THE REPUBLIC AND ITS CHILDREN: 
FRENCH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE, 1855-1900

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the unique evolution of French children’s literature during the second half of the nineteenth century. Within the turbulence of the political changes that took place during the Second Republic, the Second Empire and the watershed events leading to the establishment of France’s Third Republic in September 1870, a distinctive genre of children’s literature took root in France.

Editors, authors and illustrators who had vested political and pedagogical interests in the nation’s present and future – its children – developed this literature. Based largely on existing narrative models, the reading material produced for children between 1855 and the 1890s was at once educational and entertaining. Designed to be read at home, it served as an extension of and supplement to the nation’s educational programs and fundamentally contributed to the elaboration of republican political culture with its messages of individualism, a belief in progress, and the promotion of secular values.

The reasons that it developed in this way are basically two. In part throughout the nineteenth-century French authors continued to produce didactic children’s books because historically these texts drew on the precedents of religious education works. The other part was the practical existing circumstances in which textbook publishers branched out into the realm of publishing leisure reading material for children. Based in part on the cultural belief that heartfelt messages were best conveyed within the domestic realm, publishers intentionally targeted the home environment – through both content and publishing strategies.

By 1870, specialized publishers produced significant numbers of children’s books which made their way into the majority of middle-class French homes. Significantly, as a result of the traumatic events of 1870-1871 – military defeat by Prussia and the Paris Commune – when the
nation of France suffered military, political, and moral crises, the content of children’s literature changed markedly; it became increasingly propagandistic, militaristic and nationalistic, and revanchiste. These elements thus combined with more democratic republican values to create the whole heritage of nineteenth-century French republican political culture.
This work is dedicated to both my families – my American family of origin and my French family that I have chosen.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

“For us the book, do you hear me, the book, whatever its nature, is the fundamental and
irresistible means of freeing the intelligence.” [Pour nous, le livre, entendez-vous, le livre, quel
qu’il soit, c’est l’instrument fondamental et irrésistible de l’affranchissement de l’intelligence.]1

This passage, from a speech given by France’s Minister of Education, Jules Ferry, in December
1880 clearly and effectively conveys the central role played by books in the education of
France’s future citizens during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although Ferry likely
had school textbooks in mind, his comment is equally pertinent to children’s storybooks since
their pedagogical role reached well beyond the classroom and into the heart of French society,
the family home.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, industrialization made rapid headway in
the hexagon, major political changes on the national level took place, and technological
developments radically transformed the publishing industry. Some scholars have referred to this
episode in French children’s publishing as a “golden age”. The literature produced for children
in France at this time lies at the crossroads of several interrelated phenomena: the spread of
secular, republican schooling, growth in the volume of works produced, increased literacy in all
social classes, the establishment of school libraries, interest in children on the part of French
editors and authors, the publication of novels that made the child a central figure in adventure
and exploration tales (most famously, by Jules Verne), and the flowering of illustrated book art.
This constellation of historical factors meant that by the 1870s French publishers produced
children’s literature in ever-growing numbers and reached a wider population than ever before.

1 Jules Ferry, speech in the Chambre des Députés, 20 December 1880. Paul Robiquet, ed., Discours et opinions de
Children’s home-based reading in France expanded rapidly from 1855 to the end of the century. In addition to the over fourteen children’s journals already available by subscription, more than twenty new journals debuted. Furthermore, school libraries served to assure the presence of books in homes. While France had fewer than 5,000 school libraries with approximately 180,000 volumes to lend in 1865, by 1874, or less than a decade later, the nation claimed over 15,000 school libraries with some 1,400,000 volumes.

In this dissertation, children’s literature (books and periodicals) serves as a site for exploring the complexity of efforts to create the ideal Republican citizen in France during the years of transition from the Second Empire (1852-1870) to the Third Republic up to 1900. After the failure of the Second Republic in 1851, Republicans needed to define and create a new French citizen capable of achieving and sustaining democratic institutions. Since many observers linked the Republic’s failure to a need for moral reform, reformers concentrated their efforts on defining and promoting correct, virtuous, and civically responsible behavior. The new citizen had to be literate, informed and preferably secular. The study of the creation and dissemination of children’s literature during this transitional, fifty-year period allows for an exploration of the process of political socialization and exposes the contradictions within this process.

While scholars of French literature have analyzed children’s books’ literary dimensions, pedagogical objectives, and rates of production, relatively few historians have considered this phenomenon for its broader political, social or cultural ideas about educating children or the ways in which republican politics shaped content. My work explores the foundations, evolution, aims and content of domestic French children’s literature between the years 1855 and 1900 in
order to argue that publishers, editors, educators and authors alike worked as integral and active agents in children’s formation as future republican citizens.

Shapers of the French republic considered enlightened civic participation as the key to successful democracy. Since the French Revolution of 1789-94, people understood that democratic participation was premised on citizens’ ability to make use of their own cultivated knowledge. But true democracy in which all citizens participate equally remained in many quarters a scary concept in the nineteenth century. The specter of popular uprisings as witnessed in 1830 and 1848 threatened not only the political foundations of the nation but also its economic and social bases. Based on these fears of wide-spread insurrection, those concerned with France’s political future aimed to secure a secure and stable polity. The more liberal elements within the republican tradition envisioned the possibility of broadening political participation but with the understanding that such involvement be adequately informed. In order to assure correct democratic participation by France’s future citizens, republicans set out to form those civic participants. Children’s literature served as a primary instrument to codify, inculcate and indoctrinate children as participants in the republican model. These texts for young people became vital to solidifying and transmitting the Republican agenda. If this mission failed, France’s future as an important European and cultural leader of world democracy could not succeed.

During the late nineteenth century political understandings and use of French republicanism varied and underwent significant transformation. Changes in regimes from the Second Republic to the Second Empire through the conservative Moral Order and up to the consolidation of the Third Republic around 1880 demonstrate that republicanism was far from an effective and stable political construct. Following the Second Republic’s failure in late 1851,
many prominent republicans reconsidered the ideology’s foundations including its violent 1789 revolutionary ethos but continued to be committed to the Revolution’s democratic ideals and moved toward a more reasonable, less radical, morally-tinged, and more pervasive form of republicanism. But the designation “republican” remained vague and included a variety of partisan views and affiliations. Variations within republican ranks during the Second Empire ranged from radicals who espoused “at least the moral validity of socialist arguments against social inequalities”\textsuperscript{2} to the likes of more conservative reformers who, although opposed to Louis-Philippe’s empire, aimed to maintain social conservatism, a role for religious institutions, and significant intervention by the state.

Throughout the Second Republic and Second Empire adherents to Catholic, royalist political principles stood in opposition to this loosely defined republicanism. In part the contest for future French citizens’ hearts and minds was conducted in the realm of children’s literature. Authors and editors affiliated with the emergent republican political culture actively defined their textual themes in opposition to more conservative ones and vied with volumes approved by the Catholic authorities. Importantly, the two groups of books differed in content while the narrative forms remained comparable. Stories of all types included children as central characters – usually represented within their family environment – and overt moral messages directed at young readers from a range of social classes. Authors, editors and educators of various political persuasions included this multitude of competing political visions and ideologies in children’s storybooks. In order to put forth a common front republicanism was regularly defined in opposition to competing political objectives – monarchy, constitutionalism, socialism. Although French republicans at mid century held diverse opinions in the areas of who should govern, the

composition of the polity, and the specific form of democratic institutions, they shared the
general belief that establishing a stable and lasting republican form of government in France
depended on generating a democratic supportive majority.

French republicanism therefore came to mean more than an emergent political model in
the nineteenth century; it was a developing “mode of thought.”³ Philip Nord and Sudhir
Hazareesingh in particular have explored the political meaning of French republican cultural
practices in depth.⁴ These studies investigate the reasons for and significance of the changing
nature of French republicanism from the Second Empire to the Third Republic. Following Nord
especially, I see the most important aspect of this evolution in political culture in how proponents
of republican ideals intentionally infused this way of thinking into French society through
cultural practices. These efforts eventually served to anchor a lasting democratic form of
government in France. For the purposes of this study I use the notion of republicanism as a
nascent political culture the components of which included democratic public life, secular public
institutions, universal manhood suffrage, individualism, belief in progress, and the centrality of
private, family life. This definition corresponds to an understanding of French republicanism
generally accepted by the turn of the century which ultimately proved capable of consolidating,
unifying and sustaining the French Third Republic. The production of children’s books and their
use in family homes contributed to the formation, dissemination and acceptance of republican
political culture as both a political model and as “mode of thought” to French children and their
families in the later half of the nineteenth century.

Republican efforts to create the “new citizen” targeted children in significantly different ways from adults. Child labor laws, compulsory primary education, policies concerning moral abandonment, the establishment of summer camps [colonies de vacances] and innovations in French fictional children’s literature all attest to this concern. Why exactly was the child so central to the national project? Part of the explanation is that late nineteenth-century Republicans considered the fledgling Republic and its citizens themselves in childlike terms.

Children, like inexperienced, growing citizens learning to govern themselves, needed guidance to learn correct social relations, self-control and self-discipline. Reformers therefore produced a literature that paralleled this perceived reality. They also acknowledged the cultural idea, present in French – and general European – culture at least since Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1760s, that education could decisively shape and mold children into certain kinds of adults since children are so open and susceptible to absorbing such messages.

Creators of the new leisure reading material intended individuals to read it at home in part so that not only children but also adults received the intended moral and civic messages. Stories read at home touched the entire family. To a large extent home-based reading practices were rooted in religious precedents; Christian catechism, especially Catholic, took the whole family as its primary target to convey a common religious message. Republican reformers concentrated their efforts to unify the nation around the primary instrument of language. If future French citizens and families read the same books, then they effectively learned the same French language contributing to the establishment of a common literate, literary, and language-

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based culture. By having books at home, French parents played a dual role in the acculturation process. Adults served simultaneously as receptors of republican ideas concerning the new citizen and as mediators of children’s reading. Many descriptions and visual images of home-based reading, which portray adults as actively participating in their child’s reading experience, support this perception.

Notions of children’s specific educational and social needs as different from those of adults emerged in Europe throughout the Enlightenment era as will be discussed in Chapter Two. However, no study of French children’s literature would be complete without acknowledging the fundamental contributions of Romantic-era philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His theories are relevant to this study not only because of their considerable and enduring influence on French cultural understandings of childhood and ideas on children’s upbringing and education, but also because of their impact on European society as a whole. Rousseau’s educational theory – which he viewed as the means to renew society – was all-encompassing and included the physical, social and psychological development of the child. Most importantly Rousseau posited an influential and lasting notion of childhood as a unique chapter in life distinct from adulthood with its own needs, capacities, interests, and preferences. This suggestion of a privileged phase of childhood persisted and grew during the Romantic Movement and is reflected in the expansion of French literary works for children throughout the entire nineteenth century.

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6 France’s Minister of Public Instruction at various moments between 1880 and 1883, Jules Ferry, in connection with major educational reforms, also supervised the enactment of several laws concerning the standardization of French as the national language. On June 7, 1880 an official decree declared French the only language allowed in school. “Le français sera seul en usage dans l’école.” Jules Ferry, Ministre de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, “Écoles primaires publiques. Règlement scolaire. Modèle pour servir à la rédaction des règlements départementaux, Article 14,” Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, vol. XXIII, no. 454 (7 June 1880): 638. I thank Dr. Mark Micale for pointing out this connection to me.

7 The government also intervened in children’s reading via the selection of texts published and official lists of books accepted for inclusion in school libraries. See Chapter Four.
Rousseau’s definition of childhood includes the belief that children are innately good and subject to the corruptive influences of society. Based on this premise he developed and proposed a child-specific and child-centered pedagogical program in which he asserted a central role for an adult tutor tasked with the responsibility of directing the child’s learning through constant surveillance. In particular he tasked mothers with their children’s moral development.\(^8\) Rousseau’s educational scheme placed sentiment over reason in teaching the young since he theorized that children began to develop reason around age twelve. The importance of an adult guide and appealing to emotions in instruction are evident in children’s literature of the nineteenth century with editors’ and authors’ keen attention to assuring that children read proper material and in the ever-present depiction of an adult overseeing this activity – evidenced in both texts and images.

Rousseau published his most detailed text on the subject of children’s instruction, *Émile, ou de l’éducation*, in 1762.\(^9\) *Émile* decidedly influenced French education in the centuries that followed.\(^10\) Rousseau based his narrative on an ideal imaginary child in order to convey his ideas. This approach reinforced Rousseau’s notion of children’s individuality and of childhood as a particular stage of life.


In parallel with his influence on pedagogy, Rousseau’s thoughts in Émile had repercussions for French children’s literature. In Émile Rousseau grants his student only one book thus sanctioning – although in a decidedly limited way – children’s fictional reading. He allows Émile to read Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe because, according to Rousseau, Crusoe was the best example of a self-made man and the book provided a vicariously comprehensive learning experience. Robinson Crusoe effectively represented Rousseau’s model of instruction in both content and form. Crusoe’s story is rooted in an experiential acquisition of knowledge through its depiction of a man who through the application of his own resources and personal capacities, succeeds in developing a satisfying and secure life. However, Rousseau’s inclusion of fictional literature as a means to teach children is mitigated by the fact that although he felt that reading was a useful skill, he did not recommend it for children prior to age twelve.

Although Rousseau did not unequivocally approve of children reading, his establishment of a unique state of childhood and his theories on educating and raising children underpinned the development of European – and certainly French – children’s literature in the century that followed and remained relevant throughout the nineteenth. While acknowledging the importance of this shared European framework of evolving notions of childhood and reading, my work focuses on those elements that were specific and unique to French children’s literature in the late

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11 Émile’s impact extended beyond France. See for example Sylvia W. Patterson, Rousseau’s Émile and Early Children’s Literature (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1971) which looks at the influence of Émile on English writers of children’s books in the late eighteenth century.

12 For more detailed treatments of Rousseau’s view of reading in children’s education, see Sylvain Menant’s analysis “La place de la littérature dans les idées d’Émile,” in Rousseau, l’Émile et la Révolution, 43-49 and Barbara de Negroni, “La bibliothèque d’Émile et de Sophie. La fonction des livres dans la pédagogie de Rousseau,” Dix-huitième siècle 19 (1987): 379-90. However, it must be noted that Rousseau expressed a contradictory opinion on children’s reading elsewhere in Émile, demonstrating his suspicion of uncontrolled influences, see for example his discussion of La Fontaine’s fables as morally confusing in Œuvres complètes, vol. IV, 351-57. Authors’ reticent attitude toward fables continued in the nineteenth-century; children’s books produced were largely realist with few talking animals or fantastical characters.

nineteenth century in order to study the emergence of French republican political culture. Within this context Rousseau’s ideas concerning the state’s role in educating and forming civic-minded citizens remained ever pertinent to republican political aims.

Nineteenth-century French bourgeois society generally considered women, in particular mothers, as being responsible for the transmission of moral values. Republicans especially revered the _femme de foyer_ for her moralizing potential.\textsuperscript{14} Children of all ages, it was believed, would best absorb and internalize messages, such as correct social relations, secular morality and nationalism in the environment where they felt most safe and open to receiving such instruction – and by the most appropriate teachers, women. Producers of French children’s literature at this time picked up on this cultural belief and employed women more centrally as authors, protagonists, and narrators. In this way women were an integral part of the republican project. Writers of French children’s reading aimed to foster a personal, internal, emotional attachment to _la patrie_. Using books, mothers, considered most in touch with emotions and sentiment, produced and transmitted key elements of republican political culture to France’s future citizens within the nest of the family home.

French women wrote a large number of children’s stories published between 1855 and 1870. Their writings featured girls prominently as central characters, and publishers targeted girls and mothers as readers. Authors also made girls the subjects of much of this literature because they would grow up to be future mothers and caretakers of their own families. Due to women’s identification with the family’s spiritual and moral well being, writers portrayed and employed women as appropriate conveyers of moral lessons. This largely female-generated

literature elaborated in the private sphere had implications for the public sphere too. Republicans intended to extend this discourse to the entire nation. My work demonstrates that while an opportunity existed for consequential female involvement in shaping the Republic up to 1870, this opportunity faded by the end of the decade as the Third Republic solidified its political and moral authority.

The Republican secular morality intentionally constructed in children’s publications triumphed during the 1880s and 1890s, culminating in the historic 1905 law separating Church and State. This was not an unmitigated triumph, however. Women’s role in French politics remained limited. A similar phenomenon exists in the evolution of children’s literature. While the literature produced between 1855 and 1870 reflected a noteworthy, even primary, role for female writers, main characters and intended audience, after 1870 and especially with the rise of militaristic themes in French children’s literature, this place for women was greatly reduced.

While men controlled both formal education and the publishing business, female authors and readers remained crucial to this project. In French secular republican education, teachers, especially primary school teachers [écoles primaires], were mostly women who taught male-generated lessons. In contrast, during the 1850s and 1860s women wrote numerous texts for children to consume at home, in the private domestic sphere. Women influenced this discourse in both its production and dissemination. It was so important to present women as authors of works intended to shape children’s minds, hearts, and spirits that some male authors adopted female pseudonyms! The choice to name authors with women's names underscores the

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15 Men’s use of female pseudonyms was the opposite of the practice in adult fiction, where women took men’s names as pseudonyms such as in the case of Amandine Aurore Lucie Dupin writing as “George Sand,” Marie de Flavigny, the Comtesse d’Agoult, who published under the name “Daniel Stern,” and the journalist/novelist Léodile Béra, who went by “André Léo.”
cultural imperative of women bearing the moral and spiritual responsibility for children’s moral and psychological formation, even if that spirituality became increasingly secular and patriotic.

French republican objectives for an informed citizenry meant constructing a political culture solidly rooted in secular morality.\textsuperscript{16} These secular values would replace the Catholic Church’s traditional religious morality opposed for generations by Republicans. Instead of engaging in church-recommended behavior, individuals should regulate their own behavior in accordance with secular values. These progressive, secular values included: individualism, rationalism, duty, universal (male) suffrage, work, education, charity, self-sacrifice, and social solidarity. In order to accomplish their goal of having this secular moral code take root and endure, after the failure of the Second Republic, French Republicans explored and invested in new sites such as the family, the individual, and leisure home reading. Editors and authors self-consciously filled children’s storybooks with examples of this new secular morality.

Following certain scholars of theories of nationalism, I see this period of the late nineteenth century as pivotal in France’s definition as a nation. The elaboration of a cohesive political culture guaranteed the republic’s stability and durability. This study reveals the ways in which children’s literature contributed to the development and triumph of French republicanism. Drawing primarily on the work of Benedict Anderson, I follow the idea that “nation” is located in cultural forms and practices and that print culture in particular was fundamental to formulating and disseminating a shared national culture, which is not exclusively political, and in the formation and rise of the bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{17} Nineteenth-century French republicans recognized the


importance of creating a desirable shared experience, a “community of readers,” in order to accomplish their national political aims but political motives alone did not move them to action. Rather, by privileging the cultural construction of the nation, I maintain that individuals successfully employed cultural constructions and practices in the interest of political aims to consolidate, construct a national consensus. The nineteenth-century was a distinct period of change in France’s national evolution. France experienced a general shift during this time toward cultural homogeneity and the “outreach” of the city to the countryside occurred in order to assure political stability. The concerted effort to bring all “Frenchmen” into the republic via literacy and to create a modern French national identity was possible to a large degree thanks to modern, industrialized publishing thus rendering children’s literature – especially considering it as informal educational practice – a key element of this national dynamic between 1855 and 1900.¹⁸

Analysis of this literature’s content reveals particular aspects of the ideal republican citizen. Through the inclusion of realistic child protagonists, writers evoked models of individuals as self-disciplined in their everyday behavior, committed to self-sacrifice for family and nation, aware of the world beyond national borders, and obedient and charitable to those less fortunate than themselves.¹⁹ This strategy provided readers with a point of identification and allowed authors accurately to represent acceptable social interactions for children, both with other children and their family members. These textual messages also implied their eventual extension outward into society, the public sphere. Republican authors constructed their ideology

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¹⁹ Authors of novels written for an adult audience also often featured children as central characters including Victor Hugo’s Cosette and Gavroche in Les Misérables (1862) and George Sand’s Landry, Sylvain and Fadette in La Petite Fadette (1849).
around the premise that effective participation in political life depended on quality domestic life. Their works noticeably linked private and public virtue and portrayed both as mutually reinforcing.

The content of French children’s texts during the period under study clearly presents gender-specific roles, too. Overwhelmingly, authors produced narratives that took place within the context of the family. Correct family roles and social relationships, it was believed, would then extend to the national community. These stories portray girls as nurturers, mothers to their dolls or younger siblings, preparing themselves for their future role as mothers of the next generation of republican citizens. In contrast, children’s authors tended to depict boys serving France according to their natural abilities – preferably militarily – and expected them to become protective husbands and fathers of a future French generation. Both sets of expectations required self-discipline and self-sacrifice.

In addition to the attention given to defining and prescribing gender roles, these children’s stories also delineate social relationships along marked class lines. French children’s authors aimed to feature distinctive late nineteenth-century bourgeois social characteristics in an effort to portray an ideal citizen to their projected readers from all social classes. In doing so, however, authors and editors also contributed to shaping a model of republican political identity as one in which the members of the bourgeoisie maintained and reinforced their political importance as pillars of the Republic. Studies of the French bourgeoisie as a class have most recently included attention to the cultural components of such a category leading to the conclusion that contemporary understanding of “bourgeois” was far from fixed. Although largely the result of economic prosperity between 1850 and 1885, the group considered as “bourgeoisie” expanded to include businessmen and professionals, mothers who stayed home
and a family-centered domestic life. During the late nineteenth century definitions of bourgeois as a social class went beyond an economic status and a political role and increasingly included cultural attributes such as education, consumption practices, institutional affiliations, and “networks of sociability.” The consideration of various cultural components of this emergent and shifting identity indicates that this process was the result of a combination of complicated interactions.

Children’s literature and the corresponding reading practices significantly contributed to shaping ways of thinking and acting among the growing French middle classes. Creators of children’s literature presented the working classes with behavior models cast as “bourgeois” and designed to influence and re-shape predominant bourgeois values so that this social class too could maintain democratic institutions. The books’ contents reflect this dual objective.

Writers presented various social classes as accepting of and satisfied with their correct places in the nation - poor, working class, bourgeois, rich. They presented desired republican behavior as a model premised on emulating the bourgeoisie. To this end, regularly repeated themes in these children’s stories include: correct manners, hygiene and family responsibilities. However, successful emulation of bourgeois behavior does not lead to social mobility. The poor continue in their fixed, unfortunate circumstances, domestic workers remain faithful and bourgeois families improve their character while maintaining their proper position toward the top of the


French children reading these texts absorbed a model of stable, and immobile, social relations. Thus, while publishers aimed to democratize the practice of reading, they simultaneously presented models which aimed to maintain the social status quo by bombarding children with the ethos of self-discipline and tales of charity in which the poor, even with the aid of the bourgeoisie and the intervention of formal education, do not significantly improve their social position. French children’s literature, then, demonstrates a paradox in the republican political agenda. They lauded liberty and democratic ideals through a common language and shared literary culture, yet in practice these promises were limited by a desire for political stability. This inherent contradiction is particularly well-demonstrated in this literature.

Romantic nationalism in the early nineteenth century had produced the need to see French republicanism as politics anchored in emotion. Editors and authors therefore faced the question of how best to cultivate and transmit “romantic republicanism.” By the second half of the century, one response was that children’s literature could cultivate this key aspect of citizen formation by bringing moral instruction directly into the intimate sphere of the family home. Publishers targeted children in their homes due to a shared cultural belief in the primacy of the home environment for learning. While educators could teach the facts of civics [éducation civique] in school, Republicans conceived citizenship more broadly as emotional, an affective attachment to the nation. They aimed then to inculcate this notion, not simply by recommending correct behavior and practice, but through the transformation of individual feelings about oneself and one’s country. Shapers of this ideal considered home and family the ideal place for such emotional ties to develop.

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22 As the nineteenth century progressed, and markedly after 1852, children’s literature contained fewer noble or aristocratic characters. Those which did appear were included as secondary figures and primarily in either reprints of classic tales or exclusively within the publications by Catholic houses.
A desire to cultivate emotional ties to the nation did not of course eliminate the vital need for national education. The Republican project depended on schools to indoctrinate children. Public education expanded steadily beginning with Guizot’s Law extending primary education in 1833 and continued through 1882 with the Ferry Laws on secular education. As evidence of the importance of national education during this fifty-year period, in the 1860s, Émile Littré, creator of the authoritative Dictionnaire de la langue française, posited education as the essential means to France’s regeneration. National teachers taught a common curriculum to more children than ever before, and leisure reading moved beyond urban centers. Shut out of the conservative government’s national education program during the years of Napoléon III’s Empire (1852-1870), Republicans, then, pursued the alternative of placing reading material in homes in order to educate France’s future citizens. Unlike formally-accepted children’s textbooks whose content changed according to official programs, children’s fictional literature did not vary according to political fortunes suggesting the über-political character of republicanism.

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25 Republicans attempted to increase their influence in education throughout the century. In 1850 the conservative government passed the Falloux Law that established a significant role for the Church in public education which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.
Although politicians considered colonialism a significant element of French national identity throughout the nineteenth century, the colonial context remains beyond the scope of my study. An analysis of this literature within the colonial context would disclose little difference from the continental focus employed here due to the strict divisions within colonial society. With respect to children’s literature, the experience of French colonists’ children in Algeria, for example, remained relatively similar to that of their European counterparts.

Algeria became a French colony in 1830, but its annexation was not complete until 1842. After this time efforts at political acculturation targeted colonists rather than the indigenous populations. Even the French national system of education did not reach the majority of native Algerians. A two-tier educational system developed in which settlers’ children attended French institutions and followed the same national program as those in the hexagon while indigenous children (far fewer in number) attended separate schools where programs emphasized the acquisition of practical skills. The Ferry Laws of the 1880s legally established French national education in Algeria, but only for colonists’ children and maintained the same content and approved programs as for the rest of France. In October 1892 “reform specific to the instruction of Algeria’s indigenous populations passed into law,” and several more years passed before these reforms became practice.

Just as the children of privileged families received a formal education first, they also constituted the group that benefited most from the earliest children’s literature. Over time, however, many countries, including France, acted on a general understanding that children,

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26 See Jonathan K. Gosnell, The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria 1930-1954 (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 46-47. Gosnell tells us that until the post-WWI period, most Arabs and Berbers were reluctant to send their children to French schools and that most of these children attended “indigenous” schools until major reforms were introduced in 1949.

regardless of social class, constituted a separate group worthy of consideration. Political reformers considered national efforts for children’s education as key, and France’s development throughout the nineteenth century depended upon the democratic extension of state instructional programs.

Historically, “children’s literature” existed once society recognized that children were worthy of unique consideration. By the nineteenth century, French society had already accepted children as a distinctive group with specific needs. Philippe Ariès’ well-known *L’Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’ancien régime* launched the central discussion about the history of childhood when published in 1960. Ariès concluded that as an identity separate from adulthood, no concept of childhood existed in early modern Western Europe and that parents did not know how to meet their children’s emotional needs. He asserted that up until the early eighteenth century, European societies felt that only the children of educated aristocratic families merited individual consideration and investment and placed the bourgeois discovery of childhood in the late eighteenth century. 28 English scholar Lawrence Stone built upon Ariès’ conclusions of the state of childhood improving over time and extended them to encompass all family relationships. 29

In 1984 Linda Pollock challenged these existing conclusions by arguing that her analysis of numerous diaries and journals revealed no fundamental changes in how parents raised their children and their sentimental attachment to them. 30 While other scholars challenged Ariès’ conclusions by arguing that conceptions of childhood as a distinct state of individual development began prior to the eighteenth century, there was general acceptance of his basic

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premise that social and cultural factors constructed and defined childhood.\textsuperscript{31} In France, research from the 1970s revealed the centrality of the mid-nineteenth century to a modern recognition of childhood.\textsuperscript{32}

Historical scholarship on the production of children’s literature is also sizable.\textsuperscript{33} F.J. Harvey Darton’s classic volume \textit{Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life} first appeared in 1932.\textsuperscript{34} Darton (1878-1936) came from a long line of scholars involved in publishing; he was a descendant of the Quaker publisher William Darton.\textsuperscript{35} A sometime scholar at St. John’s College, Oxford, Darton placed children’s books within the context of their social and commercial history and asserted that these texts were a battleground in attempts to educate, restrain and influence children.\textsuperscript{36} While Darton’s work focused on English children’s literature, his arguments apply to the French case as well. Creators of didactic children’s literature also aimed to entertain their audience.


\textsuperscript{34} F.J. Harvey Darton, \textit{Children’s Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932). Subsequent editions include those published in 1958 with an introduction by Kathleen Lines and one in 1982 edited and with a preface by Brian Alderson. Because of the relevant information included in the two different introductions; I used both for this study.


Marie-Thérèse Latzarus acknowledged “the influence of reading on children’s moral and intellectual formation” in her 1924 book La Littérature Enfantine en France dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle. Latzarus set out to define what constituted children’s literature and proceeded to discuss past contributions according to categories: illustrated albums, periodicals, instructional and history texts, science books, and moral tales. Latzarus’ pioneering work succeeded not only in quantifying the books available for children to read but also in highlighting the idea that the content of what they read mattered to their development.

Subsequent scholarly studies built on Latzarus’ findings in order to produce accounts that overwhelmingly emphasized the study of texts, influences, authors, and literary themes. For instance, Isabelle Jan’s La littérature enfantine, first published in 1969, provides a complete account of how French children’s literature changed over time, taking into consideration multiple literary influences and technological developments in the publishing industry. Other scholars have studied specific aspects such as ABC books, the use of illustrations and the unique development of periodicals. Additional literary accounts engage biographical studies of

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famous authors of the period - especially the era’s two most famous authors, the Comtesse de Ségur and Jules Verne - in order to understand better this unique era of literary production.\textsuperscript{41}

Penny Brown’s 2007 study, \textit{A Critical History of French Children’s Literature} is by far the most far-reaching account of the history of French children’s literature to date.\textsuperscript{42} This well-informed work is remarkable not only in its chronological breadth but also in its attention to existing secondary source material in both history and literary studies. Brown historicizes the literary trajectory of French children’s books with consideration of precedents and antecedents. Her detailed discussions of innovative and influential texts from a multitude of genres and investigates numerous key texts of French children’s literature within the period 1600 to the present with significant attention their literary and narrative elements. She also pays attention to the political, social and cultural contexts of the authors’ influences and the texts’ creation and dissemination. She successfully considers the relationship between the selected stories and the historical moment of their production – including the various agendas of those producing the books – but with little analysis of how specific features of the historical and social context served not only to influence and create particular texts but in turn served to shape the resultant culture.

This present study draws substantively on Brown’s account in terms of considering the multiplicity of influences – educational, political, social and cultural – which served to shape specific texts. However, in addition to casting this production of French children’s literature as


reflections of an era, as representational texts within a specific historical context, I go beyond in order to look at an entire range of children’s literature in light of its pivotal role in shaping emergent Republican political culture. This emphasis on the influence of children’s literature in the construction of Republic political culture not only allows for viewing contradictions within Republican political identity but also the extent to which the literary aspects of this culture were communicated to the subsequent generation.

Specific to the French context, historical accounts tend to emphasize the economic, editorial and artistic aspects of children’s literature, particularly its production and distribution. Within this scholarship, Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin’s edited volume *Histoire de l’édition française: le temps des éditeurs, du romantisme à la Belle Époque* included Jean Glénisson’s exemplary chapter “Le livre pour la jeunesse” alongside essays outlining the changing role of editors and technological developments. Historians have also contributed to our knowledge of this phenomenon via historical biographies of influential editors such as Jean-Yves Mollier’s *Louis Hachette. Le fondateur d’un empire (1800-1864)* and A. Parménie and C. Bonnier de La Chapelle’s invaluable edited collection of Hetzel’s professional and personal correspondence, *Histoire d’un éditeur et de ses auteurs: P.J. Hetzel*.

In addition to the scholarship on publishing history, my work draws on history of the book studies. The existence of a History of the Book [*Histoire du Livre*] reading and research room at France’s National Library provides further indication of this area of study’s

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importance. This scholarship makes clear that within the broader field of publishing history, children’s literature deserves special attention. While relatively few works deal exclusively with children’s literature, several of them single out distinctive aspects of this publishing phenomenon, in particular during the nineteenth century. The 1994 opening of the Institut International Charles Perrault, a centre de formation for professionals involved in all aspects of children’s literature and the collections of children’s books and related secondary studies of the subject held by the libraries “La Joie par les Livres” and “L’Heure Joyeuse,” all testifies to a growing interest.

Scholars of children’s literature have struggled to legitimize the subject as a distinct and important field of literary production, but some resistance has remained. Brian Alderson’s statement in 1982 that critics warmly welcomed Darton’s book “but not without indulging that bane of all discussion of children’s books: sentimental reflections on their own youth…” demonstrates this persistent bias. While children’s literature appeals to our younger selves, this is far from a “bane” on this literature but rather revelatory of both our personal and shared

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46 The Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) houses a reading room, a research room, and documentation services, Service de Documentation sur le Livre, la Presse et la Lecture. In addition, attesting to the academic status of children’s literature as a field of study, as of 2008 Le Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse – La Joie par les livres is housed at the BnF as part of the Department of Litterature and Art. This collection contains over 250,000 documents.


48 Children’s literature scholar Jean Perrot founded the Institut International Charles Perrault in 1994 in the Paris suburb of Eaubonne. Named in honor of the seventeenth-century author best known for his collections of fairytales, the Institute’s mission is to study and present issues pertaining to children’s literature. Through the development and diffusion of critical perspectives, the Institute aims to provide the tools necessary for a better understanding of this literature’s production. “L’Heure Joyeuse,” a historical collection of French children’s literature located in one of Paris’ municipal children’s libraries in the 6th arrondissement, was founded in 1924. See Viviane Ezratty and Françoise Lévèque, L’Heure joyeuse, 1924-1994: 70 ans de jeunesse (Paris: Paris Bibliothèques, 1996). The association “La Joie par les Livres” established the Le Centre national du livre pour enfants in the 1960s which eventually became Le Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse – La Joie par les livres and is today housed at the BnF. Numerous “children’s book fairs” [salons du livre de jeunesse] also demonstrate the recognition of this specialized genre in France. The city of Montreuil hosts the most important of these book fairs, the now internationally recognized “Salon du livre et de la Presse jeunesse,” which began in the 1970s.

memories and histories which persist in the present. Adults often refer to their childhood reading experiences as pivotal moments in their personal past and a step toward maturity. What children read is far from inconsequential but rather fundamental to identity formation.

My research examines this process of identity formation through an analysis of the means and content employed for children’s informal education through literature. Educational reformers working within France’s republican political tradition (as opposed to its older royal, Catholic, or imperial traditions), viewed children as “receptacles” for their visions of France’s future. In the late nineteenth century French politicians, editors, authors, publishers and pedagogues shared the view that children’s education could serve to regenerate the nation’s moral fabric. The French nation needed to survive, and for the Republican project to succeed the current generation had the responsibility to teach children desirable moral values and behaviors. Of course, “children” as a category of historical social analysis is not uniform. It differs according to age, sex, class, race, and religion. I read these works of children’s literature with attention to how various narratives represented, targeted, informed or erased this diverse audience.

Drawing on literary and historical approaches, I have gleaned from the above mentioned scholarship the most useful elements of the historical specificity of childhood, multiple influences, and literary analysis in order to produce an account that considers the broader cultural, social and political forces at play. This approach contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics that shaped and stabilized France’s Third Republic. It was not a foregone conclusion that this literature would develop when and in the manner that it did for purely literary reasons. Initially constructed in strictly oppositional terms to monarchical and clerical tendencies in politics, this informal pedagogical literature, by the late nineteenth century, largely
served the interests of republican citizen formation. Historical analysis discloses this to be a pivotal transitional era in which authors and editors made use of France’s rich literary heritage to create and proactively shape national ideals.

My dissertation responds to the historiographical emphasis on national education as a key measure of French republican success by considering domestic books as an agent of informal education. By accentuating the role played by children’s leisure reading in inculcating national values, I attempt to show how early republican efforts aimed to influence the home environment and family life through reading and eventually influenced official education programs. After 1870 Republicans tried to integrate informal reading strategies into school curricula as part of the formation of the republican agenda. The fact that particular reading strategies and books with republican content already existed and were ready to be deployed in republican schools suggests an alternative periodization of republican success, a measure of success that precedes the Ferry Laws of the 1880s. Since to a large extent the republican texts produced drew from existing religious texts, in this way I contest the strict secular-versus-religious conceptualization of the era. The victory of republican ideology and the replacement of religious texts was not as clear

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52 Avner Ben-Amos, Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France 1789-1996 (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mona Ozouf, L’École, l’Église, et la République 1871-1914; Maurice Agulhon, Marianne
break a break as the chronology of formal educational reform indicates. While useful in bringing to light the contentious nature of political instability in France during the transitional years spanning from the Second Republic through the secure establishment of the Third around 1880, this reductionistic binary formulation limits our understanding of the republican consolidation process. I argue that a study of children’s literature exposes a great deal of _continuity_ during this process resulting in the elaboration of republican moral ideas and practices extensively informed by cultural and literary precedents.

Literary and pedagogical precedents for late nineteenth-century French children’s literature are certainly to be found in the heritage of folk and fairy tales. As Robert Darnton and Jack Zipes have demonstrated, the writing down of this oral tradition meant that these stories and their narrative structures became part of a European literary tradition.53 French children encountered didactic fictional literature through these texts prior to the nineteenth century, mostly through shared adult literature.54 Some books, such as fables (Aesop, La Fontaine), were considered appropriate for all ages and in the interest of education, some adults consigned instructional books to their children.55 Gradually adults handed the literary tradition of folk and fairy tales over to children due to the works’ didactic nature and their potential to initiate

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54 Children also liked books not initially intended for them, such as Daniel Defoe’s _Robinson Crusoe_ (1719), Jonathan Swift’s _Gulliver’s Travels_ (1726) and Cervantes’ _Don Quixote_ (1605 and 1615). Gradually, children’s recognized status as a specific socio-cultural group produced narrative strategies to meet their specific needs. For this particular aspect in the evolution of fairy tales, see Zipes, _The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood_.

55 For example, in the late seventeenth century children read Charles Perrault’s _Contes de ma mère l’Oye, ou Histoires du temps passé_ (1697) and Madame d’Aulnoy’s works, _Les contes de Fées_ (1697) and _Contes nouveaux ou les Fées à la mode_ (1698).
The substantive interplay between folk and fairy tales and children’s literature is clearly in evidence in the literature produced for children in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although French authors wrote few new contes for children during the late nineteenth-century, numerous editions of classic tales appeared. Publishing houses produced new edited collections of Perrault, Madame d’Aulnoy and Madame Leprince de Beaumont throughout the nineteenth century. Hachette published Contes des fees: tirés de Perrault, de Mme d’Aulnoy et de Mme Leprince de Beaumont in 1853, the Catholic editor Ardant published Les Contes des fées, par

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58 The works of Lorraine-born authors Emile Erckmann (1822-1899) and Alexandre Chatrian (1826-1890), known professionally as “Erckmann-Chatrian”, provide notable exceptions to this statement. The authors produced numerous tales about France’s national history and although the authors did not intend all of their works for child readers, Hetzel published certain titles such as Contes des bords du Rhin (1862); Madame Thérèse, ou les volontaires de ’92 (1863); Contes de la montagne (4th ed., 1873); Une campagne en Kabylie, récit d’un chasseur d’Afrique (3rd ed., 1873); and Histoire d’un paysan 1789 (1868-1870), in his editorial collections intended for families, schools and libraries. Hetzel also published some of Erckmann-Chatrian’s writings first in serial form in his Magasin d’éducation et de récréation. For more on the literary contribution of these authors and their lasting impact see François Marotin, ed. Actes du Colloque universitaire Erckmann-Chatrian: Erckmann-Chatrian, entre imagination, fantasie et réalisme: du conte au conte de l’histoire (Phalsbourg: Editions de la Musée de Phalsbourg, 1999).
Charles Perrault, revus avec soin par un directeur de Bibliothèque chrétienne in 1859 (the subtitle of which reveals Catholic publishers’ wariness of fairy tales), and Hetzel came out with his celebrated Les Contes de Perrault with illustrations by Gustave Doré in 1861. Stock narrative elements of such tales – triumph over adversity, characters searching for their “true” identities and place in society, familiar settings, negative consequences as a result of poor choices, and appealing to readers’ emotions – continued to serve as structural elements in writing of new children’s stories. The continued cultural heritage of the tale can also been seen in the recommendation of reading aloud to children – especially by mothers.

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The timeline that I have chosen for this dissertation, 1855 to 1900, encompasses the last fifteen years of the Second Empire and the consolidation of the Third Republic in order to trace the changing nature of this literature. In 1855 the publisher Hachette signed the first exclusive contract with the Comtesse de Ségur to write children’s stories. My chosen end date denotes the shift in publishing away from the creation of fictional tales to publishers’ preference for comic books. While I recognize that numerous authors adapted folktales and occasionally adult fiction for younger readers, I have chosen to investigate specifically those stories commissioned by editors and publishers designed to educate and entertain children of reading age, between the ages of seven and thirteen. Hachette’s contract with Ségur marks the first official attempt by a French editor to address specifically the needs of young readers in a formal manner. Furthermore, whereas other authors wrote for adults and only addressed children at their publisher or editor’s request, the Comtesse de Ségur was exceptional. Hachette hired her to

59 Charles Perrault, Contes des fées: tirés de Perrault, de Mme d’Aulnoy et de Mme Leprince de Beaumont (Paris: Hachette, 1853); Charles Perrault, Les Contes des fées, par Charles Perrault, revus avec soin par un directeur de Bibliothèque chrétienne (Limoges : M. Ardant, 1859); Charles Perrault, Les Contes de Perrault (Paris: Hetzel, 1861).

60 Authors wrote for children of primary school age not yet able or just learning to read as a secondary target.
write exclusively for children. While the First World War may appear to be a more logical end point, at least from a strict political chronology, I intend to move beyond a history of conventional political eras in order to look at the formation of political culture in transition, during a period of continual movement and change. My study thus ends in 1900 because by this time French children’s literature began to lose the prior balance struck between amusement and pedagogy to privilege entertainment and distraction. In addition, those who published later children’s fictional literature, also designed as home-based reading, did not conceive of their works as extensions of school programs. The majority of storybooks published after 1900 were shorter, more modern and more appropriate to the needs of the twentieth century. Whereas late nineteenth-century texts emphasized a common past intended to unify the nation, children’s literature in the next century would highlight the present and France’s future potential.

This chronological framework allows for the analysis of republican ideas in formation from the Second Empire through the stabilization of the Third Republic. Along the way, I consider the reasons for the increased importance of particular ideals, such as self-discipline, strictly defined gender roles and personal sacrifice, especially the increased urgency for their application and the political acceleration of this agenda in light of the national crises of 1870-1871, including France’s swift, catastrophic loss in the Franco-Prussian War and its subsequent shocking “civil war” known as the Paris Commune of the spring of 1871.

Each of my dissertation chapters addresses a particular aspect of French children’s literature. In Chapter Two, I outline the primary lines of French children’s literature up to 1855 in order to show that later authors used clearly established patterns and genres to craft their literary program of secular morality. Why was children’s literature post-1855 so didactic and morally charged? Part of the explanation lies in the fact that editors and authors drew upon the
precedents of religiously edifying literature. From fairy tales to children’s prayer books and the lives of saints, French literature read by and to children prior to the nineteenth century intended to educate and mold young minds. Republicans aimed to appropriate the traditional moral authority of the church in order to shape capable republican citizens. They intended to use children’s literature much as the church had, to teach children and to solidify support for their moral agenda. Thus, secular writers and publishers after 1855 successfully borrowed and adapted existing religious-themed models that served to inspire them. They produced a genre only somewhat “new” for children. In this second chapter I detail past production so as to demonstrate that republican authors reproduced an authoritarian model of morality but with parents, family and nation replacing the Catholic Church as instruments of moral authority. Republican secular morality post-1855 therefore had a good deal in common with religious codes for regulating behavior.

In my third chapter, I focus on prominent editors’ influence. I consider the contributions of the publishing house founded by Catholic editor Alfred Mame and the secular publishing houses of Louis Hachette and Pierre-Jules Hetzel in order to highlight the complex relationship between political affiliations and publishing. The role of editors and publishing houses in France grew during the nineteenth century. Editors in particular played a much more significant role in publishing than they do today. Individuals and marketing objectives determined what they would publish for children. Editors recruited authors for specific projects, decided the editorial policy on what to publish and when, and even wrote some works for children themselves. In addition to their talents as businessmen, these powerful editors brought their various personal

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convictions to the job. Both Hachette and Hetzel infused their children’s publications with models of correct moral behavior, idealized family life, and generated images of France as strong, unified, and progressive. All three publishers produced school textbooks in addition to fictional novels. This fact contributes to explaining the overwhelmingly didactic nature of nineteenth-century children’s books. The Catholic publisher Mame already published religious works for children and expanded its list to include novels for young readers, which basically were morality tales with religious overtones. Hachette and Hetzel developed the children’s market and added their own originality to the mix. Both men possessed an intense desire to educate and published overtly pedagogical literature for children as an extension of the classroom. They actively shaped their messages of fundamental feelings of belonging to and participating in the French Republic and sought to deliver them in the home, the environment they considered most effective.

My fourth dissertation chapter focuses on the growth of the French national education system and the strategies used by publishers and schools to place texts in family homes through prize books, libraries, and children’s journals. Through an exploration of these practices, I argue that publishers wanted children to read at home among their families so that they could present most effectively their encoded messages of sentimental attachment to the Republic. An analysis of these practices allows for an exploration of the significance of the home within the French republican political agenda of the second half of the 1800s. A distinct parallel exists between the passage of laws that increased the number of children attending school over the course of the century – with the Ferry Laws of 1882 as the pinnacle – and the growth of leisure reading material for children. Rising literacy rates provided a fundamental link between these factors. Editors extended the educational program into families by distributing prize books (livres de
prix), developing children’s periodicals, creating and promoting editorial collections for children and families, and founding school libraries. At the end of each French academic year, children received *livres de prix* from their schools to reward scholarly performance. I examine additionally how texts, descriptions of families reading together at home, and illustrations promoted home-based reading.

Chapter Five explains how the content of children’s reading material changed after the all-important divide of 1870-71 to include more patriotic and militaristic themes. Authors and editors used a well-established structure to produce didactic works of overt militaristic, *revanchiste* propaganda. A thematic analysis reveals that after 1870 authors and illustrators adapted and used numerous recurrent themes to present children with patriotic and militaristic visions preparing them for their future. I analyze four specific topics from this writing for children: the historic military heroine Joan of Arc presented as a nineteenth century cultural symbol; the change in illustrations post-1870 that increasingly represented children in military-like order; the growing number of images of *la patrie*; and the presentation of children playing “war games.” Authors represented both boys and girls in these texts and presented clearly defined roles in terms of their expected service to the nation: boys would be soldiers, girls mothers (of soldiers).

Finally, in Chapter Six, I take up the subject of child readers themselves. Here I focus on these key actors in order to illustrate how they assimilated this literary project. I investigate children’s intimate experiences with books and their retrospective perception of what leisure reading meant to them. In their recollections, adult authors regularly elaborated on these experiences in their writings. Through the use of (auto)biographical texts, I attempt to recover and analyze child readers’ recollections as historical memory. This approach allows me to study
children’s direct experiences with storybooks and validates the importance of reading for French children in the late nineteenth century. I have chosen various excerpts about childhood reading experiences from authors Jules Vallès, Judith Gautier, Colette, and Pierre Loti. To complement this impressionistic approach, I highlight increased child literacy.

The development of children’s leisure reading between 1855 and 1900 provides a lens through which to view the central importance of home-based learning, gender roles and manners, and literacy as foundational cultural elements of French Republicanism. Building on inherited models, however, meant that this literature reproduced an authoritarian model of morality. By targeting children in their home environments, creators of children’s leisure reading assured the success of a vital aspect of their political strategy – the moral transformation of the French republican family and, by extension, the French nation.
CHAPTER TWO
FRENCH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE THROUGH 1855

In the first volume of Mon Journal, a children’s publication which made its debut in October 1881, a dialogue by Charles Defodon introduced the new periodical and provided a clear outline of particular aspects of French children’s literature as of this date. In this exchange, two siblings discuss what they would like to see in a children’s periodical.

LITTLE PAUL: My own newspaper, well then! Why shouldn’t I have one? Dad has one; my big brother does too.

LOUISE: Mom has her own newspaper as well. I’ll have mine, just like Mom.

LITTLE PAUL: Oh yes! And my newspaper won’t have…, you know, the things that make dad yell so loud sometimes.

LOUISE: No, but it will include lovely stories, stories that make you cry.

LITTLE PAUL: I prefer stories that make you laugh.

LOUISE: Well, it could include both.

LITTLE PAUL: And there will be all sorts of pictures. I like looking at pictures almost as much as I like eating jam.

LOUISE: I like pictures; but I also really like jam. What I like even more is riddles. Our journal will also teach us games, games that are new to us, that way we won’t have to always play the same ones.

LITTLE PAUL: That will be fun! But I also want my newspaper to include those things that dad says little boys must learn to become knowledgeable.

LOUISE: And little girls too.

LITTLE PAUL: I don’t ask for more than to become knowledgeable, as long as I’m having fun.

LOUISE: Of course we’ll have fun since our newspaper is made that way on purpose. Teacher told me that she would reward me with a copy and that, if she was unhappy with me, she would not give it to me any more; you can understand how hard I’m going to work.

LITTLE PAUL: And me too! My newspaper! My newspaper!
LOUISE: My newspaper! My newspaper!

POSTMAN, at the door: Here you are, miss! Here you are, son!]

As this excerpt illustrates, by the second half of the nineteenth century, creators of French children’s literature clearly understood well-established, specific aspects of the genre. They aimed to address both boys and girls (usually of the middle and upper social classes), featured children engaged in their daily lives and social relationships, utilized a dialogue form and copious illustrations, intended to impart ethical instruction in an entertaining manner, and drew on children’s emotions in order to convey such messages effectively. Furthermore, authors and publishers meant for children to read these texts at home as an exercise in literacy.

This chapter traces the main axes of historical development in French children’s literature to demonstrate that republican authors and publishers during the late nineteenth century appropriated and adapted existing – mostly religious – models to shape and promote an agenda of secular principles for future generations. Editors and authors who wanted to advance a republican political program drew on an accessible, didactically-charged and religiously-based corpus in an attempt to replace the moral authority of the Catholic Church with one rooted in the laïque values of individual, family and nation. The models republican reformers inherited were short, illustrated, overtly edifying but amusing tales featuring individuals – children themselves often served as central characters – engaged in daily life. This style and shared content had developed in the preceding centuries, primarily around texts designed for religious education. As a result, while claiming to encourage individualism by adopting these models, republicans reproduced an authoritarian, top-down mode of correct behavior in which family and nation replaced the Catholic Church.

European-wide social and cultural phenomenon produced a specific historical context in which children’s literature – including that in France – could emerge and develop. Two basic preconditions were necessary: enough literate children and sufficient wealth within an interested social group. The Enlightenment with its re-evaluation of childhood as a particular phase of life and a vision of children themselves as malleable social beings with particular emotional needs and intellectual capacities underlay the development of entertaining and didactic children’s books in Europe. Authors of these texts aimed to shape child readers along the lines of contemporary religious, social and cultural ideals. Over the course of the eighteenth century, numerous intellectuals embraced the Enlightenment’s edifying scheme which emphasized the personal and rational development of individuals.

One route to individual development was through the printed word. A key feature of the Enlightenment era was an increase in consumption of reading materials and many European nations experienced a general expansion of their elite reading public. Capitalist print culture – with its increasingly affordable and efficient printing techniques, standardized formats and wider distribution possibilities – meant that books could reach a larger and more socially-diverse audience, although the majority of readers remained members of the middle and upper middle classes into the nineteenth century. An augmentation in printed materials coincided with the emergent and growing bourgeois classes. Early on this social group, with its developing political power, demonstrated a commitment to educating their children in part in order to assure the continuation of their economic and social ascension. Enlightenment thought concerning children’s education was that it should be more widespread and target both intellectual and moral development; a reflection of the Enlightenment’s pairing of reason and virtue in the name of
progress. This dual objective remained an essential element as a European children’s literature with a shared foundation in terms of both style and content came into being.

From its earliest phases, French children’s literature was decidedly international. This was largely due to the genre’s collective pedagogical objective of moral and social didacticism rooted in Christianity and a common folkloric tradition. Throughout the eighteenth century French functioned as the language of European elites and wealthy families employed French governesses and précepteurs. In this way Madame Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780) came to write and publish **Magasin des enfants** (1756) in London for her young English charges.63

However, the pan-European character of children’s literature also resulted from the widespread practice and popularity of translations and adaptations. This reciprocal exchange functioned in multiple directions, facilitating the circulation of children’s texts and contributing to the creation of a young reading public with shared models, references and genres. By the mid-eighteenth century French writers regularly translated works – mostly from English and German – since they found these publications’ tone particularly appropriate for their young readers. The English author Madame Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743-1825) published **Lessons for Children** between 1778 and 1779 which was subsequently translated into French, and the Abbé Louis Gaultier (1746-1818) adapted works by Madame Barbauld and several other English authors for translation.

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his Petit Livre des enfants de trois ans. Perhaps most exemplary of this international translation of books for children was the German author Christian Felix Weisse (1726-1804) and his periodical for young readers, Der Kinderfreund (1775-1782). Popular French children’s author Arnaud Berquin (1747-1791) borrowed from Weisse not only the idea for a volume of short stories for children but also the title – L’Ami des enfans – and the majority of Weisse’s tales.

In turn, Berquin’s well-liked children’s publication was translated into English, Italian, and Spanish. Similarly, Weisse included borrowed and translated stories in his children’s editorial collection. “Ein Weihnachtsgeschenk für die Jugend.” He published German versions of Madame de Genlis’ Veillées du château in 1784 and Thomas Day’s The History of Little Jack around 1793. Ample evidence exists that French children’s authors – and later specialized publishers – continued throughout the nineteenth century and beyond to incorporate translations in their collections.


68 Although national production of children’s books occupied a more significant place in France in the latter nineteenth century, French editors’ and publishers’ choice of books for adaptation and translation reveals a good deal about individuals’ underlying objectives. The republican editor Pierre-Jules Hetzel, who will be discussed at length in Chapter Three, chose to translate American author Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women – albeit with significant adaptation – in part because of its emphasis on women and the family. He also selected Marko Wovzog’s tale of a young Ukranian girl’s valiant resistance to Russian occupation, Maroussia, for his French audience in 1878 and dedicated the book to the children of Alsace. The publishing house of Charles Delagrange translated the Italian children’s novel by Edmondo De Amicis, Cuore, as Grands Cœurs in 1892. This tale of a young primary school boy certainly appealed to republican sensibilities for public education as the national route to civic and familial values. See Mariella Colin, “La littérature d’enfance et de jeunesse en France et en Italie au XIXe siècle: Traductions et influences,” Chroniques Italiennes 30 (February 1992): 22. For a theoretical approach to the importance of translations in comparative children’s literature, see O’Sullivan, Comparative Children’s Literature, 3.
The shared socio-historical context outlined above explains why western children’s literature, beginning with its earliest texts, was effectively European in nature. Due to this common heritage rooted in Christianity, the Enlightenment and Romanticism, the emergence and evolution of bourgeois society, progress in print culture and the extension of literacy through education, European children’s literature was replete with mutual influences and contained numerous shared narrative and thematic characteristics. Stories were for the most part short, emphasized learning to read, featured child protagonists, included dialogue, and ended with a moral dictum; all were designed to teach. Beyond these stylistic aspects, storybooks conveyed similar cultural messages in a more entertaining manner than classic school texts. They encouraged appropriate behaviour by emphasizing value-laden themes such as filial piety and obedience, the satisfaction of charitable actions, the moral benefits of hard work, the role of the individual in the family and in society, the importance of honesty, and respect for nature.

However, due to the sometimes complex storytelling employed by the author, child readers surely perceived contradictory messages. One relatively clear and consistent international theme was to present children with behavioral models to ensure social stability during a time when Europeans were experiencing significant social and economic change. Due largely to the bourgeois class’s influence and interest in the genre of moralizing children’s literature, writers regularly featured class and gender-specific social interactions and limited social change in their stories for young readers. In France, as elsewhere, the number of publications for girls grew

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71 Over the course of the eighteenth century social relations became central in defining moral behavior as the reasons deployed to justify good behavior shifted away from religion and toward the communal – eventually national – good. Individual usefulness and satisfaction were increasingly found in social relationships.
significantly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, evidence of an increased interest in female education.72

Alongside these common themes throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries writers for children also incorporated nation-specific elements into their work such as place and character names, cultural references, and social specificity. Authors produced narrative content to suit their intended national audience and occasionally changed geographical and historic details thereby making even translations somewhat “national” products. French children’s literature developed in culturally-specific ways and innovations occurred in response to political circumstances, changes in social conditions, and educational interests.

From the very beginning, the creators of French children’s literature intended to educate; they insisted on presenting children with overwhelmingly ideological tales and religious messages. In its earliest form, French children’s literary culture reflected a combination of oral tradition and religious instruction.73 As early as Louis XIV’s reign (1643-1715), books written for children began to take on a distinct form and developed parallel to evolving understandings of childhood.

Prior to the French Revolution a small number of authors specialized in literature intended for use by young readers [à l’usage de la jeunesse].74 The market for amusing and

72 See Havelange, “La Littérature Destinée aux Demoiselles, 1750-1830,” in Le magasin des enfants, 24-39 and “La littérature à l’usage des demoiselles, 1750-1830” (Thèse de 3e cycle, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1984). Late eighteenth-century European interest in girls’ education is further evidenced by pedagogical publications such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Thoughts on the education of daughters (London: Joseph Johnson, 1787); Mme de Genlis, Projet d’une école rurale pour l’éducation des filles (Paris: Maradan, 1801) and multiple new editions of Fénelon’s and Madame de Lambert’s writings on the education of demoiselles.

73 In terms of literature, early “children’s culture” was a combination of proverbs, stories and tales along with almanacs, holy pictures, tales of chivalry, the Roman de Renart, the chronicles of Gargantua, and the lives of Saints that became part of the child’s world via chapbooks. Educators considered chapbooks as home-based complements to the subjects of rhetoric, Latin, and Aesop’s fables as taught in school. See Jean Perrot, “France,” in International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature, ed. Peter Hunt (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 718.

74 This phrase does not mean that authors wrote these works with children’s particular needs in mind but rather that educators considered such volumes appropriate for instruction. Attention to the educational, developmental and
educational *amusants et instructifs* works expanded during the nineteenth century thanks to the growth of an “enlightened bourgeoisie” preoccupied with raising and educating their children. Economic gains, and the social mobility this allowed the bourgeois class, contributed to the development of the “angel in the house” ideal for women. Mothers therefore played a key role in their children’s instruction, both formal lessons and religious formation.\textsuperscript{75}

Early contributions to French children’s literature include works written for the aristocracy. French prelate, theologian, and author François Fénelon (1651-1715) began to write for royal children after establishing himself as an important and respected clergyman in King Louis XIV’s court.\textsuperscript{76} The second of three children, Fénelon was ordained in 1677 around the age of 25. He joined the Society of Saint Sulpice whose primary purpose was the education of priests which set him on a clear course of commitment to religious and academic training. Because he was a gifted orator, the Catholic Church selected him for the particular mission of converting Huguenots after the King revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Upon completion of this high-profile task Fénelon cultivated personal relationships with several well-placed families at the French court. These included the Duchess of Beauvilliers who had eight daughters and for whom – after she asked for Fénelon’s advice on raising them – in 1685 he wrote *Traité de...*
His connections at court ultimately led to his selection as tutor of the Dauphin’s eldest son in 1689. As royal précepteur Fénelon wrote Les Aventures de Télémaque between 1692 and 1693 for the Duke of Burgundy, Louis XIV’s grandson. Fénelon wrote this lively didactic novel in order to educate the young duke. He employed the voyage format as a means for discovery and to convey knowledge.

Over a half-century later, in 1758, Mme Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780) published a collection of stories for children as Magasin des enfants. Employed as a governess in aristocratic English families, she too wrote in order to facilitate the task of educating her young charges. Mme Leprince de Beaumont introduced two enduring aspects to the developing genre. She used the stylistic tool of dialogues between a governess and her pupils to convey her ideas instead of the existing straight-forward narrative employed by most authors. And, she replaced adult models with actual child protagonists in stories intended for them to read. In addition to these texts written by tutors for noble families’ children, throughout the eighteenth century privileged children learned to read thanks to alphabet books [abécédaries], collections of stories on Saints’ lives and catechisms. The instructive nature of children’s books – especially to teach literacy and behavioral ideals – was present from at least the début of the eighteenth century and remained so.

77 The Duchess de Beauvilliers’ father, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, was Louis XIV’s finance minister from 1665-1683. Traité de l’éducation des filles was published in 1687.
Short tales were also considered suitable children’s reading material early on. The book series *Bibliothèque Bleue* provided young readers with appropriately short and educational texts. This inexpensive book series, first published in the seventeenth century, rapidly established a sizeable market including child readers. Paving the way for later educational works for children, the content of the *Bibliothèque Bleue* incorporated “instructional works” such as alphabet books, guides to good conduct and correct manners [civilités], with tales, fables, chivalric romances, lives of saints, histories, burlesques and legends. Itinerant hawkers of low-priced, usually inspirational literature known as “colporteurs” peddled *Bibliothèque Bleue* volumes throughout France. Printed on low-quality paper, colporteurs sold these blue-covered books to their target audience, those who lacked sufficient funds to purchase more expensive reading materials. They went from town to town selling their literary wares: novels, cheap journals, new and used books of all types. The *Bibliothèque Bleue* provided a primary source of literature for the popular classes and even those who could not read enjoyed the engraved illustrations. These volumes of short tales appealed to all audiences – both adults and children – and remained available up until the mid-nineteenth century, selling millions.\(^{80}\)

Many scholars consider Charles Perrault’s fairy tales [contes] to be the oldest precursors to popular French children’s literature, and numerous publishers edited and re-published them into the twentieth century. When Perrault published *Histoires, ou Contes du Temps Passé* in 1697, the volume met with immediate success. Perrault (1628-1703) wrote down existing, well-

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known folk tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Puss in Boots,” and “Cinderella.” However, while he intended children to read his contes, he did not write them specifically for young readers. Rather, in order to appeal to his intended audience, the author placed his stories in the era of the ancien régime, and his narratives, in part, reflect aristocratic ideals. Significantly, in terms of linguistic practices, Perrault’s contes present France as a unified nation with a common language.

When Perrault’s contes were first published, critics dismissed them as “popular” literature. Indeed, even the contemporary Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française, prefaced by Perrault himself in 1694, defined fairy tales as “foolish stories such as those told by old people and which entertain children.” While overtly critical of Perrault’s narratives, denoting them as unworthy of literary adults, this definition indicates that as early as the seventeenth century, children could expect to enjoy stories. In spite of this critical reception, Perrault’s tales nevertheless began a long-standing tradition of associating simple, moralizing and pleasant stories with appropriate reading material for children.

83 Authors published numerous collections of contes throughout the seventeenth century. Most notably, Contes nouveaux ou les Fées à la mode (Paris: Vve de T. Girard, 1698) by Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, baroness of Aulnoy (1650-1705) which included the tales “The bluebird,” “The white cat,” and “The yellow dwarf.” Also, Henriette-Julie de Castelnau Murat (1670-1716) published Contes de fées (Paris: C. Barbin, 1698) and Charlotte-Rose de Caumont la Force (1650-1724) produced Les contes des contes (Paris: Simon Bernard, 1698). La Fontaine published his first collection of 124 fables, Fables Choisies, in 1668 and dedicated them to the French Dauphin, the six-year-old son of Louis XIV. In 1976 psychologist Bruno Bettelheim elaborated on the interpretation that fairytales served a moralizing and socially-civilizing role in children’s development. He viewed Perrault’s tales as presenting universal and enduring concerns about fundamental psychic issues such as sexual awareness, maturity, sibling rivalry, and parental jealousy. As such, Bettelheim argued, reading these texts served to help children deal with particular emotions and offered them imaginative and escapist means for self-construction. See Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment.
While numerous texts included in the Bibliothèque Bleue and Perrault’s fairy tales served as pleasurable and edifying reading for children, this was not their primary intent. In aiming to define what constituted effective reading material for children, Fénelon first recognized the pedagogical advantage of amusement and implicitly employed it in his writing. In 1687, Fénelon encouraged writers and educators to utilize engaging distraction to achieve educational aims. “Children passionately love ridiculous tales; we can see them every day transported with joy or weeping tears at the tale of the adventures recounted to them; do not fail to exploit this tendency; when you see that they are ready to listen to you, tell them a short and pretty tale; … show them your serious objective.”

Fénelon’s reflection contributed to the development of a clear philosophy of children’s literature throughout the nineteenth century. This dual role – entertaining and moralizing – remained essential to children’s literature.

Didactic, short, and enjoyable tales flourished throughout the eighteenth century, too, and many French children certainly read them. These contributions included Les Mille et un quarts d’heure, contes tartares (1723) by Thomas-Simon Gueulette, a translation of A Thousand and One Nights (1726) by Antoine Galland, and the previously mentioned tales by Madame Leprince de Beaumont, including La Belle et la bête. In 1785, the Cabinet des fées appeared, providing a reader’s compilation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century contes by publishing the best tales. Educators used these volumes widely.

Innovations in educational theory and philosophy also influenced the growth, content and form of literature specific to young audiences. In France during the seventeenth and eighteenth

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centuries, both John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are worthy of note. The English philosopher and “psychologist” Locke (1632-1704) wrote *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), which Pierre Coste translated into French in 1695 as *De l’éducation des Enfants*. Locke first called attention to the importance of using images to hold children’s attention while educating them. Over sixty years later, French *philosophe* Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) further emphasized the centrality of reading and the use images in his influential theory of education. Rousseau did not write *for* but *about* children and contributed to modern understandings of childhood education with his 1762 treatise, *Émile, ou de l’éducation*. Although he privileged life experience as the best route to personal development, Rousseau also portrayed reading as a path to maturity. Rousseau allowed his protagonist one book as part of his learning environment. Emile’s only reading material is Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the model for future adventure stories. The fact that Rousseau’s hugely influential text on children’s education included a central role for children’s leisure reading codified the link between pedagogy and pleasurable reading.

In *Émile* Rousseau acknowledged and highlighted the specificity of childhood. He portrayed youth as a stage in individual development with unique demands, abilities and predilections. Certainly, *Émile* influenced the development of French children’s literature over the next century. Most particularly, while Rousseau appears to encourage the autonomous act of reading as a means of self-discovery, Émile’s teacher selects the appropriate text. Adult

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mediation of children’s reading would remain central. Many high-Enlightenment authors wrote especially for children, albeit for young princes and the children of aristocrats. Tutors, governesses, and précepteurs, thus wrote numerous engaging and informative books for their students. In the generation that followed the appearance of Émile, publishers produced works – such as Madme de Genlis’ works and Berquin’s L’Ami des enfans – that increasingly took children’s distinctive identity into account.

Greatly influenced by Rousseau’s theories on “indirect education” [instructions indirectes], Madame de Genlis (1746-1830) wrote Adèle et Théodore ou Lettres sur l’éducation (1782) for readers between ages ten and thirteen. Like Rousseau’s Émile, de Genlis’ child protagonists, Adèle and Théodore, have a serious and austere learning environment. As Rousseau suggested, de Genlis incorporated reading for enjoyment into the children’s structured educational setting. This inclusion indicates the author’s awareness of reading’s multiple benefits – edification and pleasure. Within de Genlis’ tale, Adèle and Théodore read an amusing story that delivered a clear instructive message. In doing so, the narrative presented her child readers with a mirror – children reading. In this way she allowed children the opportunity to identify themselves in what they read.

De Genlis in the 1780s underscored the utility of garnering readers’ interest to teach good behavior, stating that, “There is no moral subject that cannot be treated with charm and no moral book is useful if it is boring.” [Il n’y a point de sujet moral qu’on ne puisse traiter avec

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Furthermore, she was aware of the utility of writing interesting texts that would serve to convey such messages to those who read simply for distraction. “Even a reader who does not want to improve nor be taught, and who reads these works for entertainment, through the act of reading them improves, is taught in spite of himself: in this case these books are truly useful.” The tactic of presenting ethics lessons as leisure reading proved useful for later writers too.

As a teacher, de Genlis recognized the effectiveness of using engaging texts to teach appropriate actions, and she bemoaned the fantastical elements of fairy tales, preferring that her readers identify with their actual surroundings. She knew that touching children’s emotions provided a sure way to transmit messages. “When one speaks to the heart, one is sure to be listened to.” [Lorsqu’on parle au cœur, on est sûr d’être écouté.] One of de Genlis’ works for children, Veillées du Château (1784), included a variety of tales designed so that her intended audience of noble children would recognize their own potential flaws. She incorporated the narrator’s interactions with the child audience into the text, creating a personal and intimate context that children would be familiar with. While these stories included classic messages warning children about the dangers of disobedience, laziness, and vanity, de Genlis’ contribution to the evolution of French children’s literature lies in the novelty of emphasizing child readers’ uniqueness by structuring her stories around children’s daily lives.

On the eve of the French Revolution, Madame de Genlis’ contemporary, the educator Arnaud Berquin (1747-1791), published L’Ami des enfans in twelve volumes between 1782
and 1783. This popular children’s magazine introduced play dialogues for young readers’
pleasure and learning. Berquin perceived a need to produce stories other than fantasy fairy tales
for children and in so doing he revolutionized the genre. In similar fashion to Madame de
Genlis, Berquin innovatively designed value-themed tales to reflect and penetrate the center of
the child’s world – the family home. After 1855 this motif flourished, and the secular context of
behavioral messages came to the fore. Although early nineteenth-century values lost an overt
connection to Catholic religious practices, Berquin’s notion of targeting children with moral
messages in the home environment endured as a central element in French children’s fiction
throughout the 1800s. Berquin’s texts remained on publishers’ catalogues into the early
twentieth century.\footnote{Arnaud Berquin, Conversations et historiettes de Berquin (Tours: A. Mame et fils, 1905); L’Ami des enfants, with
an introduction by M.L. Tarsot (Paris: H. Laurens, 1907); L’Ami des enfants: Récits et dialogues choisis (Paris: E.
Guérin, 1910); Contes de Berquin (Tours: A. Mame et fils, 1922).}

Berquin firmly rooted his short fictional stories for children in Christian principles. This
clearly defined niche continued to develop, and authors increasingly wrote exclusively for
children; in France, Berquin was the first to do so.\footnote{Interestingly, little secondary literature on Berquin exists. See Escarpit, Arnaud Berquin, 1747-1791; Angus
Martin, “Notes sur L’Ami des enfants de Berquin et la littérature enfantine en France aux alentours de 1780,” Dix-
In contrast to prevailing tastes, Berquin
rejected fairy tales as appropriate reading material for the young.\footnote{See, for example, “Le Ramoneur” in which Berquin overtly criticizes servants for scaring children by telling them
fairy tales. In this story young Angélique screams and runs when the chimney sweep arrives because her servant has
told her frightening tales about a black-faced man. Berquin begins his account with the words, “Une servante
imbécile avait farci l’esprit des enfants de ses maîtres, de mille contes ridicules sur un homme à tête noire.” Œuvres
complètes de Berquin, new ed., vol. I (Paris: Masson et Yonet, Libraires, 1829), 152-54.} He found contes irrational
and their overtly didactic sermons tiresome. The author met with success when he produced
short dramatic narratives that incorporated a moral bent, known as *historiettes*. These tales were fundamentally different from fantastical and heroic fairy tales. Composed in a lively, realistic style, they did not feature heroes but rather children themselves placed not in extreme circumstances but in common settings in which they faced the challenges presented by everyday activities.

Berquin explained that, as opposed to the fantasy and adventures presented in fairy tales, he used familiar surroundings so that children could identify themselves and thus rendered his desired message accessible and seemingly attainable to the intended audience.

… [T]hey will find herein only adventures they can observe everyday in the bosom of their families. The sentiments we seek to inspire in them are most assuredly not beyond the force of their souls: we set them among their own kind, with their parents, with their playmates, with the servants who surround them, with the animals they are accustomed to seeing. They express themselves in their own simple, innocent language.

Berquin’s chosen emphasis on the reality of children’s daily lives allowed him to accomplish two objectives. Because children found the intimate environment described to be familiar, these stories’ messages had the potential to touch children’s emotions profoundly. And, this context served to accentuate the link between everyday challenges and the development of decent character in children.

While these challenges may appear simple on the surface – the disadvantages of disorder, the personal rewards of honesty – Berquin’s stories include sophisticated implications for social relationships. In his 1783 story, “Les Bottes crottées,” Berquin uses the narrative of a spoiled boy who insists on having his shoes cleaned by a servant but ends up doing it himself in order to

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99 From *L’Ami des Enfants* (Paris: L. Mame-Delaunay, 1822), representative titles include: “L’homme est bien comme il est,” “Fi! Le Vilain Charmant,” and “La Petite Babillarde.” See also Latzarus, *La Littérature enfantine en France*, 56, who states the author intended some of his works for adolescents and even parents, such as “Sandford et Merton,” “Petit Grandisson,” “Introduction familière à la connaissance de la nature,” and “Livre de Famille.”

convey the message that regardless of social class, all work and those who perform such tasks, have inherent value and deserve respect.\textsuperscript{101} The father’s remark to his son summarizes the tale’s primary lesson, “That will teach you, young sir, … how cruel it is to belittle services that are useful to our well-being. You should lessen the severity of your words by using a fair tone and by treating others with a good deal of respect.”\textsuperscript{102} And yet, in spite of the appreciation the boy learns from this experience, the servant willingly returns to his daily responsibilities the very next day.

A social conservative, Berquin advocated maintaining the status quo but regularly rewarded children’s honorable actions regardless of their social class. In “L’Agneau” (1783), a poor peasant girl, Fanchonnette, encounters a dying lamb and compassionately cares for it through its convalescence.\textsuperscript{103} Once the sheep recovers its health, the girl receives a reward for her kindness when the sheep gives birth. In short measure, the girl finds herself responsible for a small flock that provides her family with milk and wool. Although Franchonnette’s social position does not change, thanks to her kindhearted act she gains a concrete advantage for her family. Berquin similarly encouraged fortunate children to share what they possessed with those in need through stories such as “La Petite Glaneuse,” in which the noble Beauval children save a young girl from her miserable circumstances. However, Berquin simultaneously counseled resignation and acceptance in those who received charity.\textsuperscript{104} Berquin subtly presented the idea that individuals should not want possessions or roles unfitting to their station, since these

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., “L’Agneau,” 175-77.
acquisitions would surely not lead to the satisfaction and happiness they desired. Berquin consistently presented his aristocratic child readers with a familiar world of social relationships in which by engaging in dignified acts they could benefit society and retain their advantaged position. This aspect of charitable children introduced by Berquin in the early 1780s carried over into children’s books of the nineteenth century, providing evidence of continuity in the depiction of class relationships.

Although Berquin chose to make socially advantaged children his central characters, he portrayed them convincingly. The author wrote of girls impatient to see their newborn baby brother eat, talk and play, children who learn to appreciate and respect their parents’ efforts, charitable children, boys who steal birds out of their nests, and disobedient children who eat cherries in the garden. He wrote about human relationships with animals, which children found sometimes difficult, but usually emotionally satisfying. Even negative interactions with animals led children to recognize aspects of their character in need of improvement. Berquin also consistently presented gender-specific appropriate manners. He encouraged cleanliness for boys and docile, manual tasks such as sewing for girls.

Through his protagonists’ difficulties and successes, Berquin challenged his readers to improve their character. In his stories, Berquin depicted greedy, gluttonous, lazy, violent, disobedient and hypocritical children. But he portrayed these individuals in turn as sensitive,

105 In fact, even in stories dealing exclusively with privileged children, Berquin underlines the fact that possessions did not always bring contentment. Instead, following basic Christian teachings, he aimed to show the dangers of a preoccupation with material possessions.
charitable, loyal, direct, wise and capable of change. Children’s poor behavior often led to unpleasant consequences, and as a result they learned that virtue, the intention of goodness or being well born, was not always enough; they needed routinely to choose good actions.

Berquin’s intention to link actively deeds and ethical integrity can also be seen in his story “Le Cerisier.”109 In this story a brother and sister who are normally obedient, good children get carried away by the temptation of ripened cherries in the garden and, briefly forgetting their mother’s request, eat some. Recognizing their error, the children confess what they have done to their mother. Touched by their honesty, she willingly forgives them. The children’s act of admission and their mother’s benevolent response clearly demonstrated the benefits that would result from cultivating one’s decent character.

Rather than encouraging children to act correctly in order to earn God’s favor and for the privilege of salvation, Berquin presented his teachings with a bit more complexity and familiar context than had earlier writers. Berquin aimed to persuade children to behave well for themselves, their families and their communities. He offered relatively uncomplicated ethical lessons and made the utility of these messages his primary aim. Readers found the usefulness of Berquin’s texts in his messages about social relationships. Ultimately, Berquin’s efforts on children’s behalf served to benefit the nation by aiming to shape children into mature, responsible individuals who as adults would contribute to France’s greatness. His contemporaries recognized the larger implications of Berquin’s personal commitment “…to plant in young minds all that can purify them, bring them to maturity; and successfully lead childhood on flower-covered paths, to man’s dignity, to the citizen’s greatest attributes that are the inexhaustible source of the public’s assets and the nation’s glory!”110 Berquin’s protégé, Jean-

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Nicolas Bouilly, wrote this description in order to praise his mentor’s contribution to his chosen task of shaping France’s most valuable resource, her future citizens.

As is well-known, the French Revolution of the 1790s generated a popular preoccupation with creating a new French citizen. The revolutionary objective had repercussions for the cultural and social view of children as well as the content of children’s books.\textsuperscript{111} Although the emphasis of books from this era remained teaching morality in an amusing way and encouraging positive social relations, children’s authors increasingly tailored their works to reflect changing national interests. An upstanding member of society became important because such a citizen would benefit the nation, e.g. the new Republic.

Shaping future citizens became a general political concern. To this end the newly established republic focused its efforts on setting up a more democratic system of national education with programs in reading and civics. Authors of reading material for children produced content designed to create the “New Man.” Whereas before the Revolution ABC books emphasized traditional Catholic values through reading lessons, literally using the words “Christian, parishioner, and faith” [\textit{Chrétien, paroissien, et foi}], following the Revolution lessons commonly employed “citizen, patriotism, and fraternity” [\textit{citoyen, patriotisme et fraternité}].\textsuperscript{112} Although the content changed in order to emphasize republican values, post-Revolutionary ABC books generally maintained the format of earlier volumes. Alphabet \textit{Chrétien, ou Instruction}


\textsuperscript{112} Alphabet ingénieux, historique et amusant, pour les jeunes enfants, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Paris: Ph. D. Langlois, 1774); Alphabet sans-culotte, avec lequel les jeunes républicains français, de l’un et de l’autre sexe, peuvent apprendre à lire en peint de temps (Paris: Debarle, 1793 or 1794, year II of the République); ABC, pour les Petits Enfans, selon l’instruction et l’ancien usage de l’Église Catholique (Strasbourg: Jean-François Le Roux, 1789); L’Alphabet français, à l’usage des petits Enfans, pour leur apprendre à épeler et à bien lire (Paris: chez les marchands, libraires, merciers, papetiers et épiciers, 1793 or 1794, year II of the République); Napoléon Landais, \textit{Syllabaire Républicain, pour les enfants du premier âge} (Paris: Chez Aubry, 1793 or 1794, year II of the République).
pour la jeunesse, for example, presented simple letters and syllables followed by pages of texts for children to read, including Church prayers, the Ten Commandments, and a Litany of Mary.\textsuperscript{113} The Alphabet républicain français maintained this format to the letter but replaced textual content with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, the French Oath [\textit{Le Serment Français}], and the Republican Calendar.\textsuperscript{114} This adaptation of content to the times while preserving the format was a marked trend; authors of children’s books continued to produce reading material for ethical instruction but the ideological substance of this education changed radically.

A 1795 article from the \textit{Journal de Paris} provides additional evidence of this mix of narrative continuity and essential change in pre- and post-Revolutionary works for children. In an article written to recommend appropriate post-Revolution reading material for children, the anonymous author specifies that the books he suggests are the logical continuation of Berquin’s tales. In particular a review for \textit{le citoyen} Ducray-Duminil’s \textit{Les Soirées de la Chaumière, ou les Leçons du vieux père} recommends that children read Ducray-Duminil’s \textit{Lolotte et Fanfan} and \textit{Alexis, ou la Maisonnette dans les bois} and that adults concerned about and involved in children’s education should continue to give them Berquin’s \textit{L’Ami des Enfans} because all of these works rely on the same basic content, maintain the same objective, and up to a certain point employ the same method, “good and healthy morality put into practice, watered down in stories for children to enjoy” [\textit{la bonne & saine morale mise en action, délaiée dans des historiettes qui

\textsuperscript{113} Alphabet Chrétien, ou Instruction pour la jeunesse (Lyon: Les Frères Perisse, 1760).
\textsuperscript{114} Alphabet républicain français (Paris: Rue Thibautodé, 1793 or 1794, year II of the République); Alphabet constitutionnel, rédigé à la portée des Enfans, de l’un et de l’autre sexe, pour leur apprendre à lire en peu de temps et les élever dans les principes de la Nouvelle Constitution (Paris: Chez Charbonnier, 1793); Élémens du Jeune Républicain, Alphabet composé d’après le projet présenté à la Convention nationale, pour honorer l’Être-Suprême, pour célébrer les Vertus Républicaines et les Fêtes Décadaires, etc. (Paris: chez tous les libraires et marchands de nouveautés, 1793 or 1794, year II of the République).
This review from 1795 demonstrates that revolutionary writers for children like Ducray-Duminil adapted existing behavior and literary models and applied them to the revolutionary era.

In addition to changes in the content of children’s reading material, Revolutionary thinking brought about new ways of looking at children and reading based on creating an ideal French citizen. The bourgeoisie found itself in a new and tenuous position of political authority and faced the urgent need to guarantee the future of its victory and of republican institutions. To reach this objective, political culture greatly emphasized the moral education of its future citizenry. The permanent nature of literacy – once acquired, this skill cannot be unlearned – gradually became central to teaching French citizenship. Due to the Revolution’s effect on class relationships, children’s education now included consideration of the malleability of social relations. Many children’s authors now began to incorporate increasingly secular principles in their works and presented more democratic social relationships to their readers while developing the central role of literacy in citizenship formation.

Writing just after the French Revolution, Jean-Nicolas Bouilly (1763-1842), for the first time placed children’s social relations at the center of his writings. Bouilly, a politician and *homme de lettres* active in Tours during the Revolution, was Berquin’s student and disciple. He began writing for children in order to help educate his own young daughter and quickly discovered his gift for story telling. Bouilly’s *Contes à ma Fille* (1809) met with enormous

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success. The imperial ministry of education soon asked Bouilly to write for schoolchildren and during the Bourbon Restoration years, the French court requested that he write for and tutor the royal family. As a result, Bouilly produced *Contes offerts aux Enfants de France* (1824) for King Charles X’s grandchildren, the future Duchesse de Parme and her brother, the future Comte de Chambord. Although decidedly preachy, Bouilly wrote engaging and emotionally moving texts in a fluid and eloquent style.

This self-proclaimed liberal’s texts include a sense of hope for a more egalitarian society via democratic relationships among children of different social classes. However, although he considered social rank as somewhat flexible and praised individual character traits over the idea of only upper classes possessing an innate good nature, Bouilly’s work almost exclusively featured privileged society. Like Berquin before him, the poor and working classes appear in Bouilly’s work as accepting of their lot and capable of developing the constructive aspects of their individual character for the well-being of the community.

Through enjoyable and realistic short stories featuring children as protagonists, Bouilly aimed to draw his readers’ attention to the elements of a virtuous character. Writing most of his stories during the years of the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy, Bouilly varied his tone depending on whether he intended his text for his daughter or for the royal children, but he consistently advised his young readers how to avoid common faults. Bouilly wrote of children’s commendable qualities alongside their errors and recognized their mistakes as occasional.

Stories in the vein of “L’Hospitalité” and “Les Voisines de campagne” written in the late 1830s

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118 The popularity of Bouilly’s instructional works led his editor to convince him to publish a compilation of his texts, “Récitations morales,” which had appeared in the children’s periodical *Dimanche des Enfants* in 1840 and 1841. An anthology of these works, Bouilly's final publication, appeared as *Les Jeunes Élèves* (Paris: Vve Louis Janet, [1841]). Latzarus, 65.
emphasized the everyday virtues required for successful relationships among classes, including humility, manners, simplicity, and avoiding the pitfalls of arrogance and jealousy. Bouilly’s stories advised children to make concerted efforts to beware of false friends, to practice generosity, to obey one’s parents, to avoid selfishness, and to live honestly. In his tales written specifically for the royal children beginning in the 1820s, noble status must be deserved and royalty have a responsibility to care for their people.

Bouilly’s innovative depiction of social relations in transformation while demonstrating what constitutes desirable conduct can also be seen in his 1813 story “Le Petit Dîner, ou les amies de pension.” In order to demonstrate correct behavior, Bouilly often emphasized the foundation of difficulties that arose between aristocratic or bourgeois children. This particular tale features Céline and Olympe, two girls who become separated socially when Olympe’s father receives a promotion and her circumstances improve. Although Céline tries to maintain their friendship, Olympe feels increasingly superior and embarrassed about her less fortunate friend and tries to hide her longtime friendship with Céline. Bouilly successfully accentuates Olympe’s naïve scorn and tendency to want to overpower her less fortunate friend. The change in Olympe’s attitude leads her to invite Céline to dine in a bedroom rather than join the family’s dinner party downstairs. While Olympe feels guilty, embarrassed and ashamed about her selfish

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actions, Céline’s father encourages the end of his daughter’s friendship with such a prideful girl in the interest of Céline’s self respect.122

As instructions for the Duchesse du Berry’s children, Louise and Henri d’Artois, Bouilly penned an entire collection of stories attentive to the characteristics of royalty.123 With subtle variation, these tales included principles quite similar to those Bouilly offered his other readers. While admirable attributes were intrinsic, all children had to work on improving their character. This attests to Bouilly’s ability to represent the contemporary social changes he witnessed or hoped for; just as social relations had changed as a result of the French Revolution, so had ideas about a sovereign’s desirable qualities. To a certain extent, the sought-after qualities of French citizens mirrored those now attributed to royalty. According to Bouilly, post-revolution monarchs should be: modest, benevolent, conscientious, authentic, and deserving of their people’s love. He also encouraged them to avoid the historic hazards of flattery, detachment, carelessness and pride. Through his stories Bouilly in the 1820s provided models that encouraged the royal children to live up to the role granted them.

Bouilly made the stories he wrote for the young prince and princess attractive so that they could recognize themselves – thus, the princess recited La Fontaine to the German ambassador and the young prince read tales of the hardships of war and the king’s role therein.124 Bouilly ascribed undesirable traits such as arrogance and unfairness to foreign kings while French kings and princes overflowed with praiseworthy characteristics.125 The royal children could therefore

122 In another example, Bouilly emphasized the harmful aspects of girls’ jealousy through the story of Melanie who invites her friend Estelle to the countryside and then proceeds to ignore her once she becomes aware that Estelle’s talents and natural goodness exceed her own. See “Les Devoirs de l’hospitalité,” Contes à mes petites amies, 202-18.
123 Bouilly, Contes offerts aux enfants de France. Bouilly first published this volume in 1824.
124 See “La Fable de la Fontaine” in Contes offerts aux enfants de France, 135-51 and “Le Lit-de-Camp” in Contes offerts aux enfants de France, part two, 47-76.
discern their privileged position as French royalty. Regardless of their social position, royal children in Bouilly’s tales are kind, fair and considerate of others. In “Le Bonnet de grenadier,” a young prince and princess carefully replace a sleeping soldier’s hat to avoid his being sunburned. The king’s nephew’s personal generosity toward those less fortunate is presented in “Chacun son Tour,” and Bouilly portrayed the royal children as selfless and capable of bringing about physical healing in “Le Vieux Précepteur,” when the children visit their sick tutor and bring about his recovery.

A transitional figure in the evolution of French children’s literature, Bouilly successfully adapted Berquin’s attention to social class to the democratic promise of the French Revolution while maintaining his primary objective, namely educating children through entertaining literature. By placing children at the center of moral-themed tales about malleable social interactions, Bouilly led the way in anticipating the possibility of peaceful social change through children. Through the portrayal of relatively democratic relationships among children – and between children of other social classes – Bouilly’s stories reflect his aspirations for a less rigid social organization, or at least a reform of aristocracy. This element is particularly evident in Contes offerts aux enfants de France, written for aristocratic children, since he consistently placed his protagonists in situations where they could observe and sometimes facilitate improved circumstances for deserving subjects. Bouilly’s hopes for increased social equality in the decades following the revolution are further evidenced by his attribution of shared honorable characteristics among all children. Regardless of social rank and hereditary birth, the individuals in these stories share the same inner qualities and constantly work to improve themselves.

French children’s authors throughout the nineteenth century elaborated on and adapted the themes of ideological and social regeneration first presented by Bouilly.
Historical events at the turn of the century continued to exert a direct effect on children’s literature; the Napoléonic era brought about changes in national education that increased available reading material for children. Following the Revolution, Napoléon’s administrative agendas helped pave the way for fundamental content changes in and the democratic expansion of access to children’s literature by allowing individuals to earn social mobility via a “state diploma” [le diplôme d’État] rather than by birthright. Napoléon’s centralized Empire also assured a market for textbook publishers since education became standardized and progressively obligatory. Napoléon’s reign, however, had a mixed effect on children’s literature itself. Bonaparte’s coup d’état and the establishment of the Consulate and later the Empire introduced an era of political repression in France. This climate severely limited innovative writing and publishing; censorship was strict.

The restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy in 1815 provided a limited reprieve from heavy-handed state control. Other gradual changes in the French book business indicate that by the early nineteenth century, publishing flourished. Numerous history of the book specialists concur that between 1730 and 1830 the number of readers in France rose from approximately seven to twelve million, and the quantity of printed matter increased between five and tenfold. The production of children’s literature increased within this context of generally expanding literacy and book production in France. During this era of expansion, the July Revolution of 1830 established France’s first constitutional monarchy when Louis-Philippe ascended the

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126 Napoléon enacted several educational reforms that allowed for successful middle class careers including a May 1, 1802 decree that established a state-run lycée system designed to prepare future civil servants and military officers; the May 10, 1806 creation of the l’Université Impériale; and a March 17, 1808 decree organizing the l’Université Impériale. See Jacques-Olivier Boudon, ed., Napoléon et les lycées. Enseignement et société en Europe au début du XIXe siècle (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions-Fondation Napoléon, 2004); Prost, Histoire de l’enseignement en France: 1800-1967, 23-26 and 89-91; and Mayeur, De la Révolution à l’école républicaine, 68, 74-76, and 80-85.

Methods of image reproduction had progressed significantly by 1830. As early as the late seventeenth century, pedagogues recognized that illustrations could serve a vital role in reading material given to children by stimulating their imagination. However, the technical difficulties and elevated cost of image reproduction limited their widespread use prior to the 1830s. Increased feasibility and cost-effectiveness of producing illustrations proved vital for the development of children’s literature. Most significant was improving the technique of wood cuts [gravure sur bois]. By using a more precise cutting tool (one previously used with copper), engravers produced detailed images in wood blocks. The symmetry and standardization of these blocks allowed printers to use them with printing machines. Publishers could now print thousands of images using one wood block engraving and a mechanized press. By 1837 the process of chromolithography, in which a steam-driven printing press produced multi-colored prints, replaced the need to color prints by hand. These developments made it reasonable for publishers to include numerous illustrations and the production of children’s picture albums flourished. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, children’s literature became inextricably identified with the inclusion of multiple illustrations.

128 These factors included: an expanded readership due to the growing wealth of the middle classes, a flourishing book trade, the introduction of new distribution methods, mechanized printing techniques, improved image reproduction methods and, up to 1835, a relatively tolerant government with respect to caricature censorship.


130 In 1866 Brisset invented the “presse lithographique” making it possible to produce tens of thousands of prints.
The emergence of publishers specializing in children’s literature constituted another significant transformation by the 1830s. Publishers such as Pierre Blanchard and Alexis Eymery identified themselves as “educational booksellers” [libraries d’éducation] or “children’s and youth booksellers” [libraries de l’enfance et de la jeunesse]. General publishing houses developed easily identifiable editorial series for this emerging market distinguished by the standardization of bindings, size and similar-looking covers. The French state had a heavy hand in the production and sale of the new “recreational books” [les livres récréatifs] that experienced a boom from 1820-1830. These multiple forces converged to produce a distinct body of literature for French children as publishers oriented their production towards the middle and upper classes.

Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century, all the necessary elements were in place to produce edifying and amusing children’s literature in large volume. In order to insure this success, however, the economic base for such an endeavor had to be shored up. The requisite economic foundation developed in tandem with a general rise in reading and the purchase of books by a wider public. Market strategies in the publishing industry evolved rapidly as French literary culture blossomed. The popularity of reading rooms, the establishment of bookstalls in train stations, and a plethora of publicity posters all attest to publishers’ success in expanding the

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131 Editors were fundamental to literary and publishing changes in the nineteenth century. Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin even call it “the era of editors” in the title of volume III of their Histoire de l’édition française. This period, beginning in the first third of the century, witnessed the development of a new role for and an increased importance of the individual person of “editor” in making books successful. In addition to early editors Blanchard and Eymery, Louis Hachette and Pierre-Jules Hetzel serve as examples of this shift in the production of children’s literature within the French publishing industry during the latter nineteenth century. See also Havelange, Le magasin des enfants, 53-55 and 128.

132 “Everything is in place: the only thing missing was a market that would insure children’s literature the economic foundations for its ‘golden age’.” [Tout est en place: il ne manqué plus qu’un marché qui assure à la littérature de jeunesse les assises économiques de son ‘âge d’or’]. Encyclopædia Universalis: Corpus 13 (Jérémie-Lorrain) (Paris: Encyclopædia Universalis, 1995), s.v. “Jeunesse, littérature pour la jeunesse,” by Marc Soriano.
reading public. Their objectives of course were not strictly altruistic. Publishers invested a great deal of effort in making sure their volumes sold. As the scholar Jean-Paul Gourévitch observes, “If a book did not find an audience, the publisher would change the title or structure, or explain to buyers how the book was better than others. The public had to be persuaded that this purchase was a bankable investment for acquiring knowledge as well as for the enjoyment it would bring.” Publishers made concerted efforts to create public interest in their books, and children’s publishing was no exception.

Other social and cultural factors contributed to the eventual emergence of a viable children’s market. French society – particularly bourgeois society – increasingly considered children as culturally valuable, both individually and collectively. The child became “the purpose of all types of investment: emotional, naturally, but also economic, educational and existential” as Michelle Perrot remarks. Changing perceptions of children’s value translated into more specific definitions of their personal needs in terms of their emotional and physical well being. Children’s clothes, toys, furniture, images, activities, and particularly books became specialized industries. Increased attention to children and their unique needs was primarily an upper-class, urban phenomenon. At the same time, the labor needs of the Industrial Revolution exploited France’s poorer children. But the passage of a law in 1841 regulating factory work for all children over eight began to address the abusive conditions of child labor. The enactment of this labor law and subsequent education laws illustrate that gradually the French public considered children from all social classes to be worthy of national investment.

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137 Weissbach, Child Labor Reform in Nineteenth-Century France.
Increased attention to children’s importance for the nation led to the need to instruct and educate them in national values. Pedagogues, children’s authors and publishers throughout the nineteenth century believed in and encouraged the idea that mothers should assure their children’s moral education. This view followed from the commonly accepted belief that for effective conveyance personal values depended on an emotional connection. Women willingly and actively took up this role of educational and ideological guide for their children. Books, journals and even curriculum guides flourished in order to assist mothers with their children’s home-based education.

Children’s education at home underscored French mothers’ central role in family life. Lessons in virtuous conduct presented at home provided the requisite emotional link to heart-felt learning. In 1843 Didier published Madame Amable Tastu’s *Éducation maternelle, simples leçons d’une mère à ses enfants*, a thorough guide for mothers educating their children at home. 138 The volume set out a clear pedagogical program for children aged four to ten. Well-organized, Tastu’s lessons included numerous illustrations and focused on the subjects of “reading, writing, geography, religious history, and arithmetic.” Both author and publisher had clear aims, to reinforce the mother’s role as her children’s teacher and primary emotional guide and to instill in children a sense of the central importance of their mothers’ role in helping them shape their character. A typical reading exercise provides evidence of this emphasis.

God cares for me, he listens to my prayers.
Love your creator. Listen to your mother.
Shape your character. Keep your word. Follow your father’s example.

[Dieu a soin de moi, il écoute ma prière. 
Adore ton créateur. Écoute ta mère.]

Educational guides regularly included such passages to be read by mothers to their children and by children themselves once they had learned to read. The repetition of these messages served to reinforce the child’s role within the family and the mother’s role in her child’s character formation via literature.

In addition to instruction at home, children’s formal education by the French state became increasingly important throughout the nineteenth century. The Empire established grammar schools to train the nation’s elite and the Guizot law of 1833 made it obligatory for all communities of more than 500 inhabitants to maintain a primary school for boys. François Guizot (1787-1874) was arguably the leading liberal politician in France during the 1830s and 1840s, and certainly no figure exerted a greater influence on the educational policies of the July Monarchy. Educational reforms enacted under Guizot as Minister of Public Education (1832-1836) guaranteed the future of primary education in France. The Guizot Law contributed to the development of primary education for boys: “the number of schools doubled in twenty years, and the number of pupils rose from 1.4 million to 3.5 million.” This law was a major turning point in French public education and produced, in large part, the reading public publishers had anticipated.

These early educational reforms, however, did not extend to include girls. Female education remained largely in the hands of the Church and the family. As a result girls fortunate enough to receive exposure to children’s literature in the first half of the nineteenth century did so in a more limited way than boys. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s in both available formal

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139 Ibid., 20.
140 A great deal of scholarly work on the history of public education in France exists. See, for example, Yves Gaulupeau, La France à l’école (Paris: Découvertes Gallimard, 1992); Prost, Histoire de l’enseignement en France 1800-1967; and Mayeur, De la Révolution à l’école républicaine, vol. 3 of Histoire générale de l’enseignement.
141 Gaulupeau, La France à l’école, 72.
education and in the realm of informal reading young girls were presented with behavior ideals and moral messages decidedly different from those directed at boys. While authors presented both sexes with models encouraging the development of a work ethic, self-discipline, the importance of sincerity, and respect for social roles, the outcome of these lessons were differentiated along gender lines. For boys, following these recommendations resulted in personal fulfillment and an achieved level of autonomy. The end results for girls, however, were decidedly linked to a positive reflection on the family and personal sacrifice for the common good. Being educated within the home surely reinforced the messages of community girls received.

Not surprisingly, the expansion of children’s education in the 1830s had direct repercussions for children’s literature. Immediately following the passage of the Guizot Law, the Minister of Public Instruction commissioned the publication of a set of school textbooks for use in public schools throughout France. In addition to contributing to the consolidation of an explicit publishing niche, this decision had several specific implications. Differences between formal education texts and books for leisure reading became more pronounced. Since legal reforms rendered public education increasingly mandatory, publishers turned their attention to leisure reading for children. They sought to encourage children to read for pleasure by offering them high-quality reading material, written and illustrated by “known professionals.” At the same time, both the Catholic Church and the national government aimed to increase their

142 For more on the content of literature for girls produced at this time, see Havelange, “La littérature à l’usage des demoiselles, 1750-1830.”
143 See Rogers, 37, who finds significant congruencies in the messages produced in literature for girls and in pedagogical theory at this time.
influence with publishers. And, since more and more students now attended school, market
demand grew for richly bound prize books to give as rewards to the best students.\footnote{144}

Following the Guizot Laws on primary education and the Minister of Public Education’s
book orders in the 1830s, children’s literature began to develop in two distinct areas, school
textbooks \textit{[les manuels scolaires]} and storybooks \textit{[les ouvrages pour la jeunesse]}. Guizot’s
initiatives assured a large market and immediate profits for publishers. Well-established
Catholic publishers\footnote{145} made up one dominating group while the other, less well-known at the
time, included up-and-coming Parisian publishing houses, among them Louis Hachette’s and
Pierre-Jules Hetzel’s businesses, discussed in Chapter Three.\footnote{146}

During the early-nineteenth century – a period literary specialist Jean Perrot refers to as
“the beginning of romanticism” – French literature was marked by a general revival of interest in
stories rooted in popular culture.\footnote{147} Publishers who aimed to develop children’s leisure reading
material manifested this tendency and borrowed and adapted such stories for a young audience.
Drawing from the nation’s rich literary past also corresponded with a more general European
trend of rising nationalism. Charles Nodier’s \textit{La fée aux miettes} (1831) serves as an example.
The new Romantic Movement also contributed works about adolescence: Alexandre Dumas’

\footnotetext{144}{I will discuss the practice and evolution of prize book distribution in greater detail in Chapter Four. The market for these volumes grew alongside the expansion of mandatory public education. In addition, the practice of awarding books changed to include not only the most worthy students but almost all students. See Glénisson, “Le livre pour la jeunesse,” in \textit{Le temps des éditeurs: Du Romantisme à la Belle Époque}, vol. III of \textit{Histoire de l’édition française}, 417-43 and “Du livre de prix au livre de jeunesse, naissance d’une édition spécialisée,” in \textit{Le Livre d’enfance et de jeunesse en France}, ed. Glénisson and Le Men, 13-17.}

\footnotetext{145}{Catholic publishers were often located outside of Paris: Ardant and Barbou in Limoges, Lefort in Lille, Mégard in Rouen, and Mame in Tours. See Michel Manson, ed., \textit{Rouen, le Livre et l’Enfant de 1700 à 1900: la production rouennaise de manuels et de livres pour l’enfance et la jeunesse} (Paris: Institut national de recherché pédagogique, 1993); Manson, “Continuités et ruptures dans l’édition du livre pour la jeunesse à Rouen de 1700 à 1900,” in \textit{Le Livre d’enfance et de jeunesse en France}, ed. Glénisson and Le Men, 93-125; and Mame: Angers-Paris-Tours, deux siècles d’histoire du livre: exposition inaugurale organisée à Tours (Paris, Tours: IMEC/Association Hôtel Mame, Centre culturel, 1989).}

\footnotetext{146}{Parisian publishers, Hachette and Hetzel among them, were largely politically liberal and secular \textit{[laïque]} as we will see in Chapter Three.}

\footnotetext{147}{Perrot, \textit{International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature}, 721.}
The Three Musketeers (1844) and George Sand’s François le Champi (1848) and La Petite Fadette (1849). The most popular form of leisure reading was the novel that portrayed children as protagonists in moral character novels [romans à caractère moral]. While story details and circumstances varied, this particular type of book for young readers (roughly aged 13 to 16) remained popular home-based reading throughout the nineteenth century.

Textual examples of the rise of reading at home proliferated in the early part of the century. In 1827, the Paris-based publisher Librairie de Castel de Courval produced an album for children, La Lanterne Magique: morale et instructive, recueil d’historiettes offert aux enfants. This illustrated album included eleven distinct stories. The unnamed author of La Lanterne Magique employed an original story-telling method that reinforced reading as a home-based, family activity. More specifically, an adult parent takes up the task of mediating children’s reading. In the album’s overall framework, set up in the preface “Soirée de Famille,” the father of a bourgeois family, M. Durand, serves as the narrator and carries on a direct dialogue with his four attentive children. The Durand family has gathered together for an anticipated evening of slide viewing and story telling as M. Durand proceeds to relate the tales contained in the album. Therefore, like the children in the story, the readers of this storybook see the events portrayed in the illustrations unfold in a sort of slide show (la lanterne magique) as they read the accompanying texts.

The stories’ content is fairly predictable. Children from various social classes are portrayed negotiating daily life situations through which they either learn to improve their character, demonstrate commendable behavior and are rewarded, or fail miserably due to an

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inability to reform. One narrative, “Le Petit Paysan,” tells the story of a bourgeois family who meets a poor laborer, Pierre, during a family picnic. A modest, intelligent, hard-working boy, Pierre considers himself in need of nothing. Impressed with Pierre’s acceptance of his humble circumstances and willingness to work, the father decides to pay for the boy’s books and school fees since he considers him worthy of an education. Pierre serves an illustrative counterpoint to the decidedly less deserving noble youth featured in the subsequent story, “Le Riche Paresseux.” In contrast to Pierre, the rich, spoiled Marquis de Gélin is lazy, useless, and needy. He eventually finds himself destitute and orphaned in a country other than France. Even when faced with the dire consequences of his poor decisions, the Marquis is incapable of authentic improvement.

Both Pierre and the Marquis de Gélin served to demonstrate desirable qualities in children. Authors often used a spoiled upper-class personality of either gender in their stories to illustrate negative characteristics to their young readers. Writers effectively used such fictional personalities to highlight that heredity was not solely responsible for good moral fiber and continued to employ this method into the late nineteenth century.

Periodicals also provided venues for children’s stories. Children’s periodicals had already appeared in the eighteenth century, such as the previously mentioned Mme Leprince de Beaumont’s *Magasin des enfans* (1758) and Berquin’s *L’Ami des enfans* (1782). But, due in part to publishers’ intention to carve out a new niche – home-based reading for families – French children’s journals really came into their own in the early nineteenth century. This type of publication had a distinct marketing advantage because, thanks to subscriptions, publishers delivered magazine copies directly into people’s homes – thus creating a stable, reliable market.

150 Ibid., “Le Petit Paysan,” n. pag.
151 Ibid., “Le Riche Paresseux,” n. pag.
Eventually, authors wrote stories in installments with one episode appearing in each edition of the journal. This served to sustain the reader’s interest.

Laurent de Jussieu published *Le Bon Génie, journal des enfants* every Sunday from April 1824 to April 1829. Jussieu served as editor and primary contributor of this four-page, richly illustrated journal for children. The journal’s content presented a decidedly Catholic perspective. In both text and illustration, Jussieu transmitted the journal’s primary objective, to transport children “…into the temple of Religion, Virtue and Study;…”

Children often appeared in the stories as main characters and in the illustrations. The illustration “La Lecture du Soir” shows a maternal figure reading to bourgeois children in front of the warming, well-apportioned kitchen’s fireplace.

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152 Laurent-Pierre de Jussieu was born in 1792 and died in 1866. In its third year, on November 4, 1827, the journal’s title changed to *Le Bon Génie, journal de la jeunesse*. Although *Le Bon Génie* existed for only five years, Jussieu went on to publish additional collections for children such as *Les petits livres du père Lami* that included, “Premières connaissances,” “Historiettes morales,” “Eléments de géographie,” “Histoire sainte,” “Histoire de France,” and “Arts et métiers” (Paris: L. Colas, 1830).


This illustration in fact reveals several interesting aspects of the development of children’s home-based reading. A woman is the person reading aloud to an attentive mixed group of children – both boys and girls of various ages. The youngest listeners are certainly pre-reading age, probably ages one and three, while the artist shows the other children listening agreeably – although they are surely old enough to read themselves – appearing to be between eight and perhaps twelve. As the one who probably chose the book and by animating the text with her voice, the elderly woman serves as the principal mediator of what the children listen to. Since the book’s content is most likely religious, she serves as their proper guide. The artist has made the link between hearth and home implicit. “La Lecture du Soir” demonstrates that reading, as a means to moral education, had become a family activity practiced in the intimate environs of the female-dominated domestic sphere as early as the 1820s.
When René-Louis Desnoyers (1802-1868) published illustrated episodes of *Les aventures de Jean-Paul Choppart* in *Le Journal des enfants* in 1832, he successfully employed a child anti-hero to demonstrate good behavior in a home-based periodical publication.\(^{155}\) Children’s journals such as this allowed authors to publish their novels first in serial form, a popular practice that continued throughout the nineteenth century. Desnoyers was the first to move literature written expressly for children from short didactic tales to novel form. Jean-Paul Choppart, Desnoyers’ fictional protagonist, is far from exemplary; the author succinctly conveys the young bourgeois boy’s intolerable character in the story’s opening pages.

Jean-Paul came from an honest, middle-class family. He had sisters, which was very unfortunate for them; but he did not have any brothers, which was very fortunate for them. Jean-Paul was lazy, greedy, and insolent, he liked to tease, was bad-tempered, fearful, and sly. I would never come to the end if I tried to list all the minor flaws that set Jean-Paul apart,….

Constantly faced with punishments and possessing an insatiable sense of adventure, Jean-Paul eventually runs away from home and ends up living with gypsy circus performers. Desnoyers highlighted the eccentricities of childhood and created in Jean-Paul Choppart an endearing character in spite of his flaws who continually finds himself in ridiculous situations.

More important than providing an early example of quality leisure reading, Desnoyers’ contribution during the 1830s lies in setting out clear criteria for children’s literature. After appearing in series form, Desnoyers’ story became a popular children’s novel first published in

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\(^{155}\) This children’s periodical, similar to Julie Gouraud’s edited publication *Le Journal des Jeunes Personnes* (1833-1868), reflected one of the Guizot Law’s implicit aims, namely to develop reading at home.

1834 that underwent numerous book editions into the twentieth century. The book’s preface, written by its author, outlined his ideas on the essential elements of children’s literature. In defining suitable reading material for children, Desnoyers takes their particular nature into account. The author claimed that with few exceptions, texts written for children up to that point in time were “vacuous, barbaric, useless or dangerous.” He effectively critiqued existing children’s literature by summarizing the primary axes established by the 1830s that would shape the French genre in subsequent years. Desnoyers outlined the basic conditions for children’s storybooks: they should take up age-appropriate themes and not inspire feelings beyond the reader’s age; they should include moral lessons fitting to the era and communicated in ways young readers could identify with; they should use correct French grammar; and they should simultaneously educate and entertain. These criteria continued to guide authors of French children’s literature throughout the nineteenth century.

When writing in 1832, Desnoyers successfully adopted the antecedents posed by Perrault, Fénelon, Berquin and others. By the nineteenth century, then, authors and publishers – although they may have disagreed about particular content – understood that it should contain the elements outlined in the dialogue from the children’s periodical Mon Journal used to open this chapter. They encouraged literacy by providing instruction through engaging texts (touching children’s emotions made learning permanent, and mothers took up this role), addressing both sexes in the framework of their daily home activities, including illustrations to facilitate communication, and emphasizing virtuous conduct in the interest of society and nation. During

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158 Desnoyers’ exceptions included Robinson Crusoe, some textbooks, and religious tracts. He included Berquin’s stories as vacuous and placed fairytales in the dangerous category. Desnoyers, “Preface,” Mésaventures de Jean-Paul Choppart, 10th ed. (Paris: Bernardin-Béchet, 1873), i-iv.
159 Ibid., ii.
the second-half of the nineteenth century, its creators would borrow from the past and continue
to place value-laden messages at the center of home-based leisure reading material.

With the establishment of Louis Napoléon Bonaparte as President of France, in 1848 a
new era of French political history began. During the years of the Second Republic (1848-1852)
and the Second Empire (1852-1870), previous developments in children’s literature and
advances in public education and literacy in France bore fruit. Between the appearance of Les
aventures de Jean-Paul Choppart in book form (1834) and the signing of a contract between the
publishing house Hachette, already specialized in textbooks, and the children’s fiction author the
Comtesse de Ségur in 1855, France’s political landscape transformed, children’s education
expanded and the functions exercised by editors in creating children’s literature peaked. Editors
increasingly played a central role in determining what leisure reading material France’s children
read. Even though the messages they wished to convey differed, religious and secular editors
shared a conception of what appropriate leisure-reading material for children should look like in
form. Authors and publishers then filled children’s books with the ideological lessons they
believed most vital. These storybooks thus became the scene in which debates concerning
shaping the nation’s future morality found expression. Throughout the nineteenth century
authors and editors – primarily in the interest of shaping future French citizens – became
evermore interested in producing quality works for children as this branch of literature truly
came into its own as a tool of citizenship formation.
CHAPTER THREE
THE ROLE OF EDITORS:
MAME, HACHETTE, HETZEL

More than authors, editors played a critical role in shaping the market of French children’s literature in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Influential editors and their publishing houses quickly recognized the economic potential of targeting young people in an era when middle-class parents were increasingly willing and able to invest in their children’s leisure activities and national interest in education was growing. These key figures invested personally and professionally in creating and disseminating new types of reading material intended to inform, educate and mold future French citizens in specific ways. Individual editorial voices became the most significant force within French publishing houses.\textsuperscript{160}

By the mid-nineteenth century, the role of individual editors had become more central than the role of authors in France’s literary production. While in the previous century authors wrote narratives to educate and entertain young readers according to pedagogical objectives, individual editors now chose children’s books as a means to advance their social, political and religious agendas. They recruited writers for pre-determined projects, defined marketing strategy, developed editorial collections, influenced content, selected titles and illustrators, and occasionally served as authors themselves.

In this chapter I focus on the biographies and contributions of three nineteenth-century editors in order to demonstrate the early use of children’s books as either direct or indirect political tools intended to shape future French citizens. Largely as a result of their personal histories and convictions, these editors developed different political and professional agendas. The latter nineteenth century was a period of significant expansion in the editorial realm of

French children’s literature and numerous publishing houses developed this aspect of their production. I have selected the publishers Mame, Hachette and Hetzel since they each helped to define the major trends of the era – textbooks, home-based reading, and periodicals – and because within their children’s publications these editors reflect prevailing trends within nineteenth-century French politics and culture: religion, secularism and republicanism. Alfred Mame was a conservative Catholic, Louis Hachette a socially-conservative and religious Republican, and Pierre-Jules Hetzel an actively engaged Republican. Although their personal politics differed, Mame, Hachette and Hetzel shared a commitment to infusing children’s leisure reading with ethical messages and clear ideas of what type of future citizen would guarantee national unity and political stability. Because these editors also sought to run lucrative businesses, ideology alone did not determine their choices. In the interest of promoting a political agenda to their chosen audience, these men made editorial and marketing decisions that fundamentally shaped the kind of books offered to children.

Two names – Louis Hachette and Pierre-Jules Hetzel – dominate this story. Both came from working-class backgrounds, pursued an advanced education, developed their own publishing empires, attracted authors of great quality, and committed themselves to creating literature capable of opening children’s minds. Louis Hachette founded the publishing house Hachette (still in existence today) in 1826. He variously published school textbooks, home readers, and religious publications. In contrast, the strictly secular publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel,

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161 Today, Hachette continues to publish widely in the areas of school textbooks, parascolaire texts, and children’s fiction. Some titles originally published during the late-nineteenth century, such as works by the Comtesse de Ségur, remain on Hachette’s list. The Hachette publishing house has maintained its longevity in part as a result of an ability to successfully discern prevalent publishing trends and adapt accordingly.
began his publishing career nearly a decade later than Hachette, in 1837. Hachette and Hetzel directed the two top French publishing houses between 1855 and 1900.\footnote{In 1914 Hachette bought out Hetzel. Some nineteenth-century Hetzel titles continue to be published under the Hachette label, such as a 1978 edition of Charles Perrault’s \textit{Contes} that includes reproductions of the 1861 illustrations by Gustave Doré with a pseudonymous preface by Hetzel himself, and a 1994 edition of Hector Malot’s \textit{Sans Famille}, first published in 1878.}

Before turning to these defining contributions to nineteenth-century children’s literature, I will first explore the role played by Catholic editors. Religious publishing houses maintained a prominent role in providing children’s reading material for most of the nineteenth century. Their influence on the genre’s form and content is thus far from negligible. This group’s fortunes altered according to political control, and their ideological task became more urgent when faced with the popular rise of Republicanism. Throughout the nineteenth century the Catholic Church, with various degrees of success, made insistent efforts to reclaim the moral and political authority it had lost after the French Revolution. The Church’s repeated attempts to maintain and even extend its influence over children’s formal education served as a prime feature of this objective. In addition, Catholic publishers increasingly added the area of leisure reading for children to their editorial programs in order to match republican efforts to influence family life.

The political interests of Catholic and secular publishers alike and their supporters became increasingly intense over the course of the century. Political fluctuations and social instability meant that children’s books became a veritable battlefield for the hearts and minds of French children and their families. Ironically, however, both camps produced surprisingly similar literature. All publications developed for children emphasized correct behavior and social stability via high-minded novels and periodicals intended as home-based reading material.

Traditionally, Catholic publishers produced religious works for children, such as prayer books, compilations of stories of saints’ lives, and religious education texts or \textit{catéchisme}. 
During the early part of the nineteenth century, when the Catholic Church held a primary role in the French system of national education, religious publishers also produced school textbooks. These included books for teaching history, language, and science, usually with a moral bent. Numerous well-established Catholic publishing houses existed by the mid-nineteenth century. For the most part, the larger ones were located outside of Paris: Ardant and Barbou in Limoges, Lefort in Lille, Mégard in Rouen, Pelagaud and Perisse in Lyon. Within the capital city, smaller Catholic publishers tended to congregate in the area around Saint-Sulpice in the 6\textsuperscript{th} arrondissement. When secular publishers began to produce textbooks for the national education system in the 1830s, they built upon the foundations of pedagogical literature established by religious publishers and included messages of principles. In addition, by mid-century, as secular textbook publishers began to encroach on Catholic publishers’ privileged domain, religious editors adapted their practices to face this new challenge and increasingly produced children’s fiction.

**Alfred Mame**

The publishing house of Mame was the most productive Catholic publisher of children’s books. Located in the city of Tours, Mame evolved from the family-owned businesses of printers and booksellers. Charles-Pierre Mame (1747-1825) became the town’s official printer around 1767.\footnote{A fire during World War II (1940) destroyed the Mame archives so a modern history of the publisher does not exist. Using indirect sources, scholars have determined that after becoming the town’s printer, Charles-Pierre Mame opened a bookstore in Angers in 1778, set up a press in 1781 and acquired a second establishment in Tours in 1796 that his son Armand ran. Eric Perrin, *Histoire de l’imprimerie Mame* (Saumur: Éditions Au fil des Mots, 2005), 13-27; Sophie Malavieille, *Reliures et Cartonnages d’éditeurs France aux XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle: 1815-1865* (Paris: Promodis, 1985), 57-62; Mame, Angers-Paris-Tours: Deux siècles d’histoire du livre; and Claude Savart, *Les Catholiques en France au XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle: le témoignage du livre religieux* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 135-40. For the business practices and impact of the French Revolution on Charles-Pierre Mame, see Jérome Letortu, “L’imprimeur Charles-Pierre Mame (1747-1825), ou l’ascension d’un opportuniste angevin,” *Recherches vendéennes* 8 (2001): 109-32.} His son Armand (1776-1848) set up a printing-publishing house in Tours in
1796 that specialized in prize books, holiday gift books, religious books and especially *les missels*, church prayer books. Armand’s son Alfred (1811-1893) modernized and transformed the family business so that by mid-century Mame was the largest French publishing house of its kind.\(^{164}\) Mame’s production grew from three million volumes in 1849 to six million in 1862.\(^{165}\) The publisher’s specialized areas continued to include religious works (*missels, catéchisme*), books for educating children, and schoolbooks (*livres de lecture, livres de prix*).

Although not actively engaged in politics, Alfred Mame – a strict, practicing Catholic – allowed his religious principles to guide his publishing endeavours. By the mid-nineteenth century, his publishing house was particularly well-known for its religious and pedagogical texts. The company published a large list of these texts – for adults as well as for children at both primary and secondary levels of schooling. As an editor and a businessman, he understood that storybooks designed for children should appeal to them aesthetically. This was especially true for prize books that rewarded students’ academic success. Mame insisted on an attractive design so that the physical object would make children want to earn them and draw in parents who would purchase them. Some parents even sought after pretty volumes in order to display them on home bookshelves. Consequently, using bright colors such as royal blue, bright red and green embossed in gold on both the covers and the spine, Mame created a desirable object linked to children’s learning and their parents’ desire to show off. The publisher produced relatively small volumes, considered appropriate for children’s little hands, and his publications featured multiple...
engraved illustrations, on average five per volume, also fitting for children. Most Catholic publishers did not include illustrations in their children’s storybooks, primarily due to the cost. By mid-century, however, Mame modernized the genre by publishing hundreds of books with engravings and bound with ornamental, full-color illustrated covers. With these changes in bookbinding and illustrations, Mame fundamentally changed the physical appearance of children’s literature.

Most religious publishers benefited from mid-nineteenth-century political conservatism and state interest in children’s education. Particularly after the founding of the Second Republic and passing of the Falloux Laws in 1850, Catholic publishers enjoyed increased orders for school texts and *livres de prix* from the conservative imperial government. These editors also maintained a practical advantage over their secular counterparts; whereas religious publishers sometimes dabbled in mainstream themes, secular publishers tended to avoid religious topics completely.

Alfred Mame was at the head of the Mame publishing house when the Falloux Law passed. Having already established Mame as the premier Catholic publishing house, especially for *livres de prix* and school textbooks, Mame was assured by the passage of this law a decided advantage in putting books in children’s hands and homes. Part of the conservative regime of Napoléon III, the Falloux Law reinforced the role of the Catholic Church and its

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167 The Falloux Law of 1850 established a predominant and favoured role for the clergy in education. This translated into advantageous sales for religious publishers, most especially for the well-established and reputable Mame. See Savart, “Le livre religieux,” in *Histoire de l’édition française*, vol. III, 405.
responsibility in public education. This increased influence of the Church was primarily seen in the inclusion of ecclesiastic representatives on consells at both the local and national levels and in the presence of clergy as teachers. In turn the traditionalist nature of the Empire allowed numerous moral and Catholic collections published by Mame and other provincial publishers to flourish.

Mame was the first to develop and market a true editorial collection for children. Original works in his Bibliothèque de la jeunesse chrétienne appeared in 1839. Additional collections targeting divergent groups of young readers followed, and secular publishers adopted this practice. Mame also published the Bibliothèque des petits enfants, Bibliothèque des écoles chrétiennes, and Bibliothèque de l’enfance chrétienne. In order to succeed with these collections, Mame recruited a range of suitable authors, advertised specific titles, integrated illustrations, and even adapted the popular secular themes of science and history. A number of Mame’s titles suggest the didactic tenor of these narratives. These translate as, Paul, or the dangers of a weak character (1839), Louise, or First Communion (1850), Marie de Langeville, or Christian resignation (1875), Poachers, or the dangerous consequences of anger and teasing (1838), and The Abandoned (1898). Alfred Mame himself declared late in life how proud he

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168 Relatively few titles appeared before 1839, although the collection apparently already existed in 1836 and came to an end in 1898. The Archbishop of Tours’ approval appeared on all titles in the collection; Mame printed “Approuvée par Mgr L’Archevêque de Tours,” on the title page. Titles published in the collection in 1839 include: Théophile Ménard, Ferréol, ou les Passions vaincues par la religion (Tours: Mame, 1839); Washington Irving, Voyages et découvertes des compagnons de Colomb, trans. Henri Lebrun (Tours: Mame, 1839); and François Valentin, Voyages et aventures de Lapérouse (Tours: Mame, 1839).

169 Arthur Mangin, Merveilles de l’industrie. Machines à vapeur – Bateaux à vapeur – Chemin de fer, 9th ed., Bibliothèque de la Jeunesse Chrétienne (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1875); Arthur Mangin, Les Mystères de l’océan (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1868); Arthur Mangin, L’Air et le monde aérien, 2nd ed. (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1865); M. Todière, Histoire de Charles VIII (Tours: Mame, 1866); L’Abbé Bourassé, Archéologie chrétienne, ou précis de l’histoire des monuments religieux du Moyen Âge (Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1867). Catholic publishers also tended to publish works related to the natural sciences. In contrast to strict scientific explanations offered by non-religious texts, religious works maintained and emphasized a role for God as creator of the natural world. See Parinet, 76.

170 M. l’Abbé Guérinet, Paul, ou les dangers d’un caractère faible, Bibliothèque de la jeunesse chrétienne (Tours: Alfred Mame et Cie., 1839); Abbé Vincellet, Louise, ou la première communion, 3rd ed., Bibliothèque des écoles
felt of maintaining proper content in his publications. “What I find reassuring and comforting is that throughout my long career I never printed a word against religion or morality; rather, I always aimed to support them.”

Alfred Mame was not an overtly political individual. He never held a political office nor affiliated himself exclusively with a particular government. Nevertheless, as the primary provider of school and prize books for national education programs, his personal Catholic convictions played a part in shaping future citizens. Mame located his publishing house in the city of Tours in the Loire Valley, well outside Paris. Using broad-based distribution strategies, his reading public consisted of both urban and rural religious families. A Catholic publisher who primarily sold to religious institutions, Mame’s content differed markedly from that of secular publishers like Hachette and Hetzel. Mame’s fictional publications emphasized the stability of family and proper social roles, the importance of Catholic religion in daily life, and the assumption that individuals found it difficult to engage in good behavior and therefore needed God’s assistance. Problems result in these stories when individuals leave their rural environment for the city or abandon their religious practices and find themselves too weak to resist “worldly” temptations and various forms of bad behavior. On the other hand, these characters find meaningful and positive resolution among family when they maintain their correct social roles, and when they grant God a predominant role in their daily lives.

No Mame publication better illustrates this combination of themes than Paul, ou les dangers d’un caractère faible: histoire religieuse et morale by the Abbot Guérinet. This story

chrétiennes, approved by Mgr l’évêque de Nevers (Tours: Mame et Cie, 1850); Stéphanie Ory, Marie de Langleville, ou la résignation chrétienne, Bibliothèque de la jeunesse chrétienne (Tours: Alfred Mame, 1875); Louis Friedel, Les Braconniers, ou les dangereux effets de la colère et de la Taquinerie (Tours: Mame, 1838); Fortuné-Louis Méaulle, Délaissée (Tours: Mame, 1898).

171 Alfred Mame, as cited by A. du Saussois, Alfred Mame: Célèbre imprimeur et éditeur-libraire français (Lille: Imprimerie de l’Orphelinat de Don Bosco, 1898), n. pag.
of two young boys, Paul and Julien, from dissimilar social classes, depicts the central role of religion in determining individual behavior. The orphan of a wealthy country farmer, Paul, after promising his dying father that he will never abandon the Catholic faith, eventually does so, goes to Paris and winds up in debtor’s prison. Thanks to the selfless intervention of his childhood friend Julien, Paul resumes his religious practices and returns to the countryside and a life of happiness.

This tale evidences several key themes of Mame’s religious fiction for young readers. Like contemporaneous secular publications, Mame’s fiction also features children as principle characters. The young protagonist Paul finds himself unable to resist lying, gambling and inappropriate relationships after abandoning his religious practices, leaving his provincial home and becoming caught up in all that Paris offers. By means of the voice of Julien, who insists in the story’s last pages that only hard work and religion can provide a better way to live, the author attributes Paul’s errors to his weak character, it is in the end the young man’s personal effort and faith that have “…corrected the defects nature placed in you.” Although Paul is weak in character, he is basically good at heart. But, without religion, family, and country values, he will never maintain good behavior.

The author writes in a rather heavy-handed narrative style; occasional asides concerning the importance of religion occupy a good deal of the volume but do little to advance the story. The author characterizes Paul’s father, Monsieur Jean Thibault, in the following manner.

He liked to offer relief to those who were destitute and provide work for the laborers, for the heads of families; he spread good values and healthy doctrines by distributing short religious texts among the poorer classes in which Catholic faith and morality put into

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172 Guérinet, Paul, ou les dangers d’un caractère faible. A second text of interest that tells a similar story but with a female protagonist is Méaulle, Délaissée.
173 Ibid., 282.
action and freed from their dogmatic structures, insinuated themselves more solidly into people’s hearts and became beloved principles.  

In the course of this pointed description, the author conjured up a religious model of an individual dedicated to disseminating his Catholic faith, particularly among the needy working classes.

Between the 1830s and the 1860s, Mame produced less engaging fictional works for children than did secular publishers. Due to the publisher’s primary goal of conveying religious teachings, creative narrative aspects often suffered. This resulted in Mame’s authors creating flat characters and placing them in stories that contained very little suspense or interesting story lines. Plot lines generally remained underdeveloped in favor of clearly presenting religious dogma to readers. The depiction of work marks a fundamental difference between secular and religious children’s fictional literature. While Catholic authors portrayed hard work as virtuous and worthwhile because it served to keep one away from bad behavior and temptation, secular authors presented hard work as admirable because it led to individual and national progress even though within both groups of stories, characters rarely move from one social class to another as a result of their personal efforts.

The Mame publishing house came to the production of periodicals for children rather late. Perhaps in an attempt to recapture some of its lost market, Mame started the weekly La Revue Mame: Journal Hebdomadaire de la famille in 1894. This journal strongly resembled its secular equivalents and presented weekly fictional instalments, travel accounts, poetry, current events, and multiple illustrations, but with a decidedly religious bent. This contribution demonstrates the type of borrowing that took place between religious and secular publishers.

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174 Ibid., 1-2.
175 *La Revue Mame* debuted two years after Alfred Mame’s death and ran for fifteen years. The final edition appeared on September 30, 1909.
While the format of Mame’s journal undoubtedly replicated secular models, its creators developed content that promoted religious principles.

As an example of Catholic publishing, then, Mame embodied these editors’ contributions. Catholic publishers such as Mame produced aesthetically appealing, illustrated volumes on a large scale for children. The growing prize book industry for primary schools accounted for this investment. Mame also introduced the first editorial collection for children. Secular publishers grew in popularity throughout the nineteenth century, and they adopted and adapted publishing formulas introduced by Alfred Mame.

When the Third Republic was founded in September 1870, the French book market had already begun to secularise, but Catholic publishers continued to enjoy a strong presence in the children’s market. However, especially from the 1880s on, most Catholic publishers experienced a decline in production. Educational reforms had much to do with this change. As Minister of Public Education, the fire-breathing Jules Ferry passed laws pertaining to the secularisation of public education between 1881 and 1882. As a result Catholic publishers’ textbook sales, and the youth and livres de prix market they had grown to count on, suffered since the government no longer placed orders with them. Secular publishers, on the other hand, benefited greatly from these educational reforms and national ideological changes.

**Louis Hachette**

Hachette and Delagrave published a variety of texts to prepare students of all ages in history, civics and reading. The content of these new books varied only slightly from the religious editions. They continued to emphasize good behavior, knowledge of France’s past and

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176 During the Third Republic, of the five publishing houses that, between 1875 and 1906, published over 800 children’s books titles, four were Catholic. Hachette placed third with 1,485 titles, while Mame published nearly 2,300 titles during these years. See Parinet, 89.
appreciation for classic texts. However, any overt mention of God and religion was largely absent and, if present, confined to the end of the text. Secular editors further distinguished their editions from Catholic ones by boldly placing phrases that denoted their professionalism, credibility, and authority on the covers. In addition to setting themselves apart from Catholic publishing houses, this practice by secular editors served to stake their claim to national approval. Hachette’s *Cours de grammaire française, fondé sur l’histoire de la langue, théorie et exercises* proudly announced “produced in accordance with July 27, 1882 programs” above the book’s title itself and tellingly listed the authors’ credentials and status as members of the Académie Française.\(^\text{177}\) Because they were produced in greater print runs, secular textbooks cost slightly less than their religious equivalents making them more appealing to schools. After the passage of Ferry’s education laws, Hachette soon replaced Mame as the primary provider of *livres de prix* and *livres d’étrennes*.\(^\text{178}\) Hachette offered works with an appropriate moral content, albeit secular, which from the 1880s on coincided with France’s republican schools’ guiding philosophy. While Catholic publishers had successfully addressed school-age children’s reading needs, they had virtually ignored the area of reading material for very young children learning to read, the growing popularity of illustrated albums, and children’s periodicals purchased by individual consumers.\(^\text{179}\) In these areas as well Hachette dominated.

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\(^\text{178}\) *Étrennes* refers to the French tradition of giving children gifts at the end of the calendar year. In addition to Hachette, other secular publishers developed school texts such as Belin, publisher of G. Bruno’s *Francinet* (1869) and *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* (1877), Larousse, who published reference materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, and Delagrave.

\(^\text{179}\) Mame only began to publish a children’s/family periodical in 1894, over thirty years after numerous secular journals had already appeared. *La Revue Mame* ran from 1894 to 1909.
At first Louis Hachette (1800-1864) had lower sales figures than Mame, but by the mid-
1800s he had become a nationally recognized publisher. Hachette’s output ranged from adult
fiction, classical fiction, religious texts, and children’s fiction (both books and periodicals), to
school textbooks. This broad variety meant that by mid-century, Hachette held a large portion of
the French publishing market.

Although he developed a publishing empire, Louis Hachette had working-class origins.
His mother was a washerwoman. She worked for the Lycée Imperial, and Hachette benefited
from an education at this prestigious institution from 1809 to 1819. Even though educational and
professional interests led Hachette in the direction of a career in secondary-education, political
changes intervened in the fall of 1822. In September 1822 the government closed the teacher’s
college Hachette planned to attend, the École Normale, effectively shutting the door on his
chosen career path. Further, as the Bourbon government became increasingly clerical and
conservative, individuals more sympathetic to the Catholic Church replaced many liberal
teachers. Disappointed but realistic, Hachette looked for another career that corresponded to his
education, as well as his personal and professional aims and objectives. In 1823, he began to
study law while working as a private tutor but shortly thereafter his professional trajectory
changed once again. This time, however, it was solely due to his personal initiative. In 1826,
when he was scheduled to take his law exams, Hachette decided to borrow money and after
taking over an existing bookseller’s collection, he opened his own bookstore. Jacques-François
Brédife’s collection included a mere six volumes, but for Hachette, obtaining the license (brevet)
to publish and sell books counted more than the small stock he gained. Business began
modestly but progressed quickly, and by 1828, the Bibliographie de la France listed Hachette as

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180 Biographical accounts include: Mistler, La Librairie Hachette; Mollier, Louis Hachette, and Parinet, 199-216.
181 Mistler, 31-33.
the publisher of twenty-nine new educational titles.\footnote{Bibliographie de la France, 1828 and Hachette catalogues. Twenty-nine new titles put Hachette in the same category as other established publishers of the time – Renouard, Marie-Nyon, Brunot-Labbé and Louis Colas – but behind Delalain, who published forty-six new titles, apparently conservative for this particular publishing house which published sixty in 1827 and sixty-five in 1829. Mollier, Louis Hachette, 128.} Indirectly he had found his way back into the educational domain and actively recruited authors to write secondary-school level texts. With the introduction of mandatory national primary and secondary education, this rapidly developing market soon exploded.\footnote{Several laws concerning national education passed in the years that followed. Taking primary education away from the authority of the clergy, the Loi Guizot passed on June 28, 1833 reorganizing primary education, and the government passed the Loi Falloux concerning primary education on March 15, 1850. See Furet and Ozouf, Lire et écrire, 116-75, 271-75 and 286-90; Prost, Histoire de l’enseignement en France, 91-99, 105 and 173-75; and Mayeur, De la Révolution à l’École républicaine, Vol. 3, Histoire générale de l’enseignement, 334-47 and 349-55.}

Hachette had decided advantages when it came to publishing textbooks; given his background, he knew his subject well. He competently discerned appropriate reading material for this age group (approximately ten- to fourteen-year-olds) and had well-developed ideas about what types of texts to publish. This clearly defined sense of purpose allowed him to come up with ideas that matched French middle schools’ developing needs and to find talented authors willing to place their trust in a debutant publisher. The closing of the École Normale had blocked his route to formal teaching, but Hachette’s choice to publish educational texts indicates that he achieved at least some of his goals by other means. He adopted as his motto the Latin phrase “Sic quoque docebo,” or “Thus, I shall teach.”\footnote{Dès le début, il s’était donné cette devise: Sic quoque docebo, ‘de cette façon j’enseignerai encore’.” Buisson, ed., Dictionnaire de Pédagogie et d’Instruction Primaire, Part 1, volume 1, s.v. “Hachette,” by Charles Defodon, 1237.}

Hachette used his knowledge of the world of French education to publish works for teachers as well.\footnote{Although Hachette missed his chance to train as a teacher due to the closing of the École Normale, the institution reopened four years later on March 9, 1826 as the École Préparatoire. With the continued growth of French mandatory public education throughout the 1830s and 1840s, ever increasing numbers of students required more and more teachers trained at all levels. Increased enrollments also meant a need for more textbooks.} He correctly perceived that secondary teachers needed to communicate with one another and in July 1827 began to publish Lycée, journal de l’instruction, rédigé par une
société de professeurs, d’anciens élèves de l’École Normale, de savants et de gens de lettres.

This edited newsletter allowed Hachette to accomplish several things simultaneously. He established a network of potential authors, advertised his own publications, and ran paid ads that brought in some money. The publication resulted in advantageous professional connections, including with Ambroise Rendu, the “royal advisor on public instruction.” Through Rendu, Hachette confirmed the opening up of a considerable publishing niche, elementary school textbooks. As a result, Hachette began to reorient his editorial policy to emphasize elementary education by signing new authors, commissioning the publication of general reference works such as Géographie à l’usage des écoles primaires by Ansart, Tabletes chronologiques by Soulise and the very popular Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires by himself and Rendu, and by purchasing titles from his competition that had proven successful for elementary students.186

Hachette and Rendu’s Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires (1831) reflects the emerging publishing and political trends of the July Monarchy. The French publishing business did not consider Hachette a Catholic editor, yet his texts were not completely devoid of religious content such as that which later secular publishers would produce. Hachette intended this particular text primarily as an elementary school reader, but he made it available for sale to both individuals and institutions. In it he presented young readers with a fusion of religious and more liberal, republican values. The first part of the book, for instance, emphasized pronunciation in which the words “soul,” “God,” “bishop,” “Christ,” and “mass”

186 Louis Hachette and Ambroise Rendu, Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires (Paris: Hachette, 1831). This volume sold for about half the price of existing similar texts. Hachette sold the text for 0.30 francs broché and 0.35 francs cartonné. The government ordered over one million copies to give to publicly educated disadvantaged school children even before the Guizot Law of 1833 made elementary education mandatory, turning Hachette’s text into an immediate “best seller.” The commercial success of the text continued after 1833 when classes grew and incoming students were obliged to have the same volume as the rest of the class. Furet and Ozouf, Lire et écrire, 165-66.
[âme, Dieu, évêque, Christ, messe] appear intermingled with “citizen,” “France,” “liberty,” “popular,” “municipality” and a variety of world place names.\textsuperscript{187} The physical world predominates as the subject of short reading passages with texts on each of the seven continents and the geographical features of rivers, mountains and volcanoes. The book’s authors, however, maintained the primacy of religion by making the first text in the reading section “God – Creation – Man”.\textsuperscript{188} Although this passage is one of the shortest, and one of only two strictly religious texts, its placement indicates the importance attributed to it by the authors.\textsuperscript{189}

Perhaps the most striking example of this accommodation of religious and secular elements in the early years of the July monarchy is the volume’s twenty-fifth reading exercise, “Various Truisms Concerning Behavior” [\textit{Diverses Maximes de Conduite}].\textsuperscript{190} In this section the authors assembled twenty-three sayings about correct conduct for children. The majority of these maxims reflect basic Christian values, such as “honor your father and mother,” “do not lie,” and “do unto others as you would have done unto you.” But, they accomplish this objective with limited direct reference to God and religion. The authors also chose to set new elements alongside these more classic dictums that reveal republican social and political views with their secular content and attention to the individual. Hachette admonished children to work hard, appreciate their social role, and obey their parents and teachers with the affirmations: “Work is both a duty and a pleasure.” “To give is to get: to teach is to learn.” “Thriftiness and tidiness are a credit to one’s tasks.” “Loving one’s circumstances is the way to succeed.” “One often has need
of someone smaller than oneself.” “Teachers represent fathers and mothers; it is correct to obey them.”

Hachette’s genius lay in publishing a reading book made up of short texts appropriate in form and content for primary school children. His 1831 *Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires* served as a successful model for future publications, both textbooks and leisure reading. As his production of children’s literature grew, the editor continued to maintain a delicate balance of secular, republican content alongside an adequate amount of religious substance in order to remain politically acceptable and commercially viable with a variety of audiences.

Despite further momentous changes in national politics in 1830, Hachette shrewdly navigated the book market and maintained the national government as a loyal customer over the next several years. France’s preoccupation with education continued, and the government paid increased attention to the education of younger children, pre-school (three to five years of age) as well as primary (six to ten years of age). Suggested educational reforms corresponded with the ideas Hachette advocated in his newsletter, the *Lycée*. Consequently, his position as a provider of quality textbooks strengthened with the accession of Louis-Philippe. Hachette followed educational trends with interest and his business grew accordingly; he published on average fifty-eight new titles each year between 1833 and 1839. Hachette in fact became the government’s preferred educational publisher; the company benefited from a sizable order for primary school textbooks placed by the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1835.

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191 Ibid.
192 Ibid., 189.
193 Ibid., 189.
194 This order included 500,000 copies of *Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires*; 100,000 copies of *Livret élémentaire de lecture*; and 40,000 copies each of Hippolyte Véron Vernier’s *Petite
thereafter, in response to complaints from the competition, the government decided to share the
textbook market by purchasing from a variety of publishers. In response, and to maintain his
commercial viability, Hachette began to publish in related areas, launching an educational
journal to support France’s emerging nursery schools [salles d’asile] for children between three
and six years old.\textsuperscript{195} Hachette’s financial success during the 1830s also allowed him to pursue
riskier and more expensive projects. Major reference works such as Bouillet’s \textit{Dictionnaire
universel d’histoire et de géographie}, Alexandre, Planche and Defauconpret’s \textit{Dictionnaire
français-grec}, Quicherat’s Latin-French volumes, and Littré’s \textit{Dictionnaire de la langue
française}, cost the publisher a great deal to produce as their public selling prices of between 10
and 23 francs indicate.\textsuperscript{196}

In 1848, national politics affected Hachette’s business again. Although Hachette
remained basically neutral with respect to Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, one particular aspect of
this political shift did concern him: the return to an increased influence of the Catholic Church in

\textit{arithmétique raisonnée à l’usage des écoles primaires}, Achille Meissas and Auguste Michelot’s \textit{Petite géographie
méthodique}, destinée aux enfants du premier âge et aux écoles élémentaires, and Madame Laure Boen de Saint-
Ouen’s \textit{L’histoire de France, depuis l’établissement de la monarchie jusqu’à nos jours}. Details of the impressive
physical size of this order and the publishing house’s effort to fulfill it can be found in Alphonse Langlois, \textit{Notice
historique sur l’origine, la formation et le développement de la Librairie de Monsieur Louis Hachette et Cie à Paris},
Vol. 15, 1868, 28-9. See also Mistler, 49 and Parinet, 202 on this particular order.
\textsuperscript{195} In 1835, Hachette launched the journal \textit{L’Ami de l’enfance, journal des salles d’asile} with curriculum support
from educational experts on these developing institutions.
\textsuperscript{196} Hachette’s other textbooks and reference volumes cost between 1.25 and 3.00 francs (ff) which he made
available in fifteen different page size and binding options in the late 1820s; this added between 0.60 and 4.00 ff to
the book’s cost. In 1846, Bouillet cost 21.00 ff \textit{broché} and 23.00 \textit{en toile} while Quicherat cost 9.00 ff \textit{cartonné en toile}
and 9.50 ff \textit{relié en basane}. Hachette acquired the \textit{Dictionnaire français-grec} from a failing printing company
and bought the pages for only 10.00 ff; he then sold bound volumes for 15.00 ff. Between 1863 and 1869, Hachette
published Littré’s \textit{Dictionnaire de la langue française} in installments that sold for 3.50 ff each bringing the total cost
of the finished work to well over 50.00 ff. Hachette published a fully-bound version in 1869. Marie-Nicolas
Bouillet, \textit{Dictionnaire universel d’histoire et de géographie} (Paris: Hachette, 1842); Charles Alexandre, Joseph
Planche, and Charles Auguste Defauconpret, \textit{Dictionnaire français-grec} (Paris: Hachette, 1842); Louis-Marie
Quicherat, \textit{Dictionnaire latin-français} (Paris: Hachette, 1846), \textit{Dictionnaire français-latin} (Paris: Hachette, 1858);
information drawn from Hachette’s \textit{Catalogue des Livres Classiques: Français, Latin, Grecs, Arabes, Anglais, etc. et
autres ouvrages publiés par L. Hachette & Cie} (Paris: Hachette, 1846) and Otto Lorenz, ed., \textit{Catalogue général de la
Hachette worried that the government would lose its influence over national education and that Catholic editors would take over a significant part of the educational publishing market. He immediately recognized that he could no longer depend primarily on educational publishing but rather had to develop other subject areas less affected by political change. The increased governmental demand for Catholic texts led Hachette to increase his production of non-scholarly children’s storybooks.

Hachette began to branch out into popular reading material. Beginning in 1852, he set up bookstalls in train stations in order to access a wider public, but he remained committed to publishing “morally correct” reading materials. Relative to his overall production Hachette, prior to the 1850s, had published only a limited number of texts for children, most of them intended for classroom use. In addition to *Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires*, he sponsored Ambroise Rendu’s abridged edition of *Robinson dans son île ou abrégé des aventures de Robinson, à l’usage des écoles primaires* in 1846. Passage of the Falloux Law directly influenced Hachette’s decision to broaden his list beyond school textbooks. His editorial collection *Bibliothèque des chemins de fer* (The Railway Library), begun in 1852, existed in seven series, including *littérature enfantine*. A colored cover distinguished each series within the collection: Travel guides, red covers; History, green covers; French literature, cream

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197 In 1850 the Falloux Law made primary school compulsory for girls in communities of at least 800 inhabitants and authorized a more active role by the Catholic Church in public schools. The presence of ecclesiastic representatives on the “conseil superior de l’Instruction publique” and in the “conseils académiques” demonstrated the increased role of the Church. In addition, once the law passed, there was a noticeable increase in religious teachers’ presence in public schools. On this reintroduction of clerical personnel, see Pierre Barbe, Claude Gauthier, and Josiane Perriaud, *La Société Française au XIXe siècle* (Cannes: Publications de l’École Moderne Française (PEMF), Collection Periscope, 1990), 40 and Sarah Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, 2000).

198 In a letter addressed to the “Compagnies de chemins de fer” dated April 1, 1852 proposing to open bookstalls in train stations and assuring the rail company of the quality of books he planned to sell, Hachette wrote of his intent to “… créer une Bibliothèque des Chemins de fer qui ne comprendra que des ouvrages intéressants, d’un format commode, d’un prix modéré… d’où seront sévèrement bannies toutes les publications qui pourraient exciter ou entretenir les passions politiques, ainsi que tous les écrits contraires à la morale.” Hachette, as cited in Mistler, 123.

covers; ancient and foreign literature, yellow covers; agriculture and industry, blue covers; and various, salmon covers. The *littérature enfantine* series cover was pink.  

Hachette intended this collection as popular and affordable leisure reading for children between eight and fourteen. The collection features works by Perrault, Florian, Fénelon, and Mme d’Aulnoy. Early on, Hachette included titles that he could publish without obtaining the rights but he soon added original tales as well, mostly preachy novels. Hachette wanted to make these works available to children of both the upper and working classes. While not necessarily an intentional political objective, Hachette’s particular marketing strategy of producing affordable storybooks for children helped to democratize reading. Hachette wanted to sell books for a profit. However, in aiming to reach this objective, he effectively made books available and affordable to an ever wider range of reading publics – including child readers.

By 1860, Hachette had adjusted his publishing strategy once again. He no longer held the monopoly on train station bookstalls, and he increased his concentration on collections of general popular literature.  

For children he introduced the *Bibliothèque Rose Illustrée* in 1856; the Comtesse de Ségur (having signed a contract with Hachette in 1855) contributed twenty original titles between 1857 and 1871. Within the *Bibliothèque Rose* collection, Hachette published Ségur’s *François le Bossu*, *Diloy le chemineau*, *Les Vacances* and others, Mlle Zénaïde Fleuriot’s *Plus tard ou le jeune chef de famille* and Daniel Defoe’s *La vie et les aventures de Robinson Crusoé*. During the 1860s the books cost between 2.25 and 3.50 FF.  

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200 Mistler, 124. 
201 Hachette lost the monopoly on selling books in train stations in 1859 after a rather lengthy legal battle. 
Although the *Bibliothèque Rose* series aimed to attract all children, it particularly targeted girls with its pretty pink covers and popular Ségur protagonist, “Sophie.” Hachette dedicated himself to this specific audience for a variety of reasons. He certainly developed narratives for girls as part of his commercial objective to address every possible group of potential readers. The undertaking also reflected Hachette’s liberal politics. As stated above, Hachette committed himself to developing a taste for reading among various social classes as a cultural means to extend knowledge. He recognized young girls as especially in need of appropriate reading material since they received their education primarily at home or by way of the Catholic Church.

In publishing popular leisure reading with decent content for young female readers, Hachette invested himself in creating works that directly included girls and women in the republican project – as writers and readers, whom he exposed to increasingly secular ethical messages.

Since the prevailing cultural view of women emphasized their predominant role as effective conveyers of moral sentiment, the republican project considered girls to be key. As future adult mothers and wives of male citizens, young females needed to learn and embody correct principles. Not surprisingly, numerous female authors published in the *Bibliothèque Rose* series. The embodiment of decency, women had both the responsibility and the obligation to represent and convey appropriate ethical lessons to France’s future generations. Female writers and a female audience seemed “natural” for home-based leisure reading material with a virtuous message. The commonly accepted model for bourgeois homes was one in which wife and mother willingly took up the role of “angel of the house.” Bourgeois French society generally considered women to be the heart of affective education; their education accordingly had to shape them for such a role. By presenting this example to a wider, working-class

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204 Hachette met the Comtesse de Ségur via her husband, Eugène de Ségur, who was Director of the Company of “Chemins de Fer de l’Est” in 1854. Hachette worked with the Count in his endeavor to obtain permission to open train station bookstalls between Paris and Strasbourg. Mollier, *Louis Hachette*, 375.
audience, Hachette ultimately encouraged the dissemination of bourgeois class values and behavior. He took important steps toward the democratization of children’s reading via an inexpensive series available in train stations and bookstores throughout France.

Mid-nineteenth-century editors also saw it as part of their role to recruit “experts” to write for children. Hachette and others courted well-known professionals to write either textbooks, or, starting with Hachette, serve as director de collection such as Victor Duruy. Choosing women to write children’s storybooks for use at home parallels this logic of carefully selecting one’s authors. Since society considered women the best means by which to communicate meritorious lessons to children, “experts” as such, some editors called upon women to write children’s storybooks.

In addition to shifting his editorial focus to quality leisure reading to supplement children’s classroom knowledge, after 1850, Hachette further developed editing and production of popular periodicals. He continued to prefer families and children as his intended audience and along with the printer Charles Lahure published the leisure magazine Journal pour tous beginning in 1855, Le Foyer des familles in 1859 and Le Tour du monde: nouveau journal des voyages in 1860. His most notable periodical, La Semaine des enfants: Magasin d’images et de lectures amusantes et instructives, first appeared in 1857 and was also printed by Charles

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205 Hachette’s selection of the Comtesse de Ségur as one of his principal children’s authors provides further evidence of his desire to present his readers with an upper-class model of behavior.

206 Later the Minister of Public Instruction, Victor Duruy was a professor when he met Hachette. They worked together to produce a series of school texts many of which were written by Duruy himself. See Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l’Orient (Paris: Hachette, 1880); Histoire de la Grèce Ancienne (Paris: Hachette, 1880); Histoire Romaine (Paris: Hachette, 1880); and Histoire de l’Europe et Particulièrement de la France, de 1270 à 1610 (Paris: Hachette, 1880).

207 Hachette had started producing periodicals in 1835 with L’Ami de l’enfance, journal des salles d’asile. His company also contributed to the publication of Journal pour tous, Le foyer des familles, and Le Tour du Monde: nouveau journal des voyages that appeared from 1860 until at least 1893.
The magazine intended to enrich children’s school experiences and provide moral lessons. As the first edition of *La Semaine des enfants* stated, the journal intended to use children’s natural enthusiasm for fun to the purposes of useful learning. The editors hoped that through publishing short historical accounts, enjoyable tales that emphasized good will, and informative texts about industry and the natural world, they would touch young readers’ hearts and emotions in ways they would not even notice, and lasting lessons would be imprinted in their minds. Hachette explicitly intended to extend formal education into the home environment and he successfully combined stories, science, history and illustrations with messages of politeness, filial piety, the value of work, charity and the importance of reading for children of both genders and all ages. Hachette clearly picked up on the historical precedent of using entertaining literature to teach not just school-based knowledge but also useful lessons in virtue. But, he added the new element of making such reading material available to a wide-reaching cross section of society. Each edition of the journal contained eight pages of text and illustrations. Inventively, Hachette used *La Semaine des Enfants* to test authors for inclusion in the *Bibliothèque Rose* collection. The Comtesse de Ségur’s writing serves as an example of this practice since her texts, before extensive editing and publication as individual titles, appeared in series form in *La Semaine des Enfants*.  

When Louis Hachette died in 1864, he had amassed a fortune, both from his work as an editor and publisher and from the profits of his editorial collections under contract. A shrewd businessman throughout his publishing career, Hachette kept his finger on the political pulse of La Semaine des enfants: Magasin d’images et de lectures amusantes et instructives ran from January 1857 to March 1871. Hachette published the journal twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays beginning in July 1862. “Aux Pères et aux Mères de Famille,” *La Semaine des Enfants* 1 (3 January 1857): 2. In spite of Ségur’s strong objections – she refused any cuts or modifications – her stories were edited for publication as books. In part the editing of Ségur’s work that took place was due to the fact that her books were sold in government-run train stations and thus subject to specific standards. See Jean-Yves Mollier, “Éditer la comtesse de Ségur, ou les ruses de la raison policière,” *Cahiers Robinson* 9 (2001): 13-22.
the French nation and courted and counted on his readers’ fidelity. He trusted them to have continued confidence in his editorial selections, especially to continue buying the distinctive dark pink and gold bound books of the Bibliothèque Rose. Hachette also made original technical and practical decisions, including the increased use of illustrations and keeping production costs low in order to sell to a wider audience and to maintain profits. By the end of the 1850s, his innovative business decisions and creative distribution strategies had contributed to revolutionizing the French publishing industry.\textsuperscript{211}

Perhaps most importantly, Hachette democratized the genre of children’s literature by making his publications available to a larger and wider demographic of child readers. He made these volumes extensively available in the nation’s train stations. He offered the same texts in various bound formats for different family budgets. This meant that individuals from both the middle and working classes could have access to the same reading material. In addition, largely through the creative contributions of the Comtesse de Ségur, Hachette provided child readers with home-based reading that emphasized contemporary social relationships. Children from all classes could identify with the characters presented in these stories, and although Hachette’s authors portray social diversity, individuals remain fixed in their social roles.

Hachette was one of the first to recognize and exploit the French youth market. In addition to paying keen attention to the production of textbooks, his firm expanded children’s publications to include fiction, novels and periodicals intended for home reading. In developing popular periodicals for children and creating a market specific to children’s leisure reading, Hachette contributed to contemporary understandings of what it meant to meet children’s needs. Especially in catering to shaping the needs of the petite and moyenne bourgeoisie, Hachette

\textsuperscript{211} Hachette used his knowledge of textbook publishing to produce quality documentary volumes – such as dictionaries – and large illustrated albums. Inventively, he standardized the font size and set high print runs thereby reducing basic costs.
extended parental desires to provide for their children to the realm of children’s reading. Hachette productively took children’s specific needs into consideration in creating these narratives and in turn effectively influenced the evolution of children’s needs themselves. As a result of the changing political climate between 1830 and his death in 1864, Hachette altered his publishing strategies while remaining committed to his primary objective, publishing accessible and appropriate books for children. Based on his personal desire to participate actively in the education of France’s children, he consciously and deliberately commissioned and published works tailored to what he perceived as their abilities and needs.

Pierre-Jules Hetzel

In similar fashion to Louis Hachette, Pierre-Jules Hetzel also invested in publishing for the new and growing audience of child readers in France. Like Hachette, Hetzel invested in children’s moral education, and he took a special interest in linking children’s reading to their future role as republican citizens. Since Hetzel, more than Mame or Hachette, intended to unmistakably direct the content of children’s reading material for political ends, he developed a pointed practice of recruiting individuals to write children’s storyooks who reflected his own republican politics.

Along with Hachette, Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1814-1886) was a major contributor to the French market of publishing for children during the nineteenth century.212 Coming on to the Parisian editorial scene a bit later than Hachette, Hetzel quickly made his professional mark. Although initially less commercially powerful and economically successful than other publishing

Houses, Hetzel eventually became one of the most influential editors of children’s literature. Hetzel’s contributions to the improvement and expansion of French children’s literature resulted from a combination of factors. A publishing revolutionary, Hetzel had clear pedagogical and publishing goals. He recruited a “stable” of outstanding contemporary writers and illustrators, and he recognized the importance of providing appropriate reading material to children beyond the classroom. Hetzel made resourceful use of the creativity of authors, artists and scientists in order to promote active learning.

Hetzel too was the son of working-class parents. He also received a quality formal education. Hetzel began his studies at Chartres and completed them in Paris, at the Collège Stanislas. At the time, schools engaged in the practice of recruiting talented students from outside of Paris to attend school in the capital. Hetzel became part of this fortunate group and while the school offered him a full scholarship, his parents refused, determined to pay half the costs of their only child’s education. He arrived in Paris in 1825 at the age of eleven and had John Lemoine (later a journalist) and Jean Macé (later a secondary teacher and founder of the Ligue de l’enseignement) as classmates. A good student, Hetzel did well in the Concours Général receiving accessits three times in Latin and French. The French national system of education conducted this exam at the end of every school year in order to recognize the very best students completing their high school studies. Successful results in this highly competitive exam allowed students to continue their education within universities or grandes écoles.

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213 His father was a maître-sellier, a master saddle-maker, and his mother a sage-femme, mid-wife. His father came from a very old Alsacian family, perhaps as early as the eleventh century.

214 The “Ligue de l’enseignement” was a private association dedicated to promoting education in France, according to Pierre Larousse, Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe siècle, Vol. 14 Koursk-Macabre (Lacour, editor, Nîmes, 1866-1876), 512. The group provided books to disadvantaged regions, established public libraries, and set up classes for adults. Additionally, it was instrumental in lobbying for mandatory, free and secular public education in France. In 1883 Macé was elected to the Senate and was involved in plans for the restructuring of national primary education. See Auspitz, The Radical Bourgeoisie; Stock-Morton, Moral Education for a Secular Society; and Arthur Dessoye, Jean Macé et la fondation de la Ligue de l’enseignement (Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, 1883).
His scholastic ability allowed Hetzel to continue his academic studies. He chose to study law and moved in with family relatives in Strasbourg but left school before earning his degree in order to alleviate the financial burden of his studies on his parents.\footnote{The editors of Hetzel’s correspondence, Antoine Parménie and Catherine Bonnier de la Chappelle, claim that Hetzel’s time in Alsace was important because he was introduced to and influenced by Germanic Romanticism, a literary influence he kept with him throughout his life. See Parménie and Bonnier de la Chappelle, 14.} Already determined to earn a living at age twenty-one, Hetzel moved to Paris and took a position as a clerk with the bookseller-editor Paulin.\footnote{Through his professional relationship with Paulin, Hetzel encountered liberal republican ideas. Like many of his generation, Paulin hoped for the return of a republic in France. A confirmed liberal, Paulin was connected to the political opposition of Louis-Philippe and, along with Thiers and Mignet, began publication of Le National in 1830. Parménie and Bonnier de la Chappelle, 15.} Due to this professional association, Hetzel by 1837 was managing his own bookstore in Paris, which dealt mainly with religious texts. In 1843, he became independent of Paulin and began to edit mainstream popular novels specializing in the increasingly popular \textit{beaux livres illustrés}.\footnote{Today we might call this type of illustrated book a “coffee table book.”}

First and foremost Hetzel was a businessman; he willingly published whatever would sell, and he recognized the importance of carefully testing potential markets. The 1840s truly began – to borrow Chartier and Martin’s phrase – the “age of the editor” in which editors not only marketed and sold volumes to a waiting public, but actively created potential markets. In addition to popular fiction and social tracts, Hetzel dabbled in less expensive religious works, which guaranteed sales – a fact that made their production, and his enterprise, economically viable.\footnote{A politically active editor, Hetzel published socially and politically satirical works by Alfred Musset, Charles Nodier, Honoré Balzac, George Sand, Victor Hugo and others and commissioned illustrations from Grandville, Bertall, and Doré.} Hetzel’s financial acumen allowed him to develop other areas of his publishing empire too, such as the more expensive illustrated albums and the not-yet-widely-established market for children’s literature.
An innovative and ambitious publisher, Hetzel’s constant attempts to expand his business had a downside; he was often in debt. Unlike Hachette, who apparently was more financially astute, as an active and generous editor Hetzel offered his authors handsome advances. In 1845, only two years after setting himself up as an independent editor based in Paris, he found himself on the verge of bankruptcy, which obliged him to make changes to his business.219

Hetzel’s successful experience with illustrated albums for an adult audience logically led to developing similar volumes for children. His interest in illustrated books found a new outlet, and he began to publish illustrated albums for children in series form. These he included in an editorial series of anthologies *Nouveau magasin des enfants*, the title of which harkened back to one of the earliest children’s publications in France, Mme Leprince de Beaumont’s mid-eighteenth-century *Magasin des enfants*. Aiming very high, Hetzel selected George Sand, Charles Nodier, Alfred Musset and Alexandre Dumas as authors and Bertall, Gavarni, and Tony Johannot as illustrators for this series which ran from 1843 to 1851.220 He produced pretty, decorative and hardbound editions [*cartonnage d’éditeur, estampé et doré*]. He published tales such as *Histoire du véritable Gribouille*, *La Bouillie de la comtesse Berthe*, and *Nouvelles et seules véritables aventures de Tom Pouce* as gift books for bourgeois children and their families. Not long after Hetzel made his début in children’s publishing, however, political changes in France altered his career, too.

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219 The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Affre, banned Hetzel from continuing to sell religious texts, a lucrative element of his business, because Hetzel also sold “suspicious books” such as Eugène Sue’s *Le Juif errant*. This decision meant that Hetzel lost an important source of revenue and was stuck with surplus stock. See Gourévitch, *Hetzel: Le bon génie des livres*, 32 and Parinet, 219.

Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte’s coup d’état in December 1851 abruptly interrupted all of Hetzel’s various publishing and political activities.\textsuperscript{221} The new imperial government exiled Hetzel, along with many other politically-active intellectuals of the time. A convinced and well-known republican, Hetzel had actively participated in the fall of Louis-Philippe and the subsequent proclamation of the Second Republic. In 1848 he served as Chief of Cabinet for Alphonse de Lamartine, the provisional government’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, and afterward in the Minister of the Navy. He supported Cavaignac’s bid for the presidency in December 1848 which the future Emperor Napoléon III eventually won. Upon being exiled, Hetzel moved northward, to Belgium, where during the 1850s he continued his editorial activities clandestinely, often via previously established professional contacts in France.\textsuperscript{222} Hetzel engaged in joint projects – with the involvement of other Paris-based printers, publishers, distributors, and booksellers – a fact that greatly reduced his profits. Moreover, not all of these new joint projects met with economic success. Hetzel worked with writers not so much as an editor-publisher but as an intermediary between authors (some fellow political exiles like himself) and Parisian publishers. Most notably, Hetzel collaborated with Victor Hugo, the most famous and outspoken of French cultural exiles during the Second Empire.

Hetzel’s exile ended with the state’s amnesty law of August 17, 1859.\textsuperscript{223} Upon his return to France, Hetzel invested less time and energy in overtly political tracts and instead devoted himself to publishing popular novels. This politically mandatory editorial decision assured him a stable market and allowed him to avoid the ever-watchful censor’s eye of the government. At

\textsuperscript{221} The Second Empire can be divided into two halves, the first quite autocratic while the second half, beginning around 1860, witnessed the selective liberalization of the regime. During this second half, Hetzel returned to France. It is not surprising that Hetzel was exiled during the Second Empire’s more authoritarian period due to his active role in 1848’s revolutionary activity.

\textsuperscript{222} Hetzel’s publishing while in exile included some political content. Most notably he secretly published Victor Hugo’s Les Châtiments, a harsh pamphlet against the Second Empire.

\textsuperscript{223} Victor Hugo refused the amnesty offered by the Second Empire and returned to France, to great fanfare, only after the Second Empire came to an end in September 1870.
the same time, novels permitted Hetzel to defend indirectly his political ideas by including substantive messages that reached a large audience.

Some of Hetzel’s publications of the 1860s took up the subject of Alsace, France’s easternmost historic province. Hetzel’s father’s family came from Alsace, and his studies in Strasbourg led him to develop a personal fondness for the region. In addition, a surge in national efforts to unify France culturally and linguistically existed at this time. Drawing on a common national past and literary heritage contributed to the success of his efforts. Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, who wrote using the pen name “Erckmann-Chatrian” contributed numerous works about Alsace as members of Hetzel’s “stable” of authors. Their popular tales found a large audience and allowed Hetzel effectively to re-establish himself as a Parisian editor.

After his period of exile and upon his return to France at the end of the 1850s, Hetzel had two professional encounters that influenced him and moved his editorial interest decidedly further toward children’s publishing. He reconnected with his old classmate and friend Jean Macé, and he became acquainted with the author Jules Verne. Hetzel and Macé attended the Collège Stanislas together when Hetzel had first come to Paris. Macé left Paris for Alsace just after Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte’s coup d’état. When Hetzel and Macé reconnected in late 1860, Macé had become a secondary school teacher in a girls’ school in Beblenheim, a small Alsatian village. Macé would later become politically active: he advocated the establishment of public

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224 Émile Erckmann (1822-1899) and Alexandre Chatrian (1826-1890) collaboratively wrote regional historical novels featuring their native province of Alsace under the pseudonym Erckmann-Chatrian. Titles include: Contes et romans populaires (Paris: Hetzel, 1866-67), Madame Thérèse (Paris: Hetzel, 1863), Histoire d’un conscrit de 1813 (Paris: Hetzel, 1864), and L’ami Fritz (Paris: Hachette, 1864).

225 Jean Macé (1815-1894) is an interesting historical subject on his own. Like Hetzel, Macé had working-class origins; his father was a wagoner [camionneur]. A gifted student, Macé attended Collège Stanislas on a scholarship. Active during the 1848 revolution [un homme de 1848], he became a high-school teacher in Paris early in his teaching career and after the coup d’état of 1851 spent the rest of his teaching career in Alsace. See Roland Remer, Jean Macé et la Ligue de l’enseignement (Metz: Serpenoise, 2004); Auspitz, The Radical Bourgeoisie; Alfaric Prosper, Jean Macé, fondateur de la Ligue française de l’enseignement (Paris: Fayard, 1955) and Dessoye, Jean Macé et la fondation de la Ligue de l’enseignement.
libraries and founded the *Ligue française de l’enseignement* in 1866. Macé’s knowledge of and interest in children’s education encouraged Hetzel to pursue this editorial line.

Jules Verne (1828-1905) entered Hetzel’s publishing orbit in 1862. Verne was thirty-four, working as a stockbroker and pursuing writing in his free time when, on the advice of a mutual friend, he submitted a book manuscript to Hetzel. The author of about thirty plays and a regular contributor of short stories, travel accounts, and scientific essays to the popular journal *Musée des Familles*, Verne was not yet a recognized author when he encountered the already-successful Hetzel. Although Verne’s work had already been rejected by other publishers, Hetzel apparently recognized Verne’s talent, potential and commitment to writing a scientific novel, capacities that corresponded to Hetzel’s goal of publishing scientific works. Their first project together, *Cinq semaines en ballon* was Verne’s first book. Hetzel published the book in 1863, just in time for the holiday season, or *étrennes*. The popularity and profitability of Verne’s volume placed Hetzel in an enduring working relationship with one of the late-nineteenth century’s most exceptional and widely-read authors. Verne soon became a staple name on Hetzel’s publication lists, and parents routinely purchased his tales as holiday gifts. In Verne, Hetzel recognized the potential of an author who could write about science in an accessible and exciting manner for young readers. Hetzel personally edited Verne’s work. He took characters out, changed names, endings, and storylines. Not only was the editor interested in rendering

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226 *Étrennes* was the gift-giving season around New Year’s Day. Parents and other family members gave children candy, toys and books. Hetzel and other publishers heavily invested in their collections of gift books for this season. Parménie and Bonnier de la Chapelle, 427-28.

Verne’s narratives financially successful, he was also committed to maintaining the content and quality of Verne’s novels as a means to promote secular science and liberal republicanism.\textsuperscript{228}

Hetzel’s renewed contact with Macé, it would seem, directly led to his developing an editorial policy that emphasized children’s publications.\textsuperscript{229} In 1861, just two years after his return to France, Hetzel published a well-received edition of Charles Perrault’s classic Contes with abundant illustrations by Gustave Doré, demonstrating his personal belief that children’s albums needed quality illustrations. This principle was founded in part on the historical precedents of children’s literature, and thanks to nineteenth-century technological advances, Hetzel brought this idea to fruition and produced an elegant, fully decorated children’s volume that further underscored the link between his illustrated albums and the publication of pictorial books for children.

Moving beyond publishing new editions of attractive picture albums, Hetzel actively began to commission original manuscripts in the 1860s. This development makes Hetzel

\textsuperscript{228} Piero Gondolo Della Riva, Olivier Dumas and others have studied the importance of Hetzel’s editorial influence on Verne’s work. See Gondolo Della Riva, “P.-J. Hetzel, correspondant de Jules Verne” and Dumas, “Hetzel, censeur de Verne” in the collection of conference proceedings edited by Christian Robin, \textit{Un éditeur et son siècle}, 117-23 and 127-36. Perhaps as a result of his earlier exile, Hetzel may have edited Verne’s work with an eye to avoiding the alienation of political conservatives. For specific examples of Hetzel’s influence on Verne’s work see the introductory material and letters contained in the three-volume collection of their correspondence, Olivier Dumas, Piero Gondolo Della Riva and Volker Dehs, eds., \textit{Correspondence inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1863-1886)}, 3 vols. (Geneva: Editions Slatkine and Paris: Société Jules Verne, 1999, 2001 and 2002). Among others, the following pages refer to letters that include examples of Hetzel’s interventions in the content of Verne’s work: Vol. I (1863-1874), 143-46, 205-7, and 229-31; Vol. II (1875-1878), 48-51, 146-49, and 291-93; Vol. III (1879-1886), 117-21, 128-30, 174-82, 200-5, and 284-86. See also Verne’s letters to Hetzel published in Parménie and Bonnier de la Chapelle, 427-31, 524-25, and 606-8. For more on Hetzel’s personal commitment to morality and republican secularism in children’s publications see Guy Gauthier, “Une morale laïque sous le Second Empire: la morale de Stahl dans \textit{Le Magasin d’éducation et de récréation}” and Jacques Chupeau, “Le Moraliste des enfants: P.-J. Stahl” in Robin, ed., \textit{Un éditeur et son siècle}, 189-204 and 207-16.

\textsuperscript{229} Hetzel already had some limited experience in children’s publishing. In 1837 Paulin had given him responsibility for the first six volumes of \textit{Livre des enfants}, a collection of traditional fairy tales and the first illustrated book published by a mechanical press. Five years later Hetzel authored a preface for Florian’s \textit{Fables} and collaborated with Alfred Musset to write \textit{Les aventures d’une poupée et d’un soldat de plomb} and \textit{Nouvelles et seules véritables aventures de Tom Pouce}. Additionally, in 1843 he worked with Gérard Seguin, Mennessier, and Grandville to publish \textit{Le livre des petits enfants}. These joint projects became part of Hetzel’s first editorial collection for children, \textit{Nouveau Magasin des enfants}, which included twenty volumes. See Gourévitch, \textit{Hetzel: Le bon génie des livres}, 33, 47-52 and 319.
especially relevant to this study of French children’s literature. Following up on the commercial triumph of Perrault’s *Contes* (and illustrated by a thirty-year-old Gustave Doré) in 1862, Hetzel began to recruit authors to write innovative creative new stories for children. This novel approach to generating projects was common among prominent publishers during the late 1850s and early 1860s, including Mame and Hachette, and underscores the increased importance of editors in the period. While previous authors wrote due to their own pedagogical interest to educate young readers, Hetzel and his editorial contemporaries of the early 1860s served as intermediaries between writer and reading audience. As such, Hetzel’s political beliefs again became increasingly present in the children’s texts he commissioned and in those he wrote himself beginning in the 1860s and continuing throughout the 1880s. Hetzel most certainly had a personal vested interest in assuring the continuation of republican institutions. He had experienced first-hand the high cost of their failures. Hetzel made his concern for France’s democratic political institutions particularly evident following the crisis of 1870; as we will see in Chapter Five.

By late 1860, Hetzel already had the idea of creating a new book series for children. Certain of his ability to bring this idea to fruition, he eagerly tapped into Jean Macé’s scholarly experience. Macé told Hetzel about his current project, writing a book for his daughter. Macé had written the book, a story about a bit of bread [*une bouchée de pain*], to entertain and instruct his daughter using an explanation of the physiology – bodily processes – of eating, swallowing, absorption and digestion. Macé’s playful narrative successfully presented serious scientific knowledge as an amusing story. Since the author did not think any publisher would take his work seriously, he had begun to set his own money aside in order to publish it. Encouraged by
his old friend, however, he submitted the manuscript to Hetzel in the spring of 1861; Hetzel suggested some changes, then eagerly published the book in July.\textsuperscript{230}

Histoire d’une bouchée de pain with its accompanying illustrations appeared in 1865. Macé’s enthusiasm for his subject immediately drew readers, and the book remained on Hetzel’s yearly publication list up to 1876.\textsuperscript{231} Composed of forty chapters and written in the form of letters to his young daughter, Macé led young readers through the complicated and virtually magical process of the transformation of “a bit of bread with jam,” which became part of the child who ate it. While such a story may at first seem straightforward, Macé laces his tale with reminders of moral precepts. At the end of the book’s first chapter, a lively account of how the bread makes it to the family’s table, Macé asks his readers to keep in mind the respect owed to farmers who worked to provide the food they enjoy. Readers are told not to tease nor think less of farmers in the field since they are important and needed. Macé’s admonitions do not always constitute social lessons and he inventively makes an effective parallel between children’s natural tendency for indulging in sweets and the value of self-discipline. While the tongue may take pleasure in a diet of pure candy, Monseigneur de l’Estomac will surely experience the negative after effects of a stomachache. Physical discomfort lets individuals know that something is wrong; the body punishes excess with a natural consequence. In “Letter V - Teeth,” the author ends a lengthy explanation of the usefulness of a balanced diet with a dictum on obedience, “…we obey much more easily and more seriously when we understand why, a duty one can comprehend is accomplished almost naturally.”\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{230} Jean Macé, Histoire d’une bouchée de pain (Paris: Hetzel, 1861).
\textsuperscript{231} This publication was so popular that it reached its fifth edition as early as 1862; the thirty-eighth edition appeared in 1876. See Macé, Histoire d’une bouchée de pain, 38\textsuperscript{th} ed. (Paris: Hetzel, 1876).
\textsuperscript{232} Macé, Histoire d’une bouchée de pain, 35.
With these types of clear messages, Macé’s text becomes much more than a physiognomy lesson. The volume anticipates the specific type of children’s literature that Hetzel, with considerable success, aimed to develop and promote throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. His illustrated volumes would consistently present stories in a lively format with clear ethical and social messages designed to shape individuals as republican citizens.

Ultimately, the reconnection with his former classmate led Hetzel to pursue a line of publishing specifically for children and to develop editions emphasizing republican ideals in an accessible and pedagogical format. Rather than trying to enlighten his readers and dogmatically place them on the right path, as Catholic children’s storybooks aimed to do, Hetzel privileged instructing children in modern republican morality, an idea that included exercising self-discipline, the benefits of hard work, and belief in the possibility of science to solve problems. Using practical examples, Hetzel hoped to demonstrate the worth and utility of these values. Thus, while Hetzel inherited the form of children’s literature from the past – relatively short, amusing and illustrated tales – he fundamentally altered the religious content and pedagogical approach by producing edifying, civilizing and enlightening works that emphasized the importance of individuals to the French nation and made science and virtuous behavior accessible to all readers.

In a December 1861 letter that he wrote to Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve Hetzel expressed his thoughts on developing different and better publications for children. He asked the famous writer and literary critic to nominate Macé’s book for a prize from the Académie Française. But Hetzel’s unmistakable expression of his thoughts about what most children’s books lacked is striking. “Books written specifically for children are ever so dreary; the nursery
books that we usually serve them are such a sad herbal tea, that this refreshing and hearty drink deserves to be nominated by the Academy and an acknowledged authority should recommend it to them. Here Hetzel clearly imagined engaging, entertaining and enlightening narratives for children. He dreamt of producing quality periodicals that included attractive illustrations and complemented his editorial series for young readers. He hoped to sell to a variety of ages at reasonable prices. Hetzel truly believed that children best absorbed knowledge and messages of principle when presented by an enjoyable means; otherwise the end result would be to turn readers off and to empty their heads rather than filling them.

Hetzel pursued these goals most often in the form of a novel. In March 1864, with Macé as co-founder and responsible for educational sections, Hetzel furthered his foray into children’s literature by launching a new periodical magazine for children, *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation: encyclopédie de l’enfance et de la jeunesse*. This publication became an acclaimed illustrated encyclopaedic bi-monthly periodical magazine that Hetzel used to test potential authors, experiment with new narrative forms and, most importantly, reach and establish the loyalty of a large popular audience.

Similar in form to Hachette’s *La Semaine des enfants*, Hetzel’s *Magasin* began seven years later. This publication provided an enjoyable reading resource for children to use at home to supplement and complete the education provided by schools. Hetzel stated his ambitious aims in the journal’s first issue:

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233 Hetzel sent a personal letter to Sainte-Beuve along with a copy of *Histoire d’une bouchée de pain* for him to read. The Académie Française recognized Macé’s book and it became a publishing success. The book remained continually in print for over forty years. Parménie and Bonnier de la Chappelle, 377-78.


235 Hetzel and Macé’s *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* ran from 1864-1906. The outbreak of war meant that the siege of Paris in September 1870 interrupted production. During the Paris Commune the next spring, Hetzel left Paris and fled to the south of France, resuming publication of *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* in July 1871.
Our objective is to create family-based education in the true sense of the phrase, education that is simultaneously serious and appealing, that parents will appreciate and children will benefit from, [...] that supplements the inevitably sober lessons of middle and boarding schools with a more personal and more penetrating lesson, in order to complete public education through reading within the heart of the family.

Il s’agit pour nous de constituer un enseignement de famille dans le vrai sens du mot, un enseignement sérieux et attrayant à la fois, qui plaise aux parents et profite aux enfants, [...] d’ajouter à la leçon forcément austère du collège et pensionnat une leçon plus intime et plus pénétrante, de compléter l’éducation publique par la lecture au sein de la famille.  

A close read of Hetzel’s words reveals that underlying his evident objective to supplement school programs, he hoped to accomplish a great deal more. He aimed to disperse knowledge via home-based reading to a child audience. Hetzel intentionally designed his periodical to address children in their most intimate environment, the home, and among their family members in order to insure that children took to heart the multiple social and personal benefits of self-control, respect for family and honesty, all lessons he hoped to teach them.

Parallel to this children’s journal, Hetzel initiated an editorial collection for young readers, the Bibliothèque d’éducation et de récréation. For this collection, Hetzel produced bound editions of stories previously published in instalments in the Magasin’s pages. Like Hachette before him, he utilized this particular editorial strategy to develop reader loyalty. Once a subscriber had read and enjoyed a story in Hetzel’s journal, the possibility existed for the young reader to own the complete novel. In addition, Hetzel standardized the format, presentation and size of books in this collection in order to attract individuals who liked the idea of owning the whole collection in order to keep, re-read or eventually pass on to other young readers. Loyal readers might compile common reading material on home bookshelves and thus build a shared literary culture among families. Certainly, the journal cost less than the complete

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237 Hetzel’s publishing house published this children’s editorial collection from 1864 to 1919.
bound volumes; these narratives existed in different forms for various social classes. While a working-class family might have a family subscription to the journal, an upper-class family may have subscribed to the journal and purchased the handsome bound titles as gifts for their children. Regardless, Hetzel presented child readers of all classes with the same textual content.

The first volume of Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, featured Macé’s scientific story “Les serviteurs de l’estomac,” a new version of Johann Rudolph Wyss’ novel Le Robinson Suisse by P.-J. Stahl and Eugène Muller, Jules Verne’s Les Anglais au Pôle Nord and Stahl’s La princesse Ilsée in serial form. In addition, early editions included two pages for younger readers under the title “Petites Tragédies enfantines,” with engaging illustrations by Froment, a “texte par un papa,” occasional poems and rhymes, meaningful citations and quotes (sagesse de tous les ages), fables, and several original contributions. This combination of illustrated scientific and fictional texts for readers of various ages meant that the entire family could read and enjoy Hetzel’s periodical. Hetzel published the magazine until 1906 in the same basic format: a chapter of Jules Verne’s latest novel (or another serial novel) would take up about half the Magasin’s pages while the rest of the edition was divided between a scientific serialized feature in which natural science and geography played primary roles, a moral text, and several pages of shorter texts with large, appealing illustrations for younger readers. Hetzel recruited contributions from a wide variety of well-known professionals: historians, authors and poets, scientists, educators and illustrators.

Jules Verne and Hector Malot (1830-1907) are the best-known professional writers to appear in Hetzel’s magazine. Malot wrote popular works for children, such as Sans Famille (1878), Roman Kalbris (1869), and En Famille (1893). The Magasin d’éducation et de

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238 The first edition of Magasin d’éducation et de récréation appeared on March 20, 1864. The subtitle “Encyclopédia de l’enfance et de la jeunesse” appeared on the title page.
récréation published Verne’s writings in serial form prior to printing them as full-length texts in the editorial series Voyages extraordinaires. Hetzel recruited individuals to write in their field of expertise. Pierre-Martin-Victor Richard de Laprade (1812-1883) was a professor, poet and member of the Académie Française who published Le Livre d’un père (1876). The architect and art historian Viollet-le-Duc wrote Histoire d’une Maison (1873) for children to instruct them on designing and building.239 And the writer-educator Ernest Legouvé published in Hetzel’s pages his ideas about reading aloud and the value of reading at home.240

Hetzel was so involved and invested in children’s publishing that he worked intimately with authors and himself wrote several original stories for children under the pseudonym “P.J. Stahl.” Under this name, for instance, he wrote the original texts Mademoiselle Lili à la campagne (1865), Jean le Hargneux (1867), and Le Roi des marmottes (1868). He also published translations and reworked versions of the American novelist Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1880) and Marko Wovzog’s Maroussia (1878), a patriotic story based on a Ukranian legend.

These literary contributions, both original narratives and adapted translations, reflected Hetzel’s instructional agenda. The Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, and Hetzel’s other projects, were decidedly republican. Rather than reflecting official dominant values of the Second Empire – authoritarianism, an influential Catholic Church, a reactionary political culture – Hetzel’s texts offered an alternative outlook, a more secular morality that allowed for the individual citizen to play a central role in the betterment of society. Importantly, Hetzel’s

239 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), the famous revivalist of Gothic-style architecture in the nineteenth century, is perhaps best known for his restoration work on Notre-Dame de Paris in 1845 and the Basilicia of Saint-Denis in 1846. He was also an architectural theorist and published his ideas in several texts including Entretiens sur l’architecture, 2 volumes (Paris: A. Morel, 1863-72).
240 Other well-known contributions include Alphonse Daudet’s Le Petit Chose (1868) and Lettres de mon moulin (1869) and Victor Hugo’s L’art d’être grand-père (1877) which all found a home in these pages.
children’s publications anticipated the official changes in education codified by the Ferry Laws in the 1880s. His titles promoted the role of independent individuals, the vital importance of universal access to knowledge, and an Enlightenment belief in science as the route to progress.

Immediately popular, Le Temps publicized the Magasin d’éducation et de récréation and Macé promoted it in his native Alsace; the journal even drew the attention of a young Émile Zola who sent a fairy tale (conte) for Hetzel to consider on March 30, 1864, just ten days after the Magasin first appeared! Zola’s submitting his work to Hetzel provides yet another indication of the high cultural appeal and profile of the publisher’s enterprise. Innovatively, Hetzel sold the Magasin either by individual number, for only 60 centimes, or in bound volumes of twelve. In the early years, the journal’s print run was 5,000 copies and reached 10,000 copies by 1875.242

Hetzel recognized that Magasin complemented his other publishing projects for children, especially the editorial collections he developed for various ages and social groups. His Albums Stahl appeared in 1862 with La journée de Mademoiselle Lili; likewise, Petite Bibliothèque Blanche began in 1879.

Like Hachette, Hetzel directed many of his books to young female readers specifically. His popular series of albums featuring the sweet Mademoiselle Lili and her daily adventures underscore Hetzel’s commitment to this particular, important audience. Certainly, Hetzel recognized the commercial benefits of this investment. Developing publications for both boy and girl readers meant that Hetzel would sell more volumes. Hetzel’s attention to young female readers resulted additionally from the aforementioned cultural imperative of women’s essential

241 The week after the Magasin d’éducation et de récréation made its début, Hetzel received a story for consideration from this young writer who had recently moved to Paris from Aix-en-Provence. At the time Zola worked during the day as a clerk for the editor Hachette and wrote at night. It is curious that, although he worked with Hachette, he submitted his work for publication with Hetzel. Letter from Émile Zola to Hetzel reproduced in Parménie and Bonnier de la Chappelle, 431.
242 Parinet, 223.
role in teaching children decent conduct. In order to assure the continuation of this longstanding motherly responsibility, authors presented girls with gender-appropriate texts preparing them for their own future role as mothers and moral guardians. Hetzel’s interest in his female reading public also went a bit further. In light of his commitment to democratic ideals, Hetzel hoped to include both genders in his aims to extend education. Since girls’ education continued to take place largely at home until the legislative extension of public education in the 1880s, Hetzel’s works would provide this function in the interim.

Curiously, however, Hetzel employed very few women children’s authors and only one woman, Madame Marie Pape-Carpantier, appeared on the *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*’s editorial board. When compared with the predominant role women authors held in Hachette’s production, in particular his star author the Comtesse de Ségur, it would appear that Hetzel’s republican agenda with its emphasis on non-religious morality left women with a limited role, even though his publications regularly made girls both subjects and targets. On the other hand, Hachette’s conservative republicanism, rooted in more traditional social values, perhaps provided a greater opportunity for women to develop narratives for little girls and serve to guide their behavior.

As someone concerned about the political and cultural state of France, Hetzel was understandably affected by the shift in French politics that took place in 1870 and the years following. Before his personal, political exile in 1851, Hetzel invested in the concerns of his own generation. But after his return to Paris and as a result of the national military defeat of 1870 and the inauguration of the Third Republic, his attention and concern – like many others’ – turned even more to the next generation, to the future of France and to the potential of

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243 During the dire situation in Alsace 1870-1871, Hetzel’s good friend and collaborator Jean Macé was in Beblenheim, Alsace where he had lived since 1851. For letters written between the two see Parménie and Bonnier de la Chappelle, 523-24.
knowledge and education to shape that future. In a letter to his son dated January 1871, Hetzel expressed the national urgency of the current situation and stated his ideas about how education should transform France.

Our poor France! well, the unhappier she is, the more we love her, and better! It is our generation that has let her fall into this abyss; it is yours, my child, which will pull her out of it. And force will not be the first weapon to seize. No, no. It is by uniting education and training that this misguided country must be returned to her path. That, first of all. Did we lack rifles, did we lack hands? No, it is science… and, above all, discipline… We must rebuild among our people the respect for the good and the beautiful, respect for right and law, respect for superior quality: in a word, respect. The nation of scoffers created by the empire has collapsed. God grant that none are left. If the lesson did not cure us, then we might as well say ‘finis Galliae’! If we learn from it, it is the opposite of death, it is resurrection.244

The traumatic events of 1870-71 did not change Hetzel’s guiding principles but heightened his optimism that those principles must come to fruition. He certainly recognized the importance of this transitional moment for France. Many politicians, pedagogues and critics, of varied political persuasions, shared the notion of reforming France via education after the Prussian defeat, which many attributed to a combination of Prussia providing better education and inherent failures within the French education system.245

From 1870 until his death in 1886, Hetzel’s primary publishing interest was children’s literature. In part, this was good business; but he continued and elaborated on this undertaking because of his personal beliefs and commitment to shaping France’s future. While Hetzel made

244 “Notre pauvre France! eh bien, plus elle est malheureuse, plus nous l’aimerons, et mieux! C’est notre génération qui l’a laissée tomber dans l’abîme, c’est la vôtre, mon enfant, qui l’en tirera. Et la force ne sera pas la première arme à saisir. Non, non. C’est par l’éducation et l’instruction réunites qu’il faudra faire remonter le courant à ce pays dérouté. Par là d’abord. Est-ce que les fusils, est-ce que les bras nous ont manqué? Non. C’est la science…et par-dessus tout la discipline… Il faut refaire chez nous le respect du bien et du beau, le respect du droit et de la loi. Celui de la supériorité, le respect en un mot. C’est le peuple de blagueurs que l’empire avait fait qui s’effondre. Dieu veuille qu’il n’en reste rien! Si la leçon ne nous guérissait pas, c’est alors qu’on pourrait dire finis Galliae! Si elle nous profite, c’est le contraire de la mort, c’est la résurrection.” Hetzel to his son Louis-Jules, 27 January 1871, as cited in Parménie and Bonnier de la Chapelle, 536.

quality content a personal priority, as an editor he also concerned himself with maintaining high standards of craftsmanship. He aimed to produce editions of the highest quality both in terms of aesthetic appeal, by including quality illustrations and attractive bindings, and of what he considered appropriate content. This was both a professional and a personal campaign. Hetzel also considered himself a liberal and a republican; he was a rational man and an admirer of modern science, a fact that comes across in his children’s publications. After 1870 he refined his vision. He saw children’s storybooks as the most appropriate and powerful means to influence future generations of French republicans, a generation he counted on to secure the nation’s future. Hetzel and his associates actively cultivated and presented an ethic, a worldview, which the Third Republic hoped to make part of the collective consciousness of all its children.

Unlike Hachette, financial stability eluded Hetzel. Continually committed to evolution and growth, Hetzel regularly ran the risk of fiscal instability. Even the acceptance and popularity he experienced after his return from exile did not alleviate his financial difficulties. He often had to borrow money and was rarely financially solvent. On September 30, 1868, he formed “J. Hetzel et Cie,” which separated his holdings from those of Macé and the printer Lahure. Hetzel created this société more likely due to a risk of financial failure rather than an attempt to raise capital. Financial difficulty – exacerbated by political tensions and the strife of 1870 – led to Hetzel’s falling out with some of his literary colleagues, including Victor Hugo and George Sand.

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246 For additional details concerning Hetzel’s financial situation see Parinet, 224-25 and Mollier, L’Argent et les lettres, 254ff.
247 Parinet, 224.
Hetzel died on March 17, 1886. His son Louis-Jules Hetzel, who had worked alongside him since 1869, took over the publishing house following his father’s death. Hetzel fils eventually bought back the company’s shares, making himself the sole shareholder, but in 1914 he was obliged to sell, ironically, to Hachette.

Hetzel’s contribution to nineteenth-century French children’s literature should not be underestimated. Hetzel successfully embraced and added his own personal touch to existing practices such as publishing stories in series form in order to create a loyal public and infused his narratives with overt republican values. Distinguishing himself from Mame and Hachette, Hetzel did not venture into the realm of textbook publishing. He targeted home-based reading and the republican content he aimed to promote meant that he remained on the edge of the official curriculum and school programs. Hetzel, however, essentially developed a version of republican secular morality appropriate for children that the French government of the 1880s would eventually integrate into its official, state-sponsored curriculum. Anticipating and essentially molding this aspect of modern French republicanism was Hetzel’s most enduring contribution.

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As outlined above, each of the three major French book editors of the nineteenth century included a particular vision of society as part of their editorial policy. While overall, in the interest of political stability, social classes remained relatively static in these texts, Hachette’s and Hetzel’s publications and their distribution strategies presented a somewhat more democratic, dynamic image of society. Their personal routes to professional success help in part to explain this characteristic. Hachette and Hetzel owed their accomplishments to their privileged access to a quality education. Separated by fourteen years, the two had experienced
France as a monarchy, a republic, and an empire and been educated during the Bourbon Restoration. Although royal authorities thwarted his goal of obtaining a teaching degree when they closed the school in 1822, Hachette maintained his connection to the respected institution and even provided himself with a semblance of professional standing by including the phrase “former École Normale student” [ancien élève de l’École Normale] on his title pages after listing his name as editor.\(^{249}\) Hachette also deployed this practice to highlight his authors’ writing credentials. Similarly, in his early textbooks, Hachette listed Ansart as “Professeur au Collège Royal de Saint-Louis” and “Membre de la Société de Géographie” and Vernier as “Professeur de mathématiques au collège royal de Louis le Grand” and “Docteur ès-Sciences.” Printing such professional qualifications on books’ title pages was not new. Catholic texts regularly referenced the bishop or archbishop who had approved the publication with phrases such as, “approved by Monsignor the Archbishop of Tours, reviewed and approved by an Ecclesiastical Committee appointed by Monsignor the Archbishop of Rouen.” [approuvé par Monseigneur l’Archevêque de Tours, revus et approuvés par un Comité d’Ecclésiastiques nommé par Monseigneur l’Archevêque de Rouen]. But Hachette, Hetzel and other nineteenth-century secular editors introduced the novel practice of citing an author’s individual and personal credentials in order to establish authority rather than stamping the whole work with a general institutional approval. Hachette’s contract with the noblewoman the Comtesse de Ségur provides further evidence of his attempts to claim credibility, even respectability, as an editor.

In slightly different fashion, Hetzel too credited experts as the authors of his children’s publications. However, since Hetzel’s primary targeted audiences were children and their parents, his claims to authority occasionally took on a more intimate tone. Hetzel directly addressed texts to his young readers in Magasin d’éducation et de récréation and signed his

\(^{249}\) See Hachette catalogues in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France series, Q 10 B.
contributions “un papa.” He proudly included the notation “couronné par l’Académie Française” and “membre de l’Académie Française.”

Whether intentionally or indirectly Mame, Hachette and Hetzel politicized the content of children’s literature in France because of their personal beliefs and interests, making the mid-nineteenth century a key moment in this evolution. Rather than promoting a fixed set of traditional ethical precepts these three editors exemplify the variations in the politicization and democratization of children’s reading in order to influence France’s future.

While overtly Catholic editors like Mame easily distinguished themselves from their contemporary colleagues, religious books for children had a good deal in common with emerging secular texts of the same type. Like Hachette and Hetzel, Mame recognized the importance of the growing market of child readers as well as parents’ and schools’ desire to place storybooks with ethical messages – either Christian or secular – in private homes. Convinced of the central role of home-based reading in shaping children’s values, these editors produced texts that reflected their political aims and social visions and created the market in which to sell such volumes. By the 1860s the growth of this home-based book market to a considerable extent reflected their achievement and indicated that editors who penetrated this market would have an enduring effect on the nation’s future.

Today Mame’s fictional stories for children seem rather boring. Authors rarely experimented with narrative, content, or style thus Mame publications were less effective in charming readers. Characters remain flat and the works generally present child protagonists as

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Hetzel’s periodical Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, his book Morale Familière: Contes, Récits, Souvenirs et Conseils d’un père à ses enfants (1867), and Macé’s Histoire d’une bouchée de pain, all received this annotation as did Jules Verne’s entire series Les Voyages Extraordinaires. The status of a book recognized by the Académie Française was apparently so important to Hetzel that he included the phrase “ouvrage couronné” even in advertising lists with limited space. Illustrious names such as Viollet-le-Duc, Jules Verne and Marie Pape-Carpantier made up the editorial team for Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, and the title page mentioned rather vaguely that Hetzel published the periodical “…avec la collaboration de nos plus célèbres écrivains et savants et illustré de 220 dessins par nos meilleurs artistes.”
idealized stick-figure models to follow. On the other hand, secular publishers, and in particular Hetzel, developed stories with more realistic and individualized characters that children could relate to. Rather than presenting child readers with one-dimensional protagonists, both Hachette’s and Hetzel’s authors tended to produce stories featuring individuals, a reflection of one of the central components of republican culture. These more believable characters embodied both positive and negative characteristics, and reading about their experiences led children to believe in their own capacity for individual achievement and self-improvement. Hetzel’s authors effectively connected with children’s imaginations and drew them into the messages he wanted to convey. In some ways Hetzel produced a novel pedagogical approach. As we have seen, he sought to entertain, amuse and distract his young readers so that they did not even recognize the teaching process.

Sharp competition between the Catholic Church and secular forces for control of national education inevitably affected the development of this literature. Over the second half of the nineteenth century children’s books developed and approved by the Catholic Church strived to compete with those of secular republican publishers for the hearts and minds of French children – a “battle of the children’s books” in Second Empire and Third Republic France. A contest ultimately won by the secular camp. However, while the content of these volumes differed, the form remained strikingly similar. All of the stories featured child protagonists, conveyed moral messages through an emphasis on individual behavior, and targeted readers of multiple social classes in their home environments.

Mame, Hachette and Hetzel reflect the variety of competing trends that marked this evolution during the late nineteenth century in that their desires for commercial and popular achievement combined with their individual political and cultural convictions. In the end
secular, republican publishers such as Hetzel were more successful in developing and exploiting a market for children’s books to be read in the family home. Following in the footsteps of Catholic publishers, secular companies like Louis Hachette’s and Pierre-Jules Hetzel’s in effect revolutionized the industry of children’s publishing while simultaneously developing their own specialized niche in the publishing world. These editors played a central role in shaping modern French children’s literature during the second half of the nineteenth century. Each paid attention to the contemporary *ésprit d’époque* and used new technical developments in printing and bookbinding as well as innovative ideas in marketing and publicity to develop the genre. Thus while the fortunes of the Catholic Church in public education shifted with the volatile French political arena between 1855 and 1900 which moved from empire to conservative republic to a stabilized liberal republic in the 1880s, leisure reading for children imbued with republican content gained an ever-increasing place in French homes. Because editors’ personal convictions influenced children’s storybooks as never before, aspects of republican political culture such as the social value of the individual, the importance of access to knowledge through the written word, and a recognition of the centrality of scientific development for national progress were actively conveyed to the nation’s future generations. Editors developed both their narrative and marketing practices in the belief that home-based reading could correctly and concretely fashion French children’s character in order to insure national stability and greatness for the republic.

By century’s end secular publishing effectively dominated the market of children’s books – in both school and home-based reading materials. Importantly, however, these secular publications owed much to their Catholic predecessors in terms of narrative models, moral content, and social differentiation. The successful adaptation of existing models by secular publishers – perhaps especially in light of their commercial savvy – went a long way toward
assuring the development of republican culture and its dissemination. Increased numbers and availability of these stories over the second half of the century coincided with the consolidation of republican political aims to a degree that cannot be taken as accidental. Catholic publishers, although maintaining a strong role in educational publishing throughout most of the nineteenth century, competed less successfully in the realm of home-based leisure reading. This facet of secular, republican children’s books’ success – the elaboration of a political culture at home which would then extend to the nation – sheds further light on this process.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE DOMESTIC WORLD OF CHILDREN’S READING, 1855-1900

In 1882, writer and education advocate Ernest Legouvé wrote of his particular objective to encourage children to read with their families at home. “…(T)o spread the principles of elocution into the domestic home environment, by the more lively means of illustrated texts, and in this way to make sensible use of it within daily home conversation.” Legouvé intended to accomplish a larger objective than transmitting correct pronunciation. He clearly expressed the more profound and shared purpose of those who aimed to develop home-based reading – moral domestic regeneration. More than establishing a family-centered communal activity, those involved in promoting this agenda hoped to influence and reform French families’ home environments for social and political ends.

Why target the home? Surely, children could learn to read at school. However, beginning in the 1860s, French advocates of domestic reading concerned themselves with more than simply encouraging families to read together. The content of what families read mattered greatly. Developers of home-based children’s reading hoped to infuse families with highly moral and patriotic reformatory messages that readers would take to heart. By the second half of the nineteenth century, many members of middle- and upper-class French society considered the intimate and sensitive environment of the home as the ideal place to touch people’s emotions. As a result, editors, authors and publishers alike increasingly inundated the family home with moral-themed literature through a variety of means.

Parents, both mothers and fathers, actively took up the task of their children’s moral education. As most prescriptive literature reveals bourgeois society considered mothers as primarily responsible for this vital aspect of their children’s formation. The first edition of

Journal des Jeunes Mères et de leurs Bébés: Éducation de l’Enfant par sa Mère, which appeared in the fall of 1873, indicated this preference not only in its title but also in its text. As the magazine’s editor stated, children’s education was “…the most important parental duty, especially for the mother.” Publishers and government officials recognized the domestic foyer as the physical space in which women exercised their moral authority, especially over children. Since republican reform efforts emphasized change in the future, they focused particularly on the moral formation of children via their mothers as the nation’s best hope. The pages of Journal des Jeunes Mères et de leurs Bébés once again provide evidence of the central role played by women in molding the nation’s future citizens. “The salvation of future generations depends on the woman, on the mother!” And since republican reformers wanted to convey messages of morality, they considered the mother’s private domain as the correct environment for the propagation of such messages.

My analysis of home-based reading practices reveals a more fundamental role for women in constructing the republican agenda than evidenced by other scholarly studies of the consolidation of the republic – existing studies on the rise of secular education, for example. As discussed in Chapter Three, female authors wrote numerous stories for children, and female protagonists featured prominently in books written by both men and women. Overwhelmingly these narratives for children depict mothers (both visually and in texts) as the adult most often reading to and in the company of their children. This literature consistently portrayed women as responsible for insuring their children’s intellectual and moral socialization through reading. Since much of this literary production pre-dates the direct political movement toward secular

252 Henry Bellaire, “A nos lectrices,” Journal des Jeunes Mères et de leurs Bébés: Éducation de l’Enfant par sa Mère, vol. 1, no. 1 (1 October 1873): vi. The primary objective of this journal was to alert mothers to the dangers of using nourrices and encourage them to nurse and raise their children themselves.

education under Jules Ferry in the 1880s, one possible conclusion is that as French republican culture consolidated over the Third Republic, women’s role in the project diminished.

Republican politicians actively maintained their primary political purpose of reforming the French nation in order to establish and insure durable republican institutions. Once the family had been successfully transformed in line with republican values, this could extend to the whole nation. In the French republican view, family life and domestic habits needed renewal in the interest of revitalizing the nation. Republican reformers maintained that their intention to regenerate the French family was pertinent to all social classes. However, not all social classes appear in French children’s storybooks produced between 1855 and 1900. Within children’s literature, republican authors and editors presented an idealized image of the bourgeois family as the objective for familial reform. Illustrations in the text present the bourgeois family ideal most plainly. While they did not necessarily expect to change lower-class families’ economic or social status, republican reformers involved in children’s publishing such as Jean Macé, Pierre-Jules Hetzel, Ernest Lavisse, and others targeted changes in behavior.

Throughout the final decade of France’s Second Empire, republicans considered their efforts to reform French families so crucial to national survival that they dedicated their efforts to heavily managing and mediating this project in order to assure an appropriate and desirable outcome. Government officials, education specialists, editors, authors and parents all participated in various ways in promoting proper reading material and practices. While numerous adults and strategies served to mediate children’s reading, as Chapter Six explores, children did not always read what publishers produced for them and often made dedicated efforts at “unmediated reading.” In fact, most readers who wrote about their childhood reading
experiences later on in life described their “unmediated reading” as more meaningful to them than the assigned, scripted reading they did as youths.

In order to augment available reading material for children at home, between 1855 and the 1890s, the groups involved in producing and disseminating children’s literature – editors, authors, publishers, educators and government officials – actively promoted children’s home-based reading through specific strategies and practices. This chapter investigates the specific reading practices developed and encouraged by these groups. Although these actors meant for children and their families to establish a direct connection to texts, determining which ones reached families in their homes remained a complicated process. Books designed for domestic reading had to appeal to parents and receive approval from prominent educators and government authorities before arriving in private homes. The formal strategies used to select books for home use included procedures that explicitly linked home and school (gift books, school libraries) and measures distinctly separate from national education that assured children read at home (editorial collections, children’s periodicals). Each of these practices emphasized home-based reading as a reinforcement of school-based programs along with the extension of republican values to the family. In addition to direct methods of placing reading material in private homes, representations of reading in both texts and illustrations also served to normalize and promote children’s home-based reading. As a result of investigating these practices, an image emerges of the centrality of reading within the family and the home environment as part of developing and quite self-conscious republican agendas.

Ultimately, the proponents of republican ideals succeeded in conveying the value of literacy to the nation’s future citizenry. Creators of these publications and related reading practices presented reading as a national value to all social classes, an important and
indispensable skill for all French citizens; belonging to the French Republic meant being literate. Adults, however, had the responsibility of mediating children’s reading through the creation of suitable reading material (authors, editors, and publishers) or through the selection of appropriate texts (either purchased, lent, or given). While authors and educators portrayed reading at home as positive, they strongly suggested that random reading was ill-advised. They recommended library books, prize books, journals and collections especially designed for young readers and their families. Through the promotion of children’s reading in the home, republican reformers aimed to instill the democratic value of reading in all French families while actively molding future citizens through the presentation of morally appropriate reading content.

The rise in French public education and the ever-increasing need for school texts ran parallel to the enlargement of home-based reading strategies. More children than ever learned to read as public national education grew. This expanding reading public was less and less limited to a strictly urban base as schools extended into more rural areas. Between the 1830s and the 1880s, when national education finally became secular, free and obligatory with the Ferry Laws, numerous associations formed between the national government and private publishers in order to fulfill the growing need for school textbooks. Accordingly, the number of institutions and students increased steadily throughout the 1850s and 1860s. Within this context of unprecedented growth in national education, several factors came together that permitted publishers to branch out into the realm of leisure reading for children. Several publishing houses had achieved economic security due to regular book orders from the national government. Evermore cost-effective printing techniques also offered the opportunity to diversify. And authors’ and editors’ personal interests played a decisive role in determining what books they published; the creative production of fictional works appealed to many purchasers of the genre...
and could prove financially rewarding. As a consequence, many publishers extended their lists into the realm of children’s leisure reading material over the course of the late nineteenth century. Even those publishers who did not enjoy the monetary benefits of large governmental orders formulated their own lists of children’s publications in order to compete in the emergent and ideologically contentious home market, especially after 1870.

Due to the connections between educational publishers and the patronage of the national government, it is not surprising that authors produced overtly didactic and pedagogical children’s books for leisure reading. They could hardly have done otherwise. Other studies of this era comment on this reality, and some conclude that the explanation for the didactic nature of French children’s literature – which, incidentally, continues to the present day – results from the historical fact that publishers of school textbooks also published recreational reading for children. 254 This explanation is somewhat oversimplified, however. In addition to late nineteenth-century publishers producing scholarly and leisure reading for children – both overly didactic – authors drew on existing literary models. Since the eighteenth century most adults considered moral tales suitable for children to read. Although nineteenth-century republican authors adapted their moral messages to their immediate context and political proclivities, their didactic stories drew on these historical precedents. Likewise, whereas publishers produced both fictional children’s literature and school readers, the leisure reading material published was mercifully more entertaining. Editors, authors and illustrators took time and made the effort to produce texts for children intended for home use intentionally more entertaining and amusing than that produced for school, but equally laden with republican values. For the most part, the

storybooks created during this period did not endure; with only a few exceptions, by the century’s end, publishers stopped producing the majority of these morally-tinged titles.\textsuperscript{255}

Each of the steps taken in expanding public education had an affect on children’s publishing. The first such change took place during France’s first constitutional monarchy, the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe (1830-1848). François Guizot, Minister of Education, enacted the law named for him on June 28, 1833 that mandated the opening of public primary schools in every French commune. This law contained three main provisions: all \textit{communes} of more than 500 inhabitants had to establish and maintain a primary school for boys; the government had to set up an \textit{école normale} (teacher’s college) in each department; and the law put in place a group of nationally-credentialed school inspectors.\textsuperscript{256} A subsequent law in 1836 created girls’ primary schools. Needless to say, these steps forward gigantically increased need for primary school texts. Thanks to his established links with national education, the publisher Hachette knew that the national government of the July Monarchy was working on a comprehensive new law concerning primary education, and recognized the business potential of this development.

“There were no school houses, no teachers, no books. School houses do not sprout on demand, teacher’s colleges are not organized in a day, only books could be reproduced quickly.”\textsuperscript{257} In a shrewd and forward-thinking move Hachette, in 1831, launched his editorial collection, “Bibliothèque des écoles primaires.” In this collection he included his first significant children’s publication, \textit{Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires}. The authors, Hachette and Ambroise Rendu, made the book available for sale to both the government and

\textsuperscript{255} Notable exceptions include the Comtesse de Ségur, Jules Verne and Hector Malot.


individuals. The government ordered over one million copies to give to poor children even before the Guizot Law made elementary education mandatory nationwide. This situation made Hachette’s text an immediate “best seller,” and teachers’ requirement for all students to use the same book further heightened the volume’s success. The first real school textbook intended for all French school children, *Alphabet et Premier Livre de lecture à l’usage des écoles primaires*, sold over one million copies by 1833.\(^\text{258}\)

Throughout the turbulent political events of the overthrow of the July Monarchy in February 1848, the establishment of the Second Republic, and the election of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte as President in December 1848, expansion of national education continued. Passed in March 1850, the Falloux Law newly solidified the presence of religious education by placing Catholic teaching clergy in public schools.\(^\text{259}\) The presence of ecclesiastic representatives on the “superior council for public instruction” [*conseil supérieur de l’instruction publique*] and the “academic conseils” [*conseils académiques*] within each department shows the active role now allowed the Catholic Church in public education.\(^\text{260}\) While defining the conditions for secondary education, the law also clarified the distinction between public education, which would be the financial responsibility of the *commune, département* or *l’État*, and private education, to which it granted a great deal of freedom. The law also made elementary school compulsory for girls in communities of more than 800 inhabitants.\(^\text{261}\)

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\(^{258}\) Parinet, 201-2.


\(^{260}\) Ibid. In France, *académies* denote administrative units within the system of public education, not unlike school districts in the U.S. system. For more on this subject, see Grew and Harrigan, *School, State, and Society*, 37, 73, and 95.

\(^{261}\) *Bulletin Administratif de l’Instruction Publique* (15 March 1850): 57-80. Some historians have criticized the Falloux Law as a conservative reaction to the revolution of 1848 following the conservative elections of May 1849 while others see it as a means to the much-needed expansion of French schooling. Ibid., 95-100.
Although the Falloux Law of 1850 generally expanded national education, it did so in a way that gave the Catholic Church a more significant role in the formal education of France’s children. This meant that religious publishers benefited whereas secular publishers turned their focus to developing the market of children’s leisure reading. Hachette serves as a prime example of one particular publisher who reconsidered a publishing emphasis on textbooks. In light of the Falloux Law, Hachette reached the conclusion that, if he wanted to continue exploiting the developing children’s market, he could ill afford to depend exclusively on schoolbook publishing, given the newly conservative political climate and policy. He therefore decided to commit himself to new niche markets.

Catholic publishers experienced the passage of the Falloux Law as a turning point. Generally speaking, Catholic publishers’ readers either belonged to specific religious groups (nuns, priests, missionaries) or were women (the portion of society that represented the majority of practicing Catholics), or children (both girls and boys). Thanks to the new law, Catholic publishers enjoyed an increased demand for their publications, including sizable orders from the government. The demand for Catholic publishers’ prize and gift books increased dramatically during the early 1850s.

The Falloux Law ultimately served to reinforce and strengthen the role of the Catholic Church in public education. Only a couple years after its passage, during the conservative era of

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262 Although the Falloux Law granted a large role for the Catholic Church in public education, it was not a return to the Catholic Church’s monopolistic educational practices under the Bourbons. Rather it was a politically motivated conservative response to the revolutionary activity of 1848 and an effort by Louis-Napoléon to garner the support of ecclesiastical authorities.


the early Empire, children’s leisure book collections that included overt religious moral messages flourished. Established Catholic publisher Mame in particular directly benefited from the Falloux Law and the new favored political status it offered. A comparison of Mame’s 1851 and 1855 catalogues reveals that while in 1851 Mame published 565 titles for children’s leisure reading, by 1855 the number had risen to 709. Authors of these overtly religious narratives did not intend for them to distract or entertain their readers but rather to inculcate directly Christian values and the understanding of one’s duties by reading strictly explanatory texts [encadrées].

By the 1870s, competition mounted between the Church and State for control of the all-important right to formally educate France’s youth. The desire to influence the form and content of children’s education arose from the fact that many republicans attributed the Prussian victory to intellectual superiority and in response called for the fundamental transformation of France’s educational system. In order to rally support for such reform, linguist Michel Bréal published Quelques mots sur l’instruction publique in 1872 in which he set up an opposition between a strong Prussia, regenerated by education after 1807, and a defeated France in 1870, the result of insufficient development in education. Republican editor Pierre-Jules Hetzel also openly expressed his belief in the regenerative potential of education for France. “It is by uniting

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265 Mame, Catalogue Général (Tours: A. Mame & Cie., 1851), Mame, Catalogue Général (Tours: A. Mame & Cie., January 1855). This same comparison also shows editorial innovations in Mame’s list: thirteen new children’s titles in 1851 compared to forty-one in 1855, and while there was only one new children’s editorial collection in 1851 there were five by 1855. During this period Mame also benefitted significantly in the area of textbook publishing. Publishers’ catalogues are housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in the Q10 B collection. A reference guide is available in the form of a comprehensive inventory of most nineteenth century catalogues for the years 1811-1924. See Bibliothèque nationale de France, Catalogues de libraires et d’éditeurs, 1811-1924, ed. Chantal Faure (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2003).

266 On this and French intellectuals’ search to explain France’s defeat, see Claude Digeon, La crise allemande de la pensée française (1870-1914) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), 74 and 364-68. Notable republicans involved in these educational reform efforts included: Jules Simon, Paul Bert, Jules Ferry, Ferdinand Buisson, and Gustave Monod.

education and training that this misguided country must be returned to her path.” Hetzel concluded similarly that quality secular education could both limit internal conflicts and prevent future military defeat. Third Republic governments placed a great deal of importance on their efforts to reform the moral underpinnings of the nation’s youth. The journal *Le Petit Français illustré* lauded the educational foundations of the Republic in an edition marking the government’s thirtieth anniversary.

After concluding a peace agreement with Germany, everything had to be rebuilt or rather built. The goal was to repair the losses caused by the last war, … Equally important was the work needed in the area of schooling. The Empire had systematically neglected primary instruction and took an interest in secondary schooling and higher education only very late. We courageously set to work and little by little the country became covered with schools where students came in droves.

Republicans therefore blamed poor national education under the retrograde Empire for the loss of 1870 and considered education a vital element of the republican government’s success since its founding.

After the events of 1870-71 the government committed itself to reforming national education programs. The reforms undertaken reflect the perception that children’s patriotism needed to increase to assure the nation’s future. Beginning in the late 1870s, the Third Republic became increasingly “republican”, and members of the national government progressively advocated for public education that was free, secular, and mandatory. This drive culminated in the Ferry Laws in 1881-1882. This series of laws is central to the history of education in France since it ultimately established the basic principles of national education that

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are still preserved (and debated) in the twenty-first century. In the interim, between the debut of the Third Republic and passage of the Ferry Laws in 1881 and 1882, the idea and practice of steadily getting books into children’s hands and homes became all the more urgent. Republicans had shared a brewing sentiment and desire for fundamental political change since the failure of the short-lived Second Republic.

The republican objective to shape and assure the nation’s future through the secular education of its children had already been established in children’s home reading. Authors addressed more and more partisan messages directly to their child readers. In part their intention came from the idea that children’s home-based reading would have a direct and positive impact on parents. Publishers and educators viewed children as more than passive receptacles for these messages; children and their books served as the means to transform the domestic foyer.

Jules Ferry (1832-1893) was central in making changes in national education during the Third Republic. He served as the Minister of Public Education [Ministre de l’Instruction Publique] between 1879 and 1880 and again in 1882. By March 1882 Ferry had successfully instituted a law on primary education that made it secular, free and compulsory for all children between the ages of six and thirteen. A key feature of Ferry’s educational program was the importance of books in teaching. As early as 1880 Ferry made his intentions known in the political realm that his education programs would privilege the use of books and in particular of government-selected books.271

Since to a great degree Republicans blamed poor familial morality and the Catholic Church for France’s national failures, Ferry, along with other politicians and educators, developed a national curriculum of secular morality to teach in schools. The introduction of

lessons in civics and morals replaced religious instruction ("catéchisme"), and public schools’
teaching staff became entirely secular. “Moral lessons” differed from religious education in two
fundamental ways: pleasing God was not included as a motive for good behavior and
instructional methods emphasized reflection and creating practical habits in everyday acts rather
than repeated memorization of maxims. For the most part, though, moral lessons’ content
differed little from religious precepts and continued to emphasize respect for oneself, one’s
family and friends, truthfulness, patriotism, and responsibilities toward others through justice and
charity but within the secular framework of children’s social duties. In order to accomplish these
new educational objectives, educators and politicians developed curriculum for schools in the
1880s that remained a secular version of traditional Catholic teachings concerning proper
behavior. Ferry recognized this important continuity with the past. “…[W]e’re saying that the
schoolteacher will teach…what? A theory on the foundations of morality? Never, sirs… but the
good old morality of our fathers, ours, yours, because we have only one.” Ferry’s words in a
speech to the Senate on June 10, 1881 draw our attention to contemporary politicians’
recognition that their formulation of secular morality was not entirely new.

Contemporary pedagogical theorists encouraged teachers to use stories, anecdotes, poems and songs as the means
to instigate discussion and explain correct moral precepts. Educational reformers asked teachers to employ these
methods in order to incite children to think about the principles of their actions in daily social interactions. See
Henri Marion, “L’Enseignement moral dans l’école primaire et dans les écoles normales.” Revue Pédagogique,
nouvelle série, vol. I, no. 1 (15 July 1882): 5-19; Gabriel Compayré, Organisation pédagogique et législation des
ecoles primaires (Paris: P. Delaplane, 1890), 61-71 and Ernest Lavisse, A Propos de nos Écoles (Paris: A. Colin,
1895), 8-10. See also Stock-Morton, Moral Education for a Secular Society, 155-58.

For more on the similarities between traditional religious moral lessons and the secular morality taught following

“…(N)ous disons que l’instituteur enseignera… quoi? Une théorie sur le fondement de la morale? Jamais,
messieurs… mais la bonne vieille morale de nos pères, la nôtre, la votre, car nous n’en avons qu’une.” Jules Ferry,
speech in the Sénat, 10 June 1881. Robiquet, ed., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry, vol. 4, Les lois scolaires
(suite et fin) (1896), 141-42. Ferry pronounced this speech to the French Senate as part of the debate surrounding
Republican efforts to establish a national primary school curriculum. Ferry reiterated this sentiment of a shared
inherited morality in writing in an official ministerial Circulaire addressed to all primary school teachers in 1883,
“(C)ette bonne et antique morale que nous avons reçue de nos pères…” Jules Ferry, “Circulaires relatives à
l’enseignement de la morale dans les écoles primaires,” Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction
The introduction of teaching secular morality in public schools during the 1880s not surprisingly engendered a great deal of political debate. Republican politicians, including Jules Ferry himself, went to great lengths to explain and justify this curriculum and teaching philosophy. According to official texts, the government considered morality teaching qualitatively different from other academic lessons because this subject needed to touch children’s hearts. The number of repeated phrases along these lines included in Ferry’s November 1883 *circulaires* make the importance of this belief clear, “place within children’s souls,” “move from his mind to his heart,” “deeply-rooted in the soul,” “teaching that reaches the source of the soul” “to touch the heart” “to profoundly penetrate into the younger generations.”

In order to assure the successful transmission of moral messages to young readers, authors needed to establish an emotional connection. The link between home and school is evident in many of these discussions, which characterize the republican teacher as filling the role of a “natural” extension of the child’s parents in shaping the child’s heart and mind.

The Ferry Laws did not really initiate a market niche in children’s reading material as much as they confirmed the prevailing trend. Publishers had increasingly produced secular moral tracts since the 1860s, and the Ferry Laws codified this trend in national education programs. With the consolidation of the republican educational agenda, secular publishers increased their production of prize books since the government stopped buying these volumes from Catholic publishers. As an excerpt from the *Bulletin de la ligue française de l’enseignement*, a newsletter published by Jean Macé’s association promoting secular education demonstrates, prior to the 1880s public schools had been limited in their selection of attractive prize books and were obliged to choose from Catholic publishers’ catalogues.

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“You all know, no doubt, having been put to the test personally, how hard it has been until recently to obtain prizes for our village schools outside of Mame’s and Alcan’s catalogues.”

In similar fashion to advocates of Catholic education, Republicans now recognized that the practice of prize books virtually assured reading at home and, by implication, the successful transmission of their partisan messages. This same text goes on to underscore the Ligue de l’enseignement’s recognition of the importance of assuring the presence of appropriate reading in all social classes’ homes. “Nevertheless, via the distribution of such prizes, we can be sure to get books into rural families’ homes, and books that will be read.”

The number of children attending public school continued to rise, and secular publishers increased the number of prize books they produced. This in turn allowed public schools greater selection. The national government remained an important purchaser of prize books, and the shift to buying from secular publishers meant this group now had the monopoly. This source of children’s domestic reading therefore increasingly provided secular texts to families through their children.

Many adults considered books the ideal gift for children since social and cultural objectives of the time privileged the encouragement of obedient, well-behaved and intelligent children. The book at once belonged to the cultural mode of exchange and symbolized parents’ love and family goodness. Books were perfect gifts because they simultaneously served to advance a child’s moral formation and his practical education. In reading, children found a quiet, self-disciplining activity, a particular aspect valued in bourgeois homes. Producers of children’s publications treated their readers – both boys and girls – as well-behaved, studious and

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276 M. Leclaire, “Report from Committee Three, ‘Librairies de campagne et colportage,’” Bulletin de la ligue française de l’enseignement, vol. 1 (1881), 399. M. Leclaire, Delegate from Nancy, made this statement within the context of his report at the “Congrès de la Ligue Française de l’Enseignement” in April 1881. Leclaire was responsible for reporting the findings of Committee Three. Among other subjects, the committee discussed and recommended an increase in production and availability of visually appealing secular children’s books in rural areas to be given as livres de prix. Conference participants unanimously adopted the committee’s recommendations.

277 Ibid.
unique individuals. But publishers recognized that they needed to address a two-fold audience, children and parents. Pleasing both assured success. As the popular children’s writer Christophe stated reflecting on his publishing career which began in 1887, “I always wrote at least as much for adults as for children. I think in fact the most successful children’s books are those that parents find entertaining.”

One of the most distinctively French ways children began to develop home libraries was through schools giving children prize books (livres de prix) at the end of the academic year. Academic institutions widely practiced this ritual from the mid-nineteenth century onward. The custom dates back to the seventeenth century when Jesuit teachers first had the idea of rewarding scholastic achievement with the gift of a book, therefore inspiring students to do well in their studies while extending student learning beyond the classroom. During the eighteenth century prize books served as rewards for meritorious middle-school (collège) students and during the Restoration (1815-1830) for elementary school classes. Victor Duruy, Minister of Public Education (1863-1869) at the end of the Second Empire, issued two circulaires formalizing the practice in all public primary schools so that by the end of the nineteenth century the ritual of the distribution of prize books had become a common and treasured aspect of French school children’s world.

278 “Christophe” was the pseudonym of high school science teacher, author and illustrator Georges Colomb (1856-1945). He made this statement in 1936 referring to the various works for children that he published in Le Petit Français illustré between 1887-1899. See François Caradec, Christophe, Le génial auteur d’immortels chefs-d’œuvre: Le Sapeur Camember, La Famille Fenouillard, Le Savant Cosinus (Paris: Pierre Horay, 1981), 187.

279 A supporter of secular public education, Victor Duruy made many far-reaching reforms during his service as minister and laid much of the groundwork for the Ferry Laws of 1881-1882. Duruy served as a member of the Conseil Supérieur de Instruction Publique from 1881-1886. See Horvath-Peterson, Victor Duruy and French Education.

280 Victor Duruy, “Circulaire aux préfets concernant l’établissement d’une école normale pour la préparation à l’enseignement spécial, les distributions de prix dans les écoles primaires, et la fondation de prix en faveur d’anciens élèves de ces écoles,” Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction Publique, vol. II, no. 32 (13 August 1864): 150-52. In this Circulaire Duruy asks all local Prefects to make sure their town has a system of prize distribution since he considered this an important means to encourage emulation among students so that they continued to improve. One year later Duruy repeated his request that all towns participate in prize book distribution.
Over time, however, the practice became much more than a classroom event to mark the end of the academic year and acknowledge students’ achievements. It had evolved into a solemn public occasion for schools and their communities to recognize accomplishments in collectively educating their youth. Communities invited local notables to participate in the ceremony that took place on a stage placed in the school’s courtyard. Principals and teachers delivered speeches, and school children performed songs or short plays. Usually a special guest – the regional inspector of education, conseiller général, a government official or retired teacher – gave the formal keynote address.\textsuperscript{281} All of this fuss centered on the procession of children called to the public stage to claim their volumes to take home.

Fortunately for publishers, the widespread practice of institutions giving children books as gifts was not limited to the end-of-the-school year ceremonies. Various institutions gave texts to children when they finished their mandatory schooling (certificat d’études), for religious milestones such as the rites of communion and confirmation, for the best summer homework, and even as (prix municipal) on behalf of the mayor, usually as part of July 14 festivities.\textsuperscript{282} Organizations also on occasion gave prize books for individual accomplishments. A child might receive a prize book from his parish priest for his particular achievements in religious education, [prix de zèle et d’assiduité], or for the child’s first communion or for learning their religious


\textsuperscript{281} The secular practice of distributing prize books as “town prizes” (prix municipal) began in schools in Paris’ XVIIIe arrondissement. Beginning in 1890, the city of Paris actively encouraged this practice. See Mouranche, “Les livres pour l’enfance,” 316.
education lessons. Additionally, schools gave prize books to the best student in each subject and in spelling.

On all of these various occasions, schools and churches offered prize books to deserving children that became part of the child’s – and by extension the family’s – home library. Since education advocates considered family homes as the ultimate destination for *livres de prix*, the moral message of works distributed was of the utmost importance. Schools, both public and private, patronized therefore publishing houses that produced *livres de prix* and institutions tended to use those publishers whose principles corresponded with their own. Since Catholic publishers had the upper hand until mid-century, they developed and promoted early on this system of rewarding quality academic work with a gift of superior reading material for use at home.

Catholic publishers offered a wide variety of selection in their prize books. Younger students might receive an anthology of Hippolyte de Chavannes de La Giraudière’s simple moral tales including “Ludovic le tricheur,” “Les tartines de confitures,” and “La Course,” while older ones could expect not only moralizing fictional stories but also biographies, saints’ stories or historical accounts bearing titles such as *Gustave et Eugène ou Orgueil et Humilité*, *Les Naufragés au Spitzberg ou les salutaires effets de la confiance en Dieu*, *Histoire de Charles V*, *Histoire de Pierre le Grand, empereur de Russie*, and *Vie de Saint-Louis, roi de France*. The

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284. C.G., *Ludovic le tricheur suivi de Les Tartines de confitures* (Tours: Mame, 1852); Césarie Farrenc, *Gustave et Eugène, ou Orgueil et Humilité* (Tours: Mame, 1850); Louis Friedel, *Les Naufragés au Spitzberg, ou les salutaires...*
diversity of prize books available for educational institutions also depended on what schools could afford; publishers adapted their offerings according to the school’s means. Mame could provide bound copies of the over 100 titles from its *Bibliothèque de la Jeunesse Chrétienne* collection in at least six different formats ranging from simple, non-illustrated, low-quality soft-bound editions for a mere ninety centimes to the most luxurious hard-bound volumes which had gauffered cloth covers stamped with gold and color vignette decoration and gilt edges for nearly two francs. Since the basic text remained the same, publishers could make various adjustments in light of the ordering school’s budget. The growth in the number of schools from the 1830s onward, combined with routine solicitations by publishers, meant that orders, including those for prize books, increased so that publishers, especially the larger ones, could count on continuing to increase their profits. Thanks to this assured market, publishing houses produced prize books in quite large and profitable quantities. Until around 1856, Catholic editors did not have much competition and provided both religious and public schools with prize books.

Schools acquired prize books through various means. Most purchased texts using the local school budget. Schools often purchased prize books from specialized bookstores or directly from the publisher, who would usually offer the incentive of a discount. Generous community members donated books on occasion, and some volumes came from local or regional politicians. For those communities that did not possess sufficient financial means to purchase such books, the national government, through the Ministry of Public Education, provided

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285 “Percaline gauffrée, riche écusson mosaique, tranche dorée.” See *Catalogue Général: Librairie Religieuse, Classique et d’Éducation* (Tours: Alfred Mame et Cie., Janvier 1855), 6-10. Customers could request even more expensive bindings for prices up to 4 francs.

286 According to Jean Glénisson, Catholic publishers had lost their monopoly on prize books by 1880. See “Le Livre pour la jeunesse,” in *Histoire de l’édition française*, 431.
books. Titles donated by the Ministry of Public Education changed from year to year. However, certain titles appeared in multiple years such as Daniel Dafoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, *Les Pourquoi du Mademoiselle Suzanne* by Émile Desbeaux, Eguène Muller’s *La Forêt son histoire, sa légende, ses habitants* and others. Schools’ need to have books donated by the state gave the national government a good deal of authority over what publications children received in poorer, mostly rural, communities. The government purchased some books directly and also exercised its influence by publishing an official list of recommended titles in the *Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction Publique*. Other interested parties – education-related associations, publishers, and booksellers – tried to influence schools’ book choices through the distribution of specialized catalogues and lists. The publisher Hetzel even created the editorial collection *Bibliothèque des succès scolaires* in order to promote his selection of prize books.

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287 The *Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction Publique* regularly published lists of books it had approved as prize books. A register of the number of volumes donated by the Ministry is located in the French National Archives (F/17/*/2260) while actual titles can be found by *département* in the Ministry’s correspondence concerning “prix d’honneur, 1867-1899” (F/17/12306 - F/17/12316). Mouranche’s statistical study, “Les livres pour l’enfance et la jeunesse de 1870 à 1914,” analyzes the financial aspects of how schools purchased volumes for distribution, the administrative structures set up in order to select prize books, and what could happen when the selection committee elected to purchase books not on the list recommended by the region or the Ministry. For the period after 1870, see Nicole Prévost, “Livres de prix et distribution de prix dans l’enseignement primaire (1870-1914)” (Thèse, École nationale des chartes, 1979), 127.

288 The Ministry of Public Education offered editions of Daniel Dafoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* to schools in 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1889; *Les Pourquois du Mademoiselle Suzanne* by Émile Desbeaux and published by P. Ducrocq appeared on the Ministry’s list at least eight years in 1881, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1890; and the Ministry provided Eguène Muller’s *La Forêt son histoire, sa légende, ses habitants*, also published by P. Ducrocq, in 1879, 1883, 1889, 1890, 1896, and 1897.

289 Eventually public and school libraries’ suggestions replaced the Ministry’s lists published between 1878 and 1880. Local libraries took over this responsibility with the government’s support so that prize books reflected local needs and values.

290 Examples of associations with educational interests include the *Ligue de l’Enseignement*, founded by Jean Macé in 1866 that occasionally published book suggestions in catalogue form; its opposition, the *Société d’Éducation et d’Enseignement* created in 1867 and the publisher of a catalogue in 1890; and the *Société des livres populaires*, a Catholic group begun in 1862 that published *Catalogue de livres propres à être donné en prix* in 1876. In addition, the Société pour l’amélioration et l’encouragement des publications populaires published its *Catalogue Raisonné de Livres pour la formation des Bibliothèques Scolaires, Communales, Paroissiales et pour les distributions de prix dans les écoles* beginning in 1864 and thereafter published supplements with additional approved titles.

291 Hetzel did not actively commission new manuscripts for this collection but rather re-grouped existing titles under this promotional heading.
Interested parties committed themselves to influencing the choice of material children read at home. This recognition furthers my argument that these groups actively deployed children’s leisure reading material to advance their ideological agendas. Lists of recommended prize books from a Catholic publisher or educational group contained markedly different titles and subjects than lists provided by the republican organization *la Ligue de l’Enseignement*. Prize books became increasingly secular throughout the 1860s and 1870s. The increased popularity of secular prize books ran parallel to the trend in national education towards secularism that the Ferry Laws codified in the 1880s.

Contemporaries referred to prize book distribution as “compensation” [*récompenses*]. The popular understanding of prize books’ role was that they should build up a student’s personal library and allow him to develop a love of books. Needless to say, schools had to select prize books appropriate to a child’s age and learning level in order successfully to foster a connection.

If we take care to choose books that are appealing and instructive, insure that they are suitable for their age, educational level, the children’s personalities, and reflect the achievement to be rewarded, the prize book easily becomes the “anytime friend” that we have all hoped for. They will cherish it; it is the first and most precious element of their future library.292

The publisher Marc Babou expressed a variation on the personal value of prize books for students, “…the book given as a reward at the end of each school year – to the studious or well-behaved student – is always and with protective care given an honored place in the student’s personal library.”293

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After 1870, debates arose concerning the appropriateness of giving prize books as rewards for academic performance. Those who criticized the giving of such gifts did so on the basis that institutions distributed volumes of poor quality, simply pretty to look at, and rarely read by the recipient. Librarians from Pau (Basses-Pyrénées), for instance, expressed this opinion in a report published in the Bulletin de la Société Franklin: “…to give them a personal prize, a book of little value whose gilded cover they admire but hardly read,….” Others criticized the practice by claiming that institutions distributed too many prize books in an effort to please students’ parents who surely appreciated schools’ generous efforts to distinguish their children. According to these critics schools gave out prize books to almost all students, including undeserving ones, thereby diminishing the value of the prize books as an acknowledgement of scholastic achievement. In areas that practiced excessive distribution, critics decried the quality of publications selected for distribution as poor. These same critics, however, often continued to uphold the importance of having books in homes.

The volumes that communities distributed as prizes varied. In general, academic institutions distributed books published in the years just after Duruy’s circulaires. For example, between 1870 and 1879, more than half the prize books awarded had publication dates between

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294. “Bibliothèque populaire de Pau,” Bulletin de la Société Franklin 162-63 (1 January 1880 and 1 February 1880): 209-10. A secular association, the founding members of La Société Franklin established it in 1862 in order to encourage local initiatives to stimulate interest in reading. The group provided administrative information, technical and bibliographical resources, and links with booksellers. As of 1868, the association’s primary function was to serve as a national advocacy group for the establishment and growth of public libraries [bibliothèques populaires] the majority of which were housed in public schools. The group’s newsletter, Bulletin de la Société Franklin: Journal des Bibliothèques Populaires provides a wealth of information on reading practices at the time. Book manufacturers who wrote to the Journal d’Indre-et-Loire asserted that recipients rarely read their prize books. “Souvent ces livres sont médiocres; on ne les garde que comme souvenir.” See “Une Cause de Chômage,” Bibliographie de la France: Chronique du Journal Général de l’Imprimerie et de la Librairie 15 (11 April 1885): 69.


1867 and 1870 and of these a notable number of new titles appeared in their respective years.\footnote{New titles accounted for 25\% in 1870-1879, 18.5\% in 1880-1889, and 20\% in 1890-1899. See Mouranche, “Les livres pour l’enfance,” 320.}


The practice of rewarding students with a book parallels the contemporary values communicated in children’s literature. Children’s authors often incorporated the central theme of work into their narratives. They shared the prevailing notion that hard work would be rewarded. The reward could come in the form of a good harvest in return for hard farm labor or a good grade for a correctly completed lesson; children’s work of all sorts was regularly affirmed by a reward. The system of prize books therefore reflected existing values and ideals for French children as well as promoting on a national scale the republican value of literacy among schoolchildren.
Another method used and expanded during the late nineteenth century to assure that children had leisure-reading material at home was the publication of children’s periodicals. Between 1855 and 1900, publishers introduced more than thirty-five children’s periodicals into the market. Both secular and religious publishers pursued the market of children’s journals.

By the nineteenth century, families could purchase children’s journals by annual subscription at reasonable prices. Following the model of adult periodicals, children’s journals published factual news items and fictional texts. French children’s magazines tended to feature a selection of stories and other activities related to reading for use at home. Customers subscribed to the inherent appeal of a regularly delivered children’s journal that contained features presented in series form and direct contact between the journal’s editor and his readers. Publishers of children’s periodicals in the nineteenth century created loyal readers via these strategies. The following excerpt from the editor’s preface to the first volume of Journal des enfants (1832) makes it clear that the editor desired a direct link with his audience. He advocates a personal relationship with his readers and intentionally and actively encourages exchange.

To our children. Children, come along with us who are creating a journal for you and you will be men. This way, come with us, come. We will soon listen to one another, us and you; place your frail little hand in our large fatherly one. We will chat together. You will tell us all your sorrows and we will comfort you. You will ask us all your questions and we will answer them. …This here is the journal for all children.”

299 The first monthly periodical destined for young readers was the Journal d’Éducation founded by M. Leroux (maître des arts de l’Université de Paris) that appeared in July 1768. A simple 32-page leaflet (cahier), the Journal d’Éducation measured 17.5x10cm with text formatted in a single column and no illustrations. The purpose of this early periodical was explicitly to instruct, not to provide a diversion as later children’s journals would. Several scholars have written about the history of children’s periodicals, most notably, Fourment, Histoire de la presse des jeunes; Marcoin, Librairie de jeunesse; and Hours, Le rêve impossible.

300 Depending on the bibliographical source consulted, statistics vary concerning the precise number of children’s journals that appeared. I determined this estimate using the Bibliographie de la France and Otto Lorenz’s Catalogue Général de la librairie française (Paris: O. Lorenz, 1867-1888).

301 Jules Janin, inaugural editorial, Journal des enfants, no. 1, 1832. Charles Lautour-Mézeray founded and owned this journal up until March 1837 when he became associated with Abraham Béraud. Although popular the periodical remained in the red financially leading to its purchase in December 1841 by Pierre Gillet de Grandmont and in 1847 by a combined number of publishing associates. The journal continued publication until 1897. See Comte G. de Contades, Portraits et fantaisies (Paris: Quantin, 1887).
Publishers produced periodicals for all types of child readers, of both sexes, rich and poor. Editors hoped, however, that their child readers would possess the desired qualities of diligence, honesty, generosity, and the ability to demonstrate respect and love for their parents.\textsuperscript{302}

The early nineteenth-century periodical \textit{Journal des enfants} presented its readers with true stories, historical accounts that would both inform and entertain. “… (W)e have to talk with you about your fellow beings, those who exist and who need you, …. … (W)e will tell you about history; which will be just as amusing and dreadful as your fairy tales and at the same time it will be more useful and more true.”\textsuperscript{303} Journal editors shared an emphasis on what children ought to know. Therefore, while publishers fundamentally intended these periodicals to educate, they believed the best means to this end was to attract readers with works that entertained.

Children’s periodicals varied in presentation and subject matter but certain similarities among them existed. Editors regularly addressed their young readers directly in editorials and explanatory side notes. They also aimed to entertain young readers and to make moral messages come alive that perhaps children had not understood at school. To illustrate, I will present a brief overview here of children’s journals followed by more detailed discussions of two of the more successful periodicals of the era, Hachette’s \textit{Semaine des enfants} which first appeared in 1857 and Hetzel’s \textit{Magasin d’éducation et de récréation} which debuted in 1864.

In general, these children’s periodicals were at least eight pages long, measured approximately 8 x 11 inches, and featured a mixture of reading material along with numerous illustrations. Publishers developed content as an extension of school programs and privileged moral lessons encouraging good behavior. Most of them contained at least one story presented

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid. This emphasis on historical accounts instead of fairy tales resulted from a larger debate in which entertaining and educational history served as a reaction to the perceived silliness of fairytales, traditionally considered appropriate for children.
in series form. This encouraged children to continue their subscriptions in order to know the story’s end. Periodical publishers therefore succeeded in captivating their intended audience and parlayed the narrative told in installments into bound chapter books for sale as a part of a collection to the same children and their families. Each periodical presented some combination of songs, a practical science-based text, riddles, current events, advice, a play in dialogue form, and sometimes even letters from readers. Specific to girl readers, some journals provided sewing patterns for dolls’ clothes, music scores, and drawing lessons.

In 1857, Hachette began a revolution in children’s periodical publishing with the introduction of the journal *La Semaine des enfants*. For the first time, Hachette made a weekly children’s journal available for sale in individual volumes directly from booksellers for ten centimes or by annual subscription. Prior to this innovative marketing strategy, publishing houses made journal subscriptions available only in towns through local bookstores that also distributed prospectus and trial issues. Hachette’s new sales technique meant that some members of the popular classes could also obtain this periodical publication. Previously, only the upper classes, educational institutions, and religious establishments could afford subscriptions, seriously limiting periodicals sales. Hachette used the journal as a testing ground for stories that he would then publish as part of his editorial collection, *la Bibliothèque Rose*. Illustrations, games, and informative texts existed alongside fiction in *La Semaine des enfants*.

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304 Publishers often used their children’s journals to test authors’ work in serial form before publication in book form. Most of Jules Verne’s novels first appeared in installments in Hetzel’s *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*, as did André Laurie’s series on children’s school experiences in different countries such as *Mémoires d’un collégienn*, *Un semester en Suisse*, and *L’Oncle de Chicago*, *Mœurs Scolaires en Amérique*. The Comtesse de Ségur’s works appeared in Hachette’s *La Semaine des enfants* before published as books.

305 Hachette publishing continued to produce *La Semaine des enfants* until 1876. In October of that year Hetzel absorbed his former periodical competition into his own *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*.

306 In keeping with this approach to marketing, Hachette made the journal available in his train station bookstalls.

307 Publishers favoured the practice of sales exclusively via annual subscription since it meant that they knew in advance how many copies they needed to print and could anticipate guaranteed sales.
The introduction Hachette penned for the first volume of *La Semaine des enfants* in 1857 clearly stated the magazine’s objective: to educate through entertaining reading that appealed to the entire family. Hachette hoped that French families would read his magazine together. He addressed his introductory editorial to “the mothers and fathers of families,” indicating his recognition that to meet with success his magazine needed to appeal to parents (especially mothers) since adults would purchase the magazine for their children. By addressing parents, Hachette successfully included them directly in their child’s education; he made it clear that children should read at home and that their parents should read to them.

His first editorial also recognized the psychological development of child readers’ needs. Hachette specifically asserted that his magazine targeted that age between when children learned to read and the moment they could handle more serious texts. According to him, the interval during which children prefer to play all the time and engage in frivolous activities should be filled with a useful activity. Picking up on the historical precondition that children’s literature should simultaneously entertain and educate, Hachette stated that his magazine aimed to meet the needs of these younger children who required a certain amount of amusement to engage the educational aspects of their reading material. “*La Semaine des Enfants* … will turn their passion for enjoyment to the advantage of an education, … useful in the present and fruitful for the future.” This established a clear connection between home-based learning and formal education two decades before Third Republic political culture officially recognized such a link as vital to their objectives. The journal published short, engaging, interesting readings appropriate to children’s different ages and illustrated with various engravings as the

308 Louis Hachette, “Aux Pères et aux Mères de Famille,” *La Semaine des enfants* 1 (3 January 1857): 2. This acknowledgement by Hachette is also interesting in terms of late nineteenth-century understandings of childhood and the increasing awareness that children had specific needs including psychological ones.

309 Ibid.
means to this end. Hachette believed that material presented in this way would prepare children for their future educational endeavors and their futures in general. An educator at heart, Hachette did not intend for his new magazine to replace school learning, but to serve as a supplement, a foundational reinforcement. Perhaps most importantly, Hachette wanted his readers to come away with moral lessons taken to heart. In spite of their simplicity, he designed his texts to leave a lasting impression.

In our stories, everything will be simple, everything will be short, and everything will be amusing as well; but, at the same time, everything will be educational and above all moral, and will tend to gradually penetrate into young hearts a love of religion and virtue.\footnote{Ibid.}

Hachette successfully developed a new source of home based reading – family reading via a children’s periodical available directly to individual homes – built upon existing narrative models of brief, entertaining, morally instructive tales for young readers.

The editor’s pioneering approach to sales and distribution of juvenile periodical literature meant that more French children had access to quality reading material at home from the late 1850s onward. Hachette and other editors of children’s works contributed to actively founding and shaping a culture of literate children and their families.

Fewer than ten years after Hachette’s innovative contribution to the field of children’s periodicals, the publisher Hetzel began his own novel enterprise. Beginning in 1864, Hetzel published his periodical for children, \textit{Magasin d'éducation et de récréation}, once every two weeks.\footnote{Magasin d'éducation et de récréation could claim 10,000 subscribers by 1875.} The publication became an immediate popular success.\footnote{Hetzel published \textit{Magasin d'éducation et de récréation} up until 1906. Interestingly, in 1876, twelve years after Hachette’s death, Hetzel’s \textit{Magasin d’éducation et de récréation} absorbed Hachette’s \textit{La Semaine des enfants}.} As mentioned in Chapter Three, Hetzel co-founded this journal with his collaborator and friend, the educator Jean Macé.
Like Hachette’s journal, Hetzel used his children’s periodical to test new authors for publication and to print books in serial form prior to printing them as bound volumes.

Although similar to other children’s journals at the time which presented educational material entertainingly, Hetzel’s publication more explicitly aimed to instruct entire families. In the introduction to the first edition of *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*, the co-editors stated their intentions. They acknowledged that they developed the magazine in order to educate both parents and children through reading at home. “Our objective is to provide a family education in the true sense of the word, … that appeals to parents and that benefits children.”313 This commitment meant that parents could have confidence that the *Magasin* would benefit their children. Hetzel reaffirmed his resolve to make *Magasin* a home-based reading activity for the entire family in an editorial letter addressed to the parents of the magazine’s subscribers in 1866 by stating,

> If the *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* is not – for those who read it – *the* journal for the whole family in matters of education, if it can not be read jointly by the fireside for the usefulness and enjoyment of each household member, our objective has not been fully achieved.314

Others in the publishing profession immediately recognized – and imitated – Hetzel’s intent to influence whole families. On the occasion of the journal’s debut in 1864, a promotional article appeared in *Le Temps* by the newspaper’s editor, Auguste Neftzter, who wrote,

> The “Education” section of this new collection will be directed by Jean Macé…. This part of the collection will quickly become the complement to children’s studies within as well as outside of the family. Mothers, fathers, both girls’ and boys’ teachers, all those who have a noble concern for children and youth, will find here a reliable guide, as enjoyable as it is enlightened.315

315 Auguste Neftzter, “Notre Nouvelle Prime,” *Le Temps*, 29 February 1864. 1. It is important to note that *Le Temps* distributed Hetzel’s *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* directly to their subscribers. Additional promotional articles concerning the *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*’s introduction also appeared in *Le Temps*.
Evidently, Hetzel hoped to have an effect beyond child readers.

Hetzel’s primary intention was to shape children’s morals. He wanted to inspire children to develop into quality adult citizens by improving their personal character. And the route to becoming a quality individual depended on the child’s formative familial experience. Hetzel expressed his personal objective to intentionally shape children’s morals through entertaining narratives. “Instruction must be presented in a form that stimulates interest: otherwise instruction repels and disgusts. Entertainment has to hide a moral reality, one that is useful: otherwise it becomes frivolous, and empties minds rather than filling them.”

The magazine’s founders claimed that if their project succeeded, it would mean that it had “…contributed to increasing the wealth of knowledge and sound ideas, the wealth of good feelings, spirit, reason and taste that make up what might be called the moral capital of France’s intellectual youth.” These were rather lofty goals.

Furthermore, Hetzel overtly committed himself to developing the Magasin as a moral complement to children’s public education. In part this goal stemmed from his inability to participate in the textbook market during the Second Empire even though by the 1860s Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte’s regime had liberalized. While Hetzel wanted to influence children’s education and learning through reading, he recognized his exclusion from the path of formal education; as a former political exile it remained highly unlikely that Hetzel would receive government book orders. Therefore, the less government-regulated path of publishing home-based reading material appealed to Hetzel as a means to influence France’s children. The secular

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on the 1st, 15th and 20th March 1864 and in numerous editions in subsequent years to advertise Hetzel’s various editorial collections.
316 Hetzel and Macé, Magasin d’éducation et de récréation 1 (1864): 1.
317 Ibid.
content of Hetzel’s periodical publication indicates that his interest lay more in subtly challenging the official moral ethos rather than in directly supporting it.

Hetzel provided readers with a magazine to use in the home “at the heart of the family” (au sein de la famille) that would generally support and not directly conflict with burgeoning national education programs.318 In an editorial from the first year of the Magasin’s publication, Hetzel publicly stated his objective to develop those aspects of children’s education not allowed in school, “We shall thus continue to grant great importance to instruction, especially to that part of instruction which cannot be included in public schooling programs and are the preserve of the family.”319

Hetzel was not the only publisher to emphasize the desired connections between home and school. Other journals published texts that made reference to lessons taught or practiced at school – gym classes, history lessons, and, after 1882, school battalions [bataillons scolaires]. In Alexis Muenier’s “L’Âge sans Pitié,” published in L’Écolier Illustré in 1896, a group of young boys learns the value of respecting those who have served France in battle. The author described in detail the boys’ school environment as the story’s backdrop.320

Hetzel committed the Magasin to social and cultural messages, in particular republican values. Summarized generally, these values included: individual autonomy, belief in a person’s capacity to resolve social problems, self-discipline, the importance of family and community, and the education of children in useful knowledge such as history and science. Hetzel consistently presented his readers with the world of the bourgeoisie as the dominant social

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element in the Magasin. This practice allowed the Magasin’s primary market and readers—bourgeois parents and their children—to identify with the messages and recognize themselves in the texts. Stories often centered on family life in which the heroes unmistakably belonged to the middle or upper classes. Major characters usually came from the upper classes. Servants, when included, were sympathetic characters relegated to subordinate roles. One-dimensional working-class characters turned up occasionally in Hetzel’s pages and while authors praised peasants for their traditional values of honesty, perseverance and patriotism, these rural characters remained undeveloped individuals peripheral to the main storyline.

Writers described the geographical locations of most tales in the pages of the Magasin d’éducation et de récréation in detail and made the physical setting relevant to the narrative’s action. While the authors who wrote for Hetzel’s Magasin paid little attention to peasants as characters, they did spend a great deal of effort explaining the inherent advantages of the countryside. They accomplished this most often by contrasting country with city, in particular the capital city, Paris. Hector Malot wrote consistently of his dislike for the city, especially in his story Sans Famille (1878), in which all of the hero’s unpleasant experiences occur in cities, most often Paris, while the countryside offered relief and help. In Sans Famille, Malot described Paris: “… we soon found ourselves in a completely miserable part of town: the tall, black houses appeared to be connected at the top; an unfrozen stream ran down the middle of the street, and, paying no attention to the stinking running water, a thick crowd treading on the greasy cobblestones.”

Paris also appeared in Malot’s En Famille (1893), where he described it as “These wretched houses, these sheds, these dirty courtyards, these vacant lots where piles of

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321 Esther S. Kanipe highlights the narrative aspect of Hetzel’s Magasin in terms of its attention to social relations and class in her article, “Hetzel and the Bibliothèque d’Éducation et de Récréation,” Yale French Studies 43 (1969): 73-84.
322 Hector Malot, Sans Famille, part one (Paris: Hachette, 1999), 251.
refuse rise – this was Paris.” […] Ces vilaines maisons, ces hangars, ces cours sales, ces terrains vagues où s’élevaient des tas d’immondices, c’était Paris….]³²³

The Magasin’s narratives did not present an idealized image of the world but rather a realistic view in order to prepare children for life. Hetzel and his roster of authors shared an aim to provide readers with an awareness of contemporary society’s problems and to guide children to become citizens with the abilities needed to solve these problems. Hetzel believed that traditional dominant attitudes were the reason for France’s problems and believed that constructive change could only come about through education. Since he was unable to participate in the formal education of France’s youth, Hetzel aimed to influence children in their home environments. He emphasized free, rational individuals, what they could accomplish in life, and what virtues they should possess and cultivate. Books and the act of reading were ideally adapted as a means to transmit concretely this republican belief since children could self-direct their reading activity.

The individual was not entirely alone, however. Articles in the Magasin’s pages also presented characters who clearly desired to participate in a larger social community. In order to do so, they had first to integrate into the family as part of an intimate community. People without families remained outsiders in a separate social world. Hetzel’s authors at times presented the plight of the child who had to live without a family – or with an undignified one – as the central cause of their unhappy childhoods [l’enfance malheureuse]. Hector Malot’s Sans Famille provides a prime example.³²⁴ Written in 1878, the story’s main character, Rémi, a

³²⁴ Other contemporary examples include L’Enfant (1881) by Jules Vallès, Poil de Carotte (1894) by Jules Renard, Petit Chose (1868) by Alphonse Daudet, and Robinsonette, histoire d’une petite orpheline (1874) by Eugène Muller.
wandering musician, travels throughout France; through his experiences the reader realizes that the orphan (as a literary “type”) has little place in French society.

In the village there were two children called ‘the children of the alms-house’; they had a numbered lead plate about their necks; they were dirty and poorly dressed; they were mocked and beaten. The other children often chased them as one chases a lost dog for amusement and also because a lost dog has no one to defend him.325 Malot’s melancholy narrative includes the terrible character of Garofoli who leads a group of orphans who work as musician-beggars. Although a type of social community, this “gang” obviously fails to offer the children the positive qualities of a family.

Malot recognized the cruelty of the problems represented by Rémi and Garofoli, however, he did not present the situation as one that society could or should resolve. Rather, in Malot’s tale, through the supportive framework of the family, Rémi’s troubles naturally come to an end. The story ends – and Rémi’s suffering as well – only when he is successfully reunited with his birth family. Through this connection the protagonist successfully integrates and participates in society.

In the majority of the Magasin’s moral fictions, Hetzel’s authors portrayed family as the great ideal and the primary path to becoming a full member of the community. Specifically, the orphan’s life serves as an ordeal through which the hero – usually bourgeois by birth - must struggle in order to locate his proper place in society. The general message conveyed therefore was that an individual could achieve self-realization only through the family and families in turn had to hold together in order to keep social problems such as poverty, crime, abandoned children, homelessness and disease, at bay.326

325 Malot, Sans Famille, 23.
326 Malot dealt only with the individual case of Rémi and not with all of the other orphans Rémi encountered, some of whose circumstances were worse than his own and who more than likely never found their proper families. The emphasis of this novel is on the individual’s needs within society.
Hetzel, the social progressive, wanted parents to read and learn from his *Magasin* alongside their children. If parents read with their children, then they too would recognize and take to heart the values presented. They may, in fact, recognize their own parenting errors and aim to raise their children along the lines Hetzel suggested. While parents recognized that publishers did not intend children’s periodicals expressly for mature readers, adults could benefit from the journals’ content, as this letter from a reader attests, “Education, as you know, is lifelong. So the reading lessons you publish, although they appear in a children’s journal, have listeners of all ages.”

Hetzel successfully and self-consciously conceived his project as conveying republican moral values to all members of French families via children.

Although Hachette and Hetzel broke new ground in developing periodical literature for children, other French publishers invested in and developed home-based reading material as well. Following the success of Hachette’s *Semaine des enfants* and Hetzel’s *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation*, numerous other publishing houses introduced their own periodicals for children between 1865 and 1900. These included: Hachette’s *Journal de la Jeunesse* (1872-1914), Hachette’s *Mon Journal* (1881-1925), Delagrave’s *Saint Nicolas* (1880-1914) and *L’Écolier illustré* (1890-1915), and Armand Colin’s *Le Petit Français illustré* (1889-1905).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each of these new periodical publications infiltrated the homes of French families with partisan ideas in order to regenerate the republic.

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Publishers also effectively placed reading material for children into individual homes through the creation of editorial collections. Publishing houses capitalized on the connection between their periodical publications and editorial collections. Hardbound versions of stories previously printed as installments in weekly journals required little re-editing, and an established market already existed. In general, publishers marketed and sold hardbound editions as *étrennes*, meaning Christmas and end-of-the-year gifts. Publishers’ advertised their suggestions for *étrennes* directly in the pages of children’s journals as the figure below shows.

![Figure 2: Advertisement, Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, 1893](image)

Due to their durability, bound versions of these texts appealed to customers and since edited collections had a shared style of presentation – standard size, matching color, identical cover

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329 As the century progressed, prize book volumes were also given as *étrennes*. The French tradition of *étrennes*, giving children gifts at the end of the year, had existed for some time, and in the twentieth century the formalization of gift giving during the Christmas season replaced this tradition. The practice of giving books as gifts gained popularity during the late nineteenth century as hardbound volumes became increasingly affordable. Publishers often advertised these editions in their *livres de prix* and *étrennes* catalogues. They even prepared full catalogues of the volumes available that year and highlighted new releases.

330 Figure 2 taken from Magasin d’éducation et de récréation, 1893.
design – readers could own a complete coordinated set of the stories that they read and enjoyed throughout the year.\textsuperscript{331}

The producers of these editorial collections sought to create a common desire among potential buyers. Because editorial collections contained similar subject matter, once an individual or family began to assemble volumes in a series, the idea of owning the complete series developed. Publishing houses further increased buyers’ desire to purchase texts within a particular editorial collection by manufacturing aesthetically-pleasing objects to display publicly. Owning books, especially bound series, came to signify a middle-class family’s social, cultural and educational status. An act of emulating the upper classes, owning and displaying books on home shelves indicated a literate (and literary) family whose children attended school.

Numerous French publishers shared the objective of establishing links between school and home. The title of one of Hachette’s editorial collections, “Bibliothèque des Écoles et des Familles,” indicates directly his intent to promote this association. Children and their parents considered this collection appropriate reading material for both school use and for home reading.

A shared cultural belief that parents and children should connect via the act of reading underlay these various strategies. Editors, authors and pedagogues actively encouraged the act of reading through texts and images. Publishers created editorial collections designed specifically for home use such as Hachette’s “Petite Bibliothèque de la Famille,” Hetzel’s “Bibliothèque illustrée des familles,” C. Palud’s “Bibliothèque de l’école et de la famille,” and the clearly-directed “La bibliothèque de la famille pour la moraliser, l’instruire, la recréer.”\textsuperscript{332}

\textsuperscript{331} Although not specifically about children’s books, Isabelle Olivero has produced an interesting historical account of editorial collections in France. See Olivero, L’invention de la collection.
\textsuperscript{332} The Paris-based publisher Charles Douniol produced the collection “La bibliothèque de la famille pour la moraliser, l’instruire, la recréer” from 1852 to 1875.
And publishing houses designed richly-illustrated periodicals for family reading that included serial novels, like the bourgeois and Catholic inclined *Musée des familles: lectures du soir*.333

Among these editorial collections, Hachette published the “Bibliothèque Rose” with a distinctive cherry-colored binding ornately embossed with gold filigree and lettering. (See Figures 3 and 4.) Each volume in the collection measured seven inches high, four-and-a-half inches across and approximately one-inch thick. Texts ran to about 275 pages in length and contained between 30 and 50 black and white illustrations based on original engravings. At the end, books contained several pages of publicity for other Hachette publications, including specialized collections and periodicals.

Figure 3: Bibliothèque Rose Illustree, *Les Protégés d’Isabelle*, 1890

Anyone who likes to read, and thinks of books as aesthetically pleasing objects to view and hold, will no doubt recognize the appeal of owning the whole series.


Hetzel invariably chose bright colors for the bindings of his editorial collections. He published Jules Verne’s works bound in royal blue, red, and kelly green in the editorial collection, “Les Grands voyages et les grands voyageurs” and later in larger editions with multi-colored covers. With the exception of illustrated albums for younger readers and special editions, the books in Hetzel’s collections were the same size as those in Hachette’s.

School libraries served as an additional means to place texts in family homes. By the mid-1860s significant leisure reading was taking place even in rural parts of France, which sparked a study by the national government on the feasibility of setting up libraries in schools. On June 1, 1862 the Ministry of Public Instruction [Ministère de l’Instruction Publique] issued a decree requiring that all public primary schools set up a library. This decree contained several articles outlining the specifics of the project; including details about what books libraries could

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335 Author’s collection.
and ought to make available. The decree stated that school libraries should house copies of all school textbooks as well as texts provided by the *communes*, the *Ministère*, the *conseil général*, teachers and local donors. In general during the early 1860s the Ministry of Public Instruction advised that school library volumes have a useful and beneficial aspect, containing the required morally educational content.

The general education of French rural families was part of the Ministry’s primary motivation in establishing these libraries. The government required the inclusion of reading material that demonstrated examples of good behavior and acceptable messages. And, although the Minister requested the impartiality and neutrality of texts, he made it clear that he would only accept pro-government ideas expressed in libraries’ collections since he established these institutions in the spirit of the public interest.

School libraries targeted the public interest via students and their families. Article 15 of the 1862 decree expressly specified that school libraries guaranteed families’ access to books to read at home. “[…] All books (except textbooks) […] may be loaned to families who agree to

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339 “Sans proscrire impérieusement les ouvrages de pure imagination, ils (les Inspecteurs d’Académie) ne les laisseront entrer dans les bibliothèques scolaires qu’autant qu’ils reconnaîtront que les populations auront quelque chose à gagner à leur lecture; ce ne sera pas une vaine satisfaction de curiosité qu’ils devront y trouver, mais de bons et salutaires exemples. Les livres d’histoire devront être également choisis avec soin […]. Les livres qu’on devra placer dans les bibliothèques scolaires devront donc avant tout être empreints d’un véritable sentiment national et d’une grande impartialité; on aura soin d’en écarter tous ceux qui, écrits sous l’impression d’idées préconçues, s’efforceront de faire tourner l’histoire au profit d’opinions qui doivent chaque jour s’effacer en présence d’un Gouvernement dont la pensée ne tend qu’à la satisfaction légitime de tous les intérêts populaires.” Rouland, “Circulaire aux recteurs relative à l’organisation de bibliothèques scolaires dans les écoles primaires publiques,” *Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l’Instruction Publique*, vol. XIII, no. 150 (24 June 1862): 123.
return them in good condition or to pay the replacement cost.” The article concerning borrowing privileges noticeably refers to the fact that not just students but participating families could borrow from the school library’s collection. Accounts from rural school libraries provide further evidence that libraries proposed their texts for home use since librarians’ reports repeatedly used the phrases “destinés aux familles” and “destinés aux élèves et aux familles.”

Accounts from 1885 also highlight the fact that, even though school libraries often had few books, they lent them out on a regular and repeated basis. In 1885 the school library in Baziège (Haute-Garonne), for example, reported a total collection of 243 with 366 books lent between January 1884 and December 1884.

The initiators of school libraries aimed to educate families – and especially rural families – through encouraging systematic home-based reading. As this ministerial memorandum from 1862 reveals, the government wanted to encourage families to read together at home and to guide the selection of reading materials.

School libraries are set up, first and foremost, in the children’s interest; but, based on article 5, books may be lent to families. For them – during the long winter evenings – this will be an excellent way to avoid the dangers of idleness, and experience has shown that, especially in the countryside, reading aloud, done in the evening as a family, has powerful assets, and it is precisely to prevent the disastrous consequences of irresponsible or bad choices that it became necessary to regulate book peddling [colportage]. (…) It is therefore important that the academy’s inspectors examine with the greatest attention books offered to school libraries and those whose acquisition is forecast.

Due to the potential power of home-based reading the choice of available titles required active regulation.

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The presence of school libraries throughout the country offered yet another battleground for religious versus secular literature to capture and influence their intended audiences. Editors of the periodical Musée des Familles did not intend the journal exclusively for child readers but targeted rural families, recognizing the opportunities libraries presented for developing popular reading.³⁴³ Musée des Familles proposed itself as THE journal for the popular classes who sought an intellectual activity and wanted reading material but needed guidance in their choices. Since Musée des Familles was basically bourgeois and Catholic in orientation, its appeal and subject matter provide evidence of the bourgeois hope of class emulation.

The founding of communal libraries opens up a new field in our activities. What periodical, what book, thanks to the variety of its contents, its lofty moral lessons – of religion, of science, of history – is more appropriate for the popular classes who aspire to intellectual life but for whom it is sometimes prudent to provide guidance in such a sensitive matter as their reading choices than the Musée des Familles?³⁴⁴

Placing what constituted basically public, or community, libraries within the environment of children’s formal education again indicates the primacy of children’s place in this ideological confrontation.

Did children take advantage of school libraries? Available evidence suggests they did. An 1885 account from the rural library in Aureville (Haute-Garonne) attests: “Residents, attached to farming, do not read; only those children who attend school request books.”³⁴⁵ The public library in Pau likewise reported “The presence of a large number of young children at our Sunday distributions…..” The Pau library’s report also mentioned in passing that the library used a large part of its budget to purchase children’s books “[We] have to spend a significant

³⁴³ Although not specifically intended for child readers, the Musée des Familles regularly included novels in installments by well-known authors who at times also wrote for children including Alexandre Dumas, Arthur Mangin, Eugène Muller, Jules Janin, Antoine de Gennevay, Jules Verne, and Charles Deslys.
³⁴⁵ Association des bibliothèques du Sicoval, “Bibliothèques d’antan.”
part of our resources on the purchase of books for children….” These first-hand accounts provide valuable insight into the actual use by students of the literature available to them.

Inevitably, school libraries grew quite rapidly. Within the ten years that followed the initial government memorandum, schools set up over 14,000 libraries across France. Not everyone concerned appreciated the government’s efforts at establishing school libraries, however. In particular, schoolbook publishers worried that their sales might decline if classroom textbooks belonged to schools rather than to students. In response to the June 1862 decree, Louis Hachette made his concerns about the project known. He expressed his apprehension that school libraries would serve to limit the reading material available to children. Hachette’s alarmist message explained in detail the role he thought books should play in children’s lives.

Hachette’s elucidation of the relationship he believed children should establish with their schoolbooks expresses one individual editor’s perception of and hope that a vital link could exist between family, home and school via books. Hachette’s reflection leaves little doubt that his interest was personal and professional. He commented on the personal attachment that children and their families had to their texts, “…they continue to study them in their evening leisure time, they inscribe notes and points of clarification; they keep them like a precious keepsake received for their first communion; and very often [these books] become a family

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347 It must be kept in mind, however, that between 50,000 and 55,000 public primary schools existed in France during this same period so the percentage of primary schools with libraries remained low. See Ministère de l’Instruction Primaire, Statistique de l’enseignement primaire, vol. I: 1876-1877 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1878); Watteville, Rapport à Monsieur Bardoux, 24-26 and 44; and Mémoires et documents scolaires publiés par le Musée Pédagogique, Bibliothèques scolaires. Catalogue d’ouvrages de lecture (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1887), 5-6. See also Hébrard, “Les bibliothèques scolaires,” in Histoire des bibliothèques françaises, 495, 553 and 575, nt. 34.
348 In October 1862, Louis Hachette communicated his opinions through a short publication he sent to all Paris bookstores and departments in France. See Louis Hachette, Les bibliothèques scolaires prescrites par arrêté de son Exc. le Ministre de l’Instruction publique en date du 1er juin 1862 (Paris, 1862).
349 Ibid., see especially pages 18, 22, 25-28, 31, and 33-35.
heirloom passed on from the eldest son to his younger brothers.” Hachette clearly expressed his concern with the future of the book as personal property. He feared that if books became permanent school property, this personal connection – and, of course, part of his sales – would be lost. “This passing on of books – so enjoyable for the one giving, so useful for the one receiving – would no longer take place if textbooks never leave the confines of the school….”

Although Hachette’s explanation in 1862 of students’ connections with their books does not tell us how children actually used and valued them, it does provide an idea of how one major French publisher hoped children would cherish these volumes. Furthermore, the desired connection between school and the use of books at home is evident. In October 1867, Victor Duruy, Minister of Public Education, expressed the hope that children and families who borrowed texts from school libraries would read them at home: “I also consider it useful to place in school libraries…information that will allow everyone to obtain the best from his work, to improve the well-being of the family household, and to rise within his social condition.”

Duruy perceived the role of school libraries as serving families’ practical needs – especially in rural and agricultural areas – to advance their work and improve their individual well being at home. One might read within Duruy’s statement the government’s hope that rural family life could develop toward a bourgeois model.

Duruy aimed to have primary school libraries stocked not only with books for children but for their parents as well. One of his larger projects was providing classes for adults (cours d’adultes). He believed it imperative for adults to have useful titles made available to them.

350 Ibid., 7-8.
351 Ibid., 8.
through school libraries.\(^{354}\) After establishing commissions on the subject in 1864 and 1866, the Ministry of Public Instruction published a catalogue of 2,000 books that listed the texts teachers could choose for their school library’s collection. The commission divided the catalogue into fourteen categories. The categories employed show the breadth of the libraries’ mission to reach children and their families. They included: Series A, general works, grammar books and dictionaries; Series B, History and Biographies; Series C, Geography and voyages; Series D, Literature and Moral texts; Series E, Works for children; Series F, Political economy, Common legislation and Useful knowledge; Series G, Mathematical, physical and natural sciences; Series H, Hygiene; Series I, Industry; Series K, Agriculture, Horticulture, Sylviculture (forestry), Pisciculture (fish breeding), etc.; Series L, Fine and Industrial Arts.\(^{355}\) Over the ensuing decades, these categories changed only slightly.

Contemporary children’s publications at times even incorporated references to school libraries within their storylines. This device helped to further encourage child readers’ use of school libraries. In Chapter XXI of G. Bruno’s \textit{Le Tour de France par deux enfants}, one of the story’s protagonists 7-year-old Julien, uses the local school library to enjoy and benefit from the pleasures of reading. In a passage apparently celebrating the national government’s patronage of school libraries, Julien enters into a discussion about who supplies library books. He receives the answer that the government, \textit{la France}, provides the texts.\(^{356}\) When Mère Gertrude, the

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woman hosting the boys in Épinal (Lorraine), suggests an evening of reading, the idea interests young Julien but he recognizes that books are expensive. Mère Gertrude suggests that he borrow titles from the school library.

“Yes,” said Julien, “but books are expensive and we have nothing.”

“Don’t forget about the school library young Julien. At school there are books that the teacher lends to hard-working students. You’ll see, first thing tomorrow we’ll go ask him to lend you some age-appropriate books.”

The next evening was a special occasion for the child. He arrived with a book filled with stories in his hand from which he read aloud that same day and those that followed.357

In addition to school libraries, young readers accounted for a large percentage of those using French public libraries. Numerous testimonies in the Bulletin de la Société Franklin testify to the presence of school-age children in local libraries in many parts of the country. In 1868, the Bulletin de la Société Franklin commented with regards to a library in Amiens, “At the library in the Saint-Jacques area, the clientele is mostly made up of young boys and girls between eight and thirteen. […] At the last opening we were on the verge of having to refuse books to children because there were none left for their age.”358 An additional observation made in 1872 by a librarian in Pau underscores the unanticipated nature of children’s presence in some public libraries: “A fact which also deserves our attention, is that young children come by themselves or are brought by their parents to borrow books from us; we did not anticipate that our project would develop in this way and we have here an important gap to fill.”359

However, it remains difficult to determine reliable statistics on the presence of children in local libraries. Information from La Société Franklin provides some insight. This private association began in 1862 with the objective of developing an interest in reading through local projects. Group members created booklists, contacts with publishers, and facilitated the

357 Ibid., 44.
establishment of reading groups. By 1868, the association worked primarily as an advocacy group for the extension of public libraries. The society regularly sent questionnaires to local libraries about their reading public and librarians often wrote in to the society’s newsletter to report their institution’s progress. Comments from the Bulletin de la Société Franklin indicate that school children made up the greater part [la majeure partie] of their readers.360 Alphonse Leullier of the library in Amiens (Somme) even stated, “Libraries…are frequented mostly by children.”361 Actual figures exist for Pau from the years 1871-1873 which reported on average 10 child readers out of 100362 and the Bibliothèque Communale de Saint-Sauflieu (Somme) which in 1870 also reported approximately 10 child readers out of 100.363 The library in Périgueux (Dordogne) reported 36 child readers out of 100 for 1880, 37 out of 100 for 1881, and 39 out of 100 for 1882.364 Orthez (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) reported 30 child readers out of 100 for 1880, 34 for 1881, and 28 for 1883.365 The highest percentage was indicated by Ajaccio (Corse), which reported 87 child readers out of 100 in 1872.366 Although the frequentation of libraries by children was certainly not always consistent, the information gathered by La Société Franklin indicates that children’s presence in libraries was worthy of notice.

Since libraries only admitted children of reading age, usually about age eight, libraries’ book selections available to children often provided a mix of novels for adults and children’s publications. Both children and adults appreciated certain ever-popular authors, like Jules Verne

360 Information culled from various volumes of the Bulletin de la Société Franklin. See also Mouranche, “Les enfants et les bibliothèques,” in Histoire des bibliothèques françaises, 531-34.
and Erckmann-Chatrian. Local libraries benefited from gifts from the national government and used these contributions to augment their collections. In 1883, the government allocated over 50 children’s titles, or, approximately 65,000 volumes intended for children, usually historical and scientific in nature.\(^{367}\)

An increased cultural emphasis on parents reading to their children accompanied these various literary distribution strategies that encouraged children to read at home. The presence within children’s stories of parents reading to children and families reading together in illustrations all attest to the perceived importance of this practice.

The Comtesse de Ségur’s 1866 novel, *La fortune de Gaspard*, provides a textual example of the significance of literacy.\(^{368}\) In this classic-themed tale of two brothers with contrasting personalities and talents, the value of work emerges as the novel’s central theme. Ségur asks the fundamental question early on, “Should one turn red as a radish from working the soil, or white as a turnip from digging in books?” \([Faut-il devenir rouge comme un radis en travaillant la terre, ou blanc comme un navet en piochant dans les livres?]\)\(^{369}\) The author highlighted the value of reading and formal education throughout the story in the character of the eldest son, Gaspard. Gaspard belongs to a farming family that does not recognize the advantages of a formal, literate education. He expresses his desire for a formal education, asserting that “My father knows that I want to become learned in order to make my own way.” and “I want to work hard, but with books and writing.”\(^{370}\) In yet another passage, a classmate asks, “And what good will it do me to know how to read?” \([Et à quoi ça me servira de savoir lire?]\) The response is, “It will help you to learn your catechism well, to get prize books, to learn to write.” \([Ça te servira à bien...\]

\(^{367}\) National Archives register F/17/*/2258.
\(^{369}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{370}\) Ibid., 23 and 29.
apprendre ton catéchisme, à avoir des prix, à apprendre à écrire.] Ségur and other authors presented literacy as the way to access a promising future – whether anchored in religious practice or not.

There are numerous examples in late nineteenth-century French children’s publications of children reading or learning to read at home while sitting alongside their parents, usually at their mothers’ sides. Illustrators regularly produced images of children as active participants in this activity. Most often in these images the child holds the book even if the parent reads. In this way artists represented visually a parent-to-child apprenticeship in literacy and clearly placed the adult in the position of mediating the child’s reading. Even when these illustrations included children not yet able to read, they depicted youth as independent beings engaged in a shared activity. The title page from La Semaine des Enfants, reproduced below, is an early example of how artists portrayed children reading at home.

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371 Ibid., 18.
This 1857 cover illustration for the journal’s first edition, titled “Éducation maternelle,” depicts a bourgeois family spending time together with books. A secondary character in this scenario, the father sits in the background deeply engaged in his lecture while the mother actively cares for their two young children. Although the child on her knees is not yet old enough to read, he listens attentively in a prayer-like pose to his older sister reading aloud. The artist portrays the older girl in deep concentration, and fully immersed in her reading. She has set her doll aside and virtually out of view in order to focus on the pages in front of her. The

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372 Illustration by Bertall, La Semaine des Enfants 1 (3 January 1857): 1. Interestingly, the cover image of the second volume of La Semaine des Enfants featured another Bertall illustration titled, “Éducation paternelle” in which the artist privileges the father’s role in children’s formal education. Only boys appear in this image surrounded by maps and textbooks, and the mother, who overlooks the scene, remains an indistinct background figure. Illustration by Bertall, La Semaine des Enfants 2 (10 January 1857): 1.
girl’s mother sits immediately to her right. French nineteenth-century illustrators regularly depicted the presence of parents – especially mothers – overseeing their children’s reading. Although this image captures the child engaged in the autonomous act of reading, the mother’s presence signifies her responsibility for assuring her children’s moral education. The mother represents more than a neutral adult figure; rather, she mediates what her daughter reads. The draping fabric of the bassinette in the background mirrors the idea of heavenly rays highlighting the mother’s role as overseeing moral guide.

Evidence of this motif in French children’s literature can be found early on, for example in the following illustration included as part of an advertisement for the periodical Journal des Enfants that ran in L’Illustration, Journal Universel in 1843. (See Figure 6.) Again, the artist portrays the mother as the center of her children’s reading activity. The illustration shows her three children being attentive as their mother directly mediates their interaction with books by reading aloud to them.

Figure 6: Advertisement for Journal des Enfants in L’Illustration, 1843

Throughout the 1860s and 1870s prescriptive parenting literature underscored the importance of mothers reading to their children in the home setting. Those invested in children’s

education shared the opinion that mothers were best suited to convey moral messages. “Is not the surest way to reach children to interest the mother, in order to convey the idea from her spirit, from her mind, to theirs?” While fathers worked as teachers, instrumental in children’s formal education, mothers extended their responsibility as their children’s guides into the realm of selecting reading material for home use. Articles recommending correct parenting encouraged mothers in this role, even granting women a somewhat innate claim to this task. One article in the *Journal des Jeunes Mères* assigned mothers the status of the only adults suited correctly to select gift volumes for *étrennes* for their children. “Indeed, only mothers know how to choose this kind of book; …it is necessary to have,…, the touch of her breath to warm it up or cool it down according to her watchful instinct.”

Mothers were believed to be so essential to this process of children’s reading that the text itself was not enough. Rather, the mother’s dedicated act of reading aloud to her child or children – surely linked to the oral tradition of the past – served as a necessary complement to the author’s message. “You who write for children, you include spirit in your books; - mothers enhance your work: they transpose this spirit and make it come alive with their love.” ![You, qui écrivez pour les enfants, vous mettez l’esprit dans vos livres; - les mères complètent votre œuvre: elles traduisent l’esprit et le vivifient par le cœur.]

Medium and message were seen as inseparable.

By the mid nineteenth century, artists produced varied, ubiquitous, and quite original representations of children reading. Hetzel’s *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* used an illustration by Eugène Froment of a serious, contented-looking, glasses-wearing baby reading attentively as an image to represent the journal.

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376 Ibid.
Publishers used similar images in their advertising, and booksellers hung posters featuring children reading. The frontispiece of Ernest Legouvé’s *La Lecture en Famille*, published in 1882, presented a collage of the various ways children read at home: to their elders - out loud in front of guests, alongside their parents, to themselves.

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377 This illustration by Froment appeared as the frontispiece in the bound volumes of *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* from 1864.
In this crowded montage, we see once again that children’s reading is mediated, usually within the context of home life. Legouvé’s work explains in depth the importance of reading at home as fundamental to children’s intellectual development, to the acquisition of knowledge, and to binding families together. Legouvé and other nineteenth-century pedagogues considered familial emotional bonding through reading essential. This notion too complemented the accepted belief that adults could best convey moral messages when child engaged their emotions.

Images of families reading together at home were not limited to bourgeois settings, as the image below of a rural family demonstrates. The family’s clothes, the small child’s clogs and their simple surroundings denote working-class status. They are seated in the family kitchen which is sparsely equipped with simple wooden furniture and apparently serves as a wash room and salle de bain as indicated by the laundry hanging in the background and the bathtub on the left of the image. All family members participate attentively in this privileged moment – even

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the cat! – and an oil-burning lamp’s inclusive glow symbolizes the enlightenment brought about by reading.

![Image](90x437 to 522x665)

Figure 9: Illustration, *Cent ans d’école*

Book illustrators also featured children reading alone. Although no one directly supervises the children’s reading, these artists chose to depict young readers as reading “correctly.” Images show children in control of their bodies, seated, unsoiled, and physically contained by the space they occupy. They hold the books properly and read appropriately. In representations of children reading alone they are always neatly dressed and well-groomed. Reading was thus sanctioned as a suitable and acceptable activity for children in a variety of contexts – school, home, with a parent or alone.

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Illustrations were not the only method employed to promote the activity of reading. An ABC book from 1860 titled *Abécédaire des enfants* provides a representative example. In this

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381 Anonymous, illustration for *Magasin d’éducation et de récréation* vol. 1 (1864): 133.
382 Anonymous, Ibid., 351.
volume, the letter “I” stands for the word “image” and the accompanying illustration presents a mother showing her little girl a book.

Figure 13: Illustration, *Abécédaire des enfants*, 1860

The associated narrative in the form of a dialogue follows.

“The book you bought me, Mommy, does it have pictures?”
“Yes, my daughter, and very pretty ones. Come close to me and I’ll show them to you.”
“It’s true Mommy, they are very pretty; are the stories that accompany them interesting as well?”
“Let’s read together my child, and then you can tell me what you thought of them.”
“They are charming, Mother.”

This passage repeats the idea of home-based reading and its supervision by adults and also indicates that illustrated texts held special appeal for children. Authors and illustrators, therefore, presented parents reading with or to their children, so that in turn children would want to learn to read.

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Recent historical scholarship has thoughtfully explored the increased importance of the family and the home in France during the late nineteenth century. Some scholars have

384 Ibid., 35-36.

Philip Nord in particular has demonstrated that following the failure of the Second Republic in 1852, many recognized that France “lacked the moral underpinnings necessary to sustain republican institutions” and that “it was imperative …that private life be redesigned, that the French learn the domestic virtues conducive to a democratic public life.”\footnote{386 Nord, “Republican Politics and the Bourgeois Interior,” 195.} Parents’ reading to their children became a crucial element of this all-important project. Furthermore, literate and correctly informed children guaranteed the continuity and stability of extending domestic values into future public life.

Through the multiple and varied means of prize books, children’s periodicals, editorial collections, and libraries, French homes during the second half of the nineteenth century increasingly contained a range of reading matter for children. At home, all family members had access to books. The increased amount of reading material present in French homes by the 1880s and 1890s owed a great deal to the large number of children who attended school as a result of several new, wide-reaching laws concerning public education. New publishing techniques and marketing practices meant that publishers could take risks and publish greater variety while reducing the cost of their products to the general public. Their publications
skillfully combined educational and entertaining texts accompanied by original illustrations; editors published more children’s books and journals and sold them in ever-larger quantities to more and more families. As a result, children’s home-based literature expanded on a scale that had not been seen before in France. Targeting children’s reading at home was vital to the central aims of the republican project – the edification of French families in those moral precepts that, when extended to the political realm, would sustain democratic institutions.
CHAPTER FIVE
PATRIOTIC ADAPTATION: CONTENT
BEFORE AND AFTER 1870

Then, once grown up, 
One day, boys and girls, 
We will start, as good parents, 
Our little families…

... 
So, citizens full of love, 
For their happy nation, 
To our young ones, our turn. 
We will pay our debt…

... 
But, if we must still fight 
To defend you o’ France! 
Men! …Line up as soldiers! 
Women! …To the ambulance!

[Puis, une fois devenus grands, 
Un jour, garçons et filles, 
Nous fonderons, en bons parents, 
De petites familles…

... 
Alors, citoyens pleins d’amour, 
D’une patrie en fête, 
À nos petits, à notre tour. 
Nous paierons notre dette…

... 
Mais, s’il faut encore des combats 
Pour te défendre, ô France! 
Hommes!…à nos rangs de soldats! 
Femmes!…à l’ambulance!]387

Jean Morlaix’s 1882 poetic round expressed the predominant themes in French children’s literature that came to the forefront after 1870. Authors presented readers with individuals ready to celebrate la patrie, prepared to defend the nation, and as brave soldiers with nurturing, supportive women behind them. While the explicit militarism is notable, other aspects of this poem voice previously existing themes turned toward the service of la patrie. References to gender-specific behavior, assistance to those in need of help, the importance of community, and personal duty and self-sacrifice were already present in French children’s literature during the 1850s and 1860s. After 1870, rather than a rupture that radically changed the themes offered to children, authors tended to adapt existing themes and to link them directly to contemporary national interests.

Although slightly altered, many of the common themes in French children’s literature remained the same over the course of the later nineteenth century. Authors adopted and

cultivated the themes of providing charity to the poor, the values of family and hard work, the importance of acquiring knowledge through reading, and personal self-discipline into their narratives as secular, national, and republican values. Writers added two particular themes to the mix after 1870 which rapidly became ubiquitous – overt militarism and promotion of *la patrie*.  

Much French children’s literature had become essentially secular and republican during the 1850s and 1860s, but it remained largely indifferent to the theme of nationalism up to 1870. After 1870, however, patriotic, nationalistic, and even warlike themes became omnipresent. The reasons are apparent. The Prussians defeated the French military in January of 1871. This humiliation, combined with the divisive and tragic events of the Paris Commune, lead to a period of anxiety and fundamental questioning of national values and priorities. The Franco-Prussian War and the Commune were perceived to have revealed inherent weakness and left much suffering, angst and apprehension about the future. Continued political instability, the changing economy, the recent wars, and increasing urbanization left the people of France in a state of uncertainty about the future. This led to a concentrated effort to imbue France’s children with what concerned citizens considered as appropriate ideas about the nation, their proud heritage.

Post 1870, “regeneration” became a popular political and cultural theme in France. National regeneration efforts targeted reforming the family, repopulation, patriotism, improved education and defining gender roles. Regeneration meant that the nation needed to re-create and fortify itself, to correct perceived errors and to ensure that France’s fundamental physical and cultural fiber endured. Numerous political reformers also cast the national crisis of 1870 in

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388 See ideas presented by art historian Jill Eileen Miller in “Propaganda and Utopianism: The Family and Visual Culture in Early Third Republic France (1871-1905),” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1998). Miller asserts that France saw itself “as a vulnerable and impressionable child, […] child imagery was an important part of the propagandistic campaign to restore the nation’s nerve and its birth rate after the defeats of 1870-71,” 192.
moral terms – as a catastrophic moral failure – and suggested that the national spirit needed regeneration. The best way to regenerate the nation was via French families and the military.

The nation’s shapers consisted of active politicians – both conservative and liberal republicans – influential publishers and authors, and social reformers who all considered France’s children vital to projects of repopulation and regeneration of the French family and military. In practice this meant that the Third Republic emphasized efforts to strengthen families, the military, and access to and improved content of public education. French children’s literature serves as a gauge of the prevailing national importance of children and provides a unique lens through which to view and interrogate the ways in which members of France’s Third Republic communicated various messages of reform, rebirth, and regeneration to children and their families.

This study privileges the ideas and subject matter of this literature but the stylistic means employed to convey these messages remain important. Central subjects of this literature included middle-class and bourgeois children, their families and their home lives. Children and parents could identify with stories that took place in this environment, even if it was not exactly like their own. In some ways, too, home and family-themed stories underscored the later nineteenth century’s cultural concern about the decline of the family in the face of change and urbanization brought about by rapid industrialization.

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389 This meant government-supported campaigns for the growth and protection of the institution of the family. Proponents focused on increasing the national birthrate and efforts to assure that families raised good healthy children in homes that modeled bourgeois morality. See Donzelot, La Police des familles, 15-49; Meyer, L’enfant et la raison d’état, 53-68; Reid, Families in Jeopardy, 69-76 and 80-88; Zeldin, France 1848-1945, vol. 2, Intellect, Taste and Anxiety, 948-68; and Claudia Scheck Kselman, “The Modernization of the French Family: The Politics and Ideology of Family Reform in Third Republic France” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1981).

Several prevalent themes of the 1850s and 1860s later became colored by militarism during the 1870s. Once again, these include the encouragement of good, gender-appropriate behavior, personal acts of charity, the importance of family, the value of self-discipline, reading and education, and the rewards of hard work. Children’s publications regularly presented their readers with specific images of society in these terms and their place within it.\(^\text{391}\)

First and foremost, authors encouraged children to behave properly. In general this meant polite, obedient conduct, being quiet when necessary, and avoiding poor habits, stubbornness, gluttony, laziness, lying and selfishness. Representative titles were Bertall’s *Les Infortunes de Touche-à-Tout* and *Marie Sans Soin* and the Comtesse de Ségur’s *Jean qui grogne, Jean qui rit*.\(^\text{392}\) In these examples, and countless others which emphasized individual actions, authors encouraged children to avoid selfish excesses in order to assure the peaceful workings of family life. Well-ordered families meant a functioning society.

While the majority of recommended comportments were identical for both boys and girls, some gendered distinctions remained. These texts encouraged boys to be active physically and mentally. At the same time, they warned boys against a lack of self-control, of being too dirty or too lazy.\(^\text{393}\) An excerpt from *Les Enfants Imprudents* represents how writers conveyed this type of message to young boys. The anonymous author of Chapter 2, “The Kite” [*Le cerf-volant*], narrates the tale of young Georges who climbs up a tree in order to get his kite unstuck. The boy

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\(^{391}\) As discussed in Chapter Two, the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s included numerous collections of fairy tales, lives of saints and translations, mostly from English literature.


falls and breaks his leg. The message is unambiguous: “It is good to be active, resourceful and nimble but it is also necessary to be aware of obstacles and to be sure of your abilities before undertaking any endeavor.” While these stories encouraged boys to be physically active and mentally industrious, they also instructed young readers to temper their acts with forethought and to avoid extremes.

French authors tended to recommend decidedly less active conduct for girls. Storybooks for girls warned of the dangers of overly-physical activities and counseled calm and composed comportment. They advised against vanity, becoming easily distracted, and being too talkative, too know-it-all or indulging an over-active imagination [trop bavarde, trop savante, l’imagination trop exaltée]. Book and magazine story titles signified these principles: La Poupée modèle, Zoé la vaniteuse, Amélie ou la petite désobéissante, “L’art de se taire,” “L’Obéissance,” “La Petite Hirondelle.” Chapter 10 of Les Enfants Imprudents, “Soap bubbles” [Les bulles de savon] tells the story of a couple of girls who almost fall while blowing bubbles from an upper-story window. The moral of the story is that hopefully the fear the girls experienced will keep them from doing similar foolish things in the future. “Fear, no doubt, cured them of this fever of recklessness so often at work in children; but it would have been better to listen to mother: the lesson would have been gentler and wouldn’t have added an act of disobedience to foolish audacity.”

The lessons imparted by this story include the importance of obedience to one’s parents and the punishment deservedly meted out by natural consequences of inappropriate acts; in this case the girls’ recklessness.

To further encourage good habits, authors filled their stories with tales of children who made poor choices that led to dire consequences, thus demonstrating to readers what they should not do. In some cases, writers depicted children who behaved badly in extreme and ridiculous circumstances, which young readers probably found humorous. Through the intentional exaggeration of children’s impolite actions, authors made their instructive subject funny and appealing to child readers. Writers developed stories based on the pedagogical belief that touching the emotions assured successful learning, so the messages they presented served to condemn undesirable deeds through humor. Embedding advice about good conduct within a comical frame meant the author successfully conveyed his message without the child reader becoming aware of the teaching process.

Hachette employed this narrative method in several volumes of the journal La Semaine des Enfants. In 1860, a regular series ran under the title “Polite behavior: childlike and honest” [La civilité puérile et honnête]. A simple drawing by Bertall accompanied each incident of correct actions by children, wittily illustrating the improper act. Advice to readers included: “A child who has forgotten his handkerchief must never wipe his nose on his sleeve…much less on someone else’s sleeve.” [L’enfant qui a oublié son mouchoir ne doit jamais se moucher sur sa manche…Encore moins sur la manche des autres.]; “Do your best not to sneeze in the soup, especially if there are many people at the table.” [Efforcez-vous de ne pas éternuer dans le potage, principalement s’il y a du monde à dîner.]; and “It is very impolite to pour water down a visitor’s collar while they are waiting in the foyer to speak with your father.” [Il est fort impoli de verser de l’eau dans le cou des personnes qui attendent dans l’antichambre pour parler à M.

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These clever and pithy one-liners conveyed a concern for healthy, hygienic manners as well as correct behavior.

The works of Hachette’s prize author, the Comtesse de Ségur, contain numerous exaggerated – and therefore humorous – instances of girls’ misbehaviors. Ségur’s young protagonist, Sophie de Réan, appears in several volumes of stories, including *Les Petites Filles modèles* (1858), *Les Malheurs de Sophie* (1859), and *Les Vacances* (1859). Sophie is a turbulent, naughty, and overly-curious four-year-old. In spite of her well-behaved cousin Paul’s best efforts, she continuously places herself in a variety of ill-advised circumstances. She is greedy (eating too many cakes makes her ill), cruel (driving a donkey to death by exhaustion), sadistic (chopping off the heads of her mother’s fish in order to try out her pocket-knife), and dishonest (lying to her mother about stealing items from a sewing basket). However, through her many missteps, Sophie demonstrates to her readers desirable behavior since her misdeeds consistently meet with serious negative consequences – either for herself or for others. Greed is punished by a stomachache, misuse of the pocket-knife results in her mother grounding her, and lying elicits a spanking.

French children’s stories from the 1850s and 1860s also encouraged exemplary conduct through the presentation of positive activities. Extending charity to those less fortunate provides a prime illustration. The theme of charity was largely a carry over from early traditional religious texts. But in the second half of the nineteenth century, children’s literature portrayed charity as a decidedly less religious act. Texts for children increasingly cast charitable activity as

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399 This advice also provided children from rural lower social classes with bourgeois examples of personal behaviour and social interactions.
personally satisfying, an act of civic self-sacrifice that made parents proud and connected different social classes while maintaining distinctions.\textsuperscript{401}

In Abécédaire des enfants, an ABC album from 1860, we read that “M is for Mendicant.”\textsuperscript{402} In this short tale, which is accompanied by a heart-wrenching picture contrasting a young bourgeois girl and her mother with two beggar children, a boy and a girl, the bourgeois girl cries:

Mother, look at the little beggar with his sister sitting against the property’s garden wall. They will be wretched, if they stay there for long tonight.
Mother, please, tell them to get up and wait. We are going home. Will you allow me to send Pierre out to bring them what they need?

Yes, my child, I will allow it. Kiss me, you have a good heart.

[Vois donc, maman, ce petit mendiant avec sa soeur, assis contre le mur du jardin de l’hôtel. Ils seront bien malheureux, s’ils restent là longtemps ce soir.
Maman, je t’en prie, dis-leur qu’ils se lèvent et attendent. Nous allons rentrer.
Voudras-tu me permettre d’envoyer Pierre leur apporter ce dont ils ont besoin?

Oui, ma fille, je te le permets. Embrasse-moi, tu as un bon cœur.]\textsuperscript{403}

This story is typical of the way in which storybooks presented charity for the poor to their readers. Most often, generous actions benefit other children or mothers in need. Usually, the better-off child initiates the gesture and demonstrates a willingness to dedicate his or her own money (allowance) to the cause. The child’s initiative must then meet with approval from an adult, and it relies on the adult’s assistance to bring the project to fruition. In addition to the

\textsuperscript{401} The importance of the theme of charity is underscored by the frequency of its presentation to child readers. Examples abound in children’s periodicals, illustrated albums, and novels. Representative models include: Anna Martin, La Charité récompensée (Limoges and Paris: F.F. Ardant Frères, 1865); Alfred Driou, “Patins et Marionnettes” and “La Famille du Fermier” in Les Heures de récréation: Historiettes et Proverbes destinés à l’enfance et à la jeunesse (Paris: Fonteney et Peltier, 1856), 33-40 and 55-63; and H.J., “Le Plaisir de faire plaisir,” La Semaine de Enfants 325 (7 November 1863): 94-95.
\textsuperscript{402} Blanchard, Abécédaire des enfants illustré, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid.
inherent satisfaction the child feels having performed an act of charity, children become a source of joy and pride for their parents. 404

Attention and kindness towards the poor in these tales also effectively showed children linked to the larger social and national community. Ever present as well was the child’s most intimate and immediate community, the family. The context of family and the importance of the role played by parents in their children’s daily lives repeatedly occurred as an overriding theme. Most significantly this is apparent in the fact that the majority of these stories take place in children’s homes and everyday lives. 405 Authors used home and family settings in part to give their readers an instantly identifiable setting. Placing morally-themed stories in familiar surroundings also allowed authors to underscore their primary objective, to shape and sustain French families. The Comtesse de Ségur’s popular stories invariably take place in the home environment with parents regularly providing the necessary moral framework.

In addition to providing child readers with a familiar backdrop, the family setting also served to allow parents a vital point of identification. Several authors, including Hetzel who wrote as “P.-J. Stahl,” used their writings for children to communicate specific messages to parents. 406 Authors included roles for parents in their narratives in order to hold up a symbolic mirror reflecting common errors in child rearing. While some books criticized over-authoritarian parenting, Hetzel at the same time committed himself to encouraging parents to avoid spoiling their children. According to him, parents who over indulged their children inevitably risked

404 In the Blanchard volume, the overt theme of charity toward the poor is repeated in the letters M, O, P, Q, R, V, in the reading lines “Le bon secours,” “Le pauvre honteux,” and in a short story at the book’s end.
405 In her analysis of the Comtesse de Ségur’s work, Penny Brown refers to this genre as “the family novel.” See “The Novel of Domestic Realism, or the Family Novel,” in A Critical History of French Children’s Literature, vol. 2, 39-76.
rendering their offspring selfish, dependent and ill-disciplined. These character traits were incompatible with Hetzel’s vision of autonomous, self-disciplined and mature citizens of a stable republic. The family model depicted in children’s stories written in the 1850s and 1860s was very much the bourgeois ideal, and authors time and again offered it as a model for readers of all social classes to follow and imitate.

Mid-nineteenth century children’s fiction occasionally demonstrated the importance of family through its absence as the pursuit of interests outside the family lead to less than desirable consequences in the majority of these narratives. In La Fortune de Gaspard (1866), Ségur’s tale of two brothers, Gaspard is drawn to working with the local industrialist Monsieur Féror while the younger son, Lucas, remains close to his family and works on the farm. Gaspard becomes increasingly estranged from his family, a circumstance that causes a great deal of tension and remorse. At first glance Ségur’s message seems rather contradictory since, Gaspard meets with financial and social success as a result of his choice to make his way independent of his family. But, in the story’s final chapters, Gaspard returns to the comfort and deep emotional satisfaction of family life through his wife Nina who encourages him in a life of charity and kindness. Ségur therefore reaffirms the prevailing cultural belief in the vital importance of family for individual self-realization and as a unit of civic participation in society.

Many other novels and stories of the 1850s and 1860s reinforced the centrality of family life in French society. Repeatedly these narratives ended happily only when characters achieved

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409 Ségur, La Fortune de Gaspard.
familial reconciliation.\footnote{Examples include Stahl, Zoé la vaniteuse and Stahl, “Petites Tragédies Enfantines,” Magasin d’éducation et de récréation (1865-1866): 273.} Using this motif Hetzel produced a series of albums for young readers featuring the charming personality of Mademoiselle Lili.\footnote{Hetzel wrote these and other books under the pseudonym P.-J. Stahl, and Lorenz Froelich illustrated the Mademoiselle Lili storybooks. See La Journée de Mademoiselle Lili (1862), L’Alphabet de Mademoiselle Lili (1863), Mademoiselle Lili à la Campagne (1865), Voyage de Découvertes de Mademoiselle Lili et de son cousin Lucien (1867).} While her autonomous nature nicely fit Hetzel’s image of independent republican citizens, the curious and adventurous Mademoiselle Lili repeatedly finds herself in minor scrapes and difficult situations when she ventures too far from her home and family. Upon her return to the family nest, Lili’s parents, especially her mother, welcome her warmly.\footnote{See in particular Stahl, Voyage de Mademoiselle Lili au tour du monde (Paris: Hetzel, 1867), Chapter XLII.}

While the family framework allowed for successful socialization, daily life also provided child readers with a variety of situations in which their stories could instruct them in those all-important personal qualities of self-discipline and self-control. Proper and polite conduct obviously required self-restraint. In order to behave appropriately, to display what was expected of them, adults presented models of children successfully regulating and controlling their natural tendencies and predisposition for instinctual, anti-social acts.

Marc-Antoine Blanchard’s 1860 Abécédaire des enfants clearly conveys the desirable trait of self-control with the letter “B.” “B” stands for “bluet” (corn flowers), glossed with the following poem,

\begin{quote}
The cornflower is a very pretty flower that grows in the fields, among the wheat.  
Little children make crowns and place them on their heads.  
These crowns increase their kindness and make them pretty.  
But in order to have these cornflower crowns, one must not walk in the fields, nor trample the wheat.
\end{quote}  

\begin{quote}
[Le bluet est une fleur très jolie qui vient dans les champs, dans les blés.  
Les petits enfants en font des couronnes qu’ils mettent sur leur tête.  
Ces couronnes augmentent leur gentillesse et les embellissent.]
\end{quote}
Mais pour avoir des couronnes de bluets, il ne faut pas marcher dans les champs, ni fouler aux pieds le blé.]

In order to experience the pleasure and benefit of having cornflower crowns, children must resist their natural tendency to wander arbitrarily, to exercise self-discipline and to walk cautiously and carefully among the fields. Authors like Blanchard also called on children to be self-disciplined. C.-B. Noisy’s Les Enfants et les fleurs (1858) for example encouraged children to moderate their behavior in order to, “…forgo forever anger, idleness, pride, lying, greediness, curiosity, and a thousand other flaws that perhaps taint your heart.” Self-discipline here is also a means to self-improvement.

Children could also meaningfully work toward self-improvement through formal education, especially through appropriate reading. This ability could enhance one’s character. As I noted in Chapter Four, republicans advocated placing reading material in homes in order to influence children and families. Additionally, in their narrative content, authors and editors regularly encouraged and praised the ability to read and to educate oneself through reading. This surely reflected contemporary concerns about education, especially the government’s desire to assure attendance in national schools by all classes and social groups. The Comtesse de Ségur took up the subject of public education for the peasantry and working classes in a nuanced fashion in her 1866 story La Fortune de Gaspard. In this tale Gaspard achieves social and financial success thanks to his education and personal drive but loses his ethical direction and becomes increasingly estranged from his family in the process. Ségur’s expression of the contradictory merits of education for the lower classes – especially literacy – surely echoes 1860s’ concerns. While advocates of the extension of public education praised its positive

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413 Blanchard, Abécédaire des enfants illustré, 21-22.
414 C.-B. Noisy, Les Enfants et les fleurs, Bibliothèque Morale de la Jeunesse (Rouen: Megard, 1858), 16.
415 Ségur, La Fortune de Gaspard.
transformative nature, both political conservatives and members of the peasantry feared education’s destabilizing effects such as fomenting social discontent (as had been seen in 1848) and a decline in the importance of traditional practical education.  

Children’s authors cast the ability to read as a personal attribute of a quality individual as well. The periodical *La Semaine des Enfants* published both fictional and informative texts that praised the inherent personal values of reading. Writers often mentioned reading alongside docility and good behaviour as meritorious. In the story of a boy in need of charity published in these pages in 1863, a bourgeois mother pulls her son away from his reading in order to go and verify for her whether a particular family truly needs charitable assistance. She asks her son especially to see that the boy can read, possesses a calm nature and acts well behaved. An earlier volume from 1860 included the article “La lecture” in which an anonymous author advised his readers about the myriad of benefits possible from reading: “Reading enhances memory, enriches the imagination, sets opinions straight, shapes good taste, teaches one to think, lifts the soul and inspires dignified feelings.”  

In this manner, texts promoted not only the multiple benefits of reading but also highlighted its importance by pointing out the inconveniences that could result if one

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416 As a social conservative Ségur apparently held the personal belief that education could be dangerous for the poor and working classes because it served to distance them from their traditional religious beliefs. See Laura Kreyder, *L’Enfance des saints et des autres. Essai sur la comtesse de Ségur* (Fasano di Puglia, Italy and Paris: Schena-Nizet, 1987), 194-96. See also Penny Brown’s discussion of *La Fortune de Gaspard* in *A Critical History of French Children’s Literature*, vol. 2, 61-63.


418 “Si cet enfant est aussi à plaindre qu’elle le dit, tu verras s’il a appris à lire, s’il paraît docile et sage, et enfin tu me reseigneras complètement sur son compte.” H.J., “Le Plaisir de faire plaisir,” *La Semaine des Enfants* 325 (7 November 1863): 94.

could not read. A child’s doll, “Chérie,” experiences public embarrassment as a result of her inability to read in the story *La Poupée modèle*. As a result of this deficiency, Chérie fails to earn a place in the children’s theatre production. The natural consequence of her illiteracy is that she has to stay home and misses out on the show. Finally, reading and education provided children with sure routes to self improvement through hard work. These texts repeatedly gave children positive images of hard work in which the rewards of systematic personal efforts included making parents proud, the academic reward and public recognition garnered through prize books, and personal fulfilment.

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, then, French children’s literature privileged the themes outlined above and encouraged the development of shared secular, civic values across class lines in the interest of communicating to children the fundamental notions of stable republican society and government. Authors consistently offered children models of appropriate deeds, charity, hard work, and self-discipline. The underlying motivations for such actions remained social approval, self-fulfillment and parental approbation.

While these themes continued as part of French children’s literature published through the 1870s, 1880s and even into the 1890s, in the years following the difficult events of 1870-71, authors put them forward in a somewhat altered form and introduced several new subjects. The themes that underwent revision did so only slightly but with the notable twist that in the years following 1870-71, authors portrayed good behavior, charity, family, self-discipline and the importance of work as imperative service to the nation.

A revealing and representative example is the personal attribute of charity. While prior to 1870 this theme was already in evidence as a desirable quality for children, after 1870 texts show

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children performing charity in ways that would directly benefit the nation and even make up for its recent losses. 421

In 1872 Le Monde illustré published a poem by Henri Jousselin titled, “La Libération du territoire.” 422 Bertall produced the accompanying illustrations. In this poem, and its accompanying artwork, a young boy witnesses his mother giving money from her charity work to help pay France’s war debt to Prussia so the occupying troops in eastern France will leave. Back at home the boy’s father explains to his son that everyone in France now had a role to play in helping the nation recover.

All else must be erased
The woman gives her jewelry
The worker gives up his salary. 423

In response to this urgent lesson in charity and self-sacrifice from his father, the young boy empties his piggy bank [tirelire] and asks his father to take the few cents [sous] he has to offer as his contribution to the national cause.

And me, father, I want you to take back
These fine coins I received for the New Year.
We’ll force (I’ll be happy then)
All the Prussians to go back where they came from. 424

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422 Henri Jousselin, “La Libération du territoire,” Le Monde illustré 30:1 (6 April 1872): 224. Although not specifically a children’s journal, Le Monde illustré appealed to child readers due to its familiar themes and illustrations. It is used here since children are central to both the text and the accompanying illustrations. This excerpt came from Jousselin’s forthcoming children’s volume illustrated by Bertall, Les Enfants pendant la guerre (Paris: Hachette, 1873). An additional example appeared featuring a mother and daughter with the accompanying dialogue, “Le sou des chaumières maman, Qu’est-ce donc? C’est tout simplement celui qu’on donne pour la France.”
423 Ibid.
424 Ibid.
Inspired and supported by his parents and moved by the plight of the nation, the boy is called in his own way to perform a charitable act, not for those less fortunate than himself, but for the greater national good.

Strikingly, authors even turned the theme of the importance of education – in particular reading – to the benefit of new national interests. While the national value of formal education for all French children continued to expand after 1870, authors of leisure reading extrapolated the republican value of literacy as a national duty. The author of the children’s short story “Hubert le clarion” linked both reading and writing des bons livres with patriotic duty. The story’s introduction encouraged children to read books written for them in which they could learn their specific duties to la patrie.425 Personal sacrifice, service to the nation (primarily militarily), hard work, courage, and bravery are all emphasized in this tale of a heroic boy bugler in order to present readers with specific aspects of patriotic duty.426

Alexis Muenier published “L’Age Sans Pitié” in the children’s journal, L’Écolier illustré in 1896. This simple story concludes with a woman from the village advising a group of boys to “Educate yourselves! You’ll bring honor to your country.” [Instruisez-vous! Vous ferez honneur à votre pays.]427 Casting this advice in terms of national honor with no mention of personal satisfaction or making one’s parents proud would not have occurred prior to 1870. Moreover, authors did not limit their recommendations concerning reading to boys. In December 1871, La Poupée Modèle advised its young readers to avoid asking for too many expensive gifts for étrennes (end of the year gifts) since France had recently suffered so much materially. Rather,

425 P. R., “Hubert le clairon,” Le Petit Français illustré: Journal des écoliers et des écolières 3 (16 March 1889): 34.
426 The author concludes the story with a list of ways individuals serve the nation and classifies all tasks as a manner of “soldiering.” “Ceux qui soignent les blessés, ceux qui perfectionnent les armes, … ceux qui écrivent de bons livres,… tous à leur manière se donnent du mal et sont des serviteurs, des soldats de la patrie.” “Hubert le clarion,” Le Petit Français illustré 4 (23 March 1889): 48.
the journal suggested that girls ask their parents for two or three volumes of Hachette’s \textit{Bibliothèque Rose} collection. This recommendation would surely benefit the nation.\footnote{428 Madame Elisabeth Müller, “Bibliographie: La Bibliothèque Rose et les ouvrages de Mme Elisabeth Müller,” \textit{La Poupée Modèle: Journal des Petites Filles} (December 1871): 1.}

Other authors during the early years of the Third Republic went so far as to suggest that reading should become an integral element of French identity. Educator and pre-school pioneer Pauline Kergomard, for instance, wrote an article for the summer edition of \textit{Mon Journal} in which she urged reading during vacation as a way for children to relax while reinforcing what they had learned in school the previous year.\footnote{429 \textit{Mon Journal: recueil mensuel pour les enfants de cinq à dix ans} was the child’s part of the Hachette teacher’s guide, \textit{L’Ami de l’Enfance: Organe de la méthode française d’éducation maternelle}. Pauline Kergomard also served as the journal’s director. Kergomard (1838-1925) is recognized as the founder of \textit{écoles maternelles} in France. Trained as a teacher, she was well known in Paris’ republican circles. Recognized geographer, anarchist and sometime Hetzel author, Elisée Reclus was Kergomard’s first cousin. In 1863 she married fellow republican Jules Duplessis-Kergomard and in 1881 Jules Ferry named her Inspector General of \textit{écoles maternelles}, a position she held until 1917. See Eric Plaisance, \textit{Pauline Kergomard et l’école maternelle} (Paris: PUF, 1996); Micheline Vincent-Nkoulou, “La fabrication des figures de deux pédagogues en histoire de l’éducation: Jean-Frédéric Oberlin et Pauline Kergomard,” \textit{Carrefours de l’éducation} 24 (February 2007): 115-29; Jean-Noël Luc, introduction to \textit{Pauline Kergomard}, by Geneviève Duplessis-Kergomard and Alain Kergomard (Paris: Fil d’Ariane, 2000), 9-37; and Luc, \textit{L’invention du jeune enfant au XIXe siècle. De la salle d’asile à l’école maternelle} (Paris: Belin, 1997), 386-92.}

Like many republicans of the time, Kergomard recognized reading as more than a purely instructional activity but also as a patriotic one, a means to strengthen the national fiber. Teaching young children to appreciate reading, she believed, would help to safeguard the French race: “It will serve to get reading into the people’s veins…” \cite{430} \footnote{430 Kergomard, “La lecture en vacances,” \textit{Mon Journal} (1 August 1887): 336.}

The importance of families and of specific gender roles within children’s literature also shifted in the years following 1870. As this chapter’s opening excerpt illustrates, writers integrated presentations of children’s duty to one day become parents in their own right. This duty would primarily help the nation by providing a stable social unit to produce and reproduce republican values. Particularly after 1870, the nation needed soldiers. French politicians blamed the country’s humiliating war loss on numerous factors, including a national lack of military
manpower. Ernest Lavisse,\textsuperscript{431} the Sorbonne historian and a lecturer at France’s École Normale who played a central role in reforming the French educational system after 1871 made this argument plain and clear in the story “La Patrie.” “The Germans entered France; we didn’t have enough soldiers since at that time not everyone was a soldier like today. They couldn’t get the enemy out.” [\textit{Les Allemands sont entrés en France; nos soldats n’étaient pas assez nombreux, car dans ce temps-là tout le monde n’était pas soldat comme aujourd’hui. Ils n’ont pu chasser l’ennemi.}]\textsuperscript{432} Lavisse successfully praised the current practice of obligatory military service and gave credit to the new republican government for distancing itself from the past. Authors now also bombarded boy readers with images of service to the nation as disciplined soldiers willing to sacrifice themselves for their country. Writers cast female service to the nation differently. Girls would serve by becoming mothers and wives of future soldiers prepared to care for others’ physical needs before their own.

In writing for children, the soldier came to play a fundamental role in reestablishing France’s lost glory. Some authors acknowledged directly in their texts soldiers’ implicit necessity for national recovery because their sacrifice consisted in a willingness to give up their lives. Anatole France highlighted this important male role in 1887: “There’s yet another reason for granting the soldier first place in the nation: he gives his life. There is no greater gift in this world than sacrifice and sacrificing one’s life is the greatest of all, because it includes all the others.” [\textit{Il y a encore une autre raison pour mettre le soldat au premier rang dans la patrie: c’est qu’il donne sa vie. Il n’y a de vraie grandeur en ce monde que celle du sacrifice et le

As a result of this national need, children’s literature presented boys with the ideal of growing up to become strong, healthy, responsible, and brave men. French male youth now had an obligation to make the nation strong again through soldiering. As “men-in-training” boys’ clothes mirrored adult military uniforms repeatedly in post-1870 children’s literature. Authors regularly included references to military schools and related activities such as *bataillons scolaires* – which by 1882 had become an official feature of boys’ education – in their post-1870s writings. The state organized physical education classes along a military model, including marching exercises. Organized in line formation, boys performed their school exercises with pieces of wood and other items in order to simulate (and thus increase their ability with) arms.

Soldiering was not the only way for men to serve their nation, however. Individuals who successfully fulfilled their duties, worked hard and followed the law also contributed to the nation’s well being. Although children’s narratives advanced the soldier as the ideal model for boys, they offered desired aspects of fatherhood in almost equal measure. Like soldiers protecting the nation, fathers protected and provided for their families. In 1887, Boutet de Monvel’s *La Civilité* communicated this fatherly role in the chapter “Les devoirs de convenance à la maison.” The text instructs children to greet family members with kisses on both cheeks.

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433 Anatole France, *Filles et garçons, scènes de la ville et des champs*, illustrations by Boutet de Monvel (Paris: Hachette, 1900), 10. The pages of this publication originally appeared thirteen years earlier as part of Anatole France and Boutet de Monvel’s collaboration *Nos Enfants, scènes de la ville et des champs* (Paris: Hachette, 1887).

434 In 1882 Jules Ferry’s Ministry of Instruction decreed that all primary or secondary public instruction establishments responsible for educating boys aged twelve and older would operate under the name *bataillon scolaire*. These schools were thus required to assemble their students for military and gymnastic exercises. These groups held public parades and demonstrations of their physical exercises as a popular way to encourage support of military efforts. As a result up until 1892, most male students over twelve received a sort of military training at school that created a “junior armed force” for France. See “A Propos de bataillons scolaires,” *Les Droits de la Jeunesse* 1 (16 July 1882): 3-4; Gaulupeau, *La France à l’Ecole*, 93; and Bourzac, *Les Bataillons Scolaires*.

435 Laloi, “La Patrie,” *Petites histoires pour apprendre la vie*, 68. “On sert aussi sa Patrie pendant la paix, en faisant chacun son devoir, en obéissant à la loi, c’est-à-dire à ce que la Patrie vous commande.”

each morning while the accompanying illustration shows a young boy greeting his father in this way and a younger brother greeting his older one in parallel. The educator Abbé Morère summarized this prevalent image of a father’s role, “A father’s primary duty is to raise his child…since the mother is the real caretaker, the father is the real teacher. They should agree upon the hierarchy of their roles, as well as their methods; so that from the hands of one, the child moves into the other’s.” Children’s books also often showed fathers involved in the sentimental raising of children, but in a less direct way than that of mothers. Thus fathers provided a protective masculine model for their children at home that could be extrapolated to the national context.

French children’s literature consistently cast women and girls in complementary and supportive roles with respect to men and boys. Texts encouraged girls to strengthen the homeland and assure the nation’s domestic well-being through motherhood; not only did individual families need healthy and moral children, the nation did, too. Women’s roles were regularly defined as actively working within the household to maintain family values and stability while attentively raising children. Her patriotic duty as a mother meant assuring the conception, survival and upbringing of a large, healthy, and morally correct family. Authors presented the image of the dutiful, nurturing, educative mother as an ideal and repeatedly impressed it upon young girls. “…[S]he will thus leave to him the realm of public affairs and science in order to fulfill with dignity her duties as a good homemaker, virtuous wife and fully-devoted mother to her children.”

Before 1870, authors and illustrators accomplished their objectives by portraying girls as “playing” mother to their dolls. This presentation of girls continued throughout the century but after 1870 convincing girls of their familial duties appears to become more urgent and the imagery employed more realist. Rather than simply showing girls with dolls, authors increasingly depicted girls as actual “little mothers” [petites mères] to their younger siblings. This shift occurred in both image and text and meant that by 1887 Anatole France could write, “an older sister is a miniature mommy: she anticipates, she predicts; she has the sacred instinct.” [une grande sœur est une petite mère: elle prévient, elle devine; elle a l’instinct sacré]. In this way children’s storybooks encouraged girls to view themselves as preparing for the key adult roles that society required them to play later on.

Boutet de Monvel employed this motif often. Examples can be found in his art work for Anatole France’s Filles et garçons, scènes de la ville et des champs (1887). This text includes multiple images of rural children acting parental toward their younger siblings. Usually the older child is a girl behaving maternally, most often toward a younger boy. In the chapter “A Travers Champs,” the illustrator represented a girl and her younger brother walking in a field, the older girl clearly taking care of the boy.

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441 Ibid.
Figure 14: Illustration, *Filles et garçons*, 1887

The text that accompanied this illustration tells the reader that “Catherine” has taken “Jean” out for a walk after lunch in the nearby prairie – a decidedly parental action with real responsibility. Boutet de Monvel repeated this theme in his album of children’s songs, *Vieilles chansons et rondes pour les petits enfants*. His illustration for the traditional lullaby “Fais Dodo, Colas” shows a rural girl – evidenced by her clogs – cradling a baby in her arms as she sings him a lullaby.

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442 Ibid., 4 and 5.
Throughout the 1860s and 1870s authors and illustrators primarily showed girls with their dolls – female dolls – simply playing at being mothers and self-consciously preparing themselves via their toys for this future role. Artists in the 1880s and 1890s, however, adapted this imagery and depicted girls – especially lower-class girls – acting maternal toward their own younger siblings, especially baby brothers. An older female child acting maternal towards her younger family members thus served to reinforce the real importance for a young girl to take on a maternal role later.445

Visual artists were not the only ones to depict girls in actual maternal roles; writers did so as well. Typically, older sisters become petites mères in stories where the mother falls ill or has

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444 Ibid., 38.
445 For additional examples, see the series “Petites Soeurs et Petites Mamans,” which ran in Hetzel’s Magasin d’éducation et de récréation between 1864 and 1866. Public and popular reinforcement of the model heterosexual couple brings to mind Judith Surkis’ argument that after 1870 the French sought social and cultural stability through this model. See Surkis, Sexing the Citizen.
died. An additional circumstance in which one can observe this scenario is in the case of a young bourgeois girl who dedicates herself to the charitable direct care of local poor children by providing them with clothing, food and other material comforts.

Yet another aspect of this noticeable shift in gender roles is that post-1870 women’s roles become ever-more secondary to men’s. Since the male role of soldier was seen to occupy the most central position in national recovery, authors largely defined women’s roles with respect to their relationship to and difference from masculine roles. We can also observe at this time a notable decline in the valorizing of women’s domestic role to one of “support” in this literature. Furthermore, on occasion authors defined women and girls strictly in relationship to men; numerous stories portrayed females as their father’s daughter, their brother’s sister, wives or mothers to young boys. In one short story celebrating heroic acts during the Prussian invasion, an author conveyed to children the tale of Mademoiselle Weick who had cut the telegraph wires in order to prevent enemy communications. When questioned about her actions, the female protagonist tells her interrogators that she acted in such a way because “I am the daughter, granddaughter and sister of military men, this is to tell you, Sir, that I am French and I want to remain French.” [Je suis fille, petite-fille et soeur de militaires, c’est vous dire, Monsieur, que je suis Française et veux rester Française.]

In this case, even the young woman’s claim to her national identity – her very Frenchness! – lay in her relationship to men.

Finally, authors successfully adapted the theme of self-sacrifice for children in the interest of national concerns after 1870. National recovery would require many individual sacrifices. Sacrifice for the greater good of the nation – and the interest of political and social

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448 Laloi, “Le devoir professionnel,” Petites histoires pour apprendre la vie, 125.
security – was appreciated and even expected. Obviously people did not expect children to go so far as to give their lives for France, but rather encouraged children to appreciate and employ the value of self-sacrifice. Many stories conveyed this message by presenting respectful and even reverential tales of past sacrifices made on behalf of France. These examples allowed children to participate indirectly in this idea of self-sacrifice for the nation.

The aforementioned Alexis Muenier honored the sacrifices of the past in his 1896 tale “L’Âge sans Pitié.”449 The author portrayed both militarism and discipline in a positive light. The narrator frames the story as one from his own childhood. He tells his readers how as young boys he and his friends repeatedly caused trouble and teased one woman in particular in their village. At the end of the school year, the town hosted an awards ceremony in order to pay tribute to those in the small community who demonstrated exemplary service. The boys’ “victim” turned out to be among those honored. During the ceremony the boys learn that this woman had performed multiple acts of self-sacrifice for her family and actually saved her father from drowning. Not coincidentally, her father was a veteran [ancien soldat] who had fought during the First Republic and the Empire.450 In Muenier’s cautionary tale, guilt fills the boys when they learn that they had treated this woman rudely and played tricks on her. Gratitude, combined with guilt, leads them to her door, oleander flowers [lauriers-roses] in hand, to apologize individually for their rude behavior.451

This story and illustrations show children paying their respects to heroes of the past – even the immediate past – while at the same time involving the tale’s protagonists in an act of personal self-sacrifice by taking the time to apologize to the neighbor they had treated so unkindly. The boys’ conscientious act of reconciliation reinforced the village’s social stability.

450 Ibid., 34 (20 August 1896): 538.
451 Ibid., 540.
Boutet de Monvel illustrated Muenier’s culminating apology scene. He depicted the boys wearing pseudo-military garb (they are most likely members of a *bataillon scolaire*) and standing in a straight line that looks like a military line-up. However, the reader clearly perceives that they remain boys. They have spent their own free time collecting plants to offer and made the time to deliver them personally; their time is their self-sacrifice. The caption reads “Go on! You’re not mean boys, I see that clearly today…” [Allez! *Vous n’êtes pas de méchants garçons, je le vois bien aujourd’hui…*] In return for their efforts the woman rewards them with a warm smile and a hug. The story and illustration work together to provide the ideal of male conduct. Future soldiers should be capable of paying their respects to those who sacrificed in the past and demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice in their own ways in order to regenerate

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452 Ibid.
453 Ibid.
France. Children’s stories after 1870 thus promoted discipline and sacrifice to the highest degree as the desired form of patriotism among French youth.

Likewise, women who had grown up trained as self-sacrificing and encouraged to follow their “natural” tendency for nurturing would in turn want to have children and to raise them in the French national environment. In turn, civic-minded women bore children whose families, neighbors and teachers encouraged them to want to aid the nation – boys in the military, girls continuing to raise children of their own. Raising responsible and self-controlled children constituted women’s most important patriotic act. Above all, society expected women to raise active and patriotic boys who would become willing and capable soldiers. In other words, both mothers and fathers, took responsibility for shaping the country’s successful future by raising their male and female children in a manner that would benefit the nation.

The notion of self-sacrifice is underscored time and again in post-1870s children’s literature. While authors included the idea of self-sacrifice for one’s family, in their narratives prior to 1870, self-sacrifice for one’s country became predominant in literature afterwards. Whether rich or poor, children received messages encouraging them to give whatever they had for their country. For girls, becoming mothers was the primary way for them to serve France. For boys, service to the nation was viewed primarily in military terms.

In addition to the adaptation and transformation of existing themes in children’s literature, authors introduced other themes that were entirely new. Of these, the inclusion of overt militarism became the most prevalent. Stories in books and journals featuring military heroes, children serving the nation – especially in military-like situations – and the prevalence of la patrie all attest to the new post-1870 accent on militarism. The inclusion of these new aspects in children’s literature demonstrates a notable shift in attitude due to contemporary concerns.
Undoubtedly the military defeat of France by Prussia and the North German Confederation had lasting effects on the country’s political and cultural landscape. During the period when Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine, from 1871-1918, the French actively cultivated and expressed a brooding desire for *revanche*. The national birthrate was low and falling, and this fact, in combination with the French military’s swift, sound defeat, led to the country’s pressing need to rally affirmative public sentiment on a national scale and direct the nation’s attention toward a more triumphant future. The message of *revanche* therefore naturally extended to children, considered the nation’s inheritors and guarantors who possessed the requisite energy to fulfill future nationalist objectives. The spirit of *revanche* impregnated children’s storybooks during the early Third Republic. Historically, French children’s literature reflected adults’ ideological concerns. Post-1870s authors filled children’s literature with militarism and patriotic messages. Parents, authors, editors and educators alike now all wanted to communicate to France’s children their hopes and desires for the future.

In both home libraries and school texts, *l’instruction morale* became a key feature of nineteenth-century republicanism. Republicans and other politicians perceived the events of 1870-71 as moral crises that the country could only overcome through the renovation of the French nation’s soul. These shapers of the Third Republic determined the nation needed changes to its spirit and lessons in republicanism directed at its core, French families.

Nineteenth-century historian Ernest Lavisse wrote for children using the pseudonym Pierre Laloi. In his book, *Petites histoires pour apprendre la vie*, the author indicatively stated in the preface, “My little stories will tell you that life is good for those who love and respect their parents, who do their duty in their profession, whatever it may be, and loving France with their
whole heart, serve her with all their might.”\textsuperscript{454} Lavisse’s nationalistic intent is evident. While borrowing from existing predominant themes of children’s literature – parental importance, personal integrity – he added an element of personal and emotional self-sacrifice to his encouragement of children working for the nation’s regeneration. This type of overt appeal to “love and serve your nation with your whole heart” would not have appeared before the 1870s.

For the most part, books written and published for children after the Franco-Prussian War promoted a confident image of the French military and the idea that individuals could contribute to regenerating the nation’s spirit.\textsuperscript{455} Works intended for both boys and girls presented militaristic themes but in different ways. Thus, children’s literature continued to instruct and entertain, but after 1870 authors geared their lessons toward defining specific aspects of children’s service to the nation.\textsuperscript{456} A selection of titles published in the years following 1870-71 provides evidence of the increased presence of militarism in children’s literature. Hetzel published Lemoine’s \textit{La Guerre pendant les vacances: récit d’un vieux soldat} in 1878 and, under the pseudonym P.-J. Stahl, Hetzel wrote and published \textit{Malborough s’en va-t-en guerre} in 1875, while Hachette produced Henri Jousselin’s \textit{Les Enfants pendant la guerre} in 1873.\textsuperscript{457} Even the Catholic publishing house Mame promoted militarism with Théophile Ménard’s \textit{Le Maréchal Fabert} in 1878. Other, less specialized publishers came out with Émile Desbeaux’s \textit{Les...
Campagnes du général Toto, scènes de la vie militaire and Charles Émile Matthis’ Pique-Toto, la paix et la guerre. These are, in fact, only some of the most evocative titles produced. Even when French militarism was not the primary message of children’s stories, many texts nonetheless promoted its positive image. Details of France’s recent military defeat and of life in Alsace-Lorraine, the presence of war veterans and the respect they deserved for their bravery, and personal losses became common background content in children’s stories after 1870. Four sub-themes of post-1870s militaristic regeneration are detectable in writing for children: the increased use of historical military heroes – especially the heroine Joan of Arc; the presence of military content in illustrations; the militaristic shading of children’s toys and games; and la patrie.

One of the ways in which children’s literature demonstrated an increased spirit of militarism was increased attention to France’s great warrior-heroes and war stories showing France as victorious. Volumes such as Le Maréchal Fabert (1870), Trois héroïs (1894), L’héritage de Charlemagne (1887), Montluc le Rouge (1878), Histoire des femmes illustres de la France (1880), and Un glorieux soldat. Mac-Mahon, maréchal de France, duc de Magenta (1894) featured great military leaders of the past. Due to the historical parallel of France as an occupied nation in need of liberation, several children’s authors took up one of the most popular

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historical subjects of the time, the Hundred Years War and its young female heroine, Joan of Arc.

A French peasant girl and military leader, Joan of Arc was executed by the English in Rouen in 1431. Napoléon declared her a French heroine in 1803, and as the nineteenth century progressed, due in part to the publication and diffusion of her trial’s records, she was elevated into a popular symbol of French nationalism. The Bishop of Orléans, Félix Dupanloup, eventually beatified her in 1909 in part as a result of efforts made during the latter nineteenth century. Bishop Dupanloup gave a eulogy to Joan of Arc in 1855 and the French government eventually, in 1920, established a national holiday in her honor. Therefore, for a variety of reasons, the story and the person of Joan of Arc experienced a wave of popularity in the late nineteenth century.

Not surprisingly, increased attention to Joan of Arc as a heroic national figure was also reflected in the realm of children’s literature. Authors drew parallels between France’s occupied status in 1870 and the nation’s plight during Joan’s era. Ernest Lavisse referred to Joan in “Les derniers coups de canon,” his story of soldiers on the verge of despair in January 1871. Here a young soldier rallies his comrades by invoking Joan’s inspirational story. He concludes his tale with the declaration, “Well, I can tell you that the France of the 19th century will come back just


461 Increased interest in Joan of Arc’s story in the nineteenth century – largely between 1849 and 1878 – resulted to a degree from the research and writings of historian Jules Quicherat (1814-1882). Quicherat’s Procès de condamnation et de rehabilitation de Jeanne d’Arc (Paris: J. Renouard), published in five volumes between 1841 and 1849, presented the story of Joan of Arc based on the records of her trial and rehabilitation. Henri-Alexandre Wallon’s Jeanne d’Arc (Paris: Hachette, 1860), Jules Michelet’s Jeanne d’Arc (Paris: Hachette, 1853), and Anatole France’s Vie de Jeanne d’Arc (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1908) serve as additional examples of contemporary interest in Joan of Arc. This interest fueled the efforts made throughout the nineteenth century to canonize her. The French government used Joan’s image in order to restore national pride after the country’s defeat by the Prussians in 1870-71. Joan of Arc also provided a source of inspiration for literature, plays, films, and art at the turn-of-the-century.

as she did in the 15th!” [Eh bien, moi, je vous dis que la France du 19e siècle se relèvera comme celle du 15e!]

Joseph Fabre took up Joan of Arc as the subject of a primary school textbook, *Jeanne d’Arc, libératrice de la France* (1882), and Jules Michelet’s 1853 text, *Jeanne d’Arc*, became recommended after-school reading in patriotic studies. Méryem Cécyl similarly placed Joan’s story at the heart of her article “Nos Gloires Nationales: Jeanne d’Arc à Orléans” in the children’s publication, *L’Écolier illustré* (1895). Young Joan was even portrayed on the cover of a school binder printed around 1880. The figure of Joan of Arc worked as a meaningful heroine for Catholic publishers as well as those secular publications cited above. In the same spirit, several schools distributed Marius Sepet’s *Jeanne d’Arc*, published by Mame in 1891, as a prize book. In 1890 an article appeared in *L’Écolier illustré* explaining the importance of having a school holiday in honor of the French maid. The article’s author also commented on the reasons for the renewed popularity of the saint. “This popular hero worship is reborn today in a new form. French youth, who recognize their patriotic duties, will not miss the opportunity

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463 Ibid., 46.
to participate with all their hearts." In this way children’s publications encouraged French youth to look to Joan not exclusively as a religious inspiration but also as a patriotic one.

The tale of this young peasant girl called upon to save France through military intervention contained all the elements of a patriotic heroic model for children and one with whom they could identify. Joan of Arc was young, dedicated, forceful, and self-sacrificing, winning against all apparent odds. She was also intensely Catholic, an aspect downplayed in some of the literature produced for children post-1870 in the interest of secularizing her story. Louis-Maurice Boutet de Monvel produced one of the most remarkable nineteenth-century works to feature Joan of Arc, an illustrated children’s album, Jeanne d’Arc, first published in 1896. Scholars who have studied and analyzed this volume agree that it constitutes one of Boutet de Monvel’s most brilliant, fully realized, and popular works. Primarily an illustrator, Boutet de Monvel wrote and illustrated this volume himself. Publishers translated the text into different languages and reprinted the volume several times.

Boutet de Monvel’s choice to create an illustrated album using Joan of Arc’s story was inspired. Joan was the perfect subject: she conveyed child-like innocence and military-like strength. Her story linked the present with the past and offered hope for France’s full liberation from occupation. Boutet de Monvel’s cover image illustrates this objective to associate two time

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470 Ibid.
471 Secular publications may have taken up Joan of Arc’s story as a clear appropriation of a religious symbol.
472 Louis-Maurice Boutet de Monvel (1851-1913), sometimes referred to as Maurice Boutet de Monvel, was a French painter and children’s book illustrator. Born in 1851 in Orléans into a family of artists, he was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1870 and first exhibited at the Salon in 1873. Beginning in 1881 Boutet de Monvel focused on illustrating children’s journals and books. It is possible that having been born in Orléans influenced his choice to write and illustrate a children’s book on Joan of Arc. For more on Boutet de Monvel’s life and work, see Friedrich C. Heller, “Maurice Boutet de Monvel, illustrateur de livres d’enfant,” Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France 27 (Spring 1988): 14-26; and Trust for Museum Exhibitions, Maurice Boutet de Monvel: Master of French Illustration and Portraiture (Washington, D.C.: The Trust for Museum Exhibitions, 1987).
periods. In this drawing he portrays the fifteenth-century heroine in full armor complete with sword but leading troops dressed in Third Republic uniforms and carrying nineteenth-century bayonets. Joan’s army is not outfitted as they would have been during the Hundred Years War in order to help readers related a familiar historic context with their own in 1896. This juxtaposition effectively underscores Boutet de Monvel’s desire to connect France’s contemporary need for military strength and brilliant leadership with similar events in the nation’s past. Like the English occupiers of the fifteenth century, Boutet de Monvel alludes to the fact that France at the turn of the century needed liberation from Germany’s evil occupation. Boutet de Monvel used Joan’s image anachronistically in order to highlight her symbolic timelessness and immediate relevance. Interestingly, the author only employs this visual strategy in the cover illustration, in order to “set the scene.” In the book itself, the imagery shows French soldiers dressed in full fifteenth-century garb. Boutet de Monvel did not continue to mix present and past throughout the book, which indicates that he did not aim to link the two inextricably but rather to present his child readers with the implicit idea that France’s salvation lay in recovering her past military strength.
From the very first pages of his illustrated album of Joan of Arc, Boutet de Monvel makes it clear that her story served his purpose of promoting service to the nation to children. Joan in fact was a model child heroine.

Open this book, my dear children, with devotion in remembrance of this humble peasant girl who is the patron of France, who is the patron saint as she was its martyr. Her story will teach you that, in order to triumph, you must have faith in victory. Remember this, on the day when the nation will need all your courage.

[Bouvez, mes chers enfants, ce livre avec dévotion en souvenir de cette humble paysanne qui est la patronne de la France, qui est la sainte de la patrie comme elle en a été la martyre. Son histoire vous dira que pour vaincre, il faut avoir la foi dans la victoire. Souvenez-vous-en, le jour où le pays aura besoin de tout votre courage.]

Boutet de Monvel actively encouraged his child readers to draw on Joan of Arc’s story as a personal source of inspiration when their service and self-sacrifice to the nation would eventually be required.

Boutet de Monvel communicated to his young readers that they would need their courage in order to render service and help save France. His Jeanne d’Arc was a straightforward story

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475 Boutet de Monvel, Jeanne d’Arc, 1.
476 Ibid., 4.
about action, devotion, and self-sacrifice. However, the author did not imagine that his child readers would sacrifice themselves exactly as Joan had, by being burned at the stake. Boutet de Monvel surely shared the widely held belief that children should contribute to the nation through serving in the military, bearing children, being obedient, and making personal sacrifices. Boys’ primary obligation to the nation consisted of becoming committed soldiers and providers for their families. Girls were expected to become mothers, to give the nation sons who would become soldiers. The nation needed all children – future men and women of France – to place the survival, health, strength and well-being of France and their families before their own.

This remarkable and revealing album had the advantage of attracting both genders and all ages as readers. His choice of Joan of Arc as a central heroine is significant because, although he portrays her as a strong, action-oriented individual, characteristics usually identified as masculine, she is, in fact, a young girl. Joan’s female gender is far from a coincidental aspect in Boutet de Monvel’s construction of a patriotic and moral-themed tale. Just as mothers exercised moral authority in the family, so Joan of Arc served as a female holder of national morality.

Children would certainly be attracted to the heroic and militaristic elements of Joan’s story. She was young, energetic, disciplined and obedient. At each stage of her story, other people supported Joan in her efforts to aid France militarily. Local villagers provided her with armor and the necessary equipment for her task; “the people” roundly celebrated her after victories. The author conveys the story’s action in a realistic manner. In this military struggle people get hurt, even die, and Joan herself suffers both mentally and physically. French écoliers could not help but admire her courage and bravery, character traits that their society now encouraged them to demonstrate.
On the other hand, the author also places attention and value on Joan’s female qualities. The author alternates Joan’s “masculine” attributes with traditionally female ones, such as sympathy, caring for others, and praying. As a young girl Joan lived with her parents in a small village and took care of the family’s livestock. Although she never became a wife or mother, Boutet de Monvel’s text highlights her feminine attributes as a moral guide to the king, selfless servant of the people, and faithful follower.

Boutet de Monvel used Joan of Arc’s lifestory to convey his larger message that France would recover in the future through her children’s willingness for service, faith and strength. He conveyed this message through text and illustrations. Richly decorated, the volume’s forty-eight pages contain over forty-five color images. This picture book stood out from others for several reasons. Boutet de Monvel designed and printed the album with the pages turned horizontally (landscape style), giving the art work a striking panoramic effect and drawing readers further into the sequence of events. Furthermore, he combined images with text on virtually every page; the deluxe picture book of forty-eight pages contains almost as many illustrations.

Boutet de Monvel clearly intended to appeal to boys with his detailed descriptions of battle scenes. Additionally, although Joan is a young woman, the author/illustrator repeatedly portrayed her in ways that reflect masculine aspects of republican-oriented regeneration ideology – as a soldier, a leader, a physically active and assertive individual. Evidence of Joan’s masculine side is that once called to arms her hair is cut in a short boyish-style bob and the tunic she puts on looks exactly like those worn by men illustrated elsewhere in the text. Presented this way in the scene where she meets the French king, she raises her hands in fists, demonstrating the strength of her convictions in a very public setting.477

477 See Miller, “Propaganda and Utopianism,” 316.
This type of image plays on the idea that boys were assertive and physical. In Boutet de Monvel’s picture, this pivotal scene contains an upturned stool and Joan’s hat on the floor, signs of movement and activity more commonly connected to boys’ actions in other works from the same period. Further evidence of Boutet de Monvel’s coded visual portrayal of Joan as masculine can be found in the album’s illustrations of Joan in full body armor with little to distinguish her from her male counterparts on the battlefield.\footnote{\textit{Boutet de Monvel, Jeanne d’Arc}, 12.} \footnote{Ibid., 13, 19, 23, and 36.}
Simultaneously, the story’s illustrations also manage to evoke Joan’s feminine qualities. Above all Boutet de Monvel’s imagery shows her nurturing aspects. The author depicted her variously as tending to animals in the pasture, consoling a wounded soldier after battle, and blessing children within crowds. She is engaged in feminine activities like praying, tending sheep or spinning thread. Up until the moment in the story when Joan decides boldly to take military action on behalf of the kingdom of France, Boutet de Monvel represents her in dresses with her hair tied up in a bun and wearing either a headscarf or a hood.

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480 Ibid., 23.
Boutet de Monvel also depicted Joan doing good deeds and caring for members of her adoring public in villages as she travels through France. In caring for these admiring groups, she is, quite literally, caring for the nation of France. The book’s illustrations alternate between battle scenes and situations in which Joan replenishes her spirit after physically and emotionally tiring tasks. Joan recovers after her fighting activities by indulging her natural female desire to care for others. She shows her femininity by touching children, weeping, or praying. Revealingly, her faithfulness and piety are never far from the story’s center.

Through his portrayal of Joan incorporating both female and male characteristics, Boutet de Monvel’s story appealed to both boys and girls and actively encouraged them to be prepared and willing to engage in self-sacrifice for the larger good. Self-sacrifice was demanded of boys and girls alike but through different actions. Like Joan, for boys the ultimate sacrifice remained risking one’s life for the good of the nation through military service. For girls, self-sacrifice

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481 Ibid., 7.
482 Miller, “Propaganda and Utopianism,” 318.
meant caring for others before themselves, which Joan most certainly does, especially in her acts of placing the King and France before herself. Society encouraged girls to bear children and to put the interests of their families first. In Joan’s case this meant putting her national family first. While Joan herself is not a mother, she repeatedly acts like one in her interactions with the crowds who welcome her at every step of her journey. Each of Boutet de Monvel’s crowd scenes predominately shows women and children in the forefront.

The popularity of Boutet de Monvel’s Jeanne d’Arc insures that girls as well as boys read and enjoyed this storybook. A military heroine remained exceptional at the end of the nineteenth century and certainly appealed to female readers as an alternative to the more common roles of wife and mother as a way to imagine themselves. In practice girls were unable to participate directly as soldiers in the national project. However, the personal characteristics Joan of Arc demonstrated through her military role – fortitude, independence, courage, resilience, and self-sacrifice for the greater good – certainly spoke to young girls. These future women imbibed these desirable character traits in very different ways than boys since actually becoming a soldier was not an option. Girls surely imagined themselves with Joan’s inner strength, albeit within the context of those roles currently available to them – daughter, wife, mother, institutrice, nurse, writer – and fully committed to the nation.

Importantly, in spite of her military role, Joan remains fundamentally female but she is far from the more prevalent contemporary models of passive femininity. Joan’s active and dynamic behavior is justified by her personal motivation to serve the national good. Like Marianne or Jeanne Hachette, Joan of Arc represents the vital importance of women in saving the French nation; a message which surely did not escape the attention of young readers. The

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nation’s salvation remained in women’s hands. Thus, just as women were tasked with assuring the moral correctness of home and family, so too were they privileged in their role of moral saviors of the nation.

Boutet de Monvel’s Jeanne d’Arc is a paradigmatic instance of the militaristic and patriotic literature produced for children in the years after 1870-71. Many other texts designated for child readers featured Joan of Arc, too. Boutet de Monvel’s children’s album met with particular success, however, and demonstrates that the messages conveyed regarding self-sacrifice and regenerating the nation applied with equal force to both boys and girls.

The theme of militarism in children’s storybook illustrations increased also. Prior to the 1870s, the majority of pictures included in French children’s books were influenced by the Romantic Movement and featured very realistic-looking children placed in domestic settings, often outdoors, enjoying and learning from the natural world and people around them. The title page image to Hetzel’s Mademoiselle Lili à la campagne drawn by Lorenz Froelich exemplifies this style.
In addition to Froelich (1820-1908), Eugène Froment (1844-1900), J.J. Grandville (Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard’s pseudonym, 1803-1847), Émile Bayard (1837-1891) and Bertall (Charles-Albert d’Arnoux’s pseudonym, 1820-1882) belonged to this vein of illustrators.

For works originally published in the 1850s and 1860s, subsequent editions reproduced the classic art work of popular children’s books. Gustav Doré, probably today the most well-known of all nineteenth-century illustrators, produced some famous illustrations for Perrault’s classic Contes and in 1857 illustrated the Comtesse de Ségur’s Nouveaux Contes de Fées. In this style artists produced grandiose images; they drew central figures larger than life, and the scenes depicted are very decorative, almost extravagant. People move in all directions, animals

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often enliven the scene, and individuals’ dress is highly ornamental. After the 1870s, although some children’s illustrations maintained this flowery, romantic style, a new style of clear, neat images began to appear. Children and their daily environment continued as the main subjects. However, they were increasingly depicted as physically constrained and orderly, as reasonable figures capable of going only slightly astray and most often engaged in organized and somewhat static activity.

Importantly, some illustrators employed this emerging artistic style of showing children engaged in organized group activities in order to portray youths in para-military situations. Artists drew soldierly formations, games, and controlled circumstances – marching, parades, even play-fighting scenarios – in the most positive ways. Boutet de Monvel’s work is a case in point. In the drawing for the children’s song “As-tu vu la casquette?” he conceived a line of young boys fully dressed as young soldiers and marching in formation, complete with toy weapons.

The boys differ slightly in age but the drawing represents soldiering as appropriate for even the youngest.

At this time educators began to encourage children, especially younger children, to sing while marching. Many of them recommended military-themed songs. Pedagogues believed this

487 Boutet de Monvel (illus.), Vieilles chansons et rondes pour les petits enfants, 24.
activity taught children to think of themselves as a group, a community, while instilling order through rhythm and encouraging shared patriotic thoughts. Boutet de Monvel’s overtly nationalistic and propagandistic frontispiece to *Chansons de France pour les petits Français* (1886) exemplifies this motif. (See Figure 23.) The drawing shows a group of children marching in line and singing in unison. They appear to range in age from three to nine, boys and girls together, and are united in their enthusiasm for the song they sing. Although walking in a homogenous group, every child has his or her individual personality and carries the French flag. This patriotic illustration exhibited France’s children as united in and enthusiastic about their patrie. In this case, the image displays relative gender parity and while a boy leads the group, the smallest child, a girl, appears at the very end.

![Figure 23: Frontispiece, Chansons de France pour les petits Français, 1886](image)

Interpretations of orderly social images presented to children in the post-1870 era vary. Art historians privilege artistic evolution and a shift away from Romantic classicism as explanations. However, there seems to be more going on. Imagery of a regenerated and forward-moving French nation incorporated portrayals of structured and restrained children. Authors and illustrators encouraged military-like obedience through children’s books’ illustrations that showed well-behaved children as desirable while negative consequences often happened to bad, disobedient children. Creators of children’s literature thought that the portrayal of physically-restrained children in a favorable light in books intended expressly for them would encourage children to adapt their behavior and act accordingly.⁴⁸⁹

Illustrations changed in part to reflect the new realities of children’s daily lives. It was not uncommon for artists to represent boys watching and participating in military parades and exercises, a new regular activity in village life after 1870. Groups of boys performing marching exercises were also depicted on occasion, and some drawings included people watching these groups perform these lockstep, uniformed exercises. In school, physical education classes emphasized disciplined exercises. While these exercises differed along gender lines, they maintained the basic rules of physically moving together toward a common objective. Also, for French boys, the school curriculum was increasingly focused on preparing them for military careers. The Ligue d’Enseignement advocated instruction involving civic ideologies in tandem with physical, armed exercises.⁴⁹⁰ Artists depicted boys as “soldiers-in-training,” which reflected the contemporary reality of bataillons scolaires. And children’s reading material increasingly portrayed boys in para-military uniforms and formations.

⁴⁸⁹ Miller, 283-85.
⁴⁹⁰ The Ligue d’Enseignement was founded in 1866. Its main objective was to democratize and extend popular education and establish it as free, mandatory, and secular. Hetzel collaborator Jean Macé was instrumental in establishing the Ligue and in promoting its republican goals. During the 1880s the Ligue was particularly active in promoting the implementation of bataillons scolaires in public schools.
Illustrators also repeatedly drew boys of all ages at play as active participants encouraged to think militarily. An illustration in Madame de Stolz’s book, Frères de Lait, depicts a group of boys playing soldier.

Figure 24: Illustration, Frères de Lait, 1885

The most active boy – the one in the middle – is clearly the leader of this quasi-military play group. His stance wide, he wears the “general’s” hat and has removed his sword from its scabbard, ready for action. The accompanying text confirms this role and explains that the boys mutually decided upon this activity in order to occupy their afternoon. Madame de Grandmaison’s 1890 children’s album, Petits soldats en marche presents illustrations of boys as accepting, preparing and even desiring their future role as soldiers. A full-color album of detachable cards detailing French soldiers’ various military uniforms, the cover image of this volume features two young boys: one setting up the paper cutouts in formation and the other wearing a fringed officer’s hat, hoisting a sword, and riding a realistic-looking wooden rocking horse. In effect, these children are not so much soldiers-in-training but actual small soldiers in their own right, already “on the march.”

In these examples French boys use weapons and actively engage in gunplay. The inclusion of military weaponry and uniforms illustrates that children’s books repeatedly offered boys images that kept their future obligation to national military service in mind. Interestingly,

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492 Madame de Grandmaison, Petits soldats en marche (Paris: Paul Bernadin, 1890).
493 Ibid.
the art work does not portray paramilitary play as dangerous or in any way negative. Even in “Le petit chasseur,” where the drawing depicts a boy shot by a canon laying on the ground, there is no blood, no dismemberment or unhappy outcome.

Battle simulations and active fighting scenarios were not the only signs of the new militarism. Illustrators also regularly cast boys in scenes of non-combatant soldiering tasks. In Anatole France and Boutet de Monvel’s collaborative effort, *Nos Enfants, scenes de la ville et des champs* (1887), the text and pictures represent boys being physically active, engaged in activities such as playing with wooden horses, demonstrating courage, and hoping to serve as sailors at sea one day. In one illustration, a youngster named Roger takes care of the toy horses in his stable. Dressed in a military uniform, Roger demonstrates the protective qualities of a good father and prepared soldier. The text reads, “At the moment Roger is grooming his handsome alezan who would be the prize of wooden horses, the star of the Black Forest stud farm, if he had not lost half of his tail in battle.”

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494 France, *Nos enfants.*
The messages conveyed are clear. Boys should look forward to and embrace their future role as soldiers and the requisite responsibilities and sacrifices that will accompany this role.

Early readers’ alphabet books offer yet another indication of the prevalence of military images after 1870. While numerous French alphabet books continued to feature animals, children’s toys, home objects, and small trades [les petits métiers] as thematic representations of letters, the number of albums using military figures and words rose significantly after 1870. Titles such as Je serai soldat, alphabet militaire, Grand alphabet militaire and L’Alphabet militaire comique appeared. Overwhelmingly bleu, blanc et rouge, these volumes contained references like: “F like flag,” “M like military school,” and “G like gun.” [D comme drapeau, E comme École militaire de Saint-Cyr, et F comme fusil.] Publishers produced entire albums in

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496 Ibid., illustration between pages 18 and 19.
498 “Un papa,” Je serai soldat, alphabet militaire, illustrations by Bombled (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1893); G. Gaulard, Grand alphabet militaire (Paris: La Société des Artistes Français, Imprimerie Monrocq, 1889); L’Alphabet militaire comique (Epinal: Pellerin, 1879). The earliest examples of military-themed alphabet books appeared during the Second Empire, such as L’Album des petits soldats [ca. 1860].
which the majority of letters were represented by military-themed words and their accompanying pictures.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, images had long been considered appropriate and even central to communicating messages to young readers. The constant presence of military-themed illustrations certainly reached children’s collective consciousness. Boys apparently accepted these ideas and even aspired to play them out. In an 1898 article in *L’Écolier illustré*, a young reader wrote in to say that if he had a completely free day, he would spend it going to a farm to teach birds to do military exercises. The accompanying drawing captures a young boy playing soldier with a group of birds. The boy, probably five or six years old, wears military-like clothing and holds a toy gun. In front of him a line of wild birds stands at attention. The birds have “guns” in the form of sticks and their young “captain” has organized them according to height. While the idea of birds as French soldiers seems ridiculous, it demonstrates the overwhelming presence of the theme of militarism in children’s texts.

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499 “Gertrude,” “Chronique des Écoliers: Troisième Concours,” *L’Écolier illustré* 9 (13 October 1898): 644. In this rather curious article the author’s name is apparently a pseudonym; the narrator claims to be the journal editor’s housekeeper. The text is written in phonetic French indicating her lack of education, which would have been humorous to young readers. The article is a summary of the journal’s winning submissions for its readers’ writing contest whose theme was, “Si j’avais un jour de pleine liberté.”
Militaristic illustrations noticeably privileged the importance of the soldier, a role girls were not permitted to take on. Apart from the exceptional case of Joan of Arc, direct representations of girls playing soldiers are rare. Most often if an artist chose to place a girl within the frame of such a scene, she appeared alongside her militarily-clad brother looking up at him in admiration. Children’s books also used means other than artwork to communicate these themes to young readers. In the decades that followed l’année terrible of 1870-71, children’s authors increasingly introduced the portrayal of children in militaristic-like situations and games. Authors created scenarios for children in which they invested aspects of children’s play – dolls, toy soldiers and arms, dressing up – with military and nationalist meaning inflected with clear definitions of gender differences. Authors depicted boys, with their games, and their toys as physically active protectors of home and family while they represented girls as secondary, supportive characters responsible for the care and comfort of others, most often in a domestic

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500 Ibid., illustration by Boutet de Monvel.
501 Notable exceptions include the cover illustration for Mon Journal in its sixth year of publication (1886-87) which featured a rag tag army of both boys and girls armed with brooms and kitchen utensils and Alphabet des Jouets: livre d’images pour les petits enfants (Paris: Théodore Lefèvre et Cie., 1882), 15.
environment. This sort of play provided child readers with texts and images of what exactly would be expected of them in adulthood as service to their nation.

Children’s books from this period went a step further and included numerous stories of groups of children actually playing soldier or “war.” Most often, girls were absent from these narratives. In the chapter “La Revue” from Filles et garçons, scènes de la ville et des champs (1887) however, the author did include both boys and girls. The accompanying illustration features a small boy on the right named Étienne, identified in the text as “the general.” From his seat in a little chair in the children’s room, he commands several boys and unusually one girl. The image shows the boys dressed in military uniform-like clothing and pretending to undergo a military inspection by their general.

![Figure 27: Illustration, Filles et garçons, 1887](image)

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502 See Desbeaux, Les Campagnes du général Toto; Lemoine, La Guerre pendant les vacances.
The short written passage tells the reader how attached Étienne is to his role as general and
draws our attention to the role allowed the little girl. “René, Bernard, Roger, Jacques and
Étienne think that the best thing in the world is to be a military man. Catherine thinks the same,
and she would like to be a boy in order to become a solider.” [René, Bernard, Roger, Jacques et
Étienne estiment qu’il n’y a rien de plus beau au monde que d’être militaire. Catherine pense
comme eux, et elle voudrait être un garçon pour devenir un soldat.]

Although the author of this unique chapter to a certain extent “included” a young girl in the boys’ military game, he
presented her as a decided misfit. He highlighted the girl’s segregated status in the game both
visually and in the text. Even though she holds a weapon like the other children, she stands at
the far end of the soldier’s line up and does not wear a uniform. The text attributes Catherine’s
exclusion to her femaleness rather than to her lack of any specific ability or desire to act as a
soldier. In fact, the text leaves the reader with the impression that young Catherine surely
possesses such skills but may not exercise them in this particular way simply because she is a
girl.

French children’s novels and periodicals of this period also delivered dissuasive messages
for girls who might have aspired to become soldiers. Zénaïde Fleuriot’s Le petit chef de famille
of 1874, for instance, opens with a scene in which the Daubry family’s youngest member,
Charlotte, bemoans the fact that her brother refuses to play with her and their sister, Marthe.
Charlotte’s brother, Raoul, insists that there is no room for girls in his game. Charlotte’s
response is revealing because she at once insists on not wanting to play with other little girls who
she acknowledges are not allowed to play soldier. “‘I don’t want to play with girls!’ Charlotte

504 Ibid.
exclaimed. ‘I want to be a soldier!’” [Je ne veux pas jouer avec les petites filles, moi! s’écria Charlotte, je veux être soldat!]\(^505\)

Even though authors directed militarism – as represented in children’s storybooks in the final decades of the nineteenth century – at boys, they also inadvertently presented new behavior models for girl readers. The overwhelmingly positive manner in which authors portrayed the soldier appealed to all children. While writers certainly did not recommend that girls play and participate in this way, they nevertheless did present the idea of girls as soldiers to their young audience. And yet, the simplicity of the gender roles presented, with boys as decisively active and girls almost exclusively in supportive roles, presented a challenge for child readers. The implicit question behind Catherine’s and Charlotte’s protests is, in fact, “why can’t a girl be a soldier?”

While authors and illustrators sometimes included girls in narratives and images featuring boys playing soldier, they invariably added direct indications that soldiering was inappropriate for females. These texts directed girls toward supportive roles and activities. In stories where the action centered on local neighborhood boys playing soldier, girl characters were typically in charge of providing housing quarters for the soldiers or nursing them when needed.\(^506\) Some texts in fact valorized highly this separate “female” contribution to the nation’s military efforts. In 1889, Le Petit Français illustré published a monologue for girls in which the female narrator, Jeanne, spoke of herself as brave and equally dedicated to France’s military efforts and well-being as any male soldier. After her brother, Pierre, claims that his sister would be unable to tolerate war’s hardships, she protests. She claims that in the country’s hour of need, les petites


\(^{506}\) See Desbeaux, Les Campagnes du général Toto, 17; Lemoine, La Guerre pendant les vacances, 118-23; and “Ces Messieurs s’en vont en guerre,” Le Petit Français illustré 23 (3 August 1889): supplementary pages.
Françaises will also prove their strength, service, and courage.\textsuperscript{507} Children’s literature after 1870 denied girls direct identification with the soldier role. When authors did include girls within a “playing soldier” scenario, they portrayed them as either unfit by nature to participate in such a game, or they relegated girls to the supportive roles of domestic assistance and nurses in the boys’ war games.

Stories also encouraged children to play with their toys in a military fashion. Camille Lemonnier’s “La Bataille des petits soldats de plomb et des petits soldats de bois,” appeared in Hetzel’s children’s journal \textit{Magasin d’Éducation et de Récréation} in 1879. This imaginative story displayed militarism through the actions of toy soldiers.\textsuperscript{508} The illustrations show two armies of disciplined toy soldiers lined up uniformly, ready to battle. The lead soldiers are more active and better armed – they have a cannon – and one image portrays a wooden soldier kissing his wife before going off into battle, thus linking military-patriotic duty to home and family. Although Lemonnier’s vivid story certainly appealed to boys and helped them imagine the type of military action they might one day encounter, girls who read the tale also received precise messages about their appropriate future roles. Her task remained staying home and providing loving support of her soldier-husband. Writers cleverly used the device of toys as animated, metaphorical characters to encourage children to introduce particular republican themes – discipline, self-sacrifice, family, dedication, male duty – into their play.\textsuperscript{509}

In books targeted toward girls, toys – and especially dolls – appeared as central characters as well. Gabriel Franay’s \textit{Les Mémoires de Primevère} (1898)\textsuperscript{510} features a French-

\textsuperscript{507} P.R., “Une petite française,” \textit{Le Petit Français illustré} 3 (16 March 1889): 36-37.
\textsuperscript{509} Another example is “La Nuit de Noël,” \textit{Magasin d’éducation et récréation}, 32:2 (1880): 79-85 in which the author uses toys in a shop window to promote the notion of charity among social classes. Hetzel reprinted this tale too in the collection \textit{Bébés et Joujoux}.
\textsuperscript{510} Gabriel Franay [Madame Louis Quioc], \textit{Les Mémoires de Primevère} (Paris: Colin, 1898).
made doll who comes to life at night. Early in this charming story, “Primevère” recognizes herself as French and feels happy and proud to be so, although she does so not knowing exactly what “being French” means.\textsuperscript{511} Regardless, she prides herself on her French status. Her little French cardboard heart swells with pride upon hearing tales of military heroics.\textsuperscript{512} Primevère eventually comes to understand the significance of her status while listening to her little girl’s older brother tell of the painful events of the war with Prussia in which he fought and was seriously injured. Listening to tales of French heroics during the recent war, Primevère becomes giddy with pleasure and pride knowing that she is a French doll. “From the beginning, I was very interested, then enthusiasm overtook me to the point that I wanted to shout and clap my hands. I now understood why I could be proud to be a French doll.”\textsuperscript{513} Even girls’ playthings in children’s literature were saturated with overtly nationalistic messages.

In some literary scenarios, adults openly encouraged boys to “play war.” Émile Desbeaux wrote in 1883 of neighborhood boys “playing war” in \textit{Les Campagnes du général Toto}.\textsuperscript{514} Following an afternoon spent acting out pretend military strategy, the boys face their mother’s half-hearted disapproval, “What a horrid game!” \textit{[Quel vilain jeu!]} The protagonist’s grandfather, a retired general, revealingly responds, “… it’s not a horrid game, nor a futile one. It trains while entertaining them, these children destined to be soldiers one day.” \textit{[…]ce n’est pas un jeu vilain ni inutile. Il forme en les amusant, ces enfants destinés à être tous soldats un jour.]} To this, the boys reply with enthusiasm that they all hope to become soldiers one day. The mother then exclaims, “Alas! Why must we fight?” \textit{[Hélas! pourquoi faut-il qu’on se batte?]}\textsuperscript{515} This question allows the author to segue into a miniature civics lesson on the meaning and

\textsuperscript{511} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{512} Ibid., 90-91.
\textsuperscript{513} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{514} Desbeaux, \textit{Les Campagnes du général Toto}, 51.
\textsuperscript{515} Ibid.
importance of la patrie. Within the context of the story, adults approved the boys’ game. Fictional parental authorization meant that the album’s readers could feel comfortable imitating this type of “play” in real life.

French children’s literature of the eighteen seventies, eighties, and nineties also widely lauded becoming a soldier as the most valued way to serve the nation. Since only boys could serve in this way, girls, through their complete exclusion from this type of play, effectively were excluded from the same level of patriotic participation permitted the future men of the nation.

Yet another discernible shift in post-1870 children’s literature was the active re-definition of notions of la patrie. French republicans at this time generally perceived pre-1870 definitions of nationhood to have failed, contributing to the country’s defeat. Educators, politicians, publishers, authors and illustrators were all active in developing and promoting new definitions of what constituted the nation of France. They also became involved in making sure that the diffusion of these new ideas and images of the nation to the people of France, in particular the country’s future citizens, took place.

In the interest of la patrie, every French citizen – all classes, ages, and sexes – had to help the nation in some way. Individual acts that benefited the interest and stability of the whole – whether in the form of family, community or nation – were the most important and cherished means of rendering service. The sheer number of titles published for children after 1870 which included the notion of la patrie is evidence of this theme’s importance. More than the number of publications, however, these works reveal the primary way in which children themselves – as children in the present, not just as future adults – were portrayed as vital to the nation’s survival and success. Writers encouraged children to conduct themselves properly as both an affirmative reflection of their patrie and as a service in return for all they had received. In 1888, one
contributor wrote in the periodical *L’Ami de l’enfance* of her recent experience traveling internationally when she encountered ill-behaved children. This incident deterred her interest and respect for the country she was visiting, and she left immediately. The author explains her objective in sharing this story in her conclusion, namely to remind French children of their personal obligation to behave correctly and to offer to the world at large a positive reflection of *la patrie.*\(^{516}\) She concludes her reflection with a bit of a challenge. The author suggests that because children draw so many benefits from their country, they should want to display exemplary behavior in order to produce an excellent image of France: “Say, wouldn’t it be wonderful for France if others talked about our children as the best and the most well-behaved?”

[Dites, ne serait-il pas beau pour la France qu’on parlât de ses petits enfants comme des meilleurs et des plus sages?]\(^{517}\) In this way her readers, as children and not as future adults, could contribute to their nation.

Children’s publications also promoted an image of correct acts as important especially within France’s own borders. Jean Aicard’s 1891 poem “L’Enfant du troupe” highlighted gendered roles in the service of *la patrie.* An illustration by Geoffroy accompanied the text in the publisher Delagrave’s periodical *L’Écolier illustré.*\(^ {518}\) In Geoffroy’s drawing, a young boy, evidently a member of a *bataillon scolaire* as seen by his para-military uniform, carries a young girl through the wet and icy streets.

He could defend me; he is strong, he is brave!  
He seemed to me a man; he was so serious!  
...In his big coat, brave little man  
He wrapped me up with my bread, my books and my apple!  
He carries me in his arms, and I feel good  
Within the folds of his pea coat from where I could no longer see!  
Little boy of the troop, my childhood friend,

\(^{517}\) Ibid.  
Ever more disarmed for my defense.
In which country did you fall! By what cannon!
Alas! Little friend, I forget your name,
But at least I will always love you as a symbol
Of the soldier who defends family and school.
And, during dreadful days, when the sky is far from clear,
Shelters the future in the folds of his coat.\(^{519}\)

The girl’s voice narrates this poem, effectively underscoring the importance of the female role in conveying moral messages. She greatly admires her hero and appreciatively alludes to the boy’s soldier-like acts of self-sacrifice. This little poem demonstrates that while both boys and girls were encouraged to anticipate that boys would one day become soldiers, their actions in the present could, and should, also reflect positively on \textit{la patrie}.

Children’s authors also encouraged their young readers to learn about France’s past – especially the importance of 1870 – as a patriotic act. This pedagogical goal was best accomplished by reading about the full history of the nation and those who had performed past acts of heroism in the nation’s interest. The events of 1870 often provided the context, as in the story “Hubert the bugler” [\textit{Hubert le clairon}] published in \textit{Le Petit Français illustré} in March 1889.\(^{520}\) The tale begins with a local boy, Jean-le-Tors, reading a serious book aloud. “Jean the Tors opened a book, a book which told the French, mainly French children, about the country they live in, what they owe their motherland when she is threatened, about what others have done

\(^{519}\) Ibid. Henri Jules Jean Geoffroy (1853-1924) was an accomplished artist; he trained at the École des Beaux-Arts and worked with Eugène Levasseur. He first exposed his work at the Salon in 1874. Geoffroy apparently lived with a married couple of teachers and had his studio in the school building; children and in particular school-themed paintings remained his best-known and preferred subject. He met Hetzel around 1876 who hired him to illustrate for his children’s journal, \textit{Magasin d’éducation et de récréation} and children’s storybooks. He took to signing his illustrations with the pseudonym “Geo” around 1880. A respected painter and illustrator, Geoffroy received numerous awards during his lifetime; the Légion d’Honneur inducted him into their ranks in 1885. See Serge Chassagne, text in Geoffroy, \textit{peintre de l’enfance} (Rouen: I.N.R.P. – Musée National de l’Education, 1984); and Christiane Hubert, “Un peintre de l’enfance aux débuts de la IIIe République: Jean Geoffroy,” \textit{Carrefours de l’éducation} 21 (January-June 2006): 95-112.

\(^{520}\) P.R., “Hubert le Clairon,” \textit{Le Petit Français illustré} 3 (16 March 1889): 34-35.
These words encouraged action in the face of national threats and in the name of patriotism. Thus, the author conveys the notion that the simple act of reading about France constitutes a patriotic act. *Le Petit Français illustré* also regularly published accounts of major battles – recent as well as past – illustrated with detailed engravings showing soldiers’ heroics.

After 1870, children’s literature presented *la patrie* as an entity that needed protection and defense – not unlike children themselves. Not only did authors try to teach children to respect and maintain their nation and its values; they also developed the idea that sinister forces threatened *la patrie* and that one day children might have to defend it in the face of serious external threats. “Today, however, only one duty is required of us: to love our country and know how to protect it”\(^{522}\) and “…loving France with their whole heart, they serve her with all their strength.”\(^{523}\) were common refrains in children’s literature after 1870.

School was one institution in which children themselves could serve *la patrie* as children. Learning one’s lessons or eventually completing one’s studies successfully meant personal satisfaction and familial pride but it also meant the child had done what he or she should for his country. Young Pierre, a fictional character in one of Ernest Lavisse’s stories from the 1880s, voices his pleasure for scholarly accomplishment in this way upon receiving his *certificat d’études*, “I had pleased my father, my teacher, my examiners, everyone; thus, I had served France for the first time.”\(^{524}\)

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Through an analysis of particular themes present in children’s literature during the second half of the nineteenth century – both adapted and new themes – it becomes clear that national

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\(^{521}\) Ibid.

\(^{522}\) Desbeaux, *Les Campagnes du général Toto*, 52.


\(^{524}\) Ibid., “Le Certificat d’études,” 89.
interests came to the forefront in the decades after 1870-71. This change is evident not only in the modification of certain themes for the purposes of patriotism but also in the introduction of entirely new themes, such as an overwhelming emphasis on militarism via the increased presence of military heroes and showing children emulating desired gender roles in military scenarios. Military strength, discipline and self-sacrifice were observably a significant part of French children’s literature produced after the events of 1870-71. The extent to which this new and timely emphasis effectively served to communicate desired values and behavior in France’s young citizens remains unclear. Regardless of how children perceived and received them, children’s literature nevertheless presented a plethora of regeneration messages to their readers.

The lack of a fundamental rupture in the substantive content of children’s literature after 1870-71 and the presence of a gradual shift in emphasis and attitudes points to historical continuity between the two periods. Priorities concerning what messages authors included and hoped to teach young readers altered. Self-discipline and personal self-sacrifice were desirable in order to fortify the nation and assure its future. In their combined roles as mothers, fathers, soldiers, and caretakers parents made sacrifices in order to guide future republican citizens to adulthood. Through texts and images accessible and appropriate to child readers, French boys and girls became aware of themselves as valuable and necessary to the nation. Patriotism was the primary motivation. After the national calamities of 1870-71, numerous sources sought to convey to all French citizens, even its youngest, that through strengthening the nation militarily, morally and demographically, France would regain greatness and respect.

Finally, a more symbolic and psychological explanation as to why children’s books at this time directly addressed essential national issues also exists. Many politicians and reform advocates viewed the new republic in child-like terms, as a nation that needed to learn – or
perhaps re-learn – fundamental lessons of republican citizenship. This view in part explains the overwhelming emphasis on efforts to mold the nation’s youngest members. National regeneration efforts had to target France’s foundations if they were to succeed in the long run. Just as popular propaganda used images of children to drive home its pro-nation messages, so children’s literature – with its pervasive themes of home, family and secular values – became an important tool of republican socialization aimed at the heart of France’s future. What better way to assure the nation’s healing than to shape its children?
“We could never leave a book until we had finished it. Sometimes my father, on hearing
the swallows in the morning would say in deep shame: ‘Let’s go to bed, I’m more of a child than
you are.’” This tender passage from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions* (1769) provides
one of the earliest French autobiographies to evoke the experience of childhood reading as
captivating and meaningful. Rousseau vividly describes the moments he spent reading with his
father as so irresistibly absorbing that together they completely lost any sense of time. Following
in Rousseau’s footsteps subsequent French writers developed a rich tradition of autobiographical
writing about their childhoods granting a special place for recollections of reading. From
Chateaubriand’s *Mémoires d’Outre-Tombe* (1848) and George Sand’s *Histoire de ma vie* (1855)
through Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913), Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Les Mots*
(1964) and Simone de Beauvoir’s *Mémoires d’une jeune fille rangée* (1958) to Michel Leiris, *La
règle du jeu* (1948-76), nineteenth- and twentieth-century French authors included childhood
memories of reading as constitutive of their adult selves.

French historian Pierre Nora’s monumental collaborative project *Les lieux de mémoire*
(1984-92) made the study of French memory a central concern for historians. Scholars have
generally understood “collective memory” to mean those practices of remembrance – including
autobiographies – that develop within and are therefore shaped by cultural and social contexts.
Nora theorized that *lieux de mémoire* are historically constructed and can therefore be studied as

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from Lloyd, *The Land of Lost Content*, 171. For a literary analysis of the narrative meaning of this passage see
Philip Robinson, “The ‘Actor’s Talent’ and the ‘Accent of the Passions’: Rousseau on his childhood reading,”
historical artifacts. Autobiographical accounts that include childhood reading clearly correspond to Nora’s definition of *lieux de mémoire* because they demonstrate a conscious “will to remember” rendering them appropriate subjects for historical investigation. Additionally, Nora’s concern with the relationship between *lieux de mémoire* and French national identity leads to an understanding of how, taken together, *lieux* form a complex system that represents the nation symbolically. I suggest that recollections of childhood reading are an important element of this national form in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this final chapter I employ an historical and literary approach to memory to analyze how and why adult writers – who were child readers in the late-nineteenth century – included childhood reading experiences in their autobiographies. Recalling reading as an essential part of childhood serves an explicit purpose for these authors – it demonstrates their intentions to identify themselves as belonging to a community, specifically a community of readers.

Several aspects of Nora’s work are germane to this study. At the core of his theory, Nora asserts a clear distinction between “collective memory” and “history.” Nora drew upon Maurice Halbwachs’ idea that individual memory depends on collective memory, and set Halbwachs’ definition of “collective memory” in opposition to history. One result of this strict division is that, according to Nora, due to the loss of collective memory – gone with the passing of peasant life in France – people have lost the “frame” in which individual memories can take shape. For Nora the response to the loss of traditional modes of recollection has been that individuals, within their communities, take it upon themselves to create personal pasts and individual

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527 “No memory is possible outside the frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections.” Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 43.
528 “Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition,” Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.
529 Ibid., 9.
memories, *lieux de mémoire*. Nora defined this notion of modern forms of remembering, *lieux de mémoire*, as, “anything pertaining to the cult of the dead, anything relating to the patrimony, anything administering the presence of the past within the present” a definition which implies an intention, a will, to remember.  

*Lieux*, however, are not authentic forms of memory but mediocre substitutes.

Nora’s groundbreaking work opened multiple disciplinary avenues for research on the subject of memory and its role in identity formation, both individual and collective. Most especially Nora’s theories have been significant for studies of the Holocaust, the two world wars, and to literary studies of remembering. The notion of memory as historically and culturally constructed has led historians – and other scholars – to consider events from the perspective of how both individuals and communities recall (or forget) them. Scholarly work on the importance of memory in history has led to major revelations about individuals’ lived experiences in the past. Because of my emphasis on how children’s literature presented and

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530 Ibid., 19.
served to shape republican political culture in late-nineteenth century France, I draw on those scholars who have investigated the complex relationship between memory and the formation of collective identity in order to argue that young readers’ inclusion in the republican project indeed served to shape their perception of themselves as belonging to a community.

Studies inspired by Nora’s attention to memory often call into question some of his conclusions. Most prominently, scholars from a variety of disciplines criticize his oversimplification of the strict division between “collective memory” and history. Nevertheless, the idea of lieu de mémoire remains valuable because it creates a place for historians to study the role of memory in identity formation. Based on the ideas of cultural studies theorist John Frow I see a significant place for writing in memory construction. Frow advocates a method which recognizes that “script and print have been of paramount importance in shaping memory and thought.” Following Frow I too see literary production as instrumental in constructing historical lieu de mémoire, individual memory, and collective memory.

I analyze examples of the particular “script and print” of autobiographies in which authors drew on and wrote about their childhood memories of reading. The authors of these autobiographies – lieu de mémoire – wrote about themselves in the way they did not because of the loss of traditional collective memory – as Nora asserts – but along with its persistence. Historical realities informed these writers’ memories and their literary creations in turn served to inform others’ individual and collective memories. Benedict Anderson has used a similar model of culturally-constructed collective identity in order to argue for the centrality of capitalist print

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culture in the emergence of a common discourse as part of the process of national identity formation. I adapt Anderson’s idea to assert that in including reading experiences when writing about their childhoods, these authors produced a historically specific personal and collective memory of identifying themselves as belonging to a reading community. The act of childhood reading in turn becomes part of the shared nostalgia for childhood. Thus, these texts serve as evidence of the complementary and mutually informing nature of collective recollection and history rather than their opposition.

As a literary form, autobiography is complex since it inevitably – whether the author acknowledges it or not – combines fact and fiction. Those who study autobiography as a genre generally accept this amalgamation \textit{a priori} and recognize that even though fictionalized – even romanticized – autobiographies tell us a great deal about the historical era in which their authors produced them. Various literary scholars have studied the genre of autobiography, often with an emphasis on the French case. Philippe Lejeune set the standard for such explorations and paved the way for subsequent literary studies of French autobiography in his 1971 work \textit{L’Autobiographie en France}. By their very nature autobiographies necessarily include attention to one’s personal past and in many cases incorporate childhood experiences as evidence of the presence of the past in the adult self. Richard Coe picked up on this distinctive aspect of autobiography and analyzed it in his book \textit{When the Grass was Taller: Autobiography and the}

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540 In some cases autobiographers write about childhood in a way that acknowledges its end so it is not surprising that few authors write their autobiographies before the age of forty. Since one’s childhood belongs to the unrecoverable past, this practice of memorializing childhood brings to mind Pierre Nora’s idea of the centrality of commemoration of death in \textit{lieux de mémoire}. 
Experience of Childhood (1984), the first exploration of what the author identifies as a subgenre, “the Childhood” within the autobiographical tradition.\textsuperscript{541}

Chapter six sits at the intersection of literary and historical studies of memory and national identity. Autobiography, as a cultural product, provides useful evidence of the interaction between individual and collective memory in identity formation. Within the selected texts I find evidence that individual memories of childhood reading contribute to our historical knowledge of political identity formation in late nineteenth-century France. These writers reflect their historical context which included expanding public education, rising child literacy rates, and the availability of an ever-increasing quantity of reading material to various social classes through the inclusion of vignettes of childhood reading. In turn, these individual memories contributed to the cultural construction of childhood and helped produce the collective identity of French children as literate. Individual memories then became part of a shared discourse about childhood reading and in turn contributed to the construction of collective memory and as such collective identity.

This chapter draws on recent investigations that emphasize the political nature of official remembrance, especially the role of memory in defining the modern nation-state, yet take into consideration the dynamic relationship between individual and collective recollections. Henry Rousso’s work on the persistence of France’s Vichy past in collective memory\textsuperscript{542} and Joseph

\textsuperscript{541} Richard N. Coe, When the Grass was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984). Coe’s pioneering study is ambitious in its scope and breadth and is not limited by either a specific chronological period or national boundaries. He defines “the Childhood” as “an extended piece of writing, a conscious, deliberately executed literary artifact, …, in which the most substantial portion of the material is directly autobiographical, and whose structure reflects step by step the development of the writer’s self; beginning often, but not invariably, with the first light of consciousness, and concluding, quite specifically, with the attainment of a precise degree of maturity.” Coe, 8-9. Rosemary Lloyd explores autobiography as just one of the narrative forms used by nineteenth-century writers to represent children and childhood in The Land of Lost Content, see especially Chapter I, “Remembering Childhood,” 23-63.

\textsuperscript{542} Rousso, Le Syndrome de Vichy: de 1944 à nos jours, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990) and Vichy: l’événement, la mémoire, l’histoire.


The use of creative written works to explore questions of memory and identity is well established. In particular Jane Bradley Winston and Susan Einbinder have both used literary evidence of individual remembrances to investigate the ways in which these recollections interact with collective memory and identity.\textsuperscript{546}

Selections included here demonstrate an irrefutable interlinking between personal and collective memories of childhood reading in which the child (written by the adult self) identifies reading with belonging to a literate community, a world of books. This not only informs our understanding of nineteenth-century French childhoods but also reveals a significant element of French national identity, literacy. In what follows, I explore the ways in which and the possible reasons for the inclusion of reading as a meaningful part of childhood by these authors. What these authors retrospectively recalled about their childhood reading includes numerous commonalities. It is my contention that authors’ use of the trope of early reading experiences serves to locate the moment at which these individuals recognized themselves as members of the larger adult community and that they identified this community as one that had access to written knowledge and a capacity to exercise that knowledge, i.e. literacy. This access is identified as making them part of a community of readers. In part then as child readers these later authors identified “being French” with an ability to read.\textsuperscript{547}


\textsuperscript{547} The autobiographies selected present an exceptional, largely bourgeois, experience since they are all from professional writers. Mark Traugott’s work on workers’ autobiographies provides additional information about child readers; however, these too are not representative sources since they highlight out of the ordinary relationships to books and reading by members of the working class. Nevertheless these workers’ autobiographies contain valuable information on access and attitudes to education and the transformative experiences of reading. See Traugott, ed. \textit{The French Worker: Autobiographies from the Early Industrial Era} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
My main texts are by Jules Vallès, Judith Gautier, Colette, and Pierre Loti. I use these four authors and their autobiographical writings to illuminate the connection between personal recollections of childhood reading and republican culture. Each of these individuals came of age during the nineteenth century and witnessed the début and consolidation of the French Third Republic in the 1880s. Born between 1832 and 1873, these authors all wrote their autobiographical accounts after age 40. Vallès published in 1879, Loti in 1890, Gautier in 1902, and Colette beginning in 1922. Therefore each viewed their childhood reading encounters in hindsight through the filter of the Second Empire’s demise and the national transition to the Third Republic. I intentionally selected both male and female writers in an effort to demonstrate that both boys and girls internalized this important aspect of republican acculturation. The authors discussed are not the best known, nor is this list exhaustive. Rather, I selected this sample chiefly in order to illustrate some commonalities running through nineteenth-century French children’s reading.

Many French children enjoyed and took advantage of leisure reading at home. These writers later remembered independent reading as positive and worthwhile; which serves to underscore the importance of children’s participation in the ever-expanding world of written knowledge. In their recollections, these child readers tended to recall, in surprising detail, the physical aspects of the books they read and their emotional responses to what they read in their youth.

The nineteenth century was a key moment in the French autobiographical tradition; the blossoming of the genre was the result of a general cultural emphasis on the individual and many

more authors engaged in the trend of writing autobiographies and somewhat fictionalized autobiographies than ever before.\textsuperscript{549} This rise can be considered one result of changing social and cultural expectations following the French Revolution in which traditional anchors such as rank and religion lost meaning. It also reflects an increasingly secular mindset which, along with the continued turbulence of nineteenth-century France and its political and industrial revolutions served to weaken even further accepted systems of collective identity. This constellation of factors introduced the need for more individualized self-definition which, when combined with the elements of expanding wealth and literacy, produced the widespread fashion of writing down and valorizing individual efforts regardless of class or gender.\textsuperscript{550} Furthermore, increased working-class political and economic power and literacy combined with a desire to capture rapidly disappearing elements of culture and tradition in an age of modernization. This literary shift provides insight into children’s culture and in particular their perception of the centrality of reading since latter nineteenth century authors referred to the process of becoming autonomous adults in new ways. In particular writers of autobiographies elevated seemingly ordinary and common childhood activities like reading to decisive, formative experiences on the path to maturity.

Writers introduced elements of fiction into their autobiographies as a means of attracting and increasing readers’ attention. They also incorporated detailed descriptions of common everyday acts in order to connect with their readers. Some “autobiographical” authors overtly

acknowledged this fictionalized aspect of their writing by giving their main character a different name whereas some even chose to title their autobiographies using the word “novel” [roman].551

In general, French autobiographical and semi-autobiographical accounts of the later 1800s are quite personal and emphasize key aspects of the authors’ daily lives as children: home, family and school. The subjects each author writes about reveal the key constituent elements of their childhoods. Jules Vallès’ table of contents from his novel, L’Enfant (1879) highlights the themes repeatedly presented in children’s literature: “My mother, Family, School, Town, Washing and Dressing, Vacation, Joys of Home Life, Brave folk, High School, Scrubbing-Gluttony-Cleanliness, and Money” [Ma mère, La famille, Le collège, La petite ville, La toilette, Vacances, Les joies du foyer, Braves gens, Le lycée, Frottage-Gourmandise-Propreté, et L’argent].552 Drawing on the common elements of childhood, each of these four autobiographers actively attempts to capture their own childhood experiences in detail while conveying to latter-day readers a sense of what their childhoods meant to them. The writers all refer to school life, to notable interactions with their parents and siblings, friends and acquaintances, to their remembered childhood thoughts, feelings and acts of rebellion, and to the activities of daily life such as cooking, cleaning, and playing. All writers mention the presence and reading of books as an essential part of their childhoods.

These autobiographical accounts notably lack certain aspects of children’s reading encounters one would expect. Curiously, my four chosen authors do not discuss how they learned to read, either at home or at school. The process of learning to read surely took place

551 Pierre Loti uses his birth name, Julien Viaud, in Le Roman d’un enfant, and Jules Vallès’ uses “Jacques Vingtras,” establishing his personal connection to his protagonist by using the same initials in L’Enfant. Other contemporary examples of this practice include François Arago’s The Novel of My Childhood [Histoire de ma jeunesse], Anatole France’s The Novel of My Friend [Le livre de mon ami], Juliette Adam’s The Romance of My Childhood and Youth [Le roman de mon enfance et de ma jeunesse], and Pierre Loti’s The Story of a Child [Le Roman d’un enfant]. For cultural background, see Lloyd, The Land of Lost Content, 41.

552 Vallès, L’Enfant, 381.
since they all include reflections on reading as children, but the actual activity of learning the
skill is never mentioned, described, or discussed. The authors also omit descriptions of reading
done in class, reading aloud, and for the most part books read as schoolwork. Equally, they tend
to leave out of their written recollections any detailed descriptions of their reading’s contents.
Rather, the authors time and again emphasize the memory of their emotional reactions in
childhood to what they read. On occasion they evoke the potential of these emotions to resurface
in adulthood, when their memory of a childhood reading experience is triggered. Finally, Vallès,
Gautier, Colette, and Loti never directly mention whether what they read as youngsters or a
childhood love of books led them to become authors as adults.

The authors under consideration, and many of their contemporaries, wrote about their
early reading experiences in their autobiographies, which leads to the question: What purpose
did the inclusion of such anecdotes serve in these literary self-representations? One fundamental
aim of autobiography is to establish a definition of the individual self with reference to one’s
personal past. In these autobiographies, the authors use their personal recollections of the
independent reading act to establish those moments in their personal childhoods when they first
became aware of their subjective individual identity and achieved a significant degree of
personal autonomy, a feeling of separateness from their parents in particular. For these
autobiographers, important understanding of themselves occurred through reading. They often
communicate an awareness of individual independence and (self) autonomy through their choice
of specific reading material, finding an isolated space in which to read or discovering a text with
which they personally identify.

Each of the authors drawn upon here makes reference to fictional works they recall
reading for pleasure. The rather striking mention of exact titles in their autobiographies reveals
that French children’s preferences and their tastes for particular reading material was decidedly varied. (For example Jules Vallès’ protagonist, Jacques Vingtras, reads Robinson Crusoe, Judith Gautier read Charles Nodier’s tales, Colette read Victor Hugo’s Les Misérables as well as tales by Charles Perrault, and Pierre Loti read at least one book from the “Bibliothèque Rose” series.) Children read fairy tales, classics, religious texts, adults’ books and school texts. They did not necessarily, or at least exclusively, read texts intended for them.

Jules Vallès (1832-1885) was born in rural France and died in Paris. Like the character Jacques Vingtras’ father in his work L'Enfant (1879) Vallès’ father taught middle school and possessed a dismal, strict character. Vallès’ mother was “narrow-minded and quick-tempered” [étroite d’esprit et coléreuse]. His parents consigned their only son to boarding schools in Saint-Etienne and Nantes. After high school, he moved to Paris to pursue his teaching studies, which he ultimately abandoned. In the capital city he worked in a variety of menial jobs that contributed to his increasingly revolutionary social beliefs. Jules became actively involved in the revolution of 1848 at the age of sixteen and many credit him with being one of the first to recognize seriously and advocate for children’s rights [Droits de l’enfant]. Three years later, in 1851, he joined a group of young revolutionaries who opposed Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. When the Empire fell in 1870, Vallès and his revolutionary-minded friends aimed to defend the Republic. They also worked to protect Paris from the advancing Prussian army. During this time Vallès founded his revolutionary newspaper, Le Cri du peuple (September 4, 1870). On March 26, 1871, revolutionaries declared the Paris Commune. Vallès actively participated in the Commune, and upon its failure the authorities sentenced him to death for his role in these violent anti-government activities. He fled to England, however, only to return to France following the

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amnesty of 1880. Upon his return, Vallès quickly resumed his publishing and journalistic activities; he revived his revolutionary journal and published a series of novels penned during his exile.

Among the works produced while living as an émigré across the English Channel, Vallès wrote a trilogy that featured his alter ego, protagonist Jacques Vingtras: L’Enfant (The Child), Le Bachelier (The Graduate), and L’Insurgé (The Insurgent). In particular, the semi-autobiographical novel of his childhood, L’Enfant, contributed to the evolution and development of the modern novel in France through Vallès’ social critique from a child’s perspective. By means of Jacques Vingtras, Vallès vividly recounts his own abusive childhood. The novel describes some of the harshest aspects of Vallès’ upbringing, his feelings of estrangement from his parents and his subsequent isolation.

Vallès wrote his story in the first person. This literary device allows the reader to identify with the author, the story’s protagonist, and his experiences. Vallès’ choice to write in the first person makes his novel informative to this study of ideas - and ideals - concerning childhood. Vallès’ approach reflects prevailing cultural ideas about children. French bourgeois society increasingly considered children as unique individuals with specific needs. Vallès decided to give the child protagonist the primary voice in this novel, an innovation that shows the author’s appreciation of the child’s own role and importance in his story. It literally places the child at the center.

Even prior to the start of the novel Vallès makes his sympathy for the inherent difficulties of childhood clear. The author’s brief dedication addresses his readers directly and demonstrates

554 In France, these publications came out several years apart after first appearing in serial form in popular periodicals: L’Enfant (Paris: Administration du journal La Lanterne, 1879), Le Bachelier (Paris: Charpentier, 1881), and L’Insurgé (Paris: Charpentier, 1886). L’Enfant and Le Bachelier were first published under the pseudonyms “La Chaussade” and “Jean La Rue,” respectively.
his recognition that the state of childhood, and its key institutions of family and school, is not necessarily a happy, innocent time. Vallès subtly acknowledges that other children, like him, have suffered at the hands of adults, especially teachers and parents. The tone of the dedication allows the reader to understand that the novel that follows is at least partially autobiographical. The author reveals that he too has personal knowledge of the events contained in the text.

TO ALL THOSE
who are bored to death in school
or
whose families have made them cry,
who, during their childhood,
were tyrannized by their teachers
or
beaten by their parents
I dedicate this book.

[À TOUS CEUX
qui crève d’ennui au collège
ou
qu’on fit pleurer dans leur famille,
qui, pendant leur enfance,
firent tyrannisés par leurs maîtres
ou
rossés par leurs parents
Je dédie ce livre.]

Vallès’ story line is simple. In L’Enfant, Jacques Vingtras is the son of two French peasants; his mother is a simple-minded homemaker and his father a teacher. Jacques’ parents think that an excellent education can insure social mobility, a prevailing contemporary belief. Jacques, however, resists his parents’ pressure and instead hopes to become a simple worker. He thus actively rejects the tyranny of school, those teachers who display a cruel nature and, perhaps not coincidentally, his father’s occupation and instructions. Young Jacques is physically and

555 Vallès, L’Enfant, 7.
psychologically abused by his parents as well as by some of his teachers. His parents’ philosophy is that learning occurs through negative reinforcement. Jacques consequently feels increasingly isolated and alone. By moving to Paris, Jacques finally finds satisfaction by engaging his revolutionary spirit and effectively escaping the oppression of his home life and his father’s failure to understand him.

L’Enfant is relevant on several levels. Vallès wrote first-hand of a “typical” French childhood, a contemporary account of a troubled, turbulent and abusive childhood that revealed how some children were, unfortunately, treated. Through his depiction of a clearly miserable upbringing, Vallès provided a vision shared by the French upper and middle classes of a desirable childhood. Vallès portrays childhood reading in mostly positive terms. The moments within L’Enfant that refer to the presence of books in the young protagonist’s life and the act of reading as a child make this book particularly pertinent. Books and reading provide moments of friendship, self discovery, distraction, pleasure, and a respite from Jacques’ largely unhappy existence as we will see.

Like young Jules Vallès, experiences related to books also filled Judith Gautier’s childhood. Judith Gautier (1845-1917) was born in Paris and died at seventy-two in Saint-Enogat in Brittany, near Dinan. She became a recognized writer in part due to her famous parents, the romantic novelist Théophile Gautier and her Italian-born mother, the singer Ernesta Grisi, and in part due to her own abilities as a writer. Gautier moved within the well-known Parisian intellectual circles of the day. She wrote novels, poems and essays. Gautier’s

556 Like Jacques Vingtras, Jules Vallès began school in the 1830s. Attending school then was neither free nor mandatory and those who did began around age six. Education became free and mandatory in 1881 as a result of the Ferry laws as discussed in Chapter Three.

557 The use of Paris as the city of dreams coming true was not uncommon in these novels. Paris often represented the city where one’s ambitions could be achieved, and anything could happen.

558 Through her parents, Judith came into contact with the singer Ernest Reyer, writers Paul de Saint-Victor and Ernest Feydeau, the photographer Nadar, the poets Banville, Gérard de Nerval and Charles Baudelaire, and the
autobiography, *Le Collier des jours: Souvenirs de Ma Vie*, was first published in 1902, and provides an intriguing source for understanding children’s reading.\(^5\)

Immediately after her birth, Judith’s parents placed her with a wet nurse [nourrice]. \(^6\) Throughout her life Judith considered her wet nurse “her real mother” [sa veritable mere]. While still a toddler, Judith went to live in her paternal grandfather’s home where she lived with him and her unmarried aunts for several years, seeing her parents only intermittently. Her parents sent her to a convent for schooling before she reintegrated into their home life in 1856 around age eleven. Upon returning to live with her birth family, Judith re-connected with her father, Théophile, who actively encouraged her interest in reading and writing.

Books, both reading them and writing them, remained central throughout Judith’s life. She makes this evident in the first several pages of her autobiography. Commenting on her earliest memories, the 57-year-old author reflects on the fact that these early memories seem written on a page.

These first lines, written on life’s blank page, seem to be written in big letters, with large spaces between the lines, that, subsequently, become increasingly close together and entangled.

\[Ces premières lignes, écrits sur la page blanche de la vie, m’apparaissent comme tracées en caractères plus gros, plus espacés, au-dessus des lignes, qui, par la suite, de plus en plus se serrent et s’enchevêtrent.\]^6

By suggesting that her early life resembled a blank page on which early incidents were inscribed recorded “in big letters,” Gautier places her personal story in the context of a literary creation and draws a parallel between life stories and the stories we read. The presence of the written

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59 Gautier, *Le Collier des jours*.

60 It was not uncommon during this period for bourgeois families to place their children with wet nurses [nourrices] for the first couple years of life.

word, of a literary organization, and of books, obviously marked Judith from a young age and continued to do so throughout her life. Her autobiography is full of anecdotes relating to her contacts with books. She recalls precise titles, the temptation of books that were inaccessible, various spaces consecrated to reading, and moments she considered privileged—reading either alone or with others.

Gautier’s autobiographical style in *Le Collier des Jours* is also worth mentioning. She wrote in the first person using the simple past tense. This technique allows the reader to appreciate young Judith’s experiences through her own personal reflections. Gautier uses phrases such as “I took away”, “I was”, “I had become”, “I suffered” [j’emportais, j’étais, je devenais, j’endurais] in order to convey to the reader her personal feelings from the perspective of hindsight. In addition, Gautier reconstructs the story of her childhood through anecdotal vignettes; she even includes reconstructed dialogues to draw the reader in to her tales of childhood. The result is an engaging text that is also easy to read.

Another girl reader who wrote of her youthful interactions with books was Sidonie Gabrielle Colette, later known as Colette. Colette (1873-1954) was a well-known writer and popular non-traditional figure of her day. She is probably best known in the Anglophone world for her novel *Gigi*, which became a popular play and film. Colette apparently had a relatively happy upbringing in the Burgundian countryside among her parents and siblings. She adored being out of doors and reveled in the nature around her—flowers, insects, trees, animals, fruits and vegetables—but also acknowledged the positive presence of books in her childhood environment. “A much-loved child of parents who were not rich, and who lived in the countryside in the middle of trees and books, who wasn’t familiar with nor did she wish for

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expensive toys: this is what I recall, leaning into my past this evening.” This lucid description of herself as a child reveals Colette’s appreciation of the variety in her environment, her childhood contentment and her attachment to nature and books.

Like other authors of the time, Colette seamlessly mixed fiction and autobiography in her novels. Most particularly in *Claudine à l’école* (1900), *La Maison de Claudine* (1922), and *Sido* (1929), she made the effort to convey to her readers the authenticity of childhood. In her writings, childhood represents an integral and substantial part of her identity. As a result, she wrote in great detail of the meaningful events of her childhood – both the mundane and the extraordinary.

Colette considered the presence of books an indication of the presence of children; she presented books as part of the “equipment” of childhood along with toys, rock collections and wildflower bouquets. As she writes in the opening chapter of *La Maison de Claudine*,

> It so happened that a book, open on the patio’s stones or on the grass, a jump rope winding in the alley way, or a pint-sized garden lined with rocks, planted with flower blooms, revealed days gone by – when this house and this garden sheltered a family – the presence of children, and their different ages. … The silence, the wind in the closed garden, the pages of the book brushed backward by the thumb of an invisible genie, everything seemed to be asking: “Where are the children?”

[Il arrivait qu’un livre, ouvert sur le dallage de la terrasse ou sur l’herbe, une corde à sauter serpentant dans une allée, ou un minuscule jardin bordé de cailloux, planté de têtes de fleurs, révélant autrefois – dans le temps où cette maison et ce jardin abritaient une famille – la présence des enfants, et leurs âges différents. … Le silence, le vent contenu du jardin clos, les pages du livre rebroussées sous le pouce invisible d’un sylphe, tout semblait demander: “Où sont les enfants?”]  

In this nostalgic passage about her childhood home, Colette effectively called to readers’ minds those physical elements that indicated the presence of children who occupied this space in the past – an abandoned book, a jump rope, a mini garden. Her description begins and ends with the

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564 Colette, *La Maison de Claudine*, 8.
mention of a book left behind, inciting the reader to connect the presence of children with their reading material.

Less idyllic than Colette’s texts about her childhood, Pierre Loti’s writings, in particular his novel Le Roman d’un enfant (1890), also provide insights into books’ prevalence in children’s lives. Pierre Loti (1850-1923) was born Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud and raised in Rochefort in the Charentaise. He grew up in a strict Protestant home where one of the books available for him to read was the Bible. He attended the naval academy and wrote over thirty novels. Loti wrote about his life and his travels, and most of his works, like many others of his era, mix fiction and autobiography. Although later in life, most publicly on the occasion of his acceptance to the Académie Française in 1892, Loti claimed that he did not read a great deal, his childhood experiences with books are very much in evidence in his work Le Roman d’un enfant, and his academic record reveals a level of success unlikely for a non-reader. Loti wrote Le Roman d’un enfant, a novel about his childhood, between 1888 and 1890, and Calmann-Lévy published it in May 1890.


Loti replaced Octave Feuillet in Chair 13. In his acceptance speech Loti insisted on his status as a non-reader in order to explain to the Académie Française that prior to his election he did not know Feuillet’s writing well. He also wanted to appear humble and to highlight his image as a solitary writer. Loti stated, “It’s an established fact, I never read.” [C’est un fait acquis, que je ne lis jamais.] Pierre Loti, Discours de réception de Pierre Loti: Scéance de l’Académie française du 7 avril 1892 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1892), 6. Loti had also laid claim to his status as a non-reader in Chapter XII of Le Roman d’un enfant, “Now this is a source of distress the result of what someone once read to me. (I myself never read and disregarded many books.)” [Ceci maintenant est une angoisse causée par une lecture qu’on m’avait faite. (Je ne lisais jamais moi-même et dédaignais beaucoup les livres.)] Loti, 77. However, Loti’s insistence on not being a reader is contradicted by the fact that as a student he received several academic awards in Latin and Greek, history, geography, math, and geometry. See J.N. Rochefort, “Julien Viaud, Élève du Collège de Rochefort,” Revue Pierre Loti 28 (October-December 1986): 88. In addition in Le Roman d’un enfant Loti made a claim that would be impossible without reading. He stated that he had “…a satisfactory average, and always, at the end of the year an award.” […]une moyenne acceptable, avec toujours, à la fin de l’année les prix de version.] Loti, 187.

Loti’s fictionalized autobiography, again in the form of a novel, relates the story of a young boy named Julien Viaud (Loti’s birthname) who starts middle school [collège] in 1862. The story follows young Julien through his move to Paris in 1866 to study at the lycée Napoléon in order to prepare for his entry tests for the École navale. In July 1867, Julien is accepted to the Naval academy. The novel ends when the protagonist is fourteen-and-a-half years old.

According to Loti literary scholars, what Loti read – especially as a child but also later in life – had a significant impact on what he wrote. The fact that what Loti read as a child appeared repeatedly in his subsequent adult writings is an indication that reading marked children’s spirits. Loti’s childhood reading inspired him to set sail (literally) to see for himself those places he read about. Several events in Loti’s life, perhaps mostly the books he read as a child, led him to become a sailor and an author. In contrast, the reading and writing assignments given at school failed to motivate Loti. Rather, it was his life beyond the school’s walls and his leisure reading – most notably what he read at home – that moved him.

Each of these authors – Jules Vallès, Judith Gautier, Colette and Pierre Loti – lived and wrote in their own creative and unique ways about their childhoods in attempts both to understand and explain who they had become as adults. Significantly, their accounts contain countless references to books and reading. The authors all mention schoolbooks and leisure reading material as consequential for their childhoods in order to communicate their participation as members of the emerging world of literate children.

Close readings of these authors’ works reveal commonalities with respect to how these adult writers portrayed their childhood reading. All four writers, for example, tend to emphasize leisure reading done at home rather than what they read for school, an emphasis on the physical

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568 Bruno Vercier, “Preface,” Le Roman d’un enfant, 35. See also Alain Buisine, Tombeau de Loti (Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1988). Buisine’s work is a literary approach to the link between Loti’s life experiences and his writings.
attributes of the books, and the strongly positive emotional connections to reading and the world of books.

Individual reading that took place at home makes up the majority of reading anecdotes mentioned by these writers. This common topos underscores the existence of a contemporary belief in the necessity of home-based reading in the development of a child’s personality. As a result of this prevailing belief editors, authors, publishers and educators went to great lengths to assure the availability of their publications to children at home, an environment, we learned in Chapter Four above, in which they believed their young readers more susceptible to moral messages.

The physical presence of many books in her family’s home marked Colette’s childhood memory since she later described a particular room of the house as being built out of books. “I only have to close my eyes in order to see, even after so many years, this room built out of books.” [Je n’ai qu’à fermer les yeux pour revoir, après tant d’années, cette pièce maçonnée de livres.]569 In La Maison de Claudine Colette includes an entire chapter titled, “Ma mère et les livres.” [My mother and books.] She opens the chapter with a brief description of the family library:

The lamp, from the upper opening of the shade, lit up an inner wall ribbed with hard-bound book bindings. The opposite wall was yellow, a dirty yellow from the soft-bound books, read, re-read, raggedy. Some “translated from English” – one franc twenty-five – accentuated the red of the bottom shelf.


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569 Colette, “Ma mère et les livres,” La Maison de Claudine, 54.
570 Ibid., 53.
Colette’s description emphasizes not only the physical presence of books in her family home – their color, texture and condition – but also that family members repeatedly read the volumes she mentions. For Colette, the fact that her family read seems to outweigh the importance of particular titles and even the books’ contents.

On occasion in her autobiographical writings, Colette does cite particular titles that were part of her family’s home collection. She most often makes reference to adult reading material and all of them classics: Musset, Voltaire, Littré, Camille Flammarion, Balzac, and even Shakespeare. Colette specifically mentions the books she read as a child – Labiche, Daudet, Mérimée, and Dumas. She talks about reading Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* as a child. She also comments that although she read Charles Perrault’s tales as a child, and tried to feel charmed by the threads of the stories told, the dramatic, intricate illustrations by Gustave Doré interested her more than Perrault’s text. As the following quote from one of Colette’s autobiographical texts suggests, although she read them, she did not identify strongly with children’s books. “As for a taste for children’s books, there was never any question.” *[De livres enfantins, il n’en fut jamais question.]*

Colette expands on the presence of books and reading in her childhood environment in her novel about her mother, *Sido* (1929). In *Sido*, Colette describes a unique reading game played by her two brothers. During the time described, she is only eight years old but the boys are fourteen and seventeen. Throughout the novel she refers to her brothers as “the savages” [*les sauvages*], casting them as rowdy children in the process of slowly becoming adults. The children’s beloved mother, Sido, regularly sanctioned this joyful state of uninhibited childhood as Colette’s brothers often teased and refused to include young Colette in their games.

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571 Colette most certainly read the famous illustrated edition of Charles Perrault’s fairy tales published by Hetzel in 1861.
572 Colette, “Ma mère et les livres,” *La Maison de Claudine*, 55.
Colette describes her two adolescent brothers as voracious readers likely to be found reading at any moment day or night in any variety of isolated and dangerous places from up in trees to a rooftop ridge.

The two savages read like teenagers of fourteen and seventeen years old did in the old days, that is to say with excess, to the point of distraction, day, night, from treetops, in the hayloft….  

Here again Colette does not mention the titles the boys read. What is also important, they had a real hunger to read. Authors describing children’s reading habits often categorize it as an insatiable need.  

Colette describes the game the two boys played, a sort of contest with the books they read. As young teenagers who did not want to admit any attraction to the opposite sex, the boys agreed that books had a “cute” factor. They came up with the idea that each would pay a fine into a common fund any time the word “cute” \textit{[mignonne]} appeared in their reading. “They had banned the word ‘cute,’ they pronounced it ‘cuuute,’ while making an awful twisted grimace, which was followed by pretending to throw up.” \textit{[(Ils) avaient frappé d’interdit le mot ‘mignonne,’ qu’ils prononçaient ‘minionne,’ avec une affreuse grimace tordue, suivie d’une imitation de nausée.]} If they read a book that contained the word, they had to contribute two “cents” \textit{[sous]} each time. Those books that did not include “cute” at all – such as historical accounts, Dickens, or strict non-fiction – earned ten cents from the fund. The detailed description of her brothers’ playful reading game indicates that Colette’s home environment

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574 “The child who likes to read, more or less has a taste for certain works, but he reads everything he is given to read, a bit like someone who has fasted too long devours all the food he is given.” \textit{[L’enfant qui aime lire, goûte plus ou moins certains ouvrages, mais il lit tout ce qu’on lui donne à lire, un peu comme celui qui a jeûné longtemps dévore tous les aliments qu’on lui présente.] } See Latzarus, \textit{La Littérature Enfantine en France}, 12.
exposed her and her siblings to a wide variety of reading material – present in the home and read by the children.

Judith Gautier encountered books at both of her childhood residences’ – her paternal grandfather’s house and later her father’s. During summer vacations throughout her time at the convent, Gautier would go to her paternal grandfather’s home. She vividly describes one summer during which she read several books. In addition to Goethe’s *Werther*, she read Charles Nodier’s *Contes*, and Guillaume de Loris’ *Le Roman de la Rose*. After her first year at the convent, it pleased her aunts and grandfather to see her during the summer. They found that she had become calm and serious. This is an important period in Judith’s lifetime of reading, and she dedicates all of chapter XLIX (49) to her reading adventures. Judith is approximately eight-years-old, and she herself noticed and reflected on this change, this new sense of calm in herself. In Judith’s memory, a deeper interest in and appreciation of books accompanied her newfound maturity. “Wiser, less full of childishness, I now stayed at home more willingly, I was even able to hold still in the company of a book.” [Plus réfléchie, moins enragée de gaminage, je restais maintenant plus volontiers à la maison, j’étais même capable de m’immobiliser en compagnie d’un livre.]576 Judith links her development into a mature individual with an increased ability to participate seriously in the “adult” world of reading.

During this summer of reading at her grandfather’s house Judith read Nodier’s *Contes* (1846), illustrated by Tony Johannot, in its entirety. One of the stories set in a convent particularly intrigued Judith.

I read from cover to cover, for example Charles Nodier’s *Contes*, ..., and one of the tales in particular, perhaps because it took place in a convent, made a profound impression on me. It was the one entitled “La Sacristine”: a nun, so pious that the Virgin Mary had given her this miraculous gift: to heal the sick with her touch. A wounded man, saved by her in this way, becomes obsessed with the young nun and seduces her, he wants to run

away with her, and in tears, she leaves the altar of the Virgin Mary, that she had always served with such devotion, steals away from the sick, flees the convent. (…) This delectable tale, that Nodier had taken from the golden legend, remained so clear in my memory, that even without ever having re-read it, I was able to, a few years ago, take it up as a theme for an opera booklet…. 577

Surely this tale appealed to young Judith in part because she could identify with the convent setting. In addition, the writer takes the time to summarize the story for her readers as the result of its meaningfulness to her. She goes on to mention that it made such an impression on her memory that even having read it only once as an adult she wrote an opera based on the story’s theme. Besides demonstrating that Judith Gautier’s essential reading experiences took place at home, the anecdote illustrates that Nodier’s Contes was generally available at the time and appealed to child readers. Children, in other words, read particular books and stories and what they read stayed in their minds.

Judith’s life also included books once she returned to her father’s house around age eleven. In her description of this return to her parents’ domicile, Judith notably writes, in the middle of her explanation of what she found to do at their home, on a line apart, “And then, there were the books.” [Et puis, il y avait les livres.]

Her accentuation of the presence of books at her parents’ house serves as a point of continuity in her disrupted girlhood. The writer’s conceptualization of books as a cherished and a leisurely pastime conveys the central importance that books held for her and the increased sense of self-directed reading allowed at her father’s.

577 Ibid., 160-61.
578 Ibid., 187.
In contrast to her grandfather’s locked book cabinet, all of her father’s books remained accessible to Judith in her youth. She thus began to read regularly from her father’s library. In chapter LIX (59) she explains her choice of Stendhal’s celebrated novel *Le Rouge et le Noir*. 

One day, however, after having thought about the titles for a long time, I grabbed a volume: it was *The Red and the Black* by Stendhal. I had not chosen it at random, the title seemed to me to herald the story of two little devils, one red and the other black, and this promised to be entertaining. I was a bit disappointed by the first couple of chapters, but, not to be dissuaded, I pursued my reading, not enthusiastically, but without being bored.

Judith’s description of her book choice reveals that as a young reader she sought out titles that would entertain her, titles that indicated a story filled with tension and action. The Stendhal classic was obviously a bit adult for eleven-year-old Judith and it ultimately failed to captivate her, although she continued to read it. She here expresses her attitude to reading as a form of perseverance; a desire to finish what she started even if it failed to capture her imagination.

Eventually, an adult in the household makes Judith trade in her Stendhal for the more appropriate fairy tale *La Fée aux Roses*. Although the fairy tale successfully replaced the Stendhal, in the author’s memory *Le Rouge et le Noir* left more of a trace. “They kept trying to make me swap this book, too weighty for me, they said, for another entitled: *La Fée aux Roses*; which to me seemed much more entertaining, but nevertheless left fewer marks on my memory.”

Children’s reading preferences obviously varied and sometimes books intended for them made little impact while books of their own choosing – perhaps in part because of the sophisticated nature of these texts – tended to remain more memorable.

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579 Judith Gautier explains in some detail that her father believed books should be available and therefore left his book cabinet unlocked on purpose. Ibid.
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid., 188.
In this same chapter LIX (59), Judith also comments in passing about the reading habits of the rest of the family household. Even the family’s maid, Marianne, was passionate about reading; Marianne would sometimes ask Judith to read aloud to her while she sewed. In addition, Judith and her sister Estelle set aside Sunday evenings for reading. “But it was on Sunday, that we drew out the evening longer than was reasonable, in order to read.” [Mais c’était le dimanche, que nous prolongions, pour lire, la soirée plus qu’il ne fallait.]582 Judith, Estelle and the maid made Sundays special since the girls’ parents went to dinner at a friend’s. On Sunday nights, left alone with Marianne, the girls benefited from the time their maid allowed them to stay up late and read together.

Marianne made some surprise beignets for us and, as soon as dinner was finished, went to get a book. She was the one who chose it. George Sand’s novels were her favorites; they touched her profoundly. Valentine above all made her shed many tears. And thus, in order to please this kind and overly-romantic Alsatian, I read early on, all the works of this great French lady.583

This charming vignette is revealing. Judith privileged these special moments during the week dedicated to reading. They became a kind of ritual; Marianne made beignets and chose the book. Part of their routine as a family included setting aside time to read together. The intimate group preferred books that touched their emotions. George Sand, a decidedly popular contemporary novelist, was one such emotional choice. Providing further evidence of the writer’s desire to connect herself to a world of literacy and literature, Judith tells us that these prized reading sessions served to introduce her to a great author’s body of work, which she then eventually read in its entirety. Importantly, Judith remembers her childhood reading taking place at home among her family.

582 Ibid., 188-89.
583 Ibid.
Pierre Loti’s meaningful reading experiences also took place at home. In Loti’s case, he remembered reading a book assigned for school at home. In a passage from Loti’s “Little Notebook” [*Petit Cahier*], the author refers to a pink-covered book that he read as a child leaving little doubt that this book belonged to Hachette’s “Bibliothèque Rose” collection. “I brought home that evening a little book with a new pink cover, a literary collection that my teacher had just made me buy and from which I had a long lesson to learn for Friday.” [*J’apportais ce soir-là un petit livre à couverture rose tout neuf, un recueil de littérature que mon professeur venait de me faire acheter et dans lequel j’avais une longue leçon à apprendre pour le vendredi.*]584

Loti read this particular book with his sister during a stormy night when the two children stayed at home alone and it left a lasting impression on him. He claims not to remember what they read but vividly recalls the feelings of fear and anxiety that overcame him during the storm and the subsequent displacement of these feelings onto the book itself.

Since that time I’ve grown up, I’ve experienced many different kinds of powerful emotions, but who can tell me why I cannot think about it without a vague sense of terror, without darkness, why I still have a sense of curious reverence for this little pink covered book, why it always made me scared as if it had been in contact with a supernatural being, why did I avoid getting near it when it was dark and keep it in my room at night?

Poor little book, the only tangible witness that remained of that night, I did not keep it long. One evening, in Limoise, I found it soaking wet, disgracefully buried in the mud, a large red slug had even climbed on top. I made a hole in the ground and I buried it in the middle of the asparagus. I felt relief mixed with pain to no longer have it in my possession.

[Depuis ce temps-là j’ai grandi, j’ai passé par de vives emotions de différentes sortes, mais qui m’expliquera pourquoi je ne peux pas y penser sans une vague terreur, sans l’obscurité, pourquoi ai-je conservé un culte pour ce petit livre à couverture rose, pourquoi m’a-t-il toujours causé quelque crainte comme s’il avait reçu le contact d’un être surnaturel, pourquoi ai-je évité de m’en approcher quand il faisait noir et de le garder la nuit dans ma chambre?]

584 Pierre Loti’s childhood diaries are part of a private collection and were not available to me for direct consultation. Robert Guéneau published full transcriptions as a series of articles in *Cahiers Pierre Loti*. The excerpt cited here dates from either 1866 or 1867. See Robert Guéneau, “Un petit cahier mystérieux (III),” *Cahiers Pierre Loti* 25 (December 1958): 21.
Pauvre petit livre, seul témoin palpable qui me restait de cette soirée, je ne devais pas le garder longtemps. Un soir, à La Limoise, je le trouvai détrempé, honteusement enfoui dans la boue, une grosse loche rouge avait même grimpé dessus. J’ai fait un trou dans la terre et je l’ai enterré au milieu du carré des asperges. J’ai éprouvé un soulagement mêlé de peine de ne plus l’avoir en ma possession.]

Thus, Loti’s powerful recollection of his negative experience of the storm became directly linked with the reading material he had at home. This passage also indicates that Loti had a profound attachment to his books, even taking the time to give one a proper burial! He collected and precious kept books and other keepsakes from his childhood.

These author’s writings combine memories of books read as children at home with more general recollections about books during their childhoods. Each author mentions in detail the physical aspects of the presence of books in their childhoods. They describe the number, colors, appearance, feel and even odor of the volumes they encountered.

In addition to her description cited above of a room at home that seemed made out of books, Colette recalls the physical presence of books in her environment even before she was old enough to read. She charmingly describes how she used large books as a hiding place. “There was a time when, before knowing how to read, I wedged myself into a ball between two Larousse volumes like a dog in a kennel.” [Il y eut un temps où, avant de savoir lire, je me logeais en boule entre deux tomes du Larousse comme un chien dans sa niche.] In this passage Colette successfully communicates the important presence of books in her childhood space. Even before she read them, books had meaning for young Colette. She considered books

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585 Ibid. Loti also mentions a lost book forgotten in the garden in Chapter XXXIX of Le Roman d’un enfant, 153-55.
587 Colette, “Ma mère et les livres,” La Maison de Claudine, 54.
not only as a source of reading pleasure but also as physical objects that could become a source of activity, of play.

Colette mentions reading several works of history and remembers feeling quite taken with them, especially with their beauty as objects. “Oh how I liked this Guizot, adorned in green and gold, having never been re-opened! And the uncorrupted [V]oyage d’Anarcharsis! If Histoire du Consulat et de l’Empire washed up one day on the river banks, I bet there would be a sign that proudly stated it was ‘just like new’” [Que j’aimai ce Guizot, de vert et d’or paré, jamais déclos! Et ce Voyage d’Anacharsis inviolé! Si l’Histoire du Consulat et de l’Empire échoua un jour sur les quais, je gage qu’une pancarte mentionna fièrement son ‘état de neuf’…] The works Colette mentions give us further insight into the books available to young readers and which might attract them due to their physical appearance.

Colette acknowledges that she did not read a great deal but that she read some books more than once. Her written recollections indicate that the physical presence of books allowed her as a child to create a meaningful isolated space. She comments on their smell, the letters of the titles and the leather covers.

Books, books, books…. It’s not that I read a lot. I read and re-read the same ones. But they were all essential for me. Their presence, their smell, the letters of their titles and the texture of their leather…. The most obscure, weren’t they my most treasured?

[Des livres, des livres, des livres…. Ce n’est pas que je lusse beaucoup. Je lisais et relisais les mêmes. Mais tous m’étaient nécessaires. Leur présence, leur odeur, les lettres de leurs titres et le grain de leur cuir… Les plus hermétiques ne m’étaient-ils pas les plus chers?]589

As for Jules Vallès, his protagonist Jacques becomes increasingly aware and appreciative of books once he begins school at age ten. His experiences at school exposed him to more and

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588 Ibid., 56-57. Colette most probably read Guizot’s historical texts such as Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe (1828) or Essai sur l’histoire de France (1836).
589 Ibid.
more books, to his delight. In reference to a book written by the middle school’s principal, Jacques states,

\[
\text{I devoured \textit{Les Vacances d’Oscar}.}
\]

\[
\text{I can still see the green cardboard cover, a marbled green which turned white under the fingers and stained the hands, with its spine of white calf-skin, which opened only with difficulty, printed on inexpensive paper. And well, pages fell from this poor book, and in my memory, a sense of freshness falls each time that I think about it!}
\]

[J’ai dévoré \textit{Les Vacances d’Oscar}.

Je vois encore le volume cartonné de vert, d’un vert marbré qui blanchissait sous le pouce et poissait les mains, avec un dos de peau blanche, s’ouvrant mal, imprimé sur papier à chandelle. Eh bien, il tombe de ces pages, de ce malheureux livre, dans mon souvenir, il tombe une impression de fraîcheur chaque fois que j’y songe! 590]

As this passage indicates, the author emphasized Jacques taking pleasure in the qualities of the book as a physical object. The author retained in his memory the material nature of the book and conveys this to his reader through the recollections of his principal character. Vallès’ communicates the working of memory by conveying the emotional and physical feeling of “freshness” [\textit{fraîcheur}] elicited by the book’s presence, which remained prominent in the young reader’s mind.

Recollections of creating a private, unique physical space in which to read reinforces the centrality of the imaginary space created by reading a particular book. Colette’s imagery of hiding between two large volumes is charming. Pierre Loti recalls reading \textit{Télémaque} in the isolated spaces of his small uncle’s garden and attic. The two spaces were physically different: the attic dimly lit and dusty, the garden spacious and silent. However, these spaces shared the qualities of security, seclusion and a personal retreat.

The authors of these literary autobiographies also positively portray the act of childhood reading as establishing strong emotional connections to the prevailing world of books, of literacy. Each author accomplished transmitting the idea of their positive connections with

\footnote{Vallès, \textit{L’Enfant}, 37.}
books in singular ways. The inclusion of these positive encounters serves to underscore these authors’ acknowledgement that they grew up in an era during which access to written sources, whether knowledge-based information or fictionalized works for entertainment, was increasingly considered common, shared and valuable cultural currency. Individual anecdotes allowed these authors to use childhood reading as a means to convey their recognition of and active participation in this burgeoning culture of literacy.

Through an endearing description of herself as a child attempting to teach a young neighbor girl to read, Judith Gautier, evokes and acknowledges the importance of reading and the desirability of participating in the “world of readers.” In reflecting on her childhood, Judith recounts that she recalls learning to read and how she felt this skill vital to have since she remembers taking it upon herself to teach her neighbor and friend, Nini. “The following spring, I thought I knew how to read, since I had undertaken to impart my discipline to another.” [Au printemps suivant, je croyais savoir lire, car j’avais entrepris de transmettre ma science à un autre.] With the choice of the word “discipline” the author suggests that young Judith considered the ability to read, the act of reading, as a science. While perhaps a sign of the predominance of contemporary science’s importance, Judith’s choice of the word “discipline” may also indicate that she perceived the ability to read as serious and valuable. The method young Judith employed to teach her neighbor to read, however, did not achieve the desired goal. In fact, Judith’s technique dissuaded Nini.

My student, or rather my victim, was of course Nini. I teased her about being such a big girl and knowing nothing. She wasn’t embarrassed, but didn’t refuse to go along with the lesson. We settled ourselves into the doorway, …; I opened my spelling book, and the lesson began. It didn’t last long and finished badly. My teaching method was not very good, so it seems. With an authoritative finger I pointed to a line in the book, and I said: “read.” Nini remained silent. On the third command, since she still wasn’t reading, I slapped her. So, she started to wail and dissolved into tears. Her

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591 Gautier, Le Collier des Jours, 58.
mother came out, grabbed her by the arm, and, slapping her anew, made her go home, while at the same time one of the aunts came down, to find out what had happened.

“She doesn’t want to read,” I explained with disdainful pity, while being forced up the stairs.

Indeed, poor Nini never did learn to read.


- Elle ne vaut pas lire, expliquai-je avec une pitié dédaigneuse, pendant qu’on me faisait remonter l’escalier.

En effet, la pauvre Nini ne sut jamais lire.]\(^{592}\)

Young Judith considered the ability to read important enough to oblige her neighbor – using force if necessary! – to learn. The author’s reference to the idea that she attempted to shame her friend into learning to read provides further evidence that the prevailing culture deemed this ability as desirable and the chief route to contemporary knowledge. In young Judith’s mind, it was embarrassing to be illiterate; she perceived reading as a shared cultural and social experience and expectation.

Judith gradually learns to appreciate her ability to read and several passages provide insight into what she read. “As with all children, I had stories read to me and I began to enjoy reading them myself.” [Comme à tous les enfants, on me racontait des histoires et je commençais à prendre plaisir à en lire moi-même.]\(^{593}\) Once again, in this passage, the author’s wording indicates how vital reading and its enjoyment were to her. Gautier’s use of the phrase,

\(^{592}\) Ibid., 58-59.

\(^{593}\) Ibid., 74.
“As with all children” [Comme à tous les enfants] presents this childhood activity as one she shared with other children.

These authors also employ references to reading as children to demonstrate the importance of the prevailing literary culture. Jules Vallès’ description of his protagonist’s learning to understand a punishment at the hands of his mother revolves around a book. In Vallès’ novel, as a boy of about five, Jacques Vingtras is unfairly blamed for an accident his father suffered. The man accidentally cut his hand while carving a toy wagon for his son. In response to what she perceives as the boy’s misbehavior, Jacques’ mother shows him in a book where it says that he must obey his parents. “They teach me to read in a book where it says, in big letters, that you have to obey your father and mother. My mother is quite right to beat me.” [On me fait apprendre à lire dans un livre où il y a écrit, en grosses lettres, qu’il faut obéir à ses père et mère: ma mère a bien fait de me battre.]594 Vallès’ description of the relevant passage leaves little doubt that the book shown to young Jacques is the Bible.

Vallès’ use of an item written in a book as an authoritative source for a young boy – probably too young to read the text himself – to understand his punishment provides further evidence of these authors’ desire to place their childhoods within the context of literary culture. Vallès also refers to the desire to participate in this shared literary culture in Chapter 11, “High School” [Le lycée].

In this chapter Jacques Vingtras’ love affair with the written word is quite evolved. Vallès describes in great detail his protagonist’s infatuation with illustrations, texts, bookbindings and all other related aspects of reading material. Jacques’ thirst for outside reading material is so acute that he even makes a deal with one of his classmates who owns a lot of books

in order to gain access to them. In exchange for the right to read these books, Jacques agrees to use his influence with his father, a teacher, to get his friend out of detention from time to time.

For this price, I had the books— all that he himself had; – he received a lot of money from his family, and could even pay to keep up the frogs behind the dictionaries. I could have had the frogs too – he offered them to me – but if I could dishonor my father's name in order to be able to read, as a result of my passion for travel and adventures, and since I couldn't resist such a temptation, I promised myself I'd resist all others, and I never touched a frog’s tail, take my word for it! I wouldn’t make half promises.595

Thus, Jacques considered the desire to read and having books available as worthwhile – worth lying and dishonoring the family name. Jacques cannot restrain himself; his need to participate in the world of reading is simply too great.

These authors also have in common an essential attraction to the world of reading. The reasons for this vary but they share a strongly emotional childhood reading event. These early encounters with books and the exciting feelings that accompanied them are for the most part positive with long-lasting effects. What these individuals read is not as noteworthy as the emotional charge it gave them. Reading usually took place in solitude and the young reader usually found him or herself fully engrossed.

For Vallès’ Jacques Vingtras, this foundational reading incident takes place in high school. Due to his misbehavior, one day Jacques finds himself sent to detention. Locked in an empty and unused classroom, alone, surrounded by dirty walls, an old blackboard, and a yellowed map, he is pleased to find a book tucked away in a crevice!

In a cranny, a book. I can see the spine and tear my nails as I try to pull it out. At last, using the ruler and breaking a desk in the process, I manage to do it. I hold the volume and look at the title:  

ROBINSON CRUSOE

It’s night.  
I suddenly realize that it’s dark. How many hours have I spent in that book?  
What’s the time?

595 Ibid., 121.
I don’t know. But let’s see if I can still read. I rub my eyes, I stretch my gaze, the letters fade away, the lines mingle together, I can still seize the edge of a word, but then nothing more.

My neck’s stiff, my shoulders ache, my chest feels hollow. I have been crouched over, reading chapter after chapter without raising my head, without hearing anything, devoured by curiosity, glued to Robinson’s side, seized by an immense emotion, shaken to the very depths of my brain and to the bottom of my heart. And in the moment when the moon showed the tip of its curve, I was sending across the sky all the birds of the island, and I saw before my eyes the long head of a poplar tree looking just like the mast of Crusoe’s ship! 596

Vallès obviously had a sense of the engrossing nature of books for children. He also effectively conveys the ability books have to transport readers to another time and place – mentally and emotionally. It is surely not coincidental that the book Vallès’ young hero stumbling upon in his time of punishment is exactly the book – the *only* book – Rousseau considered worthwhile reading for children – and necessary for their education – Robinson Crusoé and that Jacques works hard physically to access the text.

Jacques Vingtras’ discovery of Robinson Crusoé changes him forever. He no longer feels alone in the world but rather finds never-ending company in his friends Crusoe and Friday.

I shook all day long. But I was no longer alone: I had Crusoe and Friday as friends. From that moment on, there existed (there would now be) a bright spot in my imagination, in my life’s story as a battered child the poetry of dreams, and my heart set sail for those countries (places) where one suffers, where one works, but where one is free.

How many times I read and re-read that Robinson! 597

As a result of this consequential reading experience, Vingtras no longer feels isolated and lonely but rather part of a larger world complete with positive emotional connections gained through his own efforts via the act of reading.

Pierre Loti recalls reading at his uncle’s home during school vacations. In particular, he remembers reading a schoolbook, but he read it in the home environment and felt as taken with it

597 Ibid., 118-19.
as with any other book chosen for leisure reading. Loti describes the isolated space where his reading took place in detail convincingly portraying the intimacy of the relationship between book, space and reader.

The only task required of me during my vacation was that I should read from Fénélon’s Télémaque (my education, you see, was a little out of date). … Strangely enough, it did not bore me too much. …

Every day, in order to read, I hid myself from the Peyrals, either in my uncle’s garden or in the attic of his house, my two favorite hiding-places.

This attic, under the high Louis XIII roof, extended the full length of the house. The shutters of the place were seldom opened, and there was here, as a result, almost perpetual twilight. The old things, belonging to a by-gone century, lying there under the dust and cobwebs attracted me from the first day; and, little by little, the habit of sneaking up there with my Télémaque had grown on me. I usually stole up after the noon dinner, secure in the thought that no one would dream of looking for me there. … [T]hen I climbed out on the roof, and with elbows resting upon the sun-warmed old slate tiles overgrown with golden mosses, I began to read.\footnote{Loti, \textit{Le Roman d’un enfant}, 166-67. English translation adapted from Pierre Loti, \textit{The Story of a Child}, Caroline F. Smith, trans. (Boston: C.C. Birchard & Co., 1901), 180-81.}

Loti uses detail effectively in his description to transport his reader to the physical spaces where his protagonist Julien Viaud read, just as Julien’s reading transported him. In addition, Loti’s description reveals a possessive aspect of Julien’s connection to his reading material. Télémaque is referred to as “my Télémaque” indicating the boy’s personal identification with the book.

Sometimes Loti read in his uncle’s garden, a walled and closed space with a door that he could double lock.

My uncle’s garden, my other place of retreat, was not attached to the house: it was, like all the other village gardens, situated outside the town walls. It was surrounded by very high walls, and one entered it through an old arched gate that was unlocked with an enormous key. On certain days, armed with my Telemaque and my butterfly-net, I isolated myself there. (…) The charm of this old orchard lay in the feeling it gave one of being greatly secluded, of being absolutely alone in a wilderness of space and silence.
ronde que fermait une énorme clef. À certains jours, j’allais m’isoler là, emportant Télémaque et ma papillonnette.

(…)
Le charme de ce vieux verger était de s’y sentir enclos, enfermé à double tour, absolument seul dans beaucoup d’espace et de silence.)

As with his attic reading space, Loti found his uncle’s garden an oasis of solitude. In referring to this special place in his autobiography, Loti characterizes it as a large and silent space to which he could escape and create an absorbing moment with his reading.

Judith Gautier’s most emotionally engrossing reading experience came after a memorable and book-filled summer vacation at her grandfather’s. In the fall Judith returned to the convent and her established routine of daily life resumed. Back at school she became interested in a school textbook, Connaissances utiles, which she read at once in its entirety rather than moving routinely from one lesson to the next, as recommended by the school’s curriculum.

I was crazy about a little school book, its binding the color of fresh butter, entitled: Connaissances utiles, which included information about geology, astronomy and physics. Instead of learning the assigned lesson, I read it immediately, from cover to cover and then re-read it, and soon I knew it by heart. I would have liked a bigger one and with more detail, but it wasn’t the right time, I was told, and I was wasting my time by not learning mathematics and geography, subjects that made me sick.

[Je m’étais passionnée pour un petit livre de classe, cartonné en beurre frais intitulé: Connaissances utiles, qui contenait des éléments de géologie, d’astronomie et de physique. Au lieu d’apprendre la leçon donnée, je l’avais lu, tout de suite, d’un bout à l’autre puis relu, et bientôt su par cœur. J’en aurais voulu un gros et plus détaillé, mais ce n’était pas le moment, me répondit-on, et je dus perdre mon temps à ne pas apprendre le calcul et la géographie, que j’avais spécialement en grippe.]

As with other young reader’s descriptions, Judith mentions the physical characteristic of the book’s color. She expressed her desire for more reading material by stating that she would have liked a larger volume, an additional example of children’s desire to read.

599 Ibid., 167-68.
600 Gautier, Le Collier des Jours, 170.
Unlike Vingtras’ experience reading Robinson Crusoe, highly emotional due to his identification with the story’s characters and circumstances, a particular book attracted Judith Gautier because it taught her about the physical environment around her. Judith found it irresistible to try to understand those elements and aspects that made up her personal world. Colette, quite similarly, recognized and appreciated what the books she read taught her. Colette directly expressed her participation in the world of reading by describing how the written word allowed her access to knowledge.

The books Colette read as a child taught her about a variety of subjects. She writes of the pedagogical role played by books she read for leisure. “Labiche and Daudet insinuated themselves, early on in my happy childhood, patronizing teachers playing with a frequent student.” [Labiche et Daudet se sont insinués, tôt dans mon enfance heureuse, maîtres condescendants qui jouent avec un élève familier.]601 As contemporary authors and editors intended, books read at home served to educate this young reader.

The books he read as a child more than profoundly affected Pierre Loti; they also inspired him. Loti mentions the popular comic album Monsieur Cryptogame602 by the Swiss writer Töpffer (1799-1846) several times in Le Roman d’un enfant and the author even goes so far as to name Töpffer “the only true poet for school children” [le seul véritable poète des écoliers.].603 Young Loti, around age fourteen, and his sister Marie, wrote and illustrated a short story in imitation of Töpffer’s style, Aventures de Mr. Pygmalion Piquemouche et de Mlle Clorindon sa poétique fiancée.604 That a young reader would find Töpffer’s books engaging and appealing

601 Colette, “Ma mère et les livres,” La Maison de Claudine, 54-55.
602 Rodolphe Töpffer, Le Docteur Festus et Histoire de Monsieur Cryptogame: Deux odysées (Paris: Seuil, 1996). This volume is a reproduction of Töpffer’s original stories which were published in 1840 and 1846.
603 Loti, Le Roman d’un enfant, 104, 119.
604 The silly title chosen by Loti and his sister reflects other popular children’s titles, Alfred Assollant, Les aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du capitaine Corcoran (Paris : Hachette, 1881) and Stahl, Les aventures d’une
enough to want to copy it provides evidence these children’s active participation in the existing world of books.

In light of these authors’ attraction to books, it is not surprising to find yet another commonality in their writings about children’s reading experiences. Apparently, these authors wanted to express that the adults in their lives actively dissuaded them from reading certain books. This dissuasion took different forms for each – locked book cabinets, verbal scolding – and ultimately served only to augment these young readers’ interest in the “forbidden” books. These writers considered it revelatory to mention that during their childhood some adults thought of certain books as inappropriate for young readers. Descriptions of “locked up” and “off limits” books have symbolic value for these writers as a way to express their childhood desires to access and participate in the adult world via books. But these passages also reflect an historical reality. Contemporary discourse and numerous debates concerning “appropriate” versus “dangerous” reading material prevailed. Critics and commentators expressed particular anxiety about inherent dangers for child readers but also voiced concern for all members of the reading community.\textsuperscript{605}

Authors, librarians, religious leaders and educators all voiced concern about the subject of children and the possibility of “dangerous reading.” Author Zénaïde Fleuriot underscored the prevalence and importance of the issue in her children’s novel \textit{Plus tard, ou le Jeune chef de famille}.\textsuperscript{606} Fleuriot included the relevant scene in Chapter XI, “Caprices et devoirs.”\textsuperscript{607} The young protagonist, Raoul, upon finding his younger sister leafing through the volumes in his room and wanting to protect her physically from their contents, realizes reading these books is

not good for him either. His reaction is immediate and somewhat violent. He proceeds to burn all the inappropriate and dangerous books he has in his possession in order to rid himself of this “mortal poison.”608 Other groups including the Catholic Church, monarchists, and radical republicans feared that “inappropriate” reading would lead to moral and political excesses as seen during the recent revolutionary periods of 1789, 1830, and 1848. These groups seized on the opportunity to influence actively the public’s reading choices through the publication of recommended reading lists, published newsletters, and the legal restrictions placed on colportage. Librarians from Pau (Basses-Pyrénées) mentioned the challenges they faced in preventing inappropriate books from falling into the hands of young readers in their 1880 report to the Société Franklin, “We had to provide intense supervision so that books suitable for adults would not fall into the hands of children…”609

In Judith Gautier’s home environment at her father’s house, the book cabinet remained unlocked due to her father’s belief that books were not dangerous. He told Judith the story of feeling fundamentally moved by a book he read when young which led him to decide that in his own home he would keep all books available for the pleasure and challenges of reading.

…the thought they were absurd, these prohibitions and restrictions that made libraries off limits under the pretext that they contained dangerous books. Which ones? He deemed it presumptuous to decide such a thing. In his opinion, in order to avoid the risk, one had to either read them all, or read none. Paul et Virginie seemed to him to be the most dangerous book in the world, for young minds. He recalled the burning emotions he himself felt when reading it, and which were never equaled, even later, by any other reading experience.

So, the library was open before us, and, since no barrier blocked the access, we were, perhaps, less curious to rummage through it.

608 Ibid., 119.
609 “Bibliothèque populaire de Pau,” Bulletin de la Société Franklin 162-63 (1 January 1880 and 1 February 1880): 209. The Société Franklin had already asserted with certainty the potential negative effect of inappropriate books on “young spirits” [jeunes esprits] eight years prior. This earlier article affirmed that librarians needed to assure that only suitable reading material found its way into children’s hands. “[...]est donc faire acte de sage prêvoyance de mettre de bons livres entre les mains de ces enfants...il va sans dire que nos jeunes lecteurs sont l’objet d’une surveillance toute particulière.” Échos des assemblées générales,” Bulletin de la Société Franklin 54 (15 August 1872): 253-54.
Judith’s inclusion of this anecdote about her father’s attitude vis-à-vis locked book cabinets underscores the elements at the heart of these debates. Some considered individuals who felt overly strong emotions as a result of books they read as a potential threat.

Judith Gautier’s anecdote about those adults who discouraged her from reading a particular book turns around Guillaume de Loris’ *Le Roman de la Rose*. She read this particular book while at her grandfather’s, where some books were off-limits. Seeing her with this text, her aunts tried to discourage her from reading it claiming the book as inappropriate for little girls.

Nevertheless the book that I went at most fiercely was an old poem, in countless verses, by Guillaume de Loris: *Le Roman de la Rose*. They always wanted to take it from me.

“How leave that,” said Aunt Lili, “it’s a despicable book, not at all one for little girls.”

“How what you think that she understands?” Shot back Aunt Zoé, “It’s as if she were reading Turkish, it keeps her still, and since there are no pictures…”

These remarks made me want to figure out the obscure writing even more. I invested an incredible amount of time and, trying to work through the old French seemed to push me even deeper into its inextricable undergrowth. And yet, I did not back out, the secret upon which the story depended remained shrouded which made it even more appealing, and I ended up grasping the thread….

*[Cependant le livre sur lequel je m’acharnais le plus était le vieux poème, en d’innombrables vers, de Guillaume de Loris: *Le Roman de la Rose*. On voulait toujours me le reprendre.]*

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610 Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre first published this pastoral novel in 1787. *Paul et Virginie* tells the story of two children raised together happily in complete innocence [*en toute innocence*] in an isolated part of “Île de France” where their only companions are their mothers, two maids, and an old native woman. The characters are later torn apart as adolescents when they come into contact with civilization, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002 [1787]).

– Laisse cela, disait tante Lili, c’est un livre infâme, pas du tout pour les petites filles.

– Qu’est-ce que tu veux qu’elle y comprenne? Reprenait tante Zoé, c’est comme si elle lisait du turc, ça la fait tenir tranquille, et puisqu’il n’y a pas d’images…

Ces propos me donnaient encore plus envie de déchiffrer le grimoire. J’y prenais une peine incroyable et, à travers le vieux français, il me semblait m’enfoncer dans des broussailles inextricables. Je ne reculais pas pourtant, le mystère dont l’histoire restait enveloppée la rendait plus attrayante, et je finissais par en saisir le fil…).

Ultimately, the fact that her aunts want to keep her from reading this book only encourages Judith to commit herself to understanding the complicated text. The author’s recollection of the adults’ conversation about this book reveals their perception that as a child she could not understand it, most especially because the book did not contain any illustrations. This also provides support to the understanding that many believed in the importance of illustrations in order to convey particular messages and images had the potential to influence children most especially.

Children availed themselves of books not written expressly for them and often, prohibited books became even more attractive. Young Judith works hard and succeeds in understanding this tale. She refrains from telling her aunts, however, that she has read and understood it since she fears they would take the book away from her. “I burned with desire to go and repeat the tale to my disbelieving aunts, but I thought it wiser to keep my mouth shut and play dumb, so that they wouldn’t take the book from me.” [Je grillaïs d’envie d’aller redire le conte aux tantes incrédules, mais je jugeais plus malin de me taire et de faire la bête, afin qu’on ne me reprît pas le livre.] Judith’s fear of losing the adult book she has worked so hard to understand can be seen as a reference to her fear of losing her hard-won knowledge of the adult world that she has gained through her own reading efforts.

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612 Ibid., 161.
613 Ibid., 162.
As a young girl growing up in the French countryside, Colette’s mother allowed her to read pretty much whatever she wanted trusting the young girl to use her own discretion. Some books, however, and one author in particular, were off-limits.

Yet there were those that my father locked up in his wooden writing desk. But he especially locked up the author’s name.

“I don’t see the purpose in children reading Zola.”

[Il y avait pourtant ceux que mon père enfermait dans son secrétaire en bois de thuya. Mais il enfermait surtout le nom de l’auteur.

Je ne vois pas d’utilité à ce que les enfants lisent Zola.]614

Obviously, her mother’s interdiction to Zola felt practically like an invitation to a young girl of fourteen. Colette gained access to said books and read them in secret. “I went to the garden, with my first stolen book.” [Je m’en allai au jardin, avec mon premier livre dérobé.]615

Colette’s phrase intimates that this volume was simply the first of many books she would abduct. This passage also indicates that the book Colette felt the necessity to maintain the secret status of the book she had successfully absconded.

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Any attempt to answer the questions, “what did children actually read?”, “what did they think about what they read?”, and “how did it affect them enduringly?” can only result in imperfect answers. It is difficult to evaluate the precise importance and impact of leisure reading on French children during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Statistics concerning the number of books produced and the quantities in which consumers bought them only go so far in shedding light on children’s reading. How children themselves thought about and later remembered their reading experiences is more informative with respect to the workings of

614 Colette, “Ma mère et les livres,” La Maison de Claudine, 60.
615 Ibid., 61.
personal and collective memory. French children did not always read books specifically written with them in mind. However, they did not neglect these reading materials. Building on their opportunities at school, children took pleasure in leisure reading at home, whether from texts intended for them or numerous other books they found appealing.

The quartet of authors discussed above reveals unmistakably how children connected reading as an integral and important part of their own childhoods. French children apparently read widely and they read what pleased them. Taken as a whole, these autobiographical texts also demonstrate a shared common culture surrounding children’s books. The presence of books in homes, exposure to texts at school, and the practice of the distribution of *livres de prix* at the end of each academic year all contributed to defining this extensive literary culture for young people in late nineteenth-century France.

Vallès, Gautier, Loti and Colette – and most of their contemporaries – included a great many references to their childhood reading in their autobiographical-fictional writings. I have selected the passages assembled here to represent and demonstrate much more than the simple presence of books in children’s lives. They work together to bring into relief children’s intimate relationships with books and the intensity of the emotions they experienced from particular reading encounters. They also provide insight into how these individuals – all of them later writers – connected with books and the specific ways they recalled their childhood reading.

Personal recollections of childhood reading in autobiographical accounts provides insight into the interplay between official efforts to construct republican political identity – in the late nineteenth century governmental efforts to increase education, literacy and use of the French language – and personal identity construction in which individuals identified themselves as children as belonging to a community of readers. Literary recollections of childhood reading
reveal the importance of this act for nineteenth-century French children in their individual and collective identities. Each author links his or her younger self to a contemporary literary environment and the key point is not whether these authors actually read the titles cited in their biographical accounts. In retrospectively recounting the story of their childhood, as part of their adult selves, each of these writers sought to communicate that as children they had participated in a “reading public,” a “world of books.” Their personal memories thus drew from and contributed to the establishment of French collective memory that I interpret as evidence of republican cultural success. As these personal – and selectively fictionalized – accounts demonstrate, by the end of the nineteenth century French children had absorbed at least one central republican ideal: reading provided them inalienable direct access to the adult world.
In 1893 children’s author Christophe published *La Famille Fenouillard* in the form of an album. Drawn from comic-like strips published in the journal *Le Petit Français illustré*, this publication symbolically marks the relative début of the shift in French children’s literature toward the era of comic books. Increasingly throughout the twentieth century children’s storybooks would demonstrate an affinity for primarily offering readers entertainment and distraction. Traces of the didactic, home-based stories written for children during the late nineteenth century remained, however. Overt pedagogical content such as science lessons, geographical facts, and civics lessons endured in the majority of children’s periodicals which continue even in the early twenty-first century to serve as extensions of national education curriculum. Yet the family-based moralistic novel declined rapidly after 1900 in both production volume and popularity.

One way to explain this shift is to consider that the political urgency for this genre had passed. The French Third Republic entered its thirtieth year in 1900 and had successfully consolidated its authority and maintained relative stability for over two decades. In conjunction with this political context, a more fundamental transformation had taken place; republican political culture had become accepted by a demographically diverse majority. Republicans had succeeded in their efforts to create a common social, cultural and political consensus that allowed the French nation to enter the twentieth century as one of the world’s leading democracies.

This analysis of the various contributions to and specific content of late nineteenth century French children’s literature serves to provide valuable insights into an emergent republican political culture. Certainly these texts were not the only means employed to present
children with republican values; public schooling played a key role in preparing future French citizens for democratic participation in the Republic. However, an historical investigation of the evolution of children’s books between 1855 and 1900 reveals certain elements of the construction of French republican culture that studies of other more formal aspects of Republicanism – public schooling, ideologies of political parties, foundational laws – do not.

Numerous individuals participated in the elaboration of this body of literature. Authors, editors, educators, politicians, parents, children – all played a role in constructing a specifically secular republican political culture for the nation’s young. Acutely aware of and concerned with the political implications of their literary productions, the creators of these works aimed effectively to influence their intended market – French children and their families – with moral content presented through a combination of texts and images. They intended their books to serve as a child’s introduction to appropriate republican values. Significantly these texts served to include children in the independent acquisition of knowledge via reading, a shared but individualized activity that bound citizens together and provided them with the foundations necessary to fulfill their democratic duties.

Authors and editors did not create children’s storybooks in a vacuum. They drew upon, incorporated and benefited from contemporary social, cultural, political elements and technological developments. The volumes’ creators and those who bought and read them constituted an important population. Although initially read exclusively by upper and middle class children and their families, over the course of the century these texts became increasingly present in working-class homes as well. As such they constituted part of consolidated efforts to disseminate a cohesive political culture rooted in secular morality that would provide social cohesion and sustain republican institutions.
My study of the historical roots and subsequent developments in French children’s literature during the late nineteenth century provides new insights into this consolidation process. Through this analysis of late nineteenth-century children’s literature – its creators, contents, and readers – an image emerges of a process that included a significant amount of continuity with existing literary and pedagogical forms into which authors and editors integrated desirable content according to changing republican objectives.

An important element of republican political culture that becomes apparent is that of a certain continuity of form. The cultural practice of using stories to educate children in specific moral values was largely borrowed from existing religious-themed tales. Those with republican proclivities who contributed to the creation of children’s books in late nineteenth century France adopted the narrative form of the morally-didactic tale and infused it with secular republican content. The basic substance of tales depicting secular morals changed only slightly when compared with overtly Christian texts. Authors continued to encourage children to be obedient, kind, charitable, and respectful of others. However, in the republican formulation, family and nation replaced God as the source requiring such desired behavior. This increased emphasis on the French family was far from unintentional. A demonstration of the continuity of moral precepts between the Second Empire and the Third Republic calls into question other historical accounts in which the success of the French Republic founded in 1870 is characterized as a sharp break with the past and an uncontested victory of secular over religious morality. Rather, the content of these children’s storybooks reveals that the “triumph” of secularism was a gradual process of negotiation and compromise in which secular moral codes largely adhered to religious precedents.
Regeneration of the French family and home were key objectives of the republican project. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Philip Nord has explored this particular republican aim by studying mid-nineteenth century efforts for domestic reform. Developments in children’s literature and its contingent practices were clearly an integral part of these efforts. The hearth was at the heart of republican efforts of national renewal. Politicians as well as others involved in concerted efforts to stabilize the emergent republic emphasized the importance of democratic family life as a means to infuse society at large with self-sustaining, civic principles. Republican ideology was based on the principle that quality participation in political life depended on quality domestic life and relationships. Self-discipline was primary among the principles perceived to assure republican success since it implied stability. Republican reformers therefore placed families in the role of teaching this all-important quality. Proponents and promoters of children’s literature effectively employed the genre as a way for republican political culture to take root. They therefore developed specific strategies in order to assure the presence and practice of leisure reading in private homes. Public libraries extended lending privileges to families, primary through high schools participated in distributing prize books to students, and publishers developed periodicals specifically for young readers. In their own way each of these approaches succeeded in infusing family homes with republican political culture and values. These books – the content and the object itself – had significant influential potential. They circulated widely and through the combination of image and text aimed to shape the family and France’s future.

This emphasis on the family home was in part the result of a prevailing belief in the central role played by women in effectively conveying moral values to children. Efforts to place books in homes and to privilege home-based leisure reading reinforced women’s participation in
the republican project. However, with the intervening crisis years of 1870-71, an analysis of this literature’s content reveals a somewhat contradictory role for women within republicanism. While women were major authors and main characters in children’s literature between 1855 and 1870 due to their accepted role as the preferred gender to transmit moral messages, after 1870, and with the increased prevalence of militaristic themes, there followed a perceptible decrease in the desirability of female writers while male authors continued to produce numerous stories in which mothers, women and girls played decidedly secondary roles. Although shared criteria existed for both girls’ and boys’ behavior in light of their future service to the nation – children had to be obedient, disciplined, and responsible – gender differences existed. Boys were encouraged to prepare for their future role as provider, father and soldier whereas girls were expected to become mothers and to raise children capable of appropriate service to the nation. Authors regularly laid out both sets of gender expectations in children’s stories.

Solidly present in numerous family homes by the late 1860s, children’s leisure reading material experienced a fundamental shift in light of the crises years of 1870-71. The urgent need to infuse French society with an enduring sense of strength, unity and stability led to the partial usurpation of children’s stories for overt militaristic propaganda purposes. Certainly, as others have demonstrated with respect to school textbooks, the theme of revanche was clearly in evidence. A desire for punishing the enemy and recovering lost territory were not the only new themes, however. Authors, illustrators and editors increasingly incorporated messages concerning performing one’s duty to and for the nation, the importance of self-discipline, and military preparedness in works for young readers. This development in the evolving definition of republicanism meant that to a certain extent militarism, its distinct gender roles, and a further distancing of the private from the public sphere became incorporated. But the effects of the
devastations of 1870-1871 were profound and children’s storybooks became a primary means to transmit ideas about how to reorganize and revitalize the French nation.

Most importantly this study of late nineteenth century French children’s literature reveals the centrality of literacy in the republican project, the desire to create a “republic of readers” with children at its core. Louis Hachette, Pierre-Jules Hetzel, Jules Ferry, Pauline Kergomard, Anatole France, Ernest Legouvé and many others – each in his or her own way – contributed to the success of making reading, literacy itself, a central aspect of French republican identity. They effectively managed to present to children the vital importance of a reading public as a foundation of democracy. Perhaps inspired by the ads Hetzel produced for his editorial collections that featured children reading practically anywhere – up in trees, in a corner, on a sofa, under a desk, sitting up, lying down – ideal, republican children ingested these images and ultimately thought of themselves as readers. By exploring autobiographical texts written by child readers their inclusion in this community clearly emerges. Overwhelmingly what remained with young readers – aside from particular messages gleaned from the texts they read – was a sense of the importance of belonging to a reading community.

The legacy left by the republican political project’s investment in children’s literature was to provide young readers with an apprenticeship in democratic participation. This participation was rooted in cultivating and transmitting a common set of secular moral values that included individualism, self-discipline, duty to the French nation, and a belief in rational progress. Literacy was vitally important to the republican project and the book central, as Jules Ferry proclaimed in 1880 and children’s books were particularly invaluable as the preferred tool for inculcating and dispersing these values to the nation’s future citizens. Republicans succeeded in conveying the importance of reading to children since the texts these young readers left about
their personal pasts consistently include this common experience of participating in a “republic of readers.” Thus what child readers ultimately internalized – the enduring trace of the republican project – was the central, civilizing importance of the book, of literacy. Their “Frenchness,” part of their individual identity as evidenced by later memories – lay in an ability to read.
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