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# **Education and Nation in French and German Lorraine, 1870 - 1918**

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BA (Hons)**

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of Master of Research in Modern Languages**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with the subject of primary education as a means of nation building in the region of Lorraine, which was divided between the nations of France and Germany between 1870 and 1918. Compulsory education was an important device in both countries during this period for the encouragement of nationalist and patriotic sentiment amongst their citizens, to the extent where both countries found themselves embroiled in a sort of 'educational arms race' with each other in the quest for European political and cultural dominance. The development of nationalist thought was considered to be particularly important in border regions such as Lorraine, where national loyalties could be questioned.

This thesis examines some of the methods employed by both France and Germany in order to encourage nationalist sentiment within the sphere of primary education, studying textbooks from each country used during the period, but remaining focused on the application of these educational systems on both sides of the Franco-German border in the region of Lorraine. No scholarly work has yet examined primary education in both French and German Lorraine, preferring either to focus on one side of the border or the other. This thesis demonstrates how each nation employed surprisingly similar tactics to pursue very different nationalist ends.

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Last, but certainly not least, this thesis is dedicated to my late father, John. Although the pain of losing him so suddenly this year seemed to be unbearable at times, it has also strengthened me and made me determined to continue to make him proud. I can only hope that I have inherited a fraction of his fierce determination and lust for life.

## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.



## Abbreviations

The three German schoolbooks to be studied in this thesis are abbreviated as follows:

- ❖ L1 = (*Lesebuch 1) für die Oberklassen der Volksschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; new editions for mixed religious schooling; 10<sup>th</sup> edition; no author; published 1906
- ❖ L2 = (*Lesebuch 2) für die Oberklassen katholischer Volksschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; no author or publication date; 31<sup>st</sup> edition
- ❖ L3 = (*Lesebuch 3) für die Mittelklassen der Elementarschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; written by Eduard Förster; dated 1898; 29<sup>th</sup> edition

Wherever possible, I have used modern French and German spelling conventions when quoting from primary sources.

## Introduction

As a consequence of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, the French regions of Alsace and the part of Lorraine which nowadays forms the *département* of Moselle were conceded to the newly formed German Empire as part of the Treaty of Frankfurt on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 1871. The new Imperial territory (*Reichsland*), commonly referred to in English as Alsace-Lorraine, or Elsass-Lothringen in German, was to be governed from Berlin under Prussian jurisdiction, although it was not to be officially amalgamated with the state of Prussia. As a result, the formerly French inhabitants of the territory were given until the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1872 to decide whether they wished to emigrate to France and remain French citizens or to stay in Elsass-Lothringen and become German citizens. This jurisdiction lasted until the defeat of Germany in the First World War in 1918, and the territory was formally restored to France under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919.

This was not the first episode of Franco-German conflict. Robert Gildea reminds us that in 1871 Prussia had been “smarting from humiliation by France since Jena, if not since the treaty of Westphalia (1648)”<sup>1</sup>. The latter refers to the annexation of Alsace from the Holy Roman Empire to the Kingdom of France, while “Jena” is a reference to Napoleon Bonaparte’s defeat of the Prussian army in 1806, the consequence of which was the subjugation of Prussia to the French Empire. Napoleon had already succeeded in dissolving the Holy Roman Empire, turning most of the former Empire into the Confederation of the Rhine, which served as a French satellite. Following this humiliation, Prussia focused its efforts on rebuilding and strengthening its nation, placing particular emphasis on educational reform as an attempt to reform society “from above”. By 1815, much of the newly formed German Confederation looked to Prussia as the leader in comprehensive primary education, and Prussia was well on its way to regaining prominence on the European stage.<sup>2</sup> This history of Franco-German animosity dominated European politics for the best part of the nineteenth century, helping to shape the paths of both France and Germany, particularly in terms of developing theories of nationhood and nationalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Gildea 1994:118

<sup>2</sup> Harp 1998:8

This Franco-German animosity was played out most prominently in border regions, such as Lorraine, where an 'educational arms race' was gathering momentum. While the well-established Prussian education system was being established in German Lorraine, the French government was fighting to catch up with its own nation building project by means of educational reforms across France, including in French Lorraine. It is this dichotomy which makes the study of education and nation in French and German Lorraine during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century particularly fascinating. This thesis charts the development of nationalist thought in both France and Germany, and how this translated into emphasis on nation building in schools, before focusing more specifically on how this project was transmitted to schoolchildren in both parts of the province. This will be achieved by looking at the study of history, literature, geography and the use of the visual.

### **The myth of Alsace-Lorraine**

The annexed province of Alsace-Lorraine quickly became used as a powerful myth in terms of stirring nationalist and patriotic sentiments. This myth is one which has formed an important part of both French and German history, especially regarding nationalist sentiment and the consolidation of national identity, as each nation attempted to harness the province as a symbol which could be used as propaganda to help promote national unity. It also became a symbol of power, with dominance over Europe belonging to the nation who happened to have the province under its protection. After 1870, the Prussians under Bismarck tried to emphasise the Germanic nature of the province, which came to represent the cultural cement that bound the Empire together. If one small province, previously under an enemy regime, could successfully integrate into the wider German nation, it would serve as a pertinent example for the other principalities, which were struggling with their new, national identity.<sup>3</sup> Bismarck and the German government justified the annexation of Elsass-Lothringen to Germany on the grounds of returning the province to its 'natural' linguistic and cultural boundaries between the Latin and the Germanic. The government postulated that by reclaiming the parts of Alsace and Lorraine where the majority of the inhabitants spoke a Germanic dialect, they were doing

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<sup>3</sup> Silverman 1972:199

nothing more than correcting the national boundary between the start of the German Empire and the end of the French Republic. While the German assessment of this linguistic boundary was more or less accurate, it did include some notable exceptions, such as the francophone city of Metz, meaning that there was a significant French-speaking minority within the *Reichsland*.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, there was actually a range of Germanic dialects spoken in Alsace and Lorraine during the nineteenth century, particularly in Lorraine, where Romance dialects were also spoken, as shown below in Fig. 1.

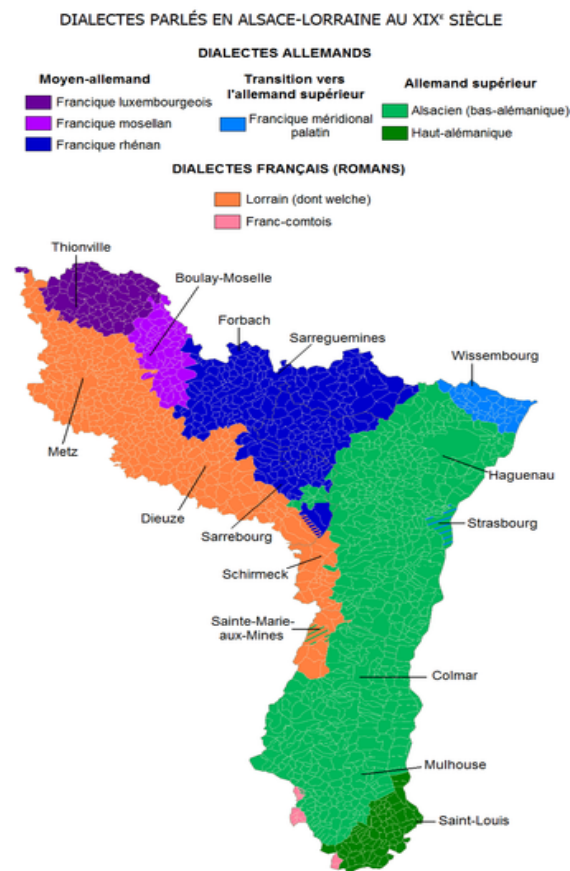


Fig. 1 Linguistic map of Alsace-Lorraine  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Alsace-Lorraine\\_Dialects.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Alsace-Lorraine_Dialects.png)

Another justification for the annexation of Elsass-Lothringen, linked to the linguistic differences between the province and those of the rest of France, was that of perceived cultural differences between Alsace, Lorraine, and the rest of France. The region of Alsace had only become a fully incorporated part of the French nation in the mid-seventeenth century, when Louis XIV gained sovereignty of the territory from the Holy Roman Empire. Lorraine did not become French until much later, having remained an autonomous duchy within

<sup>4</sup> Harp 1998:15

the Holy Roman Empire until 1766. While the events of the French Revolution had helped to foster some sense of French national identity, especially in Alsace, which had played a pivotal role by helping to defend the new Republic's eastern border, the process of building a strong French national identity was only in its infancy in 1870.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this would not become a matter of national priority until after the end of the Franco-Prussian War, when the French government were left to rebuild a 'broken' nation, primarily by means of a renewed emphasis on universal and compulsory education in order to reinforce French national identity among all French citizens. Alsace-Lorraine as a concept became an important tool within this project, in that the 'lost province' served as a reminder of the need to defend the French Republic against her enemies. For France, the pain of losing the province of Alsace-Lorraine served as a powerful mobilising force which provided the desire for vengeance as well as the catalyst for domestic reform.<sup>6</sup> It also proved to have a unifying influence on the nation, as the image of the 'lost sisters' of France, victimised and brutalised by their cruel German occupiers, became widely used in popular culture and as educational tools.<sup>7</sup> The humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War is often cited as the catalyst for educational reform in France, since it was widely held that the Prussians had dominated the French thanks to their superior education. The Franco-Prussian War also signalled the end of the Second Empire under Napoleon III and the dawn of the Third Republic, whose founders were keen to reinforce their republican ideals amongst the masses. This meant that in 1871 the French part of Lorraine, along with every other region in France, began to be formally governed by a centralised, national education policy.

Jules Ferry's law of 1881 guaranteed universal, free primary school education for the first time across France, and the following year school attendance became compulsory for all children between the ages of seven and thirteen.<sup>8</sup> Within a generation, these regulations greatly increased the numbers of educated French, which was seen as a crucial way of strengthening the once weakened French nation. According to Gildea, "the principal concern of elementary education was to draw the mass of the population into the schools to

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<sup>5</sup> Vlossack 2011:4-5

<sup>6</sup> Varley 2008:5

<sup>7</sup> Vlossack 2011:191

<sup>8</sup> Olson 2011:38

be civilised”<sup>9</sup> as a form of what he dubbed “internal colonisation”. Dialects and *patois* were to be heavily discouraged in favour of standard French, and the new Republic rendered public schooling entirely secular in order to promote republican values. At the time, the French language was used almost exclusively in north and central France, and was held as the language of law and culture. The French, therefore, joined every other Western nation in their attempt to “create and maintain a national consciousness among its citizens”<sup>10</sup>, by means of educating their children in the ‘right way’ of thinking and by teaching them to think about their place within the nation as a whole, rather than just their particular town or region.

For the children who now lived in Elsass-Lothringen, their schooling was brought in line with German education policy as one of the first priorities of the new government, and the German education system was in place in schools in the *Reichsland* by September 1871. Included in this was the introduction of compulsory schooling for 6-13 year old girls and 6-14 year old boys, something which had not previously been enforced. Over 90% of children in the German Empire attended *Volkschule*, or public primary schools, for the seven or eight years which were required of them by the state.<sup>11</sup> German education policy was determined separately by each German region, so that children were taught about events and ideas which were relevant to their particular area, as well as ones which were shared across the general German population. This meant that children in Elsass-Lothringen were taught by means of a specially designed curriculum which was only for use within the *Reichsland*, determined by the local education authority in Strasbourg but approved by the Prussian controlled central ministry for education in Berlin. It was hoped that this emphasis on the regional as well as the national, which German education is known for, would be the most effective way of gently ‘reminding’ the Alsace-Lorrainers of their Germanic roots.<sup>12</sup>

Outside of the educational sphere, the myth of Alsace-Lorraine was also discussed explicitly and extensively by academics and authors at the time. On

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<sup>9</sup> Gildea 1983:209

<sup>10</sup> Harp 1998:4

<sup>11</sup> Kennedy 2000:226-227

<sup>12</sup> Kennedy 1997:460

the French side of this particular divide, we find opinions of the Germans, often specifically named as Prussians, which are less than flattering to say the least. As an example, Ernest Babelon, writing in 1918, discusses the Prussian enforcement of their educative ‘propaganda’ in Alsace-Lorraine in terms of the ‘bitterness of fanaticism’<sup>13</sup>, as well as their ‘barbaric brutality and blundering insolence’<sup>14</sup>, concluding that it was only natural that the inhabitants of the lost province would not fully assimilate into Germanic culture during the period of occupation, since this was clearly a region which was of Gallic-Roman origin.<sup>15</sup> We also find the works of infamous authors such as Maurice Barrès, whom Gildea describes as a “professional Lorrainer”<sup>16</sup> thanks to his work in attempting to keep the memory of Alsace-Lorraine at the forefront of French minds and in promoting the cause for revanchist politics. In *La Lorraine Dévastée*, published in 1919 around the time of the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, Barrès echoes Babelon in emphasising the ‘essential French nature of the Lorrains’, who remain French countrymen even after all they have lived through thanks to their forced separation from the motherland.<sup>17</sup>

On the German side, by contrast, historians such as Heinrich von Treitschke held the opinion that ‘these provinces [of Alsace-Lorraine] are ours by the right of the sword; and we will rule them in virtue of a higher right, in virtue of the right of the German nation to prevent the permanent estrangement from the German Empire of her lost children’<sup>18</sup>. Here, Alsace-Lorraine is portrayed as ‘lost children’, who had been separated from the German fatherland, but who had now been returned safely to the fold. It is interesting to note that scholars from both sides of the debate personify the province of Alsace-Lorraine, either as children or as weak, feminine characters who are clearly unable to look after themselves or assert themselves. The province, therefore, is presented as a subordinate entity which needs to be protected by a greater nation.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “l’âpreté de fanatisme” (Babelon 1918:272)

<sup>14</sup> “la brutalité barbare et l’insolence maladroite” (Babelon 1918:272)

<sup>15</sup> Babelon 1918:297

<sup>16</sup> Gildea 1994:194

<sup>17</sup> Barrès 1919:16

<sup>18</sup> “Diese Länder sind unser nach dem Rechte des Schwertes; und wir wollen über sie verfügen kraft eines höheren Rechtes; kraft des Rechtes der deutschen Nation; die ihren verlorenen Söhnen nicht gestatten kann; sich für immer dem deutschen Reiche zu entfremden...” (von Treitschke 1870:7)

<sup>19</sup> Boswell 2000:132

## Historiographical Review

Zanoun neatly informs us that “Alsace-Lorraine has long been the focus of intense research by historians interested in the themes of borderland, politics, language, regionalism, regional, national and transnational identity, nationalism and the relationship between the central state and the region”<sup>20</sup>. The ambiguous nature of the region presents us with many questions as a result of its very particular history, much of which has been discussed in great detail. Sources from the beginning of the twentieth century tend to present biased accounts of the supposed national loyalties of the province, depending on whether the author’s sympathies lie with the French myth or the German one. Furthermore, the idea of Alsace-Lorraine is usually treated by these scholars as one single entity, with focus largely resting on Alsace, and Lorraine or the Moselle as more of an afterthought or merely as an extension of Alsace. This is something which has only recently been replaced by studies which treat Alsace and the Moselle as separate regions, with separate regional identities, with many scholars now choosing to study one or the other, instead of both together.

François Roth remains one of the most comprehensive authors on the subject of Alsace-Lorraine, beginning with his doctoral study of Lorraine in *La Lorraine Annexée : Étude sur la Présidence de Lorraine (1870 - 1918)* from 1976. Further works include *La Guerre de 70* (1990) and *Alsace-Lorraine : Histoire d’un “pays perdu” de 1870 à nos jours* (2010). Roth’s works which discuss both Alsace and Lorraine clearly chart differences between the two areas, despite their common treatment by the German (and then the French) authorities. This is something which is reinforced by Dan Silverman, whose 1972 work *Reluctant Union: Alsace-Lorraine and Imperial Germany 1871-1918* asks us to “shelve” the idea of the “Alsace-Lorrainer”, which is “a figment of the imagination; it is a term which implies a real community of interests which in fact did not exist”.<sup>21</sup> More recently, Louisa Zanoun’s doctoral thesis, entitled *Interwar Politics in a French Border Region: the Moselle in the period of the Popular Front, 1934-1938* (2009), presents an interesting account of how Lorraine’s history shaped politics in Moselle during the interwar period. Another doctoral thesis which has proved

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<sup>20</sup> Zanoun 2009:13

<sup>21</sup> Silverman 1972:2



itself to be particularly helpful is that of Carolyn Grohmann, *The Problems of Integrating Annexed Lorraine into France, 1918-1925* (1999), which presents a pertinent account of the problems faced by both the French government and the inhabitants of Lorraine during the reintegration of the province to French rule. However, focus on Lorraine has concentrated on general studies of life in occupied Lorraine, or, like Zanoun, on politics, rather than on other institutions such as education. Furthermore, academic interest continues to be concerned with German Lorraine, not French Lorraine.

In terms of national identity and nation building, the classic 1983 text by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, as well as the 1992 work of Rogers Brubaker (*Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*) have been integral to this thesis. Anderson's work helps to define the concepts of nation and nationality, as well as discussing the major factors which led to the development of nationalism in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the concept of the nation as an imagined political construct, as well as how this idea of nation develops, provides an insight which is crucial to the argument pursued in this work. Brubaker offers a sociological approach to the theme, concentrating on the shared history of France and Germany, and highlighting the differences between the two nations, especially concerning their attitudes concerning the right to obtaining citizenship. These works, amongst others, provide important insights into the development of the idea of 'nation' over the last two centuries, and how a strong sense of national identity could lead into the sort of nationalism we witnessed in the early part of the twentieth century. This is a particularly important discussion when we consider ourselves to be looking at this issue in a postcolonial period, and in light of the destructive nationalism which became fascism in the 1920s and 1930s. This question of nationalism and nation will be dealt with in more depth in the next chapter.

Education was of course one of the most important methods of nation building during the nineteenth century, and literature on the subject is plentiful. When discussing France as a whole, Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976) provides a very convincing account of the effects of education on the masses, as well as the consequences that these developments had for the country as a

whole, albeit a heavily romanticised version of events. Robert Gildea's work of 1983, *Education in Provincial France 1800 - 1914*, is also a useful tool, giving an account of the role and nature of education in three provincial parts of France. Neither Alsace nor Lorraine is covered in his work, but thanks to the centralised nature of the French education system we are able to draw comparisons and apply most of this information to the people of French Lorraine during this period. More specifically, Stephen Harp's 1998 study *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* provides a very comprehensive account of the role of education in Alsace-Lorraine both before and after the German occupation, although the part of Lorraine which remained French is not dealt with. Harp also paints a picture of German imperialism which explicitly attempts to not focus too heavily on the shadow of Nazism which so often falls over studies of this nature; something which is to be found in many earlier works.

Looking at the German and Prussian education systems during the nineteenth century, Kenneth Barkin's article from the journal *Central European History* entitled "Social Control and the Volksschule in Vormärz Prussia" provides a thought-provoking introduction to the role of the Prussian education system and its influence across Europe. It also clearly addresses the issue of scholars at the time (1983) stressing the "social control" effects of Prussian education, thus illustrating how heavily influenced they were by the subsequent development of Prussian and German nationalism into National Socialism. Barkin is quick to point out the complete shift from unconditional, uncritical glorification of the Prussian past before the Second World War to "across-the-board condemnation" after 1945.<sup>22</sup> More recently, Katharine Kennedy's studies of regionalism and nationalism in terms of German education systems provide a great insight into the myriad of differences between education in different German regions and how these converge gradually over the course of the nineteenth century, culminating in an almost nationalised system. Kennedy also discusses the role of school textbooks in the German education system, which provides a useful introduction to demonstrate their pivotal role in the education of German schoolchildren during this period. Although Kennedy's work tends to focus on southern German regions, such as Bavaria and Württemberg, the parallels she

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<sup>22</sup> Barkin 1983:31-32

draws across these regions allows me to do the same in considering the place of Elsass-Lothringen within this society.

To date there has been little direct comparison drawn between differences in education in French Lorraine and in German Lorraine. Furthermore, while the role of schoolbooks has been debated in nineteenth century France, nineteenth century Germany and Prussia, and in Alsace-Lorraine between 1870 and 1918, the schoolbooks in Lorraine (both French and German) have been mostly neglected by scholars thus far. Looking at both French and German Lorraine not only allows us to compare and contrast the differences between the national French and German education systems, and the materials which they used in order to achieve their goals of developing a sense of national identity and love for the motherland, but also allows us to delve deeper into what these ideals would have meant for a Lorrain on either side of the Franco-German border between 1870 and 1918. The sense of urgency and importance of developing patriotic sentiment is heightened in a border area where loyalties are easily questioned: those remaining on the French side of the border were distrusted by “inland” French people<sup>23</sup> - a turn of phrase and sentiment which has not entirely disappeared in modern day France - whereas the new German citizens of Elsass-Lothringen were distrusted by their new fellow citizens, who did not believe that the Alsatians and Lorrainers had truly embraced their German nationality, right up until the First World War.

During the ‘educational arms race’ between France and Germany during the period 1870 - 1918, the region of Lorraine paints an interesting picture to the academic. It is entirely possible to conceive of families divided across an arbitrary border, with one strand of the family being taught to stop using their local dialect in favour of standard French and love of the *patrie*, and their cousins having to learn German instead, as well as embracing their supposed Germanic roots and love for the *Vaterland*. One half of this hypothetical family was brought up to be good republicans, having received an entirely secular, rational-leaning education, while the other half continued to receive a traditional, literary education which varied slightly depending on their religious leanings. This differs from the case of Alsace, where 97% of the region had been

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<sup>23</sup> “les Français de l’intérieur”

incorporated into the German Empire. The Alsatians as a result were able to maintain some sort of regional unity, which remained intact throughout French and German rule. It is these different experiences within one region which clearly highlights the issues presented by nation building and to what extent this may have been successful.

### Primary Sources

Integral to this project are of course examples of schoolbooks used in both parts of Lorraine during the period, since they provide us with a unique insight into what each state was attempting to teach its children. School textbooks transport us into the late nineteenth century classroom, and while we are not able to easily establish the reception of the contents of these books, we are able to determine some of the educational aims of both governments. We can see this through the different ways in which history is interpreted by both the French government and the Elsass-Lothringen educational authority, as well as the nature of the literature studied and other resources used, such as images and maps. I have chosen to study two classic textbooks used across France during the Third Republic, which I will contrast with three readers, known as *Leesebücher*, which would have been used across the Reichsland of Elsass-Lothringen.

Thanks to the centralised nature of the French education system, it is not unreasonable to use two national textbooks as representative of what would have been taught in primary schools across French Lorraine. These books are:

- ❖ *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants* (1977 reprint of 1877 edition); Bruno, G; Paris; Librairie Eugène Belin
- ❖ *La nouvelle première année d'Histoire de France* ("Le petit Lavissee") (2010 reprint of 1894 edition); Lavissee, Ernest; Paris; Editions des Equateurs

While *Le Tour de la France* was used throughout the various levels of French primary education, the *petit Lavissee* was aimed at the first and second years of the 'cours moyen', meaning the middle two years of primary education (probably for children aged between nine and eleven years old). The two books

are very different from each other: the *petit Lavisse* is specifically a history book, written by the celebrated French historian and pedagogue Ernest Lavissee. First published in 1894, this book traces the history of France, concentrating on events from the fifteenth century onwards and culminating in the developments of the French Republic since the Franco-Prussian War. The *petit Lavissee* was conceived as a reaction to the January 1894 educational decree from the French government, which required history teaching to concentrate on the ‘essential facts’ in French history from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the first chapter quickly tackles the first 1,500 years of French history, while the next five chapters of the schoolbook take the student from 1483 to the end of the nineteenth century. *Le Tour de la France*, by contrast, written by Augustine Fouillée under the pseudonym G Bruno, is a novel about two small boys from German-occupied Lorraine who travel throughout France in order to reclaim their French nationality and thereby fulfil the dying wish of their father. The aim of the book, which was widely circulated amongst children of the Third Republic and is still in print today, was to unite the children of France through encouraging patriotic sentiment, and to educate the children about France as a nation. The book contains a mixture of fiction, geography, and travel, as well as nuggets of information about each of the different regions of France, teaching about monuments and symbols, exemplary lives of Frenchmen, famous landmarks and natural features of the landscape.

Across Germany, and therefore in Elsass-Lothringen, the *Lesebuch* was the central textbook in most schools, which would have been used several times a day by pupils; the role of the *Lesebuch* was not only to provide texts to study during reading classes, but also to support instruction in spelling and grammar, composition, history, geography, and science. The three books that I will study in this thesis all date from around the turn of the twentieth century, and provide a representation of not only Catholic schooling, but also Protestant and mixed-religious education, all of which would have been relevant in the mixed population of Lorraine. I shall abbreviate the three books as follows:

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<sup>24</sup> “les faits essentiels depuis la fin du 15<sup>ème</sup> siècle jusqu’à nos jours” (p2)

- ❖ *Lesebuch 1 (L1) = für die Oberklassen der Volksschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; new editions for mixed religious schooling; 10<sup>th</sup> edition; no author; published 1906
- ❖ *Lesebuch 2 (L2) = für die Oberklassen katholischer Volksschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; no author or publication date; 31<sup>st</sup> edition
- ❖ *Lesebuch 3 (L3) = für die Mittelklassen der Elementarschulen in Elsass-Lothringen*; written by Eduard Förster; dated 1898; 29<sup>th</sup> edition

Most German *Lesebücher* had the same structure as the above three books, beginning with a long section devoted to a mixture of poems, stories, proverbs and moralistic tales, which illustrated themes such as family life, ethics and morality, religious devotion and *Heimat*. This was followed by a section concerned with history, which discussed a selection of the most important periods of German history in the form of a series of extended narratives. At the end of the schoolbook could be found sections discussing geography, both local and national, and ‘nature’, which encompassed minerals, plants, and animals, as well as miscellaneous themes such as the weather, electricity and communications. This too is all explained through narrative. The *Lesebuch* used in the *Oberklassen*, or the final years of school, was usually meant to be kept by the pupil after they had left school, since it contained life lessons and useful information which should be passed on to others and referred back to as required.

These books of course can only offer a limited glimpse into the primary education system in French and German Lorraine. Sourcing the German books has proved particularly challenging, since online resources are relatively limited in this area. More focus thus far has been placed on creating electronic records of schoolbooks from other German regions, especially from Prussia and other large states such as Bavaria, where research has been more prevalent. At the same time, the three books which I have sourced were clearly for use in Elsass-Lothringen. While there are more resources available to choose from which would also be relevant to French Lorraine, thanks once again to the nationalised system in France, I was able to select two of the most popular books of the period in order to ensure that these were books which would almost certainly

have been used across the region. Both sets of schoolbooks, therefore, are representative of standard educational tools during the province at this time.

## Chapter Outline

This thesis is organised thematically. In order to situate the study of the primary material within a wider context, the first chapter offers a comparative study of theories of nationalism in both France and Germany; in particular it considers the models of French ‘civic’ and German ‘ethnic’ nationalism. It will also discuss the reasons why nation building became a priority for both countries, and the methods employed in order to achieve this. This will more closely examine the role of primary education within this project, as well as the problems posed by border regions such as Lorraine. This will allow us to analyse the content of the schoolbooks more closely, since we can search for evidence of differing theories of nationalism through what is taught and what is not, and the method by which particular material is taught.

The teaching of history provides us with clear insights into how nationalist sentiment was promoted in the schoolbooks, which is why the second and third chapters will deal with the subject of education, history, and nationalism. The second chapter will deal specifically with the French textbooks, especially Lavissee’s *Histoire de France*, looking at how history is used by Lavissee to promote republican values by focusing on the efforts of great men other than the monarchy and the Napoleon dynasty in building the French nation. Military victories and ‘glories’ such as colonisation are clearly prioritised, to the detriment of early French history. Furthermore, coverage of the Franco-Prussian War is limited, and the focus is on defence of the *patrie* in the face of adversity rather than on the successes of the Prussians. Not surprisingly, the Franco-Prussian War is discussed in great detail in the German *Lesebücher*, where the superiority of the Prussians over the French is a key theme. The third chapter therefore will focus on the history sections of the German textbooks, allowing us to draw effective comparisons between the teaching of history in French and German Lorraine, and how this is used to promote nation building and nationalist sentiment on both sides of the border.

The fourth and final chapter will also aim to draw comparisons between education in French and German Lorraine, but through the mediums of the literary and the visual. The literature sections of the *Lesebücher* are key here, since they provide us with a clear illustration of the ‘nostalgic nationalism’ linked to Romanticism which was popular during the late nineteenth century. While there are elements of this in the French book *Le Tour de la France*, it is nowhere near as pronounced. Linked to this are the interpretations of classical civilisation, and how these are perceived to have been the starting point for a long-standing Franco-German conflict. There are also interesting comparisons to be drawn between the use of image, or lack thereof, within the schoolbooks. While both French textbooks make extensive use of pictures in order to illustrate the messages conveyed in the text, the German schoolbooks do not. This is not completely out of character with other German schoolbooks at the time<sup>25</sup>, although it is unusual. With the French books it is also interesting to note which events or ideas were deemed important enough to be illustrated, with a strong leaning towards reinforcement of republican symbols.

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<sup>25</sup> Kennedy 2000:226



## Chapter One - Nationalism and Nations

It is important to outline models of nationalism in France and Germany during the nineteenth century, since we would expect these to be linked to each country's nation building project, elements of which should be reflected in the schoolbooks. Furthermore, French and German models of nationalism are widely held to present the conflicting schools of thought of 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism, so it is interesting to chart the progression of these models and how they are interpreted, both in terms of legal nationality and in terms of national identity. These models are not necessarily as clear-cut upon closer examination, especially when applied to border regions with suspected divided loyalties, such as Lorraine. This chapter will define key concepts such as 'ethnicity' and 'nation', before discussing the divisions between the French and German models of nationalism. This will lead us on to other influencing factors on the development of nationalist thought in both countries, as well as how this affected the priorities of their educational systems.

It can be tempting to use the terms of 'ethnicity' and 'race' interchangeably, since the definitions of the two words blur into one another subtly in a "family of concepts"<sup>26</sup>. Common to both terms is an idea of collective descent or ancestry, which is linked to some sort of shared culture, whether it be myths about the past, religion, or symbols of belonging to a particular group, such as flags, language or dress.<sup>27</sup> The idea of 'ethnicity' or an 'ethnic' group refers to the existence of a group which considers itself to be **culturally** distinctive to other groups, and is regarded as such by other, similar groups.<sup>28</sup> 'Race' therefore differs from 'ethnicity' because it has a strong association of **biological** difference, linked to a supposedly universal classificatory system, which allows it to distinguish between members of its own group and others.<sup>29</sup> Put succinctly by Hutchinson and Smith, "race refers to the categorisation of people, while ethnicity has to do with group identification"<sup>30</sup>. In this way, some ethnic groups may choose to use notions of race in their ideology as well as criteria of shared culture, but 'race' on its own does not use an ethnic distinction. Racism goes

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<sup>26</sup> Fenton 2003:8

<sup>27</sup> Fenton 2003:13

<sup>28</sup> Eriksen 1993:4

<sup>29</sup> Fenton 2003:24

<sup>30</sup> Hutchinson & Smith 1996:29

one step further than 'race' in that it builds on the assumption of biological difference and consequently classifies people as superior or inferior to one another according to their perceived race.

Having defined both 'race' and 'ethnicity', we are able to illustrate what is meant by 'nation' and 'nationalism', although Smith warns us that modern meanings of the word 'nation' are varied and often ambiguous. Smith chooses to define a nation as "a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members"<sup>31</sup>. It is this element of national structure, such as a single economy and common rights and duties, which separates a nation from an ethnic community.<sup>32</sup> It is not chronological or factual history which is the defining factor of the nation, but rather a shared, imagined history.<sup>33</sup> A nation is an artificial construct which is legitimised and rendered 'natural' through its constructed myths. Nationalism makes the abstract concept of the culture of a nation more concrete, allowing people to talk about their culture as though it were a constant. Looking at French and German nationalism and nationalist discourse in the nineteenth century from a twenty-first century perspective might lead us to assume that the classic model of ethnic German nationalism developed into a racist nationalism over the course of the nineteenth century, which turned into the fascism in the interwar period, which had such deadly consequences for millions of people, in a sort of teleological progression.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, thanks to the French success in promoting their embracing of their 'civic', inclusive republican ideals, we might be inclined to accept the suggestion that French nationalism remained on the 'right' side of the line. The classic model holds that the French civic idea of nationalism, developed during the nineteenth century, is something which bases membership on expression of a political will rather than on inherent personal characteristics, in theory at least. This should allow French citizens to be patriotic and nationalist, without bringing any notions of race or ethnicity into the equation.

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<sup>31</sup> Smith 2001:13

<sup>32</sup> Fenton 2003:52

<sup>33</sup> Hutchinson & Smith 1996:71

<sup>34</sup> Taylor 2001:xvii

## Models of Nationalism

Rogers Brubaker describes the French ‘civic’ model and the German ‘ethnic’ model of nation as ‘antagonistic’, with the French being primarily concerned with cultural and political assimilation as a consequence of Revolutionary ideals, in stark contrast to the German model, which is held to be more *Volk*-centred<sup>35</sup> and differentialist.<sup>36</sup> The opposition between French and German models of nationalism dates back to the French Revolution and its aftermath, when the Jacobins preached allegiance to the republican *patrie* in terms of a political, legal and civic community.<sup>37</sup> This, according to Brubaker, is a result of the gradual development of national consciousness within the increasingly defined borders of the developing nation-state, closely linked to increasingly homogenous use of the French language.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, German nationalist thought was formed “during the Revolutionary era by the Romantic movement on the one hand and the Prussian reform movement on the other, both occurring in the shadow of the French occupation of Germany”<sup>39</sup>. In France the ideals of Revolution inaugurated a new form of human community linked to a specific, new ideology which was able to construct a collective civic spirit.<sup>40</sup> To this end, the French model of nation was theoretically created to be open to all those who wished to integrate into the French nation by embracing French republican, revolutionary ideals. The myth engendered by the Revolution of the Jacobin allegiance to the *patrie* in terms of a political, legal and civic community theoretically evokes the idea of some sort of social contract *à la* Rousseau rather than the existence of a shared culture.<sup>41</sup>

In terms of nationality law in both countries, which is supposed to demonstrate the practical application of nationalist thought, Patrick Weil informs us that France has provided us with the ‘model of the civic nation open to the

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<sup>35</sup> The English translation of the German word ‘Volk’ as ‘folk’ does not fully express the deeper connotations of the German use of the term. ‘Volk’ refers not only to the literal idea of a people, but evokes an idea of a deeply-ingrained, sometimes unconscious, shared culture and history, much in the vein of German ethnic nationalism.

<sup>36</sup> Brubaker 1992:1

<sup>37</sup> Smith 1991:13

<sup>38</sup> Brubaker 1992:3

<sup>39</sup> Brubaker 1992:9

<sup>40</sup> Smith 2001:47

<sup>41</sup> Smith 1991:13

integration of immigrants',<sup>42</sup> since 1889, when the principle of *jus soli*<sup>43</sup> was adopted legally as a means of granting nationality. By contrast, up until recently, *jus sanguinis*<sup>44</sup> had been the favoured principle of determining nationality in German nationality law, reflecting the preference given towards ethnic nationalism.<sup>45</sup> In France, the civic community was supported by a "strong, confident bourgeoisie"<sup>46</sup>, which strongly favoured openness to immigration and an expansive definition of citizenship, since this would serve only to "expand and strengthen the nation, not to dilute its ethnocultural substance"<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, the principle of *jus soli* was encouraged since it seemed to stem from resentment of the exemption of foreigners from military service who had settled in France long term. This issue, while not a military necessity, was "ideologically scandalous and politically intolerable"<sup>48</sup>, since it directly contradicted French assimilationist values. What of course works well in theory, however, does not necessarily work so well in practice, and we must remember that it can be very difficult to separate the legal status of naturalisation from cultural assimilation. Linguistic unity was advocated as indispensable to Republican citizenship, because it not only united all Frenchmen with a universal method of communication, but because it also allowed all citizens to fully engage with the Republic. Only with knowledge of the French language could one of its (male) citizens fully understand all political communications, engage with their vote, and enjoy equal access to public office. This philosophy was consolidated during the later half of the nineteenth century, with the Third Republic's drive to improve nationalist feeling through compulsory primary education, as well as increased mobility thanks to improved road and rail networks, and military conscription.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, because the German nation as we know it today did not come into existence until 1871, German citizenship was not originally national: German

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<sup>42</sup> Weil 2002:187 ("modèle de la nation civique ouverte à l'intégration des immigrés et de leurs enfants")

<sup>43</sup> Literally translated as 'right of the soil', the principle of *jus soli* is the right of anyone born in the territory of a state to its nationality or citizenship

<sup>44</sup> Literally translated as 'right of blood', the principle of *jus sanguinis* determines citizenship not by place of birth but by the citizenship of the parents

<sup>45</sup> Weil 2002:197

<sup>46</sup> Smith 2001:45

<sup>47</sup> Brubaker 1992:91

<sup>48</sup> Brubaker 1990:395

<sup>49</sup> Brubaker 1992:10-11

nationality and Prussian (or other subnational) citizenship were sharply distinct from one another. This meant that German citizenship was not originally national: German nationality and Prussian (or other subnational) citizenship were sharply distinct from one-another. This is reflected in the German vocabulary of citizenship, which distinguishes very clearly between *Staatsangehörigkeit* (citizenship) and *Nationalität* (nationality) or *Volkszugehörigkeit* (ethnicity), in contrast to the semantic overlap in both French and English, where nationality/*nationalité* and citizenship/*citoyenneté* are rough synonyms. The words have slightly different connotations in French and English, but are generally used interchangeably to describe state-membership.<sup>50</sup> German unification was originally designed by Bismarck to create a conservative, Prussian-dominated federation to rival the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>51</sup> However, Bismarck's idea mutated rapidly and language and ethnicity quickly came to exert a greater appeal to the new German people, especially in light of the perceived external and internal threats to the new nation; namely the French and the Jewish people. According to Smith, in Germany there developed a growing fear of cultural and ethnic pollution, which influenced the course of German nationalist ideology in the direction of ethnic naturalism and biological determinism.<sup>52</sup> This fear, it was pointed out, was completely contrary to Prussian (and Bismarck's) expansionism, which had used an ethno-cultural argument to justify the annexation of Elsass-Lothringen, but had contradicted this argument when incorporating Polish districts into the Reich.<sup>53</sup>

As a result of German use of *jus sanguinis* as a determiner of entitlement to German citizenship, linked to the popularity of theories of ethnic nationalism, traditionally it has been much more difficult for immigrants to Germany to receive German citizenship than for immigrants to France, where French citizenship law automatically transformed many, if not most, second- and third-generation immigrants into citizens. At the same time, Germans residing abroad (*Auslandsdeutsche*) were allowed to retain their citizenship indefinitely and pass it on to their descendants, provided that they did not also gain citizenship of

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<sup>50</sup> Brubaker 1992:50-51

<sup>51</sup> Özkirimli 2000:152

<sup>52</sup> Smith 2001:39

<sup>53</sup> Brubaker 1992:127

another country and that they fulfilled their military obligations.<sup>54</sup> In comparison, Polish insistence on remaining distinct from other citizens of the Empire meant that they became increasingly treated as second-class citizens.<sup>55</sup> It was only in 2000 that German nationality laws became more open to German-born immigrants. Weil quotes Georges Gruffy in postulating that Germany was more favourable towards *jus sanguinis* because it was a country of emigration, whereas France had chosen *jus soli* because it was a country of immigration, mostly thanks to extensive French colonisation.<sup>56</sup> Is this too simplistic an analysis? We can certainly argue that France continues to receive immigrants primarily from her former colonies, whereas in Germany, which also now has a significant immigrant population, the highest proportion of immigrants is of Turkish origin. Furthermore, Germany is the most popular destination in Europe for asylum seekers, second in the world only to the United States.<sup>57</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, France had enjoyed the benefits of over two hundred years of establishing colonies across the globe, and had adapted to imperialist governance. In some part, France was defined by her colonies and her relations with those colonies, which in turn was reflected in French ideas about nationalism. By contrast, the German Empire had only itself been established for thirty years, and while Bismarck fought bitterly to establish German colonies in Africa from 1884, it would be difficult to argue that the German nation fostered a widespread imperialist ethos outside of Europe at this time. The French had witnessed two significant periods of colonisation between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. The first period of colonisation began with French colonisation of part of the Americas, comprising a large part of what is now Canada and extending as far down as Louisiana in the modern USA, as well as the French West Indies and French Guiana. Most of this territory was lost during wars with the British, and then some of it was later restored to the French by the British in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. The second wave of colonisation began in 1830 with the French invasion of Algeria, and continued in earnest after the Franco-Prussian War. French influence expanded over Southeast Asia, North, Western and Central Africa, as well as in the South

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<sup>54</sup> Brubaker 1992:114-115

<sup>55</sup> Brubaker 1992:128

<sup>56</sup> Weil 2002:203

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24636868> (accessed 25/10/13)

Pacific. French colonial policy was first and foremost concerned with the ‘civilising mission’<sup>58</sup> it had given itself, believing that it was the duty of Europeans to bring civilisation to uncivilised peoples. This “assimilationist, civilising, nationalising mission inside France”<sup>59</sup> echoed a larger mission being carried out in *la plus grande France*, namely the French colonies, where there was a fear of groups of foreigners (i.e. from the native population) remaining ‘foreign’ and ‘un-French’, thereby creating a ‘nation within a nation’ which would defy republican values. This self-appointed mission was supported by nineteenth century racial theories, which had popularised views about culture and the superiority of whites.<sup>60</sup> It was only after the Second World War that the process of decolonisation began, and so ‘mainland’ French citizens would have been made very aware of France’s colonial powers during the first half of the twentieth century.

After the Franco-Prussian War, it was hoped by politicians that by drawing the public’s attention onto French colonial glory, France’s loss of status in Europe would be forgotten (or at least be less prominent in the minds of the French people). At the same time, Fysh and Wolfreys postulate that the civic principle of shared political values was “powerfully reasserted” after the Franco-Prussian War in order to justify the return of Alsace-Lorraine from Germany, which had been annexed on ethno-cultural grounds.<sup>61</sup> This surely would only have added to the sense of both racial and cultural superiority, which was starting to become more popular, connecting the two strands in a way which, ironically, begins to resemble the ethno-cultural arguments put forward by the Germans at the time. The development of racist thought in France is not particularly well documented, with most focus being on the anti-Semitic strand that surrounded it. Examples of widespread racism influencing politics do not tend to become prominent until the early twentieth century, when we consider the pre-fascist and fascist movements in France. This is not to say that French politics at this time did not have racist tendencies, but it is easier to chart a development in awareness of different cultures and France’s colonial powers, which would lead French people to assume superiority over colonised peoples.

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<sup>58</sup> “la mission civilisatrice”

<sup>59</sup> Brubaker 1990:393

<sup>60</sup> Peabody & Stovall 2003:131

<sup>61</sup> Fysh & Wolfreys 2003:11

Similarly, up until recently, scholars tended to focus on the politics and actions of the National Socialist Party in the 1930s and 1940s when tracing the development of nationalist thought in Germany, allowing Germany's dark twentieth century history to colour its nineteenth century one.<sup>62</sup> However, as with the development of nationalist thought in France, German nationalism reared its head in the early part of the nineteenth century. Most choose to trace German nationalism back to the Napoleonic wars of 1813, when the German states were first of all heavily defeated by Napoleon and then eventually were able to overthrow him. The numerous threats to and conquests of German territory by the French, which led to widespread insecurity forced Germany to try and define what was meant by 'Germany', since the traditional political framework of the Holy Roman Empire had disappeared. The German nation had changed completely and needed to be redefined.<sup>63</sup> Former Francophiles felt disillusioned with what France had been turned into by Napoleon, when the Revolution had seemed to promise so much, and started to look back to Germany for a new way to make radical changes to improve society. Another longstanding argument holds that nationalist thought was able to take hold in Germany, as in other rapidly industrialising countries, since people had begun to feel threatened by mass urbanisation and the resulting changes to lifestyle and culture. This meant that they hardly recognised what their nation had become, and they longed for the simplicity of the pre-industrial past. Furthermore, Prussia was finally emerging from the shadow of Austria to dominate the German-speaking nations of Central Europe, which led to a huge shift in national consciousness.

In terms of literature, from the beginning of the nineteenth century German literature was increasingly harnessed and reinterpreted in terms of a national consciousness. Glaser tells us that a second wave of this took place later in the century, when "a massive tide of pan-Germanic literature flooded the petit-bourgeois consciousness toward the end of the nineteenth century. The arguments [within] showed little sophistication; using mostly stereotyped phrases, they pounded the reading public with the mythos of being chosen"<sup>64</sup>, promoting the development of a "Germanic cult", which celebrated the

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<sup>62</sup> Harp 1998:xi

<sup>63</sup> Hughes 1988:21

<sup>64</sup> Glaser 1978:143



superiority of all things German. A large part of this cult was the “nostalgic literature” enjoyed by millions, which “not only stilled the readers’ needs for sugar and sweetness, for torture and cruelty, for sentiment and cheap glitter; it also stilled and again roused urges to hate and to assert power, and it channelled the irrational forces of the dissatisfied”<sup>65</sup>. This particular brand of nationalist discourse, which Hughes refers to as ‘*völkisch* nationalism’, emerged as a product of Romantic nationalism, as well as a distorted version of the scientific theories about the origins of peoples, such as Darwin’s, which had emerged during the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, of course, literature of all types was becoming much more accessible to people, thanks to dramatically increased levels of literacy. This meant that people had access to more information about the world, and that they became more conscious of their place within it. It is easy to see how German people were attracted by a doctrine which “in the name of science offered to German folk the palm of pre-eminence among the peoples of the world”<sup>67</sup>.

One strand of this *völkisch* nationalism developed into the *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) movement, which emphasised the traditional, rural life, and linked it mystically to having pure German blood. While the *Blut und Boden* movement is most commonly associated with Nazi Germany, it was becoming increasingly popular throughout the late nineteenth century. Within this movement, the role of farmers was celebrated, as was love of the *Heimat*. The core meaning of *Heimat* is the sense of ‘home’, not as a physical dwelling, but rather as the idea of a more general place. This intangible sentiment essentially paints an idealistic, and often nostalgic, picture of Germany by painting a picture of an archetypal German town or village, bringing together many associations which no single English word could ever convey.<sup>68</sup> The idea of a *Heimat* common to all German peoples also promoted this idea of the German *Volk*, who were bound not only by the myth of their blood but by the myth of their shared ancestry in the German countryside, uniting them irrevocably.

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<sup>65</sup> Glaser 1978:145

<sup>66</sup> Hughes 1988:142

<sup>67</sup> Butler 1941:143

<sup>68</sup> Boa 2000:1

This is only one extreme interpretation of nationalist thought. It can be tempting to see these models of nationalism simply in terms of black and white and to place the French model on the opposite end of the scale to the German model. This is far too simplistic an analysis, especially when we consider other influencing elements on each model. As an example, the liberal nature of early German nationalism, which was concerned with establishing democracy during the 1830s and 1840s (known as the *Vormärz* period), is often forgotten.<sup>69</sup> It was only much later on in the nineteenth century that German nationalism took a decided swing to the right. Likewise, French nationalism cannot be described as purely concerned with civic values, as racial and ethnic elements became increasingly popular around the turn of the twentieth century in the developing right-wing intellectual circles. As such, the idea of the *patrie* was used by many nationalist authors such as Barrès in a similar way to the German *Heimat*, with an emphasis on the nostalgic joys of rural life. Furthermore, the increasing acceptance of anti-Semitic thought ignored the civic emphasis on embracing republican values, preferring to highlight the differences in culture between Jews and French people (meaning Christians).

### The Nation Building Project in Education

Primary education was seen by both France and Germany as one of the most important tools for effective nation building amongst the masses: after all, the children of today would grow up to be the soldiers and the mothers of tomorrow. It was believed to be important to foster a sense of national identity amongst the citizens of each country so that they would feel a sense of duty in 'doing their bit' for the nation, whether that be by defending it in battle or by rearing a new generation of patriots to follow in their parents' footsteps. This idea was already reasonably well developed in Prussia by the time of the Franco-Prussian War, but the French worked quickly during the latter half of the nineteenth century in order to develop their own national project to that effect. This project was particularly pertinent in the border region of Lorraine. On the French side, Lorraine marked the new Franco-German border, and as such the people of Lorraine had to become good French citizens who would guard that border. Hopes of stirring national identity were equally high in German Lorraine,

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<sup>69</sup> Breuilly 1992:81

where Bismarck hoped to create a new generation of Germans who would not remember life under French rule and so would have no qualms about integrating into the Empire. For the citizens of Elsass-Lothringen, primary education would provide a formal structure for teaching the German language, as well as introducing subjects such as history and geography, which would further help to instil German values and build a nationalist attachment to the *Heimat*.

Primary education in Elsass-Lothringen therefore sought to highlight the natural Germanness of Alsace and the Moselle, and placed great emphasis on teaching the history, culture and customs of the province as being specifically German features, which fitted easily into the wider culture of the German Empire. The selective use of history served the German national cause, teaching children that Alsace and the Moselle's 'return' to a united Germany in 1870 was the natural fulfilment of the German nation.<sup>70</sup> Of equal importance was the introduction of geography, where the use of maps allowed children to visualise the otherwise abstract notion of the nation as a tangible reality. Bismarck's attitudes towards education in Elsass-Lothringen were influenced somewhat by the failures of his forceful attempts to Germanise the Polish population in the Prussian Partition of Poland, which had only led to fervent anti-German sentiment and a distinct lack of successful 'Germanisation'. Bismarck realised that the Polish programme had not succeeded thus far because it had been too aggressively anti-Polish, and so he changed tack for the new *Reichsland*. Bismarck hoped that a more tolerant, bilingual approach would allow the newest members of the German Empire to slowly integrate in an organic way over several generations, gradually becoming Germans, seemingly of their own accord.<sup>71</sup>

Closely linked to general education was the attitude towards language learning adopted in the province after 1870. Most language learning was of course done in schools, and children were targeted because they were presumed to be more receptive to change than adults who had grown up as French subjects. Teaching of the German language turned out to be far more difficult than first thought, and it did not take long for the Germans to realise that Alsace and the Moselle

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<sup>70</sup> Harp 1998:119-120

<sup>71</sup> Silverman 1972:88

had to be treated as separate entities, since the Moselle still held the bulk of the French-speaking (or non-Alsatian-speaking) population. There were also several logistic difficulties associated with this. There was a distinct shortage of German-speaking teachers in francophone areas, and drives to recruit germanophone teachers from other areas of the Empire proved to be relatively unsuccessful. Furthermore, the cost of retiring established French-speaking teachers proved to be prohibitive.<sup>72</sup> There was also less incentive for people in these areas to learn German, since, thanks to Bismarck's lenience, the French language was only outlawed in schools and public places in communities where French speakers were in the minority.<sup>73</sup>

Children who had remained on the French side of the new Franco-German border in 1871 were of course taught to an entirely different curriculum. Central to the French nationalist project was the development of knowledge of the *patrie*: first of all, knowing what was meant by the word '*patrie*', second, knowing where you fit in within the *patrie*, and finally, developing a deep and intrinsic love for that *patrie*. The *patrie* is generally defined in terms of emotional attachment, defence of the homeland, and reinforcement of national symbols. As one example, the *petit Lavissee* paints a rather forceful picture of the *patrie*, explaining that the *patrie* is 'a country for which children should die rather than obey a foreign people'<sup>74</sup>. Children in French Lorraine, like their contemporaries across France, were taught to a new, centralised curriculum, and as such were taught to be aware of their place within a wider nation. This was an attempt to 'nationalise' the French people and to ensure that they identified themselves as French, rather than defining themselves by the region from which they came. French children were taught about national history and geography, as well as important figures in the development of the French nation, such as Joan of Arc and the architects of the Revolution. These characters also served as personified nationalist myths, and were used by teachers to illustrate the practical elements of being a patriot.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Silverman 1972:81

<sup>73</sup> Vlossack 2011:47

<sup>74</sup> "une patrie est un pays dont les enfants doivent mourir plutôt que d'obéir à un peuple étranger" (p23)

<sup>75</sup> Thiesse 1997:79-80

Like the German government before it, so too did the French education ministry concentrate its efforts on the teaching of standard French in schools. However, we are unable to establish how many children in Lorraine had learned French during the early nineteenth century, since official records of literacy before the 1850s did not discriminate against literacy in German or in French.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Harp tells us that literacy rates often did not illustrate the number of people who were truly literate, but rather the number of people who had memorised enough French at school in order to appear literate. While the French government made great strides in the 1850s and 1860s in introducing education in French in Alsace and Lorraine, many children left school and promptly forgot their French if they were not using it in their day-to-day lives.<sup>77</sup> In 1870, children were taught that knowledge of French, not dialect, was the best way to be truly part of the *patrie*, so that they are able to communicate with all other French people, and make the most of what the French nation is able to offer its citizens. Language, it is supposed, is something that makes all French people equal to one another, thereby uniting them.

This chapter has offered a discussion of some of the more important influences on the development of both French and German nationalism, both in popular terms as well as the official models of nationalism. It also charts how these theories of nationalism influenced both nations' projects for nation building through primary education. Both strands of nationalist sentiment developed from similar feelings of insecurity, coupled with increased awareness of other cultures or 'races'. When this awareness turned into a feeling of superiority over other races, nationalism turned into racism. These strands of nationalism and racism manifested themselves in various different ways, with the most popular permutation of German nationalism being defined as *völkisch* nationalism, heavily linked to literature and culture. The evolution of French nationalism, by contrast, involved a much less significant nationalist literary movement than the German equivalent, with 'scientific' or rational discourse being more prominent instead. What is apparent is that nationalism was an important influence in both France and Germany during the nineteenth century, and that some of these views did manage to filter down to educational literature. There is information

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<sup>76</sup> Harp 1998:23

<sup>77</sup> Harp 1998:46

about the colonial powers of France and Germany in both sets of schoolbooks, and we are treated to a short explanation of race in the *Tour de la France*. There are also many examples of *völkisch* literature and authors used throughout the German *Lesebücher*. These all correspond much more to the patterns of popular nationalism at the time, as described above, rather than to the ‘official’ civic or ethnic forms of nationalism as linked to nationality laws.

## Chapter Two - Education, History and Nation in French Lorraine

The two books studied in this thesis would have been used in French Lorraine between 1870 and 1918. They are interesting choices, since they are able to offer us contrasting methods of pedagogy while promoting the same goals of nation building; the *petit Lavis* gives an example of modern French education, with its emphasis on the rational and the scientific, and its specific focus on history. In this way, the *petit Lavis* signals a move towards separating different school subjects and teaching them individually, rather than holistically. By contrast, Kory Olson reminds us that *Le Tour de la France* “represents a crossroads between old and new ways of understanding France. Its maps showed how regions and departments related to each other, but the centuries-old method of using narrative to explain and describe the nation remained equally relevant”<sup>78</sup>. This chapter will focus on specific aspects of the curriculum as found within these two schoolbooks, namely the treatment of history, as well as the general development of nationalist myths and French national identity. This will allow us to discuss some of the methods used within these books to further the French nation building project, which was considered to be so important in Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian War, as well as across the rest of the nation.

### Education about the Nation

Both books clearly share the project of encouraging and promoting nationalist and patriotic sentiment among the children of France. They are unambiguous in this motivation, and are explicit in their mission. As an example, nationalist and patriotic sentiment rears its head early on in the *petit Lavis*: in the introduction to his pupils, Ernest Lavis informs them (using both bold and italic font formatting for emphasis) that their fathers have ‘spilt their blood in glorious battles so that France would be honoured amongst all the nations’<sup>79</sup>, and therefore their ‘first duty is to love all of their *patrie*, which is the country

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<sup>78</sup> Olson 2011:40

<sup>79</sup> “[vos pères] ont versé leur sang dans de glorieuses batailles pour que la France fût honorée entre toutes les nations” (Lavis 2010:3)

of their fathers’<sup>80</sup>. This reference to the country of their fathers is interesting, since it seems to suggest a nod to an ethnic form of nationalism, most commonly associated with the German nation.<sup>81</sup> Bruno also outlines her nationalist mission in her preface, telling us that she wishes to teach children about the *patrie* so that they could love it even more and serve it in a better way.<sup>82</sup> The characters in the *Tour de la France* clearly demonstrate their loyalties to France, and express them openly and frequently, sometimes in quite a contrived manner. As examples, André promises his dying father that he and his brother will stay French, ‘no matter what they have to suffer to do so’<sup>83</sup>. Later on, André and Julien, moved by the sight of the French countryside, exclaim, ‘beloved France, we are your sons, and we want to stay worthy of you for all of our lives!’<sup>84</sup>. The tone of this statement has an almost religious nature to it, it being so intense and heartfelt. This would, of course, have fitted in with the emerging support for secular but nationalist education during the Third Republic, as nationalism became the ‘new French religion’. It would also reflect a need to replace the religious element of education which had been so important in France until now.

Central to this republican, nationalist project was the development of knowledge of the *patrie*: first of all, knowing what was meant by the word ‘*patrie*’, second, knowing where you fit in within the *patrie*, and finally, as a result of receiving this knowledge, developing a deep and intrinsic love for that *patrie*. This was considered to be an absolute priority for education by the French government, since it was viewed to be the most effective way of promoting national unity and establishing the loyalty and cooperation of the French people.<sup>85</sup> The *patrie* is defined in various ways by both textbooks, in terms of emotional attachment, defence of the homeland, and reinforcement of national symbols. The *petit Lavis* in particular paints quite a militaristic picture of the *patrie*, using bold font for further emphasis as well as potent

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<sup>80</sup> “votre premier devoir est d’aimer par-dessus tout votre *patrie*, c’est-à-dire la *terre de vos pères*” (Lavis 2010:3)

<sup>81</sup> Ancestry is an important part of the construction of a shared history within nationalism, as is the memory of the war dead and the glory of the army, which provided a sense of stability in uncertain times. (Varley 2008:25-26)

<sup>82</sup> “s’ils le connaissaient mieux... ils l’aimeraient encore davantage et pourraient encore mieux le servir” (Bruno 1977:3)

<sup>83</sup> “Nous resterons Français, quelque peine qu’il faille souffrir pour cela” (Bruno 1977:10)

<sup>84</sup> “France aimée, nous sommes tes fils, et nous voulons toute notre vie rester dignes de toi!” (Bruno 1977:25)

<sup>85</sup> Hobsbawm & Ranger 1984:265



language. Lavissee explains that the *patrie* is ‘a country for which children should die rather than obey a foreign people’<sup>86</sup>, which seems to be a powerful lesson for children to learn. This lesson is further reinforced on the following page, when Lavissee explains that the French learnt from Joan of Arc that they loved their country (“*la grande patrie*”) and that it was ‘glorious to fight and die’ for France.<sup>87</sup> Joan of Arc is a particularly important example, since she is used as a nationalist symbol of French patriotism, and this description of her in the *petit Lavissee* serves to reinforce this symbolism, which was only starting to be developed during the late nineteenth century. Another example of a potent symbol of the *patrie* is the story of the French flag. We are told in the *petit Lavissee* that the three colours of red, white and blue are chosen (in italics for emphasis), and that French soldiers have ‘fought gloriously under this flag in every part of the world’.<sup>88</sup> The promotion of the military is important, since the military service undertaken by every male in the country was another method of developing national unity.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, one of the aims of the *Tour de la France* is to educate French schoolchildren about as much of the nation as possible in order to give them national awareness of it, thereby replacing the regional focus which dominated before. This is explicitly linked to love of the *patrie* by Bruno, who uses the character of Julien to explain that through knowledge of all of the regions of France, we love France better, and we demonstrate this love for our country through our interest in learning about it.<sup>90</sup> As a result, education is also heavily promoted in the book, and this is linked both back to the generosity of the nation in providing these services, as well as forward to what the young generation can achieve through their increased knowledge. Julien’s character is used in particular to endorse this, and he talks explicitly about his appreciation of national sponsorship of education, the purpose of which is to teach him how

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<sup>86</sup> “une patrie est un pays dont les enfants doivent mourir plutôt que d’obéir à un peuple étranger” (Lavissee 2010:23)

<sup>87</sup> “pour la première fois alors les Français aimèrent la grande patrie et comprirent qu’il est glorieux de combattre et de mourir pour [la France]” (Lavissee 2010:24)

<sup>88</sup> “Les trois couleurs sont devenues celles du drapeau de la France, et nos soldats ont combattu glorieusement sous ce drapeau dans toutes les parties du monde” (Lavissee 2010:146)

<sup>89</sup> Weber 1796:78-79

<sup>90</sup> “Je voudrais connaître toutes les provinces de la France, parce que j’aime la France et que je veux être instruit des choses de mon pays” (Bruno 1977:243)

to become a better patriot.<sup>91</sup> Passages such as these would have served as a clear illustration to the children reading this story as to how they were expected to think and act concerning love of the *patrie*. It would also have shown children that there were clear benefits to receiving an education, and so they should be grateful for the opportunities granted to them by the state. Through André and Julien's journey, French schoolchildren would have learnt in parallel with the two fictional heroes, and organically develop their own sense of national identity, which would allow them to truly and unreservedly love France as a whole. Because of this, what is important in both of the schoolbooks is the need for the children reading them to feel included in this. The fact that the main characters of the *Le Tour de la France* are children brings the story closer to the world of the children reading it, which is characteristic of a lot of children's literature. Lavissee in his turn is careful in his history manual to refer to the schoolchildren explicitly as part of the nation, using the inclusive pronoun "nous" ('us'), instead of separating himself from the children by use of the pronoun 'you'. One such example is the discussion of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, where the narrative holds that the German emperor ceded Alsace 'to us' thanks to Richelieu's conquest.<sup>92</sup>

Another connection made to love of the *patrie* concerns the use of the standardised French language, which again was a priority for the French educational ministry to develop in order to create further, stronger bonds between French citizens.<sup>93</sup> This was deemed to be particularly important in areas of France (such as Lorraine) where regional languages were much more widely used than French.<sup>94</sup> This is more prominent in the *Tour de la France*, presumably reflecting its earlier publication date, which would correspond with a higher proportion of the nation not being fluent in French. As the two brothers in the *Tour de la France* continue on their journey across France, they are

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<sup>91</sup> " - Julien, les écoles, les cours d'adultes, les bibliothèques scolaires sont des bienfaits de votre patrie. La France veut que tous ses enfants soient dignes d'elles, et chaque jour elle augmente le nombre de ses écoles...

- Oh! dit Julien, j'aime la France de tout mon cœur! Je voudrais qu'elle fût la première nation du monde.

- Alors, Julien, songez à une chose: c'est que l'honneur de la patrie dépend de ce que valent ses enfants" (Bruno 1977:45)

<sup>92</sup> "Par la paix de Westphalie, l'empereur de l'Allemagne nous céda l'Alsace, que Richelieu avait conquise" (Lavissee 2010:83)

<sup>93</sup> Olson 2011:40

<sup>94</sup> Carrol 2011:304

surprised to come across French people who do not actually speak French, but a dialect. These people are portrayed negatively: they make Julien and André feel ‘isolated’ and uncomfortable, and as if they are in a ‘foreign’ place.<sup>95</sup> André explains to Julien that these people were not able to go to school, which is why they do not speak French, but reassures him that ‘in a few years, it will not be like this anymore, and throughout France everyone will know the language of the *patrie*’.<sup>96</sup> Through discussions such as these, children were taught that knowledge of French, not dialect, is the best way to be truly part of the *patrie*, so that they were able to communicate with all other French people, and make the most of what the French nation is able to offer its citizens. Up until the time of the Franco-Prussian War, in France it was not considered necessary for citizens to speak French to prove their loyalty to the nation, which was why use of dialect had been tolerated. However, this was no longer the case, and so it was imperative that all French citizens learnt their national language in order to demonstrate their patriotism. By teaching the young Lorrains to use standard French in their day-to-day lives, and to move away from *patois*, it would become harder to question their loyalty to France. The *petit Lavis*, being published almost a generation after the *Tour de la France*, makes no reference to the use of dialects in France, but is published in standard French. There is, however, an extensive glossary at the back of the book, as well as definitions of certain words within the main body of the text. This device could serve a dual purpose: these explanations would be a key aid to understanding for pupils whose French was not yet fluent, but they would also help younger students whose vocabulary was still limited.

## History - The Revolution and the Republic

One powerful symbol of the French Republic is the Revolution of 1789. However, very little of the Revolution is mentioned in the *Tour de la France*. In fact, the word ‘revolution’ only appears in the work three times. There is reference made to the French civil code as being ‘one of the glories of our nation’<sup>97</sup>, which was established after the 1789 Revolution, as well as Desaix taking part in the

<sup>95</sup> “[ils] se sentaient bien isolés dans cette ferme étrangère” (Bruno 1977:164)

<sup>96</sup> “C’est que tous n’ont pas pu aller à l’école. Mais dans un certain nombre d’années il n’en sera plus ainsi, et par toute la France on saura parler la langue de la patrie” (Bruno 1977:164)

<sup>97</sup> “Le code français est une des gloires de notre nation” (Bruno 1977:196)

revolutionary wars.<sup>98</sup> It is interesting that the civil code is highlighted by Bruno, since this was introduced by Napoleon rather than the revolutionary government. Later on, we learn in a study of Jacquard that these revolutionary wars were ‘sad events’ where ‘citizens fought one another at the same time as France’s enemies’. However, Jacquard evidently made the best of a bad situation, since he became a soldier and ‘went to fight for the *patrie*’.<sup>99</sup> What is more, the Revolution is presented in a negative light the final time it is mentioned in the *Tour de la France*, since we are informed that Philippe de Girard and his family were ‘forced to leave France during the Revolution, and they lost everything they owned’<sup>100</sup>. With the *Tour de la France* having been published so soon after the advent of the Third Republic, it is tempting to speculate that Bruno may not have been entirely convinced by the republican ideals of the Revolution, seeing as how up until now they had failed to provide France with a strong and stable regime. By contrast, the *petit Lavis* chooses to focus on republican history to the relative detriment of monarchical history. We learn in the preface that the *petit Lavis* was conceived as a reaction to the January 1894 educational decree from the French government, which required history teaching to concentrate on what Lavis deems the ‘essential facts’ in French history.<sup>101</sup> This meant that children were supposed to focus on events dating from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.<sup>102</sup> As a result, the first chapter of the *petit Lavis* quickly tackles the first 1,500 years of French history, while the next five chapters of the textbook take the student from 1483 to the end of the nineteenth century.

Because of this focus on more modern history, and because of its publication in a republican society which was managing to cling to power against all odds, the *petit Lavis* contains an entire chapter dedicated to the study of the Revolution, the Terror, and the establishment of the first French Republic. In this chapter, the preliminary events leading up to the 1789 Revolution are

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<sup>98</sup> “Il prit part aux grandes guerres de la Révolution française contre l’Europe coalisée” (Bruno 1977:139)

<sup>99</sup> “de tristes événements... c’était le moment des guerres de la Révolution, où les citoyens combattaient les uns contre les autres en même temps que contre les ennemis de la France. Il se fit soldat et alla combattre, lui aussi, pour la patrie” (Bruno 1977:155)

<sup>100</sup> ils “furent forcés de quitter la France pendant la Révolution, et ils perdirent tout ce qu’ils possédaient” (p266)

<sup>101</sup> This decree was passed during a period in which the Left Republicans were in power (shortly before the assassination of Marie François Sadi Carnot)

<sup>102</sup> “les faits essentiels depuis la fin du 15<sup>ème</sup> siècle jusqu’à nos jours” (p2)

charted. The Revolution of 1789 is not lauded as the start of the Republican movement, nor is it held up as a potent symbol of the power of the French people the way it is today. The development of the French flag is given a paragraph, as is the new constitution, and the principles of freedom (“liberté”) and equality (“égalité”) are explained in detail. Only one part of the historical account becomes less detached, when the nobles who escaped France and sought the help of foreign powers on behalf of the French King are described as ‘thus committing the crime of treason against the *patrie*’<sup>103</sup>. The execution of Louis XVI is described, and we are told that he wanted to ‘violate the constitution’ and that he had ‘appealed to France’s enemies against France’.<sup>104</sup> However, we are also taught that the real guilt should lie with his grandfather Louis XV, who ‘was the cause of the loss of love for royalty by the French people’<sup>105</sup>. Lavissee admits that while France was waging (and winning) her revolutionary wars across Europe, horrible things were also happening to the people back in France, since their representatives were ‘becoming enemies to one another’.<sup>106</sup> The Terror is also dealt with, as is the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte who is both celebrated for his work for France and criticised for his rejection of the constitution and his return to absolutist rule over the French people.<sup>107</sup>

Most of this chapter shies away from emotive or persuasive language, and no one event is chosen to be explained in greater detail. This is interesting, since it shows that Lavissee preferred to remain analytical on the issues raised by the Revolution: the republican ideals of the Revolution are neither celebrated as the way forward nor dismissed as fruitless. The ‘republican myth’ which we recognise today might not have been fully developed at this time, therefore it might not have been recognised by Lavissee to be a device with which to aid nation building. Furthermore, it may not have been accepted easily by a populace who remained unconvinced about the lasting success of a French

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<sup>103</sup> “commettant ainsi le crime de trahison envers la patrie” (Lavissee 2010:152)

<sup>104</sup> “Louis XVI avait voulu violer la Constitution qu’il avait jurée; il avait fait appel, *contre la France*, aux puissances ennemies de la France” (Lavissee 2010:155)

<sup>105</sup> “C’est Louis XV qui a fait perdre à la royauté l’amour que les Français avaient pour elle” (Lavissee 2010:155)

<sup>106</sup> “Pendant que nos ennemis étaient ainsi vaincus, il se passait en France d’horribles choses, car les députés de la Convention, qui avaient fait ensemble la République, devenaient **ennemis les uns des autres**” (Lavissee 2010:158)

<sup>107</sup> “Bonaparte travaillait pour la France; malheureusement, il voulait aussi travailler **pour lui-même**” (Lavissee 2010:171)

Republic, thanks to the failure of its two previous incarnations. From the perspective of the French government, it was reluctant to promote any ideas of revolution or uprising of the populace in order to play down the efficacy of these methods of governmental change, in case any citizens would think to rise up against the contemporary regime. At a time where democracy in France was being heralded as the backbone of the new Republic, any other forms of protest could have proved dangerous to this regime.<sup>108</sup> The idea of the nation as a whole would have been a safer rallying point, with its republican connotations being a helpful addition.

Nationalist myths develop most quickly during times of national threat, which helps to explain the resurgence of the French nationalist project following the Franco-Prussian War. Furthermore, while myths such as the ideals of the Revolution might have been in their infancy during the late nineteenth century, it might have taken much longer for these myths to become widely recognised in the public consciousness and therefore to be so readily utilised by nationalists. As an example, Bastille Day was only established as a public holiday in 1880.<sup>109</sup> Lavissee was employed by the republican regime to impart a republican education on its children, and he would have been very conscious of this role and its importance. As a result, what *is* found in the *petit Lavissee* is the justification of republican ideals and the shortcomings of both the French royal family and the subsequent imperialist rule of the Napoleonic dynasty. At the time of the book's publication in 1894, the Third Republic was still in its relative infancy, and the *petit Lavissee* would have served to reinforce and justify the Republic to a nation which was still struggling with some of its new ideals (such as compulsory, secular education). Common references are made to the misuse of privileges by the nobility and the clergy, and the corresponding 'miserable condition' of the average Frenchman.<sup>110</sup> While the successes of the French kings are celebrated, the lesson is often repeated that the common French people suffered when the kings let power go to their heads and abused it.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Hobsbawm & Ranger 1984:264-265

<sup>109</sup> Varley 2008:64

<sup>110</sup> "le *clergé* et la *noblesse* avaient des **privilèges** qu'ils voulaient garder; ils avaient l'orgueil de leur condition"; "la condition des *paysans* était misérable" (p15)

<sup>111</sup> "Les rois ont rendu de grands service à la France, car ils ont fait l'**unité** de notre patrie; mais il arrive souvent que le mal est mêlé au bien, et ce fut un grand mal que les rois devinssent **absolus**" (Lavissee 2010:56)

It is clear that the nationalist project was explicit in the French primary education curriculum of this period. This project was neither covert nor subtle, as can be demonstrated in the prefaces of both books, and as a result French children would have been aware of what their teachers were trying to instil in them. This education certainly helped to keep the memory of Alsace-Lorraine as a “rallying point” for the French nation,<sup>112</sup> especially once the events of 1914 began to unfold, as will be seen in the following section. However, while some nationalist symbols are developed, such as the idea of Joan of Arc or the Tricolour flag, there is a distinct trend to be seen in the *petit Lavis* in particular which leans towards educating French children about their *patrie* in a more rational way, rather than relying on myth and symbolism. There is little evidence of the ‘nostalgic nationalism’<sup>113</sup> which is to be found throughout the German *Lesebücher* of the period. At the same time, ironically, this project served to create its own nationalist myths in terms of developing the idea of a shared past as a unifying force, which is where we can draw clear comparisons between the nationalist project of France and that of Germany. The invention of tradition played an essential role in maintaining the legitimacy of the Republican regime and engaging its subjects in the development of the nation, just as the invention of a shared past was appropriated by the German government in order to legitimise the idea of an united nation

### History - The Franco-Prussian War

To this end, the way that the French books deal with the humiliation of the Franco-Prussian War, and particularly the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, provides us with a great deal of insight into the nationalist aims of the French education ministry. There was a great attempt to render the events of 1870-1871 an important lesson in terms of a powerful unifying force, particularly in the *Tour de la France*, which will be explained further later in this section. The *Tour de la France* deals with the Franco-Prussian War explicitly throughout its narrative, and the backdrop of the War remains prominent in the minds of the reader. While the Franco-Prussian War is dealt with in greater depth in the *Tour de la*

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<sup>112</sup> Olson 2011:39

<sup>113</sup> ‘Nostalgic nationalism’ evokes a traditional way of life, deeply connected with the local soil, and is most commonly associated with literary movements. It will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

France, and much more emotive language is used to describe the region of Lorraine and its loss, the *petit Lavis* does make its own statement about this French tragedy. At the end of the section on the events of 1870-1871, we are reminded (in bold font) that ‘no-one among us has forgotten that more than 15,000 men who were good Frenchmen were forced to become German in 1871, and our memory remains faithful and deep to our brothers who have been exiled from the *patrie*’<sup>114</sup>. An earlier entry describing the initial attachment of the province of Lorraine to France in 1766 also proves interesting, since Lavis chooses to use the verb ‘reunited’ to describe this action, suggesting of course that Lorraine was merely returning to France when in fact the province had remained more or less independent for centuries. Furthermore, the whole phrase is formatted in bold so as to highlight its importance.<sup>115</sup>

According to Jacques and Mona Ozouf, the *Tour de la France* primarily serves to keep “memory of the amputation alive”<sup>116</sup>, explicitly presenting us with the symbolism of the Franco-Prussian War and clearly developing this in terms of a nationalist myth. The repetition of the tragic loss of part of the *patrie* was an important tactic to impress upon the next generation the atrocities committed by the Germans which meant that the *patrie* was not complete. This can perhaps be seen as part of the build-up to the waves of *revanchisme* which lingered (with varying popularity) between 1871 and 1914. Furthermore, the provenance of the two heroes of the *Tour de la France* is no coincidence, and it sends a clear, nationalist message: the boys were born French in a part of Lorraine which forcibly became German after the Franco-Prussian War, and the boys strive throughout the novel to regain their precious French nationality. The boys’ father’s death at the beginning of the novel is partly caused by an injury he suffered while fighting for the French during the Franco-Prussian War, demonstrating the actions of a loyal servant of the *patrie* who was prepared to give his life in order to defend his country. The loss of the father also can stand as a metaphor for the loss of the nation as a whole after the war. The father’s dying wish was for the boys to return to France and become French once more, which provides a highly emotionally charged image of a father’s love for his

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<sup>114</sup> “Personne de nous pourtant n’a oublié que plus de quinze cent milles hommes qui étaient de bons Français ont été obligés de devenir Allemands en 1871, et nous gardons un souvenir fidèle et profond à nos frères exilés de la patrie” (Lavis 2010:246)

<sup>115</sup> “cette belle province fut réunie à la France” (Lavis 2010:117)

<sup>116</sup> Ozouf 1997:136



children, which in turn is inextricably linked to love for France. For a child in Lorraine being subjected to a new national curriculum, the plight of the two heroes of the book would have rung particularly true.

We can find a more academic examination of the Franco-Prussian War in both schoolbooks, although this does not feature as heavily in the *Tour de la France* as it does in the *petit Lavissee*, and when it does, it is almost as if in passing. This would partly have been because the first edition of the *Tour de la France* was only published six years after the end of the war, which would have been too soon to have much perspective on events. However, that is not to say that children reading this book would not have been aware of the events preceding the publication of the book, since occupied Alsace-Lorraine provides the background of the narrative. One notable mention of the Franco-Prussian War comes when the family are passing through Paris, and Uncle Frantz decides to tell the brothers about the Paris Commune. Unlike the *petit Lavissee*, *Le Tour de la France* takes a more tolerant approach. The Parisians are described as having resisted the Germans for six months, despite the cold and the hunger, when they were not thought capable of resisting for more than a fortnight.<sup>117</sup> While the events of the Commune are not celebrated explicitly, its mention does make Julien exclaim his love for Paris, giving the story positive, nationalist connotations. By contrast, Lavissee describes the Commune as a ‘criminal revolt’ because it ‘forced the government to attack the French capital in front of the conquering foreigners, who were happy to see them destroying themselves’.<sup>118</sup> This statement, entirely in bold font for extra emphasis, is interesting since the Germans choose to record the Commune as a rare example of the courage of the French people in their schoolbooks.<sup>119</sup> What is more, this is the first example in the *petit Lavissee* where the Germans or Prussians are referred to as ‘foreigners’ (“étrangers”). Up until this point in the chronology of the book, the Germans and Prussians have been reasonably well treated by Lavissee, who instead focuses on the English as the primary threat to France. However, the destruction

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<sup>117</sup> “rappelez-vous que Paris, mal approvisionné, souffrant de la faim et du froid, a résisté six mois aux Allemands quand on ne le croyait pas capable de tenir plus de quinze jours” (Bruno 1977:283)

<sup>118</sup> “L’insurrection de la Commune fut une révolte criminelle entre toutes, car elle força le gouvernement français à attaquer la capital de la France sous les yeux de l’étranger vainqueur, et heureux de nous voir nous déchirer nous-mêmes” (Lavissee 2010:237)

<sup>119</sup> “Aber der Trotz der Pariser beugte sich erst, als sie einer mehr als viermonatlichen Belagerung und vierwöchentlichen Beschießung widerstanden hatten” (L2 p237)

brought about by the Prussian army in 1870 is clearly one step too far, and suddenly the foreignness of the Germans is highlighted, while the role of the English as public enemy number one fades into the background.<sup>120</sup> This issue will be dealt with in greater depth in a later paragraph.

By contrast, the *petit Lavis* is forced by its nature to deal with the Franco-Prussian War in some detail. Even though it would be impossible for the French to put a victorious spin on this devastating conflict, Lavis certainly attempts to do so, so its story is told in quite a different manner to what is found in the German schoolbooks. The controversy surrounding the French declaration of war is glossed over,<sup>121</sup> only saying that the French government decided that a Prussian prince should not rule Spain, which ‘was the occasion for a war between France and Prussia’<sup>122</sup>. French defeat is put down to there being fewer French soldiers, and these soldiers not being under as good a command as the Prussians.<sup>123</sup> The account of the Battle of Sedan is also glossed over, since the soldiers are described as being ‘heroes’ and ‘courageous’, and Lavis informs us that it was recognised that it was useless to prolong the conflict, since ‘enough men had died so that honour had been saved’.<sup>124</sup> What Lavis focuses on instead are the few minor victories salvaged by the French, such as the defence of Belfort, which served to ‘honour the national defence’<sup>125</sup>. The peace treaty is accepted as ‘disastrous’, but we are reassured that France still managed to ‘save her honour by her resistance’.<sup>126</sup> The lesson that is to be taken from the account of the Franco-Prussian War is that it is ‘better to defend the *patrie* until the last possible limit rather than to give in to the conquering enemy’.<sup>127</sup> Lavis addresses the children directly in the passage, telling them that while ‘all that

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<sup>120</sup> Varley 2008:4-5

<sup>121</sup> The French declared war on Prussia thanks to Bismarck’s altering of a telegram from Wilhelm I, known as the Ems dispatch, which appeared to insult the French Ambassador, enflaming public opinion in France.

<sup>122</sup> “ce fut l’occasion d’une guerre entre la France et la Prusse” (Lavis 2010:228)

<sup>123</sup> “mais nos soldats étaient moins nombreux et moins bien commandés que les soldats allemands” (Lavis 2010:228)

<sup>124</sup> “il fallut bientôt reconnaître qu’il était inutile de prolonger la lutte; assez d’hommes étaient morts pour que l’honneur fût sauve” (Lavis 2010:230)

<sup>125</sup> “la résistance de Belfort et de Bitché honorèrent la Défense nationale” (Lavis 2010:235)

<sup>126</sup> “les conditions de la paix furent désastreuses, mais la France avait sauvé son honneur par sa résistance” (Lavis 2010:236)

<sup>127</sup> “il vaut mieux défendre sa patrie jusqu’à la dernière limite du possible que de céder devant l’ennemi vainqueur” (Lavis 2010:236)

courage came to nothing in 1871', it is a lesson which teaches that 'to really love the *patrie*, you have to be prepared to give your life for it'.<sup>128</sup>

Lavissee is careful to try and focus on the positive consequences of the Franco-Prussian War for the French. We are taught primarily that the events of 1870-1871 led to the establishment of the Third Republic, but we are also made aware of the increased efforts made by this new government to engage its people, primarily through the army and the education system. This is justified by the statement that citizens need to be informed in order to 'understand and practise their civic duties'<sup>129</sup>, and that, 'in a democratic country, everyone must contribute to national defence'<sup>130</sup>. We are also informed by Lavissee that since 1870, France has lived 'in peace with her neighbours, and has not been involved in any war in Europe'<sup>131</sup>. Instead, the French simply 'went back to work' immediately after the war, showing that nowhere else do people work 'with more courage and gusto than in France'.<sup>132</sup> According to Lavissee, this can be shown in the renewed colonial drive shown by the French, and the conquests made across the world in the two decades since the Franco-German conflict. Lavissee can't resist one final dig at the British (referred to as 'British' for the first time in the book, rather than 'English') while recounting the increased military power France has gained, including a fleet to rival Britain's. Once again, Lavissee explicitly presents his readers with the importance of the government's nationalist project, expecting them to accept it wholeheartedly and embrace it for the sake of the *patrie*, including a militaristic, masculine version of it which is reminiscent of the Prussian militarism of the *Lesebücher*. The discussion of the Franco-Prussian War is used by Lavissee to highlight the dangers faced by France from foreign powers, but also to demonstrate the importance of patriotism as a form of defence against these European threats.

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<sup>128</sup> "tout ce courage n'a servi de rien en 1871; mais il est une leçon pour vous, enfants, à qui elle apprend que, *pour aimer vraiment sa patrie, il faut être prêt à donner sa vie pour elle*" (Lavissee 2010:237)

<sup>129</sup> "il faut donc que tous les citoyens soient instruits pour bien comprendre et bien pratiquer leurs devoirs civiques" (Lavissee 2010:240)

<sup>130</sup> "dans un pays démocratique, chacun doit contribuer à la défense nationale" (Lavissee 2010:240)

<sup>131</sup> "Depuis 1870, la France a vécu en paix avec ses voisins et n'a été engagée dans aucune guerre en Europe" (Lavissee 2010:241)

<sup>132</sup> "Au lendemain de la guerre, la France s'est remise au travail... c'est que nulle part on ne travaille avec plus de courage et plus de goût qu'en France" (Lavissee 2010:246)

## History - France and the 'Other'

Another effective way of developing a sense of French national identity was through a sort of *via negativa*<sup>133</sup>: by discussing who or what was not French and against France, and by showing these to be inferior in some way. Linked to this is war, and the defence of the French people against the threat of the Other. This device is used extensively throughout the *petit Lavis*, in which we are told that it was through war that the French recognised their unity as one people. Lavis explicitly explains how the French were united through their 'hate of the foreign and love for France'<sup>134</sup>. Something which I touched on earlier is that Lavis does not direct most of this prejudice towards the Germans; rather, it is the 'English' who bear the brunt of negative French bias. Lavis consistently refers to the English ("les Anglais") in the book, only once using the term 'Great Britain', even when referring to the country after the 1707 Act of Union. Furthermore, the word 'Britain' is only used when referring to events after the Franco-Prussian War, when the Germans had clearly replaced the English or British on Lavis's hierarchy of enemies! This confusion over which noun to use could either be interpreted as ignorance about the formalities of the United Kingdom on Lavis's part, or perhaps as a political statement differentiating between the English and the other members of the United Kingdom. After all, it is possible that the French still remembered the 'Auld Alliance' between Scotland and France during the Mediaeval period, especially since Marie Stuart receives an honourable mention in the text as consort to François II.<sup>135</sup> Alternatively, the reference to Britain may stem from associations with Empire, which cemented the use of the noun. Bias towards the English can be seen in the passage concerning Joan of Arc, where they are described as using 'abominable cruelty' against her.<sup>136</sup> This is a particularly pertinent example, since it shows the English threatening an established symbol of the *patrie*. This bias can also be seen in discussions about colonisation, where emotive language is used to show the follies of the English in 'pretending' to be

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<sup>133</sup> The 'via negativa' approach to religion supposes that it is easier to define God by what he is not than by what he is. (Blackburn 2008:248)

<sup>134</sup> "ils eurent la haine de l'étranger et l'amour de la France" (Lavis 2010:13)

<sup>135</sup> Lavis 2010:58

<sup>136</sup> "abominable cruauté" (Lavis 2010:13)

‘mistress of the seas’, ruining their business opportunities, and wanting to ‘take our colonies from us’.<sup>137</sup>

While Germany and Prussia are referred to more and more as we get closer to the present day during the chronological course of the book, the English are never too far away from the thoughts of Lavissee. It is always mentioned when the English side with other European powers against France in warfare, and the reason for French support for the American War of Independence is given as ‘because we hated the English and because we loved the American people’.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, it always seems to be the English who wage war on the French, not the other way around!<sup>139</sup> The English are even blamed for Napoleon’s downfall, since it is argued that they were the ones who forced Napoleon to fight and conquer ‘all the people of Europe’!<sup>140</sup> It is interesting to see the emphasis placed on hatred of the English by Lavissee, since in the *Tour de la France* it is clearly the Germans who are to be considered public enemy number one. Lavissee’s treatment of the German people appears to be more sympathetic than might have been expected, considering that this book was written a mere two decades after the Franco-Prussian War. There are several positive comments made about Prussia in the *petit Lavissee*, namely concerning Frederick II and his Prussia, with Frederick II being described as the ‘greatest general of his time’.<sup>141</sup> At the same time, Prussia is described as becoming a ‘formidable’ nation and we are told that she was going to ‘constantly be France’s enemy’, setting us up for the limited discussion of the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>142</sup>

Lavissee’s emphasis on the English as being the long-standing original villains towards the French may well reflect the continually shifting Franco-British relations of the time: in 1894, when the *petit Lavissee* was published, tensions between the two nations were running high thanks to both nations’ colonising efforts in Africa. While the Franco-Prussian War remained a fresh humiliation in

<sup>137</sup> “l’Angleterre prétendait être la maîtresse des mers. Elles gênait partout notre commerce. Elle voulait nous prendre nos colonies” (Lavissee 2010:117)

<sup>138</sup> “En France, on faisait des vœux pour leur succès, parce qu’on détestait l’Angleterre et parce qu’on aimait le peuple américain, qui combattait pour la liberté” (Lavissee 2010:130)

<sup>139</sup> “l’Angleterre continuait à nous faire la guerre” (Lavissee 2010:167)

<sup>140</sup> “L’Angleterre est en partie la cause des guerres de l’Empire. C’est elle qui a forcé Napoléon à combattre et à vaincre successivement tous les peuples de l’Europe” (Lavissee 2010:186)

<sup>141</sup> “le plus grand général de son temps” (Lavissee 2010:119)

<sup>142</sup> “La Prusse était devenue redoutable, et elle allait être constamment l’ennemie de la France” (Lavissee 2010:121)

the eyes of the French nation, it seems that this event was not sufficiently hurtful to draw focus away from the centuries of Franco-British conflict for the *petit Lavis*. While more recent Franco-British conflicts do not get a mention in the *petit Lavis*, such as British conquests in Africa to the detriment of the French colonial cause, Lavis is careful to mention other events in Asia from which the French emerged victorious, such as the conquest of Siam in 1893. We learn that the French triumphed over the Siamese, despite their having been secretly supported by England.<sup>143</sup> The *petit Lavis* may simply reflect the decade in which it was published, since Franco-British relations started to improve during the early twentieth century, especially as the increasing power of Germany started to concern other European nations.

The discussion of French colonisation in the schoolbooks also serves to promote the image of Other by means of separating the French people from those whose countries were colonised by France. This is not necessarily taught through the medium of race, although this is how Bruno chooses to address the idea in the *Tour de la France*. In the *Tour de la France*, Julien and André are taught about the categorisation of ‘the four races’ as associated with the racial theorist Gustave Le Bon, writing in the 1860s, who classified the white, yellow, red, and black races in descending order of intelligence, beauty, culture, and morality. This classification allowed for ranking people within each racial group, so for example Arabs were defined as ‘inferior whites’, and sometimes referred to as a separate race, although this level of detail does not extend to the *Tour de la France*.<sup>144</sup> While the reader of the *Tour de la France* is not subjected to an inordinate amount of detail on the subject, the simple fact of the inclusion of this idea, along with images to support it, would have been enough to teach French children to look for the differences between themselves and those deemed to be from other races, thus developing a sense of the Other. This idea of race would have been further emphasised in contemporary French culture, where images of people from French colonies were often used in advertising of food and household products in order to give a feeling of exoticism, serving to reinforce these stereotypes.

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<sup>143</sup> “les Siamois, bien que soutenus secrètement par l’Angleterre, ont dû nous abandonner la rive gauche du Meï-kong” (Lavis 2010:244)

<sup>144</sup> Peabody & Stovall 2003:132

This idea of the colonial Other is repeated in other parts of the *Tour de la France*, such as the discussion of the ‘savages of Oceania’<sup>145</sup>, in which we learn that most of the Oceanic islands are populated by savages who are of the Malay race.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, we are taught how to recognise these savages by their distinctive features, by what they wear, and we are warned that many of them are cannibals who pillage the vessels that are shipwrecked on their shores. While the *petit Lavis* refrains from illustrating the Other or from explicitly defining the different races, it is nevertheless made very clear to the reader that there is a crucial difference between the French and the non-European Other:

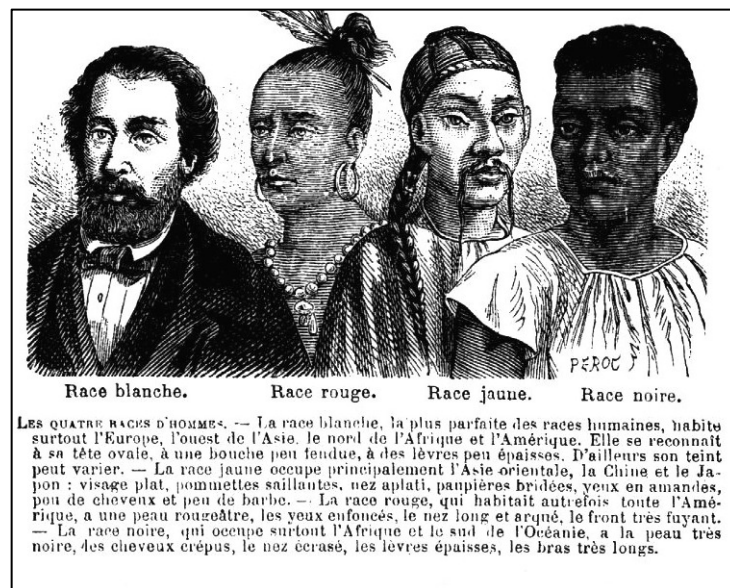


Fig. 2 Les Quatres Races d'Hommes (Bruno 2010:187)

civilisation. Lavissee defines a colony in benign terms, simply calling it a ‘territory possessed by a European nation in another part of the world where it is founding commercial establishments’<sup>147</sup>. Lavissee uses carefully neutral language here, presenting colonisation as nothing more than a logical, economic expression of progress. France’s colonies are proudly listed by Lavissee amongst an explanation of the major achievements of the Third Republic to date, and earlier on Lavissee discusses the losses to French colonies during the seventeenth century. Here, we learn that these losses were a ‘great misfortune’, since it is ‘glorious for a nation such as France to own colonies in countries where the

<sup>145</sup> “les sauvages de l’Océanie” (Bruno 1977:204)

<sup>146</sup> “une grande partie des îles de l’Océanie est peuplée par des sauvages de race malaise” (Bruno 1977:204)

<sup>147</sup> “territoire qu’une nation européenne possède dans une autre partie du monde et où elle fonde des établissements de commerce” (Lavissee 2010:254)

inhabitants are barbarians, and to bring civilisation to them'.<sup>148</sup> This teaches the French schoolchild that they are superior to others thanks to their 'civilisation': yet another example of a nationalist myth which was in the process of being developed, linked to the idea of a shared past.<sup>149</sup> The lesson here is that you are defined by a sense of shared history, which is reflected in your superior position on the world stage.

All of these lessons in developing a sense of national identity would have been deemed particularly important in an area such as French Lorraine during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As the people to mark the new Franco-German border, it would have been a priority to encourage the nation building project amongst them in order to safeguard any future attempts by Germany to extend that border further into French territory. Those who remained in France in 1871 would have to learn that they were fully French and that there were no residual traces of German culture left, thanks to an increased awareness of the past which they shared with the rest of the French nation. The French government clearly took this project seriously, and made every attempt to instil a sense of French national identity among all the children of the nation. This was done explicitly, and was even explained directly to schoolchildren in the prefaces of their textbooks. Central to this development of nationalist sentiment was the study of history, which allowed children to situate themselves as French citizens in the rest of the world. Children were taught a distinctly French interpretation of history which was meant to develop their ideas about other European nations and how the French were ultimately superior to them. To that end, French glories in war were highlighted, whereas defeats were either explained away or omitted, while the 'English' were firmly established as France's enemy, with Germany taking a lesser role until after the Franco-Prussian War.

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<sup>148</sup> "La perte de notre empire colonial fut un grand malheur ; car il est glorieux, pour un pays comme la France, de posséder des colonies dans des contrées dont les habitants sont barbares, et d'y porter la civilisation" (Lavis 2010:137)

<sup>149</sup> Hobsbawm & Ranger 1984:272



## Chapter Three - Education, History and Nation in German Lorraine

In contrast to the children of French Lorraine, who were taught to a standardised and nationalised curriculum, the children on the other side of the Franco-German educational arms race were presented with textbooks which were specific to their region, albeit under direction from the Prussian educational authority. While the vast majority of the content of these books was consistent with that of other regions' textbooks, there were also stories and articles which dealt specifically with the region of Alsace-Lorraine. This regional emphasis served a dual purpose: it caught the attention of schoolchildren, since it talked about topics which were directly relevant to their everyday lives, and it also helped to frame their growing knowledge of the German nation within a more tangible context. It would have been easier for children to start with ideas which were more obviously related to them, and to move gradually outwards until they were dealing with national and even international themes, but still recognising their own place within these. In this way, while the French and German educational authorities took very different paths in the nationalist education of their children, both had the same aim in that they attempted to teach a child how to situate themselves within their nation, and consequently to love that nation. Furthermore, each nationalist project contained similar methods of nation building, such as the development of a shared history and myths, as well as separating their people from others by use of the Other as a divider. This chapter therefore mirrors the previous one in that it charts the spread of nationalism through education, this time regarding German Lorraine, focusing on the teaching of history in particular.

### Education about the Nation

The task of educating the children of Alsace-Lorraine was taken very seriously by the German government. Bismarck hoped that the province would come to represent the cultural cement that bound the Empire together, and he believed schools to be the best vehicle for implementing his 'Germanisation' programme. If one small province, previously under an enemy regime, could successfully integrate into the wider German nation, it would serve as an example for the

other principalities, which were struggling with their new, widened identity.<sup>150</sup> Bismarck's attitudes towards Germanisation through education were influenced somewhat by the failures of his forceful attempts to Germanise the Polish population in the Prussian Partition of Poland, which had only led to fervent anti-German sentiment. Bismarck realised that the Polish programme had not succeeded thus far because it had been too aggressively anti-Polish, and so he changed tack for the new *Reichsland*. Bismarck hoped that a more tolerant, bilingual approach would allow the newest members of the German Empire to slowly integrate over several generations, gradually becoming Germans, seemingly of their own accord.<sup>151</sup> This seemed to be achievable, since local hostility in Alsace and the Moselle, which was by no means universal, seemed to spring more from socio-political and economic considerations than from an innate anti-German nationalism, as the French myth would like to suggest.<sup>152</sup> Bismarck hoped to create a new generation of Germans who would not remember life under French rule and so would have no qualms about integrating into the Empire. Bismarck also turned his attention to the education of girls as a way of targeting the future mothers of future Germans. The process of Germanisation would obviously be hindered if boys were being taught at school how to be good Germans, but were then raised as French in their homes by their uneducated or less well-educated mothers, who were after all the 'natural transmitters of national identity and culture'.<sup>153</sup>

Generally speaking, education in German Lorraine would provide children with a formal structure for teaching the German language, as well as introducing subjects such as history, geography and literature, which would further help to instil German values and build a nationalist attachment to the *Heimat*. It would also be the first time that children in the region were subjected to a compulsory education system. The *Heimat*, the government hoped, would be recognised by pupils as they studied it and as they realised that their cultural traditions were in fact shared by children all across Germany, not just in their particular region. This shared culture, however, was not so evident to children in Elsass-Lothringen, especially when they were pushed to consider this on a national

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<sup>150</sup> Silverman 1972:199

<sup>151</sup> Silverman 1972:88

<sup>152</sup> Silverman 1972:18

<sup>153</sup> Vlossack 2011:37

level. It was hoped, therefore, that the emphasis on the regional as well as the national which German education is known for<sup>154</sup> would be the most effective way of gently ‘reminding’ the Alsace-Lorrainers of their Germanic roots. To this end, we can see that the *Lesebücher* were written entirely in standard German. There is no use of Alsatian or Lorrain dialect, and certainly no French, despite the inclusion of authors such as Hebel, who often wrote in Alemannic dialect.

The German *Lesebücher* show themselves to be a clear reflection of the Germanic ‘*Kultur*’ (culture) movement, which was in direct contrast to the French emphasis on ‘*civilisation*’. While the French movement emphasises its republican tradition stretching back as far as Roman times and embracing the rational values of the Enlightenment, the German equivalent prefers to highlight its supposedly superior cultural heritage, tracing it from the Holy Roman Empire to the Prussian monarchy and embodying the values of the Reformation. Linked to this was an emphasis on the literary, as well as a conscious shift away from French rationalism. All of this means that children in German Lorraine were taught through a medium which was strikingly different to the one preferred by the French government. The *Lesebücher* reflect this in that each topic dealt with is done so by means of extended narratives, interspersed with poetry. This is a device which is uniform across the three books studied in this thesis, as well as books used in other parts of Germany at this time.<sup>155</sup> Since, as Kennedy informs us, the most focused (or perhaps explicit) education about a child’s region and nation came from history and geography lessons, this chapter will focus on these two sections of the *Lesebücher* in order to highlight one of the most important ways in which the German educational authorities conveyed nationalist sentiment to the children of their new nation, often by means of biased narrative which clearly favours the Germans to the detriment of the French.

## History - the Franco-Prussian War

One of the most important expressions of German bias against the French is of course the account of the Franco-Prussian War in the History sections of both L1

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<sup>154</sup> Kennedy 1997:460

<sup>155</sup> Kennedy 2006:227

and L2. This account concentrates on the early events of the War, especially the decisive battles of September 1870, and the subsequent advances of the German armies. While this probably would have been a common theme across schoolbooks throughout Germany, thanks to the now long-standing tradition of Franco-German rivalry, there is nowhere in the rest of the Empire where this was more relevant than in Alsace-Lorraine. By effectively poisoning the children of Elsass-Lothringen against any Francophile sentiment, it was hoped that it would push them closer towards accepting their new German national identity. The same account of the Franco-Prussian War is used in both L1 (pp. 276-282) and L2 (pp. 231-237), written by an unnamed author in what can only be described as heavily biased language, depicting the Germans or the Prussians as brave, triumphant warriors who come to war only as a last resort, in contrast to the cowardly, yet war-mongering French. For example, according to the *Lesebücher*, it was the ‘incredible jealousy of the French’<sup>156</sup> which led them to declare war on the Prussians, since the French would not ‘calm themselves’ after the diplomatic incident of the Hohenzollern candidature was seemingly resolved. These adjectives used to describe the French in comparison to the Germans seem to reveal a feminised description, almost suggesting that French soldiers were not as manly as the proud Prussians. One interesting point here is that this account of the Franco-Prussian War uses the terms ‘German’ and ‘Prussian’ interchangeably. This presents the reader with the stark reminder that, despite the participation of several other German states in the War, it was the Prussians who led the attack and who were considered to be the most important as a result. Linked to this is the development of the myth of Prussian militarism, which was held to be one of the great unifying forces of the German nation. Although these textbooks were meant to be teaching children in Alsace-Lorraine about being good Germans, the Prussians remain somewhat apart from the other German states, subtly establishing a hierarchy which should be respected.

Within this account there is no mention of Bismarck’s doctoring of the Ems dispatch to Napoleon III, which led to the French declaring war on the Prussians. What is interesting is that Kennedy discusses interpretations of the Franco-Prussian War in her paper on the teaching of history in southern German regions,

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<sup>156</sup> “die stark hervorgetretene Eifersucht der Franzosen” (L2 p231)

and she interprets this ‘omission’ as an attempt by the educational authorities in Bavaria and Württemberg to minimise the role of Prussia in the creation of the new German Empire. She argues that by stating that it was French expansionism which caused the Franco-Prussian War, it was possible to ignore the war’s Prussian origins. Like the readers in Elsass-Lothringen, these southern German schoolbooks emphasised the unity of the German states in their attacks on the French.<sup>157</sup> While this may be a valid explanation of the accounts given in Bavarian and Württemberger schoolbooks, I would argue that minimising the Prussian role in 1870 would not have been the aim of the books for Elsass-Lothringen, particularly in view of the books’ emphasis on the importance of Kaiser Wilhelm I. Furthermore, the *Lesebücher* for the region were overseen and regulated by the Prussian educational authority in Berlin, so it is unlikely that this supposed slight towards the Prussians would have been allowed to slip through the censors’ net. I postulate that it would be more appropriate to suggest that the books wished to depict the French as warmongers in order to rebrand German military ambitions as something much purer than they actually were. This version of events allows us to believe that the German states were doing nothing more than innocently defending themselves against French aggression. This would have sent a clear message to the children of Elsass-Lothringen that it was the fault of their former country that the Franco-Prussian War had taken place, not that of Germany.

The unflattering discussion of the French continues throughout the section on the Franco-Prussian War, and further inaccuracies abound within the narrative, such as in the description of the attack on Saarbrücken on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1870. As an example, according to the schoolbooks, 30,000 French soldiers attacked Saarbrücken, which was held in a three-hour battle by 1,400 Prussians<sup>158</sup>. In actual fact, the French held Saarbrücken for two days until they retreated, and there were around 50,000 Prussian soldiers stationed in that area. Mirroring the French use of the Other in order to highlight divisions between the nation and her inferior neighbours, the French are often referred to by the German books as “der Feind”, which can be translated in English as the ‘enemy’. This sent a clear signal to any French sympathisers lingering amongst the population of Elsass-

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<sup>157</sup> Kennedy 1989:13-14

<sup>158</sup> L2 p232

Lothringen, who were to be reminded that they were German and definitely not French. This also served to separate the two nations from each other in the minds of the people of Alsace-Lorraine who, up until 1870, had been used to the blurred lines between French and German in their region. Now the children of the province were being made to choose their side, and it was made clear to them that there would be no middle ground in which loyalty to both France and Germany could be demonstrated. To further highlight the differences between the French and the Germans, the French are also depicted as uncommitted to the cause within the narrative, while of course the Germans are shown to be true and proud soldiers who would rather die than give up on their country. Near the end of the account, the French soldiers are described as a ‘tight cluster of discouraged, desperate soldiers who saw that they had lost everything, and the flames shot up, and increased their terror’.<sup>159</sup> The letter of surrender from Napoleon III is repeated word for word to highlight how effectively he had been beaten by the Germans, as well as to demonstrate the significance of his surrender.<sup>160</sup> The implication here is that a true German would never surrender in such a way, since they are not cowards like the French. Napoleon’s surrender is held to be a great victory for the German nation, allowing Germany to finally unite, but we are also told that it was important for the French too, since it led to great excitement and joy amongst the population because it signalled the end of the ‘rotten’ Napoleonic regime.<sup>161</sup> German children would have interpreted this as a clear expression of the way in which the French were inferior to the Germans, which was considered to be an important lesson to learn. The children of Alsace-Lorraine were therefore taught that to be German is to be superior to the French, so they should strive to embody the qualities displayed by the brave German soldiers during the War.

The last sentence of this particular section informs us (correctly) that the French wasted no time and declared a new Republican government on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1870. This further serves to belittle the Napoleonic regime, which

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<sup>159</sup> “Vernichtend fielen die Bomben und Granaten in die dichtgedrängten Haufen der entmutigten, verzweifelten Soldaten, die alles verloren sahen; die Flammen schlugen empor und vermehrten die Angst” (L2 p235)

<sup>160</sup> “Weil es mir nicht vergönnt war, an der Spitze meiner Armee zu sterben, lege ich meinen Degen Eurer Majestät zu Füßen” (L2 p235)

<sup>161</sup> “Als diese Vorfälle in Paris bekannt wurden, entstand unter der Bevölkerung eine ungeheure Aufregung, und der längst morsch gewordene Kaiserthron brach zusammen; die Kaiserliche Regierung hatte ein Ende” (L2 p235)

was starting to gain ground as an important myth in the French tradition. The population of Alsace-Lorraine would have been very aware of the Napoleonic cult, having served as a frontier during the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century, and it would have been important for the German government to destroy this myth and replace it with other, German ones. The Napoleonic myth was a dangerous one as far as Alsace-Lorraine was concerned, because any hope of a strong French leader emerging to rescue the province would have proved detrimental to the German nation building project. In order for this to work, the population of Alsace-Lorraine had to not only believe that there was no chance of them returning to France, but that they actually belonged within the German nation and not within the French one. The Paris Commune is mentioned later in the passage, after the inclusion of Freiligrath's poem 'The Trumpets of Vionville', and the French do have a slight reprieve here, after the author admits that the Parisians remained 'defiant' in the face of the invading armies for four months.<sup>162</sup> However, there are no further personal comments made about the French. Aside from the negative language used to describe the French, there are also explicit references to German togetherness in the face of adversity throughout this passage. The Franco-Prussian War is described as the first conflict in which the 'armed brotherhood' of Prussia and Bavaria was bloodily sealed.<sup>163</sup> This further supports the growing myth of Prussian militarism, since it aims to show schoolchildren that war can be an important unifying process, as well as reinforcing the importance of Prussia as the great unifier of the German nation. The children of Alsace-Lorraine, it appears, were expected to revere the Prussians as the people who were able to 'rescue' them from the grasp of the French and reunite them with their German brothers and sisters.

Another version of the militaristic myth can be found in the many references in the passage which are made to the reawakening of the 'spirit of 1813', referring to the united German (and Austrian) forces which, along with other European nations, fought against Napoleon and finally drove him out of Germany and into exile. This spirit was seen to consist of the 'love and self-sacrifice which inspired

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<sup>162</sup> "Aber der Trotz der Pariser beugte sich erst, als sie einer mehr als viermonatlichen Belagerung und vierwöchentlichen Beschießung widerstanden hatten" (L2 p237)

<sup>163</sup> "das war die erste Schlacht, in welcher die Waffenbrüderschaft zwischen Preussen und Bayern blutig besiegelt worden war" (L2 p232)

and united the German people’,<sup>164</sup> and it helped to sustain the German soldiers, who managed to double their ‘heroic courage’ to ‘march ever closer together’, perhaps both literally and figuratively.<sup>165</sup> This unity, we are told, is what led Germany to ‘the most glorious and mighty of victories, the success of which is incomparable’<sup>166</sup>, not least because this victory was what finally led to the formal unification of the German Empire. This myth is an important symbol in many ways. First of all, it signals the revenge of a united Germanic contingent against Napoleon and France for the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire. It also conveys the rebirth of the German nation after its previous defeat, and therefore the beginning of the events which led to the ultimate expression of German unity in 1871. What is more, this is another example of the German people triumphing over both the French and the myth of Napoleon, which once again showed the children of Alsace-Lorraine which side they were on, since they were supposed to celebrate defeats of the French and embrace German military victories. This demonstrated that military victories were important because they had a cleansing effect on the past: they washed away previous humiliations and strengthened the nation. This would have been a particularly important lesson for children, who were being raised to aspire to becoming great and glorious soldiers (or the mothers of these soldiers) in order to support the glory of the German nation in the same way as their (figurative) forefathers.

Tucked in the middle of the narrative in the history section of L1 and L2 giving an account of the Franco-Prussian War is the poem “Die Trompete von Vionville” (‘The Trumpets of Vionville’) (pp. 280-281 L1; p 235 L2).<sup>167</sup> This poem was written by Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876), a controversial figure who was exiled in his youth for his political activism and resistance to Prussian censorship. Charged with *lèse-majesté* thanks to his 1848 poem “Die Toten an die Lebenden” (‘From the Dead to the Living’), Freiligrath was allowed to return to Germany after the amnesty of 1868 and became a fervent nationalist for the last few years of his life, which helps to explain the inclusion of his poetry in the

<sup>164</sup> “der Geist von 1813 war in Deutschland wiedererwacht; dieselbe Liebe, dieselbe Opferfreudigkeit beseelte das gesamte deutsche Volk” (L2 p232)

<sup>165</sup> “Mit verdoppelter Heldenmütigkeit zogen sich die deutschen Truppen immer enger zusammen” (L2 p234)

<sup>166</sup> “nie hat Deutschland ruhmreichere Tage gesehen, nie irgend ein Volk gewaltigere Siege erkämpft, als hier das deutsche. Es war ein Kriegserfolg ohnegleichen” (L2 p237)

<sup>167</sup> In contrast to the French schoolbooks, the German books mix the literary with the historical narrative. This shows an appeal to the literary imagination, linked to Romanticism, which will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter.



*Lesebücher*. It could be interpreted that it was important for the German education authority to include figures such as Freiligrath in the *Lesebücher* since they proved that sooner or later, everyone would realise that they loved their nation, and they could always return to it. ‘The Trumpets of Vionville’ is inspired by the events of the Battle of Vionville, fought on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. The full version with seven verses is given in L1, whereas in L2 only the first five verses are given. The poem asks the reader to remember the dead but moreover asks us to recognise the true horrors of war so that we can truly appreciate the sacrifices made by these soldiers, who are described as ‘brothers’.<sup>168</sup> It is not clear whether or not this was supposed to mean the brothers of those reading the poem, or if it referred to the soldiers themselves as brothers in arms. It probably could be interpreted to be both of these things, since the children reading this poem would have been taught that they were linked to all the other people of Germany by means of a sort of fraternal bond, thanks to their imagined shared past and traditions.

‘The Trumpets of Vionville’ thereby provides the reader of the *Lesebücher* with an evocative reminder that war is glorious, and it is a great thing to die for one’s country, in keeping with the militaristic Prussian tradition, but at the same time it serves to help us see the human cost of this glory. To the child in Elsass-Lothringen this might have been a demonstration of how much they were valued within the German Empire, since soldiers from all over Germany made this ultimate sacrifice so that Elsass-Lothringen could once again be part of the *Vaterland*. It would also have served as yet another encouragement of the Prussian militaristic myth, hoping to inspire the boys of Alsace-Lorraine to grow up and become soldiers in their turn, since this was the best way of promoting the splendour of their nation. It is obvious from passages such as the ones highlighted above that the Prussian militaristic myth was greatly encouraged by the German educational authorities. The official support for these myths provides us with clear evidence of the German nation building project, which, like the French project, centred itself on the establishment and development of shared myths as tangible expressions of unity. The importance of this in Alsace-

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<sup>168</sup> “Um die Tapfern, die Treuen, die Wacht am Rhein,  
um die Brüder, die heut gefallen, -  
um sie alle, es ging uns durch Mark und Bein,  
erhub sie gebrochenes Lallen” V7

Lorraine was equally as important for the German government as it was for the French in French Lorraine, since it would strengthen the power of the Franco-German border and hopefully ensure its permanence. Furthermore, it would serve to demonstrate the success of the programme and provide an example to the other reluctant German states which would show the importance of becoming a truly united nation.

### History and Biography - Kaisers Wilhelm I and II

Another expression of the Prussian and German myths of unity can be shown through the use of biographies in the *Lesebücher*, especially those concerning the most recent Prussian monarchs: Kaiser Wilhelm I, who was King of Prussia and then became the first Emperor of the united Germany in 1871, and his grandson Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose reign had begun a decade before the publication of the three books I am discussing. Biographies of royalty formed a large component of the historical section of German schoolbooks, and we can glean a lot about a region's political sympathies from which monarchs were deemed important or interesting enough to be given a starring role, and which monarchs did not make the cut.<sup>169</sup> While less popular in southern German regions with continued strong attachment to regional monarchies, such as Bavaria and Württemberg, both Kaiser Wilhelms made an appearance in most German schoolbooks. Prussian guidelines, for example, required lessons about all of the Hohenzollern rulers since the Great Elector, and the books from Elsass-Lothringen are no exception to this. Kaiser Wilhelm I takes one of the largest spaces of the biographies, which range from Charlemagne and Barbarossa to Frederick the Great right up to Kaiser Wilhelm II. All of these figures were celebrated by German nationalists as archetypal German forefathers and founders of the German Empire. To this end, showing a seemingly unbroken sequence in the *Lesebücher* which traces this 'history' implies an organic continuity between these figures which in turn gives an air of legitimacy to Wilhelm II's right to rule, having been suggested to be the natural heir to this succession. In L2, the passage about Kaiser Wilhelm I is preceded by a poem by Hoffmann von Fallersleben extolling the Kaiser's many virtues; in L1, the same passage is followed by a more general nationalist poem entitled "Deutsches

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<sup>169</sup> Kennedy 1989:15

Lied” by F W Plath, which still manages to celebrate the success of the Kaiser as an important uniting force, to whom all of Germany should be grateful.<sup>170</sup> The biographical accounts, which are identical in both L1 and L2, celebrate above all the Kaiser’s military prowess, which showed itself from a tender age, and his overriding desire to take revenge on the French for the insults of the Napoleonic period and unite Germany once and for all.

These biographies were an important part of the German nation building project, especially in terms of creating shared myths for the entire population of Germany. They celebrated leaders who were responsible for great military victories, which helped to further the cult of Prussian militarism by glorifying these triumphs. In this way, the German child was taught that warfare was the best way of proving German strength and that military glory was something to which they should aspire. Linked to this was the idea that it was the superlative sacrifice to die in the service of the nation, and that this was not something to be feared, but something to welcome, since it rendered you a hero and proved your love for the fatherland. Such a death also guaranteed a form of immortality, that of being commemorated in national history and culture. The figures studied in these biographies also provide a platform for myth making, since, like Napoleon and Joan of Arc in the French tradition, the German government hoped that these people would embody the values of the German Empire in the minds of the populace, and that they would become symbols of German superiority in their own right. People such as these were important, since they provided clear examples of what one person can achieve in the service of the nation. It was hoped that young German boys would be able to empathise with these figures and recognise their own potential as a result. It was especially important that these biographical figures could be easily related to for male Germans whose loyalties were in question or not yet cemented, such as the people of Alsace-Lorraine. It would have to be easy for these people to embrace the myths presented to them, and the stories and lessons behind them would have to be convincing enough that they would be accepted. The Prussian monarchy dominates this list of biographies in the *Lesebücher*, thereby promoting Prussian superiority under the guise of German unity to the children

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<sup>170</sup> cf. L1 p284; L2 p238

of Alsace-Lorraine. This list varies greatly to those studied in southern German books, where their own royal houses were favoured.<sup>171</sup>

The biography of Kaiser Wilhelm I begins with Franco-German conflict, showing that this has shaped most of his life one way or another. The first lesson of this passage starts with the explanation that the Kaiser had experienced ‘hardship and adversity’ during his childhood, but ‘bore it with good grace’, as all Germans should do, because his parents taught him to trust in God.<sup>172</sup> We learn that Kaiser Wilhelm I was born in a difficult time for Prussia, since soon after his birth, Napoleon had started a war with Prussia, and that Berlin stood ‘in the enemy’s hands’<sup>173</sup>, which forced the royal family to flee. This introduces the theme of Franco-German conflict, further reinforcing the sense of the French as the enemy, but also serves to make Prussian royalty easier to relate to: it would have been reassuring for German children to hear that even the Kaiser lived through dangerous and difficult times. In order for the figure of the Kaiser to become a unifying German myth, children across Germany would have to be able to recognise the relevance of their monarch in their lives. It would also allow children to be taught that the Kaiser would have understood the hardships in their lives, and therefore would be able to empathise with them. This passage provides a key lesson for the German Lorrainers in particular in that it once again shows the French to be the instigators of Franco-German conflict, in case they had been tempted to blame the Prussians for the Franco-Prussian War and its precedents. The French are once again referred to as the ‘enemy’, leaving the children of German Lorraine in no doubt as to which side they were supposed to be on.

By the time Wilhelm was sixteen years old, we are told that he was a determined and committed soldier, despite him being too young to fight in the Napoleonic Wars. This helps to cement the idea of Wilhelm I as a military example to which children should aspire, since it teaches them that they should embrace military values from a young age. Meanwhile, the French are blamed for the death of Wilhelm I’s mother who, we are told, ‘succumbed to grief over

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<sup>171</sup> Kennedy 1989:15

<sup>172</sup> “Da galt es, mit Ergebung und Gottvertrauen Trübsal und harte Entbehrung zu ertragen; aber die Eltern und die jungen Prinzen verstanden es, den göttlichen Segen, der auch in dieser Heimsuchung lag, sich zu eigen zu machen” (L2 p239)

<sup>173</sup> “Berlin fiel in die Hände der Feinde” (L1 p282)

the fate of the fatherland'<sup>174</sup> before she could witness the Prussian defeat of Napoleon several years later. This emotive statement is another way of showing the distress caused to Germany by the French. Wilhelm avenged his mother since he 'distinguished himself and was awarded the Iron Cross for bravery in combat' by his father, and sought to further develop his skills since 'he realised that Germany's future would solely be based on the proficiency of the Prussian army'.<sup>175</sup> Wilhelm was a soldier in 'body and soul'<sup>176</sup>, and his successes only increased as he bravely defended the German duchies of Schleswig-Holstein from the clutches of Denmark,<sup>177</sup> despite him being described as 'peace-loving' and only forced into war by the actions of others.<sup>178</sup> This meant, however, that the Kaiser always had God on his side,<sup>179</sup> indeed that he had been 'chosen by God to accomplish even greater things'<sup>180</sup>. This is a point which would have been very important in the heavily-religious German schoolbooks, and one which would have helped to further rationalise the Franco-Prussian War on behalf of the Germans, which is something which would have been particularly aimed at the children of German Lorraine. Furthermore, it also serves to underline the monarch's supposed divine right to rule, thanks to the grace of God. The Franco-Prussian War is also justified in this passage by the assertion that its outcome was the creation of a state 'so powerful that the name of Germany was once again met with respect and reverence throughout the world'<sup>181</sup>. Wilhelm is

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<sup>174</sup> "Nach einigen Jahren erfolgte die begeisterte Erhebung des preußischen Volkes gegen Napoleon; die zarte Königin Luise war schon vorher dem Kummer über das Schicksal des Vaterlandes erlegen" (L1 p282)

<sup>175</sup> "Er ging mit dem siegreichen Heeren über den Rhein und zeichnete sich trotz seiner Jugend in mehreren Schlachten so aus, dass der König ihm das eiserne Kreuz verlieh" (L2 p239); "weil er klar erkannte, dass Deutschlands Zukunft allein auf die Tüchtigkeit des preussischen Heeres gestellt sei" (L2 p239)

<sup>176</sup> "Prinz Wilhelm war von frühester Jugend an mit Leib und Seele Soldat" (L2 p239)

<sup>177</sup> "Mutig vertrat der König im Jahre 1864 mit dem Schwerte das Recht der deutschen Herzogtümer Schleswig-Holstein gegen Dänemark und löste sie aus dem Verbande mit diesem nichtdeutschen Staate" (L2 p240)

<sup>178</sup> It is ironic that there is no mention here of the Prussian educational reforms of the 1820s and 1830s which *also* helped to further Prussia's territorial ambitions. Education, bureaucracy and trade were also important factors in the rise of Prussia. But the Prussian myth focused first and foremost on Prussia's *military* power. This was the military ideology favoured by Prussia's ruling class, the aristocratic Junkers. It is also interesting to note that this interpretation of events almost completely sidelines the key role played by Bismarck.

<sup>179</sup> "so musste der friedliebende König Wilhelm noch einmal und diesmal zum furchtbarsten Kampfe das Schwert ziehen... und Gott war mit ihm!" (L2 p240)

<sup>180</sup> "aber zu noch größeren Dingen hatte Gott den frommen Streiter ausersehen" (L2 p240)

<sup>181</sup> "einen so mächtigen Staat, dass der deutsche Name wieder mit Achtung und Ehrfurcht in der Welt genannt wurde" (L2 p240)

heralded as the one leader who has brought unparalleled success for both Germany and Prussia during the 27 years of his reign.<sup>182</sup>

A biography of Kaiser Wilhelm II immediately follows that of Wilhelm I, and again Kaiser Wilhelm II is used to promote the nation building project. In the first paragraph of the biography, we are taught that Wilhelm thoroughly enjoyed his education, and that his ‘faithful diligence’ was recognised and commended by his teachers.<sup>183</sup> This was a clear message for schoolchildren to persuade them to make sure that they did the same and applied themselves to their studies. This point would have been all the more relevant since Wilhelm II was in power at the time of these books’ usage, and all schoolchildren would have known of his significance. For these children, Wilhelm II was promoted as a role model whose success was evident in the development of the German Empire, and whose example should be followed without question. Wilhelm II of course went straight from school into the army (as all German boys should aspire to do), where he became a ‘very zealous and able soldier’<sup>184</sup>. Stories of exemplary lives often emphasise early setbacks or suffering which are overcome by the protagonist, and the textbook narrative about Wilhelm II was no exception. It noted that he endured the loss of both his father and his grandfather in 1888. However, according to the textbooks, when Wilhelm II became Kaiser the other princes of Germany looked to him for guidance and assurance that he would continue the project of uniting the people of Germany, which Wilhelm II naturally promised to uphold.<sup>185</sup> The Kaiser also prioritised his army, including the development of a German navy, showing his focus on the military and reasserting his status as a military leader.<sup>186</sup> His intentions are clarified in the passage in the saying ‘whoever wants to keep the peace must be prepared for

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<sup>182</sup> “die 27 Jahre seiner Regierung sind so reich an innern und äußern Erfolgen für Preussen und Deutschland geworden, dass ihnen keine frühere Zeit der deutschen Geschichte an die Seite gestellt werden kann” (L2 p240 )

<sup>183</sup> “Willig fügte sich der Prinz allen Anordnungen der Schule, unbefangen verkehrte er mit seinen Mitschülern. Sein treuer Fleiß wurde von den Lehrern lobend anerkannt” (L1 p285)

<sup>184</sup> “Prinz Wilhelm wurde ein sehr eifriger und tüchtiger Soldat” (L1 p285)

<sup>185</sup> “Die Fürsten des Volkes, die Vertreter der freien Staedte scharten sich um den Enkel Wilhelms I. Vor der ganzen Nation, vor der gesamten Welt bekundeten sie dadurch offen, sie wollten ein einziges Volk von Brüdern sein; sie wollten sich niemals trennen in Nöten und Gefahren” (L1 p. 285)

<sup>186</sup> In terms of domestic politics, it was more convenient to build up the navy than the army. The navy suggested that the Germans were united against an *external* (overseas) foe, whereas the army could also (potentially) be used by Prussia against unruly *German* provinces

war’<sup>187</sup>, once again promoting the Prussian military cult. At the end of the biography Wilhelm II’s conquests in Africa are given an honourable mention as one of his many achievements, followed by the long period of peace which has been enjoyed by the German nation. The history section of the *Lesebuch* ends with the transcription of a speech given by Wilhelm II, followed by a poem extolling the many virtues of the Kaiser, such as his courage and his heroism, further helping to turn him into a myth of German nation.

### Geography - Germans and the colonised ‘Other’

While the vast majority of the Geography section of the *Lesebücher* focuses on articles about Alsace-Lorraine and the German *Heimat*, tucked in the middle of the Geography section of L1 is an extensive discussion of the German colony of Cameroon. Within L2 exists a similar passage, as well as two entries on German China. The latter topic has clearly been a recent addition to the textbook, since it is written in a more modern font than the two gothic fonts which are found throughout the majority of the *Lesebücher*.<sup>188</sup> As in the French books, discussion of successful German colonisation would have formed an important part of the nation building project for two reasons: as a tangible expression of German power on the world stage, and as a reinforcement of the status of the German people by comparing it to the Other (in this case, colonised locals). As with the History section of the *Lesebücher*, the Geography section is a collection of narratives, without pictures, as well as several poems. The natives of Cameroon are depicted as ignorant people who fight amongst themselves and steal from one another, and we are taught that consequently it is safer for the Germans to live on the river rather than on the land.<sup>189</sup> This paints a clear division between the non-European Other and the Germans, especially considering the emphasis placed on good comportment, discipline and morals in the German schoolbooks. Children in German schools had been exposed to a strict moral code from the very beginning of their education, and would have been taught that this made

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<sup>187</sup> “Wer den Frieden wahren will, muss für den Krieg gerüstet sein” (L1 p286)

<sup>188</sup> The type used in the textbooks would not have been entirely recast or reset for each new edition in order to save time and money, which explains why different fonts are found throughout each book

<sup>189</sup> “Dies geschieht einmal deshalb, weil man den Aufenthalt auf dem Flusse für gesünder hält als das Wohnen auf dem Lande, und dann auch der Sicherheit wegen gegen die unvermeidlichen Diebereien der Neger und gegen die Störungen, die der beständige Hader der Schwarzen untereinander herbeiführt” (L1 p337)

them superior to others who could not behave to the same standard. The German schoolbooks do not promote an entirely negative view of the ‘natives’, and we are told that the places where they live are a ‘pretty cheerful sight’, and that they live in the ‘utmost cleanliness’.<sup>190</sup> There are long descriptions of native plants and animals, as well as of the local landscape, but the passage ends with another less than flattering description of the Cameroonians, who are described as having ‘ugly faces, especially in the women’<sup>191</sup>, as well as being very lacking in intelligence, even behind other West Africans.<sup>192</sup> These descriptions would have left no doubt in the minds of the German children reading them of their superiority over these colonised people. L2 refrains from describing the people of Cameroon, preferring to chart a day in the life of a bushman without making comments about his personal appearance!

The passages on German China in L2 appear to be extracts from travel writers’ works, and both present a more or less dispassionate view of the country, charting journeys through the region controlled by Germany. Little is said about the native populace, with descriptions largely about the landscape, the rail network, and local flora and fauna. One interesting detail is that the first passage does describe German soldiers on duty in China, who are reportedly greeted with friendly faces in every village through which they march.<sup>193</sup> The Chinese are shown to be welcoming of the German soldiers, which sends the message to German children reading the *Lesebücher* that colonisation is a good thing for native populations as well as for the colonising nation. Furthermore, it shows schoolboys the adventures experienced by soldiers who are given the opportunity to travel to these exotic places and enjoy their time in the service of the German nation. Colonisation is tacitly accepted as a good thing in these passages rather than being explicitly taught to the children reading the books, suggesting that it does not require such a level of justification: children would

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<sup>190</sup> “Der Ortschaften der Neger im Kamerungebiet gewähren einen recht freundlichen Anblick. Ueberall herrscht die größte Reinlichkeit” (L1 p338)

<sup>191</sup> “Die Eingeborenen der Kamerungegend find im allgemeinen von schönem, kräftigem Koerperbau, haben aber hässliche Gesichtszüge, was besonders bei dem weiblichen Geschlecht auffällt” (L1 p340)

<sup>192</sup> “Hinsichtlich ihrer geistigen Fähigkeiten stehen sie hinter vielen anderen der westafrikanischen Kuestenstämme zurück” (L1 p340)

<sup>193</sup> “Unsere Soldaten marschierten in länger Linie flott vorwärts, und ihre lustigen Marschlieder lockten in den kleinen Dörfern, durch die wir kamen, jung und alt herbei. Alles um uns war friedlich und freundlich, nirgends traf man auf finstere Gesichter. Manche der Zopfträger grüßten militärisch; andere nickten uns lachend zu” (L2 p304)



have been expected to automatically accept it as a good thing to spread German culture to other, less fortunate nations. For the children of Alsace-Lorraine, these passages would also have served to separate their position from those far-away nations, hopefully meaning that they would not consider themselves to have been colonised, but rather recognising the similarities between their culture and the wider German one in light of the knowledge that other peoples existed whose culture was vastly different to their own.

The dominant theme in the schoolbooks is without question the encouragement of nationalist sentiment, although this was communicated in various different ways. While this chapter deals with more obvious expressions of nationalism, such as the interpretation of history to promote the Prussian militaristic myth, biographies of Prussian monarchs and the use of the Other (whether French or non-European) as a unifying force, this was not the only tool in the arsenal of the German education authority. To this end, the following chapter will look at interpretations of classical history in both the French and the German textbooks, as well as the advent of ‘nostalgic nationalism’. The devices highlighted in this chapter are remarkably similar to those used on the French side of the Franco-German frontier, although of course with contrasting aims. The regional focus of the German *Lesebücher* helped the German authorities to tailor material for use in Alsace-Lorraine that would best serve their nation building project in that it would both subtly and explicitly encourage German nationalist sentiment, allowing the children of German Lorraine to finally recognise their German nationality, but it is important to remember that, like the French, this project was primarily a national one. Many of the texts in the schoolbooks from Alsace-Lorraine would have been repeated in books across German regions, so they were not alone in their nationalist, militaristic education.

## Chapter Four - The Literary and the Visual

This, the final chapter, will discuss several key themes which appear in both the French and the German schoolbooks. The first theme considers the use of the literary within both sets of textbooks, particularly the use of ‘nostalgic nationalism’<sup>194</sup>. Still linked to the emphasis on history in the previous two chapters, the second part of the chapter charts the diverging treatment of classical civilisation by each set of schoolbooks in a continued attempt to create the notion of a shared ancestry. This was reflected in the field of visual culture, a diluted version of which was transmitted into these books. This will also be dealt with, as well as other visual aids such as maps (or the lack thereof). All of these themes and techniques serve to further the nation building projects of each nation by means of developing nationalist myths, especially in terms of a shared history which diverges significantly and definitively from that of the other nation, as well as providing a platform for children to learn how to situate themselves within their own nation. This education served to further separate the French from the Germans in the minds of each nation’s citizens, attempting to persuade them to turn towards their own country and regard the other as the *bona fide* enemy.

### The Literary

One of the most important nation building devices used by both nations’ governments, and one upon which I have only touched on thus far in this thesis, is the use of the literary, and in particular something which I have referred to as ‘nostalgic nationalism’. This is a major factor in the invention of a shared past for a nation. This form of nationalist thought is to be found mostly in the German schoolbooks, thanks to its roots in the German Romantic literary movement, but is also hinted at in several ways by Bruno in the *Tour de la*

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<sup>194</sup> Nostalgic nationalism is my own term, which I use to describe a particular form of nationalism connected to the cultural and literary sphere. Nostalgic nationalism centres on the invention of a shared past for a particular nation, and the longing felt by citizens of that nation for that shared past. This shared past represents supposed values and a lifestyle which has been somehow lost or tainted by the development of the modern world. It was predominantly a rural and provincial past, closely linked to working the land, and its traditions such as folk tales and, in some cases, use of dialect. This shared version of history, while linked to cultural movements of the nineteenth century such as Romanticism, has also been used and developed for political purposes in order to provide justification for the creation of a nation.

*France*. Nostalgic nationalist literature tends to evoke a traditional way of life, deeply connected with the local soil, which is reminiscent of a later discourse which flirts with fascist ideas. Linked to this in the German works is the reinforcement of the idea of *Heimat*, which promotes a more romantic, literary form of nationalism. This nationalism is at the same time both nostalgic and modern in that it attempts to unite all German people under the creation of a myth of a shared past in order to justify their new, national government. While the idea of *Heimat* is not explicitly linked to the encouragement of nationalist sentiment, there are a lot of common factors between the two. It is “an intrinsically conservative value”<sup>195</sup>, the development of which was encouraged by the German government as a means of bridging the tensions between regional and national identities. This was intensified thanks to the industrialisation and urbanisation of the late nineteenth century, which left many Germans shocked by the rapid changes to the country they were no longer familiar with. People developed a kind of nostalgia for the idealised, invented ‘memories’ of what provincial life used to be like before these accelerated social changes, most notably concerning “mystical anti-modernism” as well as “a romantic celebration of nature and rural life”.<sup>196</sup> This shared sense of *Heimat* was supposed to demonstrate a common background for all Germans which would unite them, much in the same way as the nationalist project. While *Heimat* promoted regional sentiment, these regional loyalties were presented as being entirely consistent with national loyalties, thereby being a way of celebrating German unity.

To this end, the choice of authors used in the *Lesebücher* is very important with regards to promoting nostalgic nationalism. As an example, the inclusion of Adelbert von Chamisso’s work (found in both books for the *Oberklassen*) is significant. Von Chamisso was a German author of French origin, whose family was driven out of France by the Revolution and settled in Prussian Berlin. The inclusion of his poem “die Schwalben” (‘the Swallows’) serves to show successful, voluntary integration into the German culture from France. It does not take much imagination to envisage teachers throughout Elsass-Lothringen holding up von Chamisso as an example to be followed. Furthermore, inclusion

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<sup>195</sup> Boa 2000:26

<sup>196</sup> Kennedy 1989:11

of Romantic authors in the schoolbooks, such as Schiller, the Brothers Grimm, and to a certain extent Goethe, shows a clear embrace of nationalism. This is thanks to the emphasis on folk stories, ballads and poems in these works, which aim to highlight German unity thanks to a shared cultural tradition (which fitted with the argument that Bismarck employed in order to justify the annexation of Elsass-Lothringen). The folk tale proves particularly useful to this nationalist project since it often has a clear educational purpose: it frequently involves a fight between good and evil, offering a model for human behaviour which is never ambivalent, allowing the reader to receive a clear message from the tale.<sup>197</sup> This may have been particularly important in an area such as Elsass-Lothringen, where the Germans were trying to convince the local population of their essential German natures and move them away from the French tradition, but was also important in other parts of the newly formed German Empire, perhaps in order to sway their focus from a purely regional one. However, enlightenment authors such as Lessing are also included in the anthologies. Rather than being a mismatch of the two contrasting schools of thought, this could be interpreted to be an attempt to marry the two in order to form a new, entirely rounded Germanic cultural tradition, which was supposedly independent of regional boundaries or time. Some of the authors included in the volumes (such as Goethe and Schiller) are known as both enlightenment and Romantic authors, since their works and ideas influenced and defined both movements in different ways. This is shown in the emergence of the *Sturm und Drang* ('Storm and Stress') movement in the 1770s. This pre-Romantic movement marked a crucial turning-point in German literary culture *away* from French influences and *towards* a more nation-centred culture. This process of cultural redefinition was accelerated by the Napoleonic wars and the enduring influence of German Romanticism. Some aspects of this process of 'reminding' Germans of their shared past were more subtle than others: while poems such as 'Mein Vaterland' ('My Fatherland') or 'In der Heimat ist es schön' ('The Homeland is Beautiful') make no bones about their subject matter, we have to dig slightly deeper to find evidence of nationalist thought in other stories and histories. However, the inclusion of stories by more tolerant authors such as Hebel seems to suggest at least a token attempt at promoting a more inclusive sentiment.

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<sup>197</sup> Rash 2012:30-31

Many of these more obvious examples of nationalist literature are associated with the topic of *Vaterland*, and most examples are to be found in the two books for the older pupils, especially within the History section. The poem 'Muttersprache' ('Mother Tongue'), found in both *Oberklassen* books (L1 p98; L2 p86), was written by Max von Schenkendorf (1783-1817), a Prussian poet. The aim of the poem presumably was to remind the inhabitants of Elsass-Lothringen that their mother tongue is (or should be!) German, and the poem has a distinctly nationalist tone, describing the mother tongue as a 'heroes' language'<sup>198</sup> which is 'beautiful and wonderful'<sup>199</sup>, and describing foreign languages as something which we can never love.<sup>200</sup> 'My Fatherland' is another poem in the same vein, found in the first part of the geography section specific to Elsass-Lothringen in L1. Written by Julius Sturm (1816-1896), who wrote many nationalist songs and poems, 'My Fatherland' is explicit in its mention of Germany as the fatherland, and the German language as its mother tongue. It also describes the 'proud and free' Rhine<sup>201</sup>, which serves to evoke an earlier, unofficial national anthem, 'die Wacht am Rhein' ('The Watch on the Rhine'), thereby indirectly referencing other forms of nationalism from the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The final verse of 'My Fatherland' is particularly stirring:

My Germany, to you in happiness and distress  
My heart belongs until death;  
God succours you in grace,  
That you remain united, strong and free!<sup>202</sup>

This poem is positioned as a reminder to every German child that Germany is their fatherland without question, something which of course would be particularly pertinent to the schoolchildren of Elsass-Lothringen.

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<sup>198</sup> "Heldensprache" V4

<sup>199</sup> "Sprache schön und wunderbar" V3

<sup>200</sup> "Fremde Worte brauchen muss,  
Die ich nimmermehr kann lieben" V2

<sup>201</sup> "deinem stolzen, freien Rhein!" V2 (all L1 p289)

<sup>202</sup> "Mein Deutschland, dir in Glück und Not  
gehört mein Herz bis in den Tod;  
In Gnaden stehe Gott dir bei,  
dass du bleibst einig, stark und frei!" (L3 p158)

“The Homeland is Beautiful” is another poem found in a section of L3 called *Heimatskunde*, which appears to be a mixture of geography and history, all specific to Germany and Elsass-Lothringen. As in ‘My Fatherland’, this poem marks the beginning of the section. The poem was written by Karl August Krebs (1804-1880), a composer from Dresden, who again was known for his nationalist compositions. Here, however, the tone is not only nationalist in its narrowest sense (i.e. demonstrating a love for Germany), but also tries to develop a love of the mystical wider *Heimat* which is supposed to be natural, innate and unforced. This intangible sentiment essentially evokes an idealistic, and sometimes nostalgic, picture of Germany by painting a picture of an archetypal German town or village, bringing together many associations which, according to Boa, no single English word could ever convey.<sup>203</sup> This idea of *Heimat* can be ambiguous, as it can often be unclear as to whether it refers to the nation as a whole or if it calls upon a more regionalist imagery, and it is precisely this ambiguity which makes the term politically useful because it implicitly links the local with the national. In Krebs’ vision, *Heimat* includes the mountains in the background, mountain trails, with herds of animals wandering over the green grass; your parents waiting for their children to come home, and children playing happily for hours. All of this equates a sense of belonging and security which should provide each child with a clear consciousness of their identity. This *Heimat* was supposed to be recognised by every German child (including those from Elsass-Lothringen), and was something to yearn for and love unconditionally. The inclusion of a *Heimatskunde* section in L3 at the expense of separate history and geography sections suggests that developing a sense of *Heimat* was deemed more important at a younger age than learning more specific aspects of history and geography. This in turn seems to appeal to a more Romantic, less scientific or rational discourse, in contrast to the French education model at the time.

One notable potential counter-balance to the nationalistic theme which reared its head throughout the *Lesebücher* is the inclusion of stories and poems by authors such as Johann Peter Hebel (1760-1826). Hebel was a German short story writer, dialectal poet, evangelical theologian and pedagogue, who wrote some of his works in an Alemannic dialect. His stories and poems are used extensively in all three of the *Lesebücher*, although they are all of course presented in

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<sup>203</sup> Boa 2000:1

standard German, presumably for educational purposes. One of Hebel's stories found in both L1 (pp. 99-101) and L2 (pp. 86-88) is "Die gute Mutter" ('The Good Mother'); a classic story with a clear message that a mother's love conquers all. It tells the story of a Swiss mother who travels to Alsace in search of her son, who never returned from battle. While the mother is embarrassed by her humble quest, she is treated with the greatest respect by everyone she meets along the way, all of whom do their utmost to help her in her search. The story has a happy ending: the mother finds her son, promoted to General in the French army, with a beautiful wife and child. This story presents the subject of a mother's love, and seems to serve to promote family values. However, what makes this story particularly interesting is that it is actually a sympathetic portrayal of the French and the French army, something which is rarely found within the *Lesebücher*.

Hebel gives idyllic descriptions of Alsace and the countryside, and ends with the heartwarming sentence, 'it is by far the finest feature of the human heart that it is so happy to see friends or relatives come together unexpectedly again, and that it must always laugh or cry with emotion with them, whether it wants to or not'.<sup>204</sup> The inclusion of works such as these offsets to some extent the frequent references to and encouragement of German nationalism and attachment to the German *Heimat*, thereby infusing the *Lesebücher* with a token measure of Hebel's humanism to moderate the nationalist message. This appears to be a little more forgiving to the children of Elsass-Lothringen, who were still struggling to forge the strong sense of national identity required of them by Germany. While stories such as these do help slightly to readdress the balance of allegiance within the *Lesebücher* by recognising that the children in Elsass-Lothringen were still developing their national loyalties in the gradual process masterminded by Bismarck, the books still present an overwhelming bias towards promotion of nationalist sentiment. The fact that *Lesebücher* in other parts of Germany contained similar material means that this project was being developed across the *Reich* in order to promote a national consciousness which was at least as important as each German's regional identity, but it was always going to be something which was more apt in regions such as Elsass-Lothringen

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<sup>204</sup> "Es ist die schönste Eigenschaft weitaus im menschlichen Herzen, dass es so gern zusieht, wenn Freunde oder Angehörige unverhofft wieder zusammenkommen, und dass es allemal dazu lächeln oder vor Rührung mit ihnen weinen muss, ob es will oder nicht" (L2 p88)

where the inhabitants were not necessarily automatic converts to this German national identity, even thirty years on from the Franco-Prussian War. What is more, it is not impossible that seemingly innocent stories such as Hebel's were still hijacked by the nationalist project, as suggested by Rash. First of all, the idyllic images of the countryside do still play into the nostalgic ideas favoured by the nationalists. Furthermore, this nationalism was coupled with a growing interest in Germanic dialects, such as the one in which Hebel wrote, since people associated them with rural lives, signalling the preservation of an era which existed before the centralisation of Germany. As a result, the work of authors such as Hebel continued to grow in popularity during this period.<sup>205</sup>

This is not to say that the German schoolbooks held the absolute monopoly on nostalgic nationalist content, or literary nationalism. There are several examples of this sort of sentiment being expressed by Bruno in the *Tour de la France*, especially since the general nature of the book helps to facilitate this kind of thought. While this device is much more widespread in the German books. One example of 'nostalgic nationalism' within the *Tour de la France* can be found in its final chapter. Aptly entitled 'I love France' ('J'aime la France'), the reader witnesses a scene unfolding six years later, where all is well on the farm inhabited by Julien, André, their uncle, and various other well-loved characters who have appeared along the way. The scene is idyllic, reminiscent of the countryside scenes which are repeated in nationalist ideals, as everyone works hard for the glory of *la patrie*. André is preparing to serve his country 'under the flags' as a soldier,<sup>206</sup> and Julien continues to be a good student. Most importantly, neither has forgotten his commitment to duty or to *la patrie*, nor will he ever do so.<sup>207</sup> A story such as this one could only have a happy ending, and *Le Tour de la France* does not disappoint. This provides French children with the reassurance that if they work as hard and love their country as much as the two brothers do, then they will also succeed in their efforts.

The region of Lorraine as a symbol is also used by the *Tour de la France* as a means of promoting nationalist sentiment, since Bruno names it as a border

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<sup>205</sup> Rash 2012:47

<sup>206</sup> "il sera bientôt sous les drapeaux, il sera bientôt soldat de la France" (Bruno 1976:308)

<sup>207</sup> "ils resteront toujours fidèles à ces deux grandes choses... Devoir et Patrie" (Bruno 1976:308)



region which makes its inhabitants the ‘*patrie*’s vigilant front line’<sup>208</sup>. As one example, the importance of Lorraine is highlighted in the story of Joan of Arc, helping to further develop this particular nationalist myth amongst the French. We are told that ‘no other nation has had a heroine who could compare to this humble country girl (“paysanne”) from Lorraine, to this noble daughter of the French people’.<sup>209</sup> This passage is important for several reasons: first of all, the use of Joan of Arc as a symbol of the French nation is once again highlighted. The idea of Joan of Arc was used by many different people wanting to convey different ideas about the French nation, but it was invariably used as a potent symbol of nationalism and staunch patriotism. This symbolism continues even today, with nationalist political groups such as the *Front National* celebrating the feast day of Joan of Arc. The reiteration of Joan being a daughter of Lorraine also serves to support the idea that Lorraine forms an important part of the French Republic, having contributed so much to the nation, which in turn shows why it is such a travesty that part of Lorraine has been annexed by the German Empire. Rural characters such as Joan of Arc also served to weave together elements of the local and the national in order to appeal to the rural masses in an attempt to transcend regional differences between French people.<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, the use of the word “paysanne” to describe Joan is pertinent, since it points to a nostalgic nationalism, which is evoked in images of the countryside or the *terre* (‘soil’; ‘locality’) and the people who work to maintain it, who are the backbone of the French nation.

### The Latin - Germanic Divide

What is curious is that educational authorities on both sides, reflecting the cultural trends of the time, argued that current Franco-German antagonism was nothing more than the expression of a centuries-old conflict which started between the Romans and the barbarians of Central Europe, showing a clear division between the Latin and the Germanic traditions. It is important to point out here that this device, used to great effect by both nations, signalled much more than a further reinterpretation of history as seen in previous chapters.

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<sup>208</sup> “l’avant-garde vigilante de la patrie” (Bruno 1976:58)

<sup>209</sup> “aucune nation n’a eu une héroïne qui puisse se comparer à cette humble paysanne de Lorraine, à cette noble fille du peuple de France” (Bruno 1976:61)

<sup>210</sup> Hargrove & McWilliam 2005:22

Instead, this idea was greatly influenced by the artistic communities of France and Germany, echoing their diverging movements. While French art was to experience a revival of classicism, German art was developing into something akin to the Romanticism found within the literary sphere.<sup>211</sup> As in the cultural domain, both sets of schoolbooks chose to return to representations of early European tribal history as an explanation for the emerging nationalist conflicts between French and German culture. Included in this is the French claim that they are the natural inheritors of the classical civilisation developed by Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, which is reflected in their superior culture. This culture was dismissed by the Germans, who argued that this effeminate, decadent, pagan and degenerate culture expressed an inherent weakness in the Latin race, which was not to be found in the superior Germanic one. For the Germans, it was a source of pride that the Germanic tribes were never conquered by the Romans, but instead proved to be too strong to be dominated in such a way.<sup>212</sup> The German government was quick to take advantage of this cultural movement in order to use it to further the cause of unified Germany. It was important that the origins of the Holy Roman Empire be interpreted in such a way so as to suggest that German unification of 1871 was an inevitable consequence of its past. This idea also served to create a “secular national enemy against whom the German people had defined their identity”, as well as to promote the notion of German military supremacy.<sup>213</sup>

This debate dates back to the rise of Napoleon in the early eighteenth century, when scholars began to equate the dominance of Napoleon with the rise of the Roman culture nearly a thousand years beforehand. This supposed repetition of events was further supported by the eventual defeat of Napoleon at the hands of the Northern Europeans in 1813.<sup>214</sup> Napoleon was considered to embody the values and nature of a ‘man of the south’, and this became the starting point for a development of a European racial theory, developed by scholars such as Germaine de Staël, whose book *On Germany* was published in 1813. De Staël divided Europe into three distinct races: the Latin, the Germanic, and the Slavic, and went further to develop the idea of a ‘national character’ which

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<sup>211</sup> Hargrove & McWilliam 2005:12-13

<sup>212</sup> Michaud 2012:60

<sup>213</sup> Hobsbawm & Ranger 1984:274

<sup>214</sup> Hargrove & McWilliam 2005:12-13

defined the peoples of each race in a north-south divide across Western Europe.<sup>215</sup> This conflict was to become an expression of class conflict: middle and working class Germans denounced the classical, Francophile culture of its elite class, which served to alienate them from the rest of the German people, whereas the French aristocracy was denounced for its Germanic origins.<sup>216</sup> This was despite the German elite classes and monarchy making every attempt to highlight the supposed organic and spiritual unity and shared origins of all Germans, regardless of class or status. This sense of unity, coupled with nostalgic nationalism, remained the dominant discourse.<sup>217</sup> In fact, this idea of a class conflict was much more pronounced in France between the ‘Germanic’ aristocracy and the ‘Gallic’ common people, partly in thanks to the suspicion held for the aristocracy since the 1789 Revolution.<sup>218</sup>

The figure of Charlemagne is held up by both the French and the German schoolbooks to be one of the most important founders of their nation, and as representative of the Latin-Germanic divide. The *Lesebücher* claim Charlemagne (known as Karl the Great in German) as one of their own, claiming that he was particularly devoted to his mother tongue, which is given to be German, and that he even helped to develop a German grammar together with his court scholars.<sup>219</sup> The Franks are held to be a distinctly Germanic tribe who move to conquer modern-day France by means of subjugation of the Gauls. For the children of Alsace-Lorraine, the Frankish role in developing their region is charted. The Germanic roots of the Alsatians are highlighted<sup>220</sup>, as is the fact that the Alsatians remained unaffected by internecine wars between Frankish kings.<sup>221</sup> Mirroring accounts of these histories are to be found in both L1 and L2. On the French side, Charlemagne and his Franks are claimed to be unequivocally Latin in the *petit Lavis*, and we are told that Charlemagne, having been born in France, in fact moved over to conquer Germany, becoming its emperor and

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<sup>215</sup> Michaud 2012:63-64

<sup>216</sup> Michaud 2012:65

<sup>217</sup> Forster-Hahn 1996:30-31

<sup>218</sup> Hargrove & McWilliam 2005:12-13

<sup>219</sup> “Ganz besonders lieb war dem großen Kaiser die Muttersprache... Mit den gelehrten Männern an seinem Hofe arbeitete er eine deutsche Grammatik aus” (L1 p208)

<sup>220</sup> “Von diern deutschen Volksstamme stammt der größte Teil der heutigen elsässischen Bevölkerung ab” (L1 p202)

<sup>221</sup> “Die vielen Kriege, welche die fränkischen Könige mit ihren Nachbarn oder unter sich führten, berührten das Elsaß nicht” (L1 p202)

civilising the Germans by baptising them.<sup>222</sup> Before that, Lavissee tells us that it was the Romans who civilised the Gauls and converted them to Christianity, which serves to emphasise the Roman traditions embraced by the French for the benefit of the contemporary reader. The Germans at this time are described as pagans who were so barbaric that they didn't know how to enforce justice.<sup>223</sup> Both the *petit Lavissee* and the *Lesebücher* chart the death of Charlemagne as the definitive point where France became a separate nation in its own right, as did the Holy Roman Empire. However, the Holy Roman Empire is solely referred to as Germany and the German Empire ("Deutschland"; "das deutsche Reich") in the German schoolbooks. In these books, it is also carefully noted that this is when Alsace and Lorraine became part of the German Empire, although only the part of Lorraine which was Germanic, thereby reflecting and reinforcing Bismarck's argument for cultural unity when annexing the territory in 1870.<sup>224</sup> However, the *Tour de la France* does not deal with Charlemagne, instead limiting discussion of classical civilisation to the Gauls who are described as 'our ancestors'. A subtle racial element is hinted at here, with Bruno describing the Gauls as 'big and robust, with skin as white as milk, blue eyes and long blond or red hair'<sup>225</sup>, which reminds us of an ethnic nationalism seemingly contradictory to the official civic model employed by the French government.

It is interesting that this treatment of classical civilisation is dealt with in much more detail in the *Lesebücher* than in the French schoolbooks. Firstly, the French had chosen to focus on more modern, republican history, as discussed in Chapter 2, to the detriment of French history before the fifteenth century. Secondly, this preoccupation with mediaeval history had taken on a much wider significance in Germany, since it was reflected in the artistic culture of the time in a reaction against dominance of French culture on the European stage. It was widely asserted in German artistic circles that the distinctive German character could and must survive the degrading influence of the French in order to emerge

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<sup>222</sup> Il conquiert aussi la Germanie ou l'Allemagne... Il civilisa les Germains, qu'il fit baptiser après les avoir vaincus" (Lavissee 2010:9)

<sup>223</sup> "Les Francs étaient païens, comme étaient les Gaulois avant l'arrivée des Romains... Ils étaient si barbares qu'ils ne savaient pas rendre la justice" (Lavissee 2010:7)

<sup>224</sup> "Dort wurde ausgemacht, dass Karl der Kahle vom Reiche Lothars nur den Teil bekommen sollte, in welchem die Leute welsch sprachen; soweit deutsch gesprochen wurde... sollte das Land zu Deutschland gehören" (L1 p211)

<sup>225</sup> "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois étaient grands et robustes, avec un peau blanche comme le lait, des yeux bleus et de longs cheveux blonds ou roux" (Bruno 1976:134)

triumphant.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, German history at the time tended to focus on earlier European history, rather than the specifics of the Holy Roman Empire which followed it, since this was difficult to reconcile with the nationalist model, especially since it did not suggest that the events of 1871 were inevitable, or even likely.<sup>227</sup> Finally, the Holy Roman Empire formed an important part of the German unifying myth, since it was hoped that people would accept the notion of a natural succession from one Empire to the next.

## The Visual

This debate in Germany is closely associated with the advent of ‘nostalgic nationalism’ in the form of Romantic and post-Romantic literature, as well as in the field of visual culture for both France and Germany, and in particular the issue of ‘word and image’, which focuses attention on the relationship between visual representation and the language which surrounds it. In other words, ‘word and image’ highlights the difference between the say-able and the see-able if an image is able to express something a piece of text is not.<sup>228</sup> This is something which has been widely studied,<sup>229</sup> but it is interesting that we are unable to find many examples of discrepancies between text and image in either set of schoolbooks, with one notable exception being found in the *petit Lavis*. This is particularly pertinent, since the widely held adage tells us that a ‘picture paints a thousand words’. For children on both sides of the Franco-German border who were still in the early stages of compulsory education, and who may have been trying to learn in a language different to the one which they speak at home, pictures would prove to be an important study aid in order to help them make better sense of the words they were trying to learn. Maps were considered to be particularly important because they were used to clearly illustrate both the entire nation and the school’s place within that nation, in order to give pupils a sense of perspective and to allow them to see that they were indeed a part of the nation, both physically and spiritually.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Rash 2012:39-40

<sup>227</sup> Hobsbawn & Ranger 1984:274

<sup>228</sup> Nelson & Schiff 1996:1

<sup>229</sup> c.f. Nelson & Schiff 1996; Olson 2011

<sup>230</sup> Olson 2011:39

However, the first hurdle for the children in Alsace-Lorraine was the absence of maps or pictures in any of the three *Lesebücher* which I am studying. It is more likely that maps and wall charts would have been provided separately by the educational authority, rather than being included in the books themselves. This is interesting, since the comparable schoolbooks used on the French side of the border make full use of maps and illustrations. Maps first appeared in the 1905 edition of *Le Tour de la France*, and French schoolchildren were shown maps complete with the ‘missing province’ of Alsace-Lorraine, often coloured in a deep purple, teaching them to mourn what should have remained part of their nation, and strengthening nationalist sentiment against Germany.<sup>231</sup> Lavissee in turn describes his book as ‘full of images’, explaining that he wanted to force children to look at the images, since it would allow them to better understand history.<sup>232</sup> In Germany, by contrast, pictures in schoolbooks were apparently less common, especially in books for older children. The Prussian Minister of Education, who issued ministerial guidelines in 1902 for *Lesebücher* across Prussia as well as Alsace-Lorraine, was explicit in discouraging the use of illustrations of objects and events which were already familiar to children, suggesting that the role of pictures was determinedly educational and certainly not decorative.<sup>233</sup> Nevertheless, it is surprising that there are no illustrations or maps whatsoever in the three books, particularly in the book used by the *Mittelklassen*, since this was of course used by younger children.<sup>234</sup> Kennedy informs us that by the turn of the twentieth century, “those who compiled, used and promoted readers took pictorial images seriously”, with many publishers choosing to advertise the number of pictures within their books on the title page. Teachers and pupils were also enthusiastic about the inclusion of pictures in their books, which helped to promote their success further.<sup>235</sup> Most common were pictures of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Prussian monarchy in the history section, and maps and generic pictures of the *Heimat* in the geography section, usually picturing traditional town or village scenes.

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<sup>231</sup> Olson 2011:38-39

<sup>232</sup> “remplis d’images”; “les enfants ont besoin de voir les scènes historiques pour comprendre l’histoire... Nous avons voulu forcer les enfants à bien regarder les images” (Lavissee 2010:2)

<sup>233</sup> Kennedy 2000:226

<sup>234</sup> This view could perhaps be traced back to the Lutheran and Protestant traditions of iconoclasm and emphasis on the primacy of holy scripture. As I have said previously, the German authorities *did* provide pictures for education, but these were usually highly specialised maps and technical diagrams for older students. Perhaps the idea was that only older children would be sufficiently advanced to appreciate detailed pictures and diagrams.

<sup>235</sup> Kennedy 2000:228

Why are these three *Lesebücher* without pictures? Are they anomalous or are they representative of an education ministry which did its best to limit the use of image in schoolbooks, merely showing a great discrepancy between French and German educational policy? One problem in determining the answers to these questions lies in our inability to date the schoolbooks studied here more exactly. We know that they date from around the turn of the century, with one of the books being dated from 1906, but we are not able to narrow down the spread of dates any further than this. If we were able to date the books more accurately, it might be easier to determine the reason why none of these books contain any images or maps. It could be argued that Alsace-Lorraine was not considered important enough by the Prussian educational authority to warrant more up-to-date books, so perhaps children in Alsace-Lorraine were slower to receive updates to their classroom materials than others across Prussia. Evidence of this could be interpreted through the lack of full reprinting of the *Lesebücher* studied in this thesis. None of the three books contain a uniform font: instead, all three contain items printed in one of three different fonts, showing newer additions which were fitted in to the books without reprinting or recasting the entire book. However, this lack of priority seems strange considering the importance given to the task of Germanising the children of Alsace-Lorraine, even thirty years after the Franco-Prussian War, since the process of Germanisation was not yet considered to have been fully effective. Perhaps, in this vein, it was deemed more important that the children of Alsace-Lorraine continued to receive a more traditional, German education in order to ensure continued effective nation building.

The French books, by contrast, seem to have no such reservations. The earlier editions of the *Tour de la France* appeared without maps, showing that cartography as a discipline was only just starting to become widely used, but compensated for this by boasting in the preface of over 200 images within its 331 pages, all of which have an ‘educational aim’ which helps to ‘engrave in the minds of the children’ all the ideas described in the book.<sup>236</sup> This suggests an appeal to ideas about conveying information through pictures in the vein of

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<sup>236</sup> “On remarquera que ce livre contient plus de deux cents gravures, cartes ou portraits, et que ces gravures ont toutes un but instructif... Ces dessins auront l’avantage de graver dans l’esprit des enfants les objets, les contrées, les villes et monuments, les hommes illustres dont on leur parle” (Bruno 1976:4)

Gustave Le Bon who in *La Psychologie des Foules* highlights the importance of the image in swaying the mind of the masses and in this way likens the masses to the female or child-like mind. In this way, Le Bon argues that the messages conveyed through an image are much more powerful than the same message given in text when attempting to convey that message to the masses, and that the importance of images cannot be underestimated.<sup>237</sup> The pictures in the *Tour de la France* mostly evoke scenes of rural life, rather than the famous people or events described in the book. Instead, Bruno chooses to focus on the landscapes and flora and fauna which inhabit them, as well as generic images of people working the land in various guises. These images fit perfectly with the nostalgic image painted of rural France by Bruno in her book, as well as the regionalist emphasis which aims to teach French children about every corner of their nation. These pictures would therefore further reinforce these ideas over other pieces of text which have not been illustrated, highlighting the information within the book which was deemed to be most important by Bruno. The *petit Lavissee*, on the other hand, does contain mostly images of famous people and maps of countries described in the accompanying text, as well as pictorial summaries of what is covered in each chapter or period of history. Lavissee does not appear to subscribe to the same theory about images as that of Bruno, since the images in the *petit Lavissee* have a much more secondary role in support of the text which they illustrate, perhaps reflecting a more scientific approach to education. One thing that is interesting is that Napoleon I does not get a clear portrait in the textbook, instead only being shown in little detail as part of a wider picture, unlike other important figures such as Victor Hugo or even Louis XVIII and Napoleon III. In this way, although Lavissee is unable to completely downplay the role of Napoleon Bonaparte in the development and history of France in his text, he is able to demonstrate a lack of respect for the leader through not highlighting his importance in an individual portrait. This shows a definite nod towards republicanism and leaving Napoleon's authoritarianism in the shadows, further strengthening Lavissee's republican credentials.

It can be tempting to look at these various forms of promoting nationalism within the context of the fascism that developed throughout the early twentieth century. However, it is also important to maintain a certain level of detachment

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<sup>237</sup> Le Bon 1895:76-77



from this and to look at educational nationalism in terms of its original aims. By this I mean that we should look, as we have done in this chapter, at the premises behind the teaching of nationalist thought, and not just at the subsequent evolution of nationalist sentiment. What is most striking by far are the similarities in techniques and ideas used by both governments, to such differing ends. In schoolbooks on both sides we can observe the construction of selective historical narratives for the purposes of nation building. The importance of nostalgia in developing nationalist sentiment cannot be underestimated, since it was one of the most effective ways of making people develop their 'memories' of their shared national path. Present conditions were interpreted within the context of a notionally shared past, an officially sanctioned version of the nation's history. Such narratives played on people's insecurities about the modern world, leading them to accept the histories given to them by the government, and helping to strengthen these ideas organically. Classical and mediaeval civilisations became integral to the nationalist project for both nations, since they appeared to promote the values and lifestyles for which people were becoming increasingly nostalgic. There are only so many events and personalities which can be used and reinterpreted in order to create a shared path for a nation, so it stands to reason that the ambiguities of early and mediaeval history are ideal for this project. Developments in technology allowed the increasing use of maps and images in education in both France and Germany, although this has not been demonstrated in the *Lesebücher* of this thesis. Thanks to these devices, the idea of the French nation and the German nation continued to diverge in the minds of the nations' citizens as well as in the policies of each nation's government. The nation building project was well underway on both sides of the Franco-German border in Lorraine.

## Conclusion

This thesis has examined the development of nationalism in the ‘educational arms race’ between France and Germany as it was played out in the border region of Lorraine, divided between these two nations between 1870 and 1918. By focusing on several key textbooks as used in the primary schools on each side of the border during this period, the thesis has provided us with a snapshot of the educational aims of both educational authorities, particularly in terms of nation building. What we have learned from this is that both nations clearly prioritised the encouragement of nationalist sentiment in order to inspire a love for that nation amongst its people. By means of various moral points, the schoolbooks were intended to convey the idea that one had a duty to serve and protect one’s own country, even to the extent of sacrificing one’s life in wartime. While boys were taught to aspire to an illustrious career in the national army, serving their country, their sisters on both sides of the Franco-German border were being brought up to become good wives and mothers to this generation of nationalist soldiers. This was especially pertinent in a contested border region such as Lorraine: for the French, the revised Franco-German border of 1871 marked a deep divergence in beliefs and ideas, and the French Lorrains became the first line of defence against further German expansionism. Love for the French *patrie* was to be encouraged in order to ensure a strong anti-German presence against the border. On the German side of the border, the newest members of the German Empire had a dual role in that Bismarck hoped that they would become models for national German integration, justifying the arguments for cultural assimilation, but also to mirror the French in the reinforcement of the new Franco-German border.

What has emerged most strongly from this thesis is the interpretation of historical events and their consequences in order to further ideas of either French or German superiority, and the emphasis that is placed upon the importance of history within both sets of textbooks. Crucial Franco-German events, such as the Franco-Prussian War, are recounted significantly differently in order to place the focus on whichever country is favoured to the absolute detriment of the other. Different national figureheads are revered by each nation, with the French celebrating ‘great Republicans’ such as Joan of Arc, and

the Germans preferring to attempt to chart an unbroken monarchical succession, beginning with Charlemagne and continuing with Wilhelm II. There are also echoes of the emphasis placed upon classical civilisations, reflected in the wider artistic culture of both nations at this time, within the schoolbooks. The perceived Latin-Germanic divide is accepted by both sets of books, further encouraging the sense of innate divisions between the two nations and suggesting that this conflict is inevitable. A further reflection of wider literary culture is to be found within both sets of books, and within the *Lesebücher* in particular, with a sharp preference for Romantic literature, replicating the nostalgic nationalism which was becoming so popular during this period.

These similarities are in contrast to the supposedly conflicting models of civic and ethnic nationalism, as outlined in Chapter One, as well as the well-known development of German nationalism into the national socialism of the twentieth century. At the same time, context is everything with interpretations of history, and we cannot let our knowledge of the darkest elements of twentieth century nationalism entirely cloud our discussions of earlier nationalism. While a keen sense of the ‘other’ (both European and non-European) is promoted in both sets of the schoolbooks, the nationalism in neither France nor Germany was yet to develop into anything so discriminatory, especially not to the extent that it was reflected in educational policy. However, this is not to downplay the significance of the promotion of nationalism in French and German education, or the explicit aims of both nations in this project. This is especially clear with regards to the discrepancies between the French nationalist model and French educational policy. The racial and colonial strand found within the French textbooks, as well as the prominence of the idea of conflicting Latin and Germanic tribes, do not sit easily with their civic, republican model of nationalism. The German ethnic model also appears in a much more nuanced manner in the schoolbooks, relying more on the ‘ethnicity’ of a mythical shared past than on any physical characteristics or genetics.

What is clear is that, thanks to these education systems, children on both sides of the Franco-German border were not left in any doubt as to where their national loyalties should now lie. On one side of the border Lorrains were being expressly educated to love their *patrie*, to embrace the myths of the glorious

Republic and to be prepared to die for it. Meanwhile, several kilometres to the east, Lorrains were being raised to fight and die for their mystical *Heimat*, to honour the Kaiser and to rejoice in their glorious reunification with the *Vaterland*. It is entirely appropriate that this thesis is to be completed in the centenary year of the beginning of the First World War, seeing as how this deepening Franco-German division was to be played out with such devastating consequences during four long years.

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