

Rewriting the Nation: Language Planning and Textbooks
in French Primary Education During the Third Republic

By

Celine L Maillard

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Reading Committee:

Douglas P Collins, Chair

Maya A Smith

Susan Gaylard

Ana Fernandez Dobao

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Department of French and Italian Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

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Céline L Maillard

University of Washington

Abstract

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Celine L Maillard

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Douglas P Collins

Department of French and Italian Studies

This research investigates the rewriting of the nation in France during the Third Republic and the role played by primary schools in the process of identity formation. *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, a textbook written in 1877 by Augustine Fouillée, is our entry point to illustrate the strategies used in manufacturing French identity. We also analyze other texts: political speeches from the revolutionary era and from the Third Republic, as well as testimonies from both students and teachers written during the twentieth century. Bringing together close readings and research from various fields – history, linguistics, sociology, and philosophy – we use an interdisciplinary approach to shed light on language and national identity formation.

Our findings underscore the connections between French primary education and national identity. Our analysis also contends that national identity in France during the Third Republic was an artificial construction and demonstrates how otherness was put in the service of populism. It argues that national identity came at the price of suppressed linguistic diversity and the humiliation of the speakers of minority languages. The study of language planning in France exposes the country's use

of glottophagy as another tool of imperialism, and reveals the conflicting relationship between regional and national identities.

Our goal is to better understand the impact language planning, educational policies, and textbooks can have on their target audience, as well as the effects primary schools and French literacy had on students' identity in France. By extrapolating from that study, it provides insight into the risks of imposing a single language in a country's educational system, illustrates the consequences of double standards on individual and national identity, and warns us against assimilationist policies in twenty-first century schools and states.

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Introduction

LE
TOUR DE LA FRANCE

PAR DEUX ENFANTS

DEVOIR ET PATRIE

LIVRE DE LECTURE COURANTE

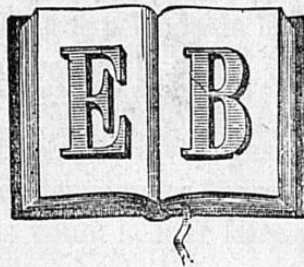
AVEC 200 GRAVURES INSTRUCTIVES POUR LEÇONS DE CHOSES

PAR

G. BRUNO

Lauréat de l'Académie française, auteur de *Francinet*.

HUITIÈME ÉDITION



PARIS

LIBRAIRIE CLASSIQUE D'EUGÈNE BELIN

RUE DE VAUGIRARD, N° 52

1878

Droits de traduction et de reproduction réservés.

My dissertation examines the rewriting of the nation in France during the Third Republic and the role played by the new Republican schools in achieving this goal. I look specifically at the textbook *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* by Augustine Fouillée as an entry point to illustrate the strategies used in manufacturing French identity. I also investigate language planning more broadly to see how it informs France's use of glottophagy¹ as another tool of imperialism, and I expose the conflicting relationship between regional and national identities.

As an immigrant to the United States, I had an opportunity to question my identity on multiple occasions. I sometimes enjoyed playing with the stereotypes associated with my French identity and receiving questions on what it means to be French. Other times, I got frustrated with the hyperboles and labels. Although I could not articulate it when I first moved here almost eleven years ago, I instinctively felt that any encounter with new people meant being othered. I was privileged enough to be met with the affable curiosity almost automatically granted to white Western Europeans. The way people labeled me – and the way I defined myself to answer their questions without initiating the lengthy conversation it would have warranted – certainly took away a lot of the complexity I was experiencing, but it was also a chance for me to better question who I was, and how it was tied to my upbringing, the social roles I was attributed early on, my education, and how I was constantly negotiating my sense of belonging and affiliation to the various groups I had been part of over the course of my life. In love with words – in French at first and later with languages in general for the learning opportunities they granted me, not only to read and educate myself, but also to talk to people I could not have communicated with in my native language – I realized the power that came with them. Talking to my grandmother about her experience growing up in a home where French was not the first language but *poitevin*, a regional language was, and about her limited yet

¹ “Language eating”: a term coined by linguist Jean-Louis Calvet to describe the absorption or replacement of minor languages/dialects by major ones.

defining experience of schooling, I kept coming up with more questions, some of which I was able to answer while doing research for my dissertation.

Le Tour de la France was a major textbook in the educational landscape of the French Third Republic. It also foresaw and contributed to the fading of regional identity, and more specifically regional languages. At the turn of the century, the two orphan boys whose story is being told are wandering the regions of the book, while the reader follows their path. Through their eyes, they are discovering the history, geography or national symbols of France, which seems like an obvious way for a primary school student to highlight one's sense of both regional and national pride. Used as an optimistic motto supposed to highlight the positive effects of diversity in France, the "unity in diversity"² principle eventually proved detrimental to diversity, compromising plurality while upholding national unity at the expense of regional languages. *Le Tour de la France* certainly aimed at encouraging school children, and eventually their families, to learn French and what it meant to be French in an effort to form one nation united by a common language.

Augustine Fouillée, the enigmatic author of *Le Tour de la France*, was born Augustine Tuillerie in 1833 in Laval. Raised in a cloth maker family, she was married at twenty years old to Jean Guyau, a merchant from the same city sixteen years her senior who abused her.³ She left him after the birth of their only son, Jean-Marie Guyau, in spite of the scandal it caused and obtained from the court a physical separation from her husband as well as custody of her son. Undeterred by society's scrutiny, she eventually managed to move in with a distant cousin, university professor Alfred Fouillée, without raising any suspicion as to their relationship, including from the servants. When they finally married in 1885, she confided in a friend: "depuis vingt-huit ans j'étais aimée, adorée..." (Balibar

² Used in the sense of "unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation," as defined by Roxanne Lalonde in 1994.

³ Both Patrick Cabanel and Renée Balibar mention that he attempted to kill her.

366). The couple would ultimately live off the sale of the numerous books they published for both primary and higher education.

When she was thirty-six years old, Fouillée (then officially Augustine Guyau)⁴ published *Francinet*, her first masterwork for elementary students, which was reprinted twice within its first year. With 103 editions by 1898, it foretold the potential for success of *Le Tour de la France*. Although it was written under the pen name of G. Bruno,⁵ the prolific author was never officially recognized, and Alfred Fouillée acted as her representative when needed—never revealing her identity. Writing about *Francinet* to the editor, Belin, in 1870, he said: “Comme j’ai eu l’honneur de vous le dire, Monsieur, je ne suis pas l’auteur du livre. Si je l’étais, non seulement je le signerais sans hésitation, mais encore je serais fier de pouvoir le signer” (Cabanel 149).

Augustine Fouillée’s son Jean-Marie Guyau, trained as a philosopher like his step-father, also wrote textbooks and essays on philosophy. His wife and son would write as well, and the latter, Augustin Guyau, who died during World War II, wrote on March 28, 1916: “Le devoir, l’inéluctable devoir pour notre génération – et quoi qu’il doive en coûter – c’est de rendre à la France ses anciennes frontières; ainsi aura-t-elle bien mérité de la patrie ... et de l’humanité” (Cabanel 152), making him Augustine Fouillée’s rightful heir when it came to his values. His grandmother would die in 1923, surviving a whole family of book writers.

Unaware of the book’s history and significance, I read it for the first time when I was eight or nine years old, after I had found it in my grandparents’ attic. It was summer. I had gone through the rest of the books on the shelves,⁶ and I needed some new material to keep me entertained after dinner. While enjoying a 110 years old textbook seemed unlikely, it did occupy my time for a couple

⁴ I will refer to her as Fouillée going forward, since it is the name she chose for herself in her private life, as well as the most commonly used by critics once her identity was revealed.

⁵ After Giordano Bruno, an Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician, poet, and cosmological theorist, who was executed by the Roman Inquisition in 1600. He was much admired by nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectuals who considered him a martyr for science. Her choice of pen name deliberately positions her work in the dominant ideology of the time – positivism.

⁶ Mostly the “Bibliothèque verte” and “Bibliothèque rose” collections from the 1950s and 1960s.

more evenings. And even if I was not a standard (if there is any) late nineteenth or early twentieth century reader, it was exciting (those boys my age were traveling all around the country on their own), interesting (I was learning a lot without feeling like I was studying at all), and made me feel somehow connected to the previous generations of children in my family who had read it before me.

Le Tour de la France's rich text was the primary source for my dissertation. Beyond my personal connection to the book as a reader, its status as a best seller, its original premise set during a painful national reassessment which played a major role in redefining the nation, its hyperbolic style illustrative of the period, which seems to compensate the doubts felt by the French population made it particularly relevant to the questions of identity I was interested in. In addition, I accessed fascinating speeches from the revolutionary era (Abbé Grégoire, Barère de Vieuzac) and from the Third Republic (Ernest Renan, Georges Clémenceau, Jules Ferry), as well as first hand testimonies from both readers and teachers written during the twentieth century (Pierre-Jacques Hélias, Emilie Carles, Jacques Ozouf's survey). From a historical perspective, I have read with a renewed interest some of Jules Michelet's work and correspondence from the nineteenth century, and I am indebted to Eugen Weber's work,⁷ which challenged the notion that France was already a united people by the nineteenth century and documented the transformation "from peasants into Frenchmen." Both Mona and Jacques Ozouf's research on schools, teachers, and *Le Tour de la France*⁸ provided me with detailed investigations of the historical and political context of the Third Republic. Gérard Noiriel on national identity⁹ and Renée Balibar on the history of French in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as contemporary linguists such as Jean-Pol Caput, Jean-William Lapierre, and Louis-Jean Calvet, helped me reframe the mainstream interpretation among French historians (Jean-François Chanet, Anne-Marie Thiesse) that French has had an overwhelmingly positive influence for all. Finally, Sarah

⁷ *Peasants Into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1880-1914*, 1976.

⁸ From the 1960s onward.

⁹ From the 1990s onward.

Ahmed's recent piece on the influence of emotions in the rhetoric of the nation particularly resonated with me and allowed me to go beyond the work of a critic with some answers and perspectives.

Building on these scholars and texts, I use an interdisciplinary approach to shed light on language and national identity formation. The proposed research differs from previous research in several ways. Using a large-scale survey on teachers¹⁰ from the 1960s, my research looks at the information from the perspective of identity and languages and how they intersect in a preselected geographical area. It also brings together research from various fields, including the perspectives of both historians and linguists, the latter having been mostly ignored by French historians considered experts on nationalism and identity formation.

Historically speaking, I explore the period going from 1877 – which is the date *Le Tour de la France* was first published – to 1940 – which is the year the Third Republic was replaced by the Fourth Republic, but also the last decade the textbook was used as such in the classroom. In terms of topic, it also aims to further investigate the possible connection between literacy and patriotism (shown on Weber's maps in *Peasants into Frenchmen*) by adding some information on the use of regional languages and dialects. Finally, special emphasis is placed on the readers of *Le Tour de la France*, to understand who they were, but also how they were reading it and how they may have perceived the textbook. In order to explore the influence of the changing social, cultural, political, and religious values of French society on schools, textbooks, teachers, and ultimately on students, I answer the following questions: Who were those first generations of readers who encountered *Le Tour de la France* decades before I did? What was it like, reading it by the fire in a landowner's farm or in a daily laborer's home where no adults spoke French in the 1880s? What role did the textbook,

¹⁰ This survey was carried out by Jacques Ozouf, who was interested in the political, religious, and social context and beliefs of the primary school teachers. He received 4,000 letters answering his questions from *instituteurs* who taught before 1914 and his premature death prevented him from doing as much as he could have with the data.

and language planning in general, play in French primary schools during the Third Republic? How did French primary education come into play in that late nineteenth century context, and what possible connections did it have with national identity? Did the authorities and Fouillée deliberately manufacture their own vision of French identity through the “Unity in diversity” trope in *Le Tour de la France*? To what extent were the author’s goals, and the educational reforms planned for primary schools at the national level successful, and at what cost?

This dissertation will help readers understand the extent of the influence educational policies and a textbook can have on their target audience, as well as the impact of primary schools and French literacy on students’ identity in France. By extrapolating from that study, it should also provide an insight into the potential risks of imposing a single language in a country’s primary schools.¹¹ Linguistic and regional minorities such as those found at the margins of France were affected by the new direction brought to primary education at the end of the nineteenth century, which had lasting effects on the populations’ sense of identity. For various reasons, countries like India and China have more recently followed a similar path in terms of limiting regional identity, sometimes unofficially. Although France will have trouble making up for the loss of what is now considered part of its heritage,¹² others may still be able to save an extremely valuable part of their identity.

Although the exact cost of the shame imposed on entire generations who did not fit the mold recast for the Third Republic’s conciliatory vision of national identity is impossible to estimate, I argue that France’s linguistic imperialism cost both individuals and the nation. By shifting the burden of shame¹³ from the victims to the oppressor – the nation – and looking at its own

¹¹ Issues brought up in James Banks’ work on multicultural education.

¹² Regional languages can be taught in bilingual primary schools today.

¹³ An idea developed by Sarah Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

responsibility, France could build a new accountable nation whose residents – nationals and immigrants alike – can learn to respect the rich diversity they bring to the table.

The first chapter shows the connections between French primary education and national identity, by giving some context to my overall research. It focuses on the institutional goals set out by the new Republic and its key actors. The chapter ends with a typology of *Le Tour de la France*'s audience. The second chapter contends that national identity in France during the Third Republic was an artificial construction. It first covers the main reason behind this vision: the Third Republic's desire to reconcile its divided population opposing Monarchy and Republic. It then addresses the role of the other in *Le Tour de la France*, the central characters who led the campaign for a new identity, and finally how Fouillée put otherness in the service of a new brand of nationalism. The third chapter argues that national identity came at the price of suppressed linguistic diversity. It first provides a more detailed understanding of language planning through its history, followed by a reflection on the strategies used to rewrite the nation through the French language, including through linguistic imperialism. It finally offers a brief discussion on a possible way forward as a nation. The conclusion warns us against new assimilationist policies in twenty-first century schools and the consequences of double standards on individual and national identity.

Chapter 1
The Third Republic and French Primary Education:
Institutional Goals and the Example of *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*

“Si la guerre a rempli le pays de ruines, c’est à nous tous, enfants de la France, d’effacer ce deuil par notre travail, et de féconder cette vieille terre française qui n’est jamais ingrate à la main qui la soigne.” (Fouillée, 326th ed. 304)

Published after the War of 1870, *Le Tour de la France* reads as a moralistic novel of the homeland combined with a civics handbook. In spite of its unappealing premise to contemporary readers, it was an extraordinarily popular book among young readers and their families: “Il n’y a sans doute pas d’autre exemple d’un livre à ce point répandu et formateur dans l’histoire de notre pays si l’on excepte la *Vie des saints* et le *Petit Larousse*” (Cabanel 154). Written by Augustine Fouillée and used for half a century in both religious and secular schools, it was also read at home, where it was a foundational item in family libraries or sometimes the only book a family owned. To make sense of its moral and political statements, we will start by providing the historical backdrop. Eight decades after its first revolution, and two Republics later, France was coming out of three decades of political stability under Napoleon III’s rule, capped by the fall of the Second Empire, the defeat by Prussia, and the failed Paris Commune in 1870 and 1871. Most French people yearned for a return to more peaceful times. Although it would end up lasting seventy years, the Third Republic was initially thought of as a provisional government, and its future was very much uncertain in the early stages, with educational policies about to play a major role in defining it. From the very first hours of the Republic, tensions with the Paris Commune emerged. The historian Timothy Baycroft saw it as a revolt of the far left, but the Republicans eventually proved their adhesion to moderation. The French Constitutional laws of 1875 organized the configuration of the Third Republic in order to prevent the type of centralized authority represented by Napoléon III. The bicameral system consisted of a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate forming the legislative branch of government, and a president to serve as head of state. The Senate, in accordance with those who wrote the

constitution, greatly limited the executive power given to the president, making the position highly unstable. The political leaders, although directly affected by polarized politics and volatile governments, reassured the *provinces* early on that a wave of terror echoing the 1789 Revolution would not happen. As divided politically as France was – between the reformists and the conservatives –, the Republican system itself stood the test of time, bringing stability back, and appeasing the population, at least at first. During its first decade of existence, the Third Republic also saw the election of many monarchists to the Chamber of Deputies, themselves divided as to who was the legitimate heir to the throne. They would lose their position in 1879, when the Republicans achieved a majority position across the land. For its Republican vision to take root, the newfound political state established educational reforms, remembered as the Jules Ferry Laws of 1881 and 1882, which first established free public primary schools, and then educational secularism as well as mandatory schooling for children between six and thirteen years old (Nouschi 309).

Le Tour de la France is emblematic of the period's changing politics and new educational policies and is wrapped in nationalistic sentiment. The patriotic textbook was extremely successful: it sold three million copies in the first ten years of its publication,¹⁴ and seven million before 1914, while advancing the Republican agenda among the younger generations. Blending a nationalist agenda with mystical undertones, the book taught children what it meant to be French through the experiences of the protagonists André and Julien, two boys from Alsace-Lorraine¹⁵ whose father's dying wish took them on an initiatory journey across the new borders between France and Prussia, after the previously French city they lived in was lost to the latter.

The eldest son, sitting by his father's bed, attempts to give him the peace needed for him to go:

¹⁴ France had a population of 40 million at the turn of the century.

¹⁵ After the 1871 Treaty of Frankfurt, which ceded 1,694 villages and cities under French control to Prussia.

André le voyait inquiet et il cherchait à deviner ; il se pencha jusqu'auprès des lèvres du moribond, l'interrogeant du regard. Un mot plus léger qu'un souffle arriva à l'oreille d'André : - France !

- Oh ! s'écria le fils aîné avec élan, soyez tranquille, cher père, je vous promets que nous demeurerons les enfants de la France ; nous quitterons Phalsbourg pour aller là-bas ; nous resterons Français, quelque peine qu'il faille souffrir pour cela." Un soupir de soulagement s'échappa des lèvres paternelles. La main froide de l'agonisant serra d'une faible étreinte les mains des deux enfants réunies dans la sienne, puis ses yeux se tournèrent vers la fenêtre ouverte par où se montrait un coin du grand ciel bleu: ses regards mourants s'éclairèrent d'une flamme plus pure. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 10)

In a final effort to communicate with his children, the father uses one of his last breaths to say "France," a word André rightly interprets as a request for them to leave their hometown of Phalsbourg and move across the border into France. Once reassured by his eldest's firm intent, his eyes move to the window where a corner of blue sky appears to be an omen for the children's enterprise. Along with the fictional characters of this book, French school children were invited to explore what Frenchness and its diverse representations in time and space were – at least according to Fouillée – in order to build a unified sense of identity.

Setting the tone for the book, this excerpt illustrates the author's nationalistic program, emphasizes the sense of loss felt by the protagonists, and by extension, French people who had just lost Alsace and Lorraine, and presents the aspirations expressed by André and Julien's promise to remain the children of France, no matter the cost. At the turn of the twentieth century, school children from all around the country were exploring the regions through the eyes of these two orphan boys. Throughout the chapters, these boys were discovering the history, geography, and national symbols of France, and shaping France's primary school students' sense of unity through

shared representations taught in history and morality classes. Democratizing education, by making it free and compulsory, helped to spread a new or renewed awareness of belonging to the French nation. The Ferry Laws added structure to the idea of nation as well as helped define and cultivate the young Third Republic's agenda in the provinces of France.

So how did French primary education come into play in the aforementioned late nineteenth century context and what possible connections does it have with national identity? This chapter will articulate the connections between French primary education and national identity, and develop the hypothesis that increased literacy correlated with patriotism.¹⁶ To better understand the issues at stake, we will attempt to break them down into two sections. First, we will focus on the Republican system, literacy, and education, looking at its main actors, ambitions, and measures. Then, we will present *Le Tour de la France* and examine a typology of its audience.

1. Republic, Literacy, and Education: Main Actors, Ambitions, and Measures

Although remembered as the regime that brought schooling for all, the Third Republic's beginnings were not very ambitious. Before education and literacy could reach the masses, stability had to be achieved politically. Born out of defeat, the Third Republic ended up crushing the popular uprising of the Commune with the support of Prussia. Divided on what to do next and without much political credibility, the notables¹⁷ elected a royalist general – Mac-Mahon – in 1873. Still uncertain when came the time to vote on the new constitutional laws in 1875, the national assembly built a system that could accommodate a parliamentary system similar to the British one, and thus work with a president or a king. By 1876 though, two thirds of the deputies identified as

¹⁶ Based on some of Weber's maps of France during the Third Republic.

¹⁷ "Notables," also known as members of the "système notabiliaire" came to power with the Revolution, and lost their exclusive power after 1870 and the democratization of France. They were usually described as individuals whose family money, social prestige, and political power gave them access to government positions, whether through election or appointment. See Jean-Louis Briquet, "Notables et processus de notabilisation en France aux XIXe et XXe siècles," 2012.

Republicans, and Mac-Mahon withdrew from office in 1879, replaced by Jules Grévy, a moderate Republican. France, after a century of tergiversation and hesitation between various forms of governments – Republics, monarchic restoration, and empires – was finally settling, which allowed long-term changes to happen, including in the field of education.

Eugen Weber's historical account of the modernization of rural France from 1870 to 1914 gives us a sense of French peasants' transformation from dimly aware of the nation they were part of to fully-fledged French citizens who identified as such. The maps he provides,¹⁸ which he found in military records over the period, show "pockets of patriotism" as well as regions that "lacked patriotism." Weber defines a "patrie" as a "fatherland": "a larger abstraction ... to replace the immediate experience of a man's *pays*" (95). Looking through the archives of the "War Ministry's files,"¹⁹ the author found references to "the local population's indifference to the interests of the army, open hostility to troops or active avoidance of military service" or more directly to "patriotism or lack of patriotism" (Weber 105). The areas characterized by their lack of patriotism almost perfectly match the maps showing illiteracy in France, found in Louis Maggiolo's study, and paint both sides of the distinctive Saint-Malo-Geneva line. In 1877, chief education officer, Maggiolo, surveyed French literacy before and after 1789, by asking teachers to measure the ability to read, write, and sign one's name on marriage contracts found in town registers. Based on their reporting, Maggiolo showed that the Saint-Malo-Geneva line, an imaginary diagonal border, separated the "enlightened" populations of the northeast from the less educated ones of the southwest.

¹⁸ See his chapter entitled "France, One and Indivisible."

¹⁹ From the Restoration (1814) to the fall of President MacMahon (1879).

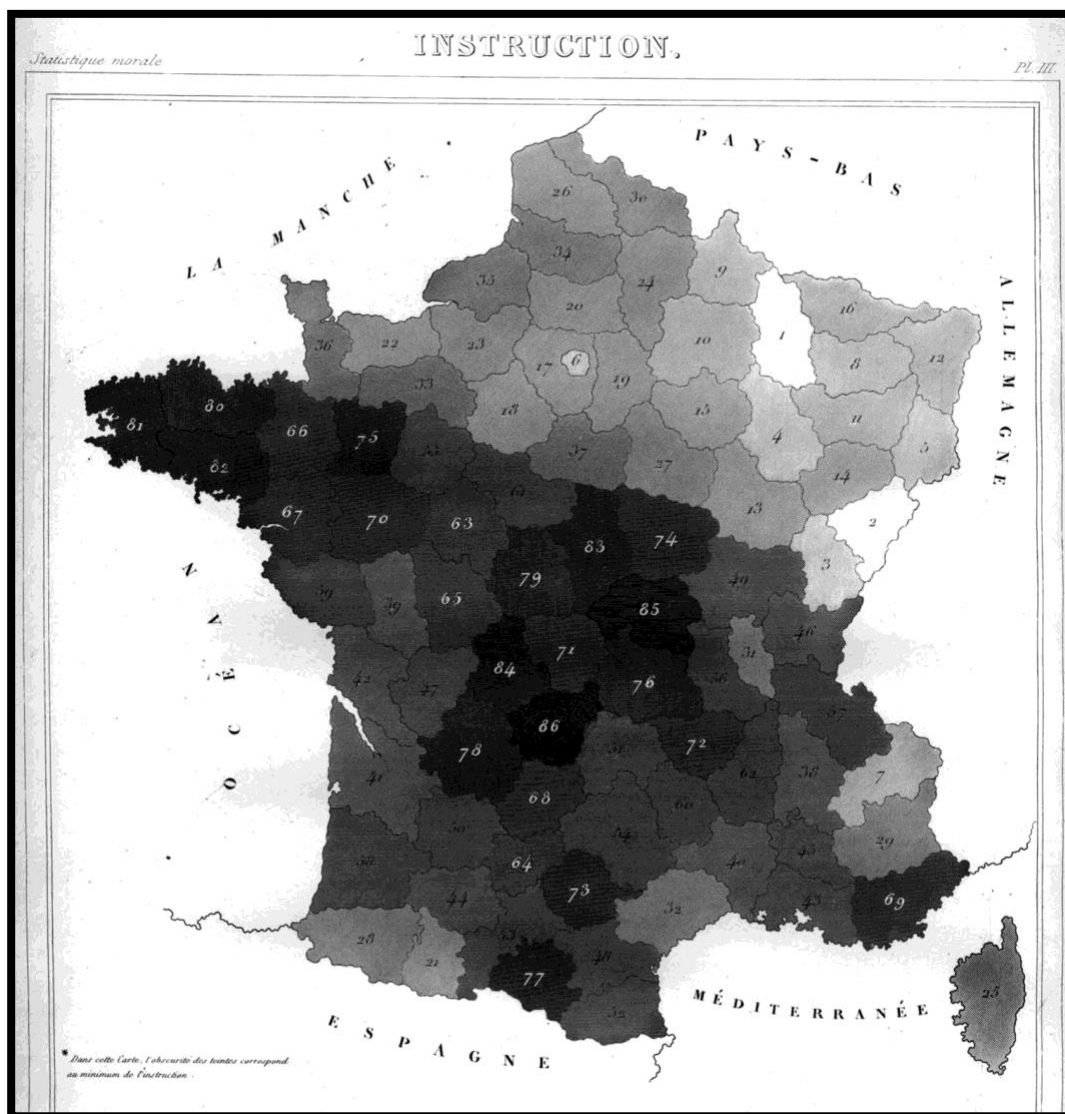


Fig. 1. A.-M. Guerry, “Instruction”, plate III : *Essai sur la statistique morale de la France*, 1833. Private collection.

Although the methodology is questionable (one could be able to write their name at eighteen years old, but have forgotten at thirty for lack of practice, or never read or wrote anything besides their name), Maggiolo’s study revealed existing geographical variations, which would eventually subside. Weber’s findings would have supported the nineteenth century anti-Republican argument: by teaching the French youth how to read, schools before the Ferry Laws already contributed to

sensitizing citizens to the concept of nation as well as to patriotism, and subsequently to make the Saint-Malo-Geneva line obsolete. The most remote provinces, or the least interested in schooling, were formerly distrustful of ideas that came from the outside of their small communities.

Generalizing education, by making it free and compulsory, would on the other hand render it possible to broaden this awareness of belonging to the French nation. It would thus fall to primary schools to forge unity through shared symbols taught in history and morality classes.

1.1. Educational Policies

The Ferry Laws of the Third Republic were part of a larger movement towards education started in the first half of the nineteenth century. Baycroft sees the period between 1815 and 1940²⁰ as a struggle for the nation to establish itself. He explains:

In terms of French historical identity, this was the period in which the battles of the French Revolution were fought again and again, sometimes hotly and sometimes slowly, until such a time as France's future as a Republic was secured and consolidated. (26)

It also coincided with the successive waves of educational measures. Initially, the Guizot laws of 1833 required every *commune* (of more than 500 inhabitants) to maintain a primary school for boys. It established the principle that secular primary education should be accessible to all citizens. In 1850, the Falloux Laws extended the requirements of the Guizot laws to require a girls' school in those communes. The 1851 law on primary schools created a mixed system, in which some primary education establishments were public and controlled by the state while Catholic congregations controlled others. Later on, the Ferry Laws of 1881-82 previously mentioned, made public primary education free, mandatory, and secular. In 1886, the Goblet law defined the organization of primary

²⁰ See his chapter "The Battle for the French Nation."

education and established that teachers should not belong to the clergy. With a law passed in 1889,²¹ teachers became civil servants. Finally, the 1904 law²² prohibited religious congregations from teaching, including in private schools. Those laws, which had been going back and forth in terms of how much power was given to Catholic congregations since the Revolution, reveal the battle between monarchists and Republicans and show a steadily decline of the power of the clergy. Some of those laws, although controversial, are thought to have influenced a growing self-awareness of France as a nation.

The early years of the Third Republic—namely the years from 1870 to 1914—are usually seen as the “Triumph of the Republic” (Baycroft 32), a golden age Baycroft believes was “conceived in terms of a variety of republican and national images, the most prominent of which is the mythical ideal of the birth of mass education” (33). However, the historian appears to be curious about the effectiveness of these early educational policies, questioning along with François Furet and Jacques Ozouf²³ the chronology as it relates to the extent to which reading and writing in French was a direct consequence of the Republican laws (Baycroft 34). Furet and Ozouf estimate that, “at the end of the 1870s, the vast majority of French boys and girls were already attending ... some sort of (more or less suitable) school, and that in the vast majority of cases, they were attending state school” (Furet and Ozouf 148), financed and run by various communities. That triumphal Republican age is also illustrated at great length in *Le Tour de la France*. Published in 1877, the textbook praised education and the nation, the former being provided generously by the latter. La mère Gertrude, one of the children’s helpers explains to the young hero:

Julien, les écoles, les cours d’adultes, les bibliothèques scolaires sont des bienfaits de votre patrie. La France veut que tous ses enfants soient dignes d’elle, et chaque jour elle

²¹ *Loi du 19 juillet 1889, sur les dépenses ordinaires de l’instruction primaire publique et sur les traitements du personnel de ce service.*

²² *Loi du 7 juillet 1904, relative à la suppression de l’enseignement congréganiste.*

²³ See François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire. L’alphabétisation des Français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 1977.

augmente le nombre de ses écoles et de ses cours, elle fonde des bibliothèques, et elle prépare des maîtres savants pour diriger la jeunesse. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 45)

This augural statement in 1877 would soon prove to be even truer.

Primary education was also meant to overcome prejudice against modern methods and ideas, and its teachings were considered beneficial to the nation in the name of progress. Thus, the *Revue Pédagogique* of February 1883 encouraged teachers to discuss the practical applications of their courses, such as ways for farmers to become more productive: “Lorsque l’agriculteur sera convaincu qu’il gaspille ses engrais, qu’il a sous la main une source inépuisable de richesse dont il ne sait pas tirer profit, sa profession deviendra vite plus lucrative, et probablement qu’alors les bras manqueront moins à l’agriculture” (M. Ozouf, *L’école, l’église et la République* 121). Thus the goal of the school curriculum was also to train the Republican workforce with an eye toward national prosperity and, to a lesser extent, to slow down rural exodus by painting a bright picture of the farming world.

Le Tour de la France’s preface laid out its goals: “les écoliers sont initiés peu à peu à la vie pratique et à l’instruction civique en même temps qu’à la morale; ils acquièrent des notions usuelles sur l’économie industrielle et commerciale, sur l’agriculture, sur les principales sciences et leurs applications” (Fouillée 326th ed. 2). Some subjects receive more coverage than others. If physics and medicine are only mentioned once each, hygiene is mentioned twice, industrial chemistry is mentioned nine times, and twenty-one pages refer to farming. For instance, chapter fourteen compares the milk production of dairy cows based on breed, and how much butter can be made from it: “Quinze litres de lait de Bretonne ne font qu’un kilogramme de beurre. ... Il y a d’autres vaches dont il faut jusqu’à vingt-cinq litres pour faire un kilogramme de beurre” explains a farmer to Julien. Chapter thirty-four covers horse care: “la peau des animaux, comme celle de l’homme, est percée d’une multitude de petits trous appelés pores, par lesquels s’échappe la sueur, et la sueur sert à purifier le sang. Quand la poussière et la malpropreté bouchent ces milliers de petits trous, le sang se

vicie et la santé s'altère chez les animaux comme chez l'homme" (Fouillée 326th ed. 75). Once in Normandy (chapter ninety-six), the author describes the region's fertile soil:

Nous avons des prairies sans pareilles, où les nombreux troupeaux qu'on y élève ont de l'herbe jusqu'au ventre. C'est dans le Cotentin, dans mon pays, que chaque année on vient acheter les bœufs gras qui sont ensuite promenés à Paris, et qui sont bien les plus beaux qu'on puisse voir (Fouillée 326th ed. 247).

French farming is also put into perspective with a comparison to its neighbors, such as England, who import, according to the author, millions of eggs and chickens from Normandy. Looking at the first edition and the key ideas and terms used by Fouillée over 308 pages in total, one can see "France" mentioned 146 times, "Patrie" 65 times, "Travail" 135 times, and "Ecole" and "Instruction" 103 times, clearly illustrating her goals: "nous avons voulu présenter aux enfants la patrie sous ses traits les plus nobles, et la leur montrer grande par l'honneur, par le travail, par le respect profond du devoir et de la justice" (Fouillée 326th ed. 2). Fouillée made sure *Le Tour de la France* provided her audience with enough content to become well versed on both France and her idea of France, the latter supporting her vision of what a young patriot should know.

1.2. Textbooks and literacy

Le Tour de la France is representative of the period; indeed, most children who passed through the primary schools of France between 1880 and 1945 studied the textbook. In fact, "in terms of sales figures, [Fouillée was] the most successful French author of the last 150 years" (Lindaman 85), which is probably why the book has its own chapter in *Les Lieux de Mémoire* written by Jacques and Mona Ozouf, who call it "Le petit livre rouge de la République." So what could make a "common" textbook so extraordinary?

First of all, its content is memorable. If the text expresses a lot of nostalgia for a world about to disappear, it displays nevertheless some clear anticipation: “*Le Tour de la France* signale l’ouverture accélérée des écoles, magnifie les départements têt alphabétisés, annonce le rattrapage des autres” (J. Ozouf, *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants* 296). Published in 1877, a few years before the Ferry Laws, it was ahead of its time: “L’édition de 1877 est toute tendue vers un avènement ... Il n’y a eu ici nul besoin de bricoler le texte primitif, miraculeusement adapté, cinq ans avant la rédaction des programmes officiels, à la loi sur l’instruction obligatoire” (J. Ozouf, *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants* 297).

The very fact it is a textbook contributed to *Le Tour de la France*’s extensive success. Alain Choppin, historian and textbook expert, affirms the power that comes with textbooks, opening it with a quote from Jules Ferry “Celui qui est maître du livre est maître de l’éducation” (Choppin, *Manuels scolaires: histoire et actualité* 22). Such power is, for him, based on the malleable characteristics of its audience’s mind, the permanence of its written content (which allows the students to read it over and over again), and its widespread message, since it was mass published. And if the power of the textbook is proportional to those elements, then the exceptional nature of *Le Tour de la France* makes it an even more powerful tool.

According to Choppin, what made textbooks—or “manuels scolaires” in French—so essential, and the way they came to reach such a wide population, boils down to three main factors. First, the triumph of “l’enseignement simultané” or simultaneous teaching²⁴, which he defines as a “méthode pédagogique qui suppose que tous les élèves d’une même classe progressent du même pas et soient pourvus de livres identiques,” effectively increased the need for textbooks for all. Its objective was to use textbooks in the classroom in order to save time and increase students’

²⁴ “L’enseignement simultané” refers to students being lectured to at once by a single authority as found in most classrooms in France today, as opposed to mutual teaching by students to each other. *Les Frères des écoles chrétiennes* spread this method.

knowledge by streamlining information dissemination, as well as to improve the quality of the teaching by limiting the use of “moniteurs,” whose role in the classroom it was to assist teachers although they had no prior pedagogical training. The second factor that gave textbooks a central role in education was a proactive and coordinated policy designed to increase literacy by sending the youth to school, something the Ferry Laws took a step further than Guizot in the 1830s. It was also an era when paper and print became much cheaper, thanks to inventions such as the cylinder press in the early 1800s and of new papermaking techniques based on pulping wood in 1844. Finally, the development of big publishing companies modified the educational landscape (Choppin, *Manuels scolaires: histoire et actualité* 7): thanks to the policies regarding mass education, the French textbook market became extremely profitable.

The textbook *Le Tour de la France* more particularly gained importance in the classroom as it would give practical expression to the ideals defended by the future Ferry Laws. The book facilitated the emergence of a national consciousness without forgetting the role played by the various regions and their heroes (official and anonymous). The two children, in this first edition, speak of love for their home region—Alsace Lorraine, the memory of which must “remain alive” (Fouillée, 326th ed. 34) even though they have left and will probably never be back. Similarly, as Jean Baubérot, a French historian and sociologist who specializes in secularism points out, “l’organisation même de l’école laïque témoigne de cette importance donnée aux ‘petites patries’: le recrutement local des enseignants du primaire était la règle” (134), which is why each department, in the years that followed the Paul Bert law of 1879, was required to have one primary school for boys and one for girls, as per its first article: “Tout département devra être pourvu d’une école normale d’instituteurs et d’une école normale d’institutrices, suffisantes pour assurer le recrutement de ses instituteurs communaux et de ses institutrices communales” (Loi Paul Bert, 1st article).

For some, including Baubérot, “La France est le produit de la fusion dans le ‘creuset national’ des qualités (et des défauts) des diverses ‘petites patries’ qui la composent. Ce qui veut dire implicitement : l’universel (français !) est formé par des particularismes (locaux et provinciaux)” (Baubérot 134-35). For others, and that includes Baycroft, the national mythology brings together “the coherent identity invented by the republican nation-builders ... and the more spontaneous and diverse images that emerged” (Baycroft 168). An organic vision of identity deriving from diversity is then opposed to a more artificial one, which “may or may not be the result of deliberate authorities expressly seeking to foster or enhance national identity among a chosen elite or the popular masses of the nation” (Baycroft 170). If the *écoles normales d’instituteurs* are any indication, it’s fair to say that the argument for the artificiality of the process has some merit. As decentralized as it may appear, the movement was definitely coming from an organized overseeing power, and so was the program teachers were meant to follow.

Furet and Ozouf tell us that “the great educational laws of the 1880s were enacted at a time when the cause of universal literacy was, if not entirely so, at least pretty well won” (Furet et Ozouf 45). In fact, they “crowned the elementary instruction of the French people as expressed in universal literacy. These laws were the institutional expression of the consequences of literacy, not its cause” (Furet et Ozouf 45). According to the authors, by the end of the eighteenth century, northern and northeastern France was mostly literate, and the rest of France followed during the renewed written culture of the nineteenth century. Royalists and Republicans credited different factors: the *Ancien Régime* for the first and the Revolution for the second (Furet et Ozouf 45). Even though both authors stated forty years ago that more research should be done, their conclusions provide us with enough information to build on not only in terms of a typology of the audience, but also in terms of raw data on reading, writing, and the native languages spoken by students.

1.3. Geography: town vs countryside

“There were bumpkins, who could not read, and the rest. Put more crudely still, there was the town, and there was the country.” These are the words Furet and Ozouf use to describe the geographical differences between the urban and the rural world. At least a century “separated urban literacy from rural literacy,” and the power resided in the larger towns and cities (Furet et Ozouf 149). They add: “the map of below-average literacy coincides accurately with one socio-occupational map at least, that of peasantry” (Furet et Ozouf 150). Who were these peasants who, at the end of the Second Empire, still represented the majority of the French population? According to Karl Marx:

La grande masse de la nation française est constituée par une simple addition de grandeurs de même nom, à peu près de la même façon qu’un sac rempli de pommes de terre forme un sac de pommes de terre ... Il n’existe entre les paysans parcellaires qu’un lien local et où la similitude de leurs intérêts ne crée entre eux aucune communauté, aucune liaison nationale ni aucune organisation politique. (Marx 189)

Individualistic, traditional, attached to his land, and resistant to change, Marx’s description of the French peasant matches the descriptions of many other authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Emilie Carles, *institutrice de campagne*, talks about this reluctance to change in her biography, recalling a story from 1925:

Les rapports qui existaient entre les gens du village restaient bien souvent empreints de ce primitivisme ancestral. ... Les habitudes et les coutumes acquises au cours des siècles avaient la solidité des vieilles chemises de chanvre que nous fabriquions autrefois, elles résistaient à l’usure du temps. (152)

Another division took place within the less literate countryside population: gender. Furet and Ozouf do mention what they call the typical “division of cultural tasks and skills,” where “the

women read but could not write; the men wrote, but could not read” (Furet et Ozouf 191). Even though men and women had varying degrees of skills related to literacy, they did not have a lot of opportunity to practice these skills in their daily lives, which is why the only one they maintained them was somehow connected to their respective tasks. The division of responsibilities meant “reading was associated with communion and catechism, writing with keeping accounts and, less frequently, with keeping up with distant relations” (Furet et Ozouf 191). Therefore women were usually the designated household readers, while men were the writers.

The regions with the highest proportions of urban populations and concentrated villages, on the other hand, matched the regions with the highest literacy rates. Furet and Ozouf explain it as follows:

Social contacts are easier, communication between inhabitants better, and hence cultural contagion works faster; lastly, children have less far to go to reach school, which is an important factor in making up parents’ minds – remembering that school attendance was a winter activity, from November to March, when dirt tracks were muddy, or snowed under, and often practically impassible (Furet 154-55).

Even in towns, literacy rates varied and depended on whether the main occupation of its population was administrative or economic. The centralized nature of the administration in France meant that the size of the town was not always proportional to its literacy. Indeed, small towns with political and administrative services such as a chef-lieu in less populated *départements*, whose populations were under 5,000 inhabitants, had the best literacy rates, especially for men, even among other larger urban centers (Furet et Ozouf 225). By comparison, the growing nineteenth century industrial towns with far greater populations did not always show good literacy rates, since having an elementary education was not required to perform these new types of jobs. Therefore, while Furet

and Ozouf conclude that there is a clear link between the literacy rates and the density of the population, they emphasize the importance of the function of the town over its size.

1.4. Language

Language has long been a cause for discrimination, preventing people who did not speak the language of the majority (in our case, French) from moving upward socially and economically, or simply from making informed decisions. If peasants in isolated areas did not necessarily “need” French in their daily lives (especially if they had no serious intention to sell their goods outside of the area), the national authorities recognized the benefits they could accrue from being understood by all of their fellow citizens, even more so after the debacle of the War of 1870. It is important to remember that France was then just emerging from a humiliating conflict with Prussia and that, among other things, the defeat had been attributed by the French authorities to the higher quality education received by the enemy in German schools, when the French conscripts often only spoke regional dialects, and could not read.

Language, colonialism, and education were intertwined in the Third Republic’s narrative. Weber depicts French politics in rural areas at the end of the nineteenth century as having “remained in an archaic stage – local and personal – in to at least the 1880s.” He adds: “It came as part of the integration of these areas into France – as part of the same slow, complex process ... of city ways and values flowing into countryside, of the country’s colonization by the town” (Weber 241). The use of the term of “colonization” as the domination of land by a central power is accurate, and very much in line with another notable trend of the Third Republic: “l’œuvre coloniale,” (Ernest Lavissee, *Histoire de France, manuel de Certificat d’études*, Armand Colin, 1942, p. 318-21.) or imperial expansion, led by Jules Ferry. In a chapter entitled “A Country of Savages,” Weber makes observations on the opinion that the elites have of the peasants: “They had to be taught manners,

morals, literacy, a knowledge of French, and of France, a sense of the legal and institutional structure beyond their immediate community” (Weber 5). He then quotes the statesman Léon Gambetta, who in 1871 said that the peasants were “intellectually several centuries behind the enlightened part of the country,” then adding that there was “an enormous distance between them and us ... between those who speak our language and those many of our compatriots [who], cruel as it to say so, can no more than stammer in it” (Weber 5). Emphasis is put on the importance of the French language, as well as on the will to instill “civilization”—a concept that was then very much in vogue and associated with progress—in the “savages” who lived on the “edges” of France. The colonization of the countryside brings together the two sides of Ferry’s ambivalent political record. As Mona Ozouf put it, today, “son œuvre scolaire vaut l’hommage national,” while his colonial legacy “mérite au mieux le silence et au pire l’opprobre” (M. Ozouf, *Jules Ferry – La liberté et la tradition* 8). Yet both educational and colonial heritages are irremediably connected by that political desire to educate and civilize subjects considered “backward,” colonial subjects treated like children and children treated like colonial subjects, a dual national imperial narrative crystallized under the Ferry leadership both within the hexagon and outside of its frontiers.

In keeping in line with the civilizing mission, lawmakers wanted to broaden the sense of belonging of the rural populations and to teach their youth the basics that they considered necessary for every French citizen. Diversity, “remarkable ... from one region to another and even from one province to the next” (Weber 9) was seen as counter-productive by the ruling authorities, who intended to apply the revolutionary ideal of “National Unity.”

So what was the state of regional languages and how did it affect primary education?

Furet and Ozouf investigated the coexistence of regional languages with French as a possible delay for the spread of literacy. In their research, they took valuable information on those languages and made a situational analysis possible. They quote Charles Robert, Permanent Secretary of the

Ministry of Education in 1867, who recorded that “nearly one-third of conscripts did not normally express themselves in French” (Furet et Ozouf 282). Most contemporary observers mention this and see it as a threat to the “spread of enlightenment and education” (Furet et Ozouf 283). Looking at Breton speakers, the authors conclude the following:

For a mid-nineteenth century conscript, regardless of his social category (peasant, domestic servant, day-labourer, shopkeeper or artisan), and irrespective of place of residence (inland, semi-maritime or maritime), the fact of being a Breton-speaker meant that he was considerably less likely than his French speaking counterpart to be literate (Furet et Ozouf 289).

Furet and Ozouf suggest that a few elements came into play. First, school exerted repression on non-native French speakers. Additionally, according to them, the “existence of a cultural desert,” (Furet et Ozouf 293) – where little French was spoken, fewer priests and schools were found, and fewer middlemen, “through whom the processes of social imitation operate” (Furet et Ozouf 293) – affected the progress of literacy. Finally, Furet and Ozouf note a “mechanism of rejection” (Furet et Ozouf 293). The authors carefully choose their words here and expand with a plethora of circumlocutions to explain that there was, “if not a capacity for revolt, at least a tendency to resist both political directives and cultural injunctions” (293). This last observation is important, since it ties in with our hypothesis that there is a connection between illiteracy and the lack of patriotism displayed on the maps gathered by Weber. Isolated in smaller communities where not much changed regardless of what was happening in the capital, rural citizens resisted official authorities and their representatives. However, learning how to read and/or write in French appears to influence patriotism, making schooling a necessary first step towards French identity.

Benedict Anderson²⁵ states that nations are “imagined communities” whose common bonds exist only in the minds of their members since they do not know each other directly (Anderson 36). This is how the *petites patries*, each having their own character, are brought together, which allows for the construction of a wider community – or “nation” in the case of France – whose character is “imagined.” According to the author, a key aspect of the development of these national communities is the introduction of “print capitalism,” or the development of the use of printing by the capitalist market. He says:

Nothing perhaps more precipitated this search [for a new way of linking fraternity, power, and time meaningfully together], nor made it more fruitful, than print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to related themselves to others, in profoundly new ways (36).

To attribute such power to the press and to books also means to recognize the power of textbooks used in France from the 1870s and published on a national scale.²⁶

Aware of the control that could be exerted on the youth’s identity formation, Republican leaders did not shy away from the task, at the risk of crossing the line of propaganda. For Baycroft, “the first step is familiarization with the representations [which] may or may not be the result of deliberate policy through education or propaganda on the part of the national authorities expressly seeking to foster and enhance national identity among a chosen elite or the popular masses of the nation” (Baycroft 170). The existence of a textbook that brings together a number of those representations for children (and by extension for their families) was not originally the authorities’ choice since the book was written and published by an independent author. However, it likely became propaganda once they decided that the message of the textbook fit their agenda and helped

²⁵ See his book *Imagined Communities*, 1991.

²⁶ This revolution was made possible thanks to cheap wood-pulp paper, a 1844 German invention by Friedrich Keller.

to promote it. The indoctrinating nature of *Le Tour de la France* became more obvious when Augustine Fouillée rewrote it for the 1906 edition, after the 1905 French law on the Separation of Church and State, removing every reference to God, but also some of the dark periods of history that did not reflect well on the early days of the Republican system.

The book had been regularly updated since its original publication date in 1877, and an eight-chapter epilogue had introduced the colonies and recent inventions such as X-rays or Pasteur's vaccine against rabies in 1885. "Les découvertes de Pasteur profitent non seulement à la France, mais au monde entier," writes Fouillée. Her next chapter focuses on the Pasteur institutes around the world, and is subtitled: "La France, toujours généreuse, donne à tous, sans compter, ses bienfaits et ses secours" (Fouillée 326th ed. 305). The chapter is meant to illustrate, with the example of "L'institut Pasteur de l'Annam" – a French protectorate from 1883 to 1945 in the center of French Indochina – both French medical successes and philanthropic nature:

De 1897 à 1902, cet Institut a pu en fournir continuellement pendant les épidémies de peste qui se sont produites aux Indes anglaises, en Indo-Chine, à Haïnan, au Japon, à l'île de la Réunion, à la Nouvelle-Calédonie. Ces sérums, sur l'ordre du Gouverneur général de l'Indo-Chine, ont été cédés gratuitement à tous avec une libéralité qui honore la France. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 305)

The Republican propaganda connected "l'entreprise coloniale de la France à son histoire, à sa mission civilisatrice, au sentiment national" (Corbin 163). The rural audience's interest went from legends shared during evening gatherings to, a few decades later, the colonies. Such interest was manipulated, if one believes Corbin, in order to inculcate "une idéologie, ... [et] une conscience coloniales" (163). The first edition of *Le Tour de la France*, obeyed similar rules, inspiring the French youth through a journey around French territories exciting enough to inspire pride mostly unknown to schoolchildren. "Le charme du voyage [d'André et Julien] tient à l'exotisme discret de leur

diversité” (Nora 281). Those regions, near and far from the students’ homes, appealed to them because of how astoundingly different they seemed.

Beyond the exotic charm of those nearby regions (there is no mention of the “grands hommes” from overseas, since Fouillée follows the path of the children in the metropole), Daniel Halévy believes that the republican best-seller adds some quaint charm to a France that the readers “regardent s’écarter par-dessus leur épaule” (Nora 284). In the chapter devoted to the textbook in *Les Lieux de Mémoire* by Pierre Nora, he states: “La France du *Tour* est une France archaïque, toute rurale, tableau déjà nostalgique d’un monde perdu” (284). The first editions of *Le Tour de la France* already appealed to readers whether or not they closely identified with the heroes, established some idealistic values and traditions for a part of France that refused to see already in motion the changes that readers were living through. The book spoke directly to these Frenchmen in the provinces, those peasants “qui resteront à la campagne et qu’on ne ‘poussera pas’ plus loin” (Nora 289). The nostalgic portrayal of an ideally ruralized and picturesque land is also a common colonial narrative, which benefits Paris and its fast-moving vision of progress. It captures the imperialist conviction that the farther you explore away from Paris, as the center of France and the “civilized” world, the further you get from modernity. Frozen in time, the countryside is set in opposition to the capital whose model the readership is meant to admire as well: bewildered by progress as they learn about it in their textbooks, but also aware of the changing times.

The development of transportation infrastructure also largely helped connect the rural and urban landscapes. The railway reached its apex before World War I, with nearly 70,000 kilometers of national lines (versus 24,000 in the early twenty-first century). In Weber’s words, “gradually space is conquered, distances are tamed, brought to heel or, rather, increasingly to wheel” in order to increase the rural population’s participation in the national project (Weber 195). Along with the occupation of space, the nation is “conquered,” “tamed,” and “brought to heel,” through the

rewriting of its myths and legends. André and Julien, children of their time, travel by railway when they can afford it, and marvel at its fast pace:

Julien n'avait encore jamais voyagé en chemin de fer : il s'amusa beaucoup la première heure, il regardait sans cesse par la portière, émerveillé d'aller si rapidement et de voir les arbres de la route qui semblaient courir comme le vent. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 175)

So how was it possible to instill in an entire class of the population a sense of national identity and belonging to something greater than their immediate environment? Indeed, local identity still prevailed over national identity in the majority of French regions, and outside of their “provincial” status, the non-Parisians included a vast range of people. The *petites patries* (or the *pays*) corresponded to the village (or at most to the *canton*), which only the notables and merchants occasionally left, and the rest of the community were quite isolated. For Anne-Marie Thiesse, the *petite patrie* is more than a defined geographical space:

La petite patrie est un espace aimable et protecteur, intermédiaire entre la famille et la société, au sein duquel l'individu s'épanouit et se développe. Pour ce qu'elle évoque de quiétude maternelle, elle se distingue de la Grande Patrie, également féminine, certes, dans l'appellation, mais plus altière, plus guerrière, plus virile en dernière instance (Thiesse 7-8).

This depiction became commonplace in education during the Third Republic and framed the way citizenship education was carried out in the first few decades of mass teaching.

It meant, for example, that national wars mattered to the countryside only to the extent that they affected it, and depending on their success (Weber 100). In fact, personal interest prevailed above all, which extended to the community if the interests were shared: “The peasants resented anyone and anything that threatened their security and homes” (Weber 102), which explains the support sometimes expressed for the German troops, whom they considered more threatening but whose protection brought safety. Submission to the French State was therefore of little value, since

it did not necessarily go hand in hand with the consciousness of belonging to that same nation, whether through shared interests or shared ideals. It remained to be seen whether Anderson's hypothesis was correct, and whether this change—print capitalism (and more specifically the lifted restrictions on publishing companies and on the choice of textbooks) combined with the use of a national language generalized by the educational institution—was sufficient to make mass primary education the cradle of the French nation.

2. *Le Tour de la France* and the typology of its audience

2.1. *Le Tour de la France*

Among the students who read *Le Tour de la France* and wrote about it, Pierre-Jacques Hélias, journalist and author who wrote both in Breton and French, born into a family of peasants in Bretagne in 1914, speaks fondly, honestly, and with much eloquence about the textbook, including its premise:²⁷

C'est une sorte de catéchisme laïque pétri de morale et de bons sentiments. ... Patriotique, plein de cocoricos, exaltant l'unité et la diversité de la France ... il raconte l'Histoire, il décrit la Géographie, il célèbre les inventions anciennes et nouvelles, il parle des métiers et de la terre. ... On y parle précisément de choses que nos paysans voudraient bien voir de préférence s'ils avaient le temps et les moyens de voyager. (Hélias 220-21)

Le Tour de la France is a masterpiece because of its author's ability to maneuver the orator's talents: to teach, to please, and to move. Fouillée, although not herself from a working-class background, knows where her ideal reader's interests lay and how to pique their curiosity with new ones. Hélias, a writer himself, is not fooled by her strategies, and his adult self has learned a trick or two since his childhood days. He points out, with a touch of humor: "Ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'ils parlent rudement

²⁷ In *Le Cheval d'Orgueil*, written in Breton regarding the first half of the twentieth century in Bretagne.

bien français pour des Alsaciens” (Hélias 222) adding that his classmates and he wanted to speak it as well as André and Julien. His teacher gently encourages them to stop speaking Breton on the playground: “‘Il ne faut pas rater une seule occasion de parler français’, dit-il. ‘Croyez-vous que les cyclistes seraient capables de faire le tour de France s’ils ne s’entraînaient pas sur leur machine tous les jours?’” (Hélias 222)

First published in 1877, *Le Tour de la France* was officially introduced in Republican schools right away, as it was perfectly in line with the new 1882 educational laws and official syllabi published at the time. The following excerpt quotes the “programmes officiels de 1882”:

Devoirs envers soi-même

- Le corps : propreté, sobriété et tempérance, danger de l’ivresse, etc.
- Les biens extérieurs : économie, éviter les dettes, travail (obligation du travail pour tous les hommes, noblesse du travail manuel).
- L’âme : sincérité, respect de soi-même, modestie, courage, esprit d’initiative.

Devoirs envers les autres hommes

- Justice et charité: ne faites pas à autrui ce que vous ne voudriez pas qu’on vous fît; faites aux autres ce que vous voudriez qu’ils vous fissent.
- Ne porter atteinte ni à la vie, ni à la personne, ni aux biens, ni à la réputation d’autrui.
- Bonté et fraternité.

Examples of the Republican teachings following the formal programs are abundant in the book and shared by the adult helpers the children encounter along the way:

Mes enfants, ... partout où vous allez passer, personne ne vous connaîtra ; ayez donc bien soin de vous tenir propres et décents, afin qu’on ne puisse vous prendre pour des mendiants ou des vagabonds. Si pauvre que l’on soit, on peut toujours être propre. L’eau ne manque pas en France, et rien n’excuse la malpropreté. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 26)

The basic structure of the book evolves with time, but originally includes 121 chapters and 308 pages, with over two hundred black and white illustrations.²⁸ Every chapter starts with a moralizing principle, such as “le nom du père honoré de tous est une fortune pour les enfants” in chapter two or “que chaque habitant et chaque province de la France travaillent, selon leurs forces, à la postérité de la patrie” in chapter twenty-five, and it then introduces a new topic and region. The author regularly revises her figures – census, data regarding economics, etc. – and eventually adds eight chapters to update the readers on the new inventions, the state of the French colonies, and what happened to André and Julien since their adventures.

2.2. Students

The transition from an overall illiterate population to a literate one took three to four centuries and varied immensely depending on the regions and later the *départements*. Education – reading, writing, and counting, was first limited to the elite: “the rich, ... the established families, the notables” (Furet et Ozouf 149). So who were the students who read *Le Tour de la France* at the turn of the twentieth century?

The front cover of the textbook states “Livres de lecture courante – Cours Moyen.” Primary schools were divided into three classes based on the age of the students: “le cours élémentaire” from seven to nine years old, “le cours moyen” from nine to eleven, and “le cours supérieur” from eleven to thirteen. Yet at the beginning of the Third Republic, “les écoles à classe unique sont les plus nombreuses. D’après une statistique de 1887, sur 61 547 écoles laïques, 47 001 écoles comptent une classe” (Combes 14), which makes up more than three quarters of them. In other words, the children who studied in the “écoles primaires” were still coming primarily from working class

²⁸ Illustrated textbooks reached the lower classes for the first time during the Third Republic. They were meant to shape the perfect patriot by vulgarizing information, which was very useful for the younger and less educated audiences targeted by Fouillée. Pérot was the initial illustrator of *Le Tour de la France*, and Dascher completed his work starting with the 1905 edition. Although there is no reference to the images in the text, they complemented and clarified it.

families, while the privileged classes (notables, which based on Briquet's definition included both nobles and bourgeois) sent their own children to the elementary classes that were part of the *collèges* and *lycées*, where professors taught (versus *instituteurs* in the *écoles primaires*). According to Jacques and Mona Ozouf, the audience targeted by Fouillée was “une France rurale,” “ces paysans qui ‘peuplent ou dépeuplent le pays’” at a time when agricultural jobs were still on the rise (J. Ozouf, *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* 288). It's also important that *Le Tour de la France* was studied both in secular and religious schools, which meant its consensual nature allowed it to reach a wider audience (at least until 1906 when the new edition took out the references to religion). The typical student for the textbook would then have been between nine and eleven years old, most likely from a rural town or commune, and his or her parents would have been from the working or lower-middle classes (agriculture, small business owners, merchants...) who sent their child to secular or religious school.

As noted by Cabanel, as well as by Jacques and Mona Ozouf, the audience of the textbook was not limited to children, but also included their families, for whom the advanced readers could read, as showed by Hélias:

Le Tour de France, nous le lisons à l'école dès que nous sommes capables. Le maître nous donne toutes les explications désirables que nous rapportons consciencieusement à nos parents, quelquefois même en français pour le plus grand orgueil de la famille. Nous daignons en faire un résumé pour les petits frères, soeurs, cousins, cousines qui brûlent d'y mettre leur nez. (221)

It was also an intergenerational read, according to Aimé Dupuy, who wrote in 1953: “Combien de fois n'a-t-on pas entendu, les soirs d'hiver, le père de famille, désireux de s'instruire, demander à son petit gars occupé à ses ‘devoirs’: ‘Passe-moi donc ton *Francinet*²⁹ [ou] ton *Tour de France*. ... C'est un si

²⁹ Also written by Fouillée under the pen name G. Bruno, it was labeled “manuel d'instruction civique et de morale” and followed a teenager at the start of his professional life. Also penned as a novel, it taught young adults notions of law, economy, and sciences.

brave livre!” (Cabanel 147). When it was not used as a textbook, Cabanel tells us that *Le Tour de la France* was a regular novel for the youth, gifted for birthdays, first communions, or graduations.

2.3. The Message

2.3.1. From the intended message...

Between instruction and ideology, Choppin raises the issue of what textbooks try to impart to their readers. The social classes depicted are the ones the authors of the textbooks want them to admire and join once they complete their primary education: farmers, craftsmen, merchants, factory workers, etc. However, civil servants are absent from the book: “Les employés de l’Etat sont peu présents, sauf l’instituteur et l’institutrice qui, parés de toutes les qualités, font figure de saints laïques” (Choppin, *Manuels scolaires: histoire et actualité* 168). André and Julien, in a similar way, are told to work hard but not to climb the social ladder. The social classes depicted in the textbooks are intentionally limited to lower middle class and lower classes. Primary school audiences are supposed to venerate farmers, craft persons, merchants, factory workers, etc. Julien exclaims about Burgundy’s workers: “Si la France est une grande nation, c’est que dans toutes ses provinces on se donne bien du mal; c’est à qui fera le plus de besogne” (Fouillée, 326th ed. 117). The author keeps telling the readers how good a student “le petit Julien” is, yet he is never encouraged to look outside of the working class in terms of job possibilities. One is expected never to forget one’s social standing, and school is mainly supposed to educate one to be a better worker within their current socioeconomic rank. Earlier in their trip, monsieur Gertal tells Julien:

Quand tout le monde sera instruit dans ce beau pays, on verra, de plus en plus, le Savoir changer de face; l’agriculture, mieux entendue, enrichira les cultivateurs, l’industrie fera prospérer les villes; car ... il faut toujours en revenir à l’instruction: les esprits cultivés sont

les terres bien labourées, qui paient par d'amples moissons les soins qu'on leur donne.

(Fouillée, 326th ed. 93)

The metaphor draws a parallel between the young minds of children and successful plowing in farming, both dependent on their effective development to come to fruition. Beyond the use of traditional agricultural themes to connect with France's rural audience, which, as showed in the graph below, represented the majority of the population until World War I, Fouillée aligns herself with the popular colonial narrative of the time.

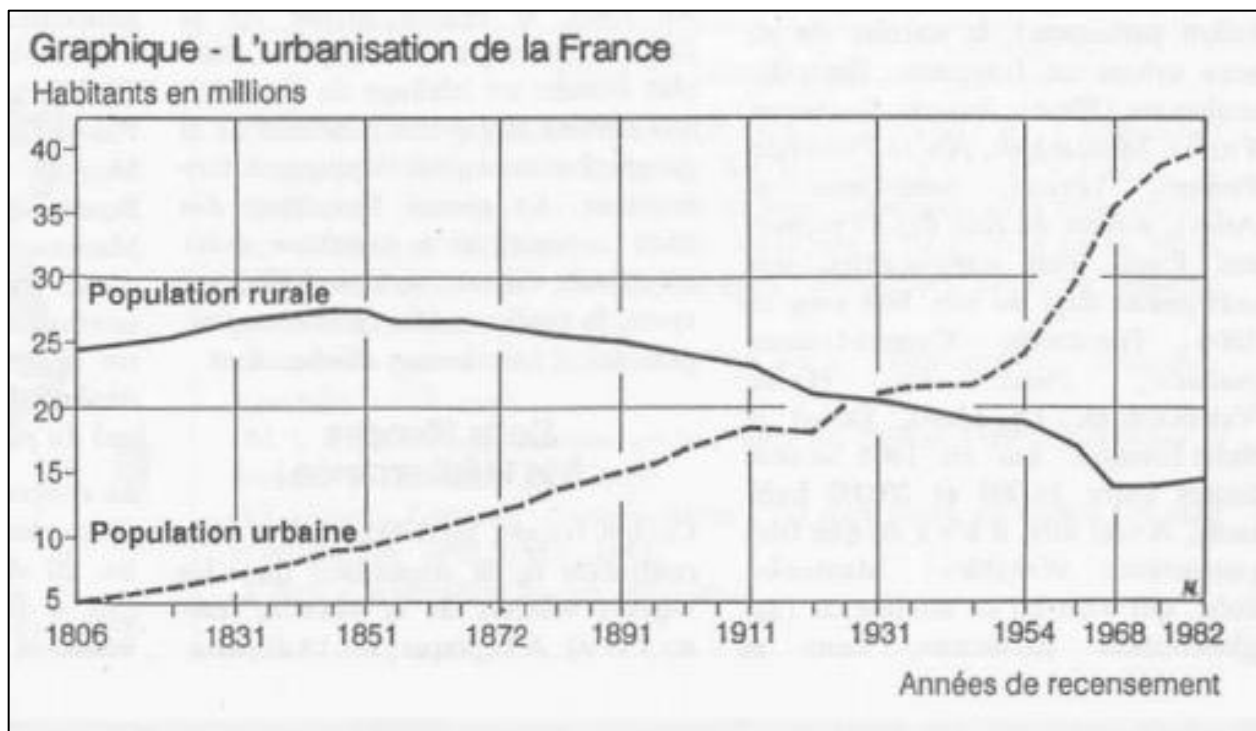


Fig. 2. French urbanization from the 19th to the 20th century: Dupâquier, Jacques, and Bertrand Oddo. "1789-1989. Deux siècles d'urbanisation." INSEE Première, no. 44, 1989, p. 1.

The use of "le Savoir" with a capital S – or Knowledge – to give it an allegorical power and bring forward both moral and political meanings to the symbol, parallels the idea of the gift of civilization to the colonized populations. The message is clear: the new Republican schools are going to bring all the minds of our "beautiful country" together; making us all richer if we follow its teachings.

2.3.2. ...to the receiving end

To the question of whether or not the *instituteurs* and their teachings influenced the choice of readings, contemporary historian Alain Corbin has analyzed what books were typically checked out in rural towns. “Le déclin puis la disparition du colportage, à partir des années 1870, s’étaient traduits par un rétrécissement du champ temporel de l’imaginaire,” recounts Corbin, who adds: “Le légendaire historique s’effaçait en même temps que la géographie fabuleuse qui constituait la scène de bien des ouvrages” (59).

So what would the rural populations read, then? Not the newspapers, according to Corbin, who explains that they would not reach the countryside until the interwar period. Almanacs did not satisfy their curiosity. The record of books borrowed from primary school libraries and gathered by Corbin informs us regarding the oldest students and young adults’ favorite books in 1877. In the Limousin region, “ce sont les ouvrages d’agriculture qui ont le plus attirés les lecteurs,” alongside history books (French history and biographies of the “grands hommes de l’histoire nationale”) (65-66). Novels, although they were not borrowed as frequently, reflect “l’attrait alors exercé par l’exotisme” with Jules Verne at the top of the list (67). Or, as Corbin suggests, colonialism is not that far removed from exoticism. And twenty years later, the number of people present at the public lecture on colonialism given by the teacher in Morterolles in the winter of 1895-96 seems to confirm this trend. Indeed, the two most successful lectures that year were “Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan” with an audience of 220 in a town of 643 inhabitants and “patriotism” with 200 people attending. Jules Ferry had encouraged the organization of these *conférences* or public lectures in 1882, which were meant to supplement the education of the adults whose sense of Republican identity and national pride had not been encouraged since they had grown up before the Ferry Laws were in place. The popularity of these topics, similarly used in *Le Tour de la France*, explains the success of the textbook as well, appealing to a wider audience fascinated by exoticism and the nostalgia portrayed. Although

a proper analysis of the way readers received the messages intended for them is difficult to consider more than a century later, it appears that the popular themes matched what Fouillée and the national authorities wanted them to take away from their teachings.

2.4. Teachers

For *Le Tour de la France*, just like for most textbooks, teachers had their own “answer key” in what was called “Le livre du maître.” It provided teachers with extra information and questions for the class, such as the infamous etching presented on page 187: “les quatre races d’hommes.” The following rhetorical questions on the slave trade and its moral value are suggested to teachers: “Que pensez-vous de ce commerce? Auriez-vous voulu vous enrichir de cette façon?” (Cabanel 189).



LES QUATRE RACES D'HOMMES. – La race blanche, la plus parfaite des races humaines, habite surtout l'Europe, l'ouest de l'Asie, le nord de l'Afrique et l'Amérique. Elle se reconnaît à sa tête ovale, à une bouche peu fendue, à des lèvres peu épaisses. D'ailleurs son teint peut varier. – La race jaune occupe principalement l'Asie orientale, la Chine et la Japon : visage plat, pommettes saillantes, nez aplati, paupières bridées, yeux en amandes, peu de cheveux et peu de barbe. – La race rouge, qui habitait autrefois toute l'Amérique, a une peau rougeâtre, les yeux enfoncés, le nez long et arqué, le front très fuyant. – La race noire, qui occupe surtout l'Afrique et le sud de l'Océanie, a la peau très noire, les cheveux crépus, le nez écrasé, les lèvres épaisses, les bras très longs.

Fig. 3 Illustration of nineteenth century racial classification.
Fouillée, Augustine. *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*. Belin, 1884, p. 188.

Extremely problematic and racist by today's standards, it was however in line with the discourses at the time. But did the *instituteurs* actually follow the instructions and suggestions given by their own edition of the textbook, by the various "revues pédagogiques," and in their previous training in the "écoles normales," or did they offer their own readings of the "livre de lecture courante" and other textbooks provided? Unfortunately, very little was shared on the subject. The teachers who have shared their personal views on the textbook, did not typically shed much light on their pedagogical approach to teaching it. Cabanel mentions a couple of them, who refer to *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants* as "émouvant," "intéressant" for Marc Larcher, *instituteur* in Martinique, or with nostalgia for Léo Larguier, who would become professor at the Collège de France and remembers escaping his "ville sans horizon" through the book (Cabanel 142-43). Choppin believes that teachers could considerably alter and put into perspective the words printed on the page, based on their own experience and their relationship with the authorities. (Choppin, *Manuels scolaires: histoire et actualité*, 122-23) Whether or not they agreed with Fouillée's narrative, the textbook's popularity would have made it difficult for teachers to openly criticize it, at least until the early 1920s, which is when we know that the instructions regarding *Le Tour de la France* changed and the new official instructions advised against its use in the classrooms (Pérochon 14).

French primary education and national identity were very closely related, and literacy and the messages transmitted through education played a major role in the rewriting of the nation during the Third Republic. Looking at the new Republican ambitions, the measures implemented, as well as at those who designed, facilitated and coordinated them give us context to better understand the ins and outs of our overall research. Finally, we focused on *Le Tour de la France*'s message and its audience in an effort to set up the stage for our next chapters.

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Chapter 2
Manufacturing French Identity Through the “Unity in diversity” Trope
in *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*

“La définition de l’identité nationale comme ‘conservation’ et non plus comme ‘révolution’, tournée vers le passé et non plus vers l’avenir, constitue le tournant majeur de 1870.” (Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité* 23)

The molding of French identity – a task carried forward by none better than Augustine Fouillée – found increasingly fertile breeding ground in primary school students during the Third Republic..

Pierre Nora coined the term *lieu de mémoire*, or site of memory, for “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (Nora xvii). *Le Tour de la France* is one such “site of memory,” used as a material reminder of many more “sites of memory” in order to promote “the attachment and sense of belonging necessary to perpetuate the nation” (Hutchins 153). Therefore it does not come as a surprise that it was used for so long by the Third Republic, avid to spark some major changes in French society after almost two decades of Imperial Bonapartist regime.

Le Tour de la France may seem like a natural way for primary school students to infuse and reinforce their sense of both regional and national pride. Based on the popular concept “unity in diversity,” which goes back to ancient civilizations in both Eastern and Western cultures, the oxymoron has often been used as a political motto to encourage and celebrate harmony while acknowledging the various cultures and languages across a territory. Yet the “unity in diversity” principle used across the board by the State during the Third Republic eventually proved detrimental to diversity, compromising plurality by upholding national unity at the expense of regional languages and traditions. Since historians were not always in agreement regarding the type of identity created during the Third Republic and were often divided along two lines, two visions of identity emerged.

On the one hand, for some, like Baubérot, France's national identity emerged organically through its diversity and is the product of a fusion of identities. He believes that the sum of the country's various regions – qualities and flaws included – adds up to a “national melting pot,” which means that what he calls “the (French) universal” is formed by its “particularisms” (Baubérot 135). On the other hand, for others, including Baycroft, the identity construct was much more artificial, built through a national mythology that concentrated on a singular, coherent identity: “Much of the nation was mythologized through the deliberate, conscious policies of nation-building on the part of (mostly faceless) political elites, but always bound and influenced by the constraints of spontaneous reactions from the population” (Baycroft 228). Both men are historians, but Baubérot has also had a political career that may have influenced his perspective and made him idealize his description and analysis of France. The “melting pot” characterization itself does not seem in line with the idea of the “sum,” since it implies a monoculture through the homogenization of multiculturalism and a unity achieved at the price of diversity. Baycroft's interpretation is much less consensual as it directly credits the Republicans for the invention of the French national identity. So did the authorities deliberately manufacture their own vision of French identity through the “Unity in diversity” trope in *Le Tour de la France*? Did Fouillée?

In this chapter, we argue that French national identity in France was manufactured during the Third Republic. The new regime wished to reconcile its divided population opposing monarchy and republic. Our investigation addresses the role of the “Other” who was mobilized in order to reinforce nationalistic pride in *Le Tour de la France*. We will then focus on the key actors who led the campaign for a new identity, namely Republicans, Fouillée and teachers. Finally, we will show how Fouillée put otherness in the service of a new brand of nationalism.

Augustine Fouillée remained a mystery to her contemporaries for over twenty-two years, despite the success of her book. Why would a “Lauréat de l'Académie française” and a prolific

children's textbooks author keep her identity a secret? Until 1885 – eight years after the first edition of *Le Tour de la France*, Fouillée was still married to M. Guyau, whom she had left in 1857 to live with Alfred Fouillée. The two finally married after the divorce law was implemented again in 1884. Separated, living with a man who was not her husband, then a divorced woman, Augustine's anonymity protected both her and her books from the scandal that would have surely erupted from nineteenth century self-righteous critics.

It is no wonder that, given her personal history, Fouillée did not have personal connections with public figures of the time. Yet, the ideology of the book matches the one shared by leading Republican figures such as Léon Gambetta, Georges Clémenceau, and Jules Ferry. Due to a lack of critical interest and/or lack of sources to look at, Fouillée's life and thoughts are still very much an enigma today. From the content of her books, we can conceive that she shared her second husband's political views. Alfred Fouillée, university lecturer at l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, is described as a free thinker and a Republican who does not believe in Marx's class warfare, which is an idea echoed in Fouillée's insistence on her heroes remaining in their rightful place. If the author did not work for the Republicans, she shared most of their ideals and she intended to foster a sense of national identity among the children coming from the popular classes of France, playing masterfully with the concept of otherness to appeal to that specific audience.

1. Manufacturing French identity to reconcile a divided country

In order to reconcile a divided country, Republicans attempted to manufacture French identity. *Le Tour de la France* illustrates a moderate style of nationalism, which fits perfectly into the future national curriculum (J. & M. Ozouf 297). The new secular schools were to promote colonialism, patriotism, and ultimately revenge. Indeed, a common idea at the time was that France had lost the war against Prussia because the enemy had better teachers. Republicans saw the defeat

as a product of the insufficient education of the people. Jules Simon, one of France's philosophers turned statesman once stated: "Le peuple qui a les meilleures écoles est le premier peuple: s'il ne l'est aujourd'hui, il le sera demain"³⁰ (Jules Simon). The goal of the school curriculum was thus also to train the republican workforce, with a view to national prosperity. *Le Tour de la France* praised education and common republican goals for the sake of the nation. After years of political instability, French elite aspired to reconciliation across the political spectrum, and more generally across the country. With a similar focus on France's needs, Fouillée used literature to reshape French identity and create a sense of community, a mission which has on occasion been referred to as propaganda.

When Edward Bernays published *Propaganda* in 1928, the term did not yet have the negative connotation it now carries. His work argued that scientific manipulation of public opinion was necessary to stabilize and control our societies. This power should be given to a small group of people who "understand human psychology and behavior" in order to "foster cooperation and ensure a functioning society. This 'invisible government,' the true ruling power of the nation, molds the minds of the people, shapes their tastes, and suggests their ideas" (Riggs 344). Although the senior officials of the French Third Republic may not have had the knowledge of the human mind required for the job in these early years of the field of psychology, they did not shy away from the task and felt invested in their mission. Jacques Ellul's later work³¹ on propaganda in the mid-sixties gives us more tools to analyze the late nineteenth century patterns. According to the French historian and sociologist, propaganda is more than a simple instrument to persuade a given population to go one way or the other; it is a "pernicious replacement for spiritual connection and community ... which is antithetical to individual thought and identity" (Riggs 347). This appears to be particularly appropriate when looking at primary schools in France at the time, where religious

³⁰ Speech given on January 10, 1920 and published in *Les Aphorismes du "Progrès civique"* (1922) by François-Jules Suisse, known as Jules Simon.

³¹ Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. New York: Vintage Books (1973).

battles were raging around the country, setting villagers against their neighbors, and priests against the teachers. Augustine Fouillée herself followed the trends imposed by the 1905 French law on the Separation of the Churches and State - which established state secularism in France³² – by deleting all references to God in her textbook, while making sure to instill enough patriotism for children to feel part of a greater French community, essentially replacing religion with nationalism.³³ In the 1877 version, monsieur Gertal tells Julien while watching the sunrise over the mountain:

Joins les mains à la vue de ces merveilles. En voyant l'une après l'autre toutes ces montagnes sortir de la nuit et paraître à la lumière, nous avons assisté comme à une nouvelle création. Que ces grandes œuvres de Dieu te rappellent le Père qui est aux cieux, et que les premiers instants de cette journée lui appartiennent (Fouillée, 326th ed. 87).

However, in the 1907 version, André comments instead : “Ce réveil ... me rappelle un autre matin que je n'oublierai jamais : celui de notre arrivée sur la terre française” (Fouillée, 335th ed. 87).

In order to achieve national reconciliation, France needed to define the nation. In his speech “Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?” Ernest Renan provided the backbone of the idea of nation, and remained particularly salient in the memory of French historians. Given at the Sorbonne in 1882, eleven years after the military defeat that led to the loss of Alsace Lorraine to Prussia, Renan said:

Une nation est une âme, un principe spirituel. Deux choses qui, à vrai dire, n'en font qu'une, constituent cette âme, ce principe spirituel. L'une est dans le passé, l'autre dans le présent. L'une est la possession en commun d'un riche legs de souvenirs; l'autre est le consentement actuel, le désir de vivre ensemble, la volonté de continuer à faire valoir l'héritage qu'on a reçu indivis. (Renan)

³² State secularism was however never applied to Alsace-Lorraine, which was still following the 1801 Concordat, because the region was part of the German Empire in 1905.

³³ The measure divided France for almost two decades. Indeed, most of the political leaders on the left were very anti-clerical when most of France was still Roman Catholic and following the Vatican. Official diplomatic relationships between the French state and the Holy See were reestablished in 1921.

The “riche legs de souvenirs” refers to the sacrifices made, in difficult times such as the 1870 war. He adds: “Une nation n’a jamais un véritable intérêt à s’annexer ou à retenir un pays malgré lui. Le vœu des nations est, en définitive, le seul critérium légitime, celui auquel il faut toujours revenir” (Renan). The author makes it clear that in his view, the annexation of Alsace Lorraine was illegal. As Venayre analyzed it, Renan’s speech is as much about France as it is about Prussia. That is what he intends for his audience to have in mind when he talks of suffering and the unlawful annexation of peoples, and he uses Prussia as the Other to build his national identity theory (Venayre 522).

According to Noiriél, three factors made the new Third Republic redefine nationalism: The 1870 war itself, the past compromises (with their enemies) made by Republicans to remain in power, and the birth of modern universities with professional historians. In order to present a united front after the humiliating defeat of 1870, French political leaders focused on their common enemies. After the 1870 war, even conservatives – previously Bonapartists, Orléanists and Legitimists, beforehand united against Socialists and Republicans - had to start using democratic principles to counter German intellectuals’ discourse about “Alsace-Lorraine.” Mommsen, a German historian, justified the annexing of the French region by the shared language and customs with Germany. Fustel de Coulanges, French historian, was forced to make a new argument, based on “the right of peoples to self-determination,” to substantiate the French claim on the German speaking Alsace-Lorraine region (Noiriél, *Population, immigration et identité* 22).

Beyond the arguments made, the way history was used changed as well. It was now a tool for collective memory and a place of ideological gathering for future generations of French people (Noiriél, *Population, immigration et identité* 20). The goal of history became to reconcile French citizens, a process often qualified as “Histoire consensuelle.”³⁴ For instance, conservative Republicans (such as Renan) were hostile to the working class because of the Commune, but prioritized an

³⁴ By Gérard Noiriél and Anne-Marie Thiesse among other scholars.

arrangement with the whole political spectrum to build a common front against Prussia (Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité* 21). As a consequence, nationalism was redefined in the following years—more interested in salvaging what could be retrieved from the previous regime than supporting a new revolution and looking towards the past and no longer towards the future. (Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité* 23)

Two branches grew from nationalism in the 1880s. Noiriel compares two main political figures, Maurice Barrès and Jean Jaurès, whose contrasting views outlined the idea of national identity. A concept born from the left side of the political spectrum, who saw the birth of the nation during the revolution, nationalism was originally a Republican ideal, but evolved towards the extreme right around the time of the Dreyfus Affair. Barrès illustrated a pessimistic style of nationalism, which was expressed in two ways: hatred of one's neighbor (including racial prejudice) and commemoration of the past. The idea of revenge is also embedded in his ideas.³⁵ Jaurès, on the contrary, believed in a more optimistic type of nationalism. For him, patriotism was about those who loved France. Jaurès tried to bring together peace, national interest, and social justice to blue-collar workers (Noiriel, *A quoi sert "l'identité nationale"*). With French maps on the walls, national heroes praised by the "écoles de la République," the establishment of *La Marseillaise* as the national anthem in 1879 followed by Bastille Day in 1880, national symbols increasingly occupied the public space. *Le Tour de la France* became one of these symbols by relying on both visions of nationalism. Fouillée did not directly include anti-Prussian comments, but the ordeal through which André and Julien are experiencing in order to be French illustrates how much it matters to them and the superiority of France and its people. The author also uses historical figures to glorify the country through its national heroes, such as Joan of Arc, whose story Madame Gertrude tells the children:

³⁵ Although he is still conciliatory before the Dreyfus case, his stand hardened around 1898, when he becomes unequivocally Anti-Semitic and xenophobic.

Jeanne Darc, mon enfant, est l'une des gloires les plus pures de la patrie. Les autres nations ont eu de grands capitaines qu'elles peuvent aux nôtres. Aucune nation n'a eu une héroïne qui puisse se comparer à cette humble paysanne de Lorraine, à cette noble fille du peuple de France. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 61)

If the glorification of national figures appears to tie in more with Barrès' perspective on nationalism, at least with his post Dreyfus Affair stance, Fouillée values a more positive nationalism and is in that way more similar to Jaurès.

The 1880s in France also saw the rise of populism, which seriously threatened the brand new Third Republic. National identity took an increasingly conservative turn, culminating in a period seen as “triumph of protectionism” (Noiriel, *À quoi sert “l'identité nationale”*). The latter translated into an increase in xenophobia and racism, illustrated by the Boulanger fever, otherwise known as *Boulangisme* – a nationalistic threat that ultimately reinforced the strength of the Third Republic. All the characteristics of populism could be found in *Boulangisme*, named after Georges Boulanger, a widely popular French general and politician who won a series of elections in the late 1880s. His popularity was such that his opponents feared that he would establish himself as a dictator. He believed in aggressive nationalism and wanted the Franco-Prussian war to be avenged. Historians today consider that *Boulangisme* forced the Third Republic to rise to the challenge and help consolidate the democracy, which would not suffer the menace of populism again until the next major military defeat by Germany in 1940.

In spite of their compromises and attempts to work towards reconciliation, the Third Republic and its political leaders were not exempt from conflicts and internal divisions, such as on the subject of colonialism. The civilizing of inferior peoples was among the big ideas used to justify imperialism, in its various forms. As Singaravélou puts it: “L'entretien d'un instituteur coûte moins cher que celui d'une compagnie militaire” (Singaravélou 526). Indeed, cultural imperialism comes at

a lesser cost than the use of military power, but that does not mean that both strategies could not be combined. In fact, both strategies stem from imperialism and were at the very heart of Jules Ferry's program. Founded on Republican ideals of human rights, the Third Republic nevertheless promoted colonial invasions in order for France to regain power on the international scene. The renewed nationalism that followed the defeat against Prussia motivated the expansion.

Colonization was also justified by its upholders, such as Ferry, for economic reasons and for "humanitarian" ones – to bring "civilization" to the "inferior races." George Clémenceau replied to Ferry's arguments on July 30, 1885:

La conquête que vous préconisez, c'est l'abus pur et simple de la force que donne la civilisation scientifique sur les civilisations rudimentaires, pour s'appropriier l'homme, le torturer, en extraire toute la force qui est en lui au profit du prétendu civilisateur. Ce n'est pas le droit: c'en est la négation. Parler à ce propos de civilisation, c'est joindre à la violence l'hypocrisie.³⁶

Despite debates on imperialism and its usual premises – colonization and racism – they remained leading tenets of the Third Republic.

The concept of a "righteous" war is not foreign to Fouillée's narrative either. And her choices of national heroes illustrate an overarching idea: the embodiment of love and sacrifice for France. In the textbook, the author mentions the army eight times, mostly when retelling the story of famous battles of the past when French heroes won fame by their bravery against the Other, including, by order of appearance in *Le Tour de la France*:

- Joan of Arc against the English (Fouillée, 326th ed. 59-60)
- Monge during the revolution (109)
- Vercingétorix against Julius Ceasar (137)

³⁶ Speech published in response to Jules Ferry in 1885 and published in the *Journal Officiel* on July 29 of that year.

- Bayard against Spanish knights in the early sixteenth century (177-78)
- Daumesnil during the Napoleonic wars (219-20)
- Duguesclin against the English in the late Middle Ages (237)

Similar to the work of Jules Michelet,³⁷ those many glorious examples are told in a lyrical tone to a young and impressionable audience who, along with the novel's heroes, would have likely admired every single one of them. Several are also examples of sacrifices for the sake of the homeland. It is, however, interesting to note that Fouillée focuses on a few historical figures more than on the military forces. Such strategy makes it easier for children to identify with heroic individuals who fought for their country, rather than with anonymous armies. Moreover, focusing on the individuals prevented the readers from paying too much attention to the fact that many of these heroes fought for emperors and kings, a somewhat uncomfortable reality when transitioning to a Republican system. The personalization also allows the author to give the historical figures a face, and she stresses their love for the country, their bravery, and their willingness to die in the defense of their nation. However, she does not promote the invasion of other countries and remains mostly silent on the subject of the colonies.

The idea of nation was an ongoing project, whose elaborate design can be understood as an illusion meant to cover up the inevitable divisions. According to Etienne Balibar, history and ideology go hand in hand when it comes to the formation of nations, through a retrospective illusion or “project” showing the marks of the prejudiced historians who interpreted the past. For him, “the illusion is twofold. It consists in believing that the generations that succeed one another over centuries ... have handed down to each other an invariant substance. And it consists in believing that ... it represented a destiny” (Balibar and Wallerstein 86). Nationality is organized around a “fictive ethnicity” (Balibar and Wallerstein 49) and a “myth of origins and national continuity” (87).

³⁷ French historian remembered for his aphoristic style.

Fouillée’s rewriting of the French nation is a perfect example of the retrospective nationalistic agenda, and the fact that she regularly amended her text to better fit the changing ideologies corroborates the fictional nature of the national project.

2. Identifying an “Other” to strengthen France’s unity

We have seen why the various protagonists of nationalist projects worked, individually and together, in order to reconcile the nation, and the limits of such projects. We are now going to determine how they undertook to appease the existing national divide at the institutional level, and, via *Le Tour de la France*, for generations to come.

Exploring the evolution of French identity over the years, we will first look at its definition before confronting its inclusive and exclusive tendencies. Perhaps the greatest agent of change when it came to rewriting patriotism and nationalizing French history in the nineteenth century was Jules Michelet. Influenced by German romanticism, the French historian’s style advanced the cause of anti-clerical republicanism. Inclusive more than exclusive when it came to national identity, he believed in the French “âme collective” but did not base identity on race. He saw France as a character with a body, whose strength came from the limbs – les provinces – and whose head and spirit was Paris (Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité* 16-18). Michelet’s personalization pictures a very centralized system, whose head, when the body was thrown into the 1870 war, initiated a major turning point for national identity in Europe. The idea of nationality was strengthened through the opposition between “us” and “others.” For example, Ernest Renan³⁸ combined a “sense of belonging to the homeland” with “the will to live together” in his definition of nationality. However, in the nineteenth century, especially after the events of the Commune, the working class was considered dangerous and foreign to what the elites believed was Frenchness. To be French implied

³⁸ Nineteenth century scholar who wrote on national identity.

claiming ownership of French culture: “This meant that a peasant, as much as an immigrant, had to be made French, and that it was the inculcation of the traditional values, particularly through the schools and the army, that was primarily responsible for creating the nation” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume Two: Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* 14). This characterization of Frenchness as an acquired culture ties together national and international migration. Rural exodus is a crucial theme during the Third Republic. Indeed, it accelerated in the 1850s, and the number of people in the urban population became equal to the rural one by 1930. For Michelet “le déracinement dû à l’exode rural est lui aussi un puissant agent d’assimilation, car en quittant leur province natale, les paysans abandonnent du même coup leurs traditions et leurs particularismes.” (Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité* 16-18) This movement contributed to the homogenization of French identity.

By making school a mandatory step in the life of every French citizen, the Jules Ferry Laws contributed to the diffusion of patriotism. But what did French culture entail? For Zeldin, a historian, sociologist and philosopher, who provided a rigorous study on what it means to be French, “to acquire French culture meant first of all to obtain mastery of its language, and language, it was believed, contained the key to the art both of behaving and of thinking” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume Two: Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* 15). This process intended to fully assimilate the populations of France, who would adopt the majority community’s cultural codes while their own traditions would be mitigated. For Michelet, the uprooting of the rural population and its emigration towards the towns and cities was also a powerful instrument of assimilation, leading peasants to leave behind traditions and particularisms. Since the late nineteenth century, French identity also depended on the ability to integrate immigrant populations, which made the assimilation project all the more fundamental to politicians. Yet if minority cultures subsided slowly, they also retained their customs for a few more decades while adapting to what it meant to be French: the ability to speak

French. This long acculturation process only bore fruit at the very beginning of the twentieth century, when patriotic ideology truly took over.

It is interesting to note that even though excluding diversity to better impose national conformism has been a pattern in French history, it also came with jolts of inclusion when it served national interest. Naturalization thus happened much faster during some periods. For instance, among fears of depopulation, immigration was very much encouraged to fight the lack of workforce during the reconstruction after World War I. France was then a global center of immigration in Europe and in the world, a time when the US was closing its borders to foreigners by implementing more stringent immigration quotas. Initiated during World War I as a response to the lack of workers in factories, immigration was seen as a “machine à produire de nouveaux Français” (Zalc 602).

However, some of the concepts that became attached to French identity emerged long before the Third Republic. Meritocracy was among the problematic ideas spread by the State, which had been inherited from Henri de Saint Simon much earlier. A French thinker at the turn of the eighteenth century, he had a lot of influence in politics, economics, sociology, and the philosophy of science. He was looking for a natural social order that would be harmonious and voluntary. France’s issue, he thought, was not that there were class differences but that they were arbitrary in nature. His goal was to find a way to rebuild society starting with “mankind’s natural capacities” (Rabinow 28). In other words: meritocracy. The principle holds that things such as power and money should be given on the basis of talent, effort, and accomplishment. Napoleon is usually considered to be among the first to apply meritocratic principles in Europe by founding highly selective higher education establishments – or *Grandes Ecoles* – open to all (at least in theory), whose graduates had access to upper level positions in the private and public sectors of French society.

Meritocracy has however been challenged since, by Pierre Bourdieu among others, as a legitimization of social inequalities. Jérôme Krop's more recent work presents the realities of the Republican principles: the school system maintained strong practices of segregation where the elite could pay for superior schooling, opening doors to the *baccalauréat* and university while the masses had access to a lower standard of education, partly because this education was free. His work also shows that within the free primary schools, teachers had double standards and selected the best students for the most challenging path. This led to the *certificat d'études*,³⁹ in which the weaker students remained in the group for younger students, indicating "une minorité d'élèves négligée par l'institution scolaire" (Krop 113). Used for the purpose of Republican propaganda in order to justify the existing class system while inequalities remained, meritocracy through free primary education for all was mostly a game of smoke and mirrors.

Highly hierarchical, France organized its new national community through the exclusion of others. Balibar states that societies have a "set of practices of social normalization and exclusion." He reminds us that no nation has a purely ethnic basis - the notion behind ethnic nationalism being that "nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry" (Muller 10) – only a *fictive* ethnicity, but that they base "their imaginary unity against other possible unities" (Balibar and Wallerstein 49-50). This process of othering focuses on the exclusion of typically populations ostracized. "The phenomenon of 'depreciation' and 'racialization' was directed simultaneously against marginalized social groups or individuals. Among others, that includes "foreign communities," "inferior races," women and "deviants" (49). He qualifies this phenomenon as a "historical system of complementary exclusions and dominations which are mutually interconnected" (49-50). In other words, the othering and

³⁹ Created in 1866, the *certificat d'études primaires* (CEP) was a diploma awarded at the end of a student's primary education in France, certifying that the student had learned basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics, history, geography, and applied sciences.

hierarchization of individuals is based on the distinctions inherent to individuals. Such a system leads to structural racism, and associated with nationalism, it helps promote racism by generating the “fictive ethnicity” around which it is organized.

Onboard with the prevailing racism of the time, Fouillée justifies colonialism through her human classification. She writes that “la race blanche [est] la plus parfaite des races humaines” (Fouillée, 326th ed. 188) and implies that the disappearance of La Pérouse, an eighteenth century French navigator, was at the hands of “sauvages.” She describes them as “des tribus barbares” among which several are “antropophages.” (205-06) Based on these racist and imperialist structures, decided by a minority closer to an oligarchy than to the meritocracy it claimed to be, the modern nationalist nation state limits the principles of equality afforded to its national community.

Rural exodus and assimilation were much less straightforward than how Michelet had described them. New schools, roads and economic progress made emigration easier and removed the traditional means peasants had used to support themselves: “Land not used to capacity was developed, and with development there came depopulation and a sort of social fallow” (Weber 129). Just like most communities in exile, people coming from the same province would find each other once in the city, such as the Bretons in Montparnasse and the Auvergnats in the Bastille neighborhood. Stereotyped and demeaned by Parisians, they stuck together. Almost forty years ago, Alain Touraine wrote about regionalist identity, its origins, and what ties provinces together:

C’est d’abord la conscience de la chute et de la mort collective prochaines; non pas l’idée de ce qui est possédé en commun, mais le sentiment des menaces qui pèsent sur tous:

désertification, paupérisation, vieillissement, dépendance croissante. (Touraine 288)

Referring to the Occitanie region, he adds: “Le sentiment Occitan est moins fait de fierté que d’humiliation” (Touraine 288). The sum of external threats, brought on, among other factors, by exclusion and stereotyping, stands in the way of national unity.

Internal borders play a key role in establishing the national standard. Quoting political geographer Oren Yifatchel, who argues that the building and maintenance of “internal frontiers” are key to “the identification of areas in need of rehabilitation to conform to a unified national norm,” Johnson and Coleman show that “the persistent recognition on the part of the nation-state of an apparently economically and culturally weaker region serves to unify the rest of the nation-state by providing a fable of sorts, one that demonstrates the grandeur of national ideals and the dangers of deviating from them” (866). A fable – a fictional telling to teach a moral lesson – seems very much in line with Fouillée’s intent when writing *Le Tour de la France*, whose back cover described the work as a “cours complet de lecture et d’instruction morale et civique.”

The book is paradoxical when dealing with internal others.⁴⁰ It aims to unite France but vilifies certain subpopulations, primarily the peasants, by using veiled criticism. When talking about the region of Savoie for example, which was annexed by France in 1860, monsieur Gertal says the following:

Elle appartenait autrefois à l’Italie, il n’y a pas longtemps qu’elle est française ; il n’y a point encore assez d’écoles en Savoie. Les Savoisiens sont très intelligents ; mais, comme un grand nombre d’entre eux ne savent ni lire ni écrire et que le pays est pauvre, il y a trop peu d’industrie. Beaucoup de savoisiens sont obligés de quitter leur pays fort jeunes, parce qu’ils n’y trouvent aucun moyen de gagner leur vie.

—Oui, oui, dit Julien, j’en ai vu des petits savoyards pas plus grand que moi ; ils ramonent les cheminées. (Fouillée, 326th ed. 93)

The patronizing account depicts the inhabitants of the newly incorporated region as illiterate and the country as poor and not yet developed industrially thus forcing its inhabitants into exile. It offers a

⁴⁰ Along with Johnson and Coleman, we define the internal other as “the intentional construction of a region as different from, perhaps even antithetical to, national norms and values as an element of nation-building.” (*The Internal Other: Exploring the Dialectical Relationship Between Regional Exclusion and the Construction of National Identity* 2012 p. 864)

grim description of the locals, which invites the readers to feel sorry for the external (now internal) others who, although “intelligent,” did not get a chance to grow up in France. Indeed, similarly to the Prussian enemy who is never named, the internal others, who are part of the target audience of the textbook, are never directly referenced, relying on subliminal messages of what should change internally. According to the textbook, embracing progress is key to being French, and the absence of it is seen as the biggest downfall of the internal others. For instance, someone explains to Julien about the newly annexed region: “Depuis que la Savoie est française, les progrès ont été très rapides dans cette contrée”⁴¹ (Fouillée, 335th ed. 93). While Fouillée definitely highlights the otherness of the various regions the two boys travel through, the rhetoric used to imply that those regions are subaltern is usually elusive. In the case of our example about Savoy, the author underlines the benefit of the new roads built by the French State in the regions at the margins of France without directly criticizing the old ways.

Before Fouillée, political leaders discriminated against rural areas and the stigma of ignorance attached to them. Abbé Grégoire, catholic priest, revolutionary leader and advocate of equality who was an abolitionist of human slavery and supporter of universal suffrage, also shows bias towards internal others during the revolution: “Pour perfectionner l'agriculture et toutes les branches de l'économie rurale, si arriérées chez nous, la connaissance de la langue nationale est également indispensable” (Grégoire). Progress, a forward movement towards general advancement, is portrayed as French and through the French language. In fact, the othered subjects are only redeemable if they join the movement. Political circles and state sponsored schools were not the only ones using this dichotomy between progress and the underdeveloped others, and authors other than Fouillée also embraced colonial discourse in nineteenth century travel writing and novels, highlighting “the ignorance and backwardness of the provincial peoples” Ciosáin cites Mérimée,

⁴¹ The Duchy of Savoy and the County of Nice were annexed to France in 1860 with the Treaty of Turin.

Michelet, Stendhal, Flaubert, Balzac and Hugo. (Internal Colonialism 159). A response from the colonized subjects with the appropriate anti-colonial discourse only came in the 1970s: for Brittany with Morvan Lebesque in 1970 and for Occitania with Robert Lafont in 1971. (Ciosáin 159)

We have seen how the Third Republic and Fouillée singled out “Others” in order to better delineate the qualities associated with French identity. When explaining Frenchness to children, Fouillée achieves a similar goal with some oversimplifications, gently sprinkled throughout the book. Rather than directly pointing the finger at specific others (Germany, Prussia, and their respective adjectives are actually never used in the book), the author provides numerous pieces of evidence of “good” morals associated with “good” French people who make the Nation proud, as well as negative examples of what Others are like, such as Charles of Bourbon, a French prince betraying his country by fighting with the Spanish army. Julien and André, rather than being excluded from the ideal “us” and alienated or consigned to the external margins of France, choose to distance themselves from the Other. They want to belong to the French nation, and their journey gives them the opportunity to understand the country in which they were born. Their travels are meant to make them suited for their role in French society, enlightened by their experience of France and its countrymen. At an age where nuance is difficult to comprehend, the audience is impressionable, and the book aimed to influence their ideas of “us” and “them.”

God, father, and fatherland become one in André and Julien’s speech, which mixes patriotic love with strong religious connotations. However, it is interesting to note that the religious references would be strictly expurgated from the original text after the Separation of Church and State in 1905. The following quote from the original edition of 1877: “la musique est une distraction intelligente : elle élève nos cœurs en exprimant nos plus grands sentiments: l’amour de la famille, de la patrie et de Dieu” would then become in 1906 : “la musique est une distraction intelligente : elle

élève nos cœurs en exprimant nos plus grands sentiments de l'âme : l'amour de la famille, de la patrie ; toutes nos joies ou nos tristesses" (Fouillée, 335th ed. 53).

Nineteenth century populism in France cannot be understood without taking into account Michelet's masterwork *History of France*, which redefined and embodies populist political movements that put people and the nation at the center. Not unlike Fouillée later, the French Historian blended populism and nationalism into a mystical and literary picture. *Le Tour de la France* brought patriotic love to a new level by reaching more than the typical educated audience who read French history, and that new audience, coming in big part from the margins of France, was brought together by a common hatred of an external Other, namely the invisible German enemy.

Beyond the hectic political climate of the late nineteenth century, *Le Tour de la France* is more than literature written in the age of populism. Writing with a specific idea of what the renewed French national identity should be, the author directly applied several populist strategies to her textbook. A typical tactic consists of exaggerating the nation's problems. In the case of France, that was not needed since the country was already coming out of a disastrous defeat. However, Fouillée used many literary tools to magnify the tragic situation in which the heroes and the country find themselves. Fouillée paints a very bleak picture from the start of the first chapter: it is dark – “malgré l'obscurité” and foggy – “par un épais brouillard” (Fouillée 326th ed. 5); the children's attire suggests a state of mourning – “leurs vêtements de deuil” (5); the wind blows with a dreary sound – “le vent secouait les grands en sifflant d'une voix lugubre – and accompanied by cold rain – “sous la pluie froide” (6) (Fouillée, 326th ed.); and they are “shivering” – “tout tremblants,” afflicted by the double loss of their father and fatherland.

Featured as well in the book is the idea of “divide and conquer”: “An indispensable ingredient of the populist recipe is the ‘us’ that embodies the nation, represented by the populist leader who promises to confront ‘them,’ who have allegedly ‘harmed the people’” (Naím). The

external other is never named explicitly, but the burden of the defeat inflicted on “us” by “them” is present throughout the book, via the long list of obstacles the heroes have to surmount in order to be freed from the Prussian stranglehold.

Populism needs both internal and foreign enemies, and in *Le Tour de la France*, the internal other is represented in ideas or groups of people who embody them. Later during their trip, André and Julien try to communicate with an old French woman at an inn where they are staying. However, she does not speak French because she did not go to school. This is what Fouillée and the Republicans were fighting against: a different mindset, which existed in the various regions of France, where the sense of identity was primarily local. The language spoken by the group of people in this instance makes the children feel isolated, and the older brother has to explain, in a didactic tone, that unity will be built through the shared language of the fatherland. This idea would lead to the disappearance of most regional languages around the country.

Finally, populism tends to celebrate the military. We’ve established that France glorified its army, particularly during the time of Boulanger, who was also called “Général Revanche” (the Revenge General). History is always a preferred instrument of nation building, and *Le Tour de la France* is no exception to the rule. Indeed, “the real past, to be sure, is inscribed in stone. The social past, how we understand this real past, on the other hand, is inscribed at best in soft clay” (Balibar and Wallerstein 78). The choices made by historians, pedagogues and authors in retelling the past are interpretations of Balibar’s “real past,” which will keep changing as our definition of the nation evolves.

The Other, although never referred to by name in *Le Tour de la France*, plays a major role in driving the actions of the heroes. The symbolic crossing of the border between Prussia and France is an example of it: after a cold and dark night, the children arrive at the French side of the mountain. When they climb up to the pass they discover the beauty of the French countryside, as the sun rises.

The title itself reveals its emblematic nature: “XI. — Le brouillard se dissipe. — Arrivée d’André et de Julien sur la terre française.⁴²” The fog, which had made the previous leg of their trip so difficult, is conveniently lifted just as they arrive on French soil. As a reward for their perseverance, they are granted clarity through a perfect vision of their “beloved country,” as opposed to the darkness that had followed them since the region of Alsace-Lorraine had become German.

Le cœur ému, songeant qu'ils étaient enfin sur le sol de la France, que le vœu de leur père était accompli, ils s'agenouillèrent pieusement sur cette terre de la patrie qu'ils venaient de conquérir par leur courage et leur volonté persévérante ; ils élevèrent leur âme vers le ciel, et tout bas remerciant Dieu et André s'écria :

— France aimée, nous sommes tes fils, et nous voulons toute notre vie rester dignes de toi !

(Fouillée, 326th ed. 25)

The readers, tied to the heroes' emotions, are expected to identify with both the patriotic love felt by the children towards France and the intense relief experienced after having left behind the spatiotemporal shadows of the German empire.

The darkness symbolically connected to Prussia is part of the tropes used in France between 1870 and 1914. In 1887, Lorraine-born Albert Bettanier painted *The Black Stain*. The political picture portrays French boys being taught to hate Prussia for taking the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, a loss which felt both humiliating and unfair. Just like the *Tour de la France's* protagonists, Bettanier moved to Paris to avoid becoming a subject of the German emperor. According to the peace treaty signed at the end of the Franco-Prussian war, Alsace-Lorraine's 1.5 million inhabitants had two years to opt to remain French by moving to France. The Third Republic's propaganda announced that 500,000 of them did, but historians now give numbers going from 25,000 to 154,000, the lower number being most likely the most accurate one. It included French civil

⁴² The fog dissipates – Arrival of André and Julien on French soil.

servants, who did not have a choice in the matter, and 6,000 inhabitants who accepted the French government's incentive to be given land in the Algerian colonies.⁴³ In spite of the propaganda painting the inhabitants of the annexed region as suffering an incredible loss, the area, used by the Kaiser for his own propagandist agenda, soon benefited from investments that led to an economic boom in the period going from 1880 to 1910. The “black stain” trope reveals a common nationalist tendency to distort the historical reality to better fit its narrative of choice in order to rewrite French identity while depicting the Other as the common enemy responsible for all of the nation's sorrows.



Fig. 4. Bettanier, Albert. *The Black Stain*: Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin, 1887.

⁴³ Land stolen from the Natives.

3. Key actors: Republicans, Fouillée, and teachers

Combined strategies, including othering, were used to settle France's divisions, which were also illustrated in *Le Tour de la France*. We will now look at the stakeholders – those driving change and those they influence – in this process. Convinced of their superior judgment when it comes to what the nation should be, various leaders have shared their opinions on the matter.

Looking at French peasants, who represented a significant part of Fouillée's audience – over half the population in 1848, and were still the largest single class of France in 1939 – Zeldin wonders why French peasants “did not throw their weight more decisively” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume One. Ambition, Love and Politics* 131). In spite of its numerical advantage, this entire class of French citizens remained seen as the Other of France in public discourse, and did little to retaliate against this image. For starters, as the description of many of the nineteenth century authors who wrote about them showed, they were “different.” Balzac for example, only felt contempt for their “barbarism” (Sieffert). As Zeldin explains, “the peasants did after all speak not only a different dialect, but sometimes even a different language.” Far from stagnant though, “they were constantly trying to improve their lot, to enlarge their farms, to raise their status” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume One. Ambition, Love and Politics* 135). “The paradox of the peasants' position in France is that they were idealized, subsidized and even feared as a great electoral force, but all the same they were unable to use their power, and they remained among the poorest people in the country” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume One. Ambition, Love and Politics* 176). In addition to that less than desirable position, they lived at a time when ambition was rather discouraged, as illustrated by Zeldin, who looked at how doctors viewed such desires: “The trouble with ambition was that it offended the basic rule of hygiene of the day: prudence. ... Dr. Descuret⁴⁴ is firm: ‘An ambitious man is a sick man’” (Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Volume One. Ambition, Love and Politics* 91-92). According to the

⁴⁴ Author of *The Medicine of the Passions*, 1842.

author, by the early twentieth century, things would change and ambition would finally become a suitable trait (France, 1848-1945 93), which is when Fouillée rewrites her own ending to include such aspirations in the protagonists' children. Talking about doctors and medical progress, Julien's son, called "le petit Jean," exclaims:

– Oh ! oh ! dit Jean, ces savants sont admirables ! Je voudrais, moi aussi, devenir un savant quand je serai grand.

– Alors, Jean, il faut travailler. Tous les savants ont été de grands travailleurs. Beaucoup, comme notre illustre Laplace, par exemple, sont partis des classes les plus humbles. C'est une belle ambition que celle de vouloir grossir le nombre de ces hommes qui, sans bruit ni fracas, exposent souvent leur vie dans leurs recherches, et souvent aussi meurent à la peine.

(Fouillée, 335th ed. 322)

If they remain modest about it and are willing to risk their lives, hard-workers coming from the lower class can now move up the social ladder. As for the bright picture painted of farming, it was in line with the government's desire to slow down rural exodus at a time when agricultural jobs were still on the rise. It was a goal clearly identified by Fouillée, who mentions agriculture over twenty-one times in her first edition, with morals such as the following to introduce her chapters: "Des animaux bien soignés font la richesse de l'agriculture, et une riche agriculture fait la richesse du pays"

(Fouillée, 326th ed. 29). Whether or not they had such exemplary farmers around them, *Le Tour de la France's* readers could appreciate the teachings of the author and the overall positive portrayal of agriculture as a source of wealth for the country and its people. "La terre ne nous donnerait pas de quoi vivre si nous ne travaillions beaucoup et si nous restions ignorants," a farmer explains to the children, "Mais nous avons besoin de bonnes écoles. ... Quand on est bien instruit, on gagne mieux sa vie" (Fouillée, 326th ed. 83-84). In the meantime, it's unlikely that the majority of children recognized their family and neighbors' style of farming in Fouillée's words. Her lessons on hygiene,

modernization and efficiency did not make a difference right away in the next generations of farmers, though, and in the meantime, they remained identified as an underperforming group of undeserving French citizens.

Othering entire regions based on their different languages was a long-lasting tradition repeatedly used by French politicians. During the revolution - which is when the origin story of the political left emerged - regional languages were already associated with barbarism, ignorance and despotism, and French with civilization, knowledge and democracy. In 1794, politician and lawyer, Barère de Vieuzac addresses the Assembly with the following words:

Dans les départements du Haut et du Bas Rhin, qui a donc appelé, de concert avec les traîtres, le Prussien et l'Autrichien sur nos frontières envahies ? L'habitant des campagnes qui parle la même langue que nos ennemis, et qui se croit ainsi bien plus leur frère et leur concitoyen que le frère et le concitoyen des Français qui lui parlent une autre langue et ont d'autres habitudes. Le pouvoir de l'identité du langage a été si grand qu'à la retraite des Allemands plus de vingt mille homes des campagnes du Bas Rhin sont émigrés. (Vieuzac)

This last excerpt reveals the fears of the revolutionary leaders, a fear that would remain and be exacerbated after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870. Barère de Vieuzac's discourse feels strangely familiar, even a century later. Again, issues of loyalty based on language rather than citizenship are pointed out. The enemy is still the German, and "l'habitant des campagnes" is both victim and culprit, oblivious to his own treasonous behaviors. However, Fouillée does not condemn French speakers of regional languages, and limits herself to one single reference to their existence in chapter sixty-eight:⁴⁵

⁴⁵ A scene I previously alluded to in the context of populism, which also carries an important reflection on regional languages.

L'hôtelière était une bonne vieille, qui paraissait si avenante, qu'André, pour faire plaisir à Julien, se hasarda à l'interroger, mais elle ne comprenait que quelques phrases françaises, car elle parlait à l'ordinaire, comme beaucoup de vieilles gens du lieu, le patois du midi.

André et Julien, qui s'étaient levés poliment, se rassirent tout désappointés.

Les gens qui entraient parlaient tous patois entre eux ; les deux enfants, assis à l'écart et ne comprenant pas un mot à ce qui se disait, se sentaient bien isolés dans cette ferme étrangère.

(Fouillée, 326th ed. 165)

The author confines herself to descriptive terms, insisting on the isolation felt by the children: “à l'écart,” they do not understand a word of what was being said in this “foreign farm.” André and Julien suffer from the lack of education of the villagers, which makes them feel othered. Fouillée's choice is interesting, since it reverses the othering/othered relationship. Indeed, the readers would have most likely been in position of the speakers of regional languages, and as such being othered when among French speakers, while native French speakers would have had little opportunity to travel in rural isolated areas. The relationship reversal reaffirms the preeminence of French speakers over the speakers of regional language, making the latter remnants of the past as well as the exception, even if it does not reflect the reality of the nineteenth century French countryside. Since André and Julien are the heroes, their marginalization due to the absence of French literacy at the inn reminds the readers of the benefits of education and French.

The othering persisted throughout the nineteenth century, with for instance French author and senior official François-Auguste de Romieu, who started his career in Brittany where he used every opportunity to express his negative view of the people and language. Strongly opposed to the use of Breton, he proposed a colonial regime to remedy the scarcity of French speakers: “La Basse-Bretagne, je ne cesserai de le dire, est une contrée à part et qui n'est plus la France. Exceptez-en les

villes, le reste devrait être soumis à une sorte de régime colonial. Je n'avance rien d'exagéré.”⁴⁶

Mimicking racist discourse, he argued, “Créons, pour l'amélioration de la race bretonne, quelques-unes de ces primes que nous réservons aux chevaux et faisons que le clergé nous seconde en n'accordant la première communion qu'aux seuls enfants parlant le français.”⁴⁷ Provincials from all areas of rural France, including Bretons, Normans and Occitans, were deemed uncivilized and unworthy of France (Ciosáin 159). After meeting Romieu in Brittany in August 1831, Michelet wrote in his travel diary: “La Bretagne est une colonie comme l'Alsace et les Basques, plus que la Guadeloupe” (Dupouy 56). Othered again and again, the populations in the margins of France are not regarded as equals to their fellow Frenchmen.

Schafer builds on this hierarchical nature of the State and argues that the lack of boundaries between the public and private spheres, a metaphorical construction consciously elaborated by French legislators towards the end of the nineteenth century, made it possible for them to increase their authoritative power. She says: “In casting the state as a parental figure ... the reformers of the Third Republic drew on the power of metaphor, perhaps the rhetorical figure most suited to the fear of usurpation, in order to stabilize their uncertainties and ground” (Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger* 205). Fatherland, or “Patrie” in French, derives from the latin “patria,” which means “father’s country.” Especially after 1871 and the defeat against Prussia, that term gained a renewed nationalistic sense in France and was expressly valued in French primary schools.

The title of the third chapter of *Le Tour de la France* includes both father and homeland: “III. — La dernière parole de Michel Volden. — L'amour fraternel et l'amour de la patrie : O mon frère, marchons toujours la main dans la main, unis par un même amour pour nos parents, notre patrie et Dieu” (Fouillée, 326th ed. 9). Brotherhood, love of the homeland/fatherland, unity through family

⁴⁶ Revue de Paris, Tome XXX, 1831, *La Basse-Bretagne*, 4^e article, “La Chouannerie,” pp. 145-54.

⁴⁷ He also said : “Ce sont des bas-Bretons. Qu'on en fasse des Français avant d'exiger d'eux les devoirs communs qu'ils ne comprendraient pas.”

love, God: Fouillée blurs the borders between the nationalistic themes exalted by the Third Republic, which empowers the governing elites.

In the name of the nation, peasants are nonetheless invited to join in the othering process. We turn to Alain Corbin's analysis as an example of how this message was received. He examined the books that were typically checked out from libraries in rural towns. Based on the record of the books borrowed from the primary school libraries, the rural populations would read "books on farming" alongside history books (French history and biographies of the "illustrious men of national history") (65-66). Meanwhile, novels, although not borrowed as frequently, reflect a strong interest in exoticism and progress, with Jules Verne at the top of the list (67). As suggested by Corbin, colonialism is not that far removed from exoticism, and civilization and progress were some of the pillars of the French colonial narrative. Although a proper analysis of the way readers received the messages intended for them is difficult for us to know more than a century after the fact, it appears that the popular themes in their reading patterns matched what Fouillée and national authorities wanted them to take away from their teachings. Forgetting the last few decades on national history under different political regimes, the author wanted to renew their sense of belonging to a great nation by reigniting their love for France while keeping them from reaching too high.

Teachers stand somewhere in the middle of the othering taking place among the key actors of the French nationalization project. Conflicting views emerge when it comes to their attempts to serve the interest of the State: "Façonner les mentalités : c'est bien à quoi contribuait, tout autant qu'à l'apprentissage du français, la littérature sélectionnée pour l'usage scolaire" (Chanet 251). Elizabeth Andersen Worden argues that even though teachers are working for the state, they sometimes have a significantly different view of the nation from their employer. Laurence De Cock, French historian, suggests that primary school teachers kept their distance from pedagogical materials. Referring to recent surveys and research projects including Chanet's, De Cock emphasizes

“la multiplicité des situations locales” and explains that it helps put things into perspective when it comes to the “puissance homogénéisante du roman national dans une République en construction” (De Cock 1). Chanet’s analysis converges with Worden: “Le maître d’école, notre enquête devrait permettre de le confirmer ... n’a pas mis son instruction au service d’on ne sait quelle croisade contre ‘l’identité’ du peuple et du pays dont il était lui-même issu” (Chanet 252). If teachers were indeed coming from a background similar to that of the students they taught, this fact alone is not sufficient to make them adopt one view or the other, and to have the agency necessary to take the lead when it comes to manufacturing identity. As members of the “transclasses,” a term coined by philosopher Chantal Jaquet to qualify those going from one class or social milieu to another, many teachers had difficulty assimilating their new environment, going back and forth between their origins, usually similar to those of their students, and the local “notables” they interacted with, and sometimes aspired to join. Yet it seems that teachers did not try to erase local identity.

Although teachers had a wide margin of freedom – for they were usually geographically isolated and very rarely received visits from inspectors – they would realistically have had very little time to prepare alternative lessons and lesson plans for their classes. They would have had to fall back on the textbook. Choppin defines the mandate of textbooks: “C’est ... le véhicule, au-delà des prescriptions étroites d’un programme, d’un système de valeurs, d’une idéologie, d’une culture ; il participe ainsi du processus de socialisation voire d’endoctrinement des jeunes générations auxquelles il s’adresse” (Choppin, *L’histoire des manuels scolaires* 1). Following the institutionalized version of the curriculum offered by the textbook was very likely the easiest way for them to teach. Respecting authority – historians, professors of the *Ecoles Normales*, and the State – had been their experience since they were themselves in school, and they would have had very little opportunity to practice any other way of dealing with the hierarchical structures in place. According to Andersen Worden, “teachers’ relationships with the historians and their former professors mirror their

relationships with their students” (76). In the case of France, that meant that student teachers would passively memorize the authoritative interpretation of the new nation, and later regurgitate it to their own students. Having very few resources, teachers lacked the agency to go against the tide of state propaganda.

However, exceptions existed. Emilie Carles was a libertarian and pacifist teacher born in 1900 in the Hautes-Alpes. She mentions how the local priest would preach war and patriotism during the Great War: “Chaque Dimanche, le curé dans son prône exaltait les Français au combat. Il légitimait le patriotisme des uns et condamnait la cruauté des autres.” (Carles 90) Still a teenager who had not heard any divergent view, she recalls her brother Joseph coming home for a leave from the army in 1916, and who shared his bitterness after experiencing the trenches: “Tu vois ... tout ce que nous a raconté l’instituteur sur la patrie, sur la gloire, ce ne sont que des balivernes et des menteries... Emilie, si tu fais classe un jour, il faut dire la vérité aux enfants” (Carles 91). A few years later, when she is about to start her career as a teacher, she is on a mission to improve children’s lives, including by teaching them critical thinking:

Déjà, je savais que je ne leur ferais jamais chanter « Flotte petit drapeau » ni même *La Marseillaise*, ce chant de guerre, je savais que je ne leur raconterais jamais des histoires à dormir debout sur les belles batailles, l’héroïsme et la sainteté. Je n’avais qu’une chose à faire, leur ouvrir l’esprit, faire en sorte qu’ils transforment leur vie pour avoir plus de bien-être et qu’ils sortent de leur isolement et de leur aliénation. (Carles 155)

By the end of her career, she looks back at her teaching and explains: “ Evidemment dans mes cours je me suis efforcée dans le cadre de ce qui était permis, mais tout de même j’essayais de donner un peu de vie aux images d’Epinal que leurs dispensaient les manuels d’histoire ” (Carles 308). Her account provides a different perspective on teachers’ agency, but her political activism, especially among women, remains a rarity.

Jacques and Mona Ozouf's survey shows that only 35 percent of female teachers were interested in politics before 1914, (J. & M. Ozouf 449) and lack sufficient data to give us an estimate of the percentage of women involved in trade union activity (out of 1,060 women surveyed). The survey reveals however that the political figure teachers admired most was socialist Jean Jaurès for 33 percent of respondents, far ahead of the pacifist Aristide Briand and Edouard Herriot, leader of the Radical Party with 8 percent each. (J. & M. Ozouf 452) All three men stood on the left of the French political spectrum.

Between instruction and ideology, Choppin raises the issue of what the classroom textbooks try to instill in their readers. Fouillée insisted on morals, work and duty to show the nation's superiority and did not encourage retaliation. The epilogue for André and Julien's story, happening on New Year's Eve 1904, shows them living on a farm, having married the daughters of a sailor they had befriended thirty-three years before:

Ils ont maintenant, les uns quarante ans, Jean-Joseph et le petit Julien ; l'autre, quarante- sept ans, notre courageux André.

Ce sont de respectables pères de famille. Nos trois jeunes gens ont épousé les trois filles du pilote Guillaume. Quatorze enfants, les leurs à tous les trois s'agitent dans la grande salle de la ferme, qu'il a fallu agrandir encore. On ne forme plus qu'une seule famille ici. Une famille unie et heureuse, car chacun y remplit son devoir. (Fouillée, 335th ed. 301)

Republicans and Fouillée are in unison regarding the message intended for their young audience. Echoing the textbook's subtitle – Devoir et Patrie – the morals emphasized throughout *Le Tour de la France*, including in the epilogue above, demonstrate the adhesion to principles of duty, honor, family, hard work and respect of the homeland. The latter is symbolically represented through the description of one big happy family united under the roof headed by three “respectable family men”

or “fathers.”⁴⁸ And if it sounds familiar, it would have been to French citizens as well during Vichy France in 1940, when Philippe Pétain replaced France’s Republican motto “Liberté, égalité, fraternité” with “Travail, famille, patrie.”⁴⁹ Whether or not they had read Fouillée’s textbook, French nationals would have been exposed the Republican ideals, through readings, classroom displays or political speeches of the Third Republic. Indeed, one of the first known uses of the expression “Travail, famille, patrie” is attributed to Republican congressman Sadi Carnot, in a speech he gave for children from the Nolay school battalion⁵⁰ on August 20, 1882. French identity and its supporting values, rewritten and vividly illustrated by Fouillée in the early days of the Third Republic, would shape the nation for decades to come.

4. Fouillée: Otherness in the service of the nation

Researchers have been interested in how textbooks portray nations and national identities in times of political change. One answer that seems to repeat itself around the world is that “new textbooks define the nation in opposition to the ‘other’ as a mean of delineating the new nation” (Anderson Worden 8). In *Le Tour de la France*, Fouillée uses a subtle rhetoric to show that some regions, populations and languages are inferior by comparing them to Julien and André, two model citizens who embrace progress, a key to being French, which comes through French and France.

The existence of a textbook that brings together a number of populist representations for children was not originally the authorities’ choice because the book was written and published by an independent author, but it likely became propaganda once they decided that the message of the

⁴⁸ The term “motherland” – or *patrie* in French – is derived from the latin *pater* (or *père*).

⁴⁹ In September 1940, he wrote in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*: “Lorsque nos jeunes gens ... entreront dans la vie ... nous leur dirons ... que la liberté réelle ne peut s’exercer qu’à l’abri d’une autorité tutélaire, qu’ils doivent respecter, à laquelle ils doivent obéir ... Nous leur dirons ensuite que l’égalité [doit] s’encadrer dans une hiérarchie, fondée sur la diversité des fonctions et des mérites ... Nous leur dirons enfin qu’il ne saurait y avoir de fraternité véritable qu’à l’intérieur de ces groupes naturels que sont la famille, la cité, la Patrie.”

⁵⁰ *Bataillons scolaires* or school battalions were established in 1882 as part of the new public-school system in order to introduce children to military practice.

textbook fit their agenda and helped promote it. Which is why, to Balibar's question: "do nations constitute themselves out of nationalist ideologies ... ?" (Balibar and Wallerstein 46), I argue that they do. In *Le Tour de la France*, Fouillée used otherness and populist strategies in the service of the French nationalistic agenda.

Manufacturing French identity through the "unity in diversity" trope in *Le Tour de la France* was part of a larger national project meant to rewrite the nation. In our third chapter, we will argue demonstrate how national identity also came at the price of suppressed linguistic diversity.

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Chapter 3 Behind the Curtain: Glottophagy in Republican Schools

“On n’habite pas un pays, on habite une langue. Une patrie, c’est cela, et rien d’autre.”
(Cioran, *Aveux et anathèmes* 21)

According to the statistics gathered by the Ministère de l’Instruction publique in 1863, 7.5 million French people out of 28 million did not speak French in their daily exchanges. For a lot of children, French was “a foreign language learned at school, which they did not speak at home or between themselves outside of school” (Valette et Wahl 159). My maternal grandmother, Josette Guignard, born in 1930 in Largeasse, a rural area of the Deux-Sèvres department, was raised in such a household. She and her three siblings only spoke “poitevin” and the shame associated with her mother tongue has followed her until today. Although she regularly insists on me listing for her the languages I can converse in, she gets upset when I tell her that she is bilingual as well: “Ah non! C’est pas pareil! C’est du patois.”

“Patois,” a French word whose origin goes back to medieval times⁵¹ carries a negative connotation. From Old French “patoier,” which meant “agiter les mains, gesticuler pour se faire comprendre,” the word is used to describe non-standard French, specifically minority languages and local or regional varieties. In *Le Littré*, a French dictionary published at the end of the nineteenth century, “patois” is defined as follows: “Parler provincial qui, étant jadis un dialecte, a cessé d’être littérairement cultivé et qui n’est plus en usage que pour la conversation parmi les gens de la province, et particulièrement parmi les paysans et les ouvriers,” adding later “*Par dénigrement*, langue pauvre et grossière.” “Patois” is therefore associated with a certain class of population: peasants and more generally the working class, who are geographically from the *province*. It is, according to the authors of the dictionary, non literary and limited to oral speech. The addendum adds poor and

⁵¹ Its first known definition as a “langue incompréhensible, grossière” and “parler local” dates back to 1285.

coarse language. Unsophisticated and described in opposition to Parisian French, it is regarded as inferior.

Le Larousse, a contemporary French dictionary, defines it as a “système linguistique essentiellement oral, utilisé sur une aire réduite, et dans une communauté déterminée (généralement rurale), et perçu par ses utilisateurs comme inférieur à la langue officielle.” The spoken nature of the language is still emphasized, and while the negative view of the term is acknowledged, the implication is that speakers are to blame for their feelings of inferiority. In this chapter, to qualify the languages otherwise called “patois” and when not quoting others, we will use the neutral term “minority languages,” which reflects the hierarchy between the official language and the other ones spoken in the state, or the term “regional languages,” which does not cover other languages such as migrant languages and specific communities (such as Hebrew speakers), who have been struggling with similar issues of power. I intend to further develop my reflection on patois in the second section of this chapter.

Looking at the teacher's manual for *Le Tour de la France* provided with the textbook, which described the program and guided teachers through the curriculum, Patrick Cabanel⁵² gives us a peak into the contemporary definition of patois: “langage populaire et corrompu, particulier à une province, ” which remains “malgré les progrès de l’instruction populaire” (Cabanel 191). The list of patois that follows includes some languages and regional varieties of French and of Occitan. The manual later adds:

Est-il désirable de conserver tous les patois de province? Si l’on parle à la fois le français et le patois, à quoi bon charger la mémoire de deux langues, au lieu d’apprendre des choses utiles? Et si on ne parle pas français ou si on le parle mal, quelle honte!” (Cabanel 191)

⁵² Cabanel published *Le tour de la nation par des enfants* in 2007, which looks at textbooks and national education in Europe through the centuries.

Although the definition uses the term “language” to explain what “patois” meant then, it is immediately brought down to a lower level. It’s “populaire” because it’s used by common people, “corrupted” as in altered, because it’s not considered pure like French, but also morally tainted. The moral connotation is confirmed at the end of the definition, with the mention of “shame.” “Patois” is considered useless, and the author does not bother to give an accurate list of regional languages. As for my grandmother, she still cannot reconcile the idea of her first language being called a language, when she worked so hard to make French her primary language.

Beyond the distinction among language, regional language, and dialect, the very definition of language is based on an idea that never fully grasps the reality it is meant to express. The ideal value given to the French language is utopian. Linguist Jean-Claude Boulanger explains:

La norme idéale est un concept théorique, une abstraction d'école qui recouvre une infinité de faits et qui permet de soutenir un édifice qui ne fut jamais stable et monolithique, justement parce qu'il prenait des figures diversement colorées selon les écologies dans lesquelles l'idiome s'épanouissait et se personnalisait. (qtd. in Chaurand 740)

Linguists have long observed the dynamic nature of languages, alive and constantly evolving, to better suit the needs of their speakers. The arbitrary choice of Parisian French as the normative language over all the languages and forms in use in France does not rely on a linguistic argument. In fact, “la différence entre *langue* et *dialecte* n'est pas d'ordre linguistique mais d'ordre politique : la langue ne serait jamais qu'un dialecte adopté par l'ensemble d'une nation” (Calvet. *Linguistique et colonialisme* 43). Calvet’s interpretation of Saussure goes against what my grandmother and several generations of French students before and after her had been told about the critical distinction in value between regional languages and French, not without consequences.

The opposition between dialect and language created a tension between family and society, when French was “la langue de l'intégration, de la promotion, en même temps que la langue de la

conformité à un modèle dominant à l'extérieur de la famille, la langue du prestige social" (L.-J. Calvet, *La guerre des langues et les politiques linguistiques* 103). The conflict presents itself in several overlapping spaces: within the child who struggles to accept their dual identity, within the family, and within society. Like most children at the time, as soon as my grandmother and her younger sister started primary school, they made a point of speaking French at home together in order to practice and improve. Her parents, born in the early 1900s, understood French but did not speak it. However, they did write in French when sending letters to family. Humiliated, French children speaking the various languages in use in the French territory internalized the embarrassment they felt for being corrected and changed their ways to better fit in, at the risk of breaking the family unit:

Ils ont parfaitement intégré leur propre dévalorisation. ... Le peuple des campagnes n'était nullement fier de sa langue ; il se sentait au contraire inférieur et aspirait à parler français ou à défaut, à faire apprendre le français à ses enfants. (Valette and Wahl 162)

Ironically, nine decades later, my grandmother's sister Paulette, with whom she used to practice her French is, the only other speaker of "poitevin" she still occasionally uses the language with, "for fun."

Taking a step back from *Le Tour de la France* and its contribution to the fading of regional identity (and regional languages), this chapter stands apart as a reflection on the relationship between language and identity, which argues that national identity came at the price of suppressed linguistic diversity. As evoked in our second chapter, Fouillée only mentions "patois" once in the text and as part of the instructions in the teacher's manual. Yet language planning was an integral part of the national project to homogenize France and particularly active in primary schools, which informs my overarching theme of rewriting the nation. In order to do so, French authorities during the Third Republic relied heavily on language planning, which came at a substantial cost. After looking back at

France's long history of language planning, we will question the traditional view of French as a positive force towards progress,⁵³ as opposed to a suppression of differences in the name of a perceived superiority. Finally, we will focus on linguistic imperialism and inequality and strategies to move forward as a nation.

1. A long history of language planning/policy

As argued in chapter two, the Third Republic defined itself in opposition to “the other,” whether exterior – like Prussians – or interior – like the internal others living on the outskirts of France, either geographically or figuratively. The use of “dialect” to translate what Francophone countries have called “patois” presents the same issues, as it denotes non-standard qualities or shows the social and political subordination of the language. The linguist Max Weinreich popularized the following adage, which summarized it well: “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy,” meaning that the sociopolitical circumstances – namely the power of its speakers – greatly influence our perception of the status of a language. So is there a difference between dialect, patois, and language? Not objectively. Linguists have struggled to establish a clear boundary, probably because dialects and languages are one and the same thing, and criteria are arbitrary. Both are codes used for communication, but what we often call languages are given more prestige because they are connected to a nation and often developed written texts. It is about defining status by othering.

How does one define “province,” another key element of the nineteenth century definition of “patois”? According to Corbin, the notion of “province” is based “in relation” to Paris. He says: “La notion de province se fonde, non pas sur l'analyse d'une différence, voire d'une inégalité, mais sur la perception d'une carence, d'un éloignement, d'une privation, celle de la capitale. ... Il s'agit d'un rapport” (777). The feelings of deficiency and deprivation reflect the very real inequality

⁵³ View upheld by Anne-Marie Thiesse and Jean-François Chanet, specialists of national identity.

resulting from an opposition between the ones who set the standard – the Parisians – and the ones socially subordinated to it.

Paris, as the center of France, has had the monopoly of decision making at the state level, which has included matters such as language policy. According to Alain Borer,⁵⁴ “la langue française précède historiquement l’Etat et contribue à le fonder. ... En retour, l’Etat développa, certes, avec ses moyens, la langue française en instrument d’unification” (Borer 266). The second half of his comment would not spark as much controversy, as nation-states have long been known to use language as a tool to unify the people. This is one of the main goals of language policies, which Calvet defines as an “ensemble des choix conscients effectués dans le domaine des rapports entre langue et vie sociale, et plus particulièrement entre langue et vie nationale.” (Calvet, *La guerre des langues* 154-55). Language policies underscored conscious choices about the relationship between language and social life for the state, a theoretical approach, often followed by language planning or “recherche et mise en œuvre des moyens nécessaires à l’application d’une politique linguistique” (Calvet, *La guerre des langues* 154-55). The concrete implementation of a language policy is usually left to the state, which is the only authority with the means to do so.

The power of the state on questions of language brings new issues to the surface. Indeed, beyond the questionable validity of the state as a democratic entity to make these choices in the name of its citizens without consulting them ahead of time, what are they looking to achieve? Unity seems to have been the most common answer, but at what cost? And if we do look at the consequences of French language policies over the years, whose analysis of the situation should bear the most weight? Political leaders? Historians? Linguists? Advocates? Citizens? To weigh in on this issue, we will investigate French language policies and their implementation by analyzing the voices of the various stakeholders.

⁵⁴ French poet, art critic, essayist, novelist, and playwright.

According to Denis Ager, identity, insecurity, and image are the three main motives behind the objectives of language policy in France as well as the three parts structuring his book. Identity comes first – or “the role of language as a symbolic marker of inclusion and exclusion” – , insecurity second – usually “caused by the presence of a more powerful neighbor or of a dominating group,” then image – “of the identity of the political community through its language,” and inequality, to be corrected through the “recognition of minority languages,” which is not a factor in the case of France according to Ager. (Centre for Information 244).

For André Chervel, linguist and historian of education, the development of the French language was made possible thanks to other conditions, which participated in the momentum that led to spreading the use of French. The first factor, the expansion of the roads in the eighteenth century and railways in the nineteenth century,⁵⁵ is indirect. Chervel explains: “Dans les villes et dans les bourgs où s’arrête son train, les enfants de paysans côtoient sur les bancs de l’école les enfants d’ouvriers et de cheminots originaires d’autres régions. On apprend aussi le français à l’école parce qu’on y fréquente les enfants venus d’ailleurs” (Chervel 32). Jean-Baptiste Haguindéguy, political scientist who focuses on language policy, evokes another indirect condition, which lies with the development of mass media, and especially newspapers. He says: “The supremacy of French was facilitated by the diffusion of French newspapers” (29). Jean-Pol Caput agrees with the role played by journalism in popularizing the language and also notes the growing function of literature. Authors such as Zola and Hugo influenced increasing numbers of people in the nineteenth century compared to authors in earlier centuries, thanks to the rise in the number of readers. Zola particularly spread the use of French among the working class while Hugo increased the usage of slang (Caput 220). French linguist Renée Balibar also highlights “la fonction réciproque de la littérature dans l’institution, au sens actif, c’est-à-dire dans l’élaboration de la norme de

⁵⁵ The role of the railway was highlighted by Eugen Weber as well.

communication” (417). Such function gives extra weight to textbooks such as *Le Tour de la France*, fixing new norms through the educational system.

The development of the French language was also rooted in war and the pedagogical role of the army - the second factor raised by Chervel - and although war became part of the language planning apparatus in the late nineteenth century, in the early stages of the 1800s, it was mostly corollary to the army:

La guerre contribue à l'unification linguistique d'un pays ; et de ce point de vue les guerres napoléoniennes ont sans doute déclenché une dynamique dont les effets sont ressentis pendant plusieurs dizaines d'années. Avec la chute de l'Empire, c'est le retour des soldats dans leur famille ou dans leur village, et l'on sait qu'un certain nombre d'entre eux deviennent maîtres d'école. (32-33)

The Napoleonic armies, besides the French troops, included men incorporated from the annexed departments and vassal states of the Empire. Although French was not a requirement for the army, it was the common language of the troops, who brought back their new knowledge of the outside world and the French language to their community through teaching⁵⁶. The French army opened schools within its ranks to improve the troops' literacy starting in 1815, and a military method meant to teach recruits how to read is established in 1840 (Chervel 30). The relationship between war and the French language would evolve, and by the end of the nineteenth century, when the Franco-Prussian war revealed the weakness in French among the recruits, it made war one of the arguments behind language planning, in order to be prepared for revenge.

Language planning was a form of preparing for revenge, and strategies varied. Prescriptive norms are part of the state language planning toolbox, for which it has both implicit and explicit codes. Several factors come into play to better set the norm, organized by linguist Georges Lüdi in

⁵⁶ Often forced to do so by the lack of professional opportunities if they had come back from war with a missing limb or another disability.

the following table meant to organize the different types of norms in French. The presence of a normative authority – l’Académie Française – gives it a frame of reference, as well as a defined content – such as a dictionary compiling what is considered legitimate French. Establishing model language users, such as journalists and writers, influenced the new ways of speaking and writing French. Sanctions were also used to include or exclude speakers. At the local level, that could mean the punishment of students using another language in primary schools or the exclusion of diverse authors at the Académie Française in order to maintain the status quo.

	Prescriptive norm		Descriptive norm
	Explicit (fixed, codified)	Implicit	
Norm setters	Normative authority	“relevant others” in social interaction	linguists
Content	Selection of legitimate features	What is normal/trendy in a speech community	Common practice
Criteria	Use of model speakers/writers	Use of trend setters; solidarity	frequency
Binding force	Infractions lead to sanctions	Evaluation by the interlocutor, inclusion in/exclusion from a group	None
Judgements	±wrong, ±grammatical	Correspondence with practice, ‘we (don’t) say that’; ‘s/he doesn’t belong to us’	± used
Tuition	Educational system	Unguided acquisition	None

Fig. 5. Prescriptive and descriptive norms: Lüdi, Georges. “Traces of monolingual and plurilingual ideologies in the history of language policies in France.” *Standard Languages and Multilingualism in European History*, edited by Matthias Hüning, et al., Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012. p. 18.

The educational system was the most explicit and widespread space for norms to be established. In the 1830s, Guizot had imposed simultaneous teaching and the use of French in schools, and created committees tasked with classroom control – a decision Terral qualifies as a “véritable chasse aux ‘patois’ et à leurs usagers” (Terral 51). Similarly, the Third Republic set the

norm through the educational system: Article 14 of the “règlement modèle des écoles primaires (7 juin 1880)” states that: “Le français sera seul en usage dans l’école,”⁵⁷ making regional languages *de facto* unacceptable in schools. In 1910, linguist Ferdinand Brunot confirmed the measure as part of a bigger plan: “L’unité linguistique est un des facteurs de l’unité nationale” (Chanet, “Appartenance locale et unité nationale” 207). Although sociopolitical circumstances helped set new language norms in France, the primary school system directly influenced the expansion of French.

Historically, the Third Republic followed centuries of language planning. The emergence of the French language(s) began with the ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts in 1539, which was primarily introduced to replace Latin as a gallicanist measure against the Catholic Church’s authority. French scholar Michel de Certeau insists on the increasingly strict prescriptions when it came to the use of French over the centuries. In the sixteenth century, Villers-Cotterêts did not forbid the use of regional languages, focusing on the primacy over Latin. According to Certeau, the ordinance:

ne visait qu’à interdire l’usage du latin et prescrivait celui du “langage maternel françois” – c’est-à-dire laissait place aux idiomes particuliers – les édits qui suivent l’annexion des provinces nouvellement conquises exigent tous, à partir de la mi-XVII^{ème} siècle, l’emploi exclusif de la langue française. (Certeau 9)

Although it looked like a battle between Latin and French, it was also the beginning of the preeminence of French at the expense of regional languages. The goal was to unite the elites and slowly remove distinctive regional identities and autonomous desires that could get in the way of centralization. The date is very significant because French was, for the first time, establishing itself as the language of a nation, intentionally attaching identity to language planning through a more unified and centralized state in order to build a national sentiment.

⁵⁷ A rule that had been in use since the mid-nineteenth century, though applied with some flexibility. According to article 29 of public school regulation: “le français sera seul en usage dans l’école” (art. 29); adding, to nuance it: “le maître s’efforcera, par des prescriptions, par de fréquentes explications, et surtout par son exemple, de former les élèves à l’usage habituel de cette langue.” (Chervel, p. 27)

The process of nationalization through language planning was slow and steady. French became a requirement to access government jobs, and a discriminatory tool when it came to social mobility. It did not immediately affect most French people, who did not usually go outside of their locality; however, it became more of a constraint at the end of the nineteenth century:

The resulting language ideology was thus characterized by an authoritarian lack of respect for linguistic diversity and the *de facto* multilingualism. Citizens had to accommodate themselves to the State and the school system was conceived as a tool for making all inhabitants of France speakers of French (Lüdi 215)

Primary schools were often the first exposure children had to French, and as such, the Ferry Laws that made schooling mandatory played a major role in France's language policy. A survey led by Victor Duruy, French historian and statesman in 1863 showed that among the 37,510 towns identified in the country, 8,381, or about twenty percent of the population, did not speak French. As Chervel explains: "La langue nationale s'est, au XVIIIe siècle, répandue sur une large zone dans les villes, sauf en Alsace-Lorraine et en Corse où, à côté du dialecte local, l'allemand et l'italien⁵⁸ tiennent lieu de langues de culture, et où le français est inconnu" (Chervel 15).

The newly incorporated regions were particularly targeted by the new language policies for education. A few decades before the Third Republic, universities had created inspection units tasked with visiting even the most remote schools and report back yearly to the *conseil départemental*. Starting with the Falloux Law in 1850, yearly reviews were presented to the departmental council. The inspectors wrote at length on the use of regional languages and established instructional strategies to fight it.

⁵⁸ The use of "italien" by Chervel is an anachronism, since what we currently call Italian, based on Tuscan, was only adopted by the state after the unification of Italy, a process completed in 1871. However the use of German as a vernacular language was more widespread and even had its own dictionary written by Johann Christoph Adelung after in 1781.

The case of Brittany reveals the conflicts at play within the region. Literacy in this region was at its lowest in France due to a lack of schools, and teaching was mostly in Latin and Breton.

Chervel reports of a project of bilingual schooling in 1831, focusing on Breton during the first year:

Le préfet du Morbihan, Le Lorois, se montre favorable et réclame l'indulgence pour la langue bretonne: "faire mourir une langue, c'est faire disparaître une individualité de la famille des nations; c'est détruire un système d'entendement, un caractère national, des mœurs, une littérature."

Despite Chervel's desire to preserve regional languages, his colleagues from the departments Finistère and Côtes-du-Nord refused any compromise and considered "qu'il faut absolument détruire le langage breton" (Chervel 15), showing the divergence of opinions, even among people who shared a common background. By 1863, seventy-five percent of the teachers still used Breton in class, which was the language used by most to teach reading. Chervel states "L'inspecteur général de passage en 1881 se déclare incapable de communiquer avec un seul élève dans des classes du Morbihan" (16). Irénée Carré, general inspector towards the end of the century, "met au point pour l'école bretonne une 'méthode directe'⁵⁹ d'apprentissage du français qui sera ultérieurement appliquée dans les colonies" (Chervel 16). Teachers did not say a word in the child's mother tongue.

In opposition to that system, the church adopted a much more flexible position regarding the Breton language, which applied to other minority languages as well:

L'enseignement congréganiste, qui reste très puissant en Bretagne jusqu'au XXe siècle, condamne 'cet odieux système de proscription du breton' ... et en 1897, l'évêque de Vannes, qui est à la pointe du combat, adopte pour les écoles libres ... un programme ... qui traite le français comme une langue étrangère, et où le maître à recours aux mots bretons que l'enfant connaît "pour enseigner les mots français que l'élève ignore." (Chervel 16)

⁵⁹ Also called "méthode maternelle."

The battle opposes various ideologies of language teaching, which in the case of religious versus secular teaching, appeared to have been motivated by the interests of the church losing influence and attempting to hold on to it, despite not necessarily being the population's best interest in the context of social advancement. Chervel considers the main obstacle to the propagation of French in schools to be the Catholic Church. (*Histoire de l'enseignement du français du XVIIe au XXe siècle* 26) In small towns, the priest still held much power over his congregation, and teachers who went against him took a great risk, the threat of social shunning being the most widespread. Until 1859, when there was a conflict between "l'inspection académique" and "l'autorité diocésaine," the priest systematically won.

Language acts as the symbol of an opposition between two worldviews. Yet, in spite of the appearances, the Catholic Church, far from being ahead of its time in terms of respect for diversity and minority languages, wanted to prevent revolutionary ideas from reaching their parishioners. French was the language of philosophy, and the new ideas were published in that language, which is why catechism was forcefully taught in the local language in the areas where it prevailed over French. As Chervel points out, when Jules Ferry took religious education out of the school curricula, forcing priests outside of the school walls where they taught it, he also cut out the regional languages (Chervel 29).

Teachers and their recruitment played a major role in language planning as well. In order to make it easier for them to be accepted into the town's communities, most of them were sent to schools whose students were from the same linguistic community. That was especially true before the Ferry laws, and it would not change until the twentieth century. This would have facilitated the learners' experiences, since "apprendre le français, ce sera toujours pour un patoisant construire des règles mentales de conversion" (Chervel 23). Chervel illustrates this change with Seine-et-Oise in 1900, where in twenty years, teachers were largely from the working class but went from being

almost exclusively from rural areas to mostly from urban areas. The training making it possible to access a teaching position was only available in “les écoles primaires supérieures” in the city (Chervel 25). By then, French had spread enough around the country as to not require teachers to speak regional languages to be able to do their job.

2. French as a positive force towards progress for all

Schooling and the diffusion of French were part of a long-term project for the nation with the intent to use the language as a unifying tool to bring progress to the country and its people.

Chanet explains:

L'école républicaine a puissamment aidé à la constitution d'une appartenance nationale équilibrée, à mi-chemin entre l'uniformité imposée par l'appareil des lois et des programmes officiels et le culte de la particularité pour elle-même, le “nationalisme de clocher” que Fournière apercevait dans le régionalisme. (J.-F. Chanet, “Appartenance locale” 56)

Chanet's position on the balanced sense of identity built thanks to French primary schools after the Ferry laws echoes the official historiography regarding the overwhelmingly positive strength of Republican schools, and the linguistic unity that came with them. The desire to bring French to the nation was not new and was already the subject of many discussions at the end of the eighteenth century, although the revolutionaries would not be able to afford the teachers they had envisioned for the task. To uncover the longstanding idea of French as a positive force towards progress, we will look at how “patois” have been depicted, and then focus on French as a national project, in turn used as a way for the country to move forward.

Preceding *Le Littré's* nineteenth century definition and *Le Larousse's* contemporary one while giving us a window into the past and allowing us to witness the changes over the centuries,

eighteenth century D'Alembert,⁶⁰ in *l'Encyclopédie*, proposed the following definition of “patois”:
“Langage corrompu tel qu’il se parle presque dans toutes les provinces: chacune a son patois ; ainsi nous avons le patois bourguignon, le patois normand, le patois champenois, le patois gascon, le patois provençal, etc. On ne parle la langue que dans la capitale.” (D'Alembert 174a)

Complementing what was stated in our introduction, it shows that the notion that “patois” are corrupted is already present, offered in contrast to “la langue,” which takes on an emblematic role. The statement is absolute: Paris is the only place where it is spoken, it being “la langue.” D'Alembert does not bother clarifying which language, as the reader is supposed to know, even though it is not mentioned earlier in the article. The use of the definite article here gives French a certain uniqueness, as if no other language even deserved the use of the same common noun alongside it.

Later in the century, Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac, one of the most prominent members of the National Convention during the French Revolution, would express similar views against regional languages. According to him, they were directly linked to barbarism, ignorance, and despotism, while French meant civilization, knowledge, and democracy. In 1794, he makes a speech at the Convention, where he starts with speaking of “bas-breton”:

Il est parlé exclusivement dans la presque totalité des départements du Morbihan, du Finistère, des Côtes du Nord, d'Îlle et Vilaine, et dans une grande partie de la Loire Inférieure. Là l'ignorance perpétue le joug imposé par les prêtres et les nobles. Là les citoyens naissent et meurent dans l'erreur : ils ignorent s'il existe encore des lois nouvelles.

His goal seems admirable; he connects, with a heavy touch of pathos, ignorance to the oppression the Third Estate of France suffered at the hands of the clergy and the nobility. In his words, the lives and deaths of his fellow citizens were unfortunately threaded with error, which ironically has

⁶⁰ Mathematician, physicist, philosopher, and *académicien*.

biblical proportions. Worthless were indeed the lives of the men and women who ignored the existence of the new laws. He continues with religious images:

Quel machiavélisme dans les prêtres d'avoir fait confondre la loi et la religion dans la pensée de ces bons habitants des campagnes! Jugez, par ce trait particulier, s'il est instant de s'occuper de cet objet. Vous avez ôté à ces fanatiques égarés les saints par le calendrier de la République; Ôtez leur l'empire des prêtres par l'enseignement de la langue française.

Manipulated by religion, Bretons were lost, and zealously led astray by their catholic traditions. Just like heretics who had lost their way, they could see the light only if they could learn French. The running metaphors, combined with the outrage expressed by Barère, seems to place all the blame on the priests, whom he accused of controlling the people against their will, or at least against their knowledge. However, he wanted to replace one authority with another, without much thought for the free will of “the good country people” who were expected to replace one language with another, and one ruler with another.

The revolution of 1789 saw regular reversals when it comes to language policies. In 1790, the Convention ruled that laws should be translated into regional languages in order for all to understand them, and that there should be a public education policy. By 1793, as the counter-revolution progressed, languages such as Breton, German, Italian, and Basque were considered the limiting factor in citizens learning French and adopting Republican values. However, Barère did not worry about “patois,” which he did not think prevented its speakers from learning French. Closer to French in their construction, they did not pose, according to him, a direct threat since they were not supported by strong political powers. Barère insisted on the need for language policy, clearly following Ager’s typology on the objectives of language policy mentioned earlier, and especially the insecurity “caused by the presence of a more powerful neighbor or of a dominating group” (Centre for Information 244). The following excerpt reveals the fears of the revolutionary leaders when it

came to France's unity, a fear that would remain and be exacerbated after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870:

Dans les départements du Haut et du Bas Rhin, qui a donc appelé, de concert avec les traîtres, le Prussien et l'Autrichien sur nos frontières envahies? L'habitant des campagnes qui parle la même langue que nos ennemis, et qui se croit ainsi bien plus leur frère et leur concitoyen que le frère et le concitoyen des Français qui lui parlent une autre langue et ont d'autres habitudes. Le pouvoir de l'identité du langage a été si grand qu'à la retraite des Allemands plus de vingt mille hommes des campagnes du Bas Rhin sont émigrés. (Barère de Vieuzac)

Barère made the connection between identity and language very clear. He believed a common language is what brings people to either side when a conflict erupts.

In light of this passage of Barère's speech, Fouillée's narrative also appears to be a mirror response to the treason and emigration of the German speakers of France after the Prussians retreated. André and Julien were French speakers from Phalsbourg, and even though they had spent their entire life in the city, their dying father wanted them to move to France:⁶¹

Les habitants qui voulaient rester Français étaient obligés de quitter leurs villes natales pour aller s'établir dans la vieille France. Le père d'André et de Julien, un brave charpentier veuf de bonne heure, qui avait élevé ses fils dans l'amour de la patrie, songea comme tant d'autres Alsaciens et Lorrains à émigrer en France. (A. Fouillée 9)

A few months after Barrère, Abbé Grégoire also challenges the use of regional languages in a speech at the Convention. In his case, the argument made was supported by a sociolinguistic survey on the regional varieties spoken in France. He did not hold regional languages in much esteem either. Certeau quotes him in 1975: "Les patois ... comportent certes des 'expressions sentimentales pour

⁶¹ Fouillée's narrative reflects the national propaganda of the time on the numbers in which the Alsace-Lorraine populations would have been moving to France to avoid becoming German, as mentioned in the second chapter.

peindre les douces effusions du cœur’. Bons pour l’affectivité et bannis de la raison. ... Ils ont leur place dans les musées” (Certeau 166). Working at length on the issue of language and identity in France, Grégoire explained that only fifteen out of eighty-three *départements* exclusively speak French, that at least six million French people did not speak French (out of 28 million), and that only three million spoke French⁶². According to more recent research by Stewart McCain in 2014 (64), who looks at the languages spoken during the First Empire, these are the varieties spoken in the early nineteenth century alongside the number of French citizens who spoke it:

Langue Française	28 126 000*
Langue Italienne	4 079 000
Langue Allemande	2 705 000
Langue Flamande	2 277 000
Langue Bretonne	967 000
Langue Basque	108 000
Total	38 262 000

Fig 5: Population of the First French Empire by Language: McCain, Stewart. *The Language Question under Napoleon*. University of Oxford. 2002. p. 63⁶³

First published in 1808 by Eugène Coquebert, these figures appear more accurate than Grégoire’s, with the drawback of not giving us a sense of how extensive bilingualism was. Similarly, to Barère, Grégoire focused on the separation between France and the foreign other, but with a harder stance on regional languages. He wanted to “anéantir les patois et universaliser l’usage de la langue française” (rapport du 16 prairial an II à la Convention). Regardless, this was never followed by any restrictive measures, whether for lack of funding or lack of consensus, and the traditional

⁶² Grégoire states: “On peut assurer sans exagération qu’au moins six millions de Français, surtout dans les campagnes, ignorent la langue nationale ; qu’un nombre égal est à peu près incapable de soutenir une conversation suivie ; qu’en dernier résultat, le nombre de ceux qui la parlent n’excède pas trois millions, et probablement le nombre de ceux qui l’écrivent correctement encore moindre.” (*Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser la langue française*. Paris, 4 Jun. 1794) Knowing his penchant for emphasis, one could imagine that the three million French speakers would be French people whose first language was French. Based on his math, with twelve million speaking bad or no French, that leaves sixteen million of French speakers, who are either bilingual or exclusive speakers of French.

⁶³ The “langue française” category included speakers of French “dans ses différents dialects et patois.” Coquebert’s definitions of “Italian” and “German” would be more accurately described as Italian and German language varieties.

tolerance towards regional languages eventually returned (Certeau 10-11).

To write his June 1794 *Rapport sur la Nécessité et les Moyens d'anéantir les Patois et d'universaliser l'Usage de la Langue française*, Grégoire had undertaken a major research project on the languages spoken in France:

Située à mi-chemin entre une temporisation fédéraliste et une prospective centralisatrice, l'enquête doit permettre à Grégoire de calculer les résistances ou les adhésions rencontrées par son “projet patriotique” et, en même temps, elle lui fournit le moyen d'exercer déjà une pression mobilisatrice sur des “clercs” provinciaux qui seront de précieux agents de pouvoir. (Certeau 50)

The list of questions of his report⁶⁴, organized thematically below, illustrates where his interest rested, while the map of the areas covered by his survey reveals a wide range of action, especially since he was acting of his own initiative. Among the questions asked in the survey, four overall subjects emerge⁶⁵, as defined by Certeau (*Une Politique De La Langue : La Révolution Française Et Les Patois : L'enquête De Grégoire*. 15):

- 1: The languages in use (Questions 1 to 28)
- 2: Education and lack of thereof – prejudice (31 to 37, then 38 to 40)
- 3: The objectives and means to eradicate “patois” (Questions 29 &30)
- 4: The political circumstances: effects of the revolution (41), the extent of patriotism (42), and the negative consequences for the nobles and the clergy (43).

⁶⁴ See annex 1

⁶⁵ See annex 1 for the complete list of questions.

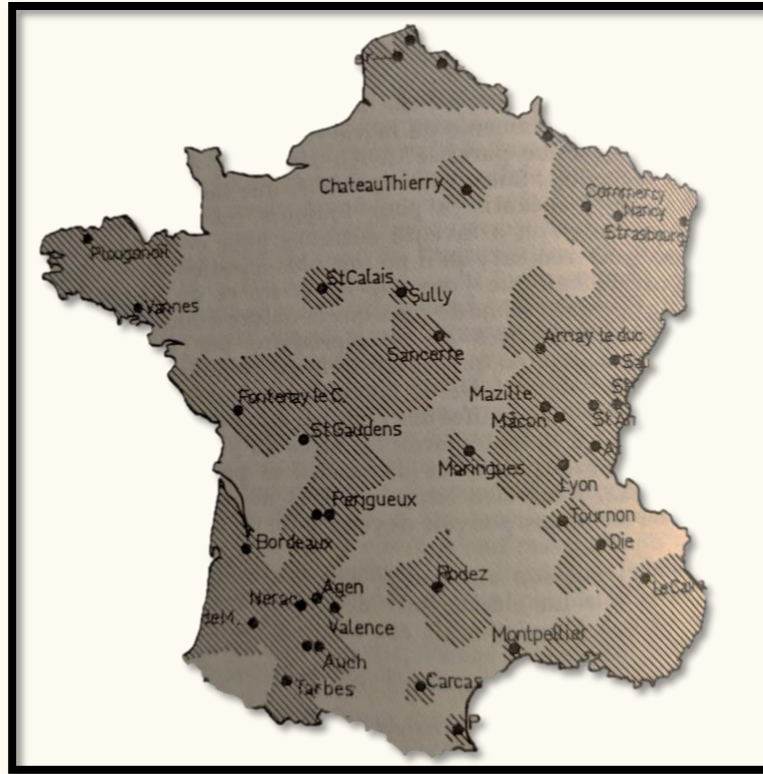


Fig. 6. Map illustrating the regions covered (diagonal stripes) by Grégoire's survey: Certeau, Michel. *Une politique de la langue*, Gallimard, 1975, p. 26.

Although Grégoire seemed genuinely curious about “patois,” his questions were biased against it, suggesting a certain inadequacy of regional languages. Question 9 asked: “A-t-il beaucoup de mots pour exprimer les nuances des idées et les objets intellectuels?” eliciting a response about the poverty or excessive simplicity of patois, even though “at the level of language system, arguments that one language or dialect is linguistically superior to another are generally very difficult to sustain” (Milroy 15). Later in his speech, he would argue:

Plutôt que d'abandonner cette fabrication aux caprices de l'ignorance, il vaut mieux certainement lui donner votre langue. D'ailleurs, l'homme des campagnes, peu accoutumé à généraliser ses idées, manquera toujours de termes abstraits, et cette inévitable pauvreté de langage, qui resserre l'esprit, mutilera vos adresses et vos décrets, si même elle ne les rend

intraduisibles. (Grégoire)

For Grégoire, “patois” were morally, linguistically and idealistically deficient. The terms he believed to be lacking in regional languages would not benefit from being translated or “fabricated” by its speakers, whose intellect he did not appear to value much: for him, people from the countryside were not accustomed to theorizing their ideas, and suffered from ignorance and narrow mindedness as a consequence of the limitations of their native language. For these reasons, French was the only way forward.

Behind Grégoire’s prejudiced questions, and the arguments from both Barère and Grégoire’s speeches at the Convention, the idea of French as a linguistic project emerged, paving the way for long-term language policies. As Certeau suggested:

La langue remplit et circonscrit le lieu politique. Là où l’attachement “féodal” au roi et l’attachement naturel à la terre sont remplacés par un attachement politique à une collectivité à créer, là où il n’y a plus ou pas encore de référence avouable au sol, à la tradition ou à une histoire propre, c’est le langage qui doit prendre en charge la symbolisation nécessaire du patriotisme. (Une Politique De La Langue : La Révolution Française Et Les Patois : L’enquête De Grégoire. 164)

Symbol of the nation’s growing unity, this French project was to be a positive force for all, bringing together men and women who could not communicate otherwise. “On peut uniformiser le langage d’une grande nation, de manière que tous les citoyens qui la composent puissent sans obstacle se communiquer leurs pensées,” said Grégoire in his speech of June 4, 1794. Borer connects the language to its speakers as well, as an inclusive power revealing its community organized around a common undertaking:

Nous n’avons pas une langue d’usage, mais une langue de loi, révélant et imposant un idéalisme abstrait. Une langue dit une société autant qu’elle la rêve, elle dit une nation et une

communauté plus large, dont les contours sont délimités par ces “nous” qui la parlent et qui se déplacent partout : il y a donc un paradigme de la langue, dans lequel s’inscrit la langue en même temps qu’elle l’inclut et le sculpte. (Borer 178)

Within this linguistic framework, French molds new models and patterns. Grégoire commented in the same speech, with a heavy dose of arrogance:

Cette entreprise, qui ne fut pleinement exécutée chez aucun peuple, est digne du peuple français, qui centralise toutes les branches de l'organisation sociale et qui doit être jaloux de consacrer au plutôt, dans une République une et indivisible, l'usage unique et invariable de la langue de la liberté. (Grégoire)

Not formalized until the Third Republic, the principles of “liberté, égalité, fraternité” that would lead to France’s current national motto were already at work during the revolution. French was deemed the language of freedom; the uniformity of language and the ability for all to speak it allowed for both equality and fraternity for the country’s residents who were otherwise confined to the use of their native language among themselves: uneducated and restricted to the area where they were born. French was not only a moral and intellectual pursuit, it was also the way forward economically for Grégoire: “Pour perfectionner l'agriculture et toutes les branches de l'économie rurale, si arriérées chez nous, la connaissance de la langue nationale est également indispensable” (Grégoire). Whereas “patois” was looking backward, French represented progress.

Despite two centuries separating them, Borer’s thoughts are in line with Grégoire’s, in which he idealizes French as an instrument for equality through revolution:

Si la langue française n'avait été qu'une “langue aristocratique,” les révolutionnaires n'auraient eu de cesse de la chambouler. C'est tout le contraire : c'est même elle, la langue, qui contribua à la Révolution et en fut l'outil principal – avec quel enthousiasme, quel lyrisme, quelle éloquence! (Borer 203)

This quote argues that French was democratic as opposed to aristocratic and limited to the elite, which makes the language the main instrument of the revolution. Excluding *de facto*, according to Grégoire's estimates, at least one fifth of the population who could not speak French, arguing that French was democratic is somewhat of an exaggeration. Only the educated fringes of the population, including most of the European courts, spoke the language.

While the temporary dropping of the formal form "vous" in favor of "tu" for all during the revolution may have been borrowing from popular customs, the new rules were coming from the top, no matter how revolutionary they sounded. Borer justifies Grégoire's desire to annihilate dialects and universalize the French language by "une volonté de justice sociale," arguing that under the strong hold of the king, French people would not have been able to revolt since they could not communicate, thus supporting French for all as a way to access progress. To this end, the standardization of language was a rational decision: "the desideratum is that everyone should use and understand the language in the same way with the minimum of misunderstanding and the maximum efficiency" (Milroy 23).

Despite the research and debates on language planning, very few policies came to light, and the process of standardization was slow at first. By the end of the nineteenth century, language policies accelerated the uniformization of language. Supporting the idea that there was no wrongdoing in imposing the use of French to the detriment of regional languages, Since the 1990s, Chanet has been refuting the accusations of uprooting, internal colonialism, and cultural genocide, which he qualified as "radical" (Chanet 244). French was, according to Chanet, welcomed by most. Modeling a study on that of Jacques Ozouf, he declared : "Les réponses de nos témoins sont claires là-dessus : les parents d'élèves, loin de reprocher aux maîtres d'inculquer le français à leurs enfants, les y encourageaient le plus souvent" (J.-F. Chanet 245). He goes on to cite a French congressman, who in 1902, declared that regional languages should be respected, and talked about how much

“charm” and “savor” they had. He concluded that “I would regret its disappearance, but I believe that the French language, the national language, must take precedence over the others” (J.-F. Chanet 245-246). The terminology used fits nicely within the exotic depictions essentializing the other and patronizing regional languages, cultures, and communities.

Chanet wanted to show that the claims of the supporters of regional languages were unfounded, or exaggerated at best. He tells us that the goal of his survey is to “illustrate the lack of zeal shown by a significant number of teachers in punishing their students for their excessive use of ‘patois’” (J.-F. Chanet 246). To support his argument, he indicates that some of the people in charge of making decisions for France’s curriculum were themselves bilingual. However, his case fails to support his assertion since being a speaker of more than one language does not mean that one understands all of the benefits, or that one has not internalized the point of view of the majority and believes in a hierarchy of languages. Chanet presents the teachers as flexible with the rules regarding the use of French in schools:

En pays bretonnant, comme dans la Haute-Auvergne d'Henri Dommergues, nombreux étaient les maîtres qui faisaient des entorses au règlement des écoles primaires. Et ces entorses n'allaient pas, on le comprendra aisément, sans regrets ou remords, sans scrupules de conscience. Les uns ont préféré, quitte à surprendre les parents, voire à mécontenter les inspecteurs, se montrer plus tolérants que répressifs. (J.-F. Chanet 250)

The author highlights the cases of teachers going primary schools’ rules and showing tolerance.

Anne-Marie Thiesse, who works on identity formation, sides with Chanet:

L'Ecole primaire républicaine, qui a parfois été dépeinte comme le théâtre d'un combat sans merci mené par des jacobins acharnés contre les cultures régionales, a tout au contraire cultivé le sentiment d'appartenance locale comme propédeutique indispensable au sentiment d'appartenance nationale. (Thiesse 2)

Fouillée similarly emphasized the unity in diversity project with an optimistic interpretation rendered by lyrical tones. Speaking of France, she wrote: “Ses provinces sont comme des fleurs de toute sorte entre lesquelles il est difficile de choisir, mais dont la réunion forme le plus beau pays, le plus doux à habiter, notre patrie bien-aimée” (248-49). Both Chanet and Thiesse insisted on putting things into perspective, shifting the blame to the linguists, activists, and politicians who criticized the French language policies, both inside and outside of schools. Thiesse uses antiphrasis and hyperbole when referring to primary schools as “le théâtre d'un combat sans merci mené par des jacobins acharnés contre les cultures régionales,” (Thiesse, “Les petites patries” 2) implying that the measures were not taken by radicals, but moderate leaders, and involved sympathy and consideration. Likewise, Chanet describes their detractors as extremists, and refutes their claims:

Nous ne partageons pas ce point de vue extrême. Les attaques les plus efficaces contre les langues et les traditions régionales ne sont pas venues, il faudra bien un jour l'admettre, des écoles de la République. Nous y voyons l'usage des dialectes persister jusqu'après 1940, malgré les interdits çà et là suspendus ou assouplis. (252)

His argument, seemingly logical, is based on the fact that there were still speakers of regional languages in schools until the 1940s, in spite of the interdictions. However, if we focus on what he does not say, one could read that the Republican schools did not fully succeed, since they did not launch “the most efficient attacks.” The persistent use of regional languages does not reflect respect and awareness on the part of the schools, it merely shows that their goals were not fully met.

3. Erasing differences in the name of a perceived superiority

The myth of French as a positive force towards progress, which required erasing differences to better unite France, was supported by the perceived superiority of its proponents. The preponderance of the official language meant restricting the use of minority languages and erasing

particularisms, and it eventually led to France going from a multicultural and multilingual country to an essentially monolingual country, where everyone spoke French. Claude Hagège, in his book *On the Death and Life of Languages*, demonstrated three principles on languages and what they mean to humans, the first one being that “languages may be what is most alive in our human cultures,”⁶⁶ from which it follows that: “To defend our languages and their diversity, especially against the domination of a single language, is to do more than just defend our cultures. It is to defend our life” (Hagège ix).

Yet, erasing differences and imposing the supremacy of French over all other languages spoken in France gained traction, justified by the need to instill a sense of national identity into the new generations. “Schooling is the principal institution which produces ethnicity as linguistic community” (Balibar and Wallerstein 98), which is why French primary schools were at the heart of the national language policies. To shape the nation, policies contradictory to the values upheld by the state were established:

The French “revolutionary nation” accorded a privileged place to the symbol of language in its own initial process of formation; it bound political unity closely to linguistic uniformity, the democratization of the state to the coercive repression of cultural “particularisms,” local *patois* being the object on which it became fixated. (Balibar and Wallerstein 104)

Linguistic uniformity and repression of multiculturalism became the norm, in the name of the new Republic and its democratic ideals. As showed by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, regional languages were the targets of the coercive repression led against diversity. Instead of a social contract respecting a diversity of languages and cultures,⁶⁷ the French Third Republic opted for state control and forced national unity and identity through a common language and culture (Lapierre

⁶⁶ Hagège adds: “second, that they are mortal, and die in impressive numbers, if there is no attempt to maintain them; and finally, that their death is not a definitive obliteration, and that some of them revive, if we know how to encourage them.” (Hagège ix)

⁶⁷ Such as in countries like Switzerland.

259). In spite of the self-satisfied declaration made by Ernest Renan⁶⁸ in 1882 that proclaimed that “Un fait honorable pour la France, c’est qu’elle n’a jamais cherché à obtenir l’unité de la langue par des mesures de coercition” (Renan), France actually coerced language uniformity. The constraints enforced on minors were an insidious form of coercion, arguably more objectionable because of the added psychological and physical vulnerability of children to authority due to their age. Chanut quotes Touraine, reporting on the experience of non-French speakers in school:

Lorsque les enfants allaient en classe et qu’ils ne savaient pas parler français, ils y ont été obligés au point d’avoir honte de leur langue initiale, ce qu’ils avaient de plus cher. Cette culture a cheminé dans un climat de répression ; l’agression était portée jusqu’au cœur des villages, des campagnes” (qtd. in Touraine 83-84).

Although Chanut is of the opinion that it was all a vast misunderstanding, the testimonies he gathered from teachers for his survey report similar behaviors and their consequences. Another teacher reported : “Je devais parfois réagir contre un sentiment d’infériorité que ressentait nombre d’utilisateurs du dialecte, sentiment dû peut-être en partie à l’action de certains de nos prédécesseurs animés du désir louable de faire progresser la langue française.”⁶⁹ (J.-F. Chanut, “Maîtres d’école” 256). The teacher surveyed did not criticize the intent of his fellow-teachers, who wanted to spread the use of French, but he noticed a pattern of inferiority complex among children who spoke regional languages, which he carefully suggested might be an effect of the language policies applied in schools.

French authorities actively controlled and suppressed regional identity, and its most salient expression: regional languages. Republican elites believed in the superiority of French. Jules Simon, French statesman and philosopher as well as leader of the Moderate Republicans, glorified the

⁶⁸ Versatile scholar whose definition of a nation, in that same 1882 discourse, has been very influential.

⁶⁹ Identified by his initials – M. N. – in Chanut’s survey as well as his teaching *département* – Haute-Vienne – and birth date – 1913.

language in a speech made in 1888 for the Alliance Française: “Jamais on ne déraisonne et jamais on n'équivoque quand on parle français” (*Bulletin du Jour*). He was convinced of the supremacy of French and worried about its loss of influence: “Nous avons dans ce moment-ci d'autant plus raison de lutter pour répandre notre langue qu'on multiplie les efforts contre elle” (*Bulletin du Jour*). Simon's rhetoric connected the language to an ideal French mindset and spirit:

Les autres peuples ont comme nous des accès de fièvre, et, après chaque accès, le malade est un peu plus affaibli qu'il ne l'était auparavant. Mais nous, Messieurs, nous nous retrouvons entiers après la crise. On nous croyait affolés ; nous retrouvons tout à coup la robuste solidité de l'esprit français. Telle est la langue, tel est le peuple. (*Bulletin du Jour*)

According to *le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* of 1888, the final sentence received plenty of applause from his public—reinforcing their feeling of pride and superiority and justifying both eloquent arguments of authority. Asserted by politicians like Simon, the prestige of the language is typically attached to literature, but also, as Singaravélou reminds us, to Parisian intellectuals through aristocrats, journalists, publicists, adventurers, and francophone teachers. (526)

Plenty of examples illustrate the explicit suppression of the regional languages and cultures denied by Chanet. Looking at internal colonialism in Brittany, Jack Reece comments: “The offensive against the maternal language begun in Breton homes was pursued even more vigorously in the classrooms of the state educational system. Both teachers and Francophone classmates made Breton-speaking students the objects of patronizing scorn” (Reece 280). Singled-out, shamed and/or excluded, speakers of regional languages were strongly encouraged to blend in and learn French.

As mentioned in our second chapter in the context of othering, Fouillée only made one reference to regional languages in *Le Tour de la France*, even though the children go through the entire Occitanie. Staying at an inn, the children wanted to communicate with its keeper “une bonne vieille” but were unable to do so because “elle ne comprenait que quelques phrases françaises, car elle parlait

à l'ordinaire, come beaucoup de vieilles gens du lieu, le patois du midi" (Fouillée 165-66).

Disappointed, the children ended up feeling like the outsiders:

Les gens qui entraient parlaient tous patois entre eux ; les deux enfants, assis à l'écart et ne comprenant pas un mot à ce qui se disait, se sentaient bien isolés dans cette ferme étrangère.

Le petit Julien finit par quitter sa chaise, et s'approchant d'André, vint se planter debout entre les jambes de son frère. Il s'assit à moitié sur ses genoux, et le regardant d'un air d'affection un peu triste, il lui dit tout bas : — Pourquoi donc tous les gens de ce pays-ci ne parlent-ils pas français ?

— C'est que tous n'ont pas pu aller à l'école. Mais dans un certain nombre d'années il n'en sera plus ainsi, et par toute la France on saura parler la langue de la patrie.

En ce moment, la porte d'en face s'ouvrit de nouveau : c'étaient les enfants de l'hôtelière qui revenaient de l'école.

— André, s'écria Julien, ces enfants doivent savoir le français, puisqu'ils vont à l'école. Quel bonheur! Nous pourrions causer ensemble. (165-66)

Although Fouillée ended up making André and Julien the others in this passage, it's a very unique event during their trip, even though the use of regional languages was still very widespread at the time she wrote the book. Erasing differences ahead of time and showing a linguistic unity that had not been achieved yet gave her readers a sense of what was to come now that their generation was in school. The old woman represents the past, and the door, opening to let in the children, the future. The protagonists' excitement brings together school and knowledge, "la langue de la patrie," and the joy felt by the children shows the happiness that can be achieved through progress. Schools were a medium for uniformization and acculturation, allowing the creation of new common references.

In the same vein, children were exposed to numerous patriotic materials. *Dictées* focused on specific vocabulary, and images were heavily lined with nationalistic themes. Reading books like *Le Tour de la France* promoted new values, which were also shared via unambiguous choices of poetry and examples for grammar. Historians Jacques Valette and Alfred Wahl state: “Tout ce contenu supplantait à partir de l’âge de six ans les bases de la culture régionale, c’est à dire les dictons, les images, le vocabulaire et les schémas de référence” (170). Substituting local and regional content for nationalistic content, regional languages for French, and the references to home for countrywide ones, primary schools destabilized the traditional equilibrium.

Although one of the main arguments about the importance of French at the time was its universal nature, Borer sets the record straight:

Il serait intelligent de ne pas confondre l’universalisme de la langue française et l’hégémonisme ; l’hégémonisme est culturel, d’ordre politique, généralement fautif (la répression des langues locales, la domination coloniale) dans le Réel ; toutes les langues officielles n’existent qu’à la condition d’avoir pratiqué délibérément l’hégémonie. (Borer 271)

“Hegemony” applies to French and the way it has been forced on all the inhabitants of the French Empire. Borer adds, comparing it to universalism, that:

L’universalisme est structurel ... L’universalité, cela ne veut pas dire que je m’adresse au monde entier, cela veut dire que je parle dans la possible proximité de tout autre au monde. Une construction, sans doute, mais nécessaire à son projet même, à son imaginaire – qui est au fond celui d’une langue porteuse d’*utopie*. (271-72)

If French were “universal,” it would make the language applicable to all people in the world, possibly all-inclusive. A desire far different from the reality, but in line with Borer’s argument of French as a language whose project is to represent an ideal, even if it remains a vision whose main function is to carry on the project of language planning.

4. Linguistic imperialism and inequality

“Le dialecte n’est jamais qu’une langue battue, et ... la langue est un dialecte qui a réussi politiquement,” observed Calvet (*Linguistique et colonialisme: petit traité de glottophagie* 54). It stems from such knowledge of linguistic imperialism in which languages are then either dominant or subject to the domination of others. Robert Phillipson, expert on language policy and linguistic human rights helped theorize the notion of linguistic imperialism.⁷⁰ He argued that Western countries have used language as a tool to dominate both colonies and former colonies. Although it may not have been theorized, eighteenth century authors such as Antoine de Rivarol in his 1784 *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française* made similar connections between language and conquest, asserting:

S’il est vrai qu’il n’y eut jamais ni langage ni peuple sans mélange, il n’est pas moins évident qu’après une conquête il faut du temps pour consolider le nouvel Etat et pour bien fondre ensemble les idiomes et les familles des vainqueurs et des vaincus. (Lapierre 13)

If Rivarol does not explicitly name victors nor losers, language is on equal terms with the merging of families – conquerors and conquered ones – when it comes to the desired unity. As such, language is a potent tool of imperialism. Language policy contributes to State control and can greatly increase its power over citizens. Following Vilfredo Pareto’s theory of the circulation of elites, access to the governing class is limited by the state control of economic resources, cultural values, and political power. The fact that the state is monolingual precludes speakers of minority languages from upward social mobility (Lapierre 259-60), a situation that would only see some significant change with the Ferry Laws.

⁷⁰ Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*, Oxford UP, 1992.

Looking at language as a symbol of a center versus periphery⁷¹ cleavage amounts to a divide between Paris and the rest of the country. Of course, there were some connections and pathways for the victims of the power imbalance to move up the social ladder, but these were carefully crafted in order to benefit the elites already in power. Lapierre talks of absolute and relative exclusion to qualify these cases. When the governing class lets in some members of the minority groups, the condition is usually bilingualism - which is a strategy of relative exclusion - and said members end up in an intermediary role, pushing for the use of the majority language without openly questioning the power of the governing class.

In the case of absolute exclusion, the risk is to see the elites of the minority group fight the existing elites for more autonomy, or even independence (Lapierre 263-64), a deliberate plan of action that works in favor of the *status quo*. According to Chervel, only a Breton mastering both French and Breton language and culture would be able to argue with the dominant culture, having knowledge and the words to be accepted by those who have authority, and would then be fully able to exert his rights (Chervel 15). The issue of language and schools was, and still is, a political matter, which sometimes brought together unlikely allies, such as monarchists and peasants on regional languages, or priests who used to teach in Latin and started supporting the use of Breton in their church and parish. Each side considered their own interest, sometimes regardless of their official political affiliations. The more traditional countryside, where regional languages were prevalent, opposed the central government, which unsurprisingly supported French. Republicans sided with French as well, while anti-Republicans leaders used their newfound support for regional languages to encourage the less educated to rally behind their cause: “Deux lignes de force se dessinent: une opposition Paris/Province(s), traduite en français/patois; une autre entre République et Réaction”

⁷¹ The center versus periphery model is grounded in imperialist theory and suggests a hierarchical relationship between the two. In his 2002 article *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*, Suresh Canagarajah argues against the imposition of the center's system and presents the forms of resistance and appropriation used in response by the peripheries.

(Terral 51-52). The Republican side insisted on the universal value of French as an instrument of progress, while others, monarchists, traditionalists, and more generally supporters of the regionalist movements, insisted on bilingualism as a pedagogical strategy.

Linguistic imperialism was best illustrated with the foundation in 1883 of the Alliance Française under the name “Alliance française pour la propagation de la langue française dans les colonies et à l'étranger” by Pierre Foncin (geographer) and Paul Cambon, official representative of France in colonial Tunisia, both Republicans and Jules Ferry supporters. Although the Alliance Française had a non-profit status and was formed of local committees of volunteers, it was funded in part by the state with the following objective: “suppléer les infrastructures scolaires déficientes de l'Etat colonial dans l'ensemble de l'empire, de réaffirmer la “mission civilisatrice” de la France et son prestige culturel, après la défaite de 1870” (Singaravélou 525). In 1886, geographer Onésime Reclus coined the term “francophonie” to name the project of linguistic imperialism which included the Alliance française. The latter was meant to be the linguistic empire's cement and to connect its margins, both national and colonial.

Language and culture also have a lot of potential when it comes to building identity through shared meaning. Language is “un véhicule de transmission et de propagation des symboles qui remémorent les souvenirs de la mémoire collective, provoquent les fortes émotions de la communion au même système de valeurs et de croyances, évoquent le vif sentiment de l'identité collective” (Lapierre 37). *Le Tour de la France* was a great example of it, as a medium that reached generations of French citizens as they were learning about that supra-regional power whose language they had to understand and speak to be fully considered in the national space. After their experience in the French primary schools of the Third Republic, children had been exposed to a new system of values and symbols, which would shape their understanding of the world. Lapierre adds that language is “l'instrument d'évocation de la mémoire collective, de manipulation d'images et de

symboles par l'idéologie de légitimation du pouvoir et la propagande des adversaires-partenaires” (257). Designed to persuade the influenceable youth of the legitimacy of its mission, the state proselytized through the use of French and French symbols. Beyond the objective of propaganda, which could have relatively easily been translated into regional languages, as was originally planned during the revolution, the language itself matters in order to manufacture identity, especially in a state where universal (male) suffrage is the way to oppose or support the current political power:

Le discours politique ... doit être compris de tous ceux auxquels il s'adresse et qu'il cherche à mobiliser pour le vote, la pétition, la manifestation, le soutien des autorités ou l'insurrection contre elles. Une politique des langues est requise pour la lutte pour le pouvoir autant que par l'exercice du pouvoir. (Lapierre 257)

In the 1980s, Renée Balibar observed the conflicting interests of the French language policy and reminded us of the active effort school children and their teachers exerted to learn how to read and write French, through coercion (R. Balibar 410). Calvet similarly summarized patterns when it came to multilingualism. He explains that when looking at the Other, humans tend to convert “different” to “inferior,” and do not act any differently when it comes to languages (Calvet, *La guerre des langues* 76). Etienne Balibar, son of Renée Balibar, criticizes the power discrepancy supported by primary schools, under the veil of equality: “Though formally egalitarian, belonging to the linguistic community – chiefly because of the fact that it is mediated by the institution of the school – immediately re-creates divisions, differential norms which also overlap with class differences to a very great degree” (Balibar and Wallerstein 104). The school acts as an instrument to justify the inequality based on falsely meritocratic principles. He adds:

The greater the role taken by the education system within bourgeois societies, the more do differences in linguistic (and therefore literary, “cultural” and technological) competence function as caste differences, assigning different “social destinies” to individuals. In these

circumstances, it is not surprising that they should immediately be associated with forms of corporal *habitus* (to use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology) which confer on the act of speaking in its personal, non-universalizable traits the function of a racial or quasi-racial mark (and which still occupy a very important place in the formulation of "class racism"): "foreign" or "regional" accent, "popular" style of speech, language "errors" or, conversely, ostentatious "correctness" immediately designating a speaker's belonging to a particular population and spontaneously interpreted as reflecting a specific family of origin and a hereditary disposition. (104)

"Class racism," now known as "classism" or "class discrimination" refers to a set of practices, which benefit a specific group, usually the upper class at the expense of the lower class. In the case of France during the Third Republic, it legitimized prejudice against the speakers of regional languages and rationalized discrimination by setting arbitrary prescriptive norms via language policy.

Linguistic norms, both implicit and explicit, have evolved over the centuries. Lüdi, tells us that examples of "bi-/plurilingual speech" can be found at any moment in the history of French and other European languages, including on the part of "very prominent writers in a context of 'semi-public' daily work." (211) These notable figures, which include Martin Luther and Du Bellay "do not feel ashamed to mix their languages, i.e. they are not affected by the ideological pressure of speaking/writing a 'pure,' 'perfect' French (or German or Latin respectively)" (Lüdi 211). The shaming could have been a post-revolutionary novelty to codify the language as the notion of identity became tied to the nation. Lüdi adds:

In other words, the social, economic and political conditions – but also and mainly the language ideology – in which these texts were produced facilitated language regimes based on dynamic, non-additive conceptions of plurilingualism and on a high level of acceptance of non-conventional forms of plurilingual speech. (211)

However, this flexibility regarding plurilingual speech is only observed among privileged classes of the population: people who could read, write, and speak several majority languages and whose writings were deemed sufficiently interesting to be conserved, which qualifies this case as another instance of classism. Moreover, Lüdi explains that this was not limited to the elites of the modern period:

There is much evidence that variational, i.e. plurilectal and plurilingual practices, have always been present in the domain of French, from the very early texts until the twenty-first century. But there have been changes at the level of social representations, formulated as endoxa in the dominant discourse, the resulting language management measures (language policy, standardization) and, eventually, the way speakers internalize the endoxa and develop feelings of either pride of speaking the “legitimate” language or variety or, on the contrary, insecurity and guilt if they think this is not the case. (225)

Lüdi’s description of the process of legitimization of a language instead of another reveals a continuity, if not in the endoxa regarding the appropriate use of language, in the double standard regarding the way bilingualism was viewed depending on the power speakers had access to. Privilege, whether through class, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, education or something else, played – and still plays – a key role in assigning a value to speakers and the language they speak. As Calvet reminds us, “there is nowhere a connection between a political border (a state), a nation, and a language” (Calvet, *La guerre des langues* 50). Yet in France, the official language and the majority language are one and the same, without any other alternative possible, since no other language spoken on the territory could aim to replace French (Calvet, *La guerre des langues* 51), a situation Calvet characterizes as “plurilinguisme à langue dominante unique.”⁷²

⁷² Calvet distinguishes five types : “plurilinguisme à langue dominante unique,” “à langues dominantes minoritaires,” “à langues dominantes alternatives,” and “à langues dominantes régionales.”

The discrimination against the lower classes regarding bilingualism can also be observed during the interwar period. In 1926, Edouard Daladier, then Secretary of State of Public Education, discussed the role of regional languages:

Il y a encore trop de gens qui parlent et écrivent en patois. J'ai pour devoir de m'opposer à tout ce qui peut diminuer, de quelque manière que ce soit, l'unité de la patrie. Mais il va sans dire que je suis partisan de l'étude des dialectes dans l'enseignement supérieur, ayant participé moi-même au mouvement félibréen. Je verrais volontiers nos instituteurs faire devant leurs élèves des rapprochements entre la syntaxe de leur patois et celle du français, mais je suis opposé à l'enseignement d'un idiome local dans les écoles primaires. (J.-F. Chanet, "Maîtres d'école" 246)

Daladier, an Occitan speaker himself from a Carpantras working class family, seems to have interiorized the dominant discourse on nationalism and languages. Although he highlights his involvement in the "movement félibréen,"⁷³ he does not condone the teaching of regional languages in primary schools. His very standard position on this issue is particularly interesting because he openly supports the study of regional languages at university, confirming the divide between the great majority of working-class families, whose children would never get to study and feel proud of their knowledge of their native language, and the others. Moreover, studying regional languages at university can also be seen as a negative sign, making them a relic of the past, like Latin or Greek, but without the prestige attached to classical languages.

Even outside of language policy, primary education was heavily segregated. When looking back at the Ferry laws and the early years of free mandatory schooling, one usually connects it to the idea of the democratization of education, and the achievement of equality. What is often forgotten however is the fact that there were still two types of primary schools. Over the course of the

⁷³ A cultural and literary group founded by Frédéric Mistral and other Provençal writers to defend and promote the Occitan language and literature.

eighteenth century, public opinion believed that France needed this distinction: one for “la petite bourgeoisie, le commerce et l’artisanat”; and one for “la paysannerie.” The first one would need to go further than the second, where only the basics were needed. Indeed, the idea, since the eighteenth century, was that instruction for the people would take labor away from agriculture, a notion that one can still feel present in Fouillée’s textbook. Politicians believed that because of the great diversity of populations in terms of lifestyle, needs, and culture, it made sense to maintain two distinct primary schools, an idea that would not be challenged in France until the 1960’s, and the establishment in 1975, of the *collège unique*⁷⁴ system.

One of the consequences of the discrimination against speakers of regional languages has been the regionalist movements, which emerged in the 1960s. It has been criticized and labeled as an artificial construction based on an idealized past and a resistance to modernity and cultural uniformization. Two decades later, Valette and Wahl wrote:

Pour les curés [et les aristocrates] la langue régionale devint le refuge au sein duquel ils pensaient pouvoir préserver la société traditionnelle, celle-là même qui devait les autoriser à conserver le pouvoir. Ils avaient jusque là prêché en français. Le quasi-monopole de cette langue au village avait apporté un surcroît de pouvoir, mais en devenant la langue de l’école, le français apporta aussi “l’irréligion et l’immoralité.” Les prêtres optèrent alors pour la langue régionale. (175-76)

Just like many political movements fought in the name of the people, the regionalist movements revealed the very same issues as the ones they were fighting against. To retain their traditional power, the regional elites were playing a game similar to their opponents, and taking advantage of the populations they insisted they were fighting for.

⁷⁴ A reform meant to generalize education by offering every child in middle school access to the same curriculum.

The consequences of the state's language policy followed, as we saw earlier, a desire to standardize the language in order to modernize the country.⁷⁵

Dans un pays habité par des populations qui parlent des langues différentes, les interventions de l'Etat en matière linguistique affectent les droits des individus et des communautés non seulement dans leurs communications avec les autorités, mais aussi dans leurs communications entre eux. (Lapierre 33-34)

Lapierre adds: "Si l'Etat décide qu'une des langues est seule officielle, il exclut du même coup de toute fonction publique ceux de ses sujets ou citoyens qui ne savent pas parler ou écrire cette langue" (34). By making French the official language and imposing its use for any administrative procedure and for work as a civil servant, France had *de facto* excluded whole segments of its population. The discrimination associated with being born in a household whose native language is not the official language began in early childhood, when children were first socialized through school and had lifelong effects, as shown by Lapierre, who sees the social stigma attached to some languages as lasting one:

Que l'usage de cette langue première devienne un stigmate d'infériorité sociale quand l'enfant sortira de ce milieu familial et communautaire pour étendre son expérience de la vie sociale, en particulier dans l'institution scolaire, dépositaire du prestige du savoir, dans laquelle il va apprendre à lire et à écrire, il en restera marqué pour le reste de sa vie. (252)

Such were the long-term consequences of the teacher's authority, forcing them to renounce or to distance themselves from their early childhood and connections to their community of origin.

Shamed by their peers and punished by instructors, there were only three ways to move forward: passively accepting the inferiority imposed and internalizing it, actively rebelling against the

⁷⁵ "L'intervention de l'Etat pour normaliser l'usage de la langue a pour motif le souci de la moderniser, c'est-à-dire de la rendre capable d'exprimer des pratiques et des techniques nouvelles, le plus souvent importées de l'étranger." (Lapierre 33)

domination, or rejecting the community of origin to better assimilate the dominant community (Lapierre 251).

A parallel can also be drawn between the Third Republic and contemporary France. The discrimination against minority languages has shifted from mostly regional languages to the languages spoken by immigrant populations. Similarly to Breton, Occitan or Basque in the late nineteenth century, Arabic, now the second language most spoken in France, is rarely taught in French primary schools on the basis that it threatens national unity. Studying Arabic is however considered prestigious in upper class high schools and at the college level, substantiating the idea of a bias against certain populations. The idea of unity through the erasure of differences is not new, but the past few decades of research in sociolinguistics have shown that speaking a different language at home does not diminish your ability to be proficient in another.

5. Shifting the burden of shame to build the nation

The shame felt by minority language speakers, including my grandmother, only took hold of them because of the desire they had to belong to the larger community. Silvan S. Tomkins, psychologist who developed affect theory, suggests that “shame – as an exposure before another – is only felt given that the subject is interested in the other; that is, that a prior love or desire for the other exists.” (qtd. in Ahmed 105) Sarah Ahmed, reflecting on Tomkins’ understanding of shame, adds adds: “I may be shamed by somebody I am interested in, somebody whose view ‘matters’ to me. As a result, shame is not a purely negative relation to another: shame is ambivalent” (105). Children are particularly vulnerable to shame. Speaking their native language in school – a “transgression” of sorts based on the rules established in the nineteenth century – could have been redirected by the teacher by answering in French or in the child’s native language when they needed reassurance through what was familiar to them. If the child’s behavior is followed by a punishment

that makes them feel badly, and even more so if this is done repeatedly – they will grow up with what Brené Brown, an expert on shame, calls “toxic shame” (in Brené Brown, *I Thought It Was Just Me*). Unable to question a widespread occurrence to which adults in their lives whom they trusted never objected, children grew up blaming themselves for their language, which is tied to their identity. Ahmed, when describing the feeling, explains that “in shame, I feel myself to be bad, and hence to expel the badness, I have to expel myself from myself” (104).⁷⁶

If the shame felt for decades by generations of school children cannot be erased in the adults they became, Ahmed however suggests a way to build the nation by shifting the burden of shame. She says: “What is striking is how shame becomes not only a mode of recognition of injustices committed against others, but also a form of nation building” (102). Just like France was able to acknowledge, over half a century later, the wrongdoings with the Harkis⁷⁷ (quite conveniently after most of them had passed), Ahmed recommends action on the part of the state, as a strategy to reinforce national identity, the very thing language policies had been working so hard to build by erasing the regional languages and cultures in the first place: “By witnessing what is shameful about the past, the nation can ‘live up to’ the ideals that secure its identity or being in the present. In other words, our shame means that we mean well, and can work to reproduce the nation as an ideal” (Ahmed 109). Academics like Chanet and Thiesse, who have been rationalizing and minimizing the discrimination against minority language speakers, are working against it, but linguists have long been aware of the issue, and will hopefully be heard.

⁷⁶ Donad L. Nathanson, an expert on affect, writes: “Whereas guilt refers to punishment for wrongdoing, for violation of some sort of rule or internal law, shame is about some quality of the self. Guilt implies action, while shame implies that some quality of the self has been brought into question” (Nathanson 1987: 4).” (qtd. In Ahmed 105)

⁷⁷ Native Muslim Algerians who fought as part of the French Army during the Algerian War of Independence from 1954 to 1962. Abandoned by France after the Évian Accords ceasefire, they were considered traitors in Algeria and thousands died after the war in reprisals, when France refused to let them resettle in France as promised. After 2001 and the establishment of a Day of National Recognition for the Harkis, President Nicolas Sarkozy recognized France’s “historical responsibility” in abandoning Harki Algerian veterans at the time of the war in April 2012.

A few years after the end of the Third Republic, the use of French over regional languages had taken over in family units. Mireille Huchon reports: “La transmission familiale du français se généralise après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, entre 1945 et 1960, alors qu’au début du siècle, la moitié des habitantes de France ont le patois pour langue maternelle” (Chaurand 236). After centuries of language planning, the Third Republic narrative of French as a positive force towards progress for all was translated into official policies, whose goal was to erase differences in the name of a perceived superiority. These political measures came at a heavy price, for France’s cultural heritage, and especially for its most vulnerable populations: linguistic minorities, and especially children, who were the designated targets of the most effective policies in schools. Looking back to recognize the damage and shifting the burden of shame from the victims to the perpetrator – the state – could be the way forward for the nation to reexamine its identity and celebrate its renewed ideals to protect it.

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Annex 1 : Le Questionnaire de l'Abbé Grégoire (1790-1792)

1. L'usage de la langue française est-il universel dans votre contrée. Y parle-t-on un ou plusieurs patois ?
2. Ce patois a-t-il une origine ancienne et connue ?
3. A-t-il beaucoup de termes radicaux, beaucoup de termes composés ?
4. Y trouve-t-on des mots dérivés du celtique, du grec, du latin, et en général des langues anciennes et modernes ?
5. A-t-il une affinité marquée avec le français, avec le dialecte des contrées voisines, avec celui de certains lieux éloignés, où des émigrants, des colons de votre contrée sont allés anciennement s'établir ?
6. En quoi s'éloigne-t-il le plus de l'idiome national ? N'est-ce pas spécialement pour les noms des plantes, des maladies, les termes des arts et métiers, des instruments aratoires, des diverses espèces de grains, du commerce et du droit coutumier ? On désirerait avoir cette nomenclature.
7. Y trouve-t-on fréquemment plusieurs mots pour désigner la même chose ?
8. Pour quels genres de choses, d'occupations, de passions, ce patois est-il plus abondant ?
9. A-t-il beaucoup de mots pour exprimer les nuances des idées et les objets intellectuels ?
10. A-t-il beaucoup de termes contraires à la pudeur ? Ce que l'on doit en inférer relativement à la pureté ou à la corruption des mœurs ?
11. A-t-il beaucoup de jurements et d'expressions particulières aux grands mouvements de colère ?
12. Trouve-t-on dans ce patois des termes, des locutions très-énergiques, et même qui manquent à l'idiome français ?
13. Les finales sont-elles plus communément voyelles que consonnes ?
14. Quel est le caractère de la prononciation ? Est-elle gutturale, sifflante, douce, peu ou fortement accentuée ?

15. L'écriture de ce patois a-t-elle des traits, des caractères autres que le français ?
16. Ce patois varie-t-il beaucoup de village à village ?
17. Le parle-t-on dans les villes ?
18. Quelle est l'étendue territoriale où il est usité ?
19. Les campagnards savent-ils également s'énoncer en français ?
20. Prêchait-on jadis en patois ? Cet usage a-t-il cessé ?
21. A-t-on des grammaires et des dictionnaires de ce dialecte ?
22. Trouve-t-on des inscriptions patoises dans les églises, les cimetières, les places publiques, etc. ?
23. Avez-vous des ouvrages en patois imprimés ou manuscrits, anciens ou modernes, comme droit coutumier, actes publics, chroniques, prières, sermons, livres ascétiques, cantiques, chansons, almanachs, poésie, traductions, etc. ?
24. Quel est le mérite de ces divers ouvrages ?
25. Serait-il possible de se les procurer facilement ?
26. Avez-vous beaucoup de proverbes patois particuliers à votre dialecte et à votre contrée ?
27. Quelle est l'influence respective du patois sur les mœurs et de celles-ci sur votre dialecte ?
28. Remarque-t-on qu'il se rapproche insensiblement de l'idiome français, que certains mots disparaissent, et depuis quand ?
29. Quelle serait l'importance religieuse et politique de détruire entièrement ce patois ?
30. Quels en seraient les moyens ?
31. Dans les écoles de campagne, l'enseignement se fait-il en français ? Les livres sont-ils uniformes ?
32. Chaque village est-il pourvu de maîtres et de maîtresses d'école ?
33. Outre l'art de lire, d'écrire, de chiffrer et le catéchisme, enseigne-t-on autre chose dans ces écoles ?

34. Sont-elles assidûment surveillées par MM. les Curés et Vicaires ?
35. Ont-ils un assortiment de livres pour prêter à leurs paroissiens ?
36. Les gens de la campagne ont-ils le goût de la lecture ?
37. Quelles espèces de livres trouve-t-on plus communément chez eux ?
38. Ont-ils beaucoup de préjugés, et dans quel genre ?
39. Depuis une vingtaine d'années, sont-ils plus éclairés ? leurs mœurs sont-elles plus dépravées ? leurs principes religieux ne sont-ils pas affaiblis ?
40. Quelles sont les causes et quels seraient les remèdes à ces maux ?
41. Quels effets moraux produit chez eux la révolution actuelle ?
42. Trouve-t-on chez eux du patriotisme ou seulement les affections qu'inspire l'intérêt personnel ?
43. Les ecclésiastiques et les ci-devant nobles ne sont-ils pas en butte aux injures grossières, aux outrages des paysans et au despotisme des maires et des municipalités ?

Concluding thoughts

Although I have not been able to change my grandmother's mind about the value of her first language, *poitevin*, or to reverse the harmful effects of the contempt she suffered from growing up as a speaker of one of France's minority languages, I have recently had some relative success with my own mother. Born in 1960, she believed, along with her family, that her grandparents and all of those who spoke what everyone called (and still calls) "patois," were somehow "arriérés," slow, and that their inability to speak proper French deemed them unworthy of their French status. In my mother's eyes, they were second class citizens. In expressions I heard repeatedly over the years from my othered grandmother about herself and her family, they were inferior people. Just like Fouillée, my grandmother would not plainly say "we are not good enough," or "we are dumb," but she would compare herself continually, and tell me about the native French speaking side of my family: "they are proper people," "they are smart," "they are better than us," or "your mother is so lucky to have married into such a great family," regardless of the abuse my mother suffered from some of her in-laws for being considered of inferior status. The fact that my mother grew up only speaking French, combined with the invisible but unquestionable qualities my grandmother attributed to my father's side, gave her access to a superior status the rest of my relatives envied. It took me years to pinpoint the origin of that jealousy, and I have yet to appreciate their full complexity. If anything, my research helped my mother validate some of her uneasy feelings – such as shame and humiliation – about herself and her family, and question their origin. My hope is that by reframing them in the context of a national project meant to rebuild French identity through language planning and education, the stigma that followed my mother found a place: the past, allowing her and the generations of French children born to non-native French speakers to have a sense of both pride and respect for their hybrid identity.

The narrative put forward by the nation and drilled into millions of children's heads in their early years profoundly affected them and their children for decades following the initial conditioning, dividing not only these families but the nation it said it meant to unify. Considering the impact that educational policies have on their audience, lawmakers would benefit from looking further at the best practices when it comes to language, education and identity instead of focusing on the immediate votes they can get from grandstanding. Fouillée's creativity and talent put forward her own vision for France, a vision shared by the Republicans who had a particular interest in rewriting French identity. Using otherness to fulfill their agenda, they also provoked irreversible damages to those who did not recognize themselves in this manufactured version of identity supported by the majority.

In 2019, we cannot ignore the consequences of assimilationist policies, whether it is in schools or in the country at large, via seemingly innocuous language policies. Glottophagy hurts everyone, including the privileged populations – native French speakers who do not speak a second language at home – who are not requested to conceal and ignore fundamental layers of their hybrid identity. The concept of double consciousness⁷⁸ explored by W.E.B. Du Bois in the early twentieth century applies in this context and resonates with me when looking at othered minorities in the French primary schools of the Third Republic, and is still very much relevant when analyzing France's current issues with the teaching of Arabic in schools.

In light of this information, I am hoping that my dissertation clarified the damage done by imposing a single language in a country's primary schools not only during the Third Republic, but also since then. Indeed, although Arabic constitutes the second most spoken language in France, the state language policy has been denying the Arabic-speaking minorities of France the right to learn

⁷⁸ The concept describes a feeling of fragmented identity and was used by Du Bois within the context of race relations in the United States. Internalizing the negative perspective imposed by the other damages one's self image and brings on a struggle between the various identities held by an individual.

their native language in the school system. The double standard⁷⁹ in place and the stigma associated with it have led the Arabic-speaking minorities to a defensive identity. Acting as if France were perfectly homogenous has proved unrealistic, and harms society as a whole. Diversity is a source of national riches, including social, political and economical and France needs to hold itself accountable and end its imperialistic policies in order to build the informed and enlightened nation it aspires to be.

⁷⁹ Middle classes and upper classes are encouraged to be bilingual by learning a regional or a foreign language, however lower classes and immigrants are told to focus on French.