Le devoir des petits Français: The Masculine Figure as Represented by Ernest Lavisse

Luke L. Eilderts

Faculty Sponsor: Denis M. Provencher,
Department of Modern Languages

ABSTRACT

Many pedagogical materials (i.e. history manuals, etc.) used throughout France and her colonies during the Third Republic (1870-1940) illustrate a discourse steeped in nationalistic and moralistic values presented to raise the spirit of the country and its citizens following the devastating defeat of the Franco-Prussian War (1870). The purpose of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of the 19th-century French history textbook *Histoire de France: Cours élémentaire* (1876) in order to identify and study the "codes of male conduct" and morality in France employed by its author Ernest Lavisse following this devastating defeat. Indeed, Lavisse's manuals merit some critical attention as his textbooks served several generations of both French and French-colonial school children. This analysis aims to better illuminate the mindset of the many generations of French and French-colonial school children that were educated and indoctrinated into his version of French history.

Enfant,
Tu vois sur la couverture de ce livre les fleurs et les fruits de la France.
Dans ce livre tu apprendras l'histoire de la France.
Tu dois aimer la France, parce que la nature l'a faite belle,
et parce que son histoire l'a faite grande.
—Ernest Lavisse
(cited in Nora 268)

Child,
You see on the cover of this book the flowers and the fruits of France.
In this book, you will learn the history of France.
You must love France because nature has made her beautiful,
and because her history has made her great (my translation).

A children's faerie tale may appear to be a rather uncomplicated story of a king and queen who cannot conceive, or of a little girl carrying cakes and wine to her grandmother who lives deep within the forest. However, upon further investigation of such tales, one finds a work replete with "moral" ideals intended to instruct the youthful reader. In the case of *Little Red Riding Hood* [*Le Petit chaperon rouge*], for example, one can see that it warns children—and especially female children—of the dangers of the world. Hence, faerie tales have underlying moral values as set forth by the authors of a given historical moment.

The same is true of many texts and images that bombard our children's lives. For example, many parents, religious leaders, lawmakers and doctors are concerned by the information children receive and argue that various media (television, movies, video games) and their messages greatly influence children's behavior as they grow older. For example, concerned parents criticize the violence and sex on television, as they seemingly fill our youth's minds with a skewed picture of society, possibly leading to extreme tragedies such as copycat crimes or school shootings. In other words, these media have a strong impact on the psyche of school-aged children—in a sense, they provide a certain type of education to our youth.

Like other media and texts, history textbooks narrate a certain view of one's world both past and present. Certainly, these narratives are based on historical events and figures and, on a certain level, simply recount historical events; consequently, these narratives are often taught as a sort of "truth" to schoolchildren and go unquestioned. Indeed, the subject of History comes to the forefront as an important factor in a student's educational base as can be noted in the adage, "history repeats itself." Repeatedly, the argument used for why we must know history—and especially our own history—is so that we may learn from our mistakes. Therefore, the manner in which an event is recounted may influence the collective thoughts of that nation. Studying which events are highlighted and which events are muted may provide a doorway through which we may better understand an historian's purpose in writing and the educational agenda of a certain historical moment.

Ernest Lavisse (1842-1922), the "nation's teacher" according to Pierre Nora (151), was deeply affected by the tumultuous events of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) and decided to write a history aimed at glorifying France to young school children (Girardet 80). Jacques and Mona Ozouf emphasize this point in the preface of Lavisse's autobiography *Souvenirs* by saying that the defeat loomed heavily on his mind (Lavisse XXVII). This is clearly evident when reading the section that deals with the Franco-Prussian War in his famous textbook *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire* [*The History of France: Elementary Edition*]. Here, Lavisse writes that he, along with many Parisians, who had seen such terrible things and who had suffered because of them, cried out that all was finished, that France was defeated (175).

In the preface of *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire*, Lavisse justified his reinterpretation by asserting that history, as it had been taught, failed to deliver the desired results [*L'expérience a montré que l'enseignement de l'histoire dans nos écoles n'a pas donné les résultats espérés*]. So then, what were these desired results according to him? Indeed, Lavisse's work reflects his belief in a connection between patriotism and the regeneration of France after the Franco-Prussian War: if we flood children's heads with images of a powerful France, then they will carry those ideas with them forever [*Si l'enfant a été ému, il se souviendra toujours de l'émotion ressentie*] (Lavisse, *A propos* 11). Although Lavisse's use of moral codes to impact public education is evident, little work has been done to research and uncover his methods. Raoul Girardet is one of the few scholars who mentions Lavisse in his work *Le Nationalisme Français: 1871-1914*. Although Girardet explains that nationalism loomed heavily in Lavisse's elementary history texts because of the Franco-Prussian war, he does not further pursue this line of study (80). In the voluminous work *Les Lieux de mémoire* [*Realms of Memory*], Pierre Nora also writes about Lavisse as well as the evolution of the manual through its many subsequent editions. Nora gives great importance to Lavisse as can be seen in the introduction to the second volume. Nora states: "without Lavisse's great history, without this great, unitary, teleological and chronological narrative, there could be no *Realms of Memory* with its method of monographic decomposition" (xi).

In this research project, I conduct a critical analysis of Lavisse's grammar school textbook

focusing on his representations of masculinity in order to identify and systematically study the moral "codes of male conduct" in France after the Franco-Prussian war. I illustrate in two examples how Lavisse wrote a text in which he educated the reader with nationalistic, moralistic, and "masculine" values in order to raise the spirit of the country following this national defeat. The two examples are the story of Vercingétorix, the general of ancient Gaul who fought against Julius Caesar's invasion, and the Franco-Prussian War, concentrating on Lavisse's narration of this national tragedy written approximately ten years after the defeat.

Masculinity and the IIIème République

The chaotic transitions France endured after the French Revolution of 1789 and throughout the industrial revolution brought about a desire for stability that seemed lacking in late 19th-century society. At the same time, the push for women's rights as well as several well-publicized homosexual "scandals" in Europe—Oscar Wilde and his affair with a Marquis' son, for example—set off a backlash in social acceptance of those who instead became labeled as "deviants" (those who did not fit a socially recognized "masculine" model).

The social constructions of masculinity during the period leading up to and following the Franco-Prussian War play an important role in setting the background for this study. Robert Nye states in his book *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* that "in this era assessments about a man's masculinity took on an unusual importance in social life… [and] being anatomically 'of the male sex' was necessary, but not in itself sufficient to satisfy the ideals of masculinity articulated routinely in public discourse" (107). Indeed, the new male bourgeoisie had much to lose lest its "honor" be tarnished forever. In the book *La Médecine des passions* (1860) [*The Medecine of Passions*], J.B.F. Descuret composes a list of virtues and vices that clearly define the limits within which an honorable, contributing member of French Bourgeois society must remain. Descuret mentions force, calm, courage, activity, emulation, economy, love of study, and religious faith as virtues situated between two extremes: 1)violence, anger, temerity, turbulence, envy, prodigality, study mania, fanaticism; 2)weakness, apathy, fear, nonchalance, indifference, avarice, disgust for study, and incredulity (cited in Nye 66).

During this era, Nye states that a "behavior" became directly equated with an "identity", such that those attracted to the same sex *became* homosexuals; those who performed sadistic and/or masochistic acts *became* sadists and/or masochists (102). Moreover, doctors and psychiatrists at that time who did not previously possess the vocabulary necessary to encompass these realms of human behavior began a mission to classify all "conditions." Nye also states "this process of medicalizing and pathologizing sexual identity was more widely and deeply developed in France than elsewhere in Europe in the years around the turn of the century" (102).

Though he wrote over one hundred years earlier, Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), archeologist and art historian from Saxony whose ideas were "received enthusiastically in France" (Mosse, *The Image* 36), helped to solidify the paradigm of masculinity through his study of Greek sculpture. Winckelmann's study centered around the statues of young athletes, "who through the structure of their bodies and their comportment exemplified power and virility, and also harmony, proportion, and self-control" (29). Thus, a disturbed or tormented soul would be considered one who practiced unhealthy acts or behaved in a way considered outside the norm of society. For example, the category of "sexual deviant" alone encompassed effeminate men, manly women, masturbators, homosexuals, exhibitionists, and a number of other "conditions" affecting people. Those who did not prac-

tice heterosexual sex, what Nye calls "procreative love" (66), with their husband or wife were therefore deemed "sexually deviant" and yet, an overactive sex drive would render a man exhausted, sickly, effeminate, or impotent. Clearly, one was not part of true polite society unless one fit into these tiny parameters. Hence, it is quite evident that balance, a "*juste milieu*," was extraordinarily important for the middle classes. The lines between which a man was confined if he was to be considered a part of respectable society were both rigid and unforgiving. Honor encompassed mental stability, physical fitness, and virility and was a quality that one strove for and, if achieved, maintained with great difficulty; its loss, however, was realized quite easily. Lavisse does not go so far as to write out lists of values and morals by which school children were to abide; however, his use of visual as well as linguistic messages throughout the history textbook such as those presented in this study reinforce the ideologies of that period—ideologies that, although seemingly dated and easily identifiable to today's reader, remain a part of today's beliefs and principles.

<u>*Le Petit Lavisse*</u>

Ernest Lavisse (1842-1922), French historian, member of *l'Académie Française*, one of the "five learned societies" that make up the *Institut de France,* and former tutor to the imperial prince before the fall of the Second Empire (1870), worked to reform the French educational system. He saw the need for change in archaic forms of instruction and wrote several books concerning national education. In the preface of the book *Écrivains français pendant la guerre: Ernest Lavisse* [*French Writers during the War: Ernest Lavisse*], Christian Pfister, professor at the *Faculté de Lettres* at the *Université de Paris*, writes that after the Franco-Prussian War, "when bleeding France wanted to resume her place in the world by setting to work," Lavisse organized an "admirable program of reforms" [*il traça un magnifique programme de réformes*]. Pfister continues by claiming that no one attained Lavisse's "eloquence" in showing the need to spread education to the people, to prepare "the children in elementary schools for their future as men, cultivators or workmen" [*de préparer les enfants des écoles à la vie d'homme, d'agriculture et d'ouvrier*] (10). In reading his elementary textbook as well as other writings aimed at national education, it seems evident that he aimed to prepare France for revenge against Germany after the Franco-Prussian War. In his book *A propos de nos écoles* [*Concerning our Schools*] Lavisse writes that the teacher of the day knew the incertitude of the future and that Europe was coming to arms. He continues by saying that by a discreet call to natural generosity, and to the old temperament of the race, the schoolmaster could drive our soldiers of tomorrow towards the flag with a lively and happy step. Lavisse writes:

> *Et, si nous réussissons à donner au plus humble des écoliers, à celui dont la vie s'écoulera tranquille, au lieu où son père a vécu, le sentiment même obscur, de la grandeur, et de la poésie de la nature et de Dieu; avec cela, une claire notion des devoirs du citoyen d'un pays libre, et du soldat d'une armée nationale, alors nous pouvons dire que notre tâche est remplie. L'école, honorée, enrichie comme elle est aujourd'hui, ne trompera point la confidence du pays ; elle paiera sa dette à la République*. (A propos 15)
>
> And if we succeed at instilling in the most humble of school children—to the one whose life will pass calmly, who lives where his father lived—

> even the obscure feeling of grandeur and of the poetry of nature and of God; with that, a clear notion of the duties of the citizen of a free country, and of the soldier of a national army, we can therefore say that our task [as teachers] is complete. The school, honored, enriched as it is today, will hardly disappoint the country; it will pay its debt to the Republic (my translation).

Indeed this passage, as well as many others, clearly demonstrates Lavisse's elementary educational reform. This passage also underscores the importance placed upon the schoolmaster who replaced the priest as the nation's teacher in the new regime of secular education put in place by the law of March 28, 1882. In a letter dated November 17, 1883, addressing the schoolmasters of the day, Jules Ferry, president of the *Conseil* and minister of public education, emphasized that religious education belonged in the private realms of home and church. Modern education, however, was to bring moral and civic education to the forefront [*elle* [*la loi du 28 mars 1882*] *y place au premier rang l'enseignement moral et civique*] (Carpentier and Lebrun 60). Clearly, the schoolmaster, acting as the new lay priest of the Republic, was to do much more than teach reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Next, let us examine two lessons taken from the famous *Petit Lavisse* that the schoolmaster of the Third Republic would most likely have covered in his classroom. I will illustrate how Lavisse uses historic events and personalities at times to glorify France's history, filling the reader and especially his male student with a sense of duty and patriotism through both linguistic and visual messages.

Vercingétorix

First, we will look at the story of Vercingétorix, the general of ancient Gaul—(ancient France)—who fought against Julius Caesar's invasion (52 B.C.). A member of the aristocracy, Vercingétorix came to power shortly after the massacre at Orléans, placing himself at the head of the revolt against Caesar. Vercingétorix's victory against Rome at the city of Gergovie brought other groups such as the Éduens to his side, which in turn helped him secure the position as leader of Gaul. Immediately proceeding the account of Vercingétorix's triumph and defeat at the hands of the Romans in the Lavisse textbook, the author comments in italics that the Gauls—ancestors of the French—liked to argue and fight one another, "as savage people do" [*Les Gaulois aimaient se disputer et se battre, comme font les peuples sauvages*] (4). That Lavisse names the Gauls savages and dis-

VERCINGÉTORIX JETTE SES ARMES DEVANT CÉSAR

counts them for their internal squabbling emphasizes his desire to show what *not* to be and how *not* to act—in essence, a moral lesson that he is applying to his day. In this example, Lavisse portrays Vercingétorix as a persuasive Gaul who speaks very well to his soldiers. He says: "The Romans want to take our country, we must defend ourselves. March and chase them from Gaul, our fatherland." Even from the early pages in Lavisse's book, we see the theme of protecting France—named Gaul during the time of Vercingétorix—from its enemies, or any one wishing it harm. The heading for the next section is titled "Vercingétorix dies for the fatherland." After winning a battle against the Romans, all of Gaul celebrated the victory. Lavisse quickly continues by saying that following this triumph, Vercingétorix was defeated. Interestingly, he never mentions the historical fact that Vercingétorix's own army turns him over to Caesar. Instead, he says that Vercingétorix did not want to let the people die of hunger as the Romans had surrounded the city, and therefore decided to surrender himself to Caesar. Alone, Vercingétorix rides to the Roman camp, and upon his horse, he throws his weapons at the feet of Caesar. Instead of kneeling before the Roman leader, Vercingétorix remains mounted in defiance. This is an example of a theme that is present throughout Lavisse: the notion of working for the greater good, doing the "honorable" deed; in this instance, as in many others, it is the sacrificing of one's life.[1]

In looking closely at the image that accompanies the linguistic text, the reader sees that the image contains the figure of a man to the left holding a sword and a man seated to the right surrounded by what appears to be three guards. Behind the seated man, who lounges in an elevated chair, the background is filled with indistinct images of soldiers holding flags and battle arms in the air. A helmet and a lance lay before the seated man in a rather insignificant pile. In reading the caption to this image, we learn that the man to the left is Vercingétorix and the man to the right is Caesar.[2]

This is a black and white image with nuances of gray like all of the other images presented alongside the written text in this book. Rectangular, it is located in the middle of the page with text above and below, including a caption, which is found just below it. The figure of Vercingétorix on his great white horse occupies most of the space in the illustration whereas Caesar and his army only occupy a third of it. As for the point of view, the reader is positioned on the side of Vercingétorix as if we were standing just behind, supporting him.

In looking at the image and reading the text, the reader realizes that the image represents the defeat of Vercingétorix to Caesar. The denoted meaning of the illustration presents itself as a simple representation of said defeat; the connotative meaning appears, however, to be more "defiant" than "conquered" since the great white horse looks as if ready to charge.[3] Another important fact is that Vercingétorix *still* holds his sword. Certainly, the goal for this image or at least the narrative that accompanies this image is to instruct children about Vercingétorix's defeat, but what is important in the image—what draws the reader's attention—is *not* Caesar and his army, but Vercingétorix on his powerful white horse, sword in hand, hair floating in air. Therefore, the image works in opposition to the linguistic message. After having looked at the image of Vercingétorix, the reader's eyes turn to the right of the drawing, observing the figure of Caesar sitting upon his elevated throne. One would normally imagine that the throne would hold the power (denotative), but in this case, the throne is not well enough defined and the connotative meaning is that it is but a simple chair. Moreover, Caesar and his army behind him do not have the sense of vanquishers: in looking closely, Caesar in fact looks quite disinterested. It appears that the image of Vercingétorix is the icon of France/Gaul and that he functions like a synecdoche (Vercingétorix = France), whereas Caesar, with his large army, represents the people and countries that would invade France.

The opposition between the linguistic and the visual message are therefore significant as these two elements *usually* function in ways that reinforce rather than contradict each other. One may argue that Lavisse, who wished to write a relatively accurate account of the popular figure of Vercingétorix, and yet who still wished to imprint a certain image upon his readers, employed a visual message that is more powerful than the linguistic one.

The caption found below the image declares, “Vercingétorix throws his arms before Caesar” [*Vercingétorix jette ses armes devant César*]. At first glance, the caption appears like the only linguistic message associated with the image and hence, contradicts the visual message, but one must realize that there are also four pages of written information as well as four other images before this image in question which lead the reader to an interpretation that Vercingétorix’s surrender is a proud one. The chapter in which the illustration is located is titled “Vercingétorix dies for the motherland(homeland)” [*Vercingétorix meurt pour la patrie*]. Along the ideas of Roland Barthes (44), the linguistic message that anchors the image keeps the reader from coming to the wrong conclusion: it is indeed Caesar who is the vanquisher and Vercingétorix who is the vanquished. The illustration that Lavisse provides, however, gives us a very powerful image of Vercingétorix as opposed to the rather indifferent appearing Caesar, and thus leaves the reader with a different version of the account, a version that does not appear to be a surrender at all, but rather a defiant challenge. Although Vercingétorix is the one who surrenders to Caesar in this account of France’s history, the power of the drawing remains with the general of Gaul. Following this lesson, Lavisse adds in italics and bold text that the pupil should remember the name of Vercingétorix, who fought to defend his homeland, and who suffered and who died in a horrible prison [*Retenez bien le nom de Vercingétorix, qui a combattu pour deféndre sa patrie, et qui a souffert et qui est mort dans une affreuse prison*]. According to a more recent history manual, Vercingétorix did indeed remain a prisoner of Caesar until 46 B.C., six years after the Gaul revolt, but was executed shortly after being marched through the streets of Rome as a part of Caesar’s triumphal return to Rome (Carpentier and Lebrun 46). This narrative is a prime example of how Lavisse stresses to the “future soldier” the importance of suffering and even death for one’s homeland.

It is quite striking to see the differences between Lavisse’s interpretation of history and that of other historians and scholars. Taking the example of the story of Vercingétorix and looking towards the work *Histoire de France*, written under the direction of Jean Carpentier and François Lebrun, we find that the legend of the general of Gaul became the symbol for national unity in the face of the foreign menace during the nineteenth century (45). Lavisse’s version paints a very powerful picture of a man who gave everything to defend the fatherland, who suffered and eventually died dreaming of the beautiful countryside of Gaul. According to Carpentier and Lebrun, however, the history of Vercingétorix is much more complex and far less grandiose than previous interpretations (45). That Lavisse employs the more sensationalized version based on the account written by Plutarch rather than the more realistic account written by Caesar is therefore not surprising considering Lavisse’s desire to show a powerful France defending itself from its invaders.

It is interesting to note that to fight one another is savage (Gauls against Gauls), but to engage in war against another country (Gauls against Romans) is considered noble. After reading through his elementary text, one finds that Lavisse rarely mentions the wars that France instigated; however, he mentions many wars where France was invaded, thus opportunity to illustrate the necessity to defend the homeland from those who would wish it harm. Through this example, it is evident that Lavisse uses popular images directed at school-aged

children to illustrate the ideologies of the republic for which he wrote. As stated by Carpentier and Lebrun, Vercingétorix became a national symbol around the end the nineteenth century, and I believe that Lavisse makes use of his story to draw a parallel to what had happened to France during the Franco-Prussian War: as Vercingétorix was not victorious throughout his campaign, neither was France at the end of the Second Empire. The savage Gauls, however, are *not* the French of Lavisse's day, and therefore by instilling these heroic ideals into the children who will be the soldiers of tomorrow, Lavisse will keep alive and defend the flame of France.

The Franco-Prussian War

Finally, let us analyze Lavisse's presentation of the Franco-Prussian war in the elementary history textbook. In book eight of the textbook, entitled "From Napoleon to 1900," Lavisse quickly summarizes the events from 1815 to 1870, noting that the student will learn more about this period when he/she is older. Lavisse concentrates on the siege of Paris where the German army encircled the capital, thus blocking the flow of food and other necessary goods to the city, which is not unlike the story of Vercingétorix examined previously. Lavisse continues by recounting the horrifying daily events that followed: starvation, disease, and death. Furious that the city was taking so long to surrender, the German army began bombing Paris.

It is quite interesting to note in this chapter that Lavisse uses an illustration that depicts a city street shortly after a bomb has exploded. This terribly frightening illustration depicts two mothers, one with her two daughters, one with her fallen son, and two male soldiers. The mother/son portion of the illustration depicts the mother on her knees next to the body of her son, his eyes still wide with shock as his blood pools beneath him. Although there are other representations of death in the textbook, none of them portrays the death of an innocent child—a child who could be the very same age as one who would have read this textbook. First, this image evokes fear in the child for the intruder, (in this case, Germany). Second, the image invokes the desire to defend the homeland from the intruder, a theme that one can trace from the beginning chapters of Vercingétorix onward. The women, pictured as almost too frightened to react, and the barely visible soldiers placed in the background—not unlike the indistinct soldiers of Caesar—show the presence of France's military power without subtracting from the sense of despair, shock, and loss. The linguistic message seems to work in tandem with the visual message in this image, as if Lavisse wished to underscore the fact that France was not well defended without being overtly critical of the failure. It is important to remember that this siege took place during the Second Empire and not the Third Republic. Pierre Nora argues that Lavisse did not adhere to the values of the Republic straightaway, but rather "his patriotic fervor wrapped itself in republican colors only after the Republic had firmly taken hold and defense of the regime became one with defense of the nation" (156). Though this may be true, I believe that Lavisse, after wrapping

himself in "republican colors," makes use of images and ideologies of the Republic, which therefore discount the Empire.

The Franco-Prussian War was a failure of the Second Empire, which in turn gave birth to the Third Republic. Following the Republican rhetoric of the day, the Second Empire represented what was lacking in society, the truly masculine virtues needed for a nation to prosper such as those listed previously by Descuret. Moreover, in the book *La Femme: Essai de sociologie physiologique* (1885) written by Dr. Henri Thulié, a "well-known medical activist," he states that the "morality of the Second Empire had encouraged promiscuity in men, concubinage in women, and given the French an international reputation for sexual depravity" (cited in Nye 91). As stated earlier, sexual deviancy was thought to be one of the major causes for the failure of nations, and therefore the need to wipe out that which caused the downfall of the Second Empire grew significantly. Turning again to the image, one can see that there is scarcely a masculine presence and what presence there is represents the lack of the masculine virtues deemed necessary for a nation to succeed. Hence, Lavisse does enhance republican values.

Following this commentary, Lavisse titles the next section "The duty of French children" [*Le devoir des petits Français*], wherein he assures the reader that later on, when he/she is older, he/she will better learn the history of the Franco-Prussian War, and that his/her grandfathers all bravely did their duty in defending the homeland. He comments on the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and that the Germans made them suffer because they did not want to become German. "It is for this reason," he writes, "that French children must love the Alsatians and the Lorraines like brothers" [*c'est pourquoi les petits Français doivent aimer les Alsaciens et les Lorrains comme des frères*]. Next, Lavisse writes a list assuring the reader that France is much better prepared for war as compared to 1870: the soldiers are as brave as those who fought in 1870 and are much more numerous [*nos soldats aujourd'hui sont aussi braves que ceux qui combattirent en 1870, et ils sont beaucoup plus nombreux*]; the generals are as brave and are much better educated [*nos généraux sont aussi braves que ceux qui combattirent en 1870, et ils sont plus instruits*]; our guns and cannons are better than in 1870 [*nos fusils, nos canons sont meilleurs qu'en 1870*]; we are much better prepared for war [*Nous sommes beaucoup mieux préparés à la guerre*]. To complete the chapter, he asserts in italics, "France is well defended" [*La France est bien défendue*]. I find that in this section, just two chapters from the end of the textbook, that we discover the main reason for the book: Lavisse's reinterpretation of history seems to be a tool of propaganda to rally French schoolchildren to the side of the Republic and its ideologies.

Although many other examples are present in the elementary textbook, I believe that these two illustrations provide a key to understanding at least in part Ernest Lavisse's purpose in writing. To close, I wish to leave you with a passage from *A propos de nos écoles* that again embodies Lavisse's prime directive in writing his elementary history textbook:

> *J'ai enseigné autrefois la géographie à de petits enfants. Je ne leur parlais jamais sans émotion de la géographie de la France. Il m'était indifférent qu'ils n'en connussent pas les détails …mais je tâchais que la figure de notre pays leur apparût avec des traits précis, et que le charme de sa rare beauté fût senti par les jeunes âmes. Ne faut-il pas que l'écolier de France sache qu'il est venu au monde heureux et riche ?* […] *En notre France, la nature a mis quelque chose de toutes ses forces et de*

> *toutes ses grâces. Ce sentiment de la beauté et de la dignité naturelle de notre pays n'invite-t-il pas à aimer, à le servir et à le défendre ?*
> *Ainsi, même dans la géographie, l'école trouve une des raisons du patriotisme.* (13)
>
> [*One time I taught geography to little children. I never spoke to them without emotion about France's geography. I was indifferent if they did not know the details… but I made sure that the figure of our country appeared to them with precise traits, and that the charm of its rare beauty was felt by all their young souls. Is it not necessary that the French schoolchild know that he/she has been born into a happy and rich world? […] In our France, nature has placed something of all her forces and all her graces. Does not this feeling of beauty and of the natural dignity of our country invite one to love, to serve, and to protect it?*
> *So even in geography, the school finds one of the reasons for patriotism. (my translation)*]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is important to note that the content and style of history employed by Lavisse, what the adherents to *La Nouvelle Histoire* [*New History*] and the *Annales* school call *histoire-récit*, *histoire-événementielle*, and *histoire politique* may appear rather surprising to today's reader (see LeGoff, 1988); nevertheless it is still necessary to ask a key question: what was Lavisse's goal? In the preface of his elementary history textbook, as noted above, he wrote that history had not delivered the desired results. His objective, therefore, was to present a linear story-like version of France's history in order to show a logical evolution from the savage Gauls to the well prepared modern Frenchman. This process is not unlike the current situation facing the country where political groups such as the *Front National* wish to mute and even eliminate certain parts of its population and history in order to achieve the goal of a strong unified France. Both periods face troubling times economically, politically and militarily, thus making the future a potentially fearsome endeavor. Therefore, it will be of great interest to see to what images, texts and ideologies the present will adhere in comparison with those of the past.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to recognize the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Undergraduate Research Committee for the funds that allowed this study to take place. Also, I would like to thank three very special people, all members of the Modern Languages Department: Dr. Barbara Lomas Rusterholz, Dr. Leslee Poulton, and especially my project advisor, Dr. Denis Provencher. Without your guidance and help, this project would never have gained flight. *Merci*.[4]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Carpentier, Jean and François Lebrun, eds. *Histoire de France*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1987.
Barthes, Roland. "Rhétorique de l'image." *Communications* 4 (1964): 40-52.
Doumic, René. *Portraits d'écrivains: Deuxième série*. Paris: Librarie Académique Perrin et Cie, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1909.
Durkheim, Emile and Ernest Lavisse. *Lettres à tous les français*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1992.

Girardet, Raoul. *Le Nationalisme Français*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1966.
Lavisse, Ernest. *A propos de nos écoles*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1895.
—-. *Écrivains français pendant la Guerre: Ernest Lavisse, Pages choisies*. Paris : Librairie Larousse, 1915.
—-. *Histoire de France : cours élémentaire*. New York: D.C. Heath & CO., 1919.
—-. *Histoire de France : cours élémentaire*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1913.
—-. *Histoire de France : cours moyen*. New York: D.C. Heath & Co., 1922.
—-. *Pourquoi nous nous battons*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1917.
—-. *Questions d'enseignement national*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1885.
—-. *Souvenirs*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1988.
LeGoff, Jacques, ed. *Le Nouvelle Histoire*. Brussels; Editions Complexe, 1988.
Mosse, George L. *The Image of Man*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
—-. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormality in Modern Europe*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1985.
Nora, Pierre, ed. *Realms of Memory*. Volume II : Traditions. Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed. of English-Language edition. Arthur Goldhammer, trans. New York: Columbian University Press, 1983.
Nye, Robert A. *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

ENDNOTES

[1] It is worth noting that in French, "motherland" or "homeland" is expressed in terms of "fatherland." This adds strength to the argument about educating male conduct.

[2] Attempts were made to contact the publisher for permission to use the images pictured in this study. Unfortunately, a response was never received. These images are the property of the Librarie Armand Colin, Paris.

[3] For more on denotative and connotative messages, see Barthes.

[4] Currently, Luke Eilderts is an MA/Ph.D. candidate in French civilization at the Pennsylvania State University. All correspondences can be sent to the author at 325 Burrowes Building, Department of French, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802 or via e-mail at cytus@yahoo.com