Here, rather than striding down the street like Auriol in Rufisque, the image was reminiscent of de Gaulle with the African heads of state. Giscard wore a dark suit, stood just off center, next to President Bokassa. “The crowd that surrounds the two heads of state,” the caption remarked, “is composed almost entirely of Blacks.” In front of the two leaders was lowered the flag of the Central African Republic; the accompanying guide instructed the teacher “to remark on the presence of blue, white, and red; read the motto [*discipline, honneur, patrie*] embroidered on the flag.” The images, when examined in tandem, clearly demonstrated the prevalence of race in explanations of decolonization. They also seemed to make the Fourth Republic’s resistance to decolonization a moral issue, one which was now safely in the past. The “welcome” granted to Giscard and the presence of French symbolism in the CAR flag reaffirmed a role for France in the former empire. A France without its empire was not a France without influence, without *grandeur*⁹⁰.

Unnamed Wars?: The Algerian and Indochinese Wars in Fifth Republic Textbooks

Lastly, it remains to be considered what and how much authors said about violence and war in the colonies. Recent scholarship on the memory of Algeria has argued for what Anne Donadey calls (borrowing from Henry Rousso’s thesis about Vichy) an “Algeria syndrome” or what Benjamin Stora’s classic treatment calls “gangrene and forgetting.” Well into the postcolonial period, the argument goes, there was a general repression of the Algerian War—to the point that only euphemisms like “events” in Algeria or “police actions” were used to describe the conflict—in official

⁹⁰ Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 131.

discourses and in popular culture.⁹¹ Some authors have extended this argument to the educational sphere. Donadey, for example, borrows Stora's observation that only in the 1980s was the Algerian War added to the curriculum in the *Terminale* year, and the first questions on the war in the *Bac* appeared in 1983. Even then, Jo McCormack argues, the War was often given short shrift due, according to teachers, to the time requirements for preparing for the *Bac* or, in McCormack's estimation, to unease with covering such topics in the classroom.⁹²

Yet, the Algerian War and the War in Indochina were named in textbooks at the elementary level at least as early as the 1960s. Furthermore, terms like "War in Algeria" also appeared relatively early after the conflict though, it is true, euphemistic language persisted, sometimes right alongside more honest terms.⁹³ I do not wish to give the impression, however, that such texts consistently and accurately represented the complexity and violence of these conflicts or even devoted very much space to them. Rather, a fairer critique seems to be that narratives of anticolonial military struggles were often short, sanitized, and imbalanced. And they were always subsumed into larger narratives about the Fourth and Fifth Republics and, of course, decolonization. They became acts in larger dramas.

The War in Indochina took a much more prominent place in narratives of decolonization in the latter period. While the independence of Vietnam figured very

⁹¹ Stora, *La Gangrene et L'oubli*; Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*; Donadey, "'Une Certaine Idée de La France': The Algeria Syndrome and Struggles over 'French' Identity."

⁹² Donadey, "'Une Certaine Idée de la France'," 216-217; Stora, *La Gangrene et L'oubli*, 353; Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).

⁹³ Maurice David, André Ferré, and Aimé Poitevin, *Histoire: les grands faits de la vie des français* (Paris: F. Nathan, 1964), 233; Audrin, Dechappe, and Dechappe, *De l'Antiquité à la France d'aujourd'hui*, 221; Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire*, 91.

briefly in some of the textbooks of the 1950s, for example, the war itself was almost completely absent. Those authors who did mention the colony were more likely to refer to how the new states on the peninsula “became independent” and “left the French Union” or how they as “the most civilized had tended to reclaim complete liberty.”⁹⁴ This mixed record continued into the 1960s, where Plandé wrote that “the countries of Indochina, Tunisia, and Morocco became independent.”⁹⁵ Other textbooks began referring to the conflict as a “war,” but only in the briefest of terms.⁹⁶

As individual chapters were devoted to the postwar republics and to decolonization, narratives of the Indochinese War became much more common. This was quite clear in two versions of a text by Drouet. In his 1981 textbook, as part of a larger chapter on the Fifth Republic, he consigned Indochina to a parenthetical aside: “Plus, the governments of the Fourth Republic had to face some colonial wars (Indochina, Algeria) which weakened France and provoked division among the French.”⁹⁷ In the 1986 version, however, in which the war fell in a new chapter on decolonization, the author discussed Ho Chi Minh, guerrilla war, the military aid the Vietnamese received from abroad, and the fall of Dien Bien Phu.⁹⁸ Ho Chi Minh became the most common anticolonial leader to appear in photographs and, unlike heads of state

⁹⁴ Audrin, Dechappe, and Dechappe, *De l'Antiquité à la France d'aujourd'hui*, 239; Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 180.

⁹⁵ Plandé, Dechappe, and Dechappe, *Histoire de France*, 139.

⁹⁶ One textbook mentioned the War in Indochina in the context of the Cold War but did not mention French involvement at all: Sage, *Une réunion de professeurs. Histoire de France, cours moyen Ière année, classe de 8e. [Suivi de]*, 438; A sentence is devoted to “the War in Indochina, which ended with the disaster of Dien-Bien-Phu” in Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire*, 91; Likewise, Audrin notes the “grave events” of the period, including “unfortunate war in Viet-Nam at the end of which the Indochinese states left the Union”: *De l'Antiquité à la France d'aujourd'hui*, 221.

⁹⁷ Drouet, *Du passé vers l'avenir CM*, 149.

⁹⁸ Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 89.

from sub-Saharan Africa, typically appeared alone rather than with French leaders. In general, images of the war were more common, though scenes of actual combat or of Vietnamese troops were extremely rare. Rather, in some texts, students were encouraged to surmise the facts of battle: the caption for an image showing French soldiers repairing fortifications at Dien Bien Phu asked students to “note the elements that show you the violence of the bombardments.”⁹⁹

Texts were surprisingly frank about the nature of the war, though not in the images. Most texts, for example, discussed guerrilla warfare, though perhaps to justify the failure of a more modern French military. To a similar end, the occasional inclusion of the Vietnamese resistance to Japan in World War II turned the Vietnamese into battle-hardened combat veterans, while discussions of aid to Vietnam by the Chinese helped to justify the loss of the modern, French army.¹⁰⁰ Drouet went the furthest in exculpating France for defeat, describing the “heroic resistance” at Dien Bien Phu that “caused France to sign the peace and leave Indochina.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, even for Marc Vincent, whose teachers’ edition included a feature on Indochina to be used in the classroom, there seemed to be few lessons for France in the events in Indochina: “The evolution of Indochina gives an example of the complexity of international relations since 1945. Decolonization, breaking of the Communist Bloc, crisis of conscience in the West mixed on a foundation of distresses and human dramas.”¹⁰² As a result, the dossier that Vincent

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Both of these dimensions of the conflict are included in Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 182; and in Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 89.

¹⁰¹ Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 89.

¹⁰² Marc Vincent, *Histoire, CM: la France au fil du temps de la préhistoire à nos jours*, Collection Télémaque, ISSN 0297-8431 7 (Paris: Nathan, 1986), 76.

included skipped over the French part of the war, beginning with Japanese occupation and Ho Chi Minh's ideological formation and then moving to the war with the United States. In the final analysis, it seems likely that the increased attention paid to the War in Indochina in the textbooks since the 1970s resulted from French policies started by de Gaulle that viewed France as the champion of the Third World and from perceptions that Vietnam was best associated with American imperialism rather than French.¹⁰³

While there were textbooks that referred to the Algerian War and to its role in the unsettling of France's domestic political affairs as early as the 1960s, with few exceptions it was not until the 1980s that textbooks considered the conflict in any depth. Moreover, the frankness with which some of the accounts discussed the violence of the war demonstrated that the past use of euphemistic language about the Algerian War was political, not an attempt to guard the sensibilities of young children. Drouet, for example, devoted only four sentences to the "armed insurrection" that the FLN "set off in Algeria," but in those few sentences noted that "French soldiers had to face guerrilla operations in the countryside and terrorist actions in the cities."¹⁰⁴ Other texts referred to: "attacks," "bombings," "an often atrocious war,"¹⁰⁵ "a deadly war of more than six years,"¹⁰⁶ "assassination of a couple of teachers,"¹⁰⁷ "an enemy who practiced a war of ambushes,"

¹⁰³ None of the textbooks in the sample described U.S. relations with France or the rest of the world in terms of imperialism, though one teacher's guide did make that connection: "Imperialism inspires and did inspire international cultural relations. Through the diffusion of French in Africa, in America, or in Asia, as through the diffusion of American film, we teach children to understand what was or what is an effect of the power of states." Bégue, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 164.

¹⁰⁴ Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 89.

¹⁰⁵ Deverre, Fournols, and Verrier, *Histoire CM*, 46.

¹⁰⁶ Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 157.

¹⁰⁷ Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 183.

and a “climate of fear” as a result of “attacks” in the cities.¹⁰⁸ All of this terminology, however, was applied only to the Algerian nationalist forces. None of the texts mentioned abuses (and certainly not torture) by the Army.

The Algerians of European origin, the *pieds-noirs*, were commonly included in textbook narratives in the 1980s. In these accounts, the *pieds-noirs* played the same role that Todd Shepard has argued supporters of *Algérie Française* played in official government and media discourses at the end of the war; they stood in the way of the unstoppable progress of history, of decolonization.¹⁰⁹ Only one account in the sample of texts, however, discussed the violent attacks of the Secret Army Organization (OAS)—or even mentioned it by name—or the attempted generals’ putsch in 1961. Incidentally, Benoît was also the only author to mention “the *harkis*, who no longer found a place in independent Algeria” or to explain that some metropolitan “French supported the F.L.N.”¹¹⁰ Surprisingly, the *pieds-noirs* were among the most commonly included in photographs, and those photographs were quite sympathetic. A popular scene was of the repatriates on the voyage to France, peering over the side at the Mediterranean Sea. Grasser’s account from 1981, for example, featured just such an image in a version of his chapter. The image, captioned “the drama of the repatriates leaving Algeria in 1962,” showed a group of *pieds-noirs* lining the deck, looking over the railing, while at the center of the frame stands a woman, face turned slightly toward the viewer, handkerchief to her eyes (figure 3.3).¹¹¹ The other version featured an excerpt from J. Loiseau’s *Pied*

¹⁰⁸ Bégué, *La France et les Français autrefois: CM, fiches pédagogiques*, 132.

¹⁰⁹ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 99–100.

¹¹⁰ Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 183; Grasser did, however, obliquely mention “some Muslims” who migrated to France with the *pieds-noirs*: *Notre histoire*, 139.

¹¹¹ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 139.

Noir, mon Frère: “During the days and the nights, the Pieds Noirs arrived ... incapable for the most part of realizing what had come to pass. The speed of the departure (...) had given more than one woman on board a nervous breakdown (...). I heard this repatriate who repeated to us: ‘And my harvest? And my harvest.’”¹¹² Though fact of return was frequently included, textbook authors generally left aside the more difficult question of how the *pieds-noirs* were reintegrated into the society. How does one explain such sympathetic narratives of *pied-noir* repatriation given that they were also perceived as the impediments to historically determined progress? First, authors could have been sensitive, as was one teachers’ guide, to “the presence of the foreigner among us.”¹¹³ Second, in such narratives and images the *pieds-noirs* seemed to have atoned; that they had lost “their goods,” their harvests, and had to leave their homes was a penance for their resistance to Algerian independence.

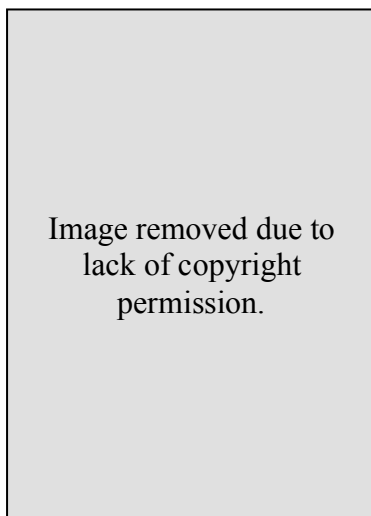


Figure 3.3. “The drama of the repatriates leaving Algeria in 1962.” Photograph by Delmas, copyright Hachette. Source: Jacques Grasser, Roger Colet and Roger Wadier, *Notre histoire: Cycle moyen* (Paris: Hachette, 1981), 139.

¹¹² Ibid., 141, omissions in original. Roughly the same passage from the same work also appears as a document in Hinnewinkel et al., *Histoire*, 127.

¹¹³ Hinnewinkel et al., *Histoire*, 163.

Images of the Algerian War did not show combat. The photograph captioned “the desert war in Algeria” in Grasser’s text, for example, showed a patrol of French soldiers marching toward the horizon, footprints in the sand trailing behind them.¹¹⁴ Indigenous Algerians were also infrequent in these texts and, when they were present, their roles were circumscribed. Bégué’s image of the Algerian War featured more anticolonial resistance than most: “In a street in Algiers, in 1960, French soldiers stand guard around a burning car. Before them, a demonstrator waves the flag of independent Algeria.”¹¹⁵ Rather, most images of Algerian “Muslims” were of the days *after* the war, of independence celebrations, in which crowds of people filled the street, flags of independent Algeria in hand, almost appearing to press forward like the crowd in the final scenes of Gillo Pontecorvo’s classic film *The Battle of Algiers*.¹¹⁶ In these photos, the end of the war became a synecdoche for the war, independence for decolonization. As does the suffix “-ization” in the word “decolonization,” photos of independence collapsed time, turned “events” into a “process” with a predetermined endpoint, fashioned the tide of history.

Conclusion

In the years immediately after World War II, the ideological apparatus of the French educational system and the school teachers who were its agents devoted

¹¹⁴ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 140.

¹¹⁵ Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 132.

¹¹⁶ Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* (Criterion, 2004) Despite the similarities between the film and some of the images in the textbooks, those textbooks did not discuss the film itself. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, xi.

considerable time and effort to convincing metropolitan students that French imperialism was necessary, desirable, generous, modernizing, and civilizing. Moreover, they had encouraged young people to develop the habits of mind to see themselves as imperial citizens, with responsibilities toward colonized peoples and to the colonial system itself. And, because France, as an empire-state, was required to negotiate constantly between the twin poles of incorporation and differentiation of its colonies and the people who lived there, the affairs of the empire carried powerful implications for French national identity. This was the state of affairs right up until the final moments of the Algerian War, as authors of textbooks in the 1950s reminded students that “our former colonies are morsels of France in Africa, in Asia, in America” and that it was “the duty of all the French to maintain” the unity of France and its empire.¹¹⁷ A few short years later, these formulations were all but gone as the final loss of the Empire (and especially the independence of Algeria) laid bare in dramatic fashion the contradictions between incorporation and differentiation.

To deal with this profoundly unsettling moment, authors absorbed the concept of “decolonization” as a “tide of history” leading inexorably toward independence. Or, more accurately, the concept of decolonization allowed the French *not* to deal with the implications of the moment. While Todd Shepard locates the presence of an abrupt and almost immediate interpretive consensus in favor of the “decolonization” model, in primary schools the development of this model, and the discourses on which it rested, were halting and slow. The decolonization narrative was impeded in large part by

¹¹⁷ René Clozier, Henri Depain, and Yves Guyomard, *Histoire de France: cours moyen, Ire et 2e années*, Cours d'histoire Clozier (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1953), 184. The copyright for Clozier's text is 1953, but there is evidence that the edition was published no earlier than 1957. Troux and Girard, *Histoire de la France*, 130.

historical programs that gave short shrift to the postwar era. As, however, the events of imperialism's twilight receded into the past, the incipient discourses of decolonization in textbooks reached maturity. These narratives transformed "events" into "history," and then—to borrow from Barthes's principle of myth—"transform[ed] history into nature."¹¹⁸ The consequences of these supposedly depoliticized and dehistoricized narratives (or might we say *misrecognized* narratives?) of the end of empire were substantial indeed. For the colonized they, on the one hand, made resistance to their demands more difficult for the metropole, but on the other hand, excised colonized people and their agency from the histories of their own struggles.¹¹⁹ For the French, however, they seem to have allowed decolonization to both be placed in a long trajectory that justified it but also to confine it to the past, where it could be ignored. Moreover, potentially bracing questions about France's world role, its civilization, its *grandeur* were omitted. (It is to the "new" issues of postcolonial France, such as regionalism, global development, and technological modernity, that I will turn in the next chapter.) In other words, in these lessons about decolonization, there were few lessons for France.

¹¹⁸ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 129.

¹¹⁹ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution*, xi.

CHAPTER FOUR:

“FRANCE, WITH ITS MODEST DIMENSIONS”: MODERNIZATION AND THE
SEARCH FOR GREAT POWER STATUS IN A CONSTRICTED AGE

[We] must transform our old country of France into a new country, and it must marry its epoch.... France must become a great industrial state or resign itself to decline.

Charles de Gaulle, June 14, 1960¹

It is necessary to produce always more and always better, to save and to invest constantly and, even more, to push relentlessly our technical and scientific research, in order to avoid sinking into a bitter mediocrity and being colonized by the activities, inventions, and capacities of other countries.

Charles de Gaulle, 1964²

“The economic richness of a country, the importance of its population, are the marks of a great nation: That is the case with the United States or the Soviet Union,” Jacques Grasser writes at the beginning of a chapter on “France and the World Today” in his 1981 textbook. He then poses the central question of his unit: “How does France, with its modest dimensions, come to be still one of the great powers of the world?”³ Grasser’s question—how does a “modest” country be great?—while appearing simple, is in fact quite rich. “Modest dimensions” immediately suggests France’s geographic size, made smaller by the loss of the French colonial empire. Yet, the French term *modeste* suggests humility, humbleness, and lack of importance; and, while *dimensions* can refer

¹Quoted in Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 247.

²Quoted in Michael D. Bess, *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 11.

³“La richesse économique d’un pays, l’importance de sa population, sont la marque d’une grande nation : c’est le cas des États-Unis ou de l’Union Soviétique. Comment la France, avec ses modestes dimensions, parvient-elle encore à être une des grandes puissances du monde?” Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 134.

to the physical size of an object, the word can also denote importance and significance. The linguistic slippage of these terms between description of physical size and of quality or significance is matched by the same double meaning of the word *grande*, a double meaning retained by the English word “great.” Thus, Grasser’s question points both to France’s small size in comparison with the much larger United States and the Soviet Union and to its reduced political, economic, and cultural importance in a world of new superpowers.

In the wake of decolonization, France found its nation of “One-Hundred Million Frenchmen” greatly reduced in number and size, and found itself chastened by long, violent anticolonial conflicts. This chapter argues, first, that French textbook authors supported a narrative in which, I claim, authors used discourses of technical and economic modernization to replace the empire in discourses of French greatness (or *grandeur*). In turn, being a “modern,” “technological,” and “productive” nation allowed France to act like a great power again, particularly in the Third World. Second, the discourse of modernization (like that of decolonization in the previous chapter) led to teleological narratives. That teleology required textbook authors to locate dramatic postwar changes in historically “French” traditions and even in “family” histories. These technological discourses were not created out of whole cloth, as the desire to historicize new developments makes clear, and especially drew on narratives of turn-of-the-century advancements. And yet, those narratives produced an array of responses, ranging from fatalism to breathless admiration to a profound sense of loss of the traditional and authentic. Finally, I demonstrate how many of the discourses and rhetorical strategies of colonial narratives— notions of conquest and heroism, *mise en valeur* (development), and

the civilizing mission, for example—resurfaced in textbook authors’ discussions of modernization and of the development of provincial France and the Third World. In short, in some ways authors continued to treat both the provinces and the Third World as they had the colonies.

Many scholars of postwar France have pointed to a sense of malaise in France since the end of the Second World War. Those scholars, however, have also shown the myriad ways in which France tried to combat that malaise by reasserting its greatness, or *grandeur*.⁴ On the one hand, leaders attempted foreign policies consistent with great power status, by removing France from the NATO command structure, developing a nuclear strike force, and occasionally spoiling the designs of the Cold War superpowers. On the other hand, the country pursued influence more in line with contemporaneous realities, by retaining economic and cultural ties with former colonies in the absence of political hegemony, for example. As Richard Bernstein put it, the French were very much like their comic-book hero Asterix “struggling scrappily against certain limitations of size.”⁵ In 1968, Stanley and Inge Hoffmann traced this paradoxical confluence of attitudes to “de Gaulle writ large”:

[De Gaulle’s] own mixture of narcissism and discipline becomes the blend of often strident French self-assertion and recognition of the need for “modesty.”...

⁴On grandeur and its relationship to de Gaulle and Gaullism: Stanley Hoffmann and Inge Hoffmann, “The Will to Grandeur: De Gaulle as Political Artist,” *Daedalus* 97, no. 3 (July 1, 1968): 829–87, doi:10.2307/20023843; Philip G Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of De Gaulle’s Foreign Policy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); on the history of the concept of grandeur in France: Gildea, *The Past in French History*, chap. 3; on the place of the United States and consumerism in postwar French anxiety: Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*; on the role of technology in reasserting French grandeur: Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, chap. 1; Sara B Pritchard, *Confluence the Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

⁵Richard Bernstein, *Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French* (New York: Plume, 1991), 123.

[T]he realistic awareness of the limits of France's present power heightens the need for self-pride: France's foreign policy today combines a colossal withdrawal from overseas and abandonment of excessive commitments, with a spectacular determination to exploit every possibility of influence.⁶

De Gaulle himself pointed the way back to national *grandeur* while acknowledging the powerful sense of malaise about France's future. France must "marry its epoch," he argued, an epoch of production, investment, technology, and science, or else face "decline," "bitter mediocrity," or even "coloniz[ation]." A consensus that national independence and technological modernization were linked, that only technological and economic strength could prevent another 1940, Michael Bess asserts, emerged out of the experience of the Second World War.⁷ In response to the other great challenge to postwar France, those modernization discourses served their purpose again. Grasser came to similar conclusions as de Gaulle about how a France of "modest dimensions" could still be a great power: "economic richness" and the "importance" of a country's population were the "marks of a great nation." Though de Gaulle may have overstated the risks, apparently the distance separating a smaller, more humble France from a mediocre and subjugated France was narrow indeed. The textbooks of the period agreed that technological and economic capacity would determine the nation's fortunes. Authors devoted considerable space to postwar French society. In these narratives, modernity, inventiveness and productivity became the new marks of French *grandeur*, as the power the country had once exerted politically (and militarily and economically) overseas was reconstituted as economic power in the metropole. Then, in turn, the

⁶Stanley Hoffmann and Inge Hoffmann, "The Will to Grandeur: De Gaulle as Political Artist," *Daedalus* 97, no. 3 (July 1, 1968): 864.

⁷ Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 20–21.

success of French modernization became a reason for France to reassert its influence overseas, especially in the former colonies.

De Gaulle's admonishment to marry the epoch of technological and economic progress echoed his demand that France embrace decolonization's timeliness and inevitability. The concept that decolonization was part of the "tide of history" ("the spirit of the century," de Gaulle called it) was a product of a dominant narrative by which "the history of imperialism and anti-imperialism [was rewritten] so that decolonization was the predetermined endpoint."⁸ After the Second World War, Michael Bess argues, the French approached postwar modernization with the same belief that "in the end they had no alternative." And they moved toward modernization, despite its apparent inevitability, with the same combination of marvel and trepidation. "Scientific and technological progress," the philosopher Raymond Aron put it pointedly,

is cloaked in a kind of fatalism. . . . [T]hose responsible in both the public and private sectors can only reply with the meaningless phrase, "You can't stop progress." Sometimes it seems that societies themselves have less and less mastery over their destiny as they employ technology to increase their mastery over their physical environment.⁹

Such is the nature of "-ization" words like modernization or globalization, Frederick Cooper argues: "[They] emphasiz[e] a process, not necessarily fully realized but ongoing and probably inevitable. [They] name the process by its supposed endpoint."¹⁰ Kristin Ross views modernization language in similar terms. "Capitalist modernization," she

⁸Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 6.

⁹Quoted in Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 23.

¹⁰Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 96.

posits, “presents itself as timeless because it dissolves beginning and end, in the historical sense, into an ongoing, naturalized process.”¹¹

Although narratives of French modernization were teleological, it was still necessary to place France in a history of technological and economic development. French technocrats, for example, went to great lengths to “plac[e] modern accomplishments in direct historical lineage with accepted traditions.”¹² Unsurprisingly, history textbooks attempted the same task, finding various ways—such as positing a lineage of invention, choosing images that showed the beauty of new technologies, and using students’ “own” families to normalize great changes—to establish *the* past of the French present and future. That authors would have established this heritage of French modernity was anything but certain. As Herman Lebovics writes of the nature of heritage, “The past, where heritages are supposed to come from, is so rich and so contested that we must edit it. Which bygone activity, or event, or personage we wish to see today as related to us, and, more important, precisely how we relate to that past depends entirely on who we are *now* and who we *want to be*.”¹³ With few exceptions, textbook authors chose a modernizing heritage for a modern present and future.

Finally, one of the arguments I wish to make is that in the textbook discussions of French modernization one sees echoes of authors’ approaches to France’s history of imperialism and decolonization. The language of imperialism was common in debates about modernization in the period. First, commentators across the political spectrum used the language of colonialism to refer to the threats to France’s sovereignty and status

¹¹Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 10.

¹²Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, 41.

¹³Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, 3.

in the postwar period, as frequent references to “Coca-colonization” make evident. Interestingly, during decolonization commentators and de Gaulle himself had argued that France had to decolonize to avoid being “colonized” by its overseas possessions with their exploding populations. These complementary attitudes may be seen as the product of what Kristin Ross calls “the peculiar contradictions of France” during the 1950s and 1960s: France was “an exploiter/exploited country, dominator/dominated, exploiting colonial populations at the same time that it is dominated by ... American capitalism.”¹⁴ Second, concepts of colonial development (*mise en valeur*) and the civilizing mission reemerged in postwar discourses about the French provinces and the Third World. As Phillip Naylor has claimed “the colonial myth may have been ‘decolonized,’ but not necessarily ‘demythified.’”¹⁵

Postwar Reconstruction and Le Plan

The narrative of a 1960 history textbook ended with General de Gaulle marching into liberated Paris; “his two arms separated in the V, symbol of victory,” he is lauded by the people as “the First French Resister.” It was not unusual for these early textbooks to ignore the postwar years entirely. Yet, Pierre Besseige included a brief “Last Word” addressed directly to the “enfants” of France at the end of the text. Unable to close the story in 1945, he writes that “1945, that is yesterday. What will be the history of tomorrow? What will be the future of your country?” His “last word” attempts to draw out the lessons of French history for the students’ future behavior; he encourages them to

¹⁴Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 7; see also: Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*.

¹⁵Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 52.

take up arms in defense of the country, to conserve the values of liberty, and to ensure goodwill and fraternity for those “in misery.” The last item on his list, however, demonstrates the uncertainty of the early postwar period:

This Fatherland [*Patrie*], look at it: it is very sick. To give it back its health, its prosperity, and its glory, follow the example of your fathers who have shown you the value of work, of conscientious work, of work well done. *Wherever you find yourself, at the school, at the workshop, in the fields, work therefore with all your abilities, work your best.* The future of our country? It is in your hands. It is you who will forge it by work, by fraternity, by the attachment to liberty. And you will render then France stronger and more beautiful.

“By work, by fraternity, by ... liberty”: the author merges the French republican triptych with that of Vichy. He gives no explanation for replacing equality with work. It may, however, speak to the broad political consensus immediately after the Second World War about the need for reconstruction and the suppression of the social question that the consensus implied. One sees here a view of France as a country in need of workers and of producers; as for de Gaulle, a healthy, prosperous, and glorious France will be “forge[d] ... by work.”¹⁶ These were discourses that, at least for a few years, were shared by the left, including the PCF and the CGT. Both organizations spoke of “the battle of production,” which could be won through support for postwar planning and longer working hours, and through avoidance of strikes. These measures would be, as Gabrielle Hecht puts it, “the working class’ patriotic contribution[s] to ending the war and beginning national reconstruction.”¹⁷ As the reconstruction-era posters reprinted in

¹⁶Pierre Besseige and Antoine Lyonnet, *Histoire de France: cours moyen et cours supérieur Ire année* (Paris, 1960), 158.

¹⁷ Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, 133. Also on “the battle of production” and labor militancy in the late 1940s, see Robert Gildea, *France Since 1945* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 99; Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chap. 7.

textbooks as late as the 1990s exhorted, “Let’s roll up our sleeves, it will be better again!”¹⁸

Redoubled efforts to usher France into modernity began immediately after World War II and were connected with postwar reconstruction. As one textbook author put it, after World War II, “France had to face two great problems: the reconstruction of the country and decolonization.”¹⁹ Reconstruction was directed by the newly created General Planning Commission (CGP). As its name suggests, the CGP was responsible for setting national five-year plans with production goals. But unlike the five-year plans of the Soviet Union, the French plans were the result of negotiations between industrial concerns and labor representatives. The CGP’s role was foremost that of a mediator and the production targets were voluntary. In general, the planning structure was successful. At the end of the first five-year plan, the Monnet Plan instituted in 1947, steel and coal production had fallen short of targets, but the rebound from the end of the war was impressive nonetheless. In the 1950s and 1960s, French economic productivity increased by about 5% per year, far outstripping even that of the United States.

There were disappointments with reconstruction in the early postwar period, however. The Monnet Plan rebuilt infrastructure, invested in heavy industry and energy capacity, and mechanized agricultural production. Moreover, planners continued the Provisional Government’s policy of nationalizing strategic industries.²⁰ Wartime shortages continued as the CGP ignored production of consumer durables and even

¹⁸See: Laurence Bastien, *Histoire: une terre, des hommes* (Paris: Magnard écoles, 1991), 152; Jean-Marc Laporte and Daniel Pain, *Histoire de France: CM 2* (Paris: Istra, 1990), 106.

¹⁹Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 144.

²⁰The Provisional Government had nationalized the Renault company in 1944 (largely as a result of collaboration accusations against Louis Renault) and founded Air France in 1945, to cite two prominent examples.

housing. Citizens in Normandy were required to take in homeless families and large contingents of squatters in the still-damaged cities began organizing for the “right to housing.” Into the 1950s, consumer goods remained the preserve of the middle class. With its 1952-1957 plan, the CGP started addressing the issues affecting the average person’s living standards. Perhaps the most obvious effect was the breakneck construction of low-cost, working-class housing—as many as 300,000 units per year. Built on farmland outside Paris, Sarcelles, for example, was one of the first of these new developments and was the largest construction site in France for a decade (1955-1965). The new units improved the housing situation, but were often small and alienating, built with cheap materials on cheap land far from city centers and transportation. There were only seventy stores for more than 20,000 residents in 1962 and observers claimed that many of the first residents acquired a kind of depression that earned the moniker “Sarcellitis.”²¹

De Gaulle viewed economic modernization as central to the French future, as a means to revive French grandeur and to stave off the disaster awaiting a country that failed to “marry its epoch.” After de Gaulle’s return to power, the Fifth Republic maintained the Fourth’s planning approach and, indeed, retained many of the bureaucrats and experts of the Fourth Republic as well. Heavy state involvement in the economy encouraged the further consolidation of corporations and farms. Meanwhile, the deep pockets of the government privileged high-technology industries in which technocrats could make their presence felt, such as electronics, nuclear energy, and aeronautics.

²¹Alice L. Conklin and Sarah Fishman, *France and Its Empire since 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 256–258; On Sarcelles: Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 442–448.

These industries had propaganda value, but high social costs. As industrial firms adopted advanced technology and moved their operations to the provinces, the laboring classes were displaced geographically and by cheaper female and immigrant labor. This weakened the foundations of the traditional working-class parties and the major unions.²² In the quarter-century between 1950 and 1975, the number of farmers in France declined from about a quarter of the working population to less than 10%. Those who remained were seldom the small-holding peasants of times past but rather commercialized industrial farmers and market-oriented specialists. Replacing the declining peasant and working classes was a ballooning middle class, which by 1970 made up 50% of the population.²³

Technological Modernity: “Conquering time,” “Conquering space”

Evidence suggests that the trope of conquest was a consistent feature of the language of development throughout the postwar period. As Sara Pritchard contends in her work on the postwar development of the Rhône River, “Intellectual, political, and technical elites celebrated the conquest of the Rhône’s obstinate nature through science and technology, by male technical experts in the name of the nation.”²⁴ Development was perceived as an explicitly masculine realm of action while the river’s obstinacy recalls myths of backward natives. Authors of postwar textbooks spoke of the conquest

²²On the declining influence of working class parties, in particular the PCF, in the Paris suburbs, see Tyler Stovall, “From Red Belt to Black Belt: Race, Class, and Urban Marginality in Twentieth-Century Paris,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 41, no. 3 (2001): 9–23, doi:10.1353/esp.2010.0178 Stovall, however, points out that the easy narrative in which class-based relations were replaced by race-based relationships in the banlieues is overly simple, that, in fact, race and class were intricately connected both in the era of the “Red Belt” and the “Black Belt.”

²³Conklin and Fishman, *France and Its Empire since 1870*, 288–292.

²⁴Pritchard, *Confluence the Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône*, 59.

of concepts more abstract than the Rhône. School texts throughout the late-twentieth century described the conquest of speed, of space, and of time. To do so, they focused especially on the grand technological projects of postwar period in ways that mirrored narratives of colonial heroism and conquest. One of the earlier texts included a section on “the conquest of speed.” The author, Dupâquier, evoked the heroic adventure and challenge of such conquests. The early combustion engine, he writes, “inspired at once admiration and terror. In 1900, during the Paris-Toulouse automobile race, a champion declared afterwards: ‘I hardly ever use the last gear, except on a flat and only for 3 or 4 kilometers ... over 30 kilometers per hour, the danger begins.’”²⁵ Other texts included a section on the conquest of space, which usually referred specifically to the Cold War space race. But the team of textbook authors led by Simon Bégué thought more broadly about the explosion in the availability motorized transport. For him, this was a truly revolutionary departure from the thousand-year-old use of “human power, animal power, or wind power to provide transport.”²⁶ That a thirty-three hour trip across the Atlantic in 1933 had been reduced to “a little more than two hours” by the Concorde was proof that man had succeeded in “conquering time,” according to Wirth’s 1985 text. (Although, Raymond Aron wondered about the wisdom of states building planes that could “gain three hours in the New York-Paris hop” when “the time saved might be lost in the bottleneck between the airport and the center of town.”²⁷) Likewise, man’s “conquering

²⁵Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l’histoire*, 80; Lacourt’s recounting of aviation history is very similar, including most of the same heroic figures. Of the crossing of the Channel, Lacourt writes “the joy was immense, because one knew that man had conquered the heavens.” See: Gautrot Lacourt, Gozé, and Auger, *Histoire de France*, 118.

²⁶Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 4.

²⁷Quoted in Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 23.

[of] space” was evident both in the exploitation of new environments for resources and in the exploration and telecommunication use of outer space.²⁸

Technological modernization and economic production lent themselves to heroic narratives, a motif common in narratives of colonial conquest. As we have already seen, textbook entries on colonialism emphasized the heroic exploits of great men in subduing strange lands and understanding strange peoples. Theoretically, decolonization was a global process beyond the actions of any individual person, but it cast doubt on the success of the great colonizers of generations past. In narratives of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization, authors placed inventions like air travel, automobiles, and radio-telegraphy into a long trajectory of individual invention, establishing the forerunners of postwar modernity. That trajectory is noticeably male and often disproportionately French. For example, Dupâquier’s discussion of the development of air travel included the Wright brothers’ French predecessor Clément Adler, as well as the crossings of the English Channel and the Mediterranean by Louis Blériot and Roland Garros, respectively. Other pioneers like the Americans Charles Lindbergh or Amelia Earhart were absent.²⁹ It is not surprising that American figures might be sparse in French textbooks, but the question of whether technologies could actually be seen as “French” was left unbroached. Indeed, Marie Curie was one of the few women included by authors with any regularity. As he had in earlier textbooks that ended with the Third Republic, Louis Pasteur dominated narratives of scientific invention due to his rich

²⁸Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 136–137.

²⁹Lindbergh did appear in the 1960s textbook by Lacourt and in Bégué’s and Chaulanges’s offerings in the 1970s, though the French pioneers were far more common. Earhart did not appear in any of the texts I sampled. See: Gautrot Lacourt, Gozé, and Auger, *Histoire de France*, 123; Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 7; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 150.

symbolism. He was a man of thought and learning, as implied by the oft-reprinted portrait by Albert Edelfelt that showed him peering into a vial at his chemist's bench. His work in preventing disease was universally admirable; he was "a benefactor of humanity" while also unmistakably French.³⁰ The litany-of-inventors approach changed the valence of colonial hero narratives. Pasteur, the Curies, and the Lumières embodied all of the radiance of French civilization without the violence of the colonial project or, for that matter, of the atomic bomb.³¹

As Gabrielle Hecht makes clear in her exceptional book on the nuclear energy industry in France, establishing the historical credentials of new technology was vital to the technical experts: "Technologists also attempted to elucidate what was—or should be—specifically French about French technology. Most of these efforts appealed to a sense of history or tradition.... Placing modern accomplishments indirect historical lineage with acceptable traditions would therefore make them demonstrably French."³² It became more difficult for authors to place new technologies in the long trajectory of individual invention once they began treating the postwar period in dedicated chapters. One way in which postwar technological achievements were historicized was through continuity in the *forms* of technology that authors maintained across chapters: high-speed rail fell in line with earlier chapters via sections on steam locomotives and carriages,

³⁰Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1964, 108.

³¹ Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, 141–142. Hecht argues, for example, that "[t]he CGT did not challenge either the concept of grandeur or its link to technological prowess. But it did challenge the manifestation of this link in de Gaulle's *force de frappe*." CGT militants favored non-military uses of atomic energy. In so doing, they often drew on the character of Frédéric Joliot-Curie who, himself a communist and a CGT member, had rejected pressure to build an atomic bomb. What is more, Joliot-Curie's connection to his in-laws, Pierre and Marie Curie, allowed the CGT to appropriate the entire history of nuclear science.

³²*Ibid.*, 41.

while nuclear power continued earlier discussions of electricity, coal, and water power. A second difficulty lay in the fact that more recent technologies—nuclear reactors, high-speed rail systems, and passenger jets—could not be easily associated with single inventors. They were frequently the result of central plans driven by bureaucrats, corporations, industrial concerns, and government ministries. One might imagine that a government would love the chance to cast itself as a hero of French modernity, to partake in the legitimacy and adoration of a Pasteur or a Curie. Yet in the occasional instance that authors referred to government nationalizations, the narratives lacked much of the heroic quality of chapters on individual inventors: “After the war, the state ‘nationalized’ the coal mines,” Marc Vincent wrote, “It augmented the production of oil and ameliorated considerably the living conditions of the miners ... it constructed a number of dams, principally on the Rhône and the Rhine. It even undertook the construction of atomic stations.”³³ Likewise, in the 1980s, Grasser argued that the state “nationalized the large enterprises vital for the country” in order “to assure better control of the economy.”³⁴ Government entities like the CGP are difficult to personify. In their writing, authors often relied on the indefinite pronoun and the passive voice; the great achievements of French modernity seem to spring fully formed from the nation, from the French people themselves. Only individuals are buried in the Pantheon.

The most visible modernization projects were the big projects—the Concorde, the nuclear arms and energy projects, and the *Train à Grand Vitesse* (TGV), for example—undertaken by large firms at the impetus of five-year plans and powerful ministries.

³³ Marc Vincent, Émile Pradel, and Pierre Noël, *Histoire de France: cours moyen* (Paris: Société universitaire d'éditions et de librairie, 1958), 169.

³⁴ Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 137.

These projects showed the extent to which technology in the postwar period was inflected by ideological questions about modernization, the French future, and the role of France in the world, as much as by value-neutral questions about effectiveness or economic cost. A key example was France's nuclear energy infrastructure. Nuclear energy and French independence were tied inextricably together; poor in coal and oil resources, France had relatively abundant fissile material in the southwest. The use of nuclear reactors would provide a degree of energy autarky, while allowing France to acquire expertise in reactor technology (an exportable expertise) and a nuclear strike force with which to guarantee French security. As Gabrielle Hecht has shown, the construction of nuclear reactors was driven by two different "technopolitical regimes" centered on competing, powerful new government bodies. These "technopolitical regimes" functioned at the intersection of technological concerns and political values. The *Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique* (CEA) emphasized the military applications of the nuclear energy program—by selecting reactor designs that would also produce weapons-grade plutonium—and, in general, argued that private consortia should be responsible for nuclear development. The *Électricité de France* (EDF), on the contrary, was more closely tied to prerogatives of the socialist left; it pushed for energy efficiency in reactor designs and hoped to demonstrate that nuclear development could best be achieved through planning and public utilities.³⁵

Nuclear technology was not the only grand project of the postwar period to be influenced by debates over the social dimensions of development, despite claims about the apolitical nature of these projects. For example, the TGV's victory over the competing *Aérotrain* had as much to do with the latter's social implications as its

³⁵Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, chap. 2.

technological feasibility. Vincent Guigueno argues that the *Aérotrain* had the advantage in the 1960s. It was supported by the influential technocrats in the recently formed *Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale* (DATAR) who planned to “reorganize[e] the country around eight densely populated ‘counterweight cities’” to be linked by “a high-speed transport network.”³⁶ The technological modernization symbolized by high-speed transport dovetailed with the political support for decentralization then on the rise. Moreover, traditional rail seemed passé among the utopian technological fantasies of the 1960s: “our cities must no longer be planned around motor engines, but around helicopters which land on the roof terraces of buildings and air-borne shuttles carrying thousands of passengers and landing in public areas.”³⁷ Eventually, however, the French political establishment chose the TGV not only because of the *Aérotrain*’s relative costliness but because of its social dimensions. The *Aérotrain* would have bypassed urban transport networks and catered solely to well-heeled travelers at the expense of *le peuple*.³⁸ Social considerations were less important in other cases. The *Concorde*’s clientele was at least as rarified as that of the *Aérotrain*, but the *Concorde* was supported across the political spectrum. In large part, that success stemmed from the apparent victory of France over the United States in the field of supersonic air travel, which the new plane represented.³⁹

³⁶Vincent Guigueno, “Building a High-Speed Society: France and the *Aérotrain*, 1962–1974,” *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 1 (2008): 26–27, doi:10.1353/tech.2008.0018.

³⁷The statement is by Philippe Lamour, one of the founders of regional and national planning, cited in *ibid.*, n. 10.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 36, 40; On the competition between the TGV and its early competitors, like the *Aérotrain*, see also: Jacob Meunier, *On the Fast Track: French Railway Modernization and the Origins of the TGV, 1944-1983* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).

³⁹On the *Concorde*: Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 24–28.

A certain heroic quality was embodied in the machines themselves. This was particularly evident in the textbook images representing the great projects in transportation, infrastructure, and energy. By far the most common images of advances in transportation were those of new aircraft (first passenger planes, then passenger jets, and finally the supersonic Concorde) and of trains (first electric locomotives and then high-speed rail). The most common motif in these images was that of a lone piece of machinery in open space: aircraft in midair and trains barreling across the countryside (figure 4.1). Authors chose images that portrayed these machines as literal trailblazers. Pictures of earlier aircraft and steam locomotives were common but were usually illustrations or reproductions of grainy, black-and-white photographs, all of which gave them a quaint quality. Newer images, on the other hand, were of better quality and gradually in color; the trains and planes gleamed. Beauty was important, since technologists believed aesthetic sensibility was one of the distinguishing features of a specifically French modernity and culture. For example, Groupe 1985, technologists brought together in 1964 to discuss the future of French modernity, argued that the “Caravelle is both a technological success and an esthetic success ... [the beauty of which] results from lines and materials, not from additional cost.” They also claimed one could find beauty in dams, bridges, electrical towers, and even nuclear reactors.⁴⁰ Indeed, the lone piece of machinery in the middle of open spaces was mirrored in photographs of new infrastructure and new forms of energy production. There was little room for large infrastructure projects the size of airports or nuclear reactors in established areas. The resulting images suggested the conquest of virgin landscapes by modernity.

⁴⁰Quoted in Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, 41.

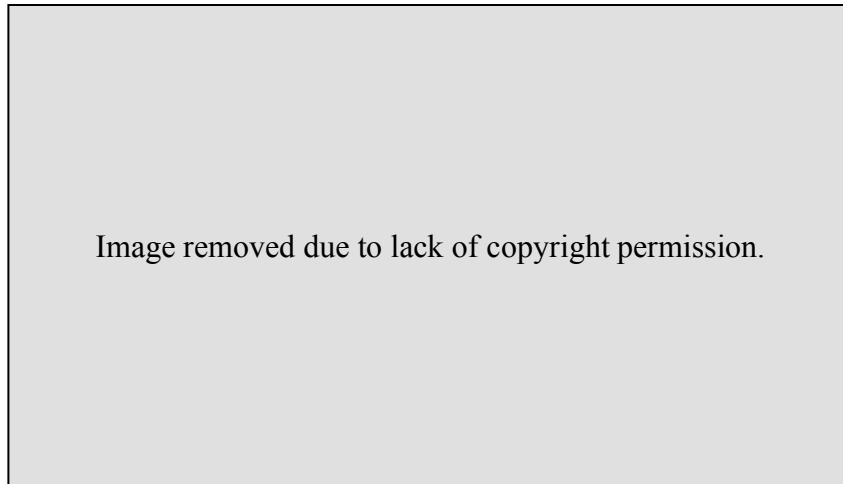


Figure 4.1. Concorde in flight. Photograph by Rapho/Zalewski. Source: Jean-Pierre Drouet, *Du passé vers l'avenir CM: éveil à l'histoire pour le cours moyen 1re et 2e années réunies* (Paris: Magnard, 1981), 152.

Postwar propaganda had called on the workers of France to “roll up [their] sleeves” to rebuild a technological, modern, prosperous France. Surprisingly, the images of technological modernity that appeared in textbooks very seldom showed workers in the act of production. Rather, images show the triumph of metal and machine, not of workers. In most textbooks, workers on the job seem positively quaint: the factory laborers are common in images of the Industrial Revolution. The difference is evident especially as one examines automobile images, a frequent form of production presented in textbooks. Bégué, for instance, includes a photograph of workers on the Citroën assembly line in 1929.⁴¹ But in the many images of *the postwar* Renault line and its automobiles in this sample, seldom were workers visible. The absence of workers is ironic considering that, Kristin Ross argues, the massive Renault factory just outside Paris, at Billancourt, was by turns “the factory of tomorrow” and “the privileged arena for the rise of union militancy in France,” in which “the *métallo* or car worker at

⁴¹Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 39.

Billancourt came to serve as the incarnation of the working class.” Rather, the automobiles appear in gleaming rows on the assembly line floor, in close-up, or in the case of textbooks from the 1980s being assembled by robotic arms.⁴²

Moreover, new mass transportation was significant for the larger number of people it could transport, facilitating circulation, trade, and connection. In their narratives, authors emphasized that transportation allowed for greater connection among people. And yet, people were noticeably absent from all but the rarest images of mass transportation. Even the Orly Airport or the Gare du Nord was typically photographed from the air rather than from within terminals or even from ground level.⁴³ Passengers *are* present in one image of Orly from the 1970s; however, they are in the background standing on the terminal building, apparently gazing (along with the reader) at the large Air France jet in the foreground.⁴⁴ It is size that is important here: great structures of steel and concrete, long fields of metal tracks slicing through the city and stretching into the distance, vast parking lots and runways like an island in the rural outskirts of Paris. In images at least, given the option of emphasizing the democratization of transportation or of presenting the conquest of space and of time, authors generally chose the latter.

⁴²Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 137; Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 106; Workers are just barely visible in the image from Grimal’s text, though they are blurry from their movement and the automobiles themselves are obviously the subject of the image: *Histoire de France*, 1960, 124; Images of automobiles being built robotically can be found in: Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Sivirine, *Histoire*, 1981, 128; Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Sivirine, *Histoire*, 1986, 136; Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 138; On the Billancourt factory’s place as a model of worker militancy and French production, see: Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 15–19.

⁴³See the pair of images of an SNCF station and Orly Airport in Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1964, 122–123.

⁴⁴Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1960, 124.

“It Is the Triumph of ‘Things’”: Postwar Consumption Society

At the beginning of his 1990 chapter on “France in Europe and the World,” Jean Marc Laporte presents a cartoon illustration of a man in a racing uniform driving an open-top racecar (figure 4.2). The car, however, is the Gallic rooster painted in the French national colors, the blue-plumed tail forming the spoiler of the racecar. “Everyone in the race . . .,” the image’s text reads, “to win the international competition, selling is just as important as producing.”⁴⁵ The cartoon represents an important shift in the way French history textbooks explained modernization and its relationship to French grandeur in the postwar period. Prior to this, Fifth Republican textbooks had consistently tied French modernity to productive capacity and, especially, to the production of grand projects. The emphasis on technological advances and production may be a result of the still modest levels of consumption of consumer goods in France throughout the 1960s. The benefits of the consumer revolution of the 1960s had largely been limited to the middle class; the working class achieved those benefits during the 1970s. Two thirds of French households owned a washing machine in 1973 while only ten percent did in 1958. Television ownership had jumped from less than a quarter of French homes in 1960 to almost eighty percent in 1973.⁴⁶ As a result, a shift occurred in the mid-1970s, as authors began to devote similar attention to “consumption society” as they had to production. The consumption society both drew on and subverted textbooks’ conventional approaches to technological modernity. Now, textbook authors saw consumer products

⁴⁵Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 116.

⁴⁶Figures on appliance ownership from Conklin and Fishman, *France and Its Empire since 1870*, 320.

as emblematic of a new social order based, as the cartoon of the Gallic-Coq racecar suggested, on “selling” in addition to “producing.”

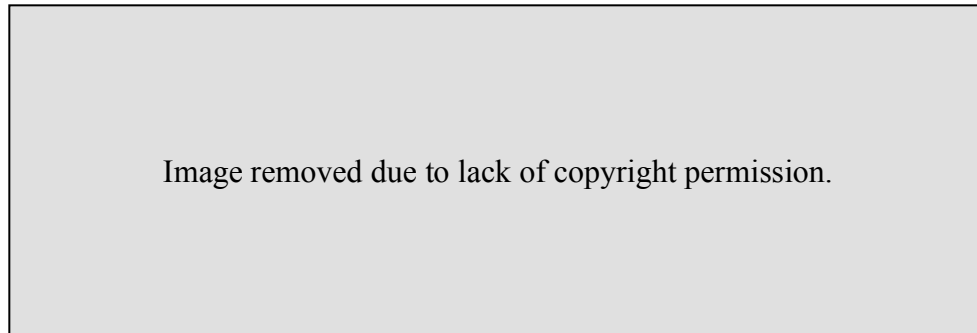


Figure 4.2. “Everyone in the Race.” Photograph from Musée de la Publicité, Paris. Source: Jean-Marc Laporte and Daniel Pain, *Histoire de France: CM2* (Paris : Istra, 1990), 116.

At first, authors considered consumer durables as emblematic of productive capacity, part of a long narrative of technological development stretching back to the Industrial Revolution and the turn of the twentieth century. Television, for example, “marked an enormous progress over the T.S.F. [radio telegraph], spreading rapidly.” And, “all the cities establishing stores selling ‘household electric’ appliances” showed how domestic work “is facilitated by the use of electricity.”⁴⁷ Thus, consumer durables were often stand-ins for French production capacity and technological progress, in these cases in energy and communications. Chaulanges’s 1971 textbook, for example, dismisses the spread of television in a brief sentence: “Television has become as widespread today as the radio was thirty years ago.”⁴⁸ Likewise, earlier chapters mention simply that “automobiles and motorcycles produced by assembly line” are available to people who are “not very wealthy” and that, while “your great-grandmother” might have

⁴⁷Vincent, Pradel, and Noël, *Histoire de France*, 169.

⁴⁸Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 156.

possessed a gas stove or an electric iron, “washing machines and frigidaires” were only available “in truly current fashion” after 1945.”⁴⁹ In the textbooks of the 1960s and early-1970s, “consumption” was more likely to refer to energy usage or changing diets due to market-oriented agriculture.⁵⁰ By the 1980s, textbooks regularly argued that the French appetite for consumer durables was a central fact of the postwar period.

“Extraordinary Journeys,” a 1980 advertisement for the Renault 5, featured prominently in Bastien’s 1991 chapter on “Our Times” (figure 4.3). The phrase “extraordinary journeys” is followed by a period, the matter-of-factness of which stands in sharp contrast to the surreal size of the pale-colored hatchback in the foreground. The car, its doors and hatchback trunk open wide, sits parked on an airport runway, dwarfing the airport control tower in the background. Behind the car, a tiny jet in takeoff flies out of frame to the left. In front of the giant vehicle, two lines of Lilliputian passengers stand waiting to scale the mobile staircases into the driver’s and rear doors. At the rear, tiny airport workers use a miniature conveyor truck to load the trunk with the passengers’ minuscule bags. Bastien’s inclusion of the Renault “Extraordinary Journeys” advertisement in his text speaks to the increasing importance of “consumption society” in the textbooks of the postcolonial period. Even his use of advertisements as illustration, which was rare in the textbooks until the 1980s, highlights the importance of advertising in students’ visual worlds and apparently signals a belief in the need to cultivate media literacy.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., 146, 150.

⁵⁰Vincent, Pradel, and Noël, *Histoire de France*, 169; Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 37; Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 145, 158.

⁵¹Bastien, *Histoire*, 151. On the history of the Renault 5, including the “Extraordinary Voyages” advertisement, see “Renault Classic, Les Cahiers Passion, Renault 5—40 Ans,”

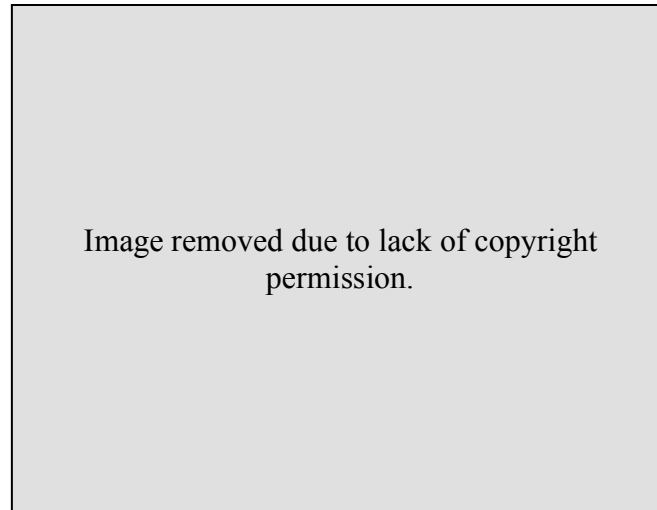


Figure 4.3. “Extraordinary Journeys,” advertisement for the Renault 5. Photograph from Musée de la publicité. Source: Laurence Bastien, *Histoire: Une terre, des hommes* (Paris: Magnard écoles, 1991), 151.

The imaginative advertisement was part of a series produced that year that played on this theme of disproportionality. A similar version featuring the huge car demonstrated the surprising spaciousness of the little four-door’s interior, a spaciousness effected by the new “Magic Console” that sloped away from the driver and the larger-than-expected trunk. In other versions, however, the Renault 5 was portrayed as exceptionally small. The car’s tiny size means speed and maneuverability in the advertisement “The Little Devil” as it speeds along the curb and past a dog out for a walk. “In the Countries of the Gourmands” played on the concerns of a France (and indeed a world) recently rocked by oil shocks: a tiny red Renault rises just above the curb, while a pair of hands uses a gas pump to put a single drop of gasoline into the car.⁵²

<http://fr.renaultclassic.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Renault-5-40-ans-Renault-5-40-years.pdf>, Accessed: August, 30, 2013.

⁵² For a visual history of Renault advertising, including the Lilliputian series, see: <http://www.renault-5.net/publicite.htm>, Accessed: August 30, 2013.

Bastien's choice of this Renault advertisement both built on the imagery that accompanied earlier narratives of technological modernization and unsettled that imagery in interesting ways. Images that showcased new modes of transport were typical in earlier textbooks. The authors of texts had usually preferred forms of mass transportation—high-speed or electric trains, aircraft, ocean-liners—that represented the success of large-scale, often-nationalized projects. The scale of those achievements was represented in the image itself; aircraft, trains, and ships dominated the center of the frame while facilities like airports and train stations were shot from above, emphasizing their immense scale. Here, the scale of the Renault dwarfs the tiny airport behind it. The explosion in scale of the tiny Renault in this image—and furthermore the juxtaposition of gargantuan and Lilliputian images of the car in the broader advertising campaign—is reminiscent of a vision of postcolonial France as territorially small, politically constrained, but hugely influential. That vision was made possible by modernity.

Moreover, the Renault advertisement, with its airport stair-cars and lines of passengers, refashioned the tiny hatchback *as* a form of mass transportation. Indeed, as the tiny jet in the distance leaves the frame, it seems to be replaced as form of transportation and as technical achievement by the modest hatchback in the foreground. The inclusion of passengers “boarding” the Renault is itself a strong departure from previous images of mass transportation in postwar textbooks, which seldom portrayed those who used trains or planes. These latter were to represent the latest stage in a long continuum of French inventiveness, productive competitiveness, and design elegance. Renault inverted the terms of mass transportation: once a vehicle that transported a mass of individuals, now a vehicle owned by individual members of the masses.

The automobile was central to the modern consumer society. Automobiles were, on the one hand, a product of the mass production techniques and economies of scale on which the consumer economy functioned, and thus were a synecdoche of consumer society itself. Just prior to the Renault advertisement, Bastien argued that “the automobile industry” had “become a ‘health indicator’ of the economy in its entirety.” Nonetheless, as the captions below the image suggested, the widespread ownership of automobiles was “a fragile” expansion given the “many oil crises.”⁵³ Furthermore, automobiles, like many of the domestic consumer durables synonymous with the period, were purchased on credit. On the other hand, cars were necessary to the functioning of the consumer society. As Bégué argued in the earliest description of “consumer society” in the sample, the consolidation of consumer activities into department stores and “hypermarkets” rested in part on “the convenience of its own parking, the advantage of bringing together in one place all the products of common usage; and their prices are most often advantageous. How could a customer resist that? He is a ‘consumer,’ the citizen of the ‘consumption society’.”⁵⁴ As Kristin Ross contends, “Fordist consumption, as Michael Aglietta points out ... is governed by two commodities: ‘the *standardized housing* that is the privileged site of individual consumption; and the *automobile* as the means of transport compatible with the separation of home and workplace.”⁵⁵

The title “extraordinary journeys” and the image of travelers boarding the Renault like an airplane suggest the importance of the leisure industry in the postwar period. Reflective of this social value, vacation was an important part of textbook narratives,

⁵³Bastien, *Histoire*, 151.

⁵⁴Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 23.

⁵⁵Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 4–5.

especially in the 1980s and 1990s. A photograph of “The West Autoroute for a weekend departure,” in which the six-lane highway from Paris to Caen is packed with vehicles in one direction, made clear that leisure culture depended on the availability of automobiles.⁵⁶ More broadly, holidays represented, first, improved living standards, middle-class affluence, and longer paid-vacations guaranteed by social legislation.⁵⁷ Second, the leisure industry was an expression of the new consumer society. Club Med, for instance, was designed as an “antidote to civilization” in which isolated modern consumers could rediscover sociability. Eventually, however, Club Med became a commodified product for the affluent. Moreover, given their tropical locations, Club Med exploited economic relations between the global North and South and gave vacationers the chance to experience a bit of colonial exoticism after decolonization.⁵⁸

Textbook writer Jacques Grasser felt that tourism was more than an “appreciable economic resource” with visitors, hotels, camp grounds, and restaurants. European peace itself was at stake: “In our epoch, tourist trips offer the possibility of knowing and understanding other countries and their inhabitants. Today, the European frontiers are crossed easily. The learning of foreign languages by all *collège* (middle-school) students facilitates comprehension among peoples.” For Grasser, tourism was one of the ways in which a Europe “ravaged by wars” could “put an end to these dramatic rivalries” and by which “Europeans could try to know each other better.”⁵⁹

⁵⁶In addition to the image of the autoroute, Drouet also included a half-page photograph of a beach scene in the Midi: *Histoire*, 134; Another example of representations of leisure is an image of a large beachfront tourist resort in Wirth, *Le livre d'histoire*, 1985, 139.

⁵⁷Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 146.

⁵⁸Conklin and Fishman, *France and Its Empire since 1870*, 293–294.

⁵⁹Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 132.

Pierre's Family Tree: Familiarizing Modern Marvels

Cours Moyens textbooks were destined for very young children. Such students would likely not remember a time in which their current technological society did not exist. Authors, therefore, had to perform an unusual double task, one that would seem more difficult because of the youth of their readers. First, they had to unsettle students' familiarity with contemporary modernity so that they might recognize the remarkably changed world in which they lived, and thus appreciate France for the dynamic, inventive, future-oriented country that it was. Second, those authors had to historicize those changes and place modernity within a French lineage. In other words, authors had to show that society had become modern without losing what it meant to be French, or better still that modern *was* French. As Gabrielle Hecht has argued about the nuclear industry, "France's postwar industrial achievements thus fitted into the nation's historical teleology, nuclear technology its apotheosis."⁶⁰ We have already seen one way in which authors accomplished this goal: by placing postwar inventions within a trajectory of prior inventions and inventors. Some authors went further, however, placing the "marvels" of modern technology within the students' own family lineage.

In these family-based narratives, textbook authors often changed tone, speaking directly to students in the second person. Chapters combined the unfamiliar and the traditional by referencing the remarkable changes seen by "your great-grandfather" or "your grandfather." Alluding to male family members was a popular trope in French textbooks. Ernest Lavisse, "the nation's teacher," had begun the 1957 version of his textbook for *cours élémentaire* students with an image of an old man surrounded by

⁶⁰Hecht, *The Radiance of France*, 43.

young children and a short notice that “the teaching of history to the little ones should be a succession of stories like those told by grandfathers to their grandchildren.”⁶¹ In keeping with a historical tradition focused on the deeds of “great men,” the family members named were almost always men. “If you told your grandfather at your age that he would soon see airplanes,” Bessiege wrote, “he would not believe you. . . . Now air travel seems ‘natural,’ going to the airport is like going to the train station.”⁶² Lacourt’s section entitled “Your great-grandfather saw more progress in his life than all your ancestors put together” is emblematic of this trend. The entry is rich, fanciful, and informal. The reader’s great-grandfather “marveled at the first telephone, the first electric lamp,” “amused himself with the first phonographs . . . and with the first cinema,” and “he went, who knows? to the Eiffel Tower constructed for the exposition of 1889; where rightly, he took the first metro, to visit the exposition of 1900, rich in sensational novelties [*sic*].”⁶³ This approach was used throughout the period. Chaulanges, who considered the industrial developments of the turn of the century in a separate chapter, notes that “many other discoveries marveled your great-grandparents.”⁶⁴

Pierre Wirth’s 1985 text was the most robust expression of this trend. As did many other authors, Wirth ended his textbook with a page reviewing the content of the text, in this case titled “a troubled twentieth century . . . lived history.” Wirth used the family motif to recap the material of the previous century but, unlike other authors, Wirth

⁶¹Lavisse, *Histoire de France*; The term “the nation’s teacher” comes from Pierre Nora’s *Realms of Memory*, vol. 2. Traditions, chap. 5.

⁶²Besseige and Lyonnet, *Histoire de France*, 144.

⁶³Jeanne Gautrot Lacourt, Edmond Gozé, and Raoul Auger, *Histoire de France: cours moyen et classes de 8e et 7e* (Paris, France: Ed. Bourrelier, 1960), 118–119. Lacourt continues the theme in his next chapter entitled “Your grandfather saw many new inventions,” 120–121.

⁶⁴Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 143.

constructed it as a series of first-person narratives “told” to the authors in 1980 by ten-year old Pierre and his male relatives. Pierre and his Papa Jean-Claude (thirty-five years old), his Papy Henri (sixty years old), and his Pépé Michel (eighty-five years old) all describe their youth, beginning when they were ten years old. The attempt to normalize the past through Pierre’s family seems evident in the titles that Wirth gives to the characters of this narrative, relying on informal words for family relationships, like “Papa,” “Papy,” and “Pépé” rather than the more formal titles of “Père,” “Grand-Père,” “Arrière Grand-Père.” One notes that Pierre’s narrative begins with technological progress and overwhelmingly positive language to describe the modernity of consumer France. He has “electronic games, a pocket calculator, and father [has] a new car; in the house, there is every comfort.” Furthermore, while Pierre does describe some of the negative aspects of contemporary France: “life is expensive ... factories are closing ... an atomic war could easily break out,” for example, he learns these facts by what his “father and mother say” or “when they let [him] look at the newspaper.” Pierre’s immediate experience of contemporary France is comfortable, a comfort brought by modern consumer society and technology.

Following the narratives back through Pierre’s family tree clarifies the trajectory of twentieth-century France. The overarching narrative is one of social and geographic mobility. Pierre’s great-grandfather, Pépé Michel, describes a childhood that is decidedly lower-class and rural. He went to school at Pierre’s age “but only in the winter” when he did not have to watch cows for a local farmer. His family’s neighbors occasionally took him to the nearest village in their cart, but “this ‘belle-époque’ was for us an epoch of misery.” He worked constructing a railroad at eleven years old, until he got a job in a

local coal mine that kept him out of the First World War until 1916. Pierre's grandfather grew up in this mining town, characterized by periodic strikes, where he "did [his] homework by oil lamp, in a house without comfort." He moved into the middle class by finishing primary school, a task facilitated by acquiring a bicycle.⁶⁵ Pierre's father, Papa Jean-Claude, on the other hand, was born in 1945 and grew up the child of teachers, who eventually took him to "liv[e] in an all white house, in Sfax, in Tunisia, where father and mother had become overseas teachers." He "went to middle school with young Tunisians" and was personally troubled by the war in neighboring Algeria. Pierre's father recalled the growing consumer and tourist culture of the immediate postwar period even in Algeria. "But we were happy," he wrote, "because there was the beach, the port and long drives by car to the southern oasis." Indeed, for the father's family, consumer durables had become disposable, replaceable, and everyday: "Papa had replaced the old [Peugeot] 201 bought in France with a [Renault] Frégate; there was a radio set in the house; and we took a 'Breguet Deux-ponts' [plane] when we returned to France."⁶⁶ In these narratives, social mobility is both facilitated and represented by technology. And,

⁶⁵ Though the text is not specific on this point, given the supposed timeframe, "finishing primary school" most likely referred not to "primary school" as it is used today in France—roughly equivalent to the U.S. appellation "elementary school"—but rather to the primary school system at prior to reforms of 1959. Prior to the creation of a single education system, "primary school" referred to a system that existed alongside the secondary school system; the primary system was essentially the system for the working class, whereas the secondary system was the system for the middle and upper classes, and which led to the baccalaureat exam and higher education. Therefore, finishing primary school at the time, may have meant receiving education well into the teenage years. It is also unclear from the wording whether he *only* finished primary school. Given that, according to the narrative, Pierre's grandfather eventually became a teacher, we can probably assume that he passed a school-leaving exam and attended a teacher training college.

⁶⁶ The Peugeot 201 was produced for much of the 1930s. It was the first Peugeot automobile produced in volume. The Renault Frégate was a luxury model automobile produced during the 1950s, after the company had been nationalized, to cater to the growing middle class. Sales were relatively weak and eventually outpaced by offerings from Citroën and Peugeot. The Breguet Deux-ponts was a double-decker transport plane employed primarily during the 1950s and 1960s. The propeller-powered aircraft sat about one-hundred passengers on two levels for medium-range flights.

as in textbook chapters in general, two of the major categories of technology are transportation and communications. In many ways, the period in which Pierre lives (and less so the period in which his father lived) seem to represent a culmination of technological modernization. Pierre possesses technology of his own—electronic games and a calculator—while the consumer technology that characterized his father’s childhood belonged to his parents or the family.⁶⁷

Oil Shocks, Gaspillage and Porte-à-faux: The “Penalty of modern progress”

In the 1960s, the mood of most textbook entries on technological modernization was one of breathless admiration. Authors made little distinction between technological progress and progress in general. For the most part, they expressed confidence in the possibility of engineering not only better aircraft and energy facilities, but an improved social world as well. Besseige titled his chapter on the changes since the end of the 19th century “The Marvels of Science[,] Social Transformations” and the two went hand in hand. Alongside an image of a modern, combustion-powered, tilling machine, he spoke in the second person directly to the students: “If you bring together this drawing with those you were shown of the swing-plows or the primitive plows of our distant ancestors, you will realize what is meant by the word: progress.” “You live in an epoch of amazing progress,” he summed up, “and this *progress, we owe to science.*”⁶⁸ “Since the beginning of the century, progress has accelerated,” Dupâquier similarly argued, “people live better than before.” That “education is no longer reserved for an elite” is evidence of the social

⁶⁷Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 143.

⁶⁸Besseige and Lyonnet, *Histoire de France*, 143–144.

face of that progress.⁶⁹ The sense that progress was “accelerating” was a popular one among authors. The transformation of life in France after 1870—due to “the progress of science and its applications in industry”—had occurred “more quickly even than in the first part of the [nineteenth] century.”⁷⁰ The speed of progress (and the inventions by which progress was proved) thus appeared as part of the teleology of modernization, evidence that France was a modern country and that it had “marr[ied] its epoch.”

Though textbook authors throughout the period tended to view the postwar period as a period of “progress,” with all the positive connotations the word implied, as the decades wore on they began to consider the negative ramifications of France’s breakneck modernization with increasing frequency. The result was that, while modernity was by and large accepted uncritically in the 1960s, by the 1980s authors regularly held modern life’s positive and negative results in an uneasy tension. It is this tension, this “ambivalence” of competing desires that was responsible for turning France into what Michael Bess has termed “a light-green society.” France, he argues, is “a society caught between the lure of technology, progress, and abundance on the one hand, and, on the other, the gnawing fear of losing contact with the natural world, of drifting insensibly out of touch with its most cherished heritage and traditions ... a society that has stubbornly wanted to have it both ways—traditional *and* modern, green *and* mass-consumerist—at the same time.”⁷¹ We have seen already the ways in which school texts embraced the telos of modernity as a way to reassert French grandeur and deal with the malaise of a postwar, postcolonial France of “modest dimensions.” Perhaps ironically, those methods

⁶⁹Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l’histoire*, 93.

⁷⁰Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1960, 113.

⁷¹Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 4.

and narratives were often traditional and (at times) positively colonial in form. But, now I wish to turn briefly to the other side of Bess's equation: How did malaise erupt in response to modern life itself? In other terms, what were the costs of modernization or what were, as one author put it, the "penalt[ies] of modern progress"?⁷²

The earliest anxieties authors raised about modernity concerned nuclear technology. Dupâquier, whose 1966 textbook was ahead of its time in portraying contemporary France as a "civilization full of contradictions," was among the first textbooks to express the fear that "the discoveries of thinkers are often diverted from their purpose: humanity is now menaced with total destruction by atomic weapons." The dual purposes of the atom are portrayed starkly in a pair of photographs, one of an atomic explosion and the other of the recently-built atomic energy facility at Chinon. The first "burned 100,000 people and marked 100,000 others for life," while the other will provide "perhaps unlimited energy in some dozens of years."⁷³ Still, in 1971, Chaulanges made a distinction between the apparently safe nuclear industry and the "ever more terrifying bombs that one hopes never to see used" wielded by imperfect people.⁷⁴ Later in the decade, Bégué went further than most, citing the larger environmental dangers of nuclear energy. While he predicted that the French nuclear program, "in the year 2000, will produce 80% of electricity from uranium," the future is not so clear because "this program arouses strong opposition on account of the dangers to which we could all be exposed." He mentioned explicitly "radioactive contamination, warming the waters of the rivers and the sea ... (which kills the fish), the disposal of radioactive waste." Yes,

⁷²Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Images et récits d'histoire de France (1958)*, 158.

⁷³Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire*, 92–93.

⁷⁴Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 155.

Bégué addressed the environmental dangers of nuclear technology, but one also notices the apparently greater danger: that fear for the environment will create opposition to the nuclear program and jeopardize future energy production. Thus, a common feature of textbooks of this period was that their concerns about nuclear technology were regarding negative impacts on human populations rather than the environment as a whole.⁷⁵

Chaulanges's long section on "the penalty of modern progress" devoted an entire page to the adverse effects of technological modernity. On the one hand, it was much more critical than earlier textbooks and, on the other, it still failed to articulate a concept of "environmentalism." Indeed, the chapter appears promising, concluding with a long quotation from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The quotation argues that "we are in the age of poisons," all of which affect "the soil, the water, the animals and the wild plants ... vegetables and fruits in particular." And yet, in the end, Carson's appraisal of the human impacts concerns Chaulanges most: "The first person to come along can purchase on every street corner substances much more dangerous than those for which a pharmacist requires a prescription."⁷⁶

In the 1980s, however, authors began to formulate more capacious concepts of environment by seeing nature, in and of itself, as a feature worthy of protection. Drouet's texts stand out in this regard. His final chapter on France's future describes the "important problems" that "progress sometimes causes." Among those problems are that "nature is retreating, replaced by houses and roads. It is necessary to see to protecting balance in our lived environment." Likewise, "pollution" caused by "factories, automobiles, [and] the inconsiderateness of some people is bringing about a degradation

⁷⁵Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 47.

⁷⁶Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 158.

of the natural environment.” To address these issues he recommends the creation of national and regional parks, the use of renewable resources, and “reflection on the consumption of energy and on waste.”⁷⁷ A chapter by Grasser also claims that “the unsettling pollution of nature has become a major preoccupation” and declares the need to “economize energy.” And yet, as had Drouet, Grasser retains earlier arguments that modern technology and exploitation of nature might threaten people’s lived environment. Below a large picture of a sea expedition by the explorer and environmentalist Jacques Cousteau, the author places a quotation from a work called “Socialization of Nature” that asks whether, by becoming “technically masters of earthly, aerial, and undersea space,” people have gained “happiness, security, and liberty.”⁷⁸ In sum, though the concern for the impact of environmental change on humans themselves continued, authors in the 1980s seemed increasingly concerned with the idea of preserving “nature” as an autonomous space. Authors coupled concern for the human environment and the natural environment into a need “to protect *la terre et les terriens* [the earth and the earthlings].”⁷⁹

The more critical stance toward the technological and economic changes of the previous decades seems to have been driven by the economic crises and energy shortages of the late-1970s. For Bégué, however, the solution to “an always more disturbing situation” posed by fuel shortages lay not in the rejection of technology but in more considerate implementation. The solutions echo the utopian technologies common in the era. “People are seriously studying the possible employment of sailboats to economize

⁷⁷Drouet, *Du passé vers l’avenir CM*, 157.

⁷⁸Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 148–149.

⁷⁹Bastien, *Histoire*, 158.

fuel!” he wrote, while radio would allow ocean-going vessels to “utilize the most favorable meteorological conditions.” “In cities, on the contrary,” he claims “innovators propose revolutionary means of transport, like the *aérotrain* or the *urbaplane*, the one fixed to the ground by a single rail, the other suspended in the air on a raised beam.”⁸⁰

These society-wrenching moments called into question many of the articles of faith of modernization and consumption society, namely that unlimited growth was possible and that modernization would erase social inequalities. According to one text, after the eight-fold increase in energy prices led to inflation, the French received wage increases “to maintain the standard of living.” Earlier texts had lauded booming standards of living as a sign that France was leaving the privations of the postwar period, but now state intervention was needed to *maintain* living standards. According to the text, the higher wages had unintended consequences that compounded the damage: corporations merged into multinationals, factories automated their labor with robots and laid off workers.⁸¹ The idea was put succinctly in a cartoon in Laporte’s 1990 chapter on the Third Industrial Revolution: as two large, anthropomorphic robots look down at a worker in overalls, one robot asks the other “but what are we going to do with him?”⁸² While technology had previously been praised for delivering workers from the most difficult tasks of the factory and the farm—freeing the worker and his or her family for

⁸⁰Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 13. Many of these utopian technologies epitomize the concern for natural resource use and sensible technological innovation of the “Small is Beautiful” movement, even though the textbooks at this level certainly did not mention the movement explicitly: E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).

⁸¹Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 148.

⁸²Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 113.

leisure, for education, and for middle-class work—automated manufacturing and international capitalism had also left unemployment in their wake.

As a result, by the 1980s many authors had apparently concluded that despite the (occasionally troubling) uniformity created by modern media and consumption habits, social inequality would continue. Hinnewinkel’s texts from 1981 and 1986 foregrounded the continued presence of “poor habitats in the Paris region,” where families still “live in miserable lodging,” as well as highlighted the differences between the monthly wages and employment rates of men and women. Despite the improvement in living standards from 1949 to 1975, she concludes, “Sadly, all the French did not benefit in the same fashion from economic growth,” a situation made worse by “very significant unemployment” since 1973.⁸³ The images and text are all the more striking when read against the breathless praise of the Paris region in the textbooks of the 1960s. Bonifacio, for instance, provided a picture of a modernist, gleaming “new quarter in the Parisian *banlieue*,” complete with green spaces and a playground where children play on a slide. It is a thoroughly modern place, since one might find “a television installed in the living-room of an apartment in a modern house.”⁸⁴ Likewise, Bégué had juxtaposed images of Sarcelles at the turn of the century, when “one harvested garden peas in the fields ... north of Paris,” with the current “concrete towers of Sarcelles” that “rise there where the vegetables that nourished Parisians used to grow” and where “the grandchildren of former farmers have dissolved into the population of Paris or its *banlieue*.”⁸⁵ Hinnewinkel’s 1986 version replaced its picture of the “miserable lodgings” still existing

⁸³Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Sivrine, *Histoire*, 1981, 135.

⁸⁴Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1964, 120–121.

⁸⁵Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 100.

in the Paris region with an image of one of *Les Restaurants du Coeur*, the newly founded charity providing hot meals to “the new poor” that resulted from unemployment.⁸⁶

Likewise, other authors devoted image space to employment agencies and, in one case, to a CFDT protest by Renault workers against layoffs.⁸⁷ The critical tone taken in this period is one expression of the more critical approach that also led to the “mature discourses” of decolonization discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, discourses that came into circulation at about the same time.

In some ways, modern capitalism and consumer society seemed to toss people aside. That tendency threw into doubt the belief in unlimited growth that underpinned postwar modernization and mirrored the criticisms raised by Grasser’s chapter on the consumption society. He argued that the consumption society rests on uncertain foundations, namely credit, and is wasteful: “Many pieces of merchandise, sometimes barely used, are thrown away prematurely as old-fashioned [*démodées*]. That is the mess of the ‘consumption society.’” A photograph of a scrapyard—“the car cemetery”—where the cars are “used generally for a dozen years” stands in sharp contrast to lines of gleaming Renault 4CVs on the assembly line in a previous chapter.⁸⁸ The textbook’s alternate version of the chapter shows the destruction of subsidized food on the side of a road despite “the reign of famine in the world.”⁸⁹ A society where it was as necessary to sell as to produce, evidently, encouraged and required wastage (*gaspillage*).

⁸⁶Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Sivrine, *Histoire*, 1986, 135; Les restaurants du coeur featured as well in Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 102.

⁸⁷Drouet, *Du passé vers l’avenir CM*, 156; Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 102, 104.

⁸⁸Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 137, 144.

⁸⁹As discussed in the previous chapter of the dissertation, Grasser’s textbook occasionally featured multiple chapters on the same unit from which teachers could choose. His chapter on “The Consumption Society” was one of those with two versions. *Ibid.*, 147.

Bastien, in a chapter on “Artists, witnesses to their times,” devotes a large image and paragraph to Jacques Tati’s cinematic Hulot character and especially to the 1958 comedic film *Mon Oncle*, which he claims is “entirely founded on observation of current society.” In the film, Madame Arpel, the housewife of an industrial manager, shows off her ultra-modern home to her guests. Showing them her kitchen, full of gadgets dedicated to even the simplest tasks, she comments on the kitchen’s (and by extension the home’s) functionality with the oft-repeated phrase “everything communicates.” As Kristin Ross aptly notes, however, “The joke, of course, is that communication is exactly what is lacking in this sterile, precise, fenced-in suburban home where parents relate to their sullen, silent child in a series of compulsive directives about hygiene.”⁹⁰ Beyond Ross’s observations, moreover, what sticks out in Tati’s film is the noise—the noise of modernity. The noise is made more obvious by the sparseness of the film’s score, the long gaps in dialogue, and the quietness with which Tati’s comedic character Monsieur Hulot speaks. The buzzing of the kitchen gadgets drowns out conversations between Monsieur and Madame Arpel; the garish fish-shaped fountain in their garden, which is turned on only for socially acceptable guests, drones on incessantly.⁹¹ The frequency with which textbook authors in the postcolonial period commented on the noise of modern technology is striking and recalls similar discourses about ambient noise and its effects on mental and physical health from as early as the *fin de siècle*.⁹² Simon Bégue’s chapter “on the conquest of space: modes of transport” was one of many to describe the loss of quiet. He marvels at the “*Concorde* [that] links Paris to Rio de Janeiro in 7 hours

⁹⁰Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, 105.

⁹¹Jacques Tati, *Mon Oncle* (Criterion, 2004).

⁹²Eugen Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1986), 5–6.

in lieu of the 13 hours of a classic aircraft; in 1980, a rapid train will link Paris to Lyon in less than two hours” but exclaims “what noise! what congestion! what devastated countryside!”⁹³ Authors raised other fears about the effects of modernity on peoples’ lived environments. If authors were slow to demonstrate concern about environmental pollution, they were surprisingly quick to decry the incessant hum that degraded their lived environment.

According to Bastien, Hulot has comedic and critical power because, like Charlie Chaplin’s “Tramp,” he “is perpetually in an awkward position [*porte-à-faux*] in relation to his surroundings.”⁹⁴ “Monsieur Hulot is a fringe member [*un marginal*] of society,” the author claims. Bastien hints at an underlying sense of malaise about the compatibility of French society and modern consumption, as embodied in Mme. Arpel’s “modern house, where everything is functional, automatic, and crammed with gadgets.”⁹⁵ Many other authors seemed by turns fascinated and troubled by the costs of modernity, especially its artificiality and conformity: “What to say about fruits and vegetables forced and ‘treated’ by chemistry, the flesh of animals full of vaccines and fattened at an abnormal speed by means of all sorts of artificial products.”⁹⁶ For Grasser, “The rhythm of modern life has many drawbacks,” such as the monotony of clerical work. While authors claimed that mass transportation drew people together it could also lead to

⁹³Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 13.

⁹⁴Bastien only compares Hulot to the Tramp, though the comparison could similarly be made to Chaplin’s roles in his other films, such as the factory worker in Charles Chaplin, *Modern Times* (*The Criterion Collection*) [*Blu-Ray*] (Criterion Collection, 2010) and the Jewish barber in Charlie Chaplin, *The Great Dictator* (*The Criterion Collection*) [*Blu-Ray*] (Criterion Collection, 2011).

⁹⁵Bastien, *Histoire*, 157.

⁹⁶Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 158.

isolation as families spent hours commuting.⁹⁷ Finally, most textbooks generally argued that mass communications were unifying social forces. Telephones “permitted families separated by modern life to maintain links”⁹⁸ while television “put the entire world at everyone’s door” when “everyday, and often at the same moment, thousands of families ... watch television.”⁹⁹ But others worried that television could be too easily exploited for propaganda purposes or that TV did not permit viewers to judge or reflect on what they had seen, only to “absorb everything gluttonously.”¹⁰⁰ In the end, Bastien seems sympathetic to Tati’s character, who “brings a little dream and unexpectedness into this universe where everything is expected and organized.”¹⁰¹ Far from being demeaned as a holdout to modernity, as backward or retrograde, Tati’s M. Hulot appears as a heroic answer to an implicit question: what has France lost in the pursuit of modernity?

“La Corrèze avant le Zambèze”: French Development in the Provinces and the Third World

What you did in Africa, can you come back and do it in France?

Andre Malraux, minister for cultural affairs, to Émile Biasini¹⁰²

So at thirty-five I found myself plunged for the first time in the life of the métropole, with serious responsibilities in a very *parisien* universe, and the charge of decentralizing the modalities of cultural life. First I had to do some learning. For that, I applied the good old method I had learned in the bush: the tour of inspection, making contacts, holding palavers. That is, I did what I knew how to do. I saddled up my camels and rode off to discover France.

Émile Biasini, director of theater, music and cultural action¹⁰³

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Wirth, *Le livre d'histoire*, 1985, 139.

⁹⁹Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 144.

¹⁰⁰Dupâquier and Canac, *Couleurs de l'histoire*, 93; Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 146.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Quoted in Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, 61.

In a series of articles in 1956, the influential journalist at *Paris-Match*, Raymond Cartier, formulated a pragmatic, conservative justification for decolonization. The ideology, which became known as *Cartièrisme*, was nicely summed up in the formula “la Corrèze avant le Zambèze [the Corrèze before the Zambezi].”¹⁰⁴ Cartier looked to France’s European neighbors, noting that independence from colonies went hand in hand with prosperity and development: “The richest and most stable country in Europe, Switzerland, has never had a square meter overseas. Sweden, another phenomenon of prosperity, has been the same case for two centuries. Germany lost, in 1918, the few colonies that Wilhelm II had acquired and it has achieved in two cases a striking international resurrection.”¹⁰⁵ Cartier evidently viewed such comparisons more favorably than did Gaullist Prime Minister—and defender of imperialism—Michel Debré, who fretted that “without Africa, France would be Switzerland.”¹⁰⁶ As Vincent explained *Cartièrisme* in the teacher’s edition for his 1986 textbook, “It was necessary to abandon the colonies, an investment abyss, in order to devote oneself to the economic development of France.”¹⁰⁷ Though Cartier’s ideas were marginal in 1956-57, during the

¹⁰³Quoted in *ibid.*, 70; Originally in Emile Biasini, *Grands travaux: De l’Afrique au Louvre* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1995), 141.

¹⁰⁴The Corrèze is a department in south-central France named after the Corrèze River, its major city Tulle, famous for the production of the lace that still bears the city’s name. The Zambezi is a river in southern Africa that empties into the Indian Ocean in Mozambique. For a summary and critique of Cartier’s concerns by a contemporary, see: “Opinion,” *Africa Today* 11, no. 5 (May 1, 1964): 3, doi:10.2307/4184518.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in Evans, *Algeria*, 200.

¹⁰⁶Quoted in Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, 25.

¹⁰⁷Marc Vincent, *Histoire, CM: la France au fil du temps de la préhistoire à nos jours*, Collection Télémaque, (Paris, France: Nathan, 1986), 74. Teacher’s guides were more available in library repositories for later textbooks. These texts, however, are unlike the teacher’s editions common in U.S. schools, which are often just versions of the original student text with additional material interposed within. Contrariwise,

pro-French Algerian consensus of the Mollet government, by the end of the war, “Cartier[’s] reasoning . . . became the bedrock of de Gaulle’s new economic calculations.”¹⁰⁸

When Cartier referred to the places in France that were still in great need of development, he was no doubt referring to the French provinces, particularly those situated to the south and west of the line from Le Havre to Marseille. Cartier’s ideas demonstrate the extent to which development of the colonies/former colonies and development of the provinces were intricately linked by contemporary observers. While Cartier believed that the two goals stood in opposition—that modernization abroad precluded modernization at home—others argued that they were two sides of the same coin. If France were to be a great nation of modest dimensions, they claimed, it would require substantial effort overseas and in the French *terroir*. About both metropolitan France and the Third World, politicians, technocrats, and textbook authors employed language and tropes that recalled the old colonial empire: the civilizing mission and the *mise en valeur*, in particular.

There was a long history of connections between colonial and metropolitan development projects and forms of technical knowledge. Technocrats in civil engineering had used the colonies as proving grounds for new designs in urban planning. The Vichy government had experimented with its own conservative revolution in Indochina. And, the 1931 Colonial Exposition had been placed in the working-class

French versions were more often “pedagogical guides”; they contained the ministerial program, suggested schedules for the material, long (sometimes very theoretical) introductions to the subject, and explanations and context for documents within each unit. In short, they were meant to accompany the textbook, not to replace it.

¹⁰⁸Evans, *Algeria*, 200. 292–293; On the similarities between Cartier and Aron, see: Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 68–70.

outskirts of Paris in the hopes that “a demonstration of how the French had civilized the natives abroad could help to civilize the savages at home.”¹⁰⁹ Contrariwise, critics in regional autonomist movements, such as those centered in Brittany or in Toulouse, spoke of being “colonized” by the state; their leaders found themselves “fight[ing] simultaneously for the improvement of the economic base and for a degree of administrative autonomy.”¹¹⁰ They argued that the nationalization policies of the French state and the economic relationships between Paris and the rest of France were akin to what Michael Hechter has called “internal colonialism.” Some of those critics even found common cause with anticolonial and postcolonial groups and with the antiglobalization movement.¹¹¹

The Provinces

In 1947, geographer Jean-François Gravier’s influential book *Paris et le desert français* put provincial modernization firmly on the national agenda. Gravier argued that the economic, cultural, administrative, and demographic centralization of France was impoverishing the rest of the country, diminishing regional cities and their environs, and threatening the overall health of the nation. His book went through multiple editions and

¹⁰⁹Quotation from Stovall, “From Red Belt to Black Belt,” 16; see also Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*; Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics*; Jennings, *Curing the Colonizers*; Sherman, *French Primitivism and the Ends of Empire, 1945-1975*; Daniel J. Sherman, “The Arts and Sciences of Colonialism,” *French Historical Studies* 23, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 707–29.

¹¹⁰Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier, “Toward a New Equilibrium in France?,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64, no. 1 (March 1974): 113.

¹¹¹See, for example, the discussion of the Larzac regional movement in Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*; On “internal colonialism” in the British case, see: Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999).

he followed it with other works on regional development.¹¹² Gravier's descriptions of the provinces (not least his use of the term "desert") drew on obvious colonial tropes. Pritchard rightfully asserts that Gravier's "neocolonial portrayals of provincial France were highly charged.... [S]everal politically freighted dichotomies underlay these representations of France: developed and undeveloped, urban and rural, modern and traditional."¹¹³ In fact, Pradeep Bandyopadhyay argues that Parisian centralization had proceeded "almost to the point of making France an example of monocephalic (i.e., single-centered) urbanization, like many third world countries today."¹¹⁴ The situation was exacerbated by a "rural exodus" of peasants from the land that accelerated in the decades after 1950. The Fourth Republic had endeavored to improve agricultural productivity through mechanization (machines often purchased on credit), artificial pesticides and fertilizers, and consolidation of farms to create economies of scale, all of which drove peasants—especially the young—toward the cities.

Yet, in the meantime, the provinces were undergoing profound changes in living standards. The economist Jean Fourastié's best-selling 1979 book, *Les trente glorieuses*, laid bare the fundamental and rapid changes overtaking France in the postwar period. The author told the story of two provincial villages, Madère and Cessac, at vastly different stages of development. Madère was a backward and archaic farming community, while Cessac was a thoroughly modern, middle-class community. Fourastié

¹¹²Gravier and Dautry, *J.-F. Gravier. Paris et le désert français*; Jean-François Gravier, *Mise en valeur de la France, L'Homme et la cité* (Paris: Le Portulan, 1949); Jean-François Gravier, *L'aménagement du territoire et l'avenir des régions françaises: Illustré de 29 cartes et graphiques* (Paris: Flammarion, 1964).

¹¹³Pritchard, *Confluence the Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône*, 164.

¹¹⁴Pradeep Bandyopadhyay, "The State, Private Capital and Housing in the Paris Region," *Science & Society* 48, no. 2 (July 1, 1984): 162, doi:10.2307/40402576.

eventually revealed that the two villages were in fact the same village—his own—in 1946 and 1975. His groundbreaking text exposed the ways in which life was evolving even in *la France profonde*.¹¹⁵ The provinces, therefore, had become a kind of Gordian knot for French policy makers. Provincial France, where living standards lagged troublingly behind those of the cities, called out for modernization. Likewise, the failure to arrest Parisian centralization at the expense of provincial cities and villages threatened to stifle French growth. On the other hand, modernization was already impacting the peasants and their environs, raising the specter that France would lose its “peasant character.”

Textbook authors at the time seem to have been profoundly marked by these competing discourses. In previous chapters on imperialism, authors had listed the litany of modern developments that France’s colonial project had brought to the backward areas of their empire, such as schools, hospitals, and seaports. Save for the word “countryside,” Bonifacio’s text on provincial development could have been mistaken for an entry on Dakar or Oran: “The material progress begun before 1940 ... has continued in the countryside. We have built new schools, sometimes a new townhall [*mairie*], new church, silos for wheat.... Many farms now have running water and are lit by electricity.... [The peasants’] lives have become pleasant thanks to radio, rural cinema, and television.”¹¹⁶ Grimal, moreover, painted the peasants of the nineteenth century as old-fashioned, archaic, and slow to adapt. In the early part of the century they “lived in the same fashion as before the Revolution ... the villages remained isolated” until the

¹¹⁵Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses ou la révolution invisible: De 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Hachette, 2000).

¹¹⁶Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1964, 121.

Third Republic, when “the peasants, becoming more comfortable, changed little by little their way of life.”¹¹⁷ Some authors noted just how happy the peasants were with the ways in which France’s new technologies had improved their workaday lives: For “your grandfather” living in the countryside “chemical fertilizers, well invented, rendered the earth fertile and permitted good harvests. The rich proprietors and cooperatives bought agricultural machines . . . to do the work of men. How fortunate!”¹¹⁸

Yet, authors were clearly ambivalent about the rural exodus to the cities. Chaulanges attributed the depopulation of the countryside to many of the factors that previous authors had praised: improved amenities of the cities, the low productivity of small family farms, and regional and global agricultural specialization.¹¹⁹ Bégué described Paris’ expansion to take over its marginal rural areas, as well as the complete repurposing of Lanpie, an isolated Drôme village of poor fields abandoned by young people seeking opportunity in the cities. Decades later, when the city had “fall[en] progressively into ruins” and was “populated by old people,” the houses were bought by townspeople as “secondary residences.”¹²⁰ Chaulanges notes the expansion of city lifeways among provincials beginning in the late nineteenth century. They “began thus to impose themselves everywhere. People are hardly recognized according to their dress any more, as they still were around 1850 or 1870, as a peasant, a worker, an employee, a Breton or an Auvergnat.”¹²¹ While he seems pleased with these forms of social mobility and equality, the postwar “conditions of modern life, in particular in the cities, [which]

¹¹⁷Grimal and Moreau, *Histoire de France*, 1960, 117.

¹¹⁸Gautrot Lacourt, Gozé, and Auger, *Histoire de France*, 118–119.

¹¹⁹Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 145.

¹²⁰Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 100.

¹²¹Chaulanges and Chaulanges, *Histoire de France*, 145.

harm health more and more gravely,” concern him greatly.¹²² Grasser attributes the changes in rural living to the expansion of television and radio into the countryside and the cities. “These ‘media’,” he argues, “contributed to making uniform the modes of life.”¹²³ In these conflicting views of modernization of the countryside, one sees something of the fatalism that Raymond Aron saw in French attitudes to postwar progress.¹²⁴ Provincial modernization was necessary to make the whole nation modern, and it brought very real benefits to rural people. Yet, these textbook narratives also reflected the “feelings of nostalgia and ambivalence” with which Michael Bess contends many French confronted “the disappearance of the old rural world ... as a spiritual loss, a deep wound in the tissue of their civilization.”¹²⁵

Was there a way that France could become modern, competitive, and technologically advanced without entirely sacrificing its traditional, provincial character? In response to Gravier’s work, pressure mounted to rebalance the economic and administrative life of France. Despite repeated promises by politicians for administrative decentralization, actual changes were slight until the Mitterrand government passed a law for decentralization in 1982. The new law quieted much of the fervor of regionally-based movements and allowed the government to turn its attention to the “problems” posed by immigration.¹²⁶ Postwar governments, on the other hand, did make real attempts to rebalance economic power toward the provinces from early on. In 1950, Eugène Claudius-Petit, minister of reconstruction and urbanism, pushed through a law for

¹²²Ibid., 156.

¹²³Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 146.

¹²⁴Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 23.

¹²⁵Ibid., 40.

¹²⁶Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*, 8.

Aménagement du Territoire (Territorial Planning). The goal was to stem the tide toward Paris and to counterbalance the capital with regional growth centers. To those ends, new laws forbade construction of new factories within the Paris region and disallowed the enlarging of existing factories. Industrial capacity moved out of Paris to take advantage of government incentives and new infrastructure. Paris began the transition to “an international service city ... characteristic of advanced capitalist development,” but about half of those factories and businesses accepting incentives reestablished themselves in the nine departments immediately adjacent to the Paris region.¹²⁷ Planners also divided the country into twenty-one *régions économiques* and then selected eight regional metropolises to lead their parts of France.

The irony of pursuing decentralization and regional development by way of central planning was not lost on observers. One popular cartoon by Plantu from the 1980s featured a mayor asking his deputy “When’s this decentralisation coming, then?” [*sic*] to which the deputy replied “They haven’t made up their minds yet in Paris.”¹²⁸ But the postwar government was giddy with planning. It is no surprise, then, that Gravier’s observations about the growing imbalance between Paris and the provinces resulted in a bevy of new acronyms and bureaucracies. Perhaps predictably, the results were mixed. The regions were meant to take measures to balance Paris, but the new regional super-prefects were chosen by Paris and were dependent on centralized bureaucracies for resources and instructions. Furthermore, the metropolises were chosen by the central government on the basis of economic qualifications, distance from Paris, “the number of

¹²⁷Bandyopadhyay, “The State, Private Capital and Housing in the Paris Region,” 164; Beaujeu-Garnier, “Toward a New Equilibrium in France?,” 118.

¹²⁸Quoted in Peter Wagstaff, “Regionalism in France,” in Peter Wagstaff, ed., *Regionalism in the European Union* (Exeter, UK; Portland, OR: Intellect, 1999), 51.

inhabitants, and the quantitative and qualitative level of their tertiary services.”¹²⁹ As a result, provincial inhabitants did not always view these metropolises as authentic capitals or centers of regional life; in Brittany, for example, Nantes was chosen over Rennes, the historical capital of the region, and combined with St. Nazaire to increase its population. Finally, in cases where no city was large enough to fill the role, the government devised multipolar regional centers. Nancy and Metz were such competitors in their region that the administrative office had to build a small town halfway between the two centers.¹³⁰

Decentralization and regionalism as political and economic concepts were not frequently presented in school texts, though they became more common during the 1980s. At most, the reader was likely to read a brief mention of de Gaulle’s failed 1969 referendum on decentralization that brought down his government.¹³¹ Images of a typical mayor’s office became more common, though they were also part of the general increase in the quantity of images in textbooks in the 1980s. Pierre Wirth went the furthest in his chapter on “administering today.” Along with lively cartoon by Plantu of “a very busy mayor” avoiding a townspeople’s request for a construction permit is the caption “this mayor has a lot of work, above all since the decentralization law.”¹³² Frequently, textbooks referred to “regions” only in guiding questions or suggested activities outside the traditional narratives. In most cases, these questions asked students about the instance of some larger national or international historical development in their locality. For example, questions from various periods asked students to investigate the date the

¹²⁹Beaujeu-Garnier, “Toward a New Equilibrium in France?,” 123.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Benoît, *Histoire, CM*, 185; Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 111.

¹³²Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 127.

railroad came to their region, to recall the local monuments to the world wars, to describe how their city “had been transformed in the last [fifty] years,” to design a tourism poster “to attract the tourists” to their commune, or to research the historical populations of their commune at the town hall.¹³³ Wirth took particular care to mention that the new administrative reorganization was not simply the old historical regions in new clothes: “In 1972, the French departments were regrouped in some more important territorial units, the Regions. There are 22 regions in France; these do not correspond to the old provinces.”¹³⁴ Like the government’s own policies of regionalization, Wirth ensures that the privileged vision of the region is one circumscribed by the state. Little room is left for the locally- and historically- determined versions of regional identity that might threaten national unity.

The Third World

In a new series of articles published in 1963-1964, Raymond Cartier contended that postcolonial development aid was a drain on the French coffers—as colonialism had been before—and that the state should divorce itself from its economic ties with its former colonies. Cartier’s objections were born out by the conclusions of the June 1963 Jeanneney Report, which held that French largesse hindered metropolitan growth and that aid would be better used if it were administered multilaterally. In this case, however, de Gaulle (and even most anti-Gaullists) did not come around to Cartier’s way of thinking. The justifications for postcolonial aid and cooperation were not economic in nature, they

¹³³Bonifacio and Maréchal, *Histoire de France*, 1964, 123; Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 132; Drouet, *Du passé vers l’avenir CM*, 157.

¹³⁴Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 127.

were political and cultural. In particular, French grandeur was at stake.¹³⁵ Phillip Naylor's assessment of postcolonial Franco-Algerian relations can, I argue, be equally applied to the rest of the former empire: "in general, French essentialism facilitated the remarkably smooth transition from colonialism to cooperation, especially under the stewardship of de Gaulle. Its successful implementation in Algeria was crucial to France's own political, and moral, transformation from an imperialist to a *tiers-mondiste* (Third-Worldist) nation and to the credibility and legitimacy of the Fifth Republic."¹³⁶ Of course, this all smacks of the colonial era "civilizing mission." As Naylor contends elsewhere, "The colonial myth may have been 'decolonized,' but not necessarily 'demythified.'"¹³⁷

Heavy French investment in the Third World, in particular in its sub-Saharan African colonies, accounted for about ninety percent of French development aid in the 1960s and was a continuation of the post-World War II explosion in colonial investment. This postwar aid was much more about facilitating integration between France and Africa (a fact exploited by African elites and labor organizations) than about making colonies self-sufficient. In the 1960s, however, the government's interests shifted as French industries became more competitive in the Common Market and trade outside the Franc Zone increased. As a result, economic benefits were increasingly intended to improve the economic standing of African states; favoritism toward Africa was more a product of

¹³⁵Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 52–54.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 54.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 52.

historical relations and cultural prerogatives than economic interest, at least until France shifted to a more multilateral approach in the late 1990s.¹³⁸

Beginning especially in the 1980s, as textbooks devoted greater attention to the latter part of the twentieth century, the development of the “Third World” became a common topic for textbook authors. Interestingly, while some had argued that exiting the colonies was necessary to French modernization, now French postwar modernization became the justification for French intervention in those former colonies. If technological modernization and climbing standards of living had made France a great power once more, foreign development gave it the opportunity to act like one again.

Given that much of French aid was distributed according to bilateral agreements rather than through multilateral organizations, France’s development policy would seemingly rest on national legitimacy rather than the legitimacy of international organizations like the United Nations. Textbook authors argued that France had earned legitimacy and soft power by decolonizing and by supporting the independence of the Third World from the Cold War superpowers. This argument built on earlier narratives about decolonization, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. These were the “privileged relations” with Africa that decolonization had left.¹³⁹ “[France’s] politics of

¹³⁸See the discussion in Teresa Hayter, “French Aid to Africa-Its Scope and Achievements,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 41, no. 2 (April 1, 1965): 236–51, doi:10.2307/2610618. Exact quantities of aid to the Third World in the period is difficult to assess (some critics placed it as high as around three percent of GNP) because while much of the aid was distributed by the Ministry of Cooperation, then by the Foreign Ministry, other ministries, such as Education, Interior, Defense, distributed funds as well. In addition, the European Community also sent funding to the Franc Zone, largely at French insistence. Furthermore, there are questions about whether such expenditures as funding for the DOM-TOMs or defense spending truly constitute “development aid.” See the discussion of these issues and funding break-downs in Gérard Bossuat, “French Development Aid and Co-Operation under de Gaulle,” *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (November 1, 2003): 431–56, doi:10.2307/20081177.

¹³⁹Bastien, *Histoire*, 154.

decolonization made it a country listened to in the world,” Grasser claimed.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, French legitimacy abroad could be attributed to its status as a “cultural power” and its historical role. Vincent made that argument in 1960, even before the empire was gone: “France, now, is no longer on the first rung of the great economic powers, but it remains still, by the radiance [*rayonnement*] of its civilization, a nation admired by the whole world,” he claimed. “It should play a preponderant role in the organization of peace.” Other texts described France’s importance in the world of art, literature, and ideas. Later, Grasser skillfully juxtaposed France’s modest territorial dimensions and its outsized international presence: “[France] helps the underdeveloped countries and it is a land of refuge for numerous refugees. These are not unaware that this little country of 53 million inhabitants is rich with a history that taught the world Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.”¹⁴¹

Cultural influence was typically measured by the spread of the French language, continuing a narrative tradition that had long characterized discussions of colonialism and decolonization. Bastien’s map of “the radiance of France in the world” showed the territories where French was a maternal language, an official language, or a language of education.¹⁴² Hinnewinkel’s chapter on “France, cultural power” also featured a map of “the French language in the world” showing Overseas Departments and Territories, “countries where French is very utilized,” and “countries having at least one French *lycée*.” Moreover, Hinnewinkel’s chapter began with a picture of billboards in Montreal written in French. Her contention that “[Quebec’s] inhabitants remain, still today, very

¹⁴⁰Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 148.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁴²Bastien, *Histoire*, 176.

attached to French and to the links that bring them closer to France” recalls the ways that authors demonstrated continued Franco-Canadian relations in chapters about the defeat of Montcalm: “many Canadians remember their French grandparents, continuing to *speak our language and loving our country*.”¹⁴³ Yet, lest the reader get the impression that French-speaking territories were simply historical anachronisms, she is careful to include that “learning French permits better understanding the French culture, but also to use our language in commercial, scientific, and political exchanges around the world.”¹⁴⁴

For most authors, France’s role in foreign development was a direct result of the fact that, as Grasser put it, “France has become again one of the premier economic powers in the world.”¹⁴⁵ France provided technological assistance because, in accordance with the civilizing mission, that was what technological powers did. For Laporte, France was particularly well-suited to this development role: it was already “present around the entire world” as a result of “its overseas departments and territories.” “Endowed with a nuclear *force de frappe*,” moreover, “it assures its own defense.”¹⁴⁶ Indeed, France’s independent security policy was in harmony with its preference to carry out foreign development through bilateral aid programs. This form of development that sent materiel and expertise through “equipment contracts with many countries, above all with the countries on the road to development” was foregrounded in Hinnewinkel’s chapter on “France, technological power.” Surprisingly, however, Hinnewinkel’s chapter is actually dominated by images of French technological exports that did not go to the former

¹⁴³Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Svirine, *Histoire*, 1986, 143. Pomot and Besseige, *Petite histoire du peuple français*, 65 Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁴Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Svirine, *Histoire*, 1986, 143.

¹⁴⁵Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 148.

¹⁴⁶Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 117.

colonies. Rather, the reader sees large images of a billboard for Elf-Aquitaine in China, a hydroelectric station built in Saint-Nazare and shipped to Ohio, the liftoff of the Ariane rocket, and the “construction of a new city” in Saudi Arabia by the firm Dumez, complete with “5,000 villas of original architecture, streets and all the necessary equipment.” Here at least, France’s role in advancing the development of the Third World is subordinated to demonstrating France’s own status as “a producer and exporter of industrial products of very high technology which puts our country in the leading pack of the large industrialized countries.”¹⁴⁷

Commentators in the postwar period who favored decolonization had lamented that colonial populations were exploding due to declining mortality rates and yet remained poor due to insufficient agricultural production. The result, they claimed, would be reverse colonization as colonial subjects, separated from the land, would flood the metropole looking for work. In the 1980s, as development became an important part of textbook narratives, world hunger became an important problem requiring European intervention. By the 1980s, however, hunger in the former colonies seemed a global problem rather than a colonial problem, thus one that could be handled at arm’s length. Textbook authors, however, differed on who or what bore responsibility for famine in the Third World. Drouet’s texts from 1981 and 1986 featured a heart-wrenching story called “if you were born in India” that bewailed the fact that at seven years old you would “still [be] happy that you were alive: half of your little childhood comrades are already in the other world.” For Drouet the causes of famine were entirely natural or internal to Third World societies: drought, population growth, “archaic agriculture,” and even the misuse

¹⁴⁷Hinnewinkel, Hinnewinkel, and Svirine, *Histoire*, 1986, 145.

of oil money by countries with “great fortunes that do not always benefit the population.”¹⁴⁸

Other authors, however, seemed to attribute famine and hunger to global economic forces. In so doing, they demonstrated an increasing uncertainty about the possibility of unlimited growth after the oil shocks and economic slowdowns of the 1970s and 1980s. Wirth, in his extensive chapter on world hunger, is less willing to attribute hunger to political mismanagement. Rather, looking back to prosperous tenth-century Ghana, he argues that these countries were not always experiencing famine. Furthermore, among the natural and structural causes of famine, he includes the fact that peasants produce more for the foreign market than for their own subsistence.¹⁴⁹ A picture in Grasser’s chapter on the consumption society shows workers disposing of huge mounds of agricultural produce (apples specifically) on the side of a country road, though whether the photograph was taken in France is unclear. “Despite the financial aid from the State to support agriculture,” the caption notes, “one must sometimes proceed with unbelievable destruction of food, while hunger reigns in the world.” The caption does not explain why food “must” be destroyed; the textbook narrative on the same page, however, suggests one answer: the collapse of agricultural prices that results from “over production.”¹⁵⁰ In a section on the environmental damage caused by the consumption society, for instance, Bastien pairs hunger in the Third World with the economically disadvantaged in France itself: “More grave still: the consumption society is the privilege of some industrialized nations, whereas three-quarters of the planet’s inhabitants suffer

¹⁴⁸Drouet et al., *Histoire*, 98–99.

¹⁴⁹Wirth, *Le livre d’histoire*, 1985, 134–135.

¹⁵⁰Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 147.

from hunger.... In the bosom even of the rich countries, an intolerable proportion of ‘leftovers’ do not benefit from the consumption society; will social justice be the great challenge of the 21st century?”¹⁵¹

Conclusion

Modernization allowed France to chart a path back to *grandeur* despite its “modest dimensions” in a postcolonial world. As Bastien makes clear in his comparison of the “leftovers” of the Third World and of domestic France, however, modernization did not necessarily lead to equality within or between nations. But, in the French case, it did require a large number of workers to fuel the boom years of the *Trente Glorieuses*. Many of those workers would come from France’s former colonial empire. They were drawn to France by favorable immigration policies and they climbed the very economic gradients between the poorer countries of the global South and the wealthy, industrialized West that economic development had helped to create. These workers, like those in the North African road crew featured in Bégué’s text, “will be employed in the hardest and lowest paying trades, those abandoned by the native French.”¹⁵² While Bégué seems to write off the threat posed by immigration to the employment prospects of the “native French,” many in French society were less sanguine about immigration to France from the former empire. Employment and economics were not their only concerns; they were anxious about the effects of immigration on the culture and identity of France. Modernization and decolonization—those global tides of history—had promised France the opportunity to compartmentalize its colonial empire and colonial past. Instead, those

¹⁵¹Bastien, *Histoire*, 158.

¹⁵²Bégué, Ciais, and Meuleau, *La France et les Français autrefois*, 99.

two developments conspired to bring formerly colonized people closer than they had ever been before. And, while colonial myths and narrative tropes resurfaced in discussions of modernization and development, immigration would mark the return of the colonial in more than just discourse, but in body.

It is also apparent from this chapter that the challenges of achieving technological, productive, and consumer modernity raised thorny questions that went beyond the technical or economic. The breakneck pace of change in the postwar decades pushed the boundaries of discourse into cultural concerns about what it exactly it meant to be French in the postwar period. At the beginning of his chapter on “France and the World,” before discussing Third World development and the admiration brought by French culture and technology, Grasser presented an image of two black men walking past a street market. The image is part of a feature called “current events show” in which the author presents the remnants of the past in the present. One of the men is well-dressed in blazer and collared shirt; the other, a few paces behind the first, wears more working class garments: blue jeans, a collared work shirt, and casual coat. In the caption below the image, Grasser writes that “in the streets of the large cities, one meets *many foreigners like these*. They come to look for work, or to bring us their knowledge.”¹⁵³

“*Foreigners like these.*” That “*comme ceux-ci*” pierces through the narrative like a shard of glass; it breaks through the discourses to lay bare the questions that will animate the following chapter. Given France’s long history of immigration, which Grasser acknowledges, how did he know that the men in the photograph were “foreigners”? How did race imply difference in nationality? What were the implications

¹⁵³Grasser, Colet, and Wadier, *Notre histoire*, 134.

when children of immigrant background, many of them French citizens, saw an image in which a “foreigner” is someone who looked like them? What were the possibilities for teachers who worked with these students to create visions of French nationality that did not reduce belonging to a binary between “French” and “foreign,” to imagine versions of citizenship that allowed for the persistence of difference? Could France, a country which has traditionally eschewed the label “multicultural,” come to the conclusion put forward by Laporte in his 1990 textbook: “Having welcomed on its soil numerous immigrants, France is set to become a *multicultural* nation. Inasmuch as the French of all origins mutually respect each other, our country will become an example of equality and fraternity for the world”?¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴Laporte and Pain, *Histoire de France*, 117.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DECOUPLING ASSIMILATION AND INTEGRATION: THE DISCURSIVE
FAILURE OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION REFORM SINCE THE 1970S

Naturally, the French Identity will not be, in the next century, what it is today, any more than it is today that which it was in the nineteenth century.

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, minister of national education, 1985¹

The school is designed to integrate; therefore it must exclude.

François Bayrou, minister of national education, 1994²

Recent events that have downplayed the role of ethnic minorities in the historical development and present social order in France—such as the headscarf affairs and the law of February 23, 2005—accord closely with the “Jacobin” approach to cultural assimilation. As such, it is far too easy for observers and scholars to attribute these contemporaneous events to a consistently mounting trajectory of state-sponsored monoculturalism or even neo-colonialism. In this chapter, however, I wish to complicate this facile narrative by emphasizing the ways in which, for a short time at least, this outcome was not predetermined. This chapter will demonstrate how, during the late 1970s and 1980s, proponents of interculturalism—a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the acceptance of difference, the inclusion of non-dominant cultures, and the importance of non-discrimination and social justice—began to imagine a discourse that might have changed the terms in which the immigrant populations they served related to the French state.

¹ Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration in Post-War France: A Documentary Anthology* (London: Methuen Educational, 1987), 40.

² Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 103.

Since the groundbreaking work of Gérard Noiriel, scholarship on immigration and the politics of France's reception of immigrants has been an important subset of the literature on the postcolonial era in France.³ That importance is only trending upward. Noiriel was keen to emphasize the extent to which "the role played by immigration in the makeup of present-day French society remains completely repressed in the French national memory."⁴ The many waves of immigrants in French history from southern and eastern Europe and more recently from North Africa have all, according to Noiriel, met with prejudice and doubts about their integrative potential, though all previous waves eventually assimilated into French culture.⁵

Despite Noiriel's powerful influence on the field of immigration studies in France, a new generation of scholars has cast doubt on Noiriel's "melting-pot" approach and that of his followers:

The proposition seldom envisions that integration policies can reproduce and reinforce, rather than erase, racial and cultural traits; and is often unaware of the ways in which assimilation fuels racial animosity. Nor does it examine how the promise of the melting pot and the interpretive power of the model at large, might be compromised by a diminishing faith in the attraction of a universal

³ See: Gérard Noiriel, *Le Creuset Français* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Blanchard, *De l'indigène à l'immigré*; Pascal Blanchard, Éric Deroo, and Bertrand Delanoë, *Le Paris arabe: Deux siècles de présence des Orientaux et des Maghrébins* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003); Ahmed Boubeker and Abdellali Hajjat, *Histoire politique des immigrations (post)coloniales: France, 1920-2008* (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2008); Adrian Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998); Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*; Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France*; Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Didier Lapeyronnie, *L'individu et les minorités: La France et la Grande-Bretagne face à leurs immigrés*, 1re éd. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993); Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Gérard Noiriel, "Difficulties in French Historical Research on Immigration," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 46, no. 1 (October 1992): 21-35; Dominique Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration: Sociologie de la nation en 1990* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991); Nacira Guénif Souilamas, *Des beurettes* (Paris: Hachette, 2003); Patrick Weil, *La République et Sa Diversité: Immigration, Intégration, Discrimination* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); Weil, *How to Be French*.

⁴ Noiriel, "Difficulties in French Historical Research on Immigration," 22.

⁵ Noiriel, *Le Creuset Français*.

“Frenchness.” Last but not least, immigration scholars have paid little attention to the colonial genealogy of such assimilationist strategies.⁶

These scholars have raised doubts about Noiriel’s and his group’s underlying faith in the French melting pot to integrate postcolonial immigrants and, moreover, have countered that “integration” and “assimilation” amount at their foundations to racism and discrimination.

In theoretical terms, this project aligns itself more closely with this latter group of scholars. While I would argue that assimilation and integration certainly have the *potential* to create equality among cultural groups, the *demand* to assimilate or integrate as a precondition for full participation in society is problematic. Furthermore, assimilationist discourse only masks the extent to which France is already (and indeed long has been) a multicultural and pluralistic society, shifts blame and guilt for cultural difference to immigrant populations themselves, and bolsters claims by the far right that even second and third generation immigrants lack “Frenchness” despite their citizenship. Historians may also wonder in current postures toward immigrants efface the degree to which the presence of immigrants is a result of the colonial and economic practices of the French state itself. And, might immigration be a counterpoint to official desires to foster postcolonial development and to participate in “globalization”? An attempt to answer fully these theoretical questions is beyond the scope of this chapter. This chapter will, however, contribute to these debates and offer some tentative responses to at least a few of these questions.

⁶ Florence Bernault, “Colonial Syndrome: French Modern and the Deceptions of History,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 124.

The progressive approaches to the education of immigrant populations from the 1970s and 1980s discussed in this chapter will cover much of the contested ground sketched by these scholars. Previous sections of this dissertation have discussed how French children were taught *about* postcolonial populations within a variety of narratives, such as decolonization, (under)development, and (to an extent) immigration. Yet, the large-scale migration of formerly colonized people to France after decolonization brought into powerful tension the two issues—the colonial past and national identity—that have undergirded this study. “The other,” in relation to whom French identity had been constructed, was increasingly present in France and in the classroom. Educators and officials struggled mightily with how people seemingly between two worlds could learn to be French; those struggles, for these educators, were seemingly fraught with implications for the nation itself. As a result, some approaches to the issue granted primacy to assimilation, to the singularity of French culture, and to official rhetoric. Other approaches were more complicated—they emphasized intercultural education’s focus on the common histories of immigrants and metropolitans in the construction of a shared and mutually constructed national identity. It is through this narrow lens that one can see these interpretive spaces, their successes and their failures.

Mary Dewhurst Lewis, for the period between the wars, attempts to complicate the traditional top-down narrative of the state’s effacement of immigrant identity by highlighting local practices in Lyon and Marseille. She finds that, “Through improvisation and negotiation, local authorities and immigrants established boundaries of inclusion and exclusion along quite different lines than those intended by state policy.”⁷

⁷ Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 14.

As were colonial discourses before them, immigration discourses and policies were neither monolithic nor uncontested.⁸ This approach, which emphasizes the contingency of the immigrant-metropole relationship around such questions as culture, identity, rights, and plurality, is one that I will similarly employ.

Despite the rightful place that must be given to local processes and everyday interactions between immigrants and authorities, the power exercised by state discourses was considerable indeed. Though this chapter argues that progressive educational reforms were important, the struggle to unseat the state's discursive monopoly on the terms of inclusion and exclusion was ultimately unsuccessful, as the court decisions on headscarves and the violent response of *banlieue* youth to the social order make tragically clear. As the French scholar Ahmed Boubeker has said of the 1980s, "For the time of a brief flirtation, the *Beurs* were seen as the 'heralds of a multicultural future for metropolitan France'."⁹ Boubeker's hope was no doubt shared by progressive educators

⁸ On ways in which colonized peoples resisted and refashioned French colonial discourses to support greater rights, autonomy, and independence, see: Frederick Cooper, "From Imperial Inclusion to Republican Exclusion? France's Ambiguous Postwar Trajectory," in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Ch. Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009); Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, chap. 7; James E. Genova, "Constructing Identity in Post-War France: Citizenship, Nationality, and the Lamine Guèye Law, 1946-1953," *The International History Review* 26, no. 1 (March 2004): 56-79; Jennings, "Conservative Confluences, 'Nativist' Synergy."

⁹ Ahmed Boubeker, "Outsiders in the French Melting Pot: The Public Construction of Invisibility for Visible Minorities," in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Ch. Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 74 The term "Beur" is a term used for self-description by youth of North African descent, especially those living in the French suburbs [banlieus]. The word derives from French slang, called —Verlan, in which syllables of a word are inverted and then rewritten into new forms. Beur is back slang of the term "Arabe" [Arab]. The word is falling out of favor with French youth as it has been adopted by the mainstream. Some ethnically North African youth now prefer the back slang version of Beur: rebeux. Other terms have also entered the lexicon, such as zupiens (derived from the French abbreviation for Priority Development Zone) or cailleras (back slang for the word for —scum). Given the negative connotations which the term Beur is acquiring, I will use it only when quoting another scholar or in instances in which North African youth have chosen it themselves.

of the period (and some no doubt share it still). But, at its foundations, this chapter is about missed opportunities and failure.

The French resistance to multiculturalism in official discourse is born of the French Revolution or, more precisely, of current republican interpretations of the revolutionary heritage. Because the French Revolution accorded rights to citizens only as individuals, in direct relation with the state, cultural particularism is to be expressed only in private. The Abbé Grégoire who, as Claude Liauzu claims, was “renowned for having championed the freedom of slaves and Jewish people, had nevertheless declared war on ‘patois,’ on the various regional languages; for him only the French language could express Reason, Civilisation, Enlightenment [*sic*].”¹⁰ Count Stanislas Clermont-Tonnerre’s oft-restated condition for the emancipation of the Jews in 1791 was that “everything must be refused to the Jews as a nation in the sense of a corporate body and everything granted to the Jews as individuals.”¹¹

Instrumental to the power of republican universalism in the discourses surrounding education has been the history of the “Franco-French wars” of the nineteenth century between the secular state and the Catholic Church over the minds of France’s youngest citizens. These debates were foundational to the creation of Jules Ferry’s free, secular, and universal education system in the 1880s. As Eugen Weber has demonstrated in his now classic work *Peasants into Frenchmen*, the republicans of the late nineteenth century imagined the French teaching force as an army of “black Hussars” of the republic

¹⁰ Claude Liauzu, “Interculturalism: New Lands to Discover in France,” *European Journal of Intercultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (1993): 25, doi:10.1080/0952391930040304.

¹¹ Quoted in Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 75.

penetrating the French provinces to wrest control of the minds of peasant children (especially girls) from reactionary and monarchist parish priests.¹²

A number of recent works by historian Joan Scott have shown that the rhetoric of the individual as the embodiment of rights and citizenship still exerts great pressure on arguments for communal rights in contemporary France. French feminists in the 1990s, for example, were forced to reconfigure as gendered the notion of the “singular abstract individual” in support of the *mouvement pour la parité*. Their movement’s success led to a law requiring that half of candidates for almost all political offices be women. As Scott argues more broadly:

During the 1980s and 1990s, the rhetoric of universalism was offered in response to a series of challenges that involved claims for the recognition of rights of different groups (women’s right of access to elective office, the rights of North African immigrants and their children to be fully French, and the rights of cohabiting homosexual couples to enjoy the same benefits as heterosexual couples, including marriage) as a way to end discrimination against them. Discrimination that was not addressed—or was covered over—by invocations of universalism.¹³

As Scott’s argument implies, the success of activities in achieving gains for discriminated groups in France was directly related to their success at activating the dominant discourses of universalism. This is no less true for the educational reformers and teachers under discussion here. Their arguments for support and recognition stopped short of pushing for the dreaded “communalism”; their use of interculturalism and multiculturalism was seldom justified in terms that threatened French republican

¹² Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; Scholars such as Caroline Ford have ably demonstrated that religion was not the hindrance to modernity and national unity it was portrayed to be and was, in fact, an important factor in negotiations about national identity in the provinces: *Creating the Nation in Provincial France*; Reference to “Black Hussars of the Republic” from Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France*, 10. The phrase was popularized by poet Charles Péguy.

¹³ Scott, *Parité!: Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism*, 1; See also, Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.

principles of assimilation, integration, human rights, and universalism. These reformers no doubt improved the lives of their own students. Yet the inability of immigrant activists to change the terms of debate neutered attempts to envision a narrative of French republicanism that did not engage in “routine violence” against second- and third-generation immigrant youth.¹⁴ Ultimately, whether adherence (or kowtowing) to the republican consensus saved small gains or doomed larger ones remains an open question.¹⁵

Interculturalism: European Movement and French Parenthesis

Intercultural education began as a response to the particular issues of migrant students. In 1975, the Conference of European Ministers of Education first hinted at intercultural education. Their 1981 project *Education and cultural development of migrants* opened the door for research into intercultural education, and in 1983, the conference first explicitly mentioned the “intercultural dimension.” Intercultural educators, theorists, and the Council of Europe gradually expanded the province of intercultural education beyond education of migrants. Indeed, intercultural education bears many similarities with contemporary Anglo-American theories of multicultural education.¹⁶ The emphasis is less on the population being served or content being taught

¹⁴ On the routine violence inherent “in the construction of naturalized nations, of natural communities and histories, majorities and minorities,” see: Pandey, *Routine Violence*; Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron also describe the “symbolic violence” carried out by educational institutions that possess “the power ... to impose meanings ... as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force,” quoted in Michele Lamont and Annette Lareau, “Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments,” *Sociological Theory* 6, no. 2 (Autumn 1988): 159.

¹⁵ William Safran, “The Mitterrand Regime and Its Policies of Ethnocultural Accommodation,” *Comparative Politics* 18, no. 1 (October 1985): 439.

¹⁶ David Coulby, “Intercultural Education: Theory and Practice,” *Intercultural Education* 17, no. 3 (2006): 245, doi:10.1080/14675980600840274.

than on methodological changes that encourage “multiperspectivity” and the acceptance of difference, so as to combat discrimination and defend equality.¹⁷ Furthermore, as is suggested by the terminology of “interculturalism,” the movement emphasizes the location of interrelations and common histories among Europeans and between Europe and the world: in this, some intercultural educators draw a distinction with what they believe is an over-emphasis of difference by multiculturalists.

The Council of Europe, in the 1970s, began to take the lead in the articulation and support of intercultural education and scholarship. It would maintain this central role throughout the rest of the century. The Council’s leadership was instrumental in articulating an international and European-wide framework for intercultural pedagogy that persists to this day.¹⁸ Nonetheless, researchers on multicultural and intercultural education, particularly those doing comparative work, have found that despite the increasing power of the Council of Europe in European affairs, the preponderant authority of nation-states over educational policy has ensured that “the reception of multiculturalism is shaped by national traditions that address the construction of identity/difference.”¹⁹

Intercultural education has gained a relatively strong following among many of the nations on the Continent, and has even garnered the support of the European Council.

¹⁷ Jean-Marie Leclercq, *The Lessons of Thirty Years of European Co-Operation for Intercultural Education*, The New Intercultural Challenge to Education: Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe (Strasbourg: Steering Committee for Education, September 30, 2002), 4.

¹⁸ Saša Puzić, “Intercultural Education in the European Context: Analysis of Selected European Curricula,” *METODIKA: Journal of Theory and Application of Teaching Methodologies in Preschool, Primary, Secondary and Higher Education* 8, no. 15 (December 10, 2007): 390–407.

¹⁹ Ines Dussel, “What Can Multiculturalism Tell Us About Difference? The Reception of Multicultural Discourses in France and Argentina,” in *Global Constructions of Multicultural Education*, ed. Carl A. Grant and Joy L. Lei (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 94.

Yet interculturalism remains weak in France. In fact, scholars of multicultural and intercultural education and historians of French education agree that, of European nations, France is and was among the most resistant to intercultural discourses.²⁰ France's hostility toward citizens who identify with sub-national (particularly ethnocultural) communities has made it the least successful environment for intercultural reform in Europe, they claim. Moreover, French critics have excoriated what they see as multiculturalism's tendency to devolve into Anglo-American style "communalism" rather than national unity. Fears of "American multiculturalism" have only magnified what Jean-Philippe Mathy calls "the French-American culture wars."²¹

Yet, during the 1970s and 1980s, French organizations, like the teacher's union *Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale* (Federation of National Education—FEN),²² and individual schools and communities engaged in nascent intercultural practices at the ground level. This chapter will demonstrate that during the 1980s the education bureaucracy and civil authorities often supported outright intercultural reforms at the local level, or at least exercised benign neglect.

²⁰ Erik Bleich attributes France's resistance to multicultural and intercultural education to a combination of structural forces within the educational system—relatively few policy gatekeepers—and ideological traditions of *laïcité* rather than liberalism. Erik Bleich, "From International Ideas to Domestic Policies: Educational Multiculturalism in England and France," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 1 (October 1998): 81–100; Most scholars, however, have focused almost exclusively on the importance of universal republican notions of citizenship. On French resistance to interculturalism relative to other European states, see: Liauzu, "Interculturalism"; Dussel, "What Can Multiculturalism Tell Us About Difference? The Reception of Multicultural Discourses in France and Argentina"; Nasar Meer et al., "Cultural Diversity, Muslims, and Education in France and England," in *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education*, ed. James A. Banks (New York: Routledge, 2009), 413–24.

²¹ Mathy, *French Resistance*.

²² The FEN was a broad coalition for most of the postwar period, choosing to remain autonomous after the 1948 scission between the CGT and Force Ouvrière. Socialists were, however, in the overwhelming majority in the education union.

Here I will emphasize a few such examples of nascent interculturalism from the late 1970s and 1980s. I will unpack the ways in which those involved in these programs understood their objectives and the ways in which their programs fit with larger currents of pedagogical thinking on the integration of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, this chapter will emphasize that many intercultural practices were in direct response to very real challenges faced by immigrant populations and those charged with educating them, challenges that were always inflected by the postcolonial policies, international events, and economic crises of those decades.

Concern on the part of the French educational system for the problems of foreign and migrant children is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating back only to 1970. In this year, the Ministry of Education launched a number of programs geared toward non-native speakers and migrants. The Classes of French for Beginners (CLIN), the Integrated Courses for Catching up (CRI) and the Classes for Adaptation (CLAD) were short transitional courses to allow students to integrate into the school system. In 1973, the state mounted ELCO (Teaching of the Languages and Cultures of Origin) through an initiative of the Council of Europe that provided instruction for students from eight different groups, including North Africans (Tunisians, Moroccans, and Algerians) and Southern Europeans (Portuguese and Italians). Yet, surprisingly, students did not flock to the ELCO. The number of teachers assigned to these programs was far too small to serve such a large immigrant population, and official languages and cultures of the states of origin were privileged over popular languages (Berber was excluded, for instance).²³

²³ Liauzu, "Interculturalism"; On the role of official agreements between France and nations of origin to provide native language instruction, see: Geneviève Vermes and Michèle Kastenbaum, "Sociolinguistic Minorities and Scholastic Difficulties in France," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 520 (March 1992): 165.

The intention of these programs, however, was never to encourage pluralism or even to assimilate immigrant populations but rather to ensure that students maintained the linguistic facility and cultural literacy necessary to their eventual return to their countries of origin. This assumption of eventual return was often supported by bilateral agreements with the countries of origin, which provided funding and teachers for the programs. Neither the French nor the source countries' governments envisioned permanent immigration, hence the common use of the term "migrant" rather than "immigrant" to describe these populations. The immigration policy of the State Secretariat in the years 1974-1980, Claude Liauzu claims, was to combat radical Islam, to encourage acculturation and avoid "rootlessness," and to head off leftist movements.²⁴

"Syndicalism Does Not Distinguish Patries": The FEN Conference of 1978

One such leftist movement was the FEN. From January 7-8, 1978, the FEN held the National Conference on the Formation of Algerian Immigrant Workers in France in concert with the *Amicale des Algériens en Europe* (AAE) and *l'Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (UGTA). The conference was intended to address three intertwined issues, all of which concerned education in a broad sense: "Literacy and training of adult workers," "education of school-age children and adolescents," and "permanent education of the wives of migrants."²⁵ The themes of the conference speak to

²⁴ Liauzu, "Interculturalism."

²⁵ Louis Astre and Ahmed Nadir, Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale and Amicale des Algériens en Europe, "Conférence nationale sur la formation des immigrés Algériens en France, les 7 et 8 Janvier 1978 à Paris," in folder Document Préparatoire, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357. Leslie J. Limage argues that until the official report *Des illettrés en France* [On the Illiterate in France] was released in 1984, the French public was largely unaware of the adult illiteracy problem, believing it to be an issue specific to migrant workers. "Adult Literacy Policy and Provision in an Age of Austerity," *International Review of Education* /

the changing face of immigration in France during the 1970s and the shockwaves of the end of colonialism. When France imported large numbers of workers during the *Trentes Glorieuses* (Thirty Glorious Years) of economic success and expansion, politicians expected that migrant workers would send home remittances and return to their countries of origin. As the economy slowed, “beginning in the mid-1970s, preference for immigrants was no longer determined by labor needs ... and instead family unification became the first preference for granting visas.”²⁶ Immigrant workers took advantage of family reunification, increasing the numbers of immigrant women and children (some native born, some not) despite attempts by the government to discourage immigration. Thus, the FEN and the immigrant issue groups with which it organized the conference became concerned with inserting women and children into French society and preparing them for meaningful labor. Immigrants from North Africa were overwhelmingly unskilled when they arrived; of North African workers who arrived in France before 1975 and who were at least fifteen years old when they migrated, eighty-three percent were unskilled laborers.²⁷

Why did an educational union choose to sponsor a conference in concert with two non-education unions for Algerians? The connection is not immediately apparent; the AAE, for example, was created in 1963 in the wake of the Algerian War as an heir to the *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front—FLN) and was charged with

Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale de l'Education 32, no. 4 (1986): 402–403.

²⁶ Rita J. Simon and James P. Lynch, “A Comparative Assessment of Public Opinion toward Immigrants and Immigration Policies,” *International Migration Review* 33, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 457; See also: Hargreaves, *Immigration, “Race” and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, 15–19.

²⁷ Timothy Beresford Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality, and Globalization Since 1980* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179.

the reception of Algerian immigrants in France.²⁸ But, by the time the FEN joined with the UGTA for the conference, the two organizations already had a history of collaborating in strikes during the Algerian War. André Henry, the secretary general of the FEN, drew on a familiar history of the French education system's role in the colonies, stating: "There have existed in effect for a very long time, particular relations between French teachers and the Algerian people. Relations so fraternal and profound, very often, that the drama of the war for your independence has not come to break them." And indeed, the secretary general of the UGTA, Abdel Kader Bennikous, had been a militant in one of the FEN's constituent syndicates, the SNI (*Syndicat National des Instituteurs*).²⁹

The opening remarks at the conference by A. Gheraieb of the AAE are shot through with disappointment at the apparent about-face made by the government in its immigration policy. The government, he argued, had moved away from its pre-1974 "politics of welcoming [*d'acceuil*] and cultural adaptation," when it had created a Secretary of State of Immigrant Workers, an Office for the Cultural Promotion of Immigrants, and other local and municipal offices. Yet, in the wake of economic crisis, the government reneged on these "engagements," suspended familial immigration, and favored the return of immigrants to their countries of origin. According to Gheraieb, the scope of these measures "shows well that it is not a matter of simple incitement to return but of a veritable politics of repression."³⁰

²⁸ Yvan Gastaut, "La Flambée Raciste de 1973 En France," *Revue Européenne de Migrations Internationales* 9, no. 2 (1993): n. 16, doi:10.3406/remi.1993.1355.

²⁹ André Henry, "Déclaration d'André Henry—Secrétaire général de la FEN" to the Conférence nationale sur la formation des travailleurs migrants, 7-8 January 1978, in folder "Déclarations et Rapport Introductif," ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

³⁰ "Communication de A. Gheraieb, Président de l'A.A.E." to the Conférence nationale sur la formation des travailleurs migrants, 7-8 January 1978, in folder "Déclarations et Rapport Introductif," ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

Here, Gheraieb is responding to the 1974 “suspension” of further inward immigration—a “suspension” that lasted more than twenty years—in response to the 1973 oil shock and rising fears of unemployment. The French government in 1956 had instituted a policy of finding North African immigrants places in hostels, which provided temporary housing with the added benefit of discouraging family immigration. The increased unification of families during the 1970s meant that Algerian families were increasingly present in the housing market and their children enrolled in French schools. The increased visibility of North Africans led to harsher solutions. In 1977, the minister of state for immigrant workers, Lionel Stoléru, began offering financial incentives for immigrants to return to their countries of origin. Few North Africans accepted the payments, so the Interior Ministry used its powers to deport as many immigrants as possible, though legislation for mass deportations failed in the legislature.³¹

The arguments made by immigrant advocates would be familiar today. Gheraieb claimed that immigrants filled jobs that were poorly paid, unhealthy, dangerous, and which French workers would not do. The repression of immigrants, he argued, amounted to “humiliation inflicted [on workers] who devote a large part of their existence to the recovery and the prosperity of the economy of the host country.”³² André Henry agreed with many of Gheraieb’s positions; in a “structural crisis touching on the economic structures of production and distribution,” the government made immigrant workers into “scapegoats” (*boucs émissaires*) to efface “the consequences of its poor politics” and the ways in which business owners used immigrant labor to deskill their workforce.³³

³¹ Hargreaves, *Immigration, “Race” and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, 17–19.

³² “Communication de A. Gheraieb, Président de l’A.A.E.”

³³ André Henry, “Déclaration d’André Henry.”

Belkacem Berrouba, the federal secretary of the FTEC-UGTA in charge of information, bemoaned the short memories of French authorities. Though immigrant workers were so “instrumental in the success of the French economy,” the government had “taken measures in opposition that tend to make immigrant workers the principal victims and the people primarily responsible for the economic crisis through which France is suffering.”³⁴

Though the education and immigrant activists at the conference criticized the scapegoating of immigrants and repressive attempts to return them to Algeria, they never really debated the contention that migrant populations would wish to return to their country of origin. The assumption of eventual return resulted from two interrelated factors, bilateral agreements between France and the countries of origin and the history of migrancy in the *trente glorieuses*. In the wake of decolonization, in an effort to shore up relations between the former colonies and the former metropole, France and the colonies fashioned a series of bilateral agreements. In a sense, these bilateral agreements doomed attempts to construct a postcolonial French community—similar to the British Commonwealth—which had been advocated by a number of politicians in France and in the colonies. As Frederick Cooper points out, Mali’s ability to earn relations and economic concessions through bilateral agreement obviated its need to incorporate itself in the French Community and exploded the possibility of the West African federation wished for by Senghor.³⁵ Some of these agreements governed the movement of people

³⁴ “Allocution d’Ouverture de M. BERROUBA Belkacem, Secrétaire Fédéral (F.T.E.C. – U.G.T.A.) charge de l’information,” to the Conférence nationale sur la formation des travailleurs migrants, 7-8 January 1978, in folder “Déclarations et Rapport Introductif,” ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

³⁵ Cooper, “From Imperial Inclusion to Republican Exclusion? France’s Ambiguous Postwar Trajectory,” 110–115.

and the cultural policies in the metropole toward immigrants and migrant workers. The right of Algeria to appoint the head of the *Mosquée de Paris* was one such example.

In the interest of increasing the workforce necessary to fuel France's postwar economic boom, politicians in France had granted cultural concessions toward countries of emigration. The accord of December 27, 1968 between Algeria and France, for example, established conditions of employment and circulation of Algerian workers in France with an eye to "facilitating [their] professional and social promotion," "ameliorating their conditions of life and work," and "favor[ing their] full employment." Article 3 of the accord put into effect "a special effort ... in favor of Algerian workers ... [to] develop the education of adults, [and] professional pre-training and training."³⁶ According to Berrouba, of the UGTA, the agreement had required that ten percent of places in the Centers for Professional Formation of Adults be reserved for Algerian immigrants. The results, he argued, were much different from the "good intentions." To Berrouba, France had violated the spirit of the law; immigration policy had become "the multiplication of administrative worries of which these workers are victims." The Centers' classes were led by progressive and democratic militants in concert with Algerian Immigrant organizations, but usually took place at night, taking the place of leisure time after long working hours. Berrouba requested time off from work and subventions to the workers to take the classes.³⁷

³⁶ "Accord entre Le Gouvernement de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire et Le Gouvernement de la République française relatif à la circulation, à l'emploi et au séjour en France des ressortissants algériens et de leurs familles, complété par un protocole, deux échanges de lettres et une annexe, signé à Alger le 27 décembre 1968." <http://www.consulat-algerie-montpellier.org/pdf/ACCORD/AC1968.pdf> [Accessed 6 August 2010]

³⁷ "Allocution d'Ouverture de M. BERROUBA Belkacem"

Pressing for legal measures to remedy the difficult situations of their immigrant constituents, advocates like Gheraieb had to make fine distinctions between the languages of universalism on which French rights claims were based and of particularism which gave their representation of immigrants meaning. Gheraieb argued, on the one hand, “that the law [should] apply to all without distinction of nationality,” while contending on the other that “the means of application that accompany [the law should] take into account particular conditions to make the exercise of the most legitimate rights possible for immigrant workers.” Unlike French republican discourse, which cast the rejection of communal ties as a necessary prerequisite to the attainment of citizenship, Gheraieb demanded that the government recognize the immigrants’ right “to assume their cultural identity,” which was “a necessary condition to the blossoming of man.”³⁸ Gérard Noiriel has argued that the “stigmatization” born of periods of economic downturn in France was instrumental in the assimilation of immigrants, who worked harder to become French and to reject their cultures of origin.³⁹ Yet, as is evident in the pronouncements of the FEN and the *banlieue* violence of the 1980s, many immigrants rejected the proposition that eliminating this stigma ought to require action on the part of the stigmatized (i.e. assimilation) rather than on the part of the stigmatizer (i.e. acceptance of difference).

Henry, in his declaration to the conference, drew on the history of French colonialism and leftist critiques of neo-colonialism to cast these issues as a moral imperative: “is it too much to say, if we remark that the Algerian workers serve in France as overexploited workers, after they have already been overexploited in their country by us in the framework of a quasi-colonial regime?” Henry even went so far as to declare

³⁸ “Communication de A. Gheraieb, Président de l’A.A.E.”

³⁹ Cited in Bleich, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies,” 86.

that “it is the French who are in a certain sense debtors with regard to immigrant workers.”⁴⁰ Especially in the early years of interculturalism and leftist approaches to immigration, the problems of immigrants in France were subsumed into the larger question of the labor movement.

Perhaps in the interest of appealing to his militants in the teaching force, Henry implored the conference goers to eschew exclusionary nationalism in favor of the global workers’ struggle and an inclusive vision of French history. “Trade unionism,” he claimed, “does not distinguish *patries* [homelands] when it is necessary to make the rights of man [*droits des hommes*] triumph.” To this end, Henry drew on the history of *laïcité*, which had been a concept near to the heart of educators since the establishment of the secular educational system in the 1880s (and which would be used to very different effect in the headscarf affairs later in the century). Henry explicitly linked *laïcité* to “scrupulous respect for conscience,” “respect of persons,” the “struggle against privileges ... against injustice,” and “the more general struggle for liberty and for the rights of man.” He highlighted that “*la laïcité* is never neutral. Since it is respect for man, it is antiracist.” To that end, the FEN called for “a day against racism,” on January 24, in which educators at all levels would “address [racism] on that day, across the lessons and courses of the students of their *pays* to remind them that liberty does not divide, and that the respect of man does not divide itself.”⁴¹

The conference speakers’ rhetoric, in the final analysis, was directed at two interrelated problems. First, the speakers were obviously concerned with solving the practical problems faced by immigrants after the economy had soured; they lauded the

⁴⁰ André Henry, “Déclaration d’André Henry.”

⁴¹ André Henry, “Déclaration d’André Henry.”

immigrants' role in the economic miracle of the last thirty years and highlighted the humiliation they now faced. Second, the speakers attempted to justify increasing assistance measures for immigrants in a time of scarcity. To that end, they drew on tropes that would have been dear to French listeners, particularly the largely left-leaning members of the FEN: *l'acécité*, human rights, and equality.

The speakers, Henry in particular, failed to recognize the extent to which the face of immigration had changed. He still assumed the government's position—as evident in the policies that attempted to incentivize workers to return—that workers were migrants rather than immigrants. Hence, he criticized the uprooting (*déraciner*) of “the people who have very much been already, and more often against their will.” He made the case instead for the “return to the *pays* for all those who desire”; he was certain that most immigrants wished for return.⁴² Adopting such rhetoric could have negative consequences. As Mireille Rosello has claimed, the “migrant worker” was the dominant image of immigration in the 1970s, as “the *Beur*” was in the 1980s and “the illegal immigrant” (*le clandestin*) was in the 1990s. The language used to *define* immigration had a way of determining what to do *about* immigration;⁴³ as long as the image of immigration was the migrant worker, the solution to economic crisis and unemployment would be to return the worker to his country of origin.

⁴² André Henry, “Déclaration d’André Henry.”

⁴³ Mireille Rosello, “Representing Illegal Immigrants in France: From Clandestins to L’Affaire Des Sans-Papiers de Saint-Bernard,” *Journal of European Studies* 28, no. 109–10 (March 1, 1998): 137, 147–148, doi:10.1177/004724419802810910.

“We Are Not Even Capable of Writing Their Names in Arabic”: The Student Exchanges of the École Vitruve and the Intercultural Consensus

“It’s tough,” according to Laurent Dubois, “to be a car in France.” Nearly a quarter-century before the *banlieue* riots of 2005 dominated news coverage, urban youth in the *Les Minguettes* housing projects near Lyon stole automobiles, took them for joyrides, and set them ablaze. The burning of cars in the suburbs of major cities has become a form of pageantry in contemporary France, replayed year after year. President François Mitterrand feared that the “Rodeo Riots” of 1980 “threatened to tear the social fabric to threads.”⁴⁴ They also shed light on the “second generation” of French immigrants; the *banlieue* youth acquired the moniker “*Beurs*,” which denoted their status as both French nationals and ethnoculturally distinct. Unlike their parents who were for far too long considered migrants and foreign nationals, the *Beurs* were unlikely ever to return to their country of origin. Furthermore, the presence of the “Minguettes generation” on the scene, especially after the 1983 March of Equality brought out 100,000 demonstrators, prompted the government to call for the renovation of the *cités*’ urban spaces.⁴⁵ The “sudden” presence of urban youth in the 1980s was a significant watershed. That presence unseated the very foundations of French “integration” policy, which supposedly made “French citizens out of immigrants within one generation” through a combination of cultural assimilation, social mobility, *de jure* equality, and *jus*

⁴⁴ Boubeker, “Outsiders in the French Melting Pot: The Public Construction of Invisibility for Visible Minorities,” 73.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

solis citizenship.⁴⁶ Second-generation immigrants thus found themselves in a double bind; their cultural differences were officially ignored and popularly highlighted.

As William Safran has argued, the Mitterrand administration was a heady time for what he terms “ethnocultural accommodation.” He claims the events of May 1968 engendered in “the French democratic Left” a questioning attitude toward Jacobin “monolithic cultural centralism.” The policy of accommodation toward territorial ethnic minorities was originally born of a series of bilateral agreements, based on agreements with Brittany and Alsace in the late 1970s, for “cultural development” between the state and various regions and municipalities. “By the end of 1982,” Safran notes, “the minister of culture had signed more than one hundred [bilateral agreements] (thirty-five with regions and departments and sixty-nine with municipalities).” Furthermore, in 1982 the minister of education, Alain Savary, issued a circular that permitted the teaching of certain regional languages in elementary schools “on an experimental basis.”⁴⁷

Safran has found “among the public authorities a willingness to accommodate the cultural aspirations of native ethnic minorities which, in turn, spilled over into accommodationist attitudes toward other subcommunities: nonterritorial ethnics, nonethnic provincials and immigrants.”⁴⁸ The Mitterrand government, in 1981, did away with the harsh Bonnet Law of 1979, which allowed the minister of the interior to arrest immigrants and deport them for illegal entry and a number of minor infractions. “There has emerged a double policy,” Safran argues, “which aims on the one hand at fitting the children of immigrants into the efficient and prosperous part of the economy and on the

⁴⁶ Patrick Simon, “France and the Unknown Second Generation: Preliminary Results on Social Mobility,” *International Migration Review* 37, no. 4 (December 1, 2003): 1091.

⁴⁷ Safran, “The Mitterrand Regime and Its Policies of Ethnocultural Accommodation,” 41–44.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

other at acknowledging the distinctness of their backgrounds. Such a policy has responded both to the Socialists' interest in productivity, economic equality, and upward mobility and to their commitment to ethnic pluralism."⁴⁹ Paul Silverstein, however, is more suspicious of the motives of the Mitterrand government's policies of ethnocultural accommodation, by which he argues "the socialist government sought to define the limits of Beur multiculturalism" to cultural concerns. He cites the views of one Beur activist that "the employment and educational programs initiated by the Mitterrand government served largely ... to 'purchase' potential Beur leaders, to create what would later be decried as 'house Beurs' (*Beurs de service*) in order to 'avoid the development of collective action.'"⁵⁰ Conservative public intellectuals, such as Alain Finkielkraut, on the contrary, have "attacked the misplaced multiculturalism of the early Mitterrand years and the ethical relativism that it supported at home and abroad."⁵¹

It was in this context of increased visibility of ethnic minorities and of more open attitudes to ethnocultural pluralism that, in 1983, about thirty of the students of the *Cours Moyens* 1 and 2 sections of the *École Vitruve* traveled to Algeria.⁵² The class spent the three weeks from February 20 to March 13, 1983 at the *Lycée El Hayat* in Oran and the *Lycée de Ghardai'a* (Ghardaïa) in Willaya de Laghouat. When the coordinator, Christiane Aline, wrote her many letters in 1986 to request subsidies for the return trip to France by about two dozen Algerian students from Ghardaïa, she wrote that this was "to

⁴⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁰ Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Indiana University Press, 2004), 168.

⁵¹ John R. Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 82. Finkielkraut argued that abandoning universal French values and culture, would mean that violations of those values could be defended on the grounds of cultural specificity.

⁵² The *Cours Moyen* corresponds roughly to the fourth and fifth grades in the United States.

our knowledge the first time that such an exchange has happened between primary school classes.”⁵³ This exchange program, however, was certainly not the only student exchange between a French school and a school outside the *hexagone*. Indeed, when the *Association Vitruve* at first had difficulty acquiring funds from the mayor of the twentieth arrondissement, it sent an excerpt from an internal bulletin that advertised assistance to exchange programs with classes from the United States and Fort-de-France, Martinique.⁵⁴

The *École Élémentaire Vitruve* was founded in 1962 at the impetus of Departmental Inspector Robert Gloton. The school brought together a team of teachers to combat “scholastic failure” (*l'échec scolaire*) by placing the students at the center of their pedagogy, adopting new methods, team teaching, and incorporating the community and the parents in the life of the school. This student exchange was part of a much larger project that was directed at the problems of the immigrant population of the school. Located in the twentieth arrondissement of Paris, the *École Vitruve* had a large immigrant population—40% in 1973. Its minority students in that year were 45% Spanish and Portuguese, 35% North African, 7% Italian. By the time the *École Vitruve* requested funding for a return trip to France by Algerian students in 1986, students of Algerian descent seem to have become more prevalent at the school.⁵⁵

The *Vitruve* educators’ program is intriguing because it was justified, even to those in positions of authority in the Ministry of Education and local and national

⁵³ Draft of generic letter, 1986, in folder “Les enfants algériens, Bilan d’un séjour,” MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁵⁴ Letter from Monsieur Chaulet for the Comité de Parents to Monsieur Bariani, Maire de XXème arrondissement (Paris, 19 juin 1986) and article “Doudous, cow-boys ou gauchos?” MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁵⁵ Raymond Millot, “Douze classes en cooperative,” *Interéducation* 1, Février 1968, <http://www.ecolevitruve.fr/difference/Vitruvefev68004.pdf> [accessed on 3 August 2010]; L’École Vitruve, “Une école différente,” *Interéducation* 31, Mars 1973, <http://www.ecolevitruve.fr/lesarchives/interedu.html> [accessed on 3 August 2010], [05882].

government, in language that contradicted the established motifs of assimilationist rhetoric usually associated with French education. In a very passionate letter to the rector of the Academy, the program's coordinator J. F. Sitruk explained that the program was intended to integrate immigrant students into the life of the classroom by validating their culture. Sitruk criticized a situation in which students of immigrant origin found themselves in "cultural ghettos" and in which, when the program began, the students had such "a devalued image of their culture of origin" that they "refus[ed] these sequences. However, before the manifest interest of the French students in the language and the culture of others, the immigrant children have accepted participating in these animations."⁵⁶ In other words, when the teachers first began to integrate intercultural approaches into their teaching, the pupils were so isolated and had such a low opinion of their home cultures that they resisted the new methods. It is clear from this letter that these reforms were undertaken not only because of commitments by the teachers to what present-day educational scholars might call culturally responsive pedagogy, but because cultural ghettoization had led to an untenable learning environment in the classroom.

An important core belief of multicultural and intercultural education is that culturally responsive pedagogy benefits all students, not just ethnic minority students.⁵⁷

The letter by J. F. Sitruk cited above makes clear the commitment of the teachers of the

⁵⁶ Letter from J. F. Sitruk writing for the Equipe des maîtres to Madame le Recteur d'Académie de Paris, n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁵⁷ Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers Successful Teachers of African American Children* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009); Alyssa Hadley Dunn, *Teachers Without Borders?: The Hidden Consequences of International Teachers in U.S. Schools* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2013); Andrea J. Stairs, Kelly A. Donnell, and Alyssa Hadley Dunn, *Urban Teaching in America: Theory, Research, and Practice in K-12 Classrooms* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012); Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (New York: Teachers College, 2010); Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, *Educating Teachers for Diversity: Seeing with a Cultural Eye* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003); Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (Boston: Pearson Education, 2012).

Association de Vitruve to this principle; the ethnically French students were evidently included in intercultural lessons and it was the interest of these students in the culture and language of the minority that was instrumental in the increased self-valuation of the minority students. Lessons, according to the teacher Christiane Alinc, were “not addressed solely to the immigrant children but also to the little French.”⁵⁸ Letters written by host parents after the Algerian students visited France in 1986 testify to the effect of the visit on their children and even themselves. Danielle Pouban, whose children Laurent and Julien were students at the *École Vitruve*, expressed it quite elegantly: “The pleasure of hearing told of a world different from ours and also different from our imaginary oases.... The interest of discovering, of living the difference: Tahar’s prayer rug spread out several times per day and the occasion for the students to discuss their beliefs, for the adults to better sense the religious impregnation in social life.” Though the exchange was not without its drawbacks, including the noise of four children in the home, the lack of time for “conjugal intimacy,” and the roughness with which the Algerians played soccer with her boys, Madame Pouban hoped that the exchange would be more than just a “parenthesis.”⁵⁹

Unfortunately, the archives for the student exchanges did not contain letters from the families in Algeria about their experience hosting French students. Though the contrast between the two experiences might have been useful, the letters from French parents do allow one to see both what these cultural exchanges were like for those who took part and what parents and students felt the effects of the trips had been. As one

⁵⁸ Letter from Christiane Alinc, (Paris, 25 janvier 1983), MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁵⁹ Danièle Pouban, “Les enfants algériens, Bilan d’un séjour (juin 1986) dans la famille de Laurent et Julien Pouban,” MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

might expect, language could be a serious drawback for the bridging of cultural distance. One parent noted that one of the students who stayed with them was much better at French than the other, and so acted as an interpreter. While the parents and their daughter sent letters to the Algerian children, they realized that it might be some time before they received correspondence in return. But, the parents observed that, while it was difficult for the Algerian children to write in French, “We are not even capable of writing their names in Arabic.”⁶⁰ The students’ difficulties with the French language, however, were generally not a source of xenophobia or feelings of superiority. Rather the parents worried that the students were not getting much out of the exchange. Such was the case with a parent who noted that the boy who stayed with his family, Mohammed, did not speak French very well and was so proper and polite (as a result of his apparently withdrawn and brusque father) that one could not get him to say much at all.⁶¹

As the letter from Madame Pouban made clear, religion and its “impregnation in social life” was a topic of great concern in the homes of host families. While Madame Pouban enjoyed the opportunity to discuss religion that Tahar’s frequent prayer provided, Mohammed’s host family’s feelings were more mixed. The family had also taken in an adult, named Bagdad, who was chaperoning the trip. Bagdad not only monopolized the conversation in the house but also practiced Islam “assiduously.”⁶²

Still, many of the families seemed quite interested in discussing hot button issues like women’s roles and human rights, which were (and still are) central to contemporary

⁶⁰ Christine Favereaux, “Visite des enfants de Guardaia,” n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁶¹ Gacem, “Bilan de l’accueil de Bagdad Bitour et de Mohamed, En adulte et un enfant,” n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁶² Ibid.

discourses on Islam and immigration from the Maghreb.⁶³ In Mohammed's host family, for example, Bagdad and the family's son Karim engaged in passionate discussions because Karim enjoyed debate. The family felt the results were overwhelmingly positive: "[They] instituted a level of cultural exchange in the house which pleased us and which developed friendship (discussions on education, women in the world, politics, and across the divergences of viewpoint we developed a similar analysis of our conceptions of fundamental human behavior." In the style of intercultural education, the family had discovered a common trunk of humanity in the two cultures that allowed for acceptance and valuation of difference.⁶⁴

By examining the itineraries of the Algerian students visiting Paris and that of the Parisian students visiting Algeria, one can see the value placed on particular forms of cultural knowledge and the limits of cultural exchanges for these students. The Algerian government recommended an itinerary heavy with technological locations for the students from Paris. Similarly, in their letter to French public transportation officials, the teachers from *Vitruve* suggested a trip by the Algerian students to "the technical installations of the Metro," since the metro in Algeria was still being built, and to the train stations and the high speed rail, the TGV. That the teachers were requesting free travel on both systems likely influenced their request, however.

In response to a request for free access to Parisian monuments during the visit of the Algerian students, the minister of culture and communication made it a point to

⁶³ Joan Scott notes the way in which, during the headscarf affairs, proponents of the law—including the women's group Ni Putes, Ni Soumises (Neither Whores nor Dominated)—simply took for granted that women had an "innate desire ... for emancipation in Western terms." Scott contends, on the contrary, that while Islam may be patriarchal, so is France: "Women are objectified in both systems, although in different ways." Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 164, 171.

⁶⁴ Gacem, "Bilan de l'accueil de Bagdad Bitour et de Mohamed, En adulte et un enfant."

suggest potential locations for the students' itinerary. Among the locations suggested were the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, the *Musée de l'homme* (Museum of Man), and the Institute of the Arab World.⁶⁵ The minister of culture apparently missed the irony of providing this repackaged version of African and Arab culture to the young Algerian visitors. The subtexts of these buildings and institutions extended beyond the collections they housed. The *Musée de l'homme* was well known for its display of colonial subjects, including the genitalia of the Hottentot Venus. Similarly, the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts was housed in the *Palais de la Porte Dorée*, which was constructed at the *Bois de Vincennes* for the Colonial Exhibition of 1931 and later held *the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer* (Museum of Overseas France). The Ministry of Culture, therefore, attempted to buttress France's authority over the ethnography of its former colonies.

The list of attractions which the students eventually attended, however, suggests that the organizers from the *École Vitruve* and the school in Ghardaïa had other goals in mind. They were much more interested in expanding the horizons of their Algerian charges. The students' itinerary focused on French history and culture rather than repackaged versions of the colonial. All the Algerian students would visit three areas of Paris: The Eiffel Tower, *Champ de Mars*, and *Trocadero*; the *Arc de Triomphe*, the *Champs-Élysées* and *Concorde*; and finally ride on a barge on the Seine River and take a walking tour of the *Ile-de-la-Cité*. Students would be allowed to visit other attractions in smaller groups as their interest dictated, such as *Montmartre*, *Père Lachaise* cemetery, the Catacombs, *La Géode* (an Omni-Max theater), and UNESCO. In the final version of

⁶⁵ Letter from the Thierry Bondoux, Directeur Régionale des Affaires Culturelles de Paris Île-de-France, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, to Madame Katell Benoit, Coordinatrice de l'équipe enseignante, École élémentaire, Paris, 21 Mai 1986, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

their itinerary, *the Musée de l'Homme* was included as it was located near the Eiffel Tower. The students did not visit any of the other attractions suggested by the Ministry of Culture. Likewise the final itinerary for the trip to Algeria emphasized traditional “cultural patrimony.” Though the students visited a factory and a dam, the majority of their time seems to have been spent at the local school learning songs and games, and visiting the village of Ghardaïa and its museum, market, and palm groves.⁶⁶

A narrative by one teacher on the purpose of the trips brought to light the ways in which the trip to Algeria both met its stated purposes and yet fell short in achieving the goals of interculturalism. On the one hand, the teacher noted that many of the students who were leaving the school for the *collèges* were choosing Arabic as their language and others were continuing “to work on Algeria.”⁶⁷ The letter did not specify whether these students were of Maghreb descent or from some other ethnic group. Either case affirms a culturally relevant approach to education—finding value in one’s own culture or acquiring the tools to interact with people from other backgrounds. On the other hand, a student is quoted in the letter as stating that “when one has made a trip like that, one can no longer be racist.”⁶⁸ While the sentiment may have been chosen (or possibly invented) to appeal to the supporting organizations to whom the letter was being sent, it fails to acknowledge the extent to which racism is institutionalized and structural in Contemporary France rather than simply the product of individual interactions.

⁶⁶ “Project de Sejour,” n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁶⁷ “‘Le Grand Voyage en Algérie,’ Réalisé par les C.M. 1-2 École 3 rue Vitruve, Paris 20,” n.d. “Projet de Séjour,” n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Intercultural education, however, is quite concerned with locating the power structures and even violence of ethnocultural relations within the context of nation states.⁶⁹

The materials circulated among the *École Vitruve*, the state bureaucracy, and the cultural organizations that supported (or not) the two exchanges between France and Algeria demonstrate the extent to which the school's attempts at intercultural education were a work in progress that had developed over the course of many years. Though intercultural education was a movement developing on an international scale, what exactly constituted intercultural practices in the everyday environment of the classroom appears to have still been very much in doubt. The school moved in steps from the inclusion of cultural touchstones in the classroom ("couscous pedagogy"), to bringing in language teachers, to forming an association of multiple schools, to arranging student exchanges with foreign schools.⁷⁰ Apparently pleased with its results at each stage, the school continued to expand and deepen its engagement with interculturalism. This approach demonstrates that even beyond any ideological commitment to interculturalism, the teachers of the *École Vitruve* were concerned with creating a workable classroom space that allowed for the success of their particularly diverse student body. As J. F. Sitruk put it in a letter to the rector of the Academy of Paris,⁷¹ intercultural education was

⁶⁹ Coulby, "Intercultural Education."

⁷⁰ On "couscous pedagogy" see Eva Lemaire, "Education, Integration, and Citizenship in France," in *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education*, ed. James A. Banks (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁷¹ For educational purposes, France and the overseas departments are divided into thirty regions or "academies." The rector of the Academy is appointed by the president and represents the minister of education; he or she is responsible for every level of education, from the maternal schools to the universities, within the academy. "Les Rectorats et Services Départementaux de L'éducation Nationale," accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid3/les-rectorats-les-inspections-academiques.html>.

vital to the daily practice of education and “an indispensable human development for the children to learn to live together.”⁷²

It was surprising, however, that despite the threat that interculturalism might pose to dominant discourses of French universalism, the teachers of the school received verbal, monetary, and personnel support from authorities for their projects. Bruno Halff, the inspector general for Arabic, was instrumental in “their experience of intercultural education” in Arabic language and culture, helping them get an Arabic language teacher in 1975. In 1978, the relevant ambassadors sent teachers of Portuguese and Serbo-Croatian. In 1981 and 1983, the school had arranged trips to Portugal.⁷³ In response to his letter to the rector of the Academy, Sitruk received a laudatory response congratulating the teachers on their intercultural work and permitting the school to invite the students from Algeria.⁷⁴

Indeed, with the exception of the letter cited above from the mayor of Paris refusing to supply funding, the response to letters from the school was largely positive. Moreover, even in those letters in which funding was denied, no criticism was made of the larger intercultural project of the school or of the student exchanges. Economic considerations were paramount, as they were for the departmental inspector of national education, who despite having no money to supply, “could only see advantages to the stay, at the *École Vitruve*, of Algerian students from Ghardaïa.” Other officials, like the minister of youth and sports, were hamstrung by bureaucratic regulations that only

⁷² Letter from J. F. Sitruk writing for the Équipe des maîtres to Madame le Recteur d’Académie de Paris, n.d., MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Letter from Hélène Ahrweiler, Le Recteur de l’Académie, Chancelier des Universités de Paris to J. F. Sitruk, Coordonnateur de l’Équipe des maîtres de l’École élémentaire, Sorbonne, Paris, 3 février 1984, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

allowed for “actions taken in favor of the adjustment of school schedules.”⁷⁵ It is telling that the letters provided to the educational authorities differed very little and generally proclaimed proudly the intercultural efforts of the school; the writers apparently did not fear that openness about their goals would handicap their requests for money and support from state officials.

The support received from the state bureaucracy bespeaks the extent to which multicultural and intercultural theories of education blossomed during the 1980s. When the Socialists came to power in 1981, they placed a greater emphasis on intercultural education in an attempt to facilitate connections between home and school.⁷⁶ The French policy toward immigrant education, however, never went as far toward multiculturalism as England’s policy did, despite both countries having large immigrant populations. Socialist Minister of Education Jean-Pierre Chevènement commissioned a report by noted scholar of Islam Jacques Berque on immigration’s effect on schooling. “The *Rapport Berque*,” in Erik Bleich’s estimation, “can be seen as advocating a halfway house between a France with a ‘historic French cultural identity’ and one where there is a ‘new concept of unity, respecting and taking into account heterogeneity, which the problem of immigrants’ children raises.’”⁷⁷ Some in the educational system, such as J.-M. Amaré, responding to the report for the *Syndicat National des Lycées et Collèges*, believed that even a halfway house was half too far:

⁷⁵ Letter from D. Rieu, L’Inspecteur Général de l’Éducation Nationale, Directeur des Services Académiques de l’Éducation Nationale to Monsieur Ourman, Inspecteur Départemental de l’Éducation Nationale, 20ème circonscription Primaire, Paris, 16 mai 1986; Letter from Gérard Courtal, L’Inspecteur Principal Directeur Départemental, Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports to Madame la Président, Association Vitruve, Paris, 7 avril 1986, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁷⁶ Hargreaves, *Immigration in Post-War France*, 33.

⁷⁷ Bleich, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies,” 87.

To say nothing of the perverse effects of interculturalism on French youth. Because not only the intercultural perspective, which puts all cultures on the same plane, engendering a skeptical indifference toward norms, whatever they were, but more it undermines the cultural project that carries our nation in its undertakings. And one can be astonished by the contradiction by [P]rofessor Berque that consists, on the one hand, of reclaiming a rootedness [*enracinement*] for the young immigrants, and on the other hand, of wishing to suppress the former condition, a solid ground, for all youths.... The fundamental perspective of the *Rapport Berque* can only therefore be rejected ... The rejection of the intercultural implies only the necessity for our school to teach and to develop the European cultural project (to return to our origins) and the proper manner that has our nation situated in relation to them (proper French culture).⁷⁸

School officials looked not only to the French authorities for support but to private and semi-private institutions as well. For example, they appealed to the youth organization *Fédération des foyers Leo Lagrange*, which was especially interested in providing opportunities for youth leisure, on the basis of the organization's interest in "develop[ing] the idea of friendship, exchanges, and fraternity among peoples."⁷⁹

Though few donated money, there was no evidence that the organizations expressed any concerns with the exchange itself or with its underlying purposes. UNESCO, for instance, was unable to give money but offered to work with the teacher to support future endeavors and invited the Algerian students to visit UNESCO during their trip.⁸⁰ The volunteer organization *Compagnons Bâtisseurs* funded the *École Vitruve* to the tune of 4,500 francs for its trip to Algeria.⁸¹ The *Institut du Monde Arabe*, however, in 1983,

⁷⁸ J.-M. Amaré, "L'École et l'immigration: à propos du Rapport Berque," *Syndicat National des Lycées et Collèges* (Paris, 1985) in Hargreaves, *Immigration in Post-War France*, 41.

⁷⁹ Letter from La Présidente Association Vitruve and Le Président de l'A.M.E.V. [Association des Amis de l'École Vitruve] to the Fédération des Foyers Leo Lagrange, Paris, 21 mars 1986, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁸⁰ Letter from Melle Catherine Okai, Division de l'égalité des chances en matière d'éducation et des programmes spéciaux, UNESCO to Madame Katell Benoit, Coordinatrice, Association Vitruve, Paris, 18 juin 1986, MNE 2006.07002.1-3.

⁸¹ Draft letter from la Coordinatrice, Association Vitruve to Compagnons bâtisseurs, n.d. MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

provided the bulk of the funding for the trip to Algeria—40,000 francs.⁸² For the 1986 trip by the Algerian students to Paris, the *Fédération des Oeuvres Laïques* (Federation of Secular Works) had exhausted its available funding but asked Mme. Aline to contact it at the beginning of the following year to “establish a common project.”⁸³ The *Comité Catholique contre la Faim* (Catholic Committee against Hunger), which was founded as an umbrella organization in 1961 after a plea by Pope John XXIII to counter world hunger, made a contribution of 3,000 francs, though the money arrived after the exchange.⁸⁴ The support that the school was able to acquire from secular Arabic and Catholic organizations bespeaks a broad consensus on the value of the cultural exchange.

Vivre Ensemble: *Grassroots Interculturalism in the Late 1980s*

Under the auspices of the minister of social affairs and national solidarity’s “*Vivre ensemble*” (Live Together) campaign, the ADRI (*Agence pour le développement des relations interculturelles*) “was charged in May 1985 with a mission of observation and evaluation of significant or innovative initiatives in the matter of insertion of immigrants

⁸² Draft letter from C. Aline, pour l’équipe des maîtres, École Élémentaire to Institut du monde Arabe, n.d.; Letter from Philippe Ardant, Le Président, Institut du Monde Arabe to Madame Christiane Aline, Directrice de l’École Élémentaire Publique, Paris, 22 novembre 1982, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁸³ Notation of telephone conversation 6 juin 1986 on letter from Christiane Aline, La Présidente, Pour l’Association Vitruve to Madame Monique Roy, Fédération des Oeuvres Laïques, Paris, 2 juin 1986, MNE 2006.7002.1-3.

⁸⁴ Bernard Holzer, Secrétaire Général, Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement to Association Vitruve, Paris 31 Octobre 1986 MNE 2006.7002.1-3. Peter Utting, Mario Pianta, and Anne Ellersiek, *Global Justice Activism and Policy Reform in Europe: Understanding When Change Happens* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Denis Pelletier, “1985-1987: Une Crise D’identité Du Tiers-Mondisme Catholique?,” *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 177 (October 1, 1996): 89–106, doi:10.2307/3778954. According to Pelletier’s article, in the 1980s, the Catholic relief organization was attacked by commentators (usually on the far-right) for being Communist subversive organizations. Though the organization’s social positions were no doubt left of center, there is no real evidence that it was a Communist movement.

and intercultural cohabitation.”⁸⁵ The report serves as a sort of compendium of locally devised and directed programs to integrate immigrants, especially those of North African origin, into the life of the community. It provides a useful cross-section of programs directed at immigrants and their families. The report, as admitted in its introduction, is not exhaustive and tends to favor new and recently improved programs.⁸⁶ The preference given to new approaches, however, ensures that the programs represent the state of interculturalism in 1988. They demonstrate the same experimentation indicative of the class trips sponsored by the *École Vitruve*. Moreover, these projects were often subsidized by various state agencies, though they seldom fell under the direct authority of governmental bodies.

A hallmark of the French educational system has long been the distinction between “instruction” and “education” or that which teachers do in the classroom and that which parents are expected to do outside of the schoolhouse doors. Traditionally, this distinction has been at least partly to blame for French teachers’ resistance to incorporation of students’ out-of-school lives into the classroom and teachers’ refusal even to sponsor clubs or athletics outside of school hours (a common expectation of teachers in the United States).⁸⁷ New emphasis on self-expression and the “whole child” after 1968, however, changed the roles of teachers to “counselors, not just instructors.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Hélène Trublin-Savoie, Centre de Ressources Documentaires, “Insertion des Immigrés et Cohabitation Interculturelle, Répertoire d’expériences, 1988,” (Paris, 1988), Introduction, ANMT 1998 011 IJJbis 357

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Leslie J. Limage, “Education and Muslim Identity: The Case of France,” *Comparative Education* 36, no. 1 (February 2000): 76.

⁸⁸ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 113; Leslie Limage argues that the French division between instruction and education has been relatively constant over time, with “several surveys and analyses of the teacher union press and policy statements ... [that] [n]o teacher union asks for or considers parent or pupil participation in any classroom issue. Teachers ‘instruct’; parents ‘educate.’ Pupils receive, successfully or

As Minister of Education Chevènement had made clear in commissioning the Berque Report, the gap between the home lives and school lives of students was especially wide for children of immigrants.

The ADRI report belies the supposedly bright-line distinction between school and home. Many of the activities serve educative functions and bridge the divide between the classroom and the community. In the Franche-Comte region in 1984, the Saône Association for Aid to Foreign Workers (ASATE) began a tutoring program for the children of immigrants in primary school or the *collège of Saint-Loup-sur-Semouse*. Students met with volunteers at the ASATE location in groups of three for twenty minutes after school or with part-time employees at their school during school hours; when common locations were unavailable, volunteers took the students into their homes. The program was intended to “palliate the insufficiency of parents who had not totally mastered the French language” and who, thus, could not help the children with their studies. Teachers, parents, and tutors—despite the traditional divisions—all collaborated in the assessment of the student’s progress at the end of the year. In fact, the report argued that further involvement by the parents was needed: “more frequent contact with the teachers and volunteers, more marked interest in the scholastic work of the children.”⁸⁹ Of course, as scholars of multicultural education in the United States have often argued, traditional stereotypes that portray minority parents as undervaluing, uninterested in, and uninvolved in education usually obfuscate the real causes of lack of

otherwise, ‘knowledge’.” She argues that it was under Minister of National Education Claude Allègre, in the late 1990s, that teachers were asked “to undertake what [we]re viewed as decadent American reforms.” Joan Scott puts the moment of transition much earlier, contending that one reason that the teacher unions came out so vociferously for the headscarf ban was that teachers (especially those in the secondary schools) had trouble identifying with students in the banlieue, who were from such different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Limage, “Education and Muslim Identity: The Case of France,” 76–77.

⁸⁹ Trublin-Savoie, 133-134, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357

parental involvement and of minority student “achievement gaps.”⁹⁰ Another organization, *Animations et Spectacles Populaires Interculturels* borrowed Chevènement’s language: “The whole world recognizes that one of the reasons for scholastic failure is the divide that exists between the scholastic world of the student and his familial milieu.” Thus, the program would “assure a link between the family and the school and fulfill therefore a certain function of welcoming and inserting families into the world of the school.”⁹¹ These programs demonstrated that the division between instruction and education may have been overstated and that parents, teachers and civil society occasionally cooperated instructional programs.

If there was any common element to these programs, it was their diversity. In some programs, the educational element was evident, such as “Berber Week” in Saint-Nazaire. Another project gave “young people on the path of marginalization” in Mons, in the Nord, video equipment to do reports on the development of their area so that they might “invest these young people in their surroundings” and “make them discover the working of a politics of their environs.” Other ideas such as the creation of a “resto-rock-bar” in the Essonne department and the painting of a mural on the Avenue de Choisy in the Thirteenth Arrondissement of Paris, were more about “permit[ting] a better knowledge of the residents of the quarter” and “show[ing] that cultural diversity can be a source of mutual enrichment” than about academics.⁹²

⁹⁰ Paul C Gorski, *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap* (New York: Teacher’s College Press, 2013); Gloria Ladson-Billings, “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools,” *Educational Researcher* 35, no. 7 (October 1, 2006): 3–12, doi:10.3102/0013189X035007003.

⁹¹ Trublin-Savoie, 99-100, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357

⁹² Trublin-Savoie, 19-20, 95-98, 117-118, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357

As in Mons, a program in Torcy also attempted to get students to interact with their environs, to “tell your *cit *” through artistic productions. In the background of these projects is the recurring trope of “uprooting” immigrant children, the palpable social danger of children without anchors in their culture of origin or that of France. Yet, the program in Torcy complicates the familiar rhetoric by encouraging children to engage their *cit *, the *R sidence du Lac*, “in the spirit of rehabilitation, to reflect on possible changes, your wish to participate.” The program directors wanted rootedness, or as they put it “desperately burrowing research,” but they also wished for active and critical citizenship. Their ambivalence may have been born of the fact that the *cit * was built only in 1968 and that urban spaces for immigrants were often hastily built and unfinished.⁹³ They may have viewed the soil for *enracinement* as not very deep. Other programs used the history of their city or region to justify their openness to other cultures. A group from Herault, in the Languedoc region, argued that Languedoc is “traditionally a land of welcoming and exchanges” while a program in Toulouse planned an “intercultural festival of Toulouse, city open on the Mediterranean.”⁹⁴

As when the Ministry of Culture attempted to repackage “traditional” Algerian and colonial culture for the Algerian students visiting the * cole Vitruve*, the “cultures of origin” which progressive teachers in France valued for their students could have many different guises. Much research in intercultural and multicultural education in France emphasizes the French tendency toward “couscous pedagogy,” which reduces other cultures to ethnic tokens like food, holidays, and festivals and which mirrors the early

⁹³ Trublin-Savoie, 131-132, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357

⁹⁴ Trublin-Savoie, 107-110, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357

days of multicultural education in the United States.⁹⁵ Such approaches to the culture of students, while perhaps better than complete ignorance in favor of the dominant culture, could have negative side effects: the reduction of colonial cultures to supposedly traditional or timeless traits, the concealment of the recent past and the violence that underlay colonialism and postcolonialism, the tendency toward asking students to speak for their ethnicity or to identify with a traditional culture that may not reflect their realities, and the division of the pasts of the minority and the majority rather than the acknowledgment of their common development. The difficulty of validating difference with reifying hegemonic narratives of minority culture could lead to Janus-faced programs even within a single organization.

The Nazairian Committee for Welcoming and Solidarity with Immigrant Workers (CNAISTI) in Saint-Nazaire, in the Loire-Atlantique Department, held two programs geared toward its largely immigrant community in 1988. The blended approach of the two programs speaks to the difficulty of valuing immigrant culture without simplifying it. The first, “Cultural Exposition on Arab Art and Civilization: AS SALAM [Peace],” was a three-week program featuring an exhibition of contemporary Algerian paintings and Arab calligraphy, a presentation of “francophone writers of the Maghreb,” programs in the school and the library with an Algerian storyteller, and an Algerian film presented by its author. Roughly two thirds of the budget for the program came from the town of Saint-Nazaire, with most of the balance coming from the *Fonds d’Action Sociale* (FAS).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Lemaire, “Education, Integration, and Citizenship in France,” 326.

⁹⁶ Amelia H. Lyons argues that the Fonds d’Action Sociale was an organization that intertwined the republican and imperial projects, and reveals the darker history of France’s integration policies. Created in the final years of the Algerian War, the organization funded social welfare directed exclusively toward Algerians in “the hope that welfare services would simultaneously provide evidence that France was committed to ‘integrating’ Algerians [...] and effectively monitoring them in order to root out those

Notably, the exhibition featured a blend of traditional artistic forms and contemporary creations, thus speaking to the Maghreb's past while recognizing its modernity and continued artistic influence. The inclusion of francophone writers acknowledged the entwined linguistic pasts of France and its former empire. The presentation of the Algerian film by its author further credited the contemporary artistic production of the country and allowed for the opportunity to contextualize and engage critically with the film. The program did, however, include traditional cultural representations like the Arab calligraphy exhibit and the Algerian storytelling in the schools and library, though we cannot be precise about the content of those exhibits. The goal of the program, as stated by the organizers, is evidently intercultural in nature: "Recognition of the cultural identity of the different foreign cultures in the framework of cultural dialogue."⁹⁷

CNASTI's second program also walked the fine line between traditional and modern representations of other cultures. The "Berber Week (Berber Customs of the Moroccan Atlases)," directed toward local students (though the public was welcomed), featured a traditionally decorated Berber tent, conferences, exhibitions, musical performances, and films. The majority of Moroccans living in Saint-Nazaire were themselves of Berber descent. Given the organizers' "desire to promote a 'different' culture," it is obvious that the program was meant for all students, not just those of Moroccan heritage. According to the report, forty primary school classes totaling 1,200

associating with the Algerian independence movement." After the fall of the empire, the FAS began providing assistance to all immigrants and parlayed its role in solving the "Algerian crisis" into one managing "the immigrant problem." Amelia H. Lyons, "Social Welfare, French Muslims and Decolonization in France: The Case of the Fonds D'Action Sociale," *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no. 1 (2009): 65, doi:10.1080/00313220802636072; In 1982, however, the Mitterrand government began to redefine the FAS, instructing them to work closely with immigrant associations and local governments. Safran, "The Mitterrand Regime and Its Policies of Ethnocultural Accommodation," 54.

⁹⁷ Trublin-Savoie, 115-116, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

students visited the exhibits, as did an additional 250 students from the leisure centers. The organizers hoped that teachers would supplement the experience with class commentary, cassettes, and books. The impulse for the program actually came from the creators of the feature films—“Berber Rhythms,” a “musical film-spectacle,” and “Julia chez les berbères,” a documentary about a four-year-old French girl living among a Berber community in the Maghreb—and the CNASTI supplemented the films with “a maximum number of facets of the life of the Berbers.” Like their other program, the “Berber Week” combined the traditional culture of the Berbers with more contemporary filmic representations.⁹⁸

Many programs devoted special attention to female immigrants, particularly in their roles as mothers and wives. Only a few programs concerned themselves with “professional” or “economic insertion” of female immigrants.⁹⁹ Typically, those interested in integrating immigrants viewed Muslim women in traditional terms as isolated and confined to the home. Women were perceived both as particularly difficult to reach and modernize and as vital to any effort to influence their children. As a case in point, since reformers recognized that children were beginning primary school already behind and that the immigrant families were much less likely to take advantage of the Maternal Schools (free, universal, voluntary schools for children between two and six years of age), the ADRI reported on a program in the Île-de-France region intended to

⁹⁸ Trublin-Savoie, 117-118, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

⁹⁹ Trublin-Savoie, 161-62, 191-92, 211-12, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

increase participation of immigrant women in the education of their children and to prevent the twin bugbears of education “*l’échec scolaire* and delinquency.”¹⁰⁰

To those familiar with the conflicts between the state and the Catholic Church during the Third Republic particularly with respect to educational policy, this concern for the influence of women, and especially religiously devout women, on the republican educational project should not be surprising. Indeed, the French state’s reaction to the religious practices of girls during the headscarf affairs as recently as 2004 was a product of discourses that went back well over a century about the susceptibility of women to religious authorities (and in turn the influence of women over the religious practices of their families). Even beyond the strictly educational, a popular strand of anti-Islamic rhetoric has been the supposed domination and isolation of women as social, political, and even sexual actors.¹⁰¹

Most efforts listed in the ADRI report took place in major cities like Paris or Marseille, and particularly in the largely-immigrant *banlieues* and *Zones d’Education Prioritaire* (Priority Education Zones). The ZEPs were instituted by Minister of Education Alain Savary in 1981 and granted additional funding and pedagogical freedom to schools facing particularly challenging circumstances. According to the circular in which Savary set out the ZEPs, their purpose was “to contribute to correcting this inequality, by the selective reinforcement of educative action in the zones and in the

¹⁰⁰ Trublin-Savoie, 17-18, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357; On the underrepresentation of (especially North African) immigrants in the maternal schools: Amicale des Algériens en Europe, Fédération de l’Éducation Nationale and Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens, “Rapport introductif sur la Formation des travailleurs migrants, Conférence nationale sur la formation des travailleurs migrants,” in folder Déclarations et Rapport Introductif, 7-8 Janvier 1978, ANMT 1998 011 1JJbis 357.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*; Bowen, *Why the French Don’t like Headscarves*; Miriam Ticktin, “Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-immigrant Rhetoric Meet,” *Signs* 33, no. 4 (June 1, 2008): 863–89, doi:10.1086/518278.

social milieus where the rate of scholastic failure is the highest.” To this end, Savary argued, it was necessary to “subordinate the augmentation of funding to the anticipated yield in terms of democratization of scholarly formation.” The ZEPs were to be selected based on a mixture of factors, including socio-economic status of the families, geographic location, dropout rates, and indeed, the number of “foreign or non-francophone children.”¹⁰² Some of the programs studied under the ADRI report took place under the auspices or funding of the ZEPs, though not all of them were purely educational in nature.¹⁰³ That programs need not be restricted to schools speaks to the holistic approach to scholarly failure adopted by the Ministry of Education for the creation of the ZEPs. The Ministry of Education encouraged the inclusion of data on the environment outside the school in the selection of ZEPs; welcomed the inclusion of other state agencies, businesses, and community organizations; and desired that measures taken “consist not only of a simple reinforcement of traditional means.”¹⁰⁴ Under such conditions, intercultural approaches to education were bound to gain institutional support.

Failed Decoupling: The Headscarf Affairs and the Rhetoric of Exclusion

¹⁰² A. Savary, “Enseignements élémentaire et secondaire, Circulaire n° 81-238 du 1^{er} juillet 1981,” in B.O. n° 27 du 9 juillet 1981, 2077-2079, <http://www.educationprioritaire.education.fr/textoff/81-238.pdf> [Accessed on 6 August 2010]. In order to trigger ZEP status, according to Savary’s circular, inspectors were to determine the percentage of elementary classes in which more than 30% of students were foreign or non-French speaking and the global percentage of such students in the *collèges*.

¹⁰³ See, for example, the project “Animations et Spectacles Populaires Interculturels” in the 20th Arrondissement of Paris, where an umbrella organization for the groups working in the area hoped to create “intercultural manifestations destined to dynamize the effort of the whole ZEP”: Trublin-Savoie, 99-100, ANMT 1998 011 IJbis 357.

¹⁰⁴ A. Savary, “Circulaire n° 81-536 du 28 décembre 1981,” in B.O. spécial n° 1 du 21 janvier 1982, 6-15, <http://www.educationprioritaire.education.fr/textoff/81-536.pdf> [Accessed on 6 August 2010]; Alain Savary, “Enseignements élémentaire et secondaire, Circulaire n° 82-128 du 19 mars 1982,” in B.O. n° 13 du 1 avril 1982, 1189-1191, <http://www.educationprioritaire.education.fr/textoff/82-128.pdf> [Accessed on 6 August 2010].

In September of 1989, Samira Saidani and Leah and Fatima Achaboun arrived for their first day of school at the *Collège Gabriel-Havez*, a middle-school in Creil outside Paris, wearing Islamic headscarves. They were expelled for violating French policies of secularism in public schools. The “Headscarf Affair” split the country, including the left. The *Ligue de l’enseignement*, which coordinated school and popular education programs in France, asked that the girls be reinstated and headscarves accepted, while the major teachers’ unions pressed the schools and the government to remain firm. One group of leftist intellectuals argued that excluding the girls only fed the flames of Islamic fundamentalism and the extreme right in France. In contrast, a second group warned that reinstating the girls would amount to appeasement with religious involvement in education, or “the Munich of the Republican school.”¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the foremost concern of commentators during the headscarf affair was that the French national ideal of Republican universalism, in which a citizen’s relationship to the state was direct and unmediated would be sacrificed to the “Anglo-Saxon” multicultural model, a largely imagined anarchy of interest groups. The French nation, they fretted, would end up only the sum of its many parts.

Much of the retrenchment of French intellectuals against the wearing of the *hijab* in schools can actually be attributed to the Ministry of National Education’s early toleration of headscarves and its ambivalence about the expulsion of the girls. The Ministry was reticent to exclude Muslim students (especially girls) from the classroom

¹⁰⁵ Bowen, *Why the French Don’t like Headscarves*, 82–85; As Bowen eloquently explains, the original 1905 law that governed state secularism actually placed no restrictions on individuals. Furthermore, the law only prohibited government support of religious practices, not religion per se. Indeed, the French government directly supported the building of the Paris Mosque by making sure it was also a cultural center and subsidizes religious schools even today. See also, the recent study of the headscarf affair by Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.

“so as to be in a better position to exercise its persuasion over what [the *hijab*] covers, namely the mind.”¹⁰⁶ As Joan Scott has made evident, a divide emerged even among progressive educators and intellectuals over the practical and ideological role of the school and, in particular, over the school’s approach to difference. Ideologically, they wondered, should the school expect cultural homogeneity as a condition of access to education or was the school responsible for the creation of that homogeneity from students with cultural particularities?¹⁰⁷ Practically, would expulsion simply further expose Muslim girls to exactly those forces which progressives feared: male domination, radical religiosity, and cultural communalism? As sociologists Françoise Gaspard and Farhad Khosrokhavar argued, “If one accepts the postulate that the royal road to liberation is through education then to reject girls with veils ... is to penalize them ... by denying them the possibility of becoming modern.”¹⁰⁸ The grandmother of the Lévy sisters, who were expelled from school for wearing headscarves in 2003, agreed. She attributed the girls’ decision to convert to Islam and adopt the headscarf to their search for stability after the separation of their parents (neither of which were Muslim or even practicing of their respective faiths): “I believe it is only through the education they receive in the course of their studies that they will be able, perhaps, to no longer need

¹⁰⁶ Liauzu, “Interculturalism,” 26; This point is also made in Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*.

¹⁰⁷ John Bowen attributes the law’s requirement that students leave their identities “at the door” to a “world as abstracted from social reality.” In other words, sociological or psychological approaches to concepts like identity or adolescent development were eschewed in favor of the abstract notions about individualism and the role of the school. Joan Scott, on the other hand, contends that these arguments were actually the result of a perversion of the history of the French school system since the Ferry Laws: “A shared language, culture, and ideological formation—and so a nation one and indivisible—was to be the outcome of the educational process. Schools were the instruments for constructing the nation, not embodiments of the nation itself. And they had enormous authority, for they were the privileged site where differences were contained and transformed into Frenchness.” Bowen, *Why the French Don’t like Headscarves*, 234; Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 99–103.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 28.

Islam, which for the moment is necessary to them.”¹⁰⁹ Bertrand Ogilvie put it simply: “To ask young Muslim women to take off their veils before coming to class is a bit like asking them to pass final exams at the beginning of the course.”¹¹⁰ Even those who opposed the headscarf ban, with few exceptions, failed to challenge the underlying discourse of assimilation, the role of the school as cultural arbiter, or the equation of French culture with modernity.

The timing of the headscarf affairs and the hardening approach to religious and cultural difference among postcolonial groups which the affairs represented, had nothing to do with any sudden increase in *hijab* wearing or in the visibility of minority ethnic groups. John Bowen notes that even at the *Collège Gabriel-Havez* the wearing of the *hijab* was not uncommon: “an earlier class photo at the same school showed a girl in headscarf as evidence of the middle school’s openness to cultural diversity!”¹¹¹ Furthermore, it is not a foregone conclusion that the increased visibility of minorities would have led to a reactionary response; as has been stated, the marches of *banlieue* youth in the early 1980s engendered greater attention to the concerns of second-generation immigrants. Laurent Dubois, moreover, has demonstrated that the success of the ethnically diverse French soccer team in the World Cup of 1998 seemed to herald an era of racial inclusiveness.¹¹² Finally, Mireille Rosello argues that the television spectacle of the *affaire des sans-papiers de Saint-Bernard*, a group of undocumented immigrants who camped out for months and engaged in hunger strikes in an attempt to

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 31.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹¹¹ Bowen, *Why the French Don’t like Headscarves*, 83.

¹¹² Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 154–176.

get identity papers, “was instrumental in the breaking down of the left-right consensus that deportation was a suitable response to illegal immigration.”¹¹³

Just as immigration rhetoric and politics had shifted in the 1970s with the economic downturn and the Iranian Revolution, the increase in concern about immigrant girls after 1989 moved with national and international politics. The Bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989 put issues of republicanism, *laïcité*, and universalism front and center. The principal of the school in Creil, Ernest Chenière, a black man from the Antilles, used the occasion of the bicentennial to boost his Republican *bona fides* and to parlay his hardline stance on immigrants into a political career. He was already active in Chirac’s right-of-center RPR (*Rassemblement pour la République*) and was one of those who wished the party would strengthen its ties with Le Pen’s far-right National Front. He secured an assembly seat in 1994 and helped push François Bayrou to issue his declaration against the *hijab*. Le Pen’s burgeoning success in 1988, when he received fourteen percent of the vote in the first round of the presidential election, brought the immigrant issue to the fore and pushed politicians of all parties (but especially those on the right) to consider how they might recapture the votes they were losing to the ultra-nationalist firebrand. In the European Parliament elections of 1994, Le Pen’s party gained eleven seats, and in 2002 he came in second in the first round of the presidential election, defeating socialist candidate and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin before losing in a landslide to Jacques Chirac in the second round of voting.¹¹⁴ Also, in 1989, the Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwa against Salmon Rushdie. “International ‘political Islam,’” according to John Bowen, “appeared on magazine covers in the form of Iranian women

¹¹³ Rosello, “Representing Illegal Immigrants in France,” 137.

¹¹⁴ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 36–38.

in Islamic dress, adding a new dimension to scarves in French schools.”¹¹⁵ When the demands to do something about Islamic immigration reached their apex in 2003, the threat of international terrorism had been added to the electoral successes of Le Pen.¹¹⁶ Finally, demands by minority groups were attributed to “external pressures—from the European Union and the international institutions like the United Nations” that already seemed to threaten French sovereignty. Timothy Smith, argues, however, that blaming international institutions simply allowed French elites to ignore the internal problems that contributed to immigrant disaffection.

From 1989 to the riots of 2005, heightened exclusionary rhetoric became the norm even at the highest levels of government.¹¹⁷ In 1993, the government revised the nationality law, changing the stipulation, in effect since 1889, that automatically granted citizenship at the age of majority to children born on French soil.¹¹⁸ Thereafter, these individuals would have to ask for citizenship and demonstrate a willingness to set aside communalism. The law even required the children of Algerians born before independence to supply proof of “*enracinement*” (rootedness) to be granted citizenship. When the Socialists regained control of the legislature in 1997, they dropped the requirement for proof of *enracinement* but retained the emphasis on individual loyalty to the state.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Bowen, *Why the French Don't like Headscarves*, 83.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹¹⁷ Historian Timothy Smith argues that “since the early 1990s, France has been in the midst of a racial crisis,” though much of the fear is probably unjustified: Smith, *France in Crisis*, 177.

¹¹⁸ Weil, *How to Be French*, 162–164.

¹¹⁹ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 81–82.

The various conservative presidents of the period used language that strained the antagonisms between ethnic minorities and the state and that recalled familiar tropes about colonization and Islam. In 1991, Jacques Chirac, while still mayor of Paris, referred to the “overdose” of foreign populations in France and the “noise and odors” of the Africans living in the heavily-immigrant Nineteenth Arrondissement. In September of the same year, former President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing bemoaned the “invasion” of France by foreigners.¹²⁰ Later, in October 2005, then Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy furthermore derided rioters as “*la racaille*” (typically translated as “scum”) and spoke of cleaning up the *cités* with a Kärcher, a power washer used to clean graffiti from walls and sidewalks. Quite a few commentators saw his comments through the prism of ethnic cleansing.¹²¹ Left-leaning politicians have not been immune to similar pronouncements, however. Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard declared on March 19, 1990 that “France could no longer afford to ‘take in all the wretched of the world’.”¹²² And in 1998, Socialist Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement called *banlieue* youth “little savages.”¹²³

In tandem with the new harsh approach to religious symbols in French schools and to youths of immigrant descent more generally, the French state began in the late

¹²⁰ Charles Tshimanga, “Let the Music Play: The African Diaspora, Popular Culture, and National Identity in Contemporary France,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Ch. Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 263.

¹²¹ The term “*racaille*,” sometimes inverted in “Verlan” style to “*cailleras*,” has been adopted by some *banlieue* youth as a form of self-identification. Boubeker, “Outsiders in the French Melting Pot: The Public Construction of Invisibility for Visible Minorities,” 85.

¹²² Didier Gondola, “Transient Citizens: The Othering and Indigenization of Blacks and Beurs within the French Republic,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Ch. Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 263.

¹²³ Boubeker, “Outsiders in the French Melting Pot: The Public Construction of Invisibility for Visible Minorities,” n. 1.

1980s to devalue intercultural approaches to education. Until the mid-1980s, “Across the OECD countries there [was] a growing willingness to adapt educational systems to take into account differing cultures.”¹²⁴ The Commission on Nationality, however, reaffirmed the role of education in defining French nationality.¹²⁵ As political scientist Erik Bleich argues, even though “the government-established High Council on Integration (*Haut Conseil à l’Intégration*) accepts that cultural diversity can enrich the nation, it does not advocate any major changes in French institutions, particularly educational institutions, as a result of it.”¹²⁶ In 2004, after the Stasi Commission issued its report on the headscarf issues, which included a number of suggested compromise measures to end the marginalization of Muslim youth, President Chirac accepted for law only the recommendation banning “conspicuous signs of religious affiliation in public schools.”¹²⁷

In 1989, just as the rhetoric about immigrants and their place in French society became more unwelcoming, the Council of Europe had begun to enlarge their intercultural program and to better define its place in the new Europe. The Council pushed more explicitly for the internationalization of the intercultural program, in particular calling for greater cooperation between member states through research, development, conferences and seminars. The Council similarly reaffirmed its 1984 call for individual states to implement “teacher training for an education for intercultural understanding.” As Claude Liauzu argued in 1993, however, that call “has had no practical consequences in France: no qualifying examination up until now has included a

¹²⁴ Quoted in Bleich, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies,” 82.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 87; Schnapper, *La France de l’intégration*, 351.

¹²⁶ Bleich, “From International Ideas to Domestic Policies,” 88.

¹²⁷ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 34.

question concerning immigration, xenophobia, minorities, except in the most marginal way.”¹²⁸ Finally, the Council’s program expanded its focus to take into account the “European dimension of education,” especially as it pertained to Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War.¹²⁹

The point of disjuncture that I am drawing at 1989 is not to suggest that localized multicultural/intercultural programs no longer exist. They do. The *École Vitruve*, for instance, continues to be a progressive institution that devotes energy to interculturalism. Nor do I mean to imply that some of the programs do not receive the support, or at least benign neglect, of the Ministry of Education and the French state. Rather, the chapter means to highlight how a period of flowering for multicultural and intercultural education at the local level and with the support of the state failed to progress into any sort of national program that could decouple assimilation from integration.¹³⁰ As interculturalism has gained traction in the national educational programs throughout much of Europe, France remains the case par excellence of traditional assimilation. Furthermore, despite the advances made by progressive educators in the late 1970s and 1980s, French teachers by and large sided with the advocates of banning headscarves from schools, with those who painted immigrants as enemies of universalism, *laïcité*, and republicanism.

¹²⁸ Liauzu, “Interculturalism,” 29.

¹²⁹ Council of Europe, Steering Committee for Education, “Analytical Repertoire of official texts and projects of the Council of Europe of the field of Intercultural Education,” (Strasbourg, 2004), presented at the Conference on “The religious dimension of intercultural education,” (Oslo: 6-8 June 2004): 17-18.

¹³⁰ Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 146–147.

EPILOGUE

For the past fifty years the French have been living with an enemy in their midst, one they do not wish to recognize: a colonial past, which is as much a part of their history as Vichy or the revolution of 1789, and which has taken human form: former colonial subjects have become French citizens, as have the descendants of the victors in a colonial war, as have the children of *harkis*, still carrying their parents' shame. They remain on the periphery of French society, knocking at the city gates as bare-breasted Marianne, symbol of the Republic, hold them at bay. Some of the youngest among them have taken to periodically storming the gates; others have turned to alternate, supranational identities, seeking in Islam the cure to rootless lives.

Nancy Honicker, "Douce France"¹

At the end of this epilogue, I will return briefly to the central argument of this dissertation, that in the fifty years following the end of the Second World War the teaching of what it meant to be French was profoundly marked by the dramatic collapse of the French colonial empire. But, for now, it seems prudent to extend our gaze beyond the narrow confines of the classroom and the history textbook. At a concrete level, the policy makers, commentators, scholars, and immigrants whose voices make up this epilogue are almost all children of the era of decolonization and products of the schools. It has become commonplace in current scholarship to note that postcolonial immigrants (with whom much of this chapter is ostensibly concerned) represent the empire "coming home." But this statement is only half true; the empire was always already home. The empire was being inscribed on the minds of little French boys and girls, who were being taught in all kinds of overt and covert ways that to be French was to rule native people by consent, to have "grandeur," to play a world role, to be technological and modern, to

¹Nancy Honicker, "Douce France'... Growing Rough around the Edges?," *The Kenyon Review* 29, no. 4 (October 1, 2007): 92.

assimilate to republican universalism. The postcolonial affects everyone, colonized and colonizer alike.

In the twenty-first century the legacy of colonial history continues to inflect, and be inflected in, debates over French national identity. The connection between France's colonial/postcolonial history and national identity seems especially evident in three domains, which I will consider in what follows: first, in government attempts to legislate interpretations of the French past and public presentation of Muslims, especially women; second, in the periodic civil unrest by largely-minority youths, many of whom are immigrants from France's former colonies or are children of immigrants; and third, in France's foreign policy, particularly toward the Middle East and Africa, and its response to globalization.

Positivity and Protest: The Law of February 23, 2005

On February 23, 2005, the National Assembly passed a law proposed by members of the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (Union for a Popular Movement—UMP) governing party, but apparently without the direct support of the government. Article Four of the law ignited particular controversy.² First, it directed university research programs to “accord to the history of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa, the place that it merits.” Though this first part was heavy-handed, it was the second part of the article that especially engendered criticism: it called for school curricula to “recognize ... the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa, and accord to that history and to the sacrifices of soldiers of the French

²Robert Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present: History Wars French-Style,” *History Australia* 3, no. 1 (February 28, 2011): 14.4.

Army ... the eminent place to which they are due.”³ The law’s supporters, as Nancy Honicker notes, argued that the law was meant to correct anti-French bias among predominant narratives of French imperialism, to return a pendulum that had swung too far.⁴ Conservative Deputy Jean-Claude Guibal, for example, argued that “history is written by the victors. For the Algerian War, the victors were the partisans of independence, and its history, or rather its vulgate version, was written by their fellow travellers [*sic*].”⁵ Other observers saw a transparent attempt by the UMP to pull votes away from the far-right National Front, a party with a strong base among *pieds-noirs* and their descendants.

In fact, the 2005 law on the teaching of colonialism was the latest in a string of “memory laws” in France attempting to legislate historical interpretation. Prior to 2005, the legislature passed laws that punished Holocaust denial (the Gayssot Act of 1990), recognized the 1915 Armenian genocide *as* genocide (the law of January 29, 2001), and defined slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity (the Tubira Act of 2001).⁶ Likewise, the state policed colonial memory in very public trials, like that of former

³*Loi N° 2005-158 Du 23 Février 2005 Portant Reconnaissance de La Nation et Contribution Nationale En Faveur Des Français Rapatriés*, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000444898&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>.

⁴Honicker, “‘Douce France’ ... Growing Rough around the Edges?,” 84.

⁵Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present,” 14.6.

⁶Raffi Wartanian, “Memory Laws in France and Their Implications: Institutionalizing Social Harmony,” *Humanity In Action*, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/117-memory-laws-in-france-and-their-implications-institutionalizing-social-harmony>.

General Paul Aussaresses, convicted of “public defense of war crimes” after his memoirs about the Algerian War defended the use of torture.⁷

Criticism of the 2005 law was widespread. “Teachers’ unions,” Honnicker asserts, “cried out against what they perceived as a demagogic ploy to turn history teachers into tools of state propaganda.”⁸ The most vociferous response came by way of a petition signed by a number of historians, led by Claude Liauzu at the University of Paris VII. Liauzu and his colleagues opposed the law on a number of grounds, arguing that it violated the neutrality of the *laïque* school and that it lied about “crimes and massacres which extend even to genocide, slavery, and the racism that is the heritage of this past.” Further, they argued that “denials of history encourage those who today are reactivating nationalist reflexes and ... those who, in opposition, promote the communitarian enclosure of disenfranchised groups who are forbidden their history.”⁹ Thus, the petition rejected the creation of an “official” history all the while defending the official values of universalism and *laïcité* that undergird the Republic and its schools. In this, they remained close to the position of many intellectuals who had defended the headscarf bans fifteen years before. Some opponents of the law, such as law Professor Thierry Le Bars, found it problematic in ways that previous memory laws were not because, while “the reality of the Holocaust and slave trade is self evident ... it is by no

⁷The ruling of the Parisian court was subsequently overturned by the European Court of Human Rights. Stiina Löytömäki, “The Law and Collective Memory of Colonialism: France and the Case of ‘Belated’ Transitional Justice,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, March 23, 2013, 205, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijt005.

⁸Honnicker, “‘Douce France’ ... Growing Rough around the Edges?,” 84.

⁹Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present,” 14.5.

means self evident that France's colonialism was positive [*sic*]."¹⁰ Contrariwise, some, such as French Caribbean researcher Silyane Larcher, opposed memory laws in general on the grounds that they did nothing to solve the underlying problems: "Memory laws are not necessary because they answer deep political issues with simple acts of recognition."¹¹ Finally, the law scuttled a friendship treaty between France and Algeria when Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika refused to sign.¹²

François Sionneau's biting satirical editorial in *Le Nouvel Observateur* imagined a France unreflective and unmoored from its past if this "certain idea of France" (to quote Charles de Gaulle) prevailed in French schools:

Then, they repeat to us over and over again about the [subject of] History-Geography which will become optional in Terminale S. Without doubt, it will be necessary still to go further: stop History-Geography in CM2 in favor of the teaching of a subject that one could title "*grandeur* and virtue: stereotypes and right-thinking about the history of France." The nation will march then like a single man, limited to an imagined past, blinded to a present that escapes it and sure of a future of which it is unaware. They will finish by believing that the Appeal of June 18 was made by Pétain, but what does it matter, one will know how to do addition and multiplication. In a France of purchasing power, who could ask for more?¹³

Broad public pressure to repeal the law buffeted President Jacques Chirac, but, in November of that year, the conservative majority of the National Assembly stifled repeal efforts. In December, fresh off of the riots that had rocked France, Chirac "disowned"

¹⁰ Quoted in Jon Henley, "French Angry at Law to Teach Glory of Colonialism," *The Guardian*, April 15, 2005, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/15/highereducation.artsandhumanities>.

¹¹ Quoted in Wartanian, "Memory Laws in France and Their Implications"; Henley, "French Angry at Law to Teach Glory of Colonialism."

¹² Aldrich, "Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present," 14.4; Caroline C. Ford, "Museums after Empire in Metropolitan and Overseas France," *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 3 (September 2010): 637, doi:10.1086/654828.

¹³ François Sionneau, "'Une Certaine Idée De...' L'histoire de France," *Nouvelobs.com*, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/contre-debat-sur-l-identite-nationale/20091208.OBS0036/une-certaine-idee-de-l-histoire-de-france.html>.

the law, claiming that “laws are not meant to write history,” and that France must acknowledge its “legacy” of “light and darker moments” and “[respect] the memory of everyone.” The president had the law referred to the *Conseil Constitutionnel*, which “declassified” Article 4 on the grounds that creating curricula for schools is a matter of administrative regulation not of law. As such, Article 4 could be changed or cancelled as could any other regulation.¹⁴ Freed from requiring parliamentary action, Chirac changed the law by presidential decree in February 2006, much to the consternation of defenders of the memory of French Algeria.¹⁵

While the forces of opposition to the law eventually carried the day, the attempt to pass the law and the conflict that ensued are indicative of other attempts by the state to define colonial memory. The spate of new museums devoted to minority history created in recent years—such as the Musée du Quai Branly and the Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration—has been ably covered by a number of scholars and the topic is much too rich to do justice to here. But, as Caroline Ford argues, “What links [these museums] to one another is a common, although sometimes only implicit, engagement with questions concerning universalism, diversity, difference, and, in some cases, race, which have stood at the center of a now long-standing, but evolving, historical debate about identity and difference in postcolonial France.”¹⁶ Historians in France have often (as they had in debates over the 2005 law) used their status as public intellectuals to oppose museums on the grounds that they exoticize indigenous cultures or use the history of

¹⁴Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present,” n. 15.

¹⁵Honicker, “‘Douce France’ ... Growing Rough around the Edges?,” 84–85; Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present,” 14.5–14.6; Ford, “Museums after Empire in Metropolitan and Overseas France,” 637.

¹⁶Ford, “Museums after Empire in Metropolitan and Overseas France,” 628–629.

immigration to justify present-day repression.¹⁷ As we have seen throughout this dissertation, narratives that painted indigenous cultures and people as by turns exotic, barbaric, sexualized, childlike, incapable of self-government and in need of French intervention were well-established in textbooks throughout the era of decolonization.

Many in the French government, including at the highest level, as well as public commentators, advocates of universalism, and anti-immigrant xenophobes, have attributed the social problems of racial and ethnic minorities to their own inability to leave the colonial past behind. The history of the law on the teaching of colonialism, however, and the broader context of the strategic deployment of colonial history in which it sits are stark reminders that, as Robert Aldrich has argued:

“The Algerian [*sic*] syndrome” or, more broadly, a colonial syndrome relegated colonialism to a past that now seemed viewed as an album of sepia images of Timbuktu and Antananarivo, of the Mekong and the Sahara. And yet: the colonial era would not disappear, and it was not only the disenchanted daughters and sons of the colonies who kept the memories alive.¹⁸

Writing Laws on Female Bodies: The Burqa Ban

The burqa ban was one of the first of its kind. In April 2011, full body coverings like the burqa and the niqab (but not the hijab) became illegal in “public spaces” like government buildings, public transportation, the streets, and even some private businesses. The ban was justified on the basis of defense of public order—the facial coverings prevented identity checks by police—and defense of France’s secular values. Resistance to this ban was happening even before it took effect. For example, in one

¹⁷The debates among these historians are covered in recent work by: Ford, “Museums after Empire in Metropolitan and Overseas France”; Sherman, *French Primitivism and the Ends of Empire, 1945-1975*; Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home*.

¹⁸Aldrich, “Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present,” 14.3.

YouTube video, a song by the Beastie Boys accompanies two young women walking the streets of Paris; the chorus rings out in youthful defiance: “And if you don’t like it, then hey, f*** you!” But this was not your typical self-made YouTube video. The controversial online video made the rounds of the internet and then the press. The two women, calling themselves “NiqaBitch,” are dressed from head to waist in black niqabs and below the waist in black mini-shorts and high heels, legs completely exposed. They stop in front of government offices and visit with police. Passers-by do double-takes, passing motorists honk and holler. In the most striking portion of the video, the two women arrive at the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity where they encounter two police officers standing guard.¹⁹ The first officer, a Caucasian-looking man, tells the women not to stay there. When he is asked if it is “forbidden” (*interdit*), he responds “no ... it is preferable.” Then the other officer, a woman of color, interjects, “I love your outfit! It has to do with the law?” When one of the protesters replies that they “want to make the situation less dramatic,” the officer replies “That’s great, can I take your picture?”

Though it did not take effect until 2011, the French ban on face coverings in public spaces was passed in April 2010 after contentious debate in the French legislature and the media.²⁰ As with the original headscarf affairs, the burqa ban has fractured

¹⁹ The Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-Development was created by the Sarkozy administration in fulfillment of a campaign promise. It has been controversial, no more so than in 2009 when, under new Minister Eric Besson, it oversaw a “Great Debate on National Identity.” See: Patrick Simon, *French National Identity and Integration: Who Belongs to the National Community* (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, May 2012), 2, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/frenchidentity.pdf>; Bruce Crumley, “Sarkozy Stands By France’s Hated Immigration Minister,” *Time*, December 21, 2009, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1948714,00.html>.

²⁰ Technically, the ban also applied to other garments that completely covered the face. Moreover, though termed the burqa ban, the burqa is exceptionally rare in France where Muslims from the Maghreb predominate. The niqab, though still rare, is more common.

political parties (including those on the left) and Muslim leaders. The burqa is “not welcome on French soil” according to Sarkozy. Dalil Boubakeur, rector of the Paris Mosque, and other Muslim leaders posited that face covering is not a prescription of Islam but represents the “invasion” of radical Salafism. In general, the opposition Socialist party rejected the burqa but also the ban on practical grounds, while the editor of the left-wing newspaper *Libération*, Laurent Joffrin, reasoned that “France would be the only country in the world that sends its policemen ... to stop in the street young women who are victims more than they are guilty.”²¹ The law empowered police to refer people who refuse to remove face coverings to a local judge, who can administer a fine of 130 Euros, a citizenship course, or both. Fines are harsher for those who force others to cover their face.

Enforcement of the law, by all accounts, has been spotty. Police are not to attempt to remove face coverings themselves and most officers neglect enforcement, while others have wrongly given on-the-spot fines. Judges, moreover, have rarely administered fines or citizenship courses. The first fines were given to two women in niqabs who attempted to enter the Meaux town hall to deliver an almond birthday cake to Mayor Jean-François Copé, a member of the ruling UMP party who was responsible for pushing through the ban. (The French word for “almond” sounds like the word for “fines.”) One of the women, Hind Ahmas, threatened to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).²² The ECHR began reviewing the burqa ban on the same day in

²¹Quoted in “France’s Ban on the Burqa: The War of French Dressing,” *The Economist*, January 14, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/15270861>.

²²“France’s Burqa Ban: Two Women Fined,” *ABC News*, September 23, 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/frances-burqa-ban-women-fined-covering-faces/t/story?id=14591682&ref=https%3A%2F%2F>

November 2013 that a Parisian appeals court “upheld the right of a nursery to fire a female employee, Fatima Afif, who insisted on wearing an Islamic headscarf at work.”²³ Lawyers for the French government drew on familiar arguments that full veils prevent identification by authorities and “eras[e] the woman who wears it,” while Interior Minister Manuel Valls claimed that it was a ban “against practices that have nothing to do with our traditions and our values.”²⁴ The lawyer for the Muslim woman who brought the suit reasoned that the ban infringed on religious, speech, and privacy rights. Moreover, overturning the logic of ban proponents, the ban caused his client to feel “like a prisoner.” Comments by the Council of Europe’s commissioner for human rights that such laws are “a sad capitulation to the prejudices of the xenophobes” may indicate that the French ban is in contravention of European human rights conventions.²⁵ And yet across Europe, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have all either passed or pushed for similar bans.

What clearly concerns Muslims in France, even more than the fines or police stops permitted by the law, is the risk that the law will encourage vigilantes and Islamophobia. The head of the French Collective against Islamophobia claims “It’s not the police I’m afraid of, it’s the personal attacks on women by people acting on their own initiative in the street.”²⁶ Reports abound of physical abuse by people in the streets, private citizens attempting to remove women’s veils by force, bus drivers refusing to pick

²³“France Defends Full-Face Veil Ban at European Human Rights Court | Al Jazeera America,” accessed December 16, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/11/27/france-defends-fullfaceveilbanateuropeanrightscourt.html>.

²⁴Quoted in Ibid.

²⁵ Quoted in Angelique Chrisafis, “France’s Burqa Ban: Women Are ‘Effectively under House Arrest,’” *The Guardian*, September 19, 2011, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/19/battle-for-the-burqa>.

²⁶Quoted in Ibid.

up women in niqabs, and business owners refusing service. Ahmas recounts a time when a “man and woman punched her in front of her [three-year-old] daughter, called her a whore and told her to go back to Afghanistan.”²⁷ Reporters note how Eric Besson’s 2009 national conversation on national identity—a series of townhall meetings taking place all across France—became forums for far-right, anti-immigrant sentiment. Besson’s hard-line approach to immigration prompted one Socialist legislator to compare the minister for immigration, integration and national identity to ardent Nazi collaborator Pierre Laval.²⁸

The protest by the NiqaBitches drew into stark relief the way that the state, dating back to the headscarf laws, has written laws about Islamic self-presentation on the bodies of women. However, the burqa ban represents a striking departure from the bans on headscarves in schools by extending restrictions to adult women and to the entire public sphere.²⁹ Such efforts had, from the beginning, been justified in the language of women’s liberation, of freeing Muslim women from the oppression of fathers, brothers, and imams. The NiqaBitch protest pointed to the fact that “women’s liberation,” despite its pretensions to neutrality, demanded a particular version of femininity, that of sexual availability.³⁰ The *Guardian* columnist Nesrine Malik arrives at a similar interpretation: “The video ... render[s] exposed and covered flesh two sides of the same coin but as manifestations of personal freedom of dress.... What I like ... is its iconoclasm. Both the

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Crumley, “Sarkozy Stands By France’s Hated Immigration Minister.”

²⁹Geoffrey W. G. Leane, “Rights of Ethnic Minorities in Liberal Democracies: Has France Gone Too Far in Banning Muslim Women from Wearing the Burka?,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2011): 1034, doi:10.1353/hrq.2011.0058.

³⁰Joan Scott makes the point that opposition to veiling in the name of women’s liberation can be seen as defining liberation as sexual availability. *The Politics of the Veil*, chap. 5.

religious and secular could do with being less precious and heavy-handed about what women would like to wear.”³¹ Why, the women of NiqaBitch seemed to ask, did covered female bodies earn the ire of the state while exposed bodies did not?

The answer seems to lie with the continued influence of the colonial in postcolonial French society. As argued by Salwa Ismail, “The contemporary contentions surrounding Muslim public self-presentation in Western settings should be read in light of the historical entanglements of the colonial encounter, in particular, in relation to discourses and practices of power at the heart of colonial governmentality.”³² Colonial discourses portrayed Arab men as threats and Arab women as victims in need of protection and the state’s civilizing efforts. On the one hand, the colonizers encouraged the unveiling of Arab women to protect them from patriarchal oppression. At the same time, new concerns about violence against minority women have been used to police the boundaries of French identity, excluding “men of North African and Muslim origin ... [from French national identity] as barbaric and uncivilized, and now as violators of women’s human rights.”³³

On the other hand, unveiling was also an expression of the Orientalist desire to expose the exoticized, sexually unavailable, covered bodies of “Eastern” women. Indeed, some wondered whether the NiqaBitch protest against the burqa ban backfired, whether Parisian men called out and took pictures because they were “witnessing ... a fantasy come true: two women, who by way of their clothing, suggest that they are covered, but

³¹Nesrine Malik, “NiqaBitch? Unveil Themselves in Paris,” *The Guardian*, October 7, 2010, sec. Comment is free, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/oct/07/niqabitch-niqab-debate>.

³²Salwa Ismail, “Muslim Public Self-Presentation: Interrogating the Liberal Public Sphere,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 26.

³³Miriam Ticktin, “Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-immigrant Rhetoric Meet,” *Signs* 33, no. 4 (June 1, 2008): 864–865.

still easily accessible.”³⁴ The colonial relationship was a gendered one, in which the colonial territories and peoples played the contradictory roles of femininity: at once irreconcilably different and yet subject to assimilation, mysterious and yet knowable by the rational European, virgin and impenetrable and yet available and violable. The end of empire and the invention of decolonization have clearly not eliminated these contradictions; instead they have been redirected onto formerly colonized people within France, in particular onto women.

The difficulties in negotiating belonging and difference in the colonial “empire-state” are, moreover, inherent aspects of nation building and formation in liberal democracies. As Christian Joppke argues in a comparison of France and Germany, while “neutrality has been the classic answer of the liberal state to religious and cultural difference,” neutrality is not free of value; it is a “field of struggles” on which both advocates and opponents of veiling laws fight their battles. Furthermore, he argues, “neutrality” has both “universal” *and* “particularist” dimensions, each of which are embodied in the machinery of liberal democratic states, “the first located in the sphere of democratic politics, the second in the legal-constitutional sphere.”³⁵ The “neutral” French state, as evident in the previous chapter and in the burqa ban, has traditionally asked citizens to relegate religious and cultural difference to the so-called private sphere. Some speculated that the NiqaBitches received such a positive response by passers-by and police *because* they were evidently wearing the niqab in protest—an acceptable use of

³⁴fatemeh, “Does NiqaBitch Enrich the Burqa Ban Debate?,” *Muslimah Media Watch*, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/mmw/2010/10/do-the-niqabitches-enrich-the-burqa-ban-debate/>.

³⁵Christian Joppke, “State Neutrality and Islamic Headscarf Laws in France and Germany,” *Theory and Society* 36, no. 4 (August 1, 2007): 313.

public space in liberal democracies—rather than as a sign of religious conviction.³⁶ Yet, political theorists have convincingly argued that “‘the liberal state’[s] ... discriminatory private/public distinction” leaves minority lifeways to the private sphere “while the particular ways of the majority are endowed with the halo of the ‘public’ and thus rendered invisible as particularism.”³⁷ This privileged French identity, in which “[t]he taken-for-granted public subject is not neutral, but male, white, middle class, and secular,”³⁸ both relies on and attempts to erase a long colonial and postcolonial history.

“Hors de la loi,” Hors de la France: *The Riots of 2005*

The French state’s inability to deal with the issues raised by the large-scale migration of its former colonial subjects to the metropole appeared to come to a head in the fall of 2005. On October 27, 2005, a group of teenagers from the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, a *cité* in which about eighty percent of the population is of North African or African descent, spent their school holiday playing soccer in a neighboring town. Heading home to break the Ramadan fast, they entered a nearby construction site, which prompted a neighbor to call the police. When the police arrived at the scene, the boys scattered; they later claimed they were afraid of the police and had left their papers at home. Three of the young men took off in the same direction: Bouna Traoré, 15, one of eleven children of Mauritanian parents; Zyed Benna, 17, whose family had arrived from Tunisia three years earlier; and Muhittin Altun, 17, a Kurd. The boys climbed the wall surrounding an electrical station to hide until, about half an hour later, the boys

³⁶fatemeh, “Does NiqaBitch Enrich the Burqa Ban Debate?”.

³⁷Joppke, “State Neutrality and Islamic Headscarf Laws in France and Germany,” 314.

³⁸Ismail, “Muslim Public Self-Presentation,” 25.

touched a live part of the transformer. The 20,000 volts that killed Traoré and Benna also briefly knocked out the power in the neighborhood. Altun returned home, badly injured, and told his friends' families and neighbors what had happened. After arriving at the scene, "Traoré's father struck his head against the wall that surrounds the station, while his mother cried."³⁹ An internal investigation "cleared the police of serious wrongdoing, though they were criticized for not doing more to help the boys."⁴⁰ The unrest began in the neighborhood almost immediately, and on Saturday, locals participated in a silent march in shirts bearing the phrase "Dead for Nothing." The unrest was, to this point, relatively subdued until, on Sunday, the police threw a tear gas canister into the local mosque (police claimed the incident was an error made during the confrontation). From there the riots spread into the neighboring *banlieues* of Paris and then to the *banlieues* of other cities.⁴¹

According to Snow, Vliegthart, and Corrigan-Brown, the framing of the riots by the press has been vital in attributing blame to various actors and in structuring responses to the underlying problems. In general, the French public held youth and "criminals" responsible. Among those directly involved, the rioters and their allies most frequently blamed the current government, while the government and Sarkozy accused "riff-raff" and criminal elements among the youth population. Without seeing any contradiction, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin attributed responsibility

³⁹Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 226.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 228.

⁴¹On the events of the riots, see: *Ibid.*, chap. 10; Didier Fassin, "Riots in France and Silent Anthropologists," *Anthropology Today* 22, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 1–3; Maboula Soumahoro, "On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed)," *Transition* 98, no. 1 (2008): 42–66; Katharyne Mitchell, "Marseille's Not for Burning: Comparative Networks of Integration and Exclusion in Two French Cities," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 2 (2011): 404–23, doi:10.1080/00045608.2010.545290; Honicker, "'Douce France' ... Growing Rough around the Edges?";

to “organized criminal networks backing the unrest” and to “gangs of youths, in a mindset of thugs, but also of playing a game and wanting to raise the stakes.”⁴² Over time, however, a consensus (or “frame crystallization”) developed in which immigrants were held responsible rather than the government or the youths themselves, though the cause of this shift is unclear. Calls for more law and order were surprisingly rarer in France than they were abroad but were frequent among those whose opinions were most widely disseminated: public officials. Sarkozy, for example, “exclaimed during the second week of rioting, he would wage ‘a war without mercy’ against the rioting immigrants, including immediate ‘deportation’ for those involved.”⁴³

The length, geographic reach, and numerical strength of the riots suggest deeper causes at work than boredom, criminal influence, or even rage at the death of two young men. First, comments made by officials, especially Sarkozy, in the days immediately preceding and following the boys’ deaths enflamed passions in the suburbs. During a visit to Argenteuil two days before the incidents in Clichy-sous-Bois, Sarkozy had proclaimed “You’ve had enough of this gang of *racaille* [scum]. Well, we’re going to get rid of them for you.” Crowds responded with shouts of “*Sarko, on t’encule!*” (Sarko, up your ass!) Earlier that summer, after a stray bullet killed an eleven-year-old boy, Sarkozy announced that “we are going to clean up this place, we are going to clean it out with a Kärcher” (a pressure hose used to clean grime off of buildings). Many *banlieue* residents heard echoes of ethnic cleansing; the writer Azouz Begag responded, “You

⁴²David A. Snow, Rens Vliegthart, and Catherine Corrigan-Brown, “Framing the French Riots: A Comparative Study of Frame Variation,” *Social Forces* 86, no. 2 (December 1, 2007): 398, 401.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 401.

don't 'clean' a neighborhood."⁴⁴ Sarkozy had also been blamed for a shift in policing strategies in the *cités* from community policing to get-tough policies. The satirical *Le Canard Enchaîné* published a political cartoon at the height of the riots featuring Sarkozy dressed in a Zorro outfit, the speech bubble reading "Call me Zero, Zero Tolerance."⁴⁵ Contrariwise, the maintenance of local associations and flexibility toward immigrant populations in Marseille, geographer Katharyne Mitchell argues, was one of the main reasons for the lack of violence there.⁴⁶ The police chief in Marseille claimed, "We have personal contacts at many levels: not only the chiefs, but the cops on patrol have regular meetings with community representatives. Not only with religious leaders but with ethnic leaders."⁴⁷

Beyond inflammatory comments by officials, a second deeper cause of the riots was the history of *banlieue* unrest in recent decades, usually prompted by the deaths of young people of color allegedly at the hands of the police. In one of the more prominent cases, Malik Oussekiné was "accidentally" killed by police during a student demonstration in 1986. His death not only rocked the *banlieues* but also galvanized the student movement. In Lyon, in 1990, a young man died in a motorcycle crash while fleeing police. Eighteen-year-old Aïssa Ihich died in police custody in 1991 when he was denied his medication during an asthma attack after being beaten. Perhaps the most well-known case involved Makomé M'Bowolé, a young man from Zaire, who was arrested

⁴⁴Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 223.

⁴⁵ Cartoon reprinted in Fassin, "Riots in France and Silent Anthropologists," 2.

⁴⁶Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 231; Katharyne Mitchell, "Marseille's Not for Burning: Comparative Networks of Integration and Exclusion in Two French Cities," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101, no. 2 (2011): 416–417.

⁴⁷Quoted in Mitchell, "Marseille's Not for Burning," 417.

carrying 120 cartons of cigarettes and was shot in the face by a policeman during interrogation in 1993. His death was reportedly the inspiration for the film *La Haine*.⁴⁸ Philosopher Alain Badiou published a letter in *Le Monde* during the riots about the frequent arrests, police insults and violence suffered by his adopted son, who is black, writing “France has the riots it deserves.”⁴⁹

As in the headscarf affairs, the voices of those most directly involved in the unrest—the participants in the *banlieues* and those close to the dead young men—were routinely obscured, particularly in the early days of the riots. Maboula Soumahoro argues that this blind spot led to interpretations of the events as the unthinking mimicry of a mob. Observers missed other forms of resistance and community building that surrounded the unrest. The attribution of *banlieue* violence to a mob mentality missed the fact that, as one local activist put it, “the majority were conscious that cars burning would attract attention. [*sic*]”⁵⁰ Bouna’s older brother described the riots as the spiraling confrontation between a cry for attention and a harsh government response:

The cars that were burnt—it was out of love for our blood. Let’s face it, had it not been for the cars burning, this would have been just another story in the news. This first started in Rabelais ... [e]verybody was in the halls of the buildings, quiet and silent ... until the police showed up and started playing smart. This is precisely when things began. The police were patrolling.... You’re feeling angry, and all you see is the police. It was the wrong time for that.⁵¹

Scholar Alec Hargreaves concurs that “far from being a serious attempt at severing their links with the rest of society ... recent urban disorders [are] first and foremost a distress

⁴⁸Soumahoro, “On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed),” 45; Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 230.

⁴⁹Fassin, “Riots in France and Silent Anthropologists,” 2.

⁵⁰Soumahoro, “On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed),” 42–44.

⁵¹Quoted in *ibid.*, 48–49.

signal.”⁵² In fact, while many contemporaries attributed the rioting to rejection of French values, rioters themselves saw their actions as part of the French republican tradition. As Samir Mihi put it, “Rioting is a French tradition; demonstrating is a French tradition, burning cars is a French tradition.” In a society in which large-scale demonstrations are part of the fabric of everyday politics, he concludes, “a silent march is bound to go unnoticed.”⁵³ How much more likely are marches to be ignored, when those marching are already geographically and socially marginal members of the body politic?

Additionally, a third underlying cause of the riots, according to many commentators, was the colonial history of France or narratives that themselves echoed the colonial past. In the latter case, those who rejected the arguments of the suburban youth often engaged in amateur “ethnography,” of the kind supposedly used by colonial heroes like Lyautey or Dupleix to gain the support of native peoples and to justify French intervention in the colonies. Scholars attributed suburban unrest to cultural deficiencies like “macho” Muslim culture and the practice of polygamy among Africans.⁵⁴ These narratives also echoed arguments that native peoples (and their descendants in France) were unassimilable. Immigrants were caught in the same double bind that had plagued their colonial ancestors: they were not French enough, they never could be, and that failure was placed squarely at their feet.⁵⁵

⁵²Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France*, 1.

⁵³Quoted in Soumahoro, “On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed),” 50.

⁵⁴Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 233–234.

⁵⁵See, for example, Silverman’s discussion of the “paradoxes of the republican model” in which he argues that “disavowal of difference on the conscious level is premised on the fetishization of difference on an unconscious level,” Maxim Silverman, “The French Republic Unveiled,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 628–42, doi:10.1080/01419870701356056.

Yet, rioters and scholars who supported the *banlieue* youth have found colonial antecedents in relations between youth and police and in the government's response to the unrest. Soumahoro, for instance, claims that youths in the *banlieues* are locked in a kind of "colonial theater," a system of "inescapable oppression" where youths always play the role of an "immutable 'other'."⁵⁶ Likewise, Laurent Dubois points to the kind of Manicheism that Fanon and Césaire had argued characterizes the colonial relationship:

Conflicts in the *banlieue* thus are often between two groups of young French men, both locked into situations they are seeking to escape. Many police recruits come from smaller towns or rural areas in France, and the police force is largely white. Lacking leverage and control over often hostile youth, some turn to using excessive force, inciting more hostility and encouraging residents' perspective that they are the enemy.⁵⁷

Finally, at the height of the riots, the government declared a state of emergency by reinstating a seldom-used law first put into effect to quell unrest in Algeria in 1955. The law was later enacted in Paris in 1961 (again in reference to the Algerian War) and in New Caledonia to combat an uprising in 1984-1985.⁵⁸ The state of emergency was supported by a majority in the National Assembly, including much of the Left. The colonial parallels were not lost on residents of the *banlieues*, many of whom were of Algerian descent; as Philippe Bernard wrote in *Le Monde*, "the police repression of the 1950s and 1960s" was being applied to "the *cités* where their children and grandchildren live."⁵⁹ Sylvie Thénault, however, goes further. For her, the importance of the state of the emergency is the way in which it places individuals "outside of the law" (*hors de la loi*). The roots of the state of emergency reach back not only to the Algerian War but

⁵⁶Soumahoro, "On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed)," 45.

⁵⁷Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 233.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 216, 234–35; Fassin, "Riots in France and Silent Anthropologists," 2.

⁵⁹Quoted in Dubois, *Soccer Empire*, 235.

also back to the 1793 decrees against the insurgence in the Vendée and to the War on Terror. It is therefore a “text, designed for those who are outside the social contract, outside the Republic, and outside the nation.”⁶⁰ The declaration of a state of emergency made evident that the state still considered colonial measures appropriate for particular groups of French people, and it made clearer what many in the suburbs had long suspected, that the *banlieues* were on the peripheries not only of their cities but of their nation.

Amiens and Trappes: Hollande's Riots

On November 17, one week after the passage of the state of emergency, the situation had returned to normal. The riots, however, retain significant symbolic potency. During his election campaign against incumbent President Nicholas Sarkozy, Socialist candidate François Hollande broadcast a campaign commercial set to the tune of the American rap song “Ni**as in Paris” by Kanye West and Jay-Z. The commercial featured crowds of overwhelmingly minority voters from suburbs like Clichy-sous-Bois and Creil at Hollande’s campaign stops displaying their voter cards and proclaiming their support. The commercial was an obvious shot at the abysmal reputation Sarkozy had acquired in the French *banlieues* as a result of his tenure as interior minister.

Yet, President Hollande has not managed to avoid unrest either. On a Monday in late August 2013, around 7:00pm, a sixteen-year-old girl named Aïssatou attempted suicide by throwing herself out of a window in her apartment building in Trappes. According to news reports, she had also attempted suicide the previous day by ingesting

⁶⁰Sylvie Thénault, “L’état D’urgence (1955-2005): De l’Algérie Coloniale À La France Contemporaine; Destin D’une Loi,” *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 218 (January 1, 2007): 77.

large amounts of prescription medication. She was eventually taken to a hospital in Paris, which described her condition as grave, though doctors saved her life. On August 13, Aïssatou told police she had been the victim of an Islamophobic attack by a group of skinheads. While she was walking late at night, the police report alleged, a group of people of “European type” and with shaved heads approached her, showed her a sharp object, ripped her veil, shouted Islamic slurs at her, and struck her in the shoulder before fleeing in an automobile. The press implied that the girl’s suicide attempts could be attributed to her attack.

The city was calm in the wake of the suicide attempt, but the government sent eight squadrons of the *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS) riot police to guard the local police station. France24 reported on the dismay expressed by local residents at the government’s response: “It’s deplorable that after an event which has rocked a local family and the neighbourhood in general, we get sent riot vans and not a counselling service,” one resident said. “It’s as though we are all considered potential enemies,” he added. ““It would have been better to do nothing than to do that,” argued another.⁶¹ As in 2005, ethnic minority youth have tended to see police presence in their neighborhoods as provocation and often cite the heavy-handedness of officers. Prior to the attack, Trappes had already become a center of conflict between police and its Muslim residents. In July, police stopped a Muslim couple on the street for a “control,” asking the woman to remove the veil of her banned niqab. According to the prosecutor, the routine identity check turned violent when the young man attempted to strangle the policeman. The

⁶¹“French Girl Attempts Suicide After ‘Veil Attack,’” *FRANCE 24*, August 27, 2013, <http://www.france24.com/en/20130827-french-muslim-girl-veil-attack-suicide-skinheads-islamophobia-paris-police>.

young man countered that he was defending his wife.⁶² For the next two nights, residents of the suburb of Paris surrounded the local police station, sometimes hurling rocks.

Not long after Hollande assumed the presidency, an ID check near a funeral for a young man who had died in a traffic accident in Amiens sparked “two days of car burning and 17 injured police.”⁶³ After arriving in Amiens to “condem[n] the violence,” according to the Christian Science Monitor, Interior Minister Manuel Valls “was met with a testy standoff, jostling, and booing.” The mother of the young man who had died in the accident complained to Valls that “local residents felt they were treated like ‘animals’ by local law enforcement.”⁶⁴

As had Sarkozy in 2005, Valls has emerged as a lightning rod. Young and energetic, he is among the most popular public officials in the Socialist government, with polls putting his popularity rating at sixty-percent. He is a staunch defender of *laïcité*; he has repeatedly endorsed the burqa ban as “a law in the interests of women and against those values having nothing to do with our traditions and values.”⁶⁵ Himself a naturalized immigrant from Spain, he has developed a reputation as an immigration hardliner, even earning the nickname “the Nicholas Sarkozy of the left.” Leftist politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon “claimed Valls had been ‘contaminated’ by far-right, anti-immigration leader Marine Le Pen.” In August of 2013, Valls made controversial

⁶²“Riots in France: Trouble in Trappes,” *The Economist*, July 27, 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21582314-violence-erupts-over-controversial-burqa-ban-trouble-trappes>.

⁶³Robert Marquand, “Riots Test New French President Hollande,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 15, 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2012/0815/Riots-test-new-French-President-Hollande>.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Reuters in Paris, “France’s Niqab and Burqa Ban Defended by Minister, despite Riots in Trappes,” *The Guardian*, July 22, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/22/france-riots-niqab-burqa-ban-defended>.

remarks, which were leaked to the press, about the incompatibility of French society and Islam and about the need to reform the policy of “*regroupement*” (reunification) of immigrant families.⁶⁶

Yet, Valls has taken care to decry outbursts of Islamophobia, such as the attack on Aïssatou by skinheads. In the wake of the attack, the Ministry of the Interior “severely condemn[ed] this new manifestation of hatred and anti-Muslim intolerance.”⁶⁷ Muslim advocates, like the Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF), however, have argued that Valls’s statements are hollow political posturing: “This kind of attack, when isolated, is already shameful in itself . . . [b]ut when it comes to the umpteenth attack . . . we cannot be satisfied with a simple public statement in a rush.”⁶⁸ Conservative opponents of the government claim the events in Trappes and Amiens represent, first, the willful ignorance (or obfuscation) of the seriousness of the situation by the government. Jean-François Copé, the head of the UMP, has claimed that “there is a denial of reality, a refusal to see that violence is rising.”⁶⁹ Second, Amiens and Trappes are symptomatic of a deeper civilizational crisis signified by France’s apparent inability to integrate Muslims and immigrants.

The failure to integrate is, as we saw in the previous chapter, a matter of political rhetoric with roots much deeper than the present administration, or even the last decade.

⁶⁶Joseph Bamat and Anne-Diandra Louarn, “French Top Cop’s Immigration Comments Spark Outrage - France,” *France 24*, August 20, 2013, <http://www.france24.com/en/20130820-franch-interior-minister-immigration-valls-reform-islam-outrage/>.

⁶⁷“Une Jeune Fille Voilée Dit Avoir Été Agressée À Trappes,” *Le Figaro*, August 13, 2013, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2013/08/13/01016-20130813ARTFIG00440-une-jeune-fille-voilee-dit-avoir-ete-agressee-a-trappes.php>.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Reuters in Paris, “France’s Niqab and Burqa Ban Defended by Minister, despite Riots in Trappes.”

In dominant discourse, responsibility for this failure has been shifted to immigrants themselves, while real causes seem to be environmental. Indeed, as Alec Hargreaves has argued, while those in positions of influence have argued immigrants are “unwilling to adapt to [France’s] cultural norms,” “socio-economic disadvantage and racial and ethnic discrimination by members of the majority ethnic population” prevent successful incorporation of immigrant populations.⁷⁰ The government has been much more willing to address socio-economic factors than discrimination. Amiens and Trappes exemplify these attempts to ameliorate the problems of poor and heavily-minority areas of the country, but also its failure to address other issues. Sarkozy had promised a never-materialized “Marshall Plan” for Amiens, which remains mired in heavy unemployment, particularly among young people. Trappes, on the contrary, had “just emerged from a seven-year renovation plan and in 2011 won an award for its parks and the attractiveness of its environment.”⁷¹ Attempts to address discrimination, however, have been half-hearted at best, largely because addressing it would confront the foundational discourse of the republic—republican universalism—which does not recognize such differences.

It’s Not You, It’s Me: Strained Relations with the Middle East and Africa

The colonial past remains an important factor in France’s foreign policy. Historically, France’s previous role as a colonial power in North Africa and the Middle East, coupled with its desire to maintain an independent foreign policy during the Cold War, powerfully influenced its postcolonial development programs. Likewise, the

⁷⁰Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France*, 3.

⁷¹Reuters in Paris, “France’s Niqab and Burqa Ban Defended by Minister, despite Riots in Trappes.”

government under de Gaulle pursued a policy of patronage of the Arab states in the Mediterranean, especially after Algerian decolonization and the Six Day War in 1967. The French perception of the Mediterranean region as vital to French interests continued into the late 1980s and 1990s, though policy makers realized that France's declining influence necessitated using the European Union to achieve its goals in the region. This "Europeanisation of French Mediterranean Politics," according to Verónica Martins, consisted of the French taking a leading role in the European Union's Mediterranean policy while also relying on older diplomatic networks and bilateral agreements with countries in the region.⁷² Finally, French relations with the Maghreb were marked by personal relationships between French and Maghrebian leaders and by the presence of large numbers of immigrants from the region in France.

The rapidly-shifting political landscape has complicated France's position in the region in recent years. The Sarkozy and Hollande administrations have both struggled to navigate the Arab Spring, to balance their support for established governments and their proclaimed universal guiding principles of democracy, women's rights, and popular sovereignty. Despite France's close ties to the region, it failed to anticipate the popular movements and handled the crises clumsily. For instance, during the uprisings in Tunisia, Foreign Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie offered French riot police to help quell the unrest and the government authorized shipments of tear gas only days before the fall of the government. Alliot-Marie resigned soon thereafter amid a scandal over her Christmas travel to a resort in Tunisia.

⁷²Verónica Martins, "Towards a Europeanisation of French Mediterranean Politics?," *L'Europe En Formation* n° 368, no. 2 (August 7, 2013): 226–227, doi:10.3917/eufor.368.0223.

The appearance of personal ties between French officials and undemocratic regimes in the region have sullied France's image, as when Prime Minister François Fillon took a week's vacation in Egypt, much of it at the expense of Egyptian President Mubarak and the Egyptian government. On the contrary, more strained historical ties with Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi allowed the Sarkozy government to take a more forceful stance on uprisings in Libya. Seeing an opportunity to rectify its slow support for the Arab Spring, France led the international intervention forces in the name of democratization. (France still had to rely on U.S. military might, the latter relishing the chance to cast military intervention as a "NATO action.")⁷³

President François Hollande has adopted this more strident tone with regard to Syria, stating to the 2012 Conference of Ambassadors that "I'm certain of one thing: the Syrian regime will never regain its place within the community of nations. It has no future among us." And, while the French government has been at the forefront of providing funding, humanitarian aid, and non-lethal materiel to the Syrian opposition and placing diplomatic pressure on the Syrian regime, the regime's formidable military and support for Syria by Iran and Russia have prevented direct intervention as in Libya.⁷⁴ Finally, as Rachel Utley has persuasively argued, the instability in North Africa has threatened delicate situations in other areas of French historical interest, as the recent case of Mali shows. Fighters returning from the uprisings in Libya launched a coup in France's former West African colony, after which the interim president asked for French military intervention. This has raised, however, "thorny problem[s]" for French foreign

⁷³Rachel Utley, "France and the Arab Upheavals," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 2 (2013): 68–79, doi:10.1080/03071847.2013.787752; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Contradictions of the Arab Spring," November 14, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/11/2011111101711539134.html>.

⁷⁴Utley, "France and the Arab Upheavals" passim.

policy, potentially “limiting France’s ability to exert influence in other theatres,” fostering regional instability, and creating the perception that France is “acting against Islamist rebels in Mali while supporting them in Syria.”⁷⁵

Franco-Algerian relations have been unsteady, thanks especially to the large ethnic-Algerian presence in France and to France’s obfuscation of its colonial past in Algeria. And yet, despite these points of contention, France and Algeria have managed to work together on infrastructure investments, the rights of immigrants in France, and the threat posed to both countries by Islamic fundamentalism. Relations between France and Algeria soured in the mid-1990s as terrorist violence in Algeria spilled over onto the French mainland. Those relations improved somewhat with the *Déclaration d’Alger* in 2003, which institutionalized meetings between the two heads of state. An attempt to sign a “Declaration of Friendship” in 2005, however, was sandbagged by the passing of the Law of February 23, 2005, as previously described. Sarkozy, in an effort to improve relations with Algeria, made the capital Algiers one of his first official state visits in 2007. In a sign of improvement, the government negotiated treaties with Algiers, including one on nuclear power. And yet, as Martins argues, “These efforts did not erase the reciprocal resentments, in particular as far as immigration matters or its colonial presence are concerned.”⁷⁶

Hollande endeavored to improve Franco-Algerian relations, especially by acknowledging French actions during the Algerian War. He became the first French president to acknowledge French misdeeds in the massacre of Algerian protesters on October 17, 1961. Then, on December 20, 2012, Hollande made headlines by

⁷⁵Ibid., 76.

⁷⁶Martins, “Towards a Europeanisation of French Mediterranean Politics?,” 233.

denouncing “the brutality and injustice of the whole era of French colonialism before the Algerian Parliament.”⁷⁷ Both statements raised the ire of the French Right. At the same time, Camille Pacastaing argues, Hollande’s statements were politically opportunistic: they bolstered his Leftist credentials; given his inability to enact many of the economic promises of his campaign, they were a small token to ethnic minorities in France; and they provided cover to Algerian President Bouteflika—an aging and unpopular leader threatened by the Arab Spring—by co-opting an issue touted by the Islamists on his right flank.⁷⁸

While France’s policy in the region seems merely a continuation of its colonial interests and the Gaullist legacy of counterbalancing the United States, the shift in tone signals something rather different. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, France’s more aggressive stance toward the Middle East and North Africa, its willingness to engage in military intervention there (in contrast to its staunch refusal to go along with U.S. intervention in Iraq), and its more conciliatory stance toward Israel, suggest greater optimism in the last few years about France’s ability to play an important world role. The root cause, Wallerstein contends, is “the decline of the United States’ effective power on the world scene.” And yet, he claims, France’s real prospects in the region are still mostly rhetorical; the Middle East is too crowded a field for France to act alone. Rather, France’s best opportunities for intervention have come in Africa, where Britain

⁷⁷Camille Pecastaing, “The Politics of Apology: Hollande and Algeria,” *World Affairs Journal*, accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/politics-apology-hollande-and-algeria>.

⁷⁸Ibid.

and the United States are reluctant to act militarily. As recent actions in Mali and the Central African Republic make clear, France seems eager to fill that void.⁷⁹

Globalization by Stealth

Many French observers argue that United States has not only stifled French military and political *grandeur*, but has diminished France's economic and cultural influence as well. Globalization, which French critics have often equated with Americanization, seemed yet another sign of the demotion of France to a middling power. Those critics of globalization, moreover, are not in the minority in France; there is remarkable consensus—among the political class *and* the population as a whole—about the need to limit the effects of globalization in France. By the 2007 presidential election, “deglobalizing” had moved from a fringe political position to the mainstream parties of the center-right and center-left, while surveys showed sixty-four percent of the French public believed that globalization was “a threat for jobs.”⁸⁰

Despite the fear and rhetoric, those same scholars and reporters have remarked on the astonishing success with which France has globalized since the early 1980s. As Gordon and Meunier put it, “Breaking with its mercantilist and *dirigiste* past, France has since the early 1980s converted to market liberalization, both as the necessary by-product of European integration and globalization and as a deliberate effort by policy-makers.”

Privatization proceeds apace under even Socialist governments, they claim, “with scant

⁷⁹Immanuel Wallerstein, “France’s Aggressive Foreign Policy | Al Jazeera America,” accessed December 16, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/12/france-foreign-policy-military-intervention.html>.

⁸⁰Katrin Bennhold, “France: Whither Globalization? - The New York Times,” accessed December 16, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/02/world/europe/02iht-france.5.5117796.html?pagewanted=all>; Pierre Haski, “Is France on Course to Bid Adieu to Globalization?,” text, July 21, 2011, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/france-bid-adieu-globalization>.

regard for the nationality of the buyer.”⁸¹ The results are extraordinary. One in seven French workers is employed by a foreign company; that number is one in ten in Britain and only one in twenty in the “neo-liberal” United States. Similarly, France is “the third biggest recipient of foreign direct investment in the world” and is McDonalds’ most profitable foreign market. France is not only on the receiving end of globalization: “a third of Europe’s biggest multinationals are French” and nominally French companies in some sectors, such as energy production, transportation, finance, and even grocery stores, are among the industry leaders, especially in Europe.⁸²

Christine Lagarde, a former trade minister under Sarkozy, argues that “it’s paradoxical: the openness of France alongside our fears of the world.”⁸³ Indeed, how does one account for the drastic and largely successful globalization of France when seen alongside the dominant public and political rhetoric opposing that same globalization? When, according to Sabatier, “France increasingly acts as a citadel besieged by the forces of globalization,” when French voters rejected the European Union constitution because “the EU has become ... a Trojan horse,” and when the work-stealing “Polish plumber” is a “specter” that haunts the country, how could globalization proceed, often at the hands of those same politicians who decry it? One answer, according to many scholars, is that the French government has been engaging in what Sabatier calls “stealth globalization,”

⁸¹Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, “Globalization and French Cultural Identity,” *French Politics, Culture and Society* 19, no. 1 (2001): 22.

⁸²Bennhold, “France”; Katrin Bennhold, “Spotlight: Selling Globalization to France - The New York Times,” accessed December 16, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/09/business/worldbusiness/09iht-wbspot10.4854283.html?_r=2&.

⁸³Bennhold, “Spotlight.”

using “populist anti-globalization rhetoric” as political cover for economic changes.⁸⁴ It is a strategy reminiscent of de Gaulle’s strident public resistance to U.S. power, which provided room for French citizens to embrace American culture without the threat of being subsumed into the American orbit.⁸⁵ Yet, some commentators claim that stealth globalization is not without its drawbacks. By playing both sides of the field, the state “has been caught in its own trap.” The duplicitous policy pursued by the government has created a France segmented into globalization’s winners and losers and has laid the groundwork for, for example, protests by young people against laws that would have made it easier to fire young employees.⁸⁶

The way out of the trap is not clear. Some suggest that European countries like France should engage in limited protectionism to reverse deindustrialization in sophisticated manufactures. France should take short-term losses to protect the human and social capital that will become competitive again in the medium-term but which would be expensive to replace once lost. For others, like Christine Lagarde, the problem seems to lie simply in the disconnect between rhetoric and reality, that French globalization is hindered by the perception (in France and abroad) that the country is antibusiness: “I have to sell France to the world and globalization to the French.” The

⁸⁴Patrick Sabatier, “No Globalization, Please – We Are French!,” text, March 28, 2006, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/no-globalization-please-%E2%80%93-we-are-french>.

⁸⁵Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, 131–134.

⁸⁶Sabatier, “No Globalization, Please – We Are French!”. The law establishing the First Job Contract (*Contrat première embauche*—CPE) was withdrawn soon thereafter as a result of pressure from protestors: “MM. Chirac et de Villepin retirent le CPE,” *Le Monde.fr*, accessed March 1, 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2006/04/10/mm-chirac-et-de-villepin-retirent-le-cpe_759910_3210.html; Hélène Bouneaud, “Small Numbers, Big Power: The Paradox of the French Labor Movement,” *New Labor Forum* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2007): 68–77.

way out, Lagarde seems to imply, is simply for the French to embrace France's own globalization.⁸⁷

The most strident resistance to globalization in France, interestingly, has been framed as defense of French culture from homogenization. What many French people see as the stakes in the globalization debate is French identity itself, not economic interests. As two of the preeminent scholars of French globalization, Gordon and Meunier, have claimed, "It is not so much the disappearance of *dirigisme* that worries the French, but the disappearance of France itself."⁸⁸ Therefore, French officials have been eager to defend the "cultural exception" to globalization, such as at the Uruguay Round in 1993, when France shielded "cultural goods" from U.S. attempts to subject them to free trade rules. Unsurprisingly, given France's tradition of market intervention, politicians have argued that such goods cannot be "treated, produced, exchanged, and sold like any other," and that the near-monopoly held by American cultural behemoths like Hollywood requires market correction.⁸⁹

Other arguments against cultural globalization have been more creative. In particular, French leaders have begun arguing that the cultural exception is necessary to protect "cultural diversity." In these arguments, the French language's fall from grace as the language of culture and diplomacy to a more middling language—a source of great consternation for a great many French commentators over the years—is redeployed as an asset and the reason for the language's defense. Lionel Jospin reasons, "French is no

⁸⁷Bennhold, "Spotlight."

⁸⁸Gordon and Meunier, "Globalization and French Cultural Identity," 24.

⁸⁹Ibid., 26, 29.

longer the language of a power [but] it could be a language of counter-power.”⁹⁰ This claim is all the more striking when one recalls the role of the French language in the civilizing mission and in creating a unified France. Furthermore, many of the racial, ethnic, and religious minorities of France must have been shocked by Jospin’s hopes that “French can become one of the languages in which the resistance to uniformity in the world is expressed, the refusal of the fading of identities, the encouragement of one’s freedom to create and to express oneself in one’s own culture.... France wants to be the motor of cultural diversity in the world.”⁹¹

As in the political sphere, the apparent decline of U.S. hegemony (real or imagined) after the global recession and long wars in the Middle East appears to have changed the terms of French debates. While some believed that Nicholas Sarkozy’s election in 2007 signaled a dramatic shift toward “an overtly pro-business, pro-globalization, pro-American” political landscape, they were soon dismayed by Sarkozy’s continued willingness to criticize capitalism and the United States.⁹² Rather, as Sophie Meunier argues, the changes in France’s relationship with the United States have occurred “in spite” of Sarkozy’s policies, that Sarkozy’s election was in fact a *product* of changing French views of globalization and the United States. The ground has shifted in the past decade. Public opinion polls indicate the French public no longer equates globalization with Americanization: “If anything,” Meunier claims, “France and the U.S. today are in the same boat with respect to globalization—they are on the same side of the fence, partners as well as competitors, with China looming large on the other side.” And,

⁹⁰Ibid., 34.

⁹¹Quoted in Ibid.

⁹²Sophie Meunier, “Globalization, Americanization and Sarkozy’s France,” *European Political Science* 9, no. 2 (June 2010): 213, doi:10.1057/eps.2010.2.

while France once stood alone in its fears of globalization, those fears have become commonplace in other Western nations—including in the United States—and the American bugbear has been replaced by the European Union.⁹³ Finally, as a lengthy recession has diminished U.S. standing, France’s *dirigiste* response to global markets and transnational labor flows looks like an increasingly viable answer, including, ironically, to many in the United States.⁹⁴

Conclusion

The twenty-first-century uncertainty about French national identity and France’s world role—apparently wracked by internal and external threats—stands in sharp contrast to the self-assured *grandeur* implied in that old saw: France is a nation of “one-hundred million Frenchmen.” Throughout this dissertation I have endeavored to show how the French educational system, through the teaching of history, attempted to come to terms with the era of decolonization, with the loss of the roughly sixty-million “Frenchmen” in the empire. In the two decades immediately following the end of the Second World War, the history textbooks of the *cours élémentaire* were used to inscribe colonial rule on the minds of France’s youngest citizens. Colonial histories were used to construct the identities of the colonized and of the French colonizers, implicating young students in the colonial system. In the heroic narratives that dominated the histories of imperialism, authors created a set of Janus-faced images of native peoples typical of Orientalist discourses: socially deficient but in need of protection, knowable but unnamed, politically disunited but culturally and socially undifferentiated. Moreover, textbook

⁹³Ibid., 218.

⁹⁴Ibid., 221.

narratives obscured the violence inherent in colonial conquest. In last years of the colonial empire, authors like Trous and Girard were reminding students that it was their duty to maintain the unity of France and its empire. And yet, soon after the loss of Algeria in 1962, this rhetoric had largely disappeared from textbooks, replaced with narratives of decolonization. Authors drew on discourses that, as Todd Shepard has argued, came to dominate the public sphere and that normalized the loss of empire as part of a global process with a predetermined end, the “tide of history,” or the “spirit of the century,” as de Gaulle himself put it. The teleological narratives of decolonization were mirrored by the discourse of modernization, which became increasingly prominent in postwar textbooks for young students. While some found the fatalism of postwar modernization troubling, others found it exciting. There was, however, general consensus that modernization would allow a France of “modest dimensions”—reduced in size, weakened internationally, and chastened by anticolonial conflicts—to act like a great power once again. In other words, modernization largely replaced the function of empire in discourses of *grandeur*. Modernization, furthermore, replaced colonialism not only in purpose but also in structure, as narratives of French technological superiority borrowed notions of conquest, heroism, *mise en valeur*, and the civilizing mission. As argued by Phillip Naylor, “The colonial myth may have been ‘decolonized,’ but not necessarily ‘demythified.’”⁹⁵

In addition to international and domestic politics, intellectual currents, and social changes, changes in history education in the postwar period were determined by professional developments. Two of these developments were especially determinative in

⁹⁵Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 52.

this dissertation. The first, more subtle but also more consistent and long-lasting, was the gradual passage of current events into history. Historians often prefer a certain amount of historical distance from their subject, and this seems to have been no less the case for textbook authors and ministerial curriculum writers. This circumstance was especially important in the slow devotion of ever greater attention (and textbook space) to postwar topics like decolonization, modernization, development, and consumer society. The second professional development was more dynamic and abrupt, though ultimately perhaps more short-lived and superficial. I refer here to a period of educational reform from about 1969 to 1984 that deemphasized “history” as an independent subject (including a sharp reduction in classroom hours), unleashing a critical response from historians and public intellectuals of all stripes. The reforms, for example, changed the content of the *cours élémentaire* curriculum, reducing drastically the prominence of colonial history. In the *cours moyen*, on the contrary, methodological changes could not stem the deeper trend of the passage of decolonization and other postwar topics into history. Rather, the two trends seem to have operated in a concerted direction, leading to greater space devoted to the postwar period and to more critical and mature narratives of subjects like imperialism, decolonization, and modernization.

Bearing in mind the importance, therefore, of educational practice and methodology in defining the content of history texts, this dissertation has also explored the work of contemporary reformers. I have investigated progressive alternatives to the state-directed educational system in order to elucidate the counter-narratives to dominant historical discourses and to sketch the boundaries of what reforms were “thinkable” in particular historical contexts. Célestin Freinet’s *Écoles Modernes* movement employed

methods that reversed the direction of knowledge production in traditional education. Students produced their own narratives of their lives and their milieu; the movement's teachers unseated the top-down educational forms advocated by the state and by the Communist Party in the early years after World War II. In the 1970s and 1980s, reformers in teachers' unions, classrooms, and community organizations experimented with interculturalism, which has typically been thought unsuited to the French case. They did so largely, as did the Freinet teachers, out of conviction that these reforms were necessary to the practical success of their charges. In both instances, results were mixed. The children of the Freinet movement, perhaps due to the strength of the movement in rural areas and its emphasis on daily life, often produced materials that seemed strikingly traditional, pastoral, and—in the case of the Empire—exoticizing. Nonetheless, students created alternate visions of national belonging, they wrote about anticolonial wars at a very early date, and, given the presence of Freinet schools in the empire, colonial students had opportunities to write back to the metropole. Intercultural reformers working with immigrant populations, in the other case, often found a sympathetic state, or at least a benignly neglectful one, when they approached officials for money and logistical support. Yet, when state discourses about immigrants and multiculturalism became harsher with the headscarf affairs in 1989, it became clear that the practical concerns of reformers had failed to translate into systemic changes.

Replacing imperial power with modernization required large scale immigration to France and the opening of French economic and cultural borders to global (especially U.S.) markets in a bid to become a global power once again. In its effort to “marry its epoch,” to borrow again from de Gaulle, a pessimist might argue that France was a victim

of its own successes. Immigrant laborers wished to stay in France to partake of the gains they had helped produce; their children and grandchildren—overwhelmingly French citizens themselves—today demand more than just economic justice but recognition, equality, and acceptance. Likewise, modernization brought globalization and Americanization. To its critics, globalization threatens not just French competitiveness and jobs; it threatens French culture, national identity, and sovereignty. And, what is more, globalization seems to advance with the same fatalism that modernization did fifty years earlier.

More optimistic readings of French current affairs, however, seem possible. France's successful modernization during the *Trente Glorieuses* (with an emphasis on high technology); its productive human capital; its strong agricultural, service, and tourism industries; and its willingness to engage in limited protectionism have made France better able to weather globalization than many.⁹⁶ The strong international presence of French corporations bears this out. The relative decline of the United States as a military and economic power (in image if not in fact) has reduced the threat of globalization in the eyes of many French people and has improved Franco-American relations. The numbers of immigrants who migrated to France to fuel that modernization have stayed to enjoy greater opportunity and higher standards of living. Evidence indicates that, far from the failure to integrate or the rejection of French culture that concerns critics, immigrants and their children are eager to acquire citizenship and the

⁹⁶Peer Ederer, *Innovation at Work: The European Human Capital Index*, The Lisbon Council Policy Brief, Vol. 1, No. 2. (Brussels: The Lisbon Council, 2006); Daniel Cohen and Marcelo Soto, "Growth and Human Capital: Good Data, Good Results," *Journal of Economic Growth* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 51–76, doi:10.1007/s10887-007-9011-5; Jerald Hage, Maurice A. Garnier, and Bruce Fuller, "The Active State, Investment in Human Capital, and Economic Growth: France 1825-1975," *American Sociological Review* 53, no. 6 (December 1, 1988): 824–37, doi:10.2307/2095893; Peter Karl Kresl and Sylvain Gallais, *France Encounters Globalization* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002).

universal values of the republic remain attractive.⁹⁷ Furthermore, as the Law of February 23, 2005 and the burqa ban suggest, much of the failure to integrate may be a problem of France's own making. The young minorities are not banging at the gates of the French citadel because they wish to tear it down but because, they argue, Marianne refuses them entry. The functions of governmentality (even under the guise of liberal neutrality) include boundary-making and thus the designation of "others": a process to which colonial populations were once integral is now redirected toward postcolonial minorities within France.

What then is to be done? Conservatively, French minorities and the formerly colonized countries in which France desires influence demand acknowledgment and apology for colonial-era excesses. French leaders have been more willing to make such statements in recent years. Minorities also demand the abandonment of colonial discourses toward immigrants and minorities and the rejection of get-tough policing. More fundamental change, however, may require replacing current understandings of French national identity with the kinds of bottom-up, inclusive forms imagined by reformers like those in the Freinet and intercultural movements. The extent to which the French are willing to accept changes along these lines remains an open question. According to those on both sides of the debate, it is a question on which hinges the future of France. And it is a future over which the second half of the twentieth century and the end of empire loom large. Addressing the colonial legacy in twenty-first century France appears so often to fail because attempts to do so always raise troubling implications for French national identity. If the links between the colonial legacy and Frenchness have

⁹⁷Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France*.

proven difficult to break, might it be because decades worth of officials, teachers, authors, and textbooks did so much to forge them?

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