

Department of Humanities, Northumbria University

Honours Dissertation

**Education, Sociability and the Politics of Culture
in Fin-de-Siècle France**

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Introduction

At the fin-de-siècle, the French Third Republic experienced a ‘culture war’ – commonly referred to as ‘the war of the two Frances’.¹ In short, this politico-cultural conflict was, as Henk Wesseling put it, a battle between ‘the France of St Louis and the France of Voltaire’.² With the rise of the Third Republic, ‘republicans’ – rather axiomatically – became the strongest political force in the new regime. Predominantly men of the enlightenment, they embodied Voltaire’s France. They were met by traditional French forces: monarchists, Catholics and the recently deposed Bonapartists. The *kulturkampf* that ensued manifested itself in a number of areas, one of the most prominent being education. The republicans advocated the introduction of free, compulsory and secular education for the masses – free from the influence of the church. The reactionary forces of the French right, however, fought back in defence of the ‘truth’ held by the Catholic Church. As such, the realm of education at all levels – including public instruction for adults – became territory that was virulently fought over by both sides.

Much of the literature concerning the early Third Republic has traditionally consisted of political surveys. These studies have focused on the Jules Ferry Laïc Laws and education reforms (1880-1886) and the culmination of a process that led to the separation of church and state in 1905.³ In recent years, however, scholars have been increasingly interested in the social and cultural history of the period. This has encompassed investigations into gender, political culture and, perhaps worthy of specific mention, anticlericalism.⁴ The study of the French intellectual tradition is also a

¹ James McMillan, “‘Priest Hits Girl’: On the Front Line in the “War of the two Frances””, in Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 78.

² H.L. Wesseling, *Certain Ideas of France: Essays on French History and Civilisation* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 58.

³ For a survey of political reforms, see Pierre Lévêque, *Histoire des Forces Politiques en France: 1880-1940* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994); Sanford Elwitt, *the French Republic Defended: Bourgeois Reform in France, 1880-1914* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986). See also, Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Berkeley, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

⁴ See J.R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the early French Third Republic* (Albany, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001). For an examination of gender and sociability, see Carol Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in*

continuing source of fascination to historians. Sudhir Hazareesingh, in his most recent work, hailed the cultural distinctiveness of French thinking; its ‘contrarian and impertinent’ tendencies; its ‘love of paradox’⁵ – the ‘French Exception’, as it were.⁶

The ‘notion’ of sociability, which features explicitly in the title of this dissertation, must be defined before we continue. There are two relatively clear dimensions to the term: the structural and the spatial. Historians have often identified one or the other for the purposes of their research. Jean-François Sirinelli and Venita Datta have concluded that it is a series of constructs that constitute a social network, or web, of individuals connected by their interests, professions, or political persuasions.⁷ Jacques Julliard argued that we can use these ‘networks’ to comprehend the ways in which contemporaries interacted and engaged with each other.⁸

Other historians have placed greater emphasis on the spatial quality of the term. Steven Kale, in his work on the French Salons and the *salonnières* of the 1789 Revolution observed the role salons played as a point of congregation for the *émigrés* that had spread themselves throughout the royal courts of Europe. In turn, they constituted social networks of influence as a whole.⁹ Alongside the salons, the café circuits of the Latin Quarter have been identified as yet another ‘space’ for sociability: Léon Gambetta recalled his pilgrimage from Café de Madrid, to Café Procope, before making his way to Café Voltaire, as a regular day in his student years.¹⁰ In sum then, we can define sociability as a mode of interaction via the spaces and structures contemporaries used to convene with one another.

Nineteenth-Century France: Gender, Sociability and the use of Emulation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For anticlericalism, see René Rémond, *L’anticléricalisme en France de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); Jacqueline Lalouette, *La République Anticléricale: XIXe-XXe Siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

⁵ Sudhir Hazareesingh, *How the French Think: An Affectionate Portrait of an Intellectual People* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), p. 26; p. 45.

⁶ The term, ‘the French Exception’ is my own translation, taken from the title of Michel Vovelle (ed.), *Révolution et République: L’Exception Française* (Paris: Kimé, 1994).

⁷ Venita Datta, ‘La Revue Blanche: Un Milieu Parisien fin-de-siècle’, *French Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 26 (1998), p. 148.

⁸ Jacques Julliard, ‘Le Monde des Revues au début du siècle’, *Cahiers George Sorel*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1987), p. 6.

⁹ Steven Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 2-4.

¹⁰ Hazareesingh, *How the French Think*, p. 140.

This dissertation considers three spaces and three networks: the first being the *Ligue de l'enseignement* and its annual conferences; the second being the academic cadre and the French *université*; and the third is the *bien-pensantes* and their cherished *revues*. Consequently, this dissertation seeks to use the high politics of the early Third Republic as a backdrop to an examination of the sociable and cultural dimensions of the culture war. In doing so, the overall intention is to reveal the ways in which private citizens, bureaucrats and public intellectuals sought to create a new, republican society. Subsequently, the dissertation is separated into three case studies.

Employing a variety of conceptual and methodological approaches to the *guerre des deux Frances*, this dissertation examines the following: Chapter One will focus on the *Ligue de l'enseignement*, a lay group of like-minded individuals who sought to spread free, compulsory, secular education across France. Of specific concern is the way in which various local branches of the *Ligue* articulated their principles, the nature of the activism and their varying degrees of success. To do so, the close examination of their published news bulletins will take place.

Chapter Two expands the exploration of sociability in the French *université*, with a case study on the work and reforms of the Director of Higher Education in France (1884-1902), Louis Liard, and his close associate and fellow academic, Ernest Lavisse. This allows for an evaluation of the systemic reforms made by academics, to fashion an education system in their own image. It equally highlights their anxieties regarding national efficiency.

We are thus drawn to the nature of patronage in the early French Third Republic. This was at a time when joining the ranks of the newly expanded French bureaucracy was ‘something of a mystery’

for most.¹¹ In sum, the combination of *bourgeois* predominance over the government's administrative apparatus and the significance of this are of primary concern. To achieve this end, the chapter will cross-examine the published work of Liard and Lavissee with the reforms they oversaw, to reflect on the efficacy of their approach.

Chapter Three follows the dialectic into yet another dimension of the conflict, cultural representations. To do so, the chapter compares the work of Anatole France and Maurice Barrès. From this we gain an insight into their sense of identity, masculinity and the impact of education. Subsequently, the reception their work received from contemporaries – many of whom they knew personally – will be examined to further our understanding of how *bien-pensantes* circles, perceived themselves, society, and the world around them. Venita Datta has been a particularly fervent advocate of this approach, arguing that the sociable dimension of *revues* and *journals* are integral to our understanding.¹² Gilbert Chaitin, by contrast, has preferred to focus on the conception of literary works as opposed to their reception.¹³ Notably, this chapter has a specific focus on 1897. Not only is it the year in which Anatole France published the first volumes of *L'Histoire Contemporaine* and Barrès published *Les Déracinés*, it sets our investigation against the backdrop of the Dreyfus Affair. The ultimate aim of the chapter is to illuminate the anxieties and contradictions of the French psyche in the fin-de-siècle with regards to the *guerre des deux Frances*.

This multifaceted approach consequently accommodates the intersection of multiple historiographic fields of research. The dissertation weaves together the history of education, ideas, intellectuals and literature. As a result, a more holistic picture of cultural and social experience in the early French Third Republic is ascertainable.

¹¹ Theodore Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 118-121.

¹² Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 1-17.

¹³ See Gilbert Chaitin, *The Enemy Within: Culture Wars and Political Identity in Novels of the French Third Republic* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2009).

Chapter 1

Republicans, Education and the *Ligue de l'enseignement*

In 1870, Jules Ferry addressed an audience at the *Salle Molière* on the topic of ‘*l’égalité d’éducation*’. The aim of his lecture was to draw attention to the detrimental effect that inadequate education had on society. He advocated the introduction of free, secular and compulsory education that would in turn realign mankind with the laws of nature and with it, true morality.¹⁴ The foremost question one may ask upon learning of this event is *why*? To answer such a question, it is necessary for one to understand the basis of Ferry’s argument and the mindset of secularists more generally. The first part of this chapter will do so by examining the role of secularism within republican ideas in the Third Republic. The subsequent points of the chapter will build upon this by discussing an association that promoted such ideas: the *Ligue de l’enseignement*.

Republicans – opportunists or fundamentalists?

There are those who argue for the ‘fundamentalist’ interpretation; they stress the republicans’ ‘utopian vision’ and their radical desire to create an ‘alternative society’.¹⁵ For Katherine Auspitz, the radicals had ‘this uneasiness with coercion – which was prudential as well as humanitarian – that characterized the radical position and underlay their concern for republican morals’ but understands that this had very practical manifestations in ‘work, fatherhood, and citizenship’.¹⁶ Indeed, as Professor in philosophy, Eugène de la Houtière, would write in his *Cours de morale pratique*, moral science teaches you how ‘to become an honest man and a good citizen’. There is little question that citizenship was a matter of great concern to the bourgeoisie in the French Third

¹⁴ Jules Ferry, *L’égalité d’éducation: Conférence Populaire faite à la salle Molière* (Paris: Société pour l’instruction élémentaire, 1870), pp. 1-6.

¹⁵ Philip Nord, ‘Republicanism and Utopian Vision: French Freemasonry in the 1860s and 1870s’, *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 63, no. 2 (1991), p. 221; Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie: The Ligue de l’enseignement and the origins of the French Third Republic 1866-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 49.

¹⁶ Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 21; p. 29.

Republic for it was central to the fabric of society in their burgeoning Republic.¹⁷ Jean-François Chanet has argued that they wished to impress on man ‘his condition and...the contract that links him to those with whom he shares a collective destiny’.¹⁸

On the other hand, Philip Nord believed that in the case of republican freemasons (with whom the radicals had considerable overlap, not least including Jules Ferry and Léon Gambetta) the potential to be of service to ‘the cause of a visionary humanitarianism’ was integral to their motivations.¹⁹ It is in this domain that they asserted Kantian dualism: the belief that there existed both a moral world and a material world that were mutually exclusive.²⁰ In this context one should be careful not to underestimate the importance of freemasonry. It is hard to deny the symmetry of masonic teaching and liberal republican doctrine. Aspiration, individualism, and, perhaps most obviously, fraternity run parallel in both camps.²¹

It is also true, that in a somewhat symbiotic relationship, both masonic and republican movements evolved together in the early years of the republic from roots laid in the 1850s, a period that espoused a generation of new lodges and their modern, ‘scientific-positivist’ way of thinking.²² This resulted in the secularisation of the masonic Grand Orient’s constitution in 1877. Like scientism, both masonry and secularism, have at their core a pedagogical philosophy.²³ This is of course at the ‘high brow’ end of the spectrum in republican thought; not all manifestations of bourgeois secularism were so intellectually refined. On such a basis, the ‘opportunists’ argument has been put

¹⁷ Eugène de la Houtière, *Cours de morale pratique: rédigé conformément aux programmes de l'enseignement secondaire moderne, classe de quatrième* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1892), p. 1.

¹⁸ Jean-François Chanet, ‘Instruction publique, éducation nationale et liberté d’enseignement en Europe occidentale au XIXe siècle’, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 41, no. 1-2 (2005), pp. 11-12.

¹⁹ Nord, ‘Republicanism and Utopian Vision’, p. 221.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 221-222.

²¹ J.P. Mazaro, ‘Les Cabales et Conspirations de la politique et des Politiciens laïques et religieux’, *La revanche de la France* (Paris: L’auteur, 1882) p. 7; J.P Mazaro, ‘La Franc-Maçonnerie Religion Sociale’, *La Revanche de la France* (Paris, L’auteur, 1880), pp. 4-11.

²² Nord, ‘Republicanism and Utopian Vision’, p. 213.

²³ Ibid, p. 224.

forward by historians of the period.²⁴ Before continuing, ‘opportunism’ – to be clear – refers to the way in which the bourgeoisie sought to re-organise the state and the nation’s socio-economic relations for their own ends.²⁵

Sudhir Hazareesingh would have the conflict reduced to a ‘quarrel among intellectuals’, men who would propagate the trivial protestations against the village *curé* in the provinces to support their assertion that clerics were ‘neither of the times nor their country’.²⁶ Such an assertion carries some merit, as is evident in de la Hautière’s *Cours de morale pratique* that outlines both the ‘sacred character’ of contractual obligations and the ‘heroism’ inherent in the pursuit of accomplishing one’s professional endeavours – all of which endorses bourgeois business principles and their self-perception.²⁷ This draws attention to ‘liberal professionals’, who as arbiters of bourgeois politics represent specific social groups of their own and can therefore be included under the banner of ‘civil society’. Indeed, Jean-François Chanet mirrored the sentiments of Jules Simon’s *Dieu, Patrie, Liberté* when he argued that, philosophically guided or not, it was a bourgeois imposition by the secularists.²⁸ This imposition brings the discussion back to broader notions of bourgeois culture and the sociability of their strata, which will be addressed in the following case study.²⁹

A more nuanced perception, however, is required. Notably close to the beginning of de la Hautière’s pamphlet, it affirms that ‘the idea of liberté and needs are inseparable’.³⁰ This statement requires some explanation: firstly because one must consider ‘liberté’ in abstraction and by

²⁴ Ralph Gibson, ‘Why Republicans and Catholics couldn’t stand each other in the nineteenth century’, in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (eds.), *Religion, Society and Politics since 1789* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991). See also, James R. McMillan, “Priest hits girl”.

²⁵ Theodore Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945* (London: Clarendon, 1973), p. 606.

²⁶ Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectual Founders of the Republic: Five Studies in Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 286; Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 28.

²⁷ de La Hautière, *Cours de morale pratique*, p. 109.

²⁸ Chanet, ‘Instruction publique’, p. 12; Jules Simon, *Dieu, Patrie, Liberté* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1883), pp. 307-309.

²⁹ James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Albany, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 3-4.

³⁰ de La Hautière, *Cours de morale pratique*, p. 5.

extension to the freedom of the mind, *la libre-pensée*.³¹ Secondly, ‘needs’ in this context refer as much to aspiration as they do to base needs for sustenance. The combination of abstract concept with material needs gives the former a tangibility that is borne out of earthly verities – evidence no doubt that radicals actually sought to reconcile their Kantian precepts with reality. From this, one can surmise that the polarised debate that has been rife is ultimately problematic for it fails to acknowledge how radicals were employing real world needs to justify their philosophical position; a demonstration of their adherence to the principles of contemporary science. In light of this, we will consider how the two were drawn together by the *Ligue de l’enseignement* throughout France.

The roots of the *Ligue de l’enseignement*

The creation of the *Ligue de l’enseignement* preceded the foundation of the Third Republic. The organisation was established by Jean Macé in 1866 with the purpose of bringing together like-minded individuals who believed in the propagation of ‘free ... obligatory ... [and] *laïc*’ education.³² The *Ligue*’s activities were to be centered on the reform of educational practices but it must be acknowledged that their concerns extended beyond the classrooms of primary and secondary schools. The principle that underpinned their actions was ‘*la liberté de la conscience d’homme*’, subsequently leading to the extension of their works to the public instruction of adults as well as children.³³

The structure of *Ligue de l’enseignement* ought to be briefly explained, as this has rarely been done in the relevant literature. The local branches or ‘*cercles*’ formed the basis of the association’s structure: ‘each *cercle* has its own office ... all of the *cercles* are united by close and frequent contact with the Parisian *cercle* ... [where] each year they submit an annual report on their

³¹ For a definition of the term ‘*libre-pensée*’, see Jacqueline Lalouette, *La République Anticléricale XIXe-XXe Siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), pp. 10-19.

³² Emmanuel-Séraphin-Désiré Vauchez and Jean Macé, *Cercle Parisien de la ligue française de l’enseignement* (Paris: A. Chaix & Gie, 1880), p. 5.

³³ Ferdinand Buisson, *Discours par Ferdinand Buisson: XXIIe Congrès de la Ligue, A Lyon* (Paris: Vve Drevet et Fils, 1902), p. 14.

activities' to the central committee.³⁴ It seems common that the *cercles* would allocate money to fund members who wished to visit other branches of the *Ligue*.³⁵ In turn, the executive committee appointed an office composed 'of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a treasurer, a secretary ... and an archivist'.³⁶ In the same pamphlet's list of statutes, it proceeds to explicitly call upon 'lawyers, engineers, magistrates, doctors and university professors' to join the organisation and participate in its various conferences.³⁷

What is most intriguing about the structure is the way in which it mirrors that of a masonic lodge and its hierarchy, and also the sorts of individuals a lodge would wish to attract. It is abundantly clear that the *Ligue* was essentially a bourgeois association, as one realises upon examination of the *cercles*' member lists – an observation shared by historians such as Auspitz.³⁸ In the *comité du direction* of the *Cercle Manceau* alone there were several *professeurs* of the local *lycée* as well as municipal councillors and a director of a tobacco manufacturer.³⁹ This not only tells us about the class base that the *Ligue* sprang from but also points to the principles and norms that formed the basis of the association's constitution.

To return to the mirror-like similarity of the *Ligue* to Masonry, it was *Ligue* founder Jean Macé himself who explained that the principles of the Freemasonry are 'the same as those that the *Ligue* has come to express' and subsequently called upon masons to swell the *Ligue*'s ranks.⁴⁰ The affiliation of the two associations is evident in the financial statement of the *Cercle Poitevin* of

³⁴ Jean de Moussac, *La Ligue de l'enseignement: Histoire, Doctrines, Œuvres, Résultats et Projets* (Paris: Librairie de la Société Bibliographique, 1880), p. 158; all translations taken from primary material are my own.

³⁵ Unknown Author, *Ligue de l'enseignement, Cercle Manceau: Bulletin No. 1* (Le Mans: E. Lebrault, 1893), p. 1; Unknown Author, *Cercle Poitevin de la Ligue de l'enseignement* (Poitiers: Millet, Descoust & Pain, 1888), pp. 1-2.

³⁶ Unknown Author, *Cercle Manceau*, p. 1.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 1.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 2; Unknown Author, *Cercle Poitevin*, pp. 23-26; Vauchez and Macé, *Cercle Parisien*, pp. 11-12; Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, pp. 20-22.

³⁹ Vauchez and Macé, *Cercle Parisien*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ de Moussac, *La Ligue de l'enseignement*, p. 124.

Poitiers in central France (*fig. 1*) in which it openly states that they received a donation from the local Masonic lodge. That is not to say the *Ligue* was in any sense a ‘masonic invention’ like that of the École Professionnelle de Jeunes Filles.⁴¹ In fact, some of the earliest recruits were, as Nord notes, from the ‘utopian’ camp. This camp was not necessarily masonic though neither were they mutually exclusive. For instance, Auguste Verdue, the ‘philanthropic utopian’, was known for his charity as the title suggests but he was equally renowned for his belief in Proudhonist political thought – a man of distinctly socialist inclinations – contrary to the designs of French freemasonry.⁴² Nonetheless it contained well known masons such as writer and philosopher, Alexandre Massol, and the journalist, Léon Richer.⁴³ That said, it would be a disservice to presume the bourgeoisie held a uniform set of beliefs.

SITUATION FINANCIÈRE	
ET COMPTES ADMINISTRATIFS	
DU	
Cercle Poitevin de la Ligue de l'Enseignement	
PENDANT L'ANNÉE 1887	
Présentés par M. BRIX, Trésorier	
RECETTES.	
En caisse, au 1 ^{er} janvier 1887	3.693 10
Dons du Ministre de l'instruction publique.	
Pour l'année 1886.	1.000 »
Pour l'année 1887.	1.000 »
Don de M. Chaignet.	100 »
Don de la Loge Maçonnique.	200 »
Don de M. Béranger pour 1886.	100 »
Don de M. Béranger pour 1887.	100 »
Don de M ^{lle} Delétant.	70 »
Cotisations annuelles.	827 70
Arrérages de rentes.	160 »
Trimestres de boursières.	712 50
Quête à l'Assemblée générale.	72 60
Total.	8.031 00

Figure 1. ‘Situation Financière...Pendant L’année 1897’ for the Cercle Poitevin.

There is, however, clear evidence of the interplay between masonic organisations and the *Ligue*. In light of this, it is apparent that radical republicanism was not a unitary force but remained relatively fluid – something that built upon their belief in individual initiative.⁴⁴ It is in that respect that further consideration of what they actually believed in is essential to fully understanding the *Ligue*’s basis. In this regard one must again refer back to the symmetry shared by

⁴¹ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 25.

⁴² Ibid, p. 25.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 50.

the *Ligue* with Freemasonry; in several places the documents already examined refer to ‘honour’ and ‘fidelity’, two core principles behind Freemasonry.⁴⁵ Whilst this constitutes a particular mindset, at least in the masonic case there are very genuine philosophical underpinnings from which said principles derive.⁴⁶ A significant feature was their ‘unanimous declaration of respect for individual liberty and freedom of conscience’, as noted by Ferdinand Buisson.⁴⁷ All of this places their ideas in the wider trajectory of political ideas in France, including Enlightenment thought, liberalism and the revolutionary tradition. Such is the nature of an organisation primarily comprised of well-educated individuals who were in many cases *professeurs, avocats*, and school *inspecteurs*.⁴⁸

Equally, Macé’s intentions must be considered in this context given his call upon founding the *Ligue* in 1866 that ‘the future members of the *Ligue* maintain a politically and religiously neutral footing’, instead placing emphasis on the ‘higher question of popular instruction’.⁴⁹ A statement such as the latter served to demonstrate the humanistic impulse at the heart of the *Ligue*’s conception. Macé’s ideas certainly maintained a prime position in the praises of all those who were a member of his association; the President of the *Cercle Poitevin* hailing Macé’s ‘talent ... oratory finesse ... [and] his ardent desire to do good’.⁵⁰ It is, however, with reference to the future - from Macé’s position in 1866 – that attention must be turned to exactly how the *Ligue* put its principles into practice.

The activities of the *Ligue*

As has been explained, the *Ligue*’s structure was decentralised and individual initiative was heavily encouraged. Consequently, the methods the *Cercles* employed were varied. In some places, libraries

⁴⁵ Unknown Author, *Cercle Manceau*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Unknown Author, *Cercle Manceau*, p. 12; Ferdinand Buisson, *Discours*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Buisson, *Discours*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Unknown Author, *Cercle Manceau*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Unknown Author, *Cercle Poitevin*, p. 13; also see Buisson, *Discours*, p. 14.

were purchased with the patronage of wealthy members of the *Ligue* as was the case in Pont-Audémérien in 1868.⁵¹ In other places, for instance Marseille, the *Ligue* was heavily involved in the establishment and support of free schools not only for boys but also to some extent for women.⁵² The latter instance is one that was mirrored across France, as demonstrated by the *Cercle Poitevin*'s report in which they note some one-hundred-and-fifty-six schools that they have provided reading material for.⁵³

In the case of that same *cercle*, the relations between local schools and the *Ligue* was highlighted in a report to their annual general assembly in 1888. The President of the *cercle* would recall '*une fête scolaire*' arranged by their members for the local boys' schools. At said ceremony, prizes were to be awarded to various schools for the achievements of talented students in the form of books and so on. He would add that there were a number of parents also in attendance and that generally, he considered the event to have been a success.⁵⁴ This is, of course, a single anecdotal example but it draws attention to the way in which branches of the *Ligue* wished to augment their 'alternative society'.⁵⁵

As such, the *Ligue*'s modus operandi was based on local activism. Although the local Mayor's presence is duly noted, there is little reason to presume that this was anything more than a show of support for the cause as there is no mention of him actually being a member of the *Ligue de l'enseignement*.⁵⁶ Secondly, the presence of a number of parents is particularly striking because it suggests that far from looking to simply allow the next generation flourish with freedom of conscience in their formative years, it leads one to conclude that they were conscious of ensuring the current generation could 'buy-into' their cause. Such evidence is in accordance with the famed

⁵¹ de Moussac, *La Ligue de l'enseignement*, p. 160.

⁵² Phyllis Stock-Morton, 'Secularism and Women's Education: The Case of the École Professionnelle de Jeunes Filles of Marseille', *French History*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1996), pp. 362-364.

⁵³ Unknown Author, *Cercle Poitevin*, pp. 27-31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 49.

⁵⁶ Unknown Author, *Cercle Poitevin*, p. 3.

petition by the *Ligue* in 1871, for the *laicisation* of education, had in excess of half a million signatures. This would lead one to question whether the assertion that the war of the two Frances was simply fought between two elite intellectual factions, the victor winning the accord of the ‘passive middle’.⁵⁷

However, what seems to be a shared feature of their different activities is the pedestal upon which they placed their conferences. In fact, all of the material that has been addressed in this case study has elaborated on the proceedings of their various conferences or is the transcript of the conferences themselves. It is this activity that appears to have been central to the *Ligue* in as much as it served as an intellectual forum for the continuing revision of their position. It was not merely the spread of *laïcité* into schools that they were concerned with but also a great many matters spanning ‘the arts, physical education, and scholarship’ as well as ‘science which elevates, literature that charms, the appetite for study which improves’.⁵⁸ They carry, therefore, a spatial importance regarding the sociability of the group. This ran in confluence with the structural dimension to the *ligue* elaborated upon in reference the *cercles*. Together, these elements underpin what was a vast social network in France in the early Third Republic.

The significance of the *Ligue*

The evidence examined would suggest that the *Ligue* made significant gains in the battleground of education. The aforementioned *bibliothèque* purchased by the *Cercle* in Pont-Audémérien contained at least 250,000 books – all of which were made available to the public and local schools.⁵⁹ Its significance rests upon the fact that the battle between the religious and secular forces of France often came to be centered on the control of information; the Catholic Church was of course seen to prevent ‘*liberté de la conscience*’ from the *Ligue*’s perspective.⁶⁰ Tackling the

⁵⁷ Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 93.

⁵⁸ Unknown Author, *Cercle Manceau*, pp. 8-12.

⁵⁹ de Moussac, *La Ligue de l’enseignement*, p. 160.

⁶⁰ Buisson, *Discours*, p. 14.

monopoly on truth that the Catholic Church claimed to possess was undoubtedly aided in part by the passing of Ferry's *laïc* laws between 1880 and 1886. As both William Bruneau and James R. Lehning have noted, Ferry and the other radical *députés* under his direction were keen to place 'their people' across the country to facilitate the implementation of *laïcité*.⁶¹ More amenable local authorities were helpful to a cause such as that of the secularists. It is important to recognise the extent to which regionalism was at play in this regard though. Lehning having paid attention to the regional reports a 'clerical attitude' and 'fanaticism' present amongst the population of Ernée, Monistrol-sur-Loire, and Pouilly-les-Feurs.⁶²

Still, the *Ligue* appears to have established a sizeable following throughout the country. The Marseille chapter had 1500 members as early as 1868.⁶³ As noted, they also made considerable progress towards the declared objectives through the establishment of schools, and, as previously mentioned, the acquisition of libraries. Yet it remains difficult to quantify their accomplishments beyond these examples. Waging war over education and instruction not only takes time but is often a task that will only ever bear implicit gains. Nonetheless, it seems unreasonable to label them an organisation that acted in an episodic and infrequent manner, as Katherine Auspitz has done.⁶⁴ The documents examined in this chapter are examples that span a number of years (and governments) from which one can sense a degree of persistence on the part of the *Ligue*.

What, perhaps, most succinctly describes the importance of the *Ligue de l'enseignement* in the present context is the work of Ferdinand Buisson. In reference to the pretenses often held in France, Buisson would lament that 'old method...verbal, scholarly, sometimes ..."metaphysical" ... used in France because it has a passion for words that are both attractive and lofty in their meaning but ...

⁶¹ William Bruneau, 'Ambition in the French University: Louis Liard at Bordeaux and Caen, 1874-1884', *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1998), pp. 209-212; Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, pp. 37-42.

⁶² Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, p. 52.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 362.

⁶⁴ Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie*, p. 94.

they have never really been embraced as a living reality'.⁶⁵ This is clearly something that he believed the *Ligue* was attempting to address and in that sense, its practicality is what made the association important in reference to the 'war of the two Frances'.

⁶⁵ Buisson, *Discours*, p. 2.

Chapter 2

Higher Education, *la patrie* and patronage in the French Third Republic: Louis Liard and Ernest Lavissee

In chapter one, ‘sociability’ is a theme that was touched upon with the convocation of bourgeois men in local branches of the *Ligue de l’enseignement*. This chapter will extend the theme of sociability to the French *université* and the nature of patronage in this system. To do so, the chapter will map the work of two men: Louis Liard, Director of Higher Education (1884-1902) and Ernest Lavissee, *Maître de Conférence* at the *École Normale Supérieure* (1876-1888), Professor of Modern History at the New Sorbonne from 1888 and the Director of the ENS following its amalgamation with the University of Paris – an appointment granted by Liard himself. By examining the spatial and structural dimensions of higher education in the Third Republic, we will be able to better understand the role it played in the *guerre des deux Frances*.

There is yet another reason why it is worthwhile to examine higher education and Liard’s reforms at this time – namely that this subject is underrepresented in French historiography.⁶⁶ Indeed, Liard’s work appears to receive limited and at times superficial coverage, despite it being over three decades since Theodore Zeldin made historians aware that the likes of ‘Octave Gréard and Louis Liard ... exercised enormous and still unchronicled influence on the educational system’.⁶⁷

Before discussing Liard and Lavissee the environment in which these men studied during their time in higher education during the 1860s will be considered, so as to provide greater context surrounding events that followed in the French Third Republic. It was this generation of men who

⁶⁶ Emmanuelle Picard, ‘L’histoire de l’enseignement supérieur français: Pour une approche globale’, *Histoire de l’éducation*, vol. 122, no. 3 (2009), pp. 11-33.

⁶⁷ Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945*, p. 127. For a detailed examination of Liard’s work, see Bruneau, ‘Ambition in the French University’, p. 216. See also Louis M. Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne: Liard’s Purpose and Durkheim’s Role’, *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1981), pp. 77-94. The following publications only mention Liard in passing, Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), pp. 46-47; Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les Intellectuels en France: De l’affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), pp. 54-55.

had studied in the years of ‘liberal empire’ during the 1860s that rose to prominence in the fin-de-siècle and led the charge of educational reforms at all levels. To further contextualise the case study, an overview of liberal professionals’ engagement with the *guerre des deux Frances* will be made. Subsequent points will address the ideas of Liard and Lavissee, Liard’s reforms as Director of Higher Education and his use of patronage, and the legacy of their work.

La rive gauche in the 1860s

In the earlier years of the Second Empire, the French university, and education more broadly, had seen itself attacked by the likes of Hippolyte Fortoul. An inherently religious and socially conservative minister for education, Fortoul had removed the study of philosophy – both classic and contemporary – from the *lycée* curriculum on the premise that such studies were believed to ‘trouble the soul’.⁶⁸ This discontinued the majority of enlightenment-based educational reforms implemented under the July Monarchy by Victor Cousin, the first director of the *École Normale Supérieure*, who firmly believed in metaphysics and the ‘good, the true, and the beautiful [that] were conceived as timeless verities akin to Platonic forms’.⁶⁹

The appointment of Victor Duruy as minister for public education in 1863, however, did precipitate strides towards the liberalisation of education in the years leading up to 1870.⁷⁰ It was during this period that Louis Liard and his contemporaries – perhaps most notably, Georges Clemenceau – studied at university. In fact, Clemenceau became synonymous with early instances of student activism. He was both the editor of a student paper, *Le Travail*, and an organiser of a demonstration in 1862 to commemorate the events of 1848 – an endeavour that earned him his first arrest. These students were generally subscribed to enlightenment thinking. As Philip Nord asserted, a ‘new round of disturbances rocked the Latin Quarter in the mid-sixties. This time the catchphrase was “science”. These young men equated science with free thought, the positive method, and, in the

⁶⁸ Nord, *The Republican Moment*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 33.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 33.

most extreme instances, materialism'.⁷¹ They were, as mentioned in the introduction, young men of the Café 'set'. In '*Gambetta par Gambetta*', a publication by the former Premier's relatives, it is noted that the Café Voltaire regularly reserved an upstairs room for Léon and his peers to discuss matters of the day.⁷²

It is amidst this space and atmosphere of activism and enlightened thinking that Louis Liard had considered joining the republican cause after they had finished their studies in 1866.⁷³ Indeed, there is little doubt that it was at this time that a great deal of thought went into the transformation of republicanism in this period immediately prior to the establishment of the French Third Republic.⁷⁴ This would have undoubtedly been attractive to ambitious young men who had recently graduated from the most esteemed sites of higher education in France. Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that all the men mentioned here would maintain contact with each other throughout their adult lives.⁷⁵

The professional orders and the *guerre des deux Frances*

Besides their practical function, professional guilds, orders, and faculties have a social dimension within which members of various professions are able to come together in a shared forum for topical discussion. This was no different regarding the *guerre des deux Frances*.

The prevalence of advocates in the conflict has been duly noted by historians.⁷⁶ Many of the central figures were either practicing advocates; politicians; or both. John Savage believed that this was due to the fact that professional practice brought them into contact with the lives of average citizens - in

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 35.

⁷² Pierre-Barthélemy Gheusi, *Gambetta par Gambetta: lettres internes et souvenirs de famille* (Paris: P. Ollendorf, 1909), p. 100.

⁷³ Bruneau, 'Ambition in the French University', p. 210.

⁷⁴ Hazareesingh, *Intellectual Founders of the Republic*, p. 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 212.

⁷⁶ François Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), p. 203; John Savage, 'Advocates of the Republic: The Paris Bar and Legal Culture in early Third Republic France, 1870-1914' (PhD diss., New York University, 1999), pp. 1-2.

their capacity as advocates, they were often ‘arbiters’ in this context.⁷⁷ In turn, he argued, the traits they developed from their occupation made them ‘natural leaders of the democratic polity’ in the new republic.⁷⁸ It seems equally feasible, however, to argue that the reason for their centrality was their education at university whilst still of a formative age; a point of departure that will be considered more closely in the following case study.

The legal profession was joined by the work of anti-clerical doctors and psychiatrists in the name of positive science and rationalism. Examples ranged from the infamous Jules Soury’s psychopathological thesis that concluded Jesus must have simply been insane to psychiatrists concluding celibacy to be the cause of satyriasis which in turn explained sexual deviance amongst the clergy.⁷⁹ The latter theory was even offered as explanation for the necrophilism of a deranged priest, nicknamed the ‘ghoul of Montparnasse’. Such theories did not go unchallenged, as long-held as they had become, the likes of Dr Jean-Ennemond Dufieux had refuted satyriasis theories well before the Third Republic came into existence, with his five-hundred page thesis published in 1854.⁸⁰ John Priest argued, that the ultimate failure of Soury’s work made plain the ‘limits of purportedly secular and scientific religious history during its emergence as an established academic discipline’.⁸¹

This reiterates that the *bourgeoisie* were by no means in possession of a set of normative principles. As we have already seen they were often driven by vested interests and certainly individuality was a treasured ideal. Nonetheless, the relationships and rivalries fostered between individuals in this setting are of note to the historian, as is space and structure - the core tenets of sociability.

⁷⁷ Savage, ‘Advocates of the Republic’, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Jules Soury, *Jésus et les Évangiles* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1878), p. 5; Tim Verhoeven, ‘The Satyriasis Diagnosis: Anti-Clerical Doctors and Celibate Priests in Nineteenth-Century France’, *French History*, vol. 26, no. 4 (2012), pp. 504-521.

⁸⁰ Verhoeven, ‘The Satyriasis Diagnosis’, p. 217.

⁸¹ Robert D. Priest, “‘After the God and the Man, the Patient’: Jules Soury’s Psychopathology of Jesus and the boundaries of the science of religions in the early Third Republic”, *French History*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2013), p. 537.

Louis Liard and Ernest Lavissee

Born in Falaise in 1846, Louis Liard was similar to other prominent figures of the Third Republic such as Léon Gambetta, Ernest Lavissee and Emile Durkheim due to his *petit bourgeois* background.⁸² In genealogical data available on Liard, his family consist largely of *commerçants*, labourers, and shop-keepers.⁸³ Whilst at the *École Normale Supérieure* in the 1860s, he read Philosophy and was placed first in his class upon graduation.⁸⁴ In some ways he was ‘typical’ of the type of men that came to the fore in the 1880s.⁸⁵

Ernest Lavissee was born in Novion-en-Thiérache, in 1842. He was, in his primary academic capacity, a historian. His works of contextual interest to this study include *La Fondation de l’université de Berlin* (1876), *Questions d’enseignement national* (1885), and *Un Ministre: Victor Duruy* (1895).⁸⁶ His textbook on French history, *Cours Élémentaire* (1913), will also be consulted. Aside from his work as *maître de conférence* at the ENS and his publications on history and education, he also ran the *Revue de Paris* for a short period in the 1890s.

It was during their time at the ENS that Liard and Lavissee developed what would become a lifelong affiliation.⁸⁷ It is, perhaps, this kinship – coupled with the atmosphere surrounding the left-bank in the 1860s – that led to the striking symmetry of their publications. Liard’s protégé, Emile Durkheim, that proved so vital to mentor’s reforms, will also be considered.⁸⁸ Their affiliation reiterates the importance of patronage in the development of higher education.

⁸² Bruneau, ‘Ambition in the French University’, p. 204.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 207.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 205; From this point, the Ecole Normale Supérieure will be referred to as the ENS.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 206.

⁸⁶ ‘Ernest Lavissee: Biographie’, Académie Française, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/ernest-lavissee?fauteuil=6&election=02-06-1892>

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 204.

⁸⁸ Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne’, p. 84.

Their ideas

Central to the arguments of both Liard and Lavissee regarding higher education is the perceived superiority of German institutions and their role in the defeat of 1870.⁸⁹ Ernest Lavissee believed that ‘history, literature, philosophy, and even theology and philology [were] employed for the glory of German life; the German zeitgeist’.⁹⁰ In addressing the *Conseil Académique de Paris*, in his capacity as Vice-Rector, Liard argued that ‘teaching which refused to be thoroughly modern in substance and spirit would not be simply an inoffensive anachronism; it would become a national danger’.⁹¹ Essentially, these inefficacies had to be rectified for the sake of the Republic. As Louis Greenburg has noted, the ‘university represented an instrument of the state that would for France’s honour, further the good of science while delivering lessons in cultural and moral idealism’.⁹² It is an interesting combination. It speaks again to Kantian Dualism and the wish – as explained in chapter one – to combine their ideals with reality. There was a degree of vanity innate in the position; since the time of Napoleon there had been the desire to secure Paris’ status as the intellectual capital of the world.⁹³

What is more, Liard believed the work on university reformation to have begun during the revolution under the guidance of ‘Mirabeau ... [then] Talleyrand ... [then] Concordet’ – all in ‘*l’esprit de la Révolution*’.⁹⁴ Lavissee extended this list of reformers up to Victor Duruy, who was at work whilst Liard and Lavissee were studying at the ENS.⁹⁵ Clearly Liard and Lavissee understood the process of university reform as an episodic process that began in 1791 under the Constitutional Monarchy. Liard evidently sought to continue the process. The ideas of historic revolutionaries and

⁸⁹ Louis Liard, *Les Universités Françaises: Historique et Constitution* (Paris: S.N, 1896), p. 3; Lavissee, *Questions*, p. 214.

⁹⁰ Lavissee, *Questions*, p. 214.

⁹¹ Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne’, p. 83.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁹³ Alistair Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris: Portrait of a City* (London: Pan MacMillan, 2003), pp. 327-328; Paul Johnson, *Napoleon* (London: Phoenix, 2003), pp. 106-107.

⁹⁴ Liard, *Les Universités*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ Ernest Lavissee, *Un Ministre: Victor Duruy* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1895), pp. 2-3.

those of contemporary French philosophical works were, in essence, to become ‘an effective and extraordinary framework within which to work his administrative miracles’.⁹⁶

Their work then brings us to the idea of the French nation or *patrie*. It is apparent in the work of Liard and Lavissee that an explicit link is made between university reform and the work of the revolutionaries of 1789 – almost as if to provide a sense of legitimation. It connects Liard’s endeavours to a distinctly French heritage. Similarly, Lavissee argued that prior to the Revolution, there was no ‘patriotism’ or ‘*l’amour du peuple*’, only the ‘loyalism’ of the elite to the crown.⁹⁷ With the revolutionary wars of the 1790s, however, Lavissee argued that ‘our young soldiers were courageous and victorious because they loved, in their heart, the *patrie*’.⁹⁸ Somewhat conspicuously, he plays down the extent to which the revolutionary terror led to thousands of deaths in arbitrary and often cold-blooded circumstances.⁹⁹ The core tenets of the 1789 Revolution were, for Lavissee, ‘order and liberty’ - highlighting the Jacobin conception of the past.¹⁰⁰ These tenets outline concerns that Liard affirmed regarding the citizen and the responsibility they hold for the effect of their actions have on society.¹⁰¹

So from their work, we can see that they were firmly rooted in the enlightenment; the memory of the revolution; the experience of defeat in 1870. Equally, they were mindful of broader concepts such as honour and national destiny.¹⁰²

Liard’s reforms

Liard’s belief that ‘man is naturally free and the master of his actions’ is, perhaps, accountable for the nature of his reforms to the university system in France, but first, one must outline exactly what

⁹⁶ Bruneau, ‘Ambition in the French University’, p. 205.

⁹⁷ Ernest Lavissee, *Vue générale de l’histoire politique de l’Europe* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1890), pp. 196-197.

⁹⁸ Ernest Lavissee, *Histoire de France: Cours Élémentaire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1913), p. 142.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 145.

¹⁰⁰ Lavissee, *Un Ministre*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Louis Liard, *Morale et enseignement civique à l’usage des écoles primaires: Cours Moyen et Cours Supérieur* (Paris: Librairie Leopold, 1883), p. 32.

¹⁰² Liard, *Les Universités*, pp. 4-5; Lavissee, *Questions*, pp. 212-215.

it was that Liard and his contemporaries believed was wrong with the university system.¹⁰³ In his treatise on French universities, he notes that ‘the most competent men agreed that the problem with French higher education was the multiplicity and dispersion of faculties’.¹⁰⁴ The dispersion of said faculties and institutions had originally begun during the Convention and the dictatorship of Robespierre.¹⁰⁵ Universities constituted a private association in the eyes of statesmen. It was not until 1808 that they received approval as an ‘official association’ of the state.¹⁰⁶ Higher education had come under increasing surveillance and in attempting to detract attention, its dispersion had never been properly rectified after the fall of the Committee for Public Safety.

Consequently, the esteemed academics of Liard’s generation concluded, rather obviously, that ‘these diverse faculties should be concentrated in a number of limited centres for learning’.¹⁰⁷ In a collaborative work, Liard and Léonce Bénédict (an art historian and Director of the *Musée du Luxembourg*) added that these newly centralised institutions must then be free to research in the manner they see fit and materially supported by the state.¹⁰⁸ Such an argument was put forward by Lavisé in 1885, when he outlined the success of German institutions, having been given the freedom to pursue scientific knowledge and understanding.¹⁰⁹ It would be such a structure that would allow them the freedom to fully explore life’s condition. Thus it was centralisation and institutional autonomy that Liard’s 1896 University Reform Bill would rest upon.

To compliment the structural changes, Liard employed his considerable powers of patronage as Director of Higher Education to furnish his institutions with men of the calibre he deemed necessary to ensure the success of his reforms. Two of the most notable appointments were that of Ernest Lavisé, as *Maître de Conférences* at the ENS, and Emile Durkheim as a Professor in the

¹⁰³ Liard, *Morale et enseignement civique*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Liard, *Les Universités*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Harrison, *The Bourgeois Citizen in Nineteenth-Century France*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 24-27.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Louis Liard and Léonce Bénédict, *Rapports du Jury International, Introduction Générale: Tome Premier - Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900, à Paris* (Paris: Imprimer Nationale, 1904), p. 115.

¹⁰⁹ Lavisé, *Questions*, p. 214.

newly founded seat of Sociology at the Sorbonne. Louis Greenburg believed that the arrival of Durkheim ‘best illustrates what the New Sorbonne had come to mean to France and higher education’.¹¹⁰ His ‘type’ flourished at France’s foremost institution; with their ‘dialectical skill, and the passion for arguments always enclosed within “a firmly maintained objective and intellectual posture”’.¹¹¹ Seemingly Durkheim, with his intellectual conviction that sociology was the scientific replacement for philosophy and religion, suited the requirements of his patron on the basis of his willingness to assert his own beliefs.

Much of Liard’s reforms to higher education were representative of the growing efficacy and assertiveness of France’s new bureaucratic model.¹¹² Centralisation, technocracy, and collective endeavour were clearly manifested in his achievements. Liard’s penchant for such a task had been duly noted in his ability ‘to realise ideas through acts, to convert them into building blocks, to organise things [and] to command men’.¹¹³ All of this was geared towards a new kind of educational space; one that had an acceptably republican outlook.

Whilst it is tempting to adhere to Theodore Zeldin’s argument that the reforms made during the early Third Republic actually made the management of the university system, as a whole, a much more labourious task than was really necessary, it should be avoided.¹¹⁴ In essence, he is right on account of the fact that the individuality Liard provided institutions with made the entire system more complex. However, given the increase in spending on education and the expansion of the bureaucratic system more generally (the exact details of which have been examined by Eugen Weber), it seems unfair to hold this against Liard’s work.¹¹⁵ The autonomy he granted not only

¹¹⁰ Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne’, p. 84.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 85.

¹¹² Theodore Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945*, p. 121.

¹¹³ Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne’, p. 79.

¹¹⁴ Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945*, pp. 120-121.

¹¹⁵ See Eugen Weber, ‘Civilising the Earnest: Schools and Schooling’, for statistics regarding spending on all levels of education during the *fin-de-siècle*, in Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 309-316.

rectified widely accepted problems with French higher education, but marked a considerable feat in its own right.

Their legacy

Ultimately, the ideas of men like Liard and Lavissee have a legacy that lives on to the present day. Liard's reforms still underpin the structures of higher education in France. In this context, Lavissee's work on education, and perhaps more importantly, his work on the contemporary history of Germany aid our understanding of the psychology behind educational reform in the Third Republic. He recognised a distinct difference between the French psyche and that of the naturally conservative Germans.¹¹⁶ In turn, his dissemination of what made the Germans' and their education system successful are intrinsically linked the French national condition, questions of efficiency and the experience of defeat in 1870. There was a reason he wished to portray 'the beautiful defence' of Paris in 1870 as such in *Cours Élémentaire*.¹¹⁷

It was, however, from within the confines of the university system that they were provided with the agency to formulate these ideas that had been fostered in their formative years. It was there that, as Pierre Bourdieu would argue, the pedagogic authority of Liard was disseminated through the agency he permitted the likes of Lavissee and Durkheim.¹¹⁸ This would not have been possible without the inherently sociable nature of patronage in the bourgeois republic. Whilst it was no longer the 'spoils system' that had characterized French bureaucracy and patronage in the first half of the nineteenth-century, it is clear that Jules Ferry elevated Louis Liard for reasons far beyond his competence as an administrator.¹¹⁹ The meritocracy we tend to associate with the Third Republic was evidently not so pure. To some degree, this supports the proponents of the 'opportunist

¹¹⁶ Ernest Lavissee, *Essais sur l'Allemagne Impériale* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1888), pp. 1-10.

¹¹⁷ Lavissee, *Cours Élémentaire*, p. 159.

¹¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), pp. 3-8.

¹¹⁹ William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the rise of the French City* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998), p. 67; Bruneau, 'Ambition in the French University', p. 213.

republican’ argument that was detailed in the previous chapter. Yet it lends further credence to the proposed amendment, in chapter one, to thinking on the subject – namely the motivation of republicans. Liard’s career serves as a pertinent example of how men ‘at the top’ used talented young gentlemen of a similar disposition to augment educational change in the early Third Republic; they were yet another weapon in the *guerre des deux Frances*.¹²⁰

Liard, being a ‘master of the system and its internal practices’, seems to have exploited this reality with remarkable precision, as we have noted with his appointment of Lavissee and Durkheim.¹²¹ He was a man ‘anxious to force the system to recognise him and to accept the changed social world from which he had come’.¹²² His decisions appear to have fed into a master plan; a plan that sought to make concrete a process of reform that began in 1791. It is with this idea of ‘new men’, patronage and sociability in mind that we will move into chapter three. Keeping in mind the battleground of education, we will consider the newfound role of ‘public intellectuals’ and their influence on the *guerre des deux Frances*.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 210.

¹²¹ Zeldin, *France: 1848-1945*, p. 120; Greenburg, ‘Architects of the New Sorbonne’, p. 120; Bruneau, ‘Ambition in the French University’, p. 205.

¹²² Bruneau, ‘Ambition in the French University’, p. 205.

Chapter 3

Literature as a weapon and cultural representations of the *guerre des deux Frances*: Anatole France and Maurice Barrès in context

Up to this point, this dissertation has considered the role of an independent organisation, established to tackle the predominance of the clericalism over primary education. The roles of bureaucrats and professors such as Louis Liard and Ernest Lavisse have also been considered. The *guerre des deux Frances*, however, also captured the imagination and spurred the engagement of writers and artists. Most famously, Emile Zola, in 1898, published ‘*J’accuse!*’, an open letter to the President of the Republic, in protest against what he believed was a military conspiracy – or the Dreyfus Affair, as it became known.¹²³ The Affair, in many ways, came to embody the tensions that already existed between the two camps that have been the overarching subject of this investigation. It is with this combination – of the wider cultural conflict and the engagement of literary figures – in mind, that chapter three will examine the literary contributions of Anatole France and Maurice Barrès.

Through close examination of *L’Histoire Contemporaine* (1897-1901) by France and *Les Déracinés* (1897) by Barrès, and subsequently, the reception they received from literary critics, we can gain an insight into how the Parisian *bien-pensantes*. This follows on from the assertion of Venita Datta and Jean-François Sirinelli, that the *Revue* is valuable to the historian not only interested in intellectual history but also ‘the sociability of the intellectual cadre’.¹²⁴ This mode of investigation, therefore, explores the chosen space and structure of their interaction.

¹²³ Emile Zola, ‘*J’accuse!*’, *L’Aurore*, January 13, 1898, p. 1.

¹²⁴ Datta, ‘*La Revue Blanche*’, p. 148.

Anatole France and Maurice Barrès

Anatole France was born in Paris, in 1844. As an author, literary critic and public intellectual, he was prolific. Between 1864 and his death in 1924, he published eighty-nine works.¹²⁵ Amongst those works, some of the most notable were *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* (1881), *Le Lys Rouge* (1894), and the four-part *L'Histoire Contemporaine* (1897-1901) – although he is considered to have been a leading figure in French literary circles from around 1896.¹²⁶ France was of equal renowned for his contributions to literary criticism and political discourse via his articles in the *Journal des Débats*, the *Journal Officiel*, and *Le Temps*. In recognition of his talents, he was elected to the *Académie Française* in 1896 and received the Nobel Literary Prize in 1921.¹²⁷

Maurice Barrès was born in Charmes, Alsace-Lorraine, in 1862. He rose to prominence very early in his career following the success of *La Culte de Moi* ('The Cult of the Self') in 1888, before his twenty-sixth birthday.¹²⁸ He became heavily engaged – both directly and indirectly – with politics. He was elected *député* for Nancy in 1889, and would also go on to act as President of the anti-Dreyfusard *Ligue de la Patrie Française* and then the *Ligue des Patriotes*.¹²⁹ In a literary capacity, he founded the journal, *La Cocarde*, in 1894 as a means of sharing his political views. Like his contemporary, Anatole France, he received recognition from the *Académie Française* for his literary talents, being elected to their ranks in 1896.¹³⁰

In the context of this chapter, therefore, it is important to remember that both these figures were considered to be a part of the literary establishment in the fin-de-siècle. This is despite assertions

¹²⁵ See 'Anatole France: Biographie', Académie Française, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/anatole-france?fauteuil=38&election=23-01-1896>.

¹²⁶ Dinah Birch, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 389.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 389.

¹²⁸ See 'Maurice Barrès: Biographie', Académie Française, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/maurice-barres>.

¹²⁹ Birch, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 99.

¹³⁰ 'Maurice Barrès: Biographie', Académie Française, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/maurice-barres>.

that have been made – at least in the case of Barrès – that have labelled them as such figures as ‘avant-garde’.¹³¹

L’Histoire Contemporaine and Les Déracinés

As mentioned, *L’Histoire Contemporaine* is split into four volumes. They follow the travails of Professor Bergeret and company as they confront the forces of *ancien* France and wrestle with the controversies of the day. His protagonist, M. Bergeret, promulgates many of Anatole France’s opinions. Sarah Shurts has argued that in M. Bergeret, we find the ideal Dreyfusard character; republican, universalist and scientist.¹³² Throughout this work, Anatole France’s signature use of irony is frequently encountered.¹³³ This is often affected by caricature of anti-Dreyfusard groups such as the monarchists, bonapartists and clerics. For example, he somewhat mockingly wrote under in the guise of monarchist, that the ‘small shopkeeper’, who, deluded by ‘bad books’ and ‘newspapers’, did ‘not yet understand that the monarchy alone will bring him ... happiness’.¹³⁴

Les Déracinés, by contrast, follows a group of young men from Nancy, who we meet in the classroom of M. Bouteiller; a republican *lycéen*, firmly footed in rational, scientific thought. As these young men graduate, they take to Paris, in pursuit of fortune. This, for Barrès, leads them to become ‘rootless’; ‘transplanted’ from their provincial origins. For Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, Barrès juxtaposes the ‘universal intellectual’, ‘defender of republicanism’ and the ‘nationalist intellectual, guardian and paladin of the nation’.¹³⁵ Ruth Harris believes his motivation lay in the national condition. ‘He argued that such cerebral abstractions diverted the young men from the vital emotional sources of their Frenchness ... such feelings lay in France’s regional

¹³¹ Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, pp. 7-9.

¹³² Sarah Shurts, ‘Redefining the Engagé: Intellectual Identity in Fin de Siècle France’, *Historical Reflections*, vol. 38, no. 3 (2012), p. 26.

¹³³ Birch, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 389.

¹³⁴ Anatole France, *Monsieur Bergeret à Paris* (Paris: C. Lévy, 1901), p. 246.

¹³⁵ Pascal Ory and Jean François Sirinelli, *Les Intellectuels en France de l’Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002), p. 41.

diversity, and he wanted the nation's youth to rediscover their roots and then channel their renewed energies into nationalist discipline'.¹³⁶

Key themes

L'Histoire Contemporaine and *Les Déracinés* share a common form, in the sense that they choose to map the stories of the intellectual camp with which they disagree. Anatole France, as mentioned, often wrote as if a proponent of the traditional, anti-Dreyfusard forces in France that he held in contempt. Similarly, Barrès essentially paints a picture of young men on a path deemed desirable by republicans. As a result there are a number of key themes common to both novels – namely identity, education and masculinity.

Identity

Anatole France's perception of identity is less polemic than that of Barrès'. In *L'Orme du Mail* ('The Elm Tree on the Mall'), the first volume of *L'Histoire Contemporaine*, France chooses to observe the various characters that epitomise various groups in French society. The Cardinal Charlot, is 'ignorant', 'weak', 'intransigent' and 'hypocritical'.¹³⁷ By comparison, his protagonist, M. Bergeret is steadfast, republican and an exemplar of the 'professor-type' in the Third Republic.¹³⁸ Yet the book concludes with M. Bergeret going to join his friend and university colleague, the *Abbé* Lantaigne, under the tree after which the book is named. Essentially, men that represent polar opposites to French society are seen in perfect harmony. From this, Anatole France appears to acknowledge that Frenchmen are a lot more similar to one another than they perceive themselves to be.

¹³⁶ Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island and the Affair that divided France* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), p. 138.

¹³⁷ Gaston Deschamps, 'La Vie Littéraire', *Le Temps*, January 31, 1897, p. 2.

¹³⁸ Gaston Deschamps, 'La Vie Littéraire: M. Anatole France et les universitaires', *Le Temps*, October 31, 1897, p. 2.

For Venita Datta, Barrès' model man is 'solidly bourgeois, firmly implanted in society, and true to the land and their regional roots'.¹³⁹ Society, therefore, is organic for Barrès. His model, anti-Dreyfusard 'man of intelligence' possesses a keen realism, a 'recognition of the needs of society' and will not speak in dangerous and irresponsible 'abstractions' as he believed the republicans were often predisposed towards doing.¹⁴⁰ Given the stark contrast this poses to M. Bouteiller, it is evident that Barrès depicts an antithesis to emphasise the difference between men with whom the 'elite of France' appeared to identify and the men who wish to ensure the best for their country.¹⁴¹ This, for Barrès demonstrates 'the most avid naïvety'.¹⁴²

Education

It was the seeming naïvety that led to Barrès' dismissal of 'the "intellectuals"' as shortsighted, cerebral men, as pontificators "without authority" unable to comprehend that society's foundations were not necessarily based on "individual reason".¹⁴³ These concerns lead to his assertion that *lycéens* essentially demanded unquestionable adherence to republican values from their students. The 'monstrous regime', he argued, sought to ridicule country-dwelling young men, who felt 'the beauty of nature' and 'a delicate sense of morality'.¹⁴⁴

Like Barrès, Anatole France makes observation of the camp to which he is opposed. He demonstrates this with *Abbé Lantaigne's* internal dialogue. Lantaigne wrestles with his confliction regarding his most talented student, Firmin Piédagnel. He 'despaired of a soul to whom doubt was light and bearable and whose thoughts flowed to irreligion by a natural inclination'.¹⁴⁵ He sees in Piédagnel a 'Renan' rather than a 'Pèreyve'.¹⁴⁶ As a result, Lantaigne fears that, 'in rearing such

¹³⁹ Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁰ Shurts, 'Redefining the Engagé', p. 29.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 36-37.

¹⁴² Maurice Barrès, *Les Déracinés* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1897), p. 8.

¹⁴³ Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁴ Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Anatole France, *The Elm Tree on the Mall* (London: John Lane Company, 1897), p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 13.

pupils, he might be training formidable enemies of the truth'.¹⁴⁷ It follows that his inferred solution would be to avoid educating such individuals at all, allowing ignorance to ensure the prevalence of Catholicism. This, ironically, precludes any chance of understanding any 'truth'. Much like the 'intellectuals' of the period, it is clear that education was determined by two 'rival ideologies' and with it, 'two opposing visions of French national identity'.¹⁴⁸

Masculinity

The question of manhood was of equal concern to both writers. In 1886, Anatole France, in reference to duelling, would write: '[the sword is] the first tool of civilization, the only means man has found to reconcile his brutal instincts and his ideal of justice'.¹⁴⁹ Dueling in the early Third Republic saw an 'astonishing revival'.¹⁵⁰ This is explained in part by Max Nordau's insistence that the urban elite, 'were overly stimulated intellectually but physically weak and inactive'.¹⁵¹ As a result, sport, alongside dueling, became increasingly popular in fin-de-siècle France. Venita Datta argued that in *Les Déracinés*, Barrès called for 'real men with rifles, not half-men bureaucrats'.¹⁵² In doing so he denigrated the manhood of 'state intellectuals', like the character M. Bouteiller, to present them as a subversive threat to the health of the nation.¹⁵³ Manhood, therefore, was intrinsically linked to the state of the nation.

If we invert the current theme and consider femininity, an added gender dimension is revealed in the work of France and Barrès. In *La Mannequin d'Osier* – the second volume in *L'Histoire Contemporaine* – even our venerable protagonist, M. Bergeret, falls foul of his wife's ability to deceive him. In this, Anatole France emphasises the wariness to be had regarding the women in

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ Anatole France, 'La vie à Paris', *Le Temps*, July 18, 1886.

¹⁵⁰ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 18.

¹⁵¹ Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, p. 121.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 122.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 122.

one's life.¹⁵⁴ He equally displays a cynicism towards 'aristocratic women' – in *The Elm Tree on the Mall* – who revered 'this dirty, threadbare, yet respected, Cossack that bowed before him [the republican *préfet*]'. This, he combines his disdain for clerics, women and hereditary privilege in one sweeping passage.¹⁵⁵ That is without mentioning his talent for defamatory descriptions of the clergy.

Barrès' depiction of the 'feminine', on the other hand, is more complex and contradictory. He sees women as nervous, weak and subversive, whilst at the same time portraying their 'trait of instinct' in a positive fashion.¹⁵⁶ For the *lycéens* protagonists, however, they are a source of 'distraction' and 'sensual desire', in Barrès' opinion.¹⁵⁷ What the authors share in this regard, is a relatively set vision of society concerning gender roles. Women were to be handled with caution; caution that men must always maintain in their affairs. In that sense, a similar approach to matters of the nation appears to have been considered integral.

Contemporary Reviews

Having examined the themes *L'Histoire Contemporaine* and *Les Déracinés* are concerned with, it is worth considering the reception they received from their peers. The intentions of France and Barrès, and the message they wished to convey, may of course, be interpreted in various ways. As Marieke Dubbelboer has noted, by around 1900, there were over two-thousand periodicals and newspapers being published in Paris every day.¹⁵⁸ The literary reviews would have been widely read – influencing the opinion of a considerable number of people. Therefore, the 'diffusion' and 'reception' is equal to, if not more important than, the production of literature.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Deschamps, 'La Vie Littéraire: M. Anatole France', p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ France, *The Elm Tree on the Mall*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁵⁶ Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁷ Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, p. 4; p. 71.

¹⁵⁸ Marieke Dubbelboer, 'Nothing ruins writer like journalism': Colette, the press and *belle époque* literary life', *French Cultural Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2015), p. 33.

¹⁵⁹ Marie-Ève Thérénty, 'La Civilisation du Journal entre Histoire et Littérature', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2014), p. 50.

Here, examples from a variety of *revues* and *journals* spanning the contemporary political sphere will be consulted. Anti-Dreyfusard publications include *Le Gaulois*, *La Croix*, and *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Dreyfusard publications include *La Revue Blanche*, *Le Temps* and the literary supplement, *Le Temps Nouveaux*.

Anatole France

Most notably, around Anatole France's *L'Histoire Contemporaine*, a dialogue was formed by a Gaston Deschamps, in *Le Temps*, regarding a previous article in *Revue des Deux Mondes* that outlined M. Georges Meunier critique of French universities in the Third Republic.¹⁶⁰ Deschamps begins by noting the popularity of Anatole France's work in French universities due to the style of prose and the 'exalted humanism' it had a tendency to profess.¹⁶¹ He argues that M. Meunier, in his seemingly antiquated attack on the '*nouveau jeu*' – who he believed were obsessed with 'modernism' – had missed the point. That point being, the role occupied by the academic in nurturing the 'intellectual life of the nation' for the betterment of the Republic.¹⁶² It is the position of the academic and the 'celebrated philosophy' of the day that Anatole France venerated in his work, Deschamps believed.¹⁶³ For this reason, he hails him.

Maurice Barrès

Barrès was equally afforded praise for his work. He was repeatedly lauded for the confidence to question tenets of 'official republicanism'.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, *La Croix* noted Barrès' belief that the men 'of the chamber' ignore public opinion.¹⁶⁵ That said, not all *revues* and *journals* considered 'anti-Dreyfusard' uniformly praised the sentinels of the cause. *Le Gaulois* featured a scathing critique of Barrès' hypothesis in *Les Déracinés*. In particular, the article wished to remind M. Barrès that, like

¹⁶⁰ Deschamps, 'La Vie Littéraire: M. Anatole France', p. 2; Rene Doumic, 'Revue Littéraire: Une Apothèse du Naturalisme', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. 144, no. 4 (1897), pp. 914-916.

¹⁶¹ Deschamps, 'La Vie Littéraire: M. Anatole France', p. 2.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶³ Unknown Author, *Le Temps Nouveaux, Supplément Littéraire: no. 41* (1897), p. 216.

¹⁶⁴ Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 138.

¹⁶⁵ 'Revue des Journaux: Exploitation de la Politique', *La Croix*, January 7, 1897, p. 1.

the young men in his book, he was also a *déraciné* – a very successful one.¹⁶⁶ Barrès had long been subject to criticism. In 1895, Louis Lumet went as far as to describe Barrès and his admirers as ‘imbecilic’.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Barrès was praised for his ‘realist aesthetic’ by René Doumic, a colleague of Gaston Deschamps at the Collège de Stanislas.¹⁶⁸ Georges Thiébaud captured the mood of critics and writers on both sides of the divide. *Les Déracinés*, he believed, realised the ‘truth’ behind the ‘social peace ... the republic appeared to enjoy’; it was ‘superficial’ and ‘assimilated with elements of disorder and revolution’.¹⁶⁹ This paradox delicately illustrates the paranoia that appears to have captivated the middle-classes in the Fin-de-Siècle.

In addition to what the evidence tells us about French society during the Fin-de-Siècle, there is also a remarkable demonstration of editorial discretion. The various articles used here demonstrate that the opinions of critics did not necessarily correspond to political dividing lines. As mentioned earlier, these publications were often self-declared as ‘Dreyfusard’ or ‘anti-Dreyfusard’. Yet, the issue of the anti-Dreyfusard *Le Gaulois* in which Barrès was heavily criticised, extolls the virtues of ‘impartiality’ and ‘well-informed’, objective journalism.¹⁷⁰ Whilst French journalism was indeed ‘a journalism of expression and opinion’, it seems imprudent to suggest that this was at the expense of proper observation, as Dubbelboer has argued.¹⁷¹ Rather, it fed into a ‘series of struggles between the engaged thinkers of the Left and the Right to define, and even monopolise, the empowering role of the intellectual according to their own sociopolitical values’.¹⁷²

It is apparent then, from the work of Anatole France and Maurice Barrès that they had more in common than has often been acknowledged. This serves as another instance in which the ‘pervading tendency of modern scholars ... to define “true” intellectual identity according to the

¹⁶⁶ Tout Paris, ‘Bloc-Notes Parisien: La Province à Paris’, *Le Gaulois*, November 21, 1897, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ Louis Lumet, ‘La Presse’, *Le Temps Nouveaux, Supplement Littéraire*: no. 22 (1895), p. 359.

¹⁶⁸ René Doumic, ‘Revue Littéraire: Les Déracinés de M. Maurice Barrès’, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. 144, no. 4 (1897), p. 464.

¹⁶⁹ Georges Thiébaud, ‘Entre Taine et Napoléon’, *Le Gaulois*, November 13, 1897, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Échos de Paris’, *Le Gaulois*, November 21, 1897, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Dubbelboer, “Nothing ruins writers like journalism”, p. 33.

¹⁷² Shurts, ‘Redefining the Engagé’, p. 25.

Dreyfusard model' is dispelled.¹⁷³ This is, perhaps, taking lead from the French penchant for dividing things in two.¹⁷⁴ The connection they made between the French masculinity and the health of the nation is particularly telling. Both *L'Histoire Contemporaine* and *Les Déracinés*, exemplify their ideal type of man as they are steadfast and honourable in their conduct. These are attributes one would readily associate with good statesmanship. This explains in part, why education remained an omnipresent concern for writers. Education, after all, would make or break the character of Frenchmen.

The work of Barrès and France betray much deeper anxieties of French society. There is undoubtedly a question of order, at the heart the conflict; who wields power; where it is wielded from; and for what purposes it is deployed is central to their thought. As Jean Bourdeau observed, writers across the board, from Anatole France to Maurice Barrès to Paul Bourget, were struck by 'horror' at the thought of 'pure democracy'.¹⁷⁵ Barrès himself, once stated in *Le Temps*, that he would sooner 'commit to an injustice than support disorder', so visceral were his concerns.¹⁷⁶ Clearly, from the reception they received, the work of the two writers fed into ongoing debates at the time. This was not a benign forum for intellectual posturing - these debates were vibrant and multifaceted. As such, it is their intellectual contribution to discourse that characterised the *guerre des deux Frances* that constitutes their importance in this dissertation.

¹⁷³ Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Hazareesingh, *How the French Think*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ Bourdeau, 'Revue Philosophique', p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Henry Bordeaux, 'Les idées morales d'Henrik Ibsen', *Le Temps Nouveaux, Supplément Littéraire*: no. 23 (1897), p. 179.

Conclusion

At the outset of this dissertation, the intended aim of this project was to further our understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of the *guerre des deux Frances* through three case studies. A closer examination of the *Ligue de l'enseignement* and their activism revealed a nationwide, organic movement that sought to endorse the radical reforms of the Jules Ferry government and subsequent republican administrations. The work of Louis Liard as both bureaucrat and academic, and his close associate, historian Ernest Lavissee demonstrated the way in which republicans used their powers of patronage to facilitate the systemic dissemination of their ideas through the university system. Both case studies highlighted how the endeavours of the *Ligue*, Liard and Lavissee genuinely tried to bring the abstract and the material together. This contributed to the accentuation of a highly polemicized scenario, as documented by French artistic and intellectual cadres. From the work of Anatole France and Maurice Barrès we gained an insight into how republican reforms in the early Third Republic were perceived on the ground. From their respective critics, we saw then, how their hypotheses were interpreted, dissected, and how they intersected into other conversations being had in *revues* and *journals*.

Essentially, the evidence put forward by this dissertation is characterised by competing narratives; that of 'Voltaire' or 'St Louis'.¹⁷⁷ With it, both sides of the culture war developed parallel claims on French heritage. This is, perhaps, the overarching discovery of this project. Louis Liard and Ernest Lavissee were steadfast in their belief that their work was resuming – and even completing – the work of the revolutionaries of 1791. Enlightenment ideas – forever intertwined with the memory of the revolution – were equally espoused by the *Ligue de l'enseignement* through Kantian precepts. By contrast Anatole France's character, *Abbé Lantaigne*, concerned himself with limiting the capacity of his brightest student to protect the 'truth' that only the Catholic Church could provide.

¹⁷⁷ Wesseling, *Certain Ideas of France*, p. 58.

Notable, however, was the observation made by both Anatole France and Maurice Barrès (although not intentionally in the case of the latter) that in either side failing to prevail over the other, their two imagined versions of France which are immediately irreconcilable, continued to coexist. Whilst attempts to settle this conflict were made again throughout the twentieth-century, by both sides, it remains omnipresent. It was from France that protest came in opposition to same-sex marriage; yet the very same country banned the hijab on secularist grounds. Sudhir Hazareesingh, in *How the French Think*, aptly summarised this paradox in his conclusion, entitled: ‘Anxiety and Optimism’.¹⁷⁸ Today it is the right-wing ‘intellectual’, Michel Houellebecq, that captures peoples’ attention; ironically born on the island to which Alfred Dreyfus was exiled.¹⁷⁹ In light of which, it is clear that that this continual strife is an intractable and ever-present dimension to French social and cultural life that did not cease in the Fin-de-Siècle.

¹⁷⁸ Hazareesingh, *How the French Think*, p. 257.

¹⁷⁹ See Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015). His controversial novel was the source of considerable debate for imagining France under the control of an Islamic Fundamentalist party after elections in 2022. See also Angelique Chrisafis, ‘Right-Wing “New Reactionaries” stir up trouble among French Intellectuals’, *The Guardian*, 9 October 2015; Patrick Marnham, ‘Meet the Intellectuals leading France to the Right’, *The Spectator*, 29 October 2015.

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