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SOME IMPLICATIONS OF FRENCH FOLK LITERATURE
FOR THE SECONDARY LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
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By

Genelle Grant Morain, B.A.

****

The Ohio State University
1968

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
College of Education
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I express my appreciation for guidance and encouragement to my adviser, Professor Edward D. Allen, who sees with the eyes of a master teacher; and to Professor Francis Lee Utley, who sees with the eyes of a folklorist.
VITA

March 3, 1928 Born - Indianola, Iowa
1949 ........ B.A., Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa
1949-1950 .... Classroom Teacher, Cherokee High School, Cherokee, Iowa
1950-1951 .... Graduate studies in Folklore, Indiana University
1952-1953 .... Classroom Teacher, Indianola High School, Indianola, Iowa
1961-1965 .... Classroom Teacher, Indianola High School, Indianola, Iowa
1962 ........ Summer NDEA Institute, University of Kansas City
1964 ........ Summer NDEA Institute, University of Oregon, Tours, France
1965-1968 ... NDEA Fellow, The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Foreign Language Education: Professors Edward D. Allen, Frank Otto, and Paul Pimsleur

Studies in French Folklore: Professor Francis Lee Utley

Studies in Curriculum: Professor Paul Klohr

Studies in Teacher Education: Professor L. O. Andrews
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................. 11

VITA ........................................................................... iii

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION ....................................... 1

Background (1)--Scope (4)--Limitations (5)--
Definition of Terms (6)--Summary of Research
on Attitudes and Learning as They Apply to the
Teaching of Culture (15)--Effects of Attitude
on Language Learning (15)--Effects of Language
Learning on Attitude (18)--Conclusion (22)--
Notes (23)

CHAPTER II. THE FRENCH CHARACTER......................... 26

Difficulties in Depicting (26)--Organizational
Schemes: Hall (28)--Brooks (29)--Nostrand
(29)--Wylie (30)--Pitts (30)--Métraux and
Mead (31)--This paper (31)--l'Individu (33)--
Intellectualisme (40)--Rationality (42)--
Equilibre and Mesure (44)--Clarté (46)--Humor
(55)--La Famille (59)--Les Autres (66)--
Méfiance (67)--Esprit Critique (71)--l'Étranger
(73)--La Patrice (75)--Conclusion (78)--
Notes (79)

CHAPTER III. FOLK LITERATURE IN FRANCE .............. 84

Folklore and Folk Literature (84)--Marchen
(88)--Animal Tales (100)--Pourquoi Tale (107)
--Sage (109)--Jests and Anecdotes (114)--
Blason Populaire (123)--Saints' Legends (128)--
Proverb (135)--Formula Tale (138)--Riddle
(140)--Comptine (140)--Other Genres (141)--
Conclusion (143)--Notes (144)

CHAPTER IV. CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOLK LITERATURE TO
THE TEACHING OF CULTURE ..............................149

Folk Literature: A Link with the Past (149)--
Folk Literature: A Link with Others (151)--
The Functions of Folklore (153)--An Outline of
TABLE OF CONTENTS
(Continued)

Relationships (156)— The Relationship Between Sisters (159)— The Croquemitaine (160)— Making the Irrational Rational: A Study of Märchen (163)— Teaching Unit I: Le Goût du Rationnel (170)— Teaching Unit II: The Concept of Individualisme (175)— Teaching Unit III: The Proverb (195)— Folk Literature and Symbolism (210)— Conclusion (213)— Notes (214)

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................. 216
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural understanding has come to be an important goal of foreign language study in the United States today. Of this the profession can be proud. It was a big step to move from the grammar-translation method to the audio-lingual approach. It was an even bigger step to realize that proficiency in phonology, morphology, and syntax still did not guarantee communication. Cultural understanding was the missing ingredient.

In a recent survey conducted by Edmund Glenn, former chief of the Interpreting Branch of the U.S. Government Language Services, a group of official State Department interpreters and fifty of the people for whom they interpret were asked to describe what qualities are essential to good interpreting. It may come as a surprise to language teachers that "Language proficiency" was ranked next to the bottom in importance. "Interpersonal skills" topped the list, while "Ability to bridge gaps between cultures" and "Knowledge of the
visitor's culture" both received higher ratings of importance than did "Language proficiency."¹

Very few students in our public schools are studying language with an eye to becoming interpreters in the professional sense of the word; yet the high value assigned by professional interpreters to knowledge of the foreign culture and the interpersonal skills necessary to implement this knowledge has relevancy for every language curriculum.

With "inclusion of the cultural component" now a fully recognized objective, language teachers must search for ways to give their students this new dimension of language training. The old days of the "Friday afternoon culture session" are past.

No longer are students satisfied to accept Frère Jacques and La Marseillaise as the sole representatives of the French musical heritage. No longer are they willing to devote tedious hours to a comparison of Roman and Gothic architectural detail. And the four tattered travel posters that were scotch-taped to the board in September no longer seem stimulating on the first of March.

The scattering of culture randomly--according to the "Je sème à tout vent" principle--is unacceptable in light of revised goals. A decade ago, "culture" was
usually introduced by the lecture method: a presentation in English of the French Impressionist School one week; a lecture on "Transportation and Communication in France" the next; a third Friday devoted to biographical sketches of such an improbable trio as Jeanne d'Arc, Louis XIV, and Victor Hugo.

The typical climax of the Friday culture sessions was the showing of the math teacher's slides of her trip to France in 1938. Invariably the visual tour opened with a shot of the bottom half of a slightly tilted Cathedral of Notre Dame and progressed to a view of an equally tilted top half. Until the advent of commercially prepared slides, no Friday afternoon class ever witnessed the complete cathedral at one glance.

The intent of this introduction is not to deride the culture teaching of the past, for the efforts to impart culture were usually conscientious and sincere. Sometimes they were effective. But the increased sophistication of the language student today, coupled with the intense motivation for international understanding, forces some serious innovation in approach and methodology.

The purpose of this paper is to present one new approach to the cultural component: the use of folk literature to illuminate cultural themes and societal
values.

Scope

Chapter I is designed to sketch the broad outlines of the problems language teachers face in including the cultural component. It discusses the background of the term "culture" and presents the latest definition as given by foreign language educators. It also defines the term "cultural theme." The meager research on attitudes and learning as they apply to the teaching of culture in the foreign language class is presented in this chapter.

In Chapter II an attempt is made to analyze contemporary French society, pointing out existent cultural themes and discussing their influence on the French character. This is essentially a synthesis of material from scholars in sociology, anthropology, political science, and language study. Offering extensive bibliographic references, it was written with Nelson Brooks' recent proposal to the language teaching profession in mind:

Proposal III. That materials be prepared to help teachers know about, analyze and teach culture in the foreign language in which they are giving instruction.

Chapter III introduces the field of French folk literature and explores the various genres which it con-
tains. It is designed to give the classroom teacher an understanding of the versatility of form and content found in folk literature, and to stimulate an interest in unfamiliar genres which may be useful in imparting insights into societal themes and values.

Chapter IV is intended to present teaching materials and techniques on a practical level. Certain characteristic aspects of the French way of life are chosen as focal points for discussion, and these are illuminated through a combination of folk literature and contemporary materials.

**Limitations**

This study will concentrate on the use of folk literature. Other aspects of folklore, however, have great potential in the teaching of culture.

The most popular contribution of folklore to foreign language classrooms has been the folk song. These are widely used today, primarily to provide relief from the intense pace of the pattern drill, the directed dialogue, and other audio-lingual techniques. There are many fine collections of folk music available to the language teacher on records and tape as well as in books.

To a lesser degree, the folk dance has found its way into the language program, although the accompanying need for floor space has kept it more of a club or

Another area of folklore which is not treated in this study is that of popular tradition, including the folk beliefs and practices associated with work, health, holidays, birth and death—in fact, with the whole business of living from the cradle to the grave. The works of Arnold van Gennep provide an excellent point of departure for any French teacher interested in bringing la tradition populaire into the curriculum.

Definition of Terms

The language profession is currently taking a long and a more scholarly look at the nature of culture. In an article entitled "Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom," printed in the March, 1968, Foreign Language Annals, Nelson Brooks writes: "Our greatest immediate problem is that we are uncertain about what we mean by the word culture." (p. 205)

Although it is time to clear up this uncertainty, language teachers need not feel apologetic about their confusion. Sociologists, anthropologists, historians,
literary scholars, and psychologists are also "uncertain about what we mean by the word culture." A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn wrote an entire volume in which they wrestled with various concepts of culture and tried to find a scheme which would make them intelligible. They present 164 definitions of the term culture, as offered by 110 different scholars, and although they have done a masterful job of sorting and sifting, the degree of contradiction which exists in the minds of the world's thinkers on the subject of culture is very evident.

Before looking at the definition of culture proposed by Nelson Brooks as spokesman for foreign language education, a quick review of the definitions advanced by scholars in other fields might be profitable.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn organized the various definitions of culture into seven groups, categorizing them according to the basis of principal emphasis.

The first group is composed of those definitions which look upon culture as a "comprehensive totality." Most of these have been influenced by E. B. Tylor, whose own definition of culture as given in 1871 in *Primitive Culture* has been quoted and re-quoted by scholars in many fields:

"Culture, or civilization ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."
A second group of definitions places the emphasis on social heritage or tradition, and is typified by this statement of Groves and Moore in a sociology textbook:

Culture is thus the social heritage, the fund of accumulated knowledge and customs through which the person "inherits" most of his behavior and ideas.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn point out that, while making clear that man has a social as well as a biological heritage, such a definition puts too much emphasis on the passive role of men--suggesting that they inherit, without implying that they also create.

A third cluster of definitions is built around the concept of culture as a pattern for living--a social blueprint for action. The French sociologist J. Maquet, a typical proponent of this "way of life" theory, phrases it simply: "La culture, c'est la manière de vivre du groupe." Some members of this group add the dimension of values and ideals as adjuncts to cultural behavior.

A psychological emphasis on adjustment to environment is the key feature of a fourth group. In this set of definitions, culture is seen as a problem-solving device. The weakness of such a functional definition of culture is that it neglects to show that cultures create problems as well as solve them.

Still another cluster of definitions stresses the
organization of culture. W. Coutu, a social psychologist, links organization to "way of life" and to the "fields" approach to culture and personality:

Culture is one of the most inclusive of all the configurations we call interactional fields—the way of life of a whole people. ... Culture is to a population aggregate what personality is to the individual.  

The sixth group of definitions looks upon culture as a product or artifact, and includes such statements as: "Culture is the sum total of all that is artificial"; and, "Culture is the man-made part of the environment."  

A final group is made up of incomplete definitions --such fragmentary statements as Ruth Benedict's, "What really binds men together is their culture—the ideas and the standards they have in common."  

Kroeber and Kluckhohn underline the fact that the term culture has acquired one scientific denotation:

This meaning is that of a set of attributes and products of human societies which are extrasomatic and transmissible by mechanisms other than biological heredity, and are as essentially lacking in sub-human species as they are characteristic of the human species ...

To these two scholars, culture is not some mystical "force" acting at a distance, but is created by individual organisms and by organisms operating as a group.

The history of each group leaves its precipitate—conveniently and, by now, traditionally called "culture"—which is present in persons, shaping their perceptions of events, other persons, and the environment situations
in ways not wholly determined by biology and by environmental press. Culture is an inter-
vening variable between human "organism" and "environment." 11

Adding to the confusion involved in defining culture is the term civilization, which is used by some scholars as a synonym for culture, and by others as a completely different lexical item.

In formulating his own definition of culture, Brooks attacks the problem by first enumerating a list of things which culture is not. "Culture," he says, "is not the same as geography ... as history ... as folklore ... as sociology ... as literature ... Above all, culture is not the same as civilization. The distinction between these two presents a major problem for teachers and students alike." (Annals, pp. 208-209)

This writer is not convinced that foreign language teachers and students spend much time pondering the dis-
tinction. When such a quibble becomes "a major problem" it is time to move on to other areas of scholarship.

A brief glance at the history of these terms reveals that sociologists and anthropologists have been using them more or less synonymously for years. In an early period of American sociology the two were contrasted, with culture referring to technology and material products; then a second phase found the roles exactly re-
versed, with science and technology now being called
civilization; finally there was a trend to the non-differentiation of the terms, with culture as the more frequently encountered and civilization used as a synonym or near-synonym.

As for anthropology, whether in the United States or Europe, Kroeber and Kluckhohn assert that "... there has never existed any serious impulse to use culture and civilization as contrastive terms" (p. 25).

Only in Germany was there support for differentiating the two. Humboldt defined culture as "technological-economic activities" (the material sphere), while civilization, he believed, dealt with "spiritual ennoblement and enrichment" (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, Culture, p. 288). A similar attitude, proposed by Alfred Weber in 1920 and maintained by Thurnwald as late as 1950, identified civilization with "... the objective technological and informational activities of society," and culture with "... subjective religion, philosophy, and art" (p. 289). Both of these reflect essentially the old spirit-matter dualism carried over into the area of culture.

Brooks, noting that the word civilization stemmed originally from the Latin word for the inhabitant of a town or city, would place emphasis on the urban nature of civilization:
Civilization deals with an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been attained. It deals mainly with cultural refinements and technological inventions that have come about as the result of living in cities and thickly populated areas ...

Civilization develops in and emanates from those areas in which persons of diverse classes live together in large numbers, permitting advancements and improvements in all walks of life that are not possible when family groups live in relative isolation (Annals, p. 209).

Although the reader is welcome to furrow his brow over the distinction between these terms, for the purpose of this paper the culture-civilization controversy will be unimportant. The concept of culture employed will be an inclusive one.

In dealing with the term culture, Brooks arrives at five distinct meanings, which he separates in the following way:

- **Culture₁** -- biological growth
- **Culture₂** -- personal refinement
- **Culture₃** -- literature and the fine arts
- **Culture₄** -- patterns for living
- **Culture₅** -- the sum total of a way of life.

He selects **Culture₄** as the least well understood, yet the most important for the early phases of language instruction. He defines **Culture₄** as follows:

**Culture₄** refers to the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude
and conduct in them. By reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best he can, associates with those around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached. (p. 210).

This writer accepts Brooks' definition of Culture4 as a good statement of the concept of culture which we must strive to present in language classrooms. The conceptual framework for Chapter II of this paper, which analyzes French society according to how the patterns for living affect the individual, runs a close parallel to Brooks' idea that in Culture4 the human being "... justifies the world to himself," (l'Individu) "... associates with those around him," (La Famille) and "... relates to the social order to which he is attached" (Les Autres and La Patrie).

For a succinct definition of culture which would be easily remembered by a student, one might select the definition offered by L. Myres:

Culture is what remains of men's past, working on their present, to shape their future.12

One approach to the study of a culture is to isolate the main themes which identify what is significant in that culture, and by analyzing these themes, reduce the culture to its essence. Morris E. Opler is a convincing advocate of this thematic approach.
The strength and importance of a theme can be estimated by the manner in which it penetrates all areas of the culture; the fact that it cannot be confined to one sector of a way of life may be accepted as an indication of its vitality and dynamism.\[13\]

Opler asserts that complex though it may be, no culture has an unwieldy number of themes—usually no more than twelve can exist compatibly. Since each theme is a force which affects thought and action, a strong theme tends to eliminate weaker competitors. Themes are not eternal, however, and may change with the gradual evolution of society. The complex nature of any culture is a result of the interaction of main themes, rather than the creation of new ones.

An understanding of the themes operant within a culture is essential if language students are to know the meaning behind what a native speaker says. "Inevitably," says Opler, "themes ... of a culture become the focus for literature and art. Language lingers over them and symbolism of all kinds arises to express them. Once a student of language is aware of the existence of themes, he has a means not only of conversing with others across linguistic and cultural borders, but of understanding the systems of thought and action that determine what we shall say to each other" (p. 96).
A Summary of Research on Attitudes and Learning as They Apply to the Teaching of Culture

A search for experimental studies concerning the introduction of culture into the foreign language curriculum reveals two things: (1) Only a handful of research projects have been conducted along these lines; (2) Those studies which have been made tend to fall into the questionnaire-interview category instead of into designs that produce statistically valid results.

Most of the studies have dealt with the relationship between attitude and learning, based on the hypothesis that a positive feeling toward the people who speak the language will produce better results in learning; or that learning a language will generate positive feelings toward the people who speak the language.

Effects of attitude on language learning

An experiment conducted by Robert Gardner, R. Otton, and K. Turnstall, entitled "A Study of the Roles of Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning," is one of the most significant research efforts. Its purpose was to compare the importance in the language learning process of intellectual ability and language learning aptitude on one hand, and social attitudes
toward the "other" language group, and motivation to
learn the language, on the other hand.

The population included samples of students from a
bi-cultural community in Louisiana, another from a
Franco-American community in Maine, and a control group
from Hartford, Connecticut, where there is no sub-
community of Franco-Americans.

The results of the first phase of the study showed
that two independent factors underlie the development of
skill in learning a second language: (1) intellectual
capacity; (2) appropriate attitudinal orientation toward
the target language group, coupled with a determined
motivation to learn the language.

An analysis of the attitudes of the potentially
bi-lingual Franco-American students revealed that the
Louisiana group had largely negative attitudes toward
France and the French language, while the Maine group
held the French culture and language in repute.

As for competencies in French, the Maine group
showed decided superiority over the control group in
Hartford, while the Louisiana students showed little or
no advantage.

An examination of the stereotypes held by both
Franco-American and American students toward the French
people revealed that all groups, except the Maine Franco-
Americans, held unfavorable stereotypes.
The consequences of holding negative stereotypes toward the people whose language one is supposed to learn became very apparent in this study. However, it was also pointed out that favorable attitudes in themselves are not enough to produce increased learning results; they must be pervasive enough to involve a student's motivation before they affect his progress.

Another study by Gardner and Lambert, working this time with English-speaking Montreal high school students who were studying French, reached the conclusion that students with "integrative orientation" (feelings of interest and respect for the speakers of the foreign language) were more successful in language learning than those who were "instrumentally oriented" (motivated by a desire to use the language to meet a scholastic requirement, attain an occupational goal, or reach some other objective). 15

Studies with Spanish-Americans and their attitude toward the Anglo ethnic group have been conducted by Granville B. Johnson. He found that "... a profound knowledge of the Anglo culture or no knowledge of it yielded the least bias toward it." 16 Such a conclusion points up the dangers of giving a language class only a superficial exposure to a foreign culture.

Another Johnson study analyzed the age at which
prejudice originated. It was found that the Anglo's concept of the Spaniard becomes negative earlier in life than the Spaniard's toward the Anglo and has arisen from some source other than direct contact. The origin of the Spaniard's prejudice appeared to be close to the 3½-year level while the genesis of the Anglo's appeared even before this time. It is disconcerting to realize that some students come to their first language class already equipped with negative attitudes toward the people whose language they will be learning—even when that study begins very early in the elementary school.

Effects of language learning on attitude

In a recent study by Eleanor Culver Young it was hypothesized that intensive reading of selected materials in a foreign language during a minimum period of three months will effect significant changes in certain attitudes. The results were startling. Reading in the language did effect significant changes in attitudes (as measured by the Osgood Semantic Differential Scale, the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values, and Dressel's Inventory of Beliefs), but the changes were not with the emphasis or direction assumed in the related literature. Contrary to expectation, the concept "Foreign language" lost in value, while "English language" gained. "International friendship" did not
change, but "Foreigners" and "National liberty" lost in value. There were weaknesses in the experimental design, but the apparent ineffectiveness of the approach as far as producing positive attitudes should be studied by those teachers who wish to develop effective cultural techniques.

Margaret Sutherland at Glasgow University devised a study to investigate the effects of learning French on the attitudes toward the French people held by students in French II. Their responses to a modification of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale showed that the French were ranked higher by students who had studied French than by non-French pupils, although the differences were small. Sutherland concluded that "... while a slight increase in favor to the French seems to accompany learning French, it is neither great nor so great as it could be." 19

More positive results were obtained in a 1964 experiment of Miguel Riestra and Charles Johnson. They worked with audio-lingual Spanish students and a control group of non-language students to determine the extent to which a group of elementary school pupils who had studied foreign language differed in their attitudes toward peoples represented by that language from another group of pupils who had not studied the foreign language.
It was found that studying Spanish caused significantly more positive attitudes toward Spanish speakers. It was not found, however, that students who had studied Spanish generalized their positive attitudes toward Spanish speaking persons to other foreign speaking peoples.

The authors regard their findings as evidence to support the hypothesis that teaching a foreign language to elementary school children in its cultural setting is a potent force in creating a more positive attitude toward the peoples represented by that language.20

The Scherer-Wertheimer experiment21 did not focus directly on the problem of attitude and language learning, but as one result of the experiment it was found that audio-lingual students tended to have a significantly more favorable attitude toward the Germans than did the students trained by the traditional method.

In addition to these experimental studies, two questionnaire-type studies have significance for the language teacher. One is the study by Howard Lee Nostrand, "Experiment in Determining Cultural Content: Pretesting the Questionnaire, 'How the Americans See the French',"22 in which the questions were directed to Americans who had either lived or were living in France. With this background of experience they were able to
provide information about areas of congeniality and conflict between Americans and Frenchmen.

The ultimate aim of the questionnaire was to select the aspects of a foreign people's way of life that most need to be explained to given groups of learners--particularly learners of the people's language--in order that they may communicate successfully with the foreign people and understand the foreign culture and social system.

A great deal of valuable information was gained relative to concepts of "culture shock" (feelings of hostility and frustration engendered by cultural differences) and "cognitive dissonance" (the theory of dissonance assumes that a person is comfortable when he feels congruence among his beliefs about the world around him).

The second questionnaire was formulated by Daniel Lerner of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This well-conceived study utilized prolonged interviews with 1500 Frenchmen from all social levels to analyze the French character as revealed in their responses to a highly structured questionnaire. Some very interesting generalizations have been made by Lerner as a result of this analysis.

Both studies provide information which can be
valuable to language teachers in developing methods of teaching cultural insights.

CONCLUSION

The basic premise undergirding this paper is the belief that the foreign language teacher has a responsibility to teach cultural understanding as well as language skills. To gain these insights, a student must become familiar with the patterning that gives to French culture its distinctive life-way. In addition, the themes and value systems whose interactions shape the French national character must be familiar to the student. This information should be included systematically in the classroom materials and made an integral part of the foreign language curriculum.

The writer adheres to the theory that increased knowledge about a people makes for more favorable attitudes toward that people, a theory crystallized in the following parable:

See that man over there?
Yes.
Well, I hate him.
But you don't know him.
That's why I hate him. 24

This paper will attempt to show how one medium--French folk literature--can be used to teach cultural patterns, themes, and value systems, and thereby contribute to the deepening of inter-cultural understanding.
NOTES


4. Ibid., p. 91.


11. Ibid., p. 368.


22. Howard Lee Nostrand, "Experiment in Determining Cultural Content: Pretesting the Questionnaire, 'How Americans See the French',"


CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH CHARACTER

Trying to find a safe path through quicksand is perilous. The French have a term for those shifting sands—les sables mouvants—an expression which could well describe the hazards in store for the student attempting to define the French national character.

The scene in France is changing swiftly. The eddies and currents of twentieth century life nibble away at stereotypes, invalidate generalizations, and shift the patterns of daily life. By the time a "national personality" is delineated and committed to print, the social tides have already re-arranged history.

To add to the difficulties, the French themselves are prone to scoff at the results. They complain that they are drawn from out-dated materials, are based on "observations contestables," and are fraught with "curieuses lacunes."

One way to avoid French criticism would be to use only those observations made by the French themselves. But as Sapir points out, "Forms and significances which seem obvious to an outsider will be denied outright by
those who carry out the patterns." And Ernst Curtius expresses the same thought with specific reference to the French when he writes:

> It might seem a safe method to collect what the French have said about themselves, and then to prepare a description based on these observations. There are...two objections to this method. First, these statements will vary so greatly that it will be impossible to bring them into any kind of unity; secondly, the most illuminating characteristic of an individual or a group is precisely that element of which the individual or group is quite unconscious.

What, then, is the position of the classroom teacher of French who wishes to incorporate the cultural component into the curriculum? In order to give his students insights into the nature of the French people, the teacher himself must have a sound understanding of the French social structure and of the national psychology. He must be able to present those aspects of the French character which seem to have endured over a considerable span of time--those cultural themes and assumptions which recur in all strata of society and provide a skeletal frame upon which the French value system can be hung with some assurance of validity.

Any depiction of the French character will be incomplete; it may unwittingly contain contradictions and distortions; but it must be offered--as a beginning. The student needs some starting point in his own search
for an understanding of the French way of looking at the world. He may reject this totally or in part as his own insights develop. Hopefully, as he reads more extensively and travels in France, his understanding of the French will deepen and mature. But his formal language study should equip him with as valid an understanding of the French people as modern sociology, anthropology, and psychology can provide.

As Jesse R. Pitts says in In Search of France:

The analysis of a total society is a dangerous endeavor: our theoretical tools are limited, our knowledge of the relevant data is poor, and there is always a risk of calling something "French" that is found generally in European societies. But the intellectual attempt must be made, for it is only through such attempts that our theories and our identification of the strategic facts will improve.6

There are many organizational schemes from which to choose when one analyzes a culture. One of the best known is that presented by Dr. Edward T. Hall in The Silent Language. Hall has designated ten separate kinds of human activity which he labels "Primary Message Systems":

1. Interaction
2. Association
3. Subsistence
4. Bisexuality
5. Territoriality
6. Temporality
7. Learning
8. Play
9. Defense
10. Exploitation (use of materials)
"Since each is emmeshed in the others," Hall contends, "one can start the study of culture with any one of the ten and eventually come out with a complete picture."

Dr. Nelson Brooks (Annals, March, 1968, p. 213) has drawn up a different list of "Matters that appear central and critical in the analysis of a culture." His profile of a culture includes:

1. Symbolism (language, literature, art, myths, politics, religion)
2. Value (personal preference and rejection, conscience, morality, and philosophy)
3. Authority (whose word is accepted and acted upon)
4. Order (arrangement of thoughts and things)
5. Ceremony (dress, ritual, congregations on special occasions)
6. Love (of family, of friends, of a supreme being)
7. Honor (standards of personal conduct)
8. Humor (what is found to be humorous, by whom)
9. Beauty (description of what is an indication of the esthetic sense)
10. Spirit (man's contemplation of reality and non-reality; his quest of what it is that he is)

Other scholars, concentrating specifically on the French culture, have arrived at different organizational approaches.

Howard Lee Nostrand, equating "themes" with "values," sets forth twelve values as representative of the French culture. These are:

1. L'individualisme
2. L'intellectualité
3. L'art de vivre
4. Le réalisme
5. L'amour
6. La famille
7. Le bon sens
8. L'amitié
9. La religion
10. La justice
11. La liberté
12. La patrie

Nostrand also presents the underlying assumptions which appear most characteristic of French culture. 

1. Human Nature: (a) The ego as a discrete entity (b) Humanity as an acquired characteristic (c) Reality versus appearance.

2. Social Relations: (a) Primacy of the individual over the group (b) A vertically structured society (c) Cautious attitude toward the outsider.

3. Man and Nature: Adaptation of man to nature in order to utilize it.

4. Conception of Time: (a) The present viewed in a long perspective (b) History as a storehouse of models.

5. Conceptual Organization of Space: (a) France as a focal point (b) Radial organization of space (c) Current enlargement of the international context.

Laurency Wylie, in an article entitled "Social Change at the Grass Roots" (In Search of France, 1963), manages to encompass the whole of French society under the three divisions of "Reality," "Man" and "Time." In the same book, Jesse Pitts ("Continuity and Change in Bourgeois France") uses "Aristocracy," "Prowess" and "Peer Groups" as his organizational points, and sets up a basic tension between the "aesthetic-individualistic" and the "doctrinaire-hierarchical" traits of the French
Margaret Mead and Rhoda Métraux (Themes in French Culture, 1954) build their entire analysis around the unifying core of le foyer.

Thus in studying the various attempts to conceptualize a culture, one encounters what Kroeber and Kluckhohn are pleased to call "...the splitters, the lumpers, and the plumpers for one special feature."\(^{10}\)

This writer will use a simplified organizational scheme which can be depicted visually for the classroom. It makes use of concentric circles to show the relationships among components.

The focal point in the design is the individual. The first circle surrounding the individual represents the family (le foyer). The next and larger circle symbolizes les autres—that part of society which lies outside the intimate confines of the family group. This ring is depicted with a broken line to show that the circumference of the circle may dilate or contract. It may expand to include the entire European community, or it may be as small as the immediate neighborhood in which the family lives. The largest circle in the diagram represents the concept of la patrie. This usually forms the periphery of the Frenchman's immediate world, but it may be encircled by the ring representing les autres.
Organization of French Society: Patterns for Living

It is clear immediately that this organizational scheme is ego-centered. It represents the way most adolescents tend to relate themselves to their world and should be readily grasped by students in the secondary school.
L'Individu

One of the traits most frequently mentioned in discussions of the French personality is that of "individualism."

To the Frenchman this does not mean non-conformism so much as it means a kind of inner direction. Americans, who think of themselves as great individualists, are often surprised to learn that the French accuse them of a manque d'individualisme (lack of individualism). Daniel Lerner, who conducted extensive interviews with the French under the auspices of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, explains it this way:

For contemporary Americans, individualism implies non-conformism; expressing one's self is doing something just a little differently from the other fellow. For Frenchmen, individualism lives quite comfortably with a massive conformism. Their underlying principle is much older: not to do some things a little differently (on the contrary, most Frenchmen do most ordinary things of life in quite the same way) but rather not to do very many things at all. In the eyes of the Frenchman, the American loses individuality by identifying himself too readily with other persons, by associating himself too intensely with public causes, and by joining too many organizations.

Because of this long tradition of inner direction, the French have a feeling of self-sufficiency. They do not like to be tied down to organization, even though they admire the principles of order which underlie that
organization. They put more faith in their own intelligence than in the experience of others. As a result, they tend to cooperate only in emergency.

The French are ambivalent toward this "individualism," which they see as a somewhat mixed blessing. Gabriel Le Bras, discussing the psychology of France in 1952, wrote:

L'opinion étrangère nous considère souvent comme un peuple en voie de décomposition, par manque de solidarité, d'obéissance et de continuité. Beaucoup de Français confirment cette opinion sévère; on peut même dire qu'il n'est pas lieu commun plus répandu.
Leur solidarité, il est vrai, se manifeste surtout contre l'État, c'est-à-dire dans la négation de leur communauté... On se méprendrait toute-fois en tenant les Français pour désagrégés; ils sentent leur communauté d'aventures, ils se ressoudent dans les grandes épreuves, ils sont complices dans le laisser-aller et le resquillage, comme dans l'héroïsme... Ils réclament l'autorité, mais ils refusent l'obéissance.12

(Foreign opinion often looks upon us as a people in a state of deterioration, due to a lack of solidarity, obedience, and continuity. Many Frenchmen confirm this severe opinion--one might even say that there is no more widely held belief.
Their solidarity, it is true, manifests itself especially against the State--that is, in the denial of their community. Nevertheless, one would be mistaken to look upon the French as disunited. They experience a certain community of adventure; they join together in great crises; they are accomplices in negligence and gate-crashing as well as in heroism... They call for authority, but they refuse to obey.)

The philosopher Alain urges his countrymen to "obey but resist" (obéissez mais résistez).13 And Jean Cocteau,
in his "Lettre aux Américains," states with pride:
"La grande tradition française est une tradition
d' anarchie."

André Siegfried, speaking on "Aspects of the
French Character," credits the Celtic heritage of the
French with adding this strand to the national personal-
ality.

Mais la fée qui nous a donné les qualités
du Celte nous a, telle Carabosse, donné en
mêmes temps de grands défauts. Le Celte est
un anarchiste né, le Celte est un individu
qui ne sait pas s'associer avec un autre indi-
vidu; il est jaloux des autres individus, il ne
peut pas faire partie d'une communauté, il est
individu jusqu'à la pathologie, et vous ne
pouvez véritablement rien en tirer. Cet indi-
vidualisme anarchique caractérise la France.

(But the hunchbacked fairy who gave us the
qualities of the Celt also gave us some weak-
nesses. The Celt is a born anarchist, an
individual who doesn't know how to join with
another individual. He is jealous of others,
his unable to become part of a group; he is
almost pathologically individual, and you
can't do anything about it. This anarchic
individualism characterizes France.)

Siegfried refers repeatedly to individualism as
both a strength and a weakness. He sees the desire for
individuality reflected in the Frenchman's need to be
self-sufficient economically as well as intellectually:
"To acquire a little property, a little house, a little
business, a little income of investments is the dream of
millions of French people, a dream that is narrow and
devoid of romance. It is the counsel of wisdom if you
will, but the results border on mediocrity." 16

The French creed of individualism acts as a negative force against the development of a community-minded citizenry. This attitude toward the responsibilities of the wealthy is characteristic:

In France riches are not regarded as public property as they are in England but are, on the contrary, entirely a private matter. A Frenchman does not place his money at the disposal of the community ... At the back of his mind is always the thought that his savings are not for the benefit of others but for himself, or at any rate his heirs. The French do not give generously to charity. One does not hear of a magnificent donation to universities or social institutions, as in England or America. The use of wealth with us is less considered as a social duty, according to the feudal tradition, than under the aspect of the right which we have to keep it and defend it, according to the bourgeois ethics. This idea, hard and clear as one may glean it from the writing of Balzac, gives the nation a foundation of astonishing solidity. 17

One result of the accent on individualism is the difficulty many Frenchmen have in putting themselves in the position of others. On the national level, this has had serious consequences in the results of governmental planning. Pierre Massé in an article in the magazine Prospective points out that successful national planning calls for projecting results into the future—anticipating the reactions of others and predicting their subsequent moves. But " ... the great stress the French place on individuation prevents the planner from
identifying successfully with people in groups and classes and associations different from his own; so he cannot predict accurately how his plan will work." Intense individualism thus restricts the ability of government functionaries to empathize with such groups as les paysans and makes for attitudes and decisions which create tension.

An interesting dimension of the French brand of individualism is brought out by Jesse Pitts in his discussion of "Continuity and Change in Bourgeois France." In a section dealing with peer groups in the French school, Pitts points out that the school experience reinforces the prevailing attitude toward authority. Students accept the legitimacy of the academic demands made by the teacher--the peer group does not develop an anti-intellectual culture. But the administrative role of the teacher is "fair game," and some teachers have a sort of perpetual revolution on their hands. The peer group operates as an organization to harass the administration, to provide occasions for cheating or for entertainment in the class, but above all, to protect the interests of the individual member.

Since the basis of the peer group is supremacy of individual interests, one cannot expect from members the type of loyalty that the American and especially the British or the German peer group can ask as its due ... The peer
group understands that the member cannot prejudice his interest position for the sake of the group, since the raison d'être of the group is to protect his interest position. There is a general expectation that members will not caïfarder (play stoolie) on one another; but if the school administration starts putting pressure on an innocent ... the innocent is unlikely to take punishment for someone else very long.19

Many students of the French scene see this essential individualism as a real deterrent to social change. In his book La France change de visage (1956), André Maurois made a forthright plea to the French people to put the welfare of their country ahead of personal gain. He bemoaned the lack of team spirit (le sens de l'équipe) in these words:

La vertu essentielle de l'équipe, c'est l'abnégation de l'individu lorsque le succès de l'équipe est à ce prix ... Avoir le sens de l'équipe, c'est jouer pour elle et non pour soi. Dans la vie politique et administrative, cette vertu est capitale.20

(The essential virtue of the team is the abnegation of the individual when the success of the team is at stake. To have team spirit is to play for the team and not for oneself. This virtue is of prime importance in political and administrative life.)

And in a terse forerunner of John F. Kennedy's famous "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," Maurois exhorted the French citizen to think: "Non pas moi, mais le pays."
There are many signs that the spirit of cooperation is becoming much stronger in France. Farmers, for example, are pooling their funds to buy a tractor and are sharing it among the group. Wylie, in his recent sociological study of two French villages, cites several examples of cooperation among the citizens of Chanzeaux in the département of Maine-et-Loire: families have organized the Association de l'Aide Familiale to finance a trained social worker in the community; a local unit of the Crédit Agricole is flourishing; a group fire insurance plan and a prepaid surgical plan affiliated with a regional system are also doing well. 21

For the sake of social progress this trend is a healthy one for France. But the feeling persists that the French will never relinquish completely their cherished individualism. Friedrich Sieburg, in Gott In Frankreich? (Dieu est-il Français?) may have been speaking lightly when he wrote the following passage, but it captures perhaps inadvertently the feeling of admiration tinged with envy which the world shares for French individualism.

Dieu, qui forme les masses en armées
da travers les rues des grandes villes, ne
e peut pas compter sur le Français parce qu'il
sort du rang, où et quand il lui plait. Sans
doute, le vacarme, le fracas cadencé du travail
sont-ils dans les rues de Paris aussi forts qu'
ailleurs, mais le Parisien ne se laisse pas
troubler par cette cadence. Nous ne savons
s'il ne s'en ira pas en courant, pour bavarder avec sa femme, boire un bock, ou faire une révolution.\textsuperscript{22}

(God, who forms the masses into armies on the streets of cities, cannot count on the Frenchman because he drops out of rank when and where he pleases. The rhythm of daily work is probably as strong on the streets of Paris as elsewhere, but the Parisian doesn't let it bother him. We never know when he'll drop his tools and run off to gossip with his wife, drink a beer, or start a revolution.)

Intellectualism

Intellectual self-sufficiency plays a key role in French individualism. It follows logically that if one is to be his own master, one must possess the intelligence and wit to maintain his niche in the social order. Camille Bauer contends that the French have made a cult of intelligence, assigning it to the first rank in the hierarchy of valued traits.\textsuperscript{23} Other spokesmen for France agree. "La faculté dominante de l'âme française est l'intelligence," writes Paul Gaultier.\textsuperscript{24} André Reboullet, discussing the U.N.E.S.C.O. survey of 1948, concludes, "L'intelligence semble, à tort ou à raison, notre caractéristique majeure.«\textsuperscript{25} And André Siegfried states: "A la base de l'individualité française il y a une revendication d'indépendance. D'abord indépendance intellectuelle."\textsuperscript{26}

The French conception of intelligence, Siegfried maintains, is based on "...un esprit critique, un esprit
anticonformiste, un esprit antitotalitaire." A Frenchman never docilely accepts established authority, be it that of the State, of a priest, or of a professor.

Un Français n'est jamais de l'avis de celui qui parle ... En ce qui me concerne, je suis épouvanté lorsque dans une réunion quelqu'un me dit: "Excusez-moi, cher ami, je ne suis pas tout à fait de votre avis." Je sais bien qu'il n'est pas tout de mon avis et que personne n'est jamais de mon avis, en sorte que chaque Français a un avis différent. Il y a en France une vingtaine de partis, mais en réalité il y en a bien davantage; autant de Français, autant de partis, parce que chaque Français veut juger par lui-même.27

(A Frenchman never agrees with anybody. As a speaker I am dismayed when someone says, "Pardon me, I don't agree with you." I know he doesn't agree with me and that nobody ever agrees with me, so that every Frenchman has a different opinion. There are around twenty parties in France, but really there are many more: there are as many parties as there are Frenchmen because each Frenchman wants to judge for himself.)

Perhaps no other aspect of the French personality is so universally admired as the French intellectual prowess. It gives substance to gaiety, adds depth to charm. But to the outsider, the French intellect is also disconcerting. The Englishman, Harold Nicolson, describes it this way:

Above all the secondary aspects of national temperament rises the essential quality of French genius—as a glacier, arrogant, lucid, and cold. The French mind is ... architectural in character; it is deliberate, cautious, balanced and terribly intent upon the proportions, the stability and the meaning of the business in hand.28
And André Reboullet, summing up the impression
foreigners have of the French intellect, admits that
they find it "capricieuse, parfois coupeuse de cheveux
en quatre, parfois épris de paradoxe, toujours décon-
certante."²⁹ ("...capricious, hair-splitting, given to
paradoxes, always upsetting.")

Rationality

Basic to the French concept of intelligence is the
framework of rationality. Siegfried declares ("Aspects

Il faut être raisonnable: cette notion de
la raison fondée sur l'expérience est absolu-
ment essentielle chez le Français; un Anglais
le faisait remarquer, en entendant une mère
française dire à son enfant âgé de deux ans
"sois raisonnable," alors qu'une mère anglaise
aurait dit, "Be a good boy." Cet Anglais était
plein d'admiration et disait: voilà toute la
France."²⁹

(One must be reasonable; this notion of reason
founded on experience is absolutely essential
to the French. An Englishman overheard a
French mother say to her two year old child,
"Be reasonable," when an English mother would
have said, "Be a good boy." The Englishman
was filled with admiration and said, "That
sums up everything that is France.")

That which is reasonable is logical. The French
intellectual approach makes operative the national heri-
tage from Descartes and Voltaire. In fact, the "mythe
du cartésianisme" has been a powerful force in French
society since the end of the 18th century. The
intuitive philosophy of Bergson and that of Pascal ("Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point") stand out in bold relief against the consistent backdrop of French rationality.

Laurence Wylie, discussing the "rational framework for existence" in use by the French, says:

French children ... are taught that history is the rational unfolding of the personality of France as a nation. It is expected that the individual child will grow up in the same rational manner, step by step, developing a distinct personality but at the same time fitting neatly into the rational scheme of society. ... The value, then, for which man should strive in society is the rational organization of that society. Good government, like the balanced individual, the strong family, the attractive garden, is one which is rationally organized.30

Wylie sees the emphasis put on deductive reasoning by the French school system as a force for conservatism. The child is first taught the principles and then shown how to apply them. Thus he learns from the previous experience of adults instead of from his own exploratory efforts. Certainly a great deal of learning in all cultures makes use of previously acquired knowledge, but the French actually stress the impossibility of learning from personal experimentation. Instead the child is presented with an organized body of knowledge, cut into manageable bits and pieces. His learning task is to fit them all together into an established scheme which makes
up the "truth" of the discipline. It is this method which Wylie sees as having an inhibitive effect on social change.31

Equilibre and mesure

The French intellect responds to the qualities of balance, restraint, and order. Their influence permeates all aspects of French life. Traditionally, to French eyes, they were even reflected in the geography of the land. In this respect the attitude of 19th and early 20th century writers was almost rhapsodic: "La ciel, le sol, les eaux, la faune, la flore, tout y concourt, s'harmonise et s'adapte." gushed Gaultier (L'Ame française, p. 12). (The sky, the soil, the waters, the fauna, the flora, everything unites, harmonizes, and adapts.)

According to this view of France, nature was here so "raisonnable" that even the landscapes were discreet: mountains were not too high, plains not too broad, rivers not too wide; everything cooperated to avoid the "brusque rupture of line" that would shatter the sense of total harmony.

French school children are still taught that France is best visualized in the form of a hexagon, divided into two equal parts by the meridian of Paris. But a
more modern French sociologist, François Goguel, would deny that the idea of mesure--of "harmony within the hexagon"--is still a valid concept. He sees a growing conflict between the dynamic industrial regions of the northeast and the static, less populated regions of the rural southwest.32

"Mesure," writes Jesse Pitts, "is reason applied to human action." (p. 244) A favorite realm of French action relates to the enjoyment of food and drink. The principles of order and balance are reflected in the repas bien composé and in the almost ritualistic observance of the order of courses, the hours for dining, the correct service of wine. Sieburg, perhaps longing for French cuisine after a lifetime of Wiener Schnitzel, devotes a long paragraph to la mesure as it is found at the French table. He also develops his private theory as to why the French have fewer drinking songs than the Germans. "To sing," he theorizes, "is the first stage of losing consciousness, and the French, on the contrary, ask wine for rapidity of conversation" (p. 166). Sieburg would be gratified with the mesure called for in the words of a French drinking song popular in the early 1960's:
Boire un petit coup c'est agréable,
Boire un petit coup c'est doux.
Mais il ne faut pas rouler dessous la table,
Boire un petit coup c'est agréable,
Boire un petit coup c'est doux.

(To take a little drink is pleasant ...
But it's not necessary to roll under the table ...)
the message.

André Reboullet characterizes French intelligence as "... un pouvoir de clarification, de simplification, plus que d'approfondissement" (a power of clarification, of simplification, more than of depth). He cites the old opposition between the philosophic intelligence of the Germans and the critical intelligence of the French—between Kant, the profound genius, and Voltaire—"ce touche-à-tout de génie."

A somewhat similar view on clarity is expressed by Le Bras in his article "Psychologie de la France" (p. 70): "Son goût de la clarté précède à la fois d'une certaine paresse, qui le détourne des approfondissements, des complications ... d'un souci de n'être pas dupé." (His taste for clarity precedes both from a certain laziness which turns him away from thorough investigation and from complications, and also from a desire not to be taken in.)

An earlier, almost chauvinistic attitude toward the principle of clarity, especially as it relates to the French language, is mirrored in this excerpt from André Siegfried's lecture to the students of a girls' school:

...notre langue est un instrument de précision, et j'estime qu'elle est capable d'exprimer tout ce qui doit être exprimé. Nous avons confiance dans notre langue, presque
trop de confiance puisque nous avons peur
du néologisme, nous avons peur des mots
nouveaux, nous sommes tellement attachés
à nos traditions que nous croyons que la
langue française peut tout expliquer et
nous avons peine à la faire évoluer.35

(Our language is an instrument of precision
and is capable of expressing everything that
ought to be expressed. We have almost too
much confidence in our language, since we are
afraid of new expressions and new words; we
are so attached to our traditions that we
believe the French language can explain every-
thing and we are reluctant to let it change
and develop.)

The recent French dismay engendered by the ten-
dency to incorporate English and American words into
their language--producing a sort of "Franglais"--is
based upon the same attitude expressed by Siegfried:
the French language is self-sufficient in its clarity
and precision; there is no need to contaminate it with
outside influences. In 1960, Hervé Lauwrick, writing in
Figaro, pictures these threatening new words as " ... 
grimpant à l'assaut du français comme les crabes d'une
plage" (crawling to the assault of French like crabs
from a beach).36 And the Sorbonne's Professor Étiemble,
writing in l'Express, contends that the French language
is like a great house gnawed by termites--with " ... 
thousands of English words and expressions making their
holes."37

Siegfried concludes his oral essay on clarity with
a somewhat ominous assertion (p. 139):
Cette clarté, nous la trouvons parfaitement exprimée dans notre langue et ceci nous explique pourquoi le Français l'aime tant. Il a pour elle une sorte d'amour comme celui qu'on éprouvait pour un bel instrument qu'il faut entretenir, polir, aiguiser. Le Français ne pardonne pas les erreurs de langue.

(We find this clarity perfectly expressed in our language and that explains why the Frenchman loves it so. He has the sort of love for it that one feels for a beautiful instrument that he must care for, polish, and sharpen. The Frenchman does not pardon mistakes in language.)

An interesting sideline to the consideration of clarté is discussed by Métraux and Mead (Themes in French Culture, pp. 111-112), who used the Rorschach inkblot test in their study of the French personality. They maintain that their French informants manifested "... an intense wish to see everything clearly and distinctly." They "... commented repeatedly on the relative vagueness or clearness of their perceptual images of the blots, such as "imprécis" (not precise), "très vague" (very vague), "plus net" (clearer), "voilà quelque chose de définitif" (now there's something definite), "raisonnable" (reasonable), and so on. On the Thematic Apperception Test some informants introduced a light into their interpretation. The experimenters concluded that "... this emphasis on trying to see clearly and distinctly ... may be reflected ... in the intellectual emphasis on clear and distinct ideas and
lucidity of expression both in formal education and in child rearing in the home."

Similarly, a psychological analysis of the paintings of French children reveals "... a relative absence of linear perspective, of objects diminishing in size with distance, or of atmospheric effects. The most remote objects are in this way brought close and seen clearly and distinctly." 38

Thus through the analysis of two media--inkblots and paintings--Métraux and Mead conclude that the French do sub-consciously attempt to reduce vagueness and increase clarity of perception in order to gain clearness of understanding.

Closely allied to the French love of clarté is the need felt by most Frenchmen for carefully prescribed boundaries. This is reflected in the walls surrounding French property, in the hedgerows delineating French fields, in the rules of classical literature, in the ordered rituals of daily living, and in the formules de politesse. On a less obvious basis it is seen in the French response to questions directed to them by sociologists and anthropological field workers. Daniel Lerner discusses at length the difficulty his team of researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology experienced in framing questions for French inter-
I was baffled by the recurrent request from respondents to state precisely various questions that seemed to me already precise ... What makes questions precise for Frenchmen is their capacity to frame the object of reference in a specific context (bien délimité, dans un cadre qui lui est propre) ... He wants external boundaries sharply defined (circonscrire l'objet).39

Lerner points out that the French revulsion against relationships without clearly perceived boundaries is mirrored in the large number of pejorative expressions which attest to this "horror of inadequate distantiation." He cites such sayings as "dans le jus," "dans le sirop," and "dans la soupe." One is also reminded of the "Je nage dans l'encre" (I am swimming in ink) which means "I'm in the dark on this." Lerner contends that "... these images convey vividly the sense that fluidity (les idées flouées) is the enemy of clarity." He adds as further proof of the French distaste for fuzziness the expressions "dans le cirage" (in the wax), "dans le coton" and "dans la vaseline," where, as he says, "... the soft and shapeless mass without defined margins provides the antonym of clarity and precision."

Paul Gaultier echoes this conclusion when he writes, "Notre esprit, ainsi que notre langue, a horreur de tout ce qui est nuageux, confus, imprécis. Nous aimons passionnément la clarté" (l'Ame française, p. 38).
Gaultier reminds us that the great romanticist, Chateaubriand, considered by many today to be a master of dark and somber prose, wrote in his Mémoires d'outre tombe: "Le ténébreux, l'embroussaillé, le vaporeux, le pénible me sont abominables." (The shadowy, the entangled, the vaporous, the troublesome are abominable to me.)

It is interesting to speculate about the cluster of words built around the French word for "fog," brouillard (from the Old French broue). The verb brouiller not only means "to obscure" or "to fog over," but has taken on the added meaning of "to put in disorder," "to trouble," "to bring about discord between persons." As Laurence Wylie illustrates in Village en Vaucluse (pp. 124-125), the quarrel, la brouille, has become an informal institution in some parts of France. The verb se débrouiller has acquired the meaning of "to extricate oneself from difficulties." The famous "Système D" (système débrouillard) is the well-developed art of wangling, of side-stepping regulations. It would seem that the French distaste for something which obscures, such as fog, is illustrated well by the pejorative nature of this cluster vocabulary.

The need for boundaries, coupled with the emphasis on rationality, has an observable influence on French
imagination and fantasy. Gaultier insists that French imagination admits only that which is "filtered by reason" (p. 57). The difficulty experienced by Lerner in formulating his questionnaire has been mentioned. To smooth out the difficulties he used a French consultant who, as director of an important national research organization, had had long experience in survey work. Lerner recounts that at five different questions scattered throughout the interview schedule, the informant "... threw up his hands in utter contempt and despair, declaring, 'You will never get any Frenchman to answer questions like these.'" These were the questions:

1. If you were président du conseil (prime minister), what would be the main lines of your policy?

2. If you had to live in another country, which one would you choose?

3. If you had your life to live over again, what sort of life would you want?

4. Who are the most enviable people in the world?

5. What functions do you think you could fill in a communist France? 40

These questions appeared at scattered points in a battery of about 100 items, yet the consultant spontaneously reacted to each as "impossible." They all have in common the fact that the interviewee is asked to imagine himself in a situation other than his real
one (role-playing questions). To a people who are educated against a rational background, and who consider realism as one of their strongest traits, such a "game" is regarded as too frivolous to be worthy of des gens sérieux. Later, in the actual interviews, when these questions were posed, many informants reacted with such comments as, "De la blague!" (This is a joke!), "De la fantaisie pure" (Pure fancy) and considered them too silly to be answered.

Henri Mendras, reporting on the "Mentalité paysanne," reveals a similar reaction to a question directed to rural Frenchmen. When the following question was posed: "If you had six months to do nothing and as much money as you wanted, what would you do?" often the reply was, "I don't understand"; or "I can't do that...you can't sit around and not work ... six months would be a long time, and with that money I could put a new roof on the barn." Mendras concludes that those who responded in this fashion were incapable of dreaming, of imagining a situation so unprecedented. Invariably they led the conversation back to the dimensions of daily life--work, money, repairs.

In discussing this reaction, Lerner says (p. 191):

An instructive study could be made of the diverse ways in which people of different cultures respond to empathic questions of
this sort. Such questions are handled with
greater facility by people habituated to
ready ego-involvement with the new and
strange, who are closer than the French are
to other-directed personalities, and who,
having a less stable or less rigid con-
ception of themselves and their proper con-
duct in the world, show a more supple capacity
for re-arranging their self-system upon
short notice.

Humor

A discussion of the French intellect leads
directly to a consideration of the French sense of
humor. That the French themselves link humor ines-
capably to intelligence is underscored by Henri Berg-
son's assertion that "The comic demands something like
a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to
intelligence, pure and simple." 42

Most Frenchmen who write about their national
sense of the comic trace its beginnings back to the
Gauls. "L'esprit gaulois" is the tendency to treat deli-
cate matters in a witty, even ribald, way, with a mocking
scorn for authority, be it secular or ecclesiastical.

Gaultier (p. 70) characterizes the Gallic spirit
of French humor in this way:

Le Français aime trop la vie pour ne pas être
gai. Il est même optimiste, d'un optimisme
robuste et souriant, que, comme chez ses an-
cêtres les Gaulois, rien ne saurait ébranler
sinon la crainte que le ciel ne lui tombât sur
la tête... Le Français n'a ni la gravité du
Musulman, ni la morgue du Castilian, ni le
(The Frenchman loves life too much not to be gay. He is even an optimist, with a robust and smiling optimism which, as with his ancestors the Gauls, nothing could shake except the fear that the sky might fall on his head. The Frenchman has neither the gravity of the Moslem, the arrogance of the Castilian, the impassivity of the English, nor the coldness of the Scandinavian. He knows how to laugh at everything and, to begin with, at himself.)

The distinguishing characteristic of French humor is irreverence. There is the rollicking irreverence of Rabelais and Balzac, which in turn reflects the gay, often scatological irreverence of folklore's contes pour rire and faceties—where priests are duped and fools are ridiculed; where the high and mighty are shaken from their perch like ripe pears from the trees of Anjou. There is the irreverent needling of personality weakness, handled with such brilliance by Molière. There is the rapier-sharp irreverence of the Parisian chansonniers and of the satirical writers whose target is the modern scene. There is the gentler, good-humored irreverence of such men as Marcel Pagnol and Pierre Daninos; and the humor of Marcel Ayme, about which Norman Denny writes:

His laughter may shock and sometimes hurt, but it does not smear. When he laughs at the Church, as he often does, it is sophistry and formal morality he is laughing
at, not simple faith. He laughs as Rabelais laughed, at the same things, for the same reasons.43

Daninos has pointed out, in his study of humor in different countries of the world, that the Gallic irreverence toward persons in positions of authority distinguishes the French from the British:

Le duc d'York pourrait avoir les plus grands pieds du monde; ce n'en seraient pas moins les pieds d'un membre de la famille royale, et ces pieds-là ne déclenchent jamais le rire dans une salle de cinéma anglaise à l'instant des actualités. En France, c'est le contraire ... Plus la dignité est élevée, plus la moindre imperfection dans la tenue, le moindre ridicule dans le geste ou dans l'accent déclenchent le rire.44

(The Duke of York could have the biggest feet in the world; they would still be the feet of a member of the royal family, and these feet never cause laughter during the English newsreels. In France it's just the opposite. The greater the dignity, the greater the possibility that the least hint of the ridiculous in gesture or accent will cause laughter to break out.)

The laughter of the French, in its penchant for satire and criticism, never strays far from the touchstone of rationality. Konrad Lorenz has found that "Laughter, even in the form of the most outrageous and scornful ridicule, always remains obedient to reason."45 "Humor," he says, "is the best of lie-detectors."

As a people, the French seem to have developed to a remarkable degree this ability to use humor as a
searchlight, as a pricker of egos, as a toppler of unworthy idols. It has stood them in good stead from the medieval days of conflict between peasant and overlord, through the dark days of the Nazi occupation. It seems to be deeply ingrained, this *esprit gaulois*, and is likely to endure in spite of temporary obstacles.

*Time* magazine of April 12, 1968 (p. 36) carried an article concerning the policy of President Charles De Gaulle toward those Frenchmen who criticize him too bitterly. In 1881 the National Assembly passed a law which provided for punishment of citizens who insult the President of France "... by speeches, cries, threats, posters, or notices exhibited to the public." In the first 77 years since its passage, it was invoked only nine times; but since 1959, President De Gaulle has used it 350 times as a weapon against his critics.

As *Time* reports:

Aimed at ever more ridiculous targets, the ... law was recently invoked to arrest a diner at a provincial bistro for drawing a caricature of De Gaulle on a tablecloth, an amateur ceramist for portraying him on an ashtray, a drunk for criticizing him in a bar, and an unsuspecting man in the street for shouting "Hou! Hou!" (Boo! Boo!) at a passing presidential motorcade.

Students of the contemporary scene would be likely to question the long-range effectiveness of any attempt to stifle the irrepressible Gallic wit; the philosophy
of Rabelais is too deeply ingrained:

Mieux est de ris que de larmes escripre,
Pour ce que rire est le propre de l'homme.

French intellectualism, including the stress on rationality, balance, restraint, and clarity, is the key force in French individualism, yet it does not shoulder aside humanity. As Siegfried sums it up:

Le Français, lui, est un réaliste; c'est un sceptique, mais il est humain. Il met son intelligence au service de son idéal.

**La Famille**

Traditionally, the French family has been the most influential force in shaping French character and personality, for it is in the family circle, le foyer, that the French child is molded into the type of adult his parents wish him to become. The responsibility of "molding" and "shaping" is taken more seriously by the French than by many other cultures. Jesse Pitts phrases it starkly: "For the French, all children are barbarians who must be tamed and molded ruthlessly to adult standards." (p. 245) Wylie, with more restraint, says: "Individuals must be fashioned by human intelligence into reasonable beings capable of living in society " ("Social Change at the Grass Roots," p. 203). He elaborates this position by explaining that children are not considered
by the French to be naturally good. Consequently, it is the obligation of the parents to train them to be "civilized."

Métraux and Mead, who use the *foyer* as an organizational focus for their study of French societal themes, put it this way:

French childhood is a long apprenticeship in becoming a person. Through training, the child gradually is transformed from a small being into an individual, an adult with an awakened spirit, a developed imagination, and a critical intelligence, who knows the behavior appropriate to a man and a woman, and who has acquired the skills and control necessary for well-being... The incessant devoirs (lessons, duties) and disciplines associated with childhood are valued as they have helped one to become a person, to avoid—or at least minimize—malheur and to achieve bonheur.47

The details of family life vary according to whether it is rural or urban and according to which social class it belongs. Wylie and Bégué's *Village en Vaucluse*, which presents family life in a small French village, has become a contemporary classic. Henri Mendras also gives a good picture of the rural family and its process of education within *le foyer*:

Quand l'enfant commence à marcher, le rôle de l'éducation des parents semble se limiter à des interdictions: "Ne touche pas aux ciseaux, Ne te penche pas par la fenêtre Ne sors pas sur la route," etc. Par contre on ne voit jamais les parents proposer aux
(When the child begins to walk, the parents' role in his education seems to be limited to prohibitions: Don't touch the scissors. Don't lean out the window. Don't get out on the highway, etc. By contrast, one never sees parents proposing a positive activity to their children. For them, as for their ancestors, liberty consists of doing that which is not forbidden.)

Jesse Pitts draws an interesting picture of the bourgeois family, which he divides into the "nuclear family" (parents, children) and the "extended family" in which it is embedded. The extended family includes the grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and others from both lines of kinship. Within the nuclear family, the father remains the source of authority. The child is allowed little initiative and is expected to conform to the proper forms of behavior. But within the extended family, relatives with prestige equal to or exceeding that of the father may offer preferential treatment to the child. (A grandmother seeking a new protégé, an uncle wanting an admirer, and so on.) By responding to this invitation for special favor, and by knowing how to please (savoir plaire), the child may find not only pleasure for the moment, but the hope of increased prestige and property in the future. Thus the French bourgeois family teaches the child certain basic atti-
tudes toward authority:

He learns to accept an aloof father as the primary source of authority; he expects protector-protégé relationships; he knows the importance of savoir plaire; he recognizes the fact that in order to protect his individuality he must resort to secrecy and political manipulation (Pitts, p. 254).

In all societies, the goal of child-training is the creation of a capable adult, but the French seem to place unusual stress on the essential quality of adulthood.

Babies and children are given a generous measure of love and affection in the French home, but traditionally, French society is adult-oriented. Anyone who has tried to buy a "typically French" toy in a French toy store knows that with rare exceptions the counters are laden with imports. The French seem to rely on the English, the Germans, the Americans, and the Japanese to manufacture playthings.

French literature for children is also lacking in scope and variety. Certainly there is nothing in France to compare with the glossy and intriguing books for children which spill over the counters of every American drugstore and supermarket. The fables of La Fontaine, heavy with their burden of adult wisdom, are still favorites of French educators.

Ernst Curtius contends that the French language
has no special word for youth, resorting to the term 
jeune homme. Neither is there a word which quite cor-
responds to the English girl or the German Mädchen, 
although the French insistence on jeune fille instead 
of fille is declining. He notes too that the French 
child "... sees in himself the man of the future ... 
He calls his comrade mon vieux." 49

Substantiating these remarks are the words of 
Jean Cocteau:

La France méprise la jeunesse sauf quand 
elle s'immole pour sauvegarder la vieillesse. 
Mourir est un acte de vieux. Aussi chez nous 
la mort seule donne du poids aux jeunes. Un 
jeune qui rentre de la guerre a vite perdu 
son prestige. Il redevient suspect. 50

(France scorns youth except when it sacrifices 
itsel for old age. To die is an act of old 
age. Thus with us death alone gives stature 
to the young. A youth who returns from war 
has quickly lost his prestige. He becomes 
once again suspect.)

To Curtius, the values which French civilization 
prefers are all values of age: completeness, taste, 
the quality of a connoisseur, and realism. The French 
family provides the milieu where these qualities are 
absorbed and made a part of the individual's life style.

Prudence and moderation, la mesure and le bon sens, 
are all included in the modus vivendi of the French 
family. Another part of the art of living deals with 
the acquisition of "good taste," which Pitts defines as
"... doing particularly well what must be done anyway." (p. 245) Learning how to please is essential to the French child. A phrase heard repeatedly is the request to do something "... pour me faire plaisir." Brutal frankness does not fit into the French pattern. Satire and irony, however, are condoned; and there exists an elaborate array of *formules de politesse* which permit one to gracefully handle an unpleasant social situation without resorting to a crude display of bad manners. ("Il ne faut pas toujours dire ce qu'on pense; il faut toujours penser ce qu'on dit.")

The appreciation of perfection—whether it be exemplified by an artistic masterpiece, a witty discourse, or a steaming bouillabaisse—is a desired goal for the educated Frenchman. It is in the family circle where foundations are laid for this aesthetic dimension of maturity.

Also provided through interactions within *le foyer* are the initial concepts of justice. *La justice* looms large in the French view of life. It is considered a cherished legacy from the days when Rome ruled Gaul. The Napoleonic Code is the formal crystallization of what exists informally in the patterns of everyday life. When injustice threatens, the French rise against it. French history is full of the Voltaires and the Zolas who
championed the cause of justice. In the give and take of everyday living, the accusation "C'est injuste" is one of the most devastating criticisms that can be launched against authority on any level. \(^5\) Paul Gaultier has said that the French conscience is saturated with the judicial spirit: "La justice est ce à quoi le Français tient le plus, ce pour quoi il est prêt à sacrifier sa vie" (p. 49).

Thus within the close embrace of the family circle, the French child learns the art of living, a certain respect for authority, and a sense of justice. This has been the traditional role of the family. And as with all traditions, in France or elsewhere, modern society is bringing change.

Women are becoming increasingly independent. There is a heightened feeling of equality among family members as the authoritarian role of the father diminishes, and as one out of every two women finds a job outside the home. \(^53\) Even the time-honored rite of the noon meal which used to create a feeling of togetherness is losing its hold in urban situations where transportation difficulties make it easier to eat at the office or factory than to come home.

Camille Bauer, describing the disruptive forces of modern society, declares:
Il en résulte que dans la famille moderne, l'enfant est roi. En présence d'un père féminisé et d'une mère virilisée, il ne sait plus à qui obéir.54

And Pierre Mantel, speaking of the comprehensive education in le foyer, writes:

Il est vrai que cette forte éducation ... si elle n'a pas toujours fait le bonheur des Français, en a fait la force et la relative excellence. Mais ... ne savez-vous pas qu'elle est en pleine décadence?55

(It is true that although it has not always brought happiness to the French, this strict education has made for strength and relative excellence. But ... don't you know that it is rapidly declining?)

Les Autres

Environné d'ennemis comme l'Anglais d'eau, le Français demeure sur ses gardes. Il est méfiant. Puis-je même dire qu'il naît méfiant, grandit méfiant, se marie méfiant, et meurt ... méfiant... (Pierre Daninos, Les Carnets du Major Thompson.)

(Surrounded by enemies as England by water, the Frenchman keeps his guard up. He is suspicious. I may even say that he is born suspicious, grows up suspicious, marries suspicious, and dies suspicious.)

In the ring of concentric circles which represents our concept of French society, the one which marks the outer limit of la famille could well be made of bricks and mortar. This is the boundary which separates the Frenchman and his family from the rest of the world—from les autres. An understanding of this invisible
barrier and the psychology which lies behind it is one of the most valuable insights an American student could gain from his language study.

That foreign students in general do not understand the French position regarding the sanctity of the foyer and the vaguely threatening atmosphere without is made clear by the results of opinion polls. One recent inquiry by the Institut français d'opinion publique reveals that what is most displeasing to foreign students during their stay in France is "l'indifférence envers l'étranger, le manque de cordialité, l'egoïsme familial, un sens déficient de l'hospitalité, voire la xénophobie ou le racisme."56 (Indifference toward foreigners, lack of cordiality, the egoism of families, a deficient sense of hospitality, even xenophobia or racism.)

Underlying the concept of méfiance is the basic premise upon which the French system of education is predicated—that the individual is not innately good but must be carefully trained to fit into society. If the individual is not by nature good, he is probably bad, and if the family and school fail to remold him, then the world is filled with selfish, hostile people. The only defense is to withdraw to a secure position (le foyer--or even within one's own self) and to be forever on the alert against the nefarious intentions of others.
Laurence Wylie explains it this way:

In a sense mankind is great because from chaos it has fashioned society and even art, but ... since all individuals are on the whole malicious and since society never tames the deeper self, every individual is actually motivated by hidden forces which are probably hostile. ("Social Change," p. 203)

André Siegfried compares the attitude of the French with that of the Americans:

Le Français n'est pas disciple de Jean Jacques Rousseau qui croyait à la bonté des hommes; il croit l'inverse et agit en conséquence. Quand vous allez aux États-Unis, où tout le monde est disciple de Rousseau, vous voyez tout de suite une différence absolue d'attitude; la confiance y est naturelle, alors que chez nous c'est la méfiance qui règne. ("Aspects du caractère français," pp. 133-134)

(The Frenchman is not a disciple of Rousseau, who believed in the goodness of man; the Frenchman believes the opposite and acts accordingly. When you go to the United States, where everyone is a disciple of Rousseau, you see immediately the difference in attitude: there, confidence is the natural thing, while here, suspicion rules supreme.)

The resulting psychological insecurity has been a traditional characteristic of the French peasant, and to some extent of city dwellers as well. "Ils avaient toujours peur," said Daniel Halévy. "Ils ne savaient pas exactement de quoi, mais ils avaient toujours peur de quelque chose."57 (They were always afraid. They didn't know exactly what they feared, but they were always afraid of something.)
Such an attitude has widespread implications for a whole society. Taking for granted that others are hostile, the Frenchman retaliates in kind. He protects himself by a complicated network of laws and regulations. On the formal level, these resulted in the Code Civil, of which Siegfried says, "Dans le Code Civil, on se méfie de tout et de tous" ("Aspects du caractère français," p. 133).

The need to protect himself has given the Frenchman the most fantastic tangle of red tape and restrictions in the modern world. With such a strait jacket of legality, business deals and social changes would be sorely hampered if it were not for behavior on the unofficial level. According to Wylie, "The well-known Système D favors social change in France by permitting individuals to accomplish things which would have been impossible were the paralyzing formalities of the official world respected" ("Social Change," p. 209).

The formules de politesse are another direct result of the French spirit of méfiance. They are distance-maintaining mechanisms which help protect the privacy of the individual without giving the impression that he is rude. In contrast to the American penchant for moving an acquaintance rapidly onto a "first name" basis, the Frenchman appreciates la réserve. "Il faut
garder ses distances" is the watchword of the day—
every day.

Still another result of French suspicion is the
refus de s'engager (refusal to become involved). The
Frenchman is not a joiner; the long list of clubs and
organizations to which the average American belongs
would fill him with horror. (It is perhaps significant
that one French term for "club" is cercle, a tight,
geometric figure with completely restricted boundaries.)
He also restricts his participation in civic and govern-
mental affairs, seeking to avoid entanglements that
might lead to unsuspected events. L'aventure and la
surprise have no special attraction for the French.
American teenagers are startled to learn that to their
French counterparts the "surprise party" has really no
element of surprise, but is a carefully planned event
for all concerned. Such expressions as "Pas d'aventure!"
and "Pas de surprise!" reflect this distaste for the new
and strange.

Lerner points out that:

... the danger of adventure, among people whose
defensive shell often protects a wistful in-
terior, is that one would be disappointed. It
seems especially important to avoid deprivation
(ne pas être déçu). And the famous French
pessimism is at bottom a defensive measure for
avoiding future deprivation by maintaining de-
liberately low expectations. ("Interviewing
Frenchmen," p. 191)
Sometimes cited by sociologists as an example of French defensiveness is their response to the common greeting, "Comment va?" One frequently given response is the negative, "On se défend" (one defends himself). Similarly, Lerner contends that the Frenchman who answers the telephone with "Je vous écoute" (I'm listening to you) is taking up a position of defense against the unknown caller at the other end of the line (p. 187). This does not reflect timidity, for the French are trained in aggressive verbal discourse; but it does mirror the desire to have the adversary clearly defined before formulating a strategy of response.

A natural result of suspicion and distrust is the tendency to criticize others and their activities. When coupled with the biting wit and incisive intellect of the French, this tendency makes for an esprit critique that is truly formidable. "Pour les Français," writes Camille Bauer, "la critique est une fonction naturelle; on critique comme on respire." (La France Actuelle, p. 109)

An excellent example of l'esprit critique is given by Wylie and Bégué in Village en Vaucluse (p. 126).

Bourdin dit: "Si le Christ lui-même venait habiter à Peyrane, les autres trouveraient quelque chose à redire sur Lui. A Peyrane personne ne peut avoir raison. Si vous n'êtes pas trop comme ceci, vous êtes trop comme cela. On vous critique si vous faites quelque
chose, et on vous critique si vous ne le faites pas. C'est donc à vous de décider une fois pour toutes que les autres ne comptent pas. Ne dites à personne ce que vous pensez, ce que vous projetez de faire, combien d'argent vous gagnez. Occupez-vous de vos affaires, et n'ayez pas d'histoires avec les autres.

(If Christ Himself came to live in Peyrane, the others would find something to say against Him. In Peyrane nobody can be right. If you aren't too much this way, you're too much that way. They criticize you if you do something and they criticize you if you don't. So it's up to you to decide once and for all that the others don't count. Don't tell anyone what you think, what you plan to do, or how much money you make. Look after your own business and don't get involved with others.)

The spirit of criticism is clearly reflected in French literature, from the oral literature of the folk to the formal literature of the salon, as well as in the pamphlets and caricatures which appear overnight and help to topple political giants. "Le Français, on l'a souvent dit, est né moquer." 58 (The Frenchman, it is said, is a born scoffer.)

Distrust of les autres has interesting ramifications in the forming of friendships. A recent study comparing American, Russian, and French friendship patterns shows that there are significant differences among the three. The American pattern is characterized by many friendships, each one stemming from a special interest: there are church friends, business friends, neighborhood friends, and friends who share an interest in sports or
hobbies. Each friendship is flexible—it may continue for years, or it may be broken off readily as interests change or a move is made.

The characteristic Russian pattern is to specialize in only a few deep friendships which are total in scope—rejecting any reticence and expecting almost constant companionship. Whereas Americans subdivide the field of friendship into a large number of small units, the Russians divide the field into a small number of large units.

The French friendship pattern is almost a compromise. Friendships are specialized, but they are of long duration—many family friendships extend over more than one generation.

The divergent demands of privacy, independence, and long and close friendships are reconciled by the French through the institution of the brouille; friendship is put in abeyance but not broken, the individuals concerned are not on speaking terms, but expect a reconciliation and stand ready to resume mutual help under some grave circumstances, such as a death in the family. Under similar circumstances Americans would quietly drift apart, and Russians seek immediate resolution through a stormy scene.59

A recently stated goal of foreign language teachers in the United States was to so prepare the student that he would be received in the country of the target language "as a welcome stranger." A French teacher who wishes to steer toward such a goal must have a clear
understanding of the French concept of "stranger."

For the French, the stranger (l'étranger) is essentially the outsider, not necessarily someone who is unknown (inconnu), but rather the identified alien with whom one has no common bonds and about whose intentions there is no certainty ... He may be someone from another neighborhood or town or region of France, or he may be a foreigner--an Italian who has lived and worked for twenty years in Provence, and so on. He is someone "not like the others" ... and, living where he does not belong, he is déraciné--without roots. The stranger is, in fact, anyone who belongs outside the safe confines of the foyer. (Métraux and Mead, Themes in French Culture, p. 51)

The American student who wishes to play the role of the stranger successfully must stick to the script. Individual circumstances make for several possible characterizations: there are those strangers who are respected for their knowledge or ability and who are recognized for any possible contribution they might make to French society; there are those who are accepted as personal friends of French individuals; and there are those who are negatively classified as les sales étrangers. As long as the strangers, whatever their role, continue to act in ways that are expected of them, the French can respond with a degree of security that comes from knowing what the stranger will do in a given situation. (Pas de surprise!)

Métraux and Mead point out that the stranger "...is
both attractive (as he may suggest new models) and threatening (as he may intrude and destroy what he does not understand.)” (p. 53)

The inviolability of the French family circle is a natural outgrowth of the distrust of strangers. The French are sociable in the café, courteous in business and commerce. But invitations to strangers to share in the warmth of the foyer are rare indeed. As Bauer says, "Une famille qui admet souvent des étrangers n'est pas une famille française." (p. 176)

La Patrie

The illustrator Walter Goetz, in sketching a humorous diagram of the stereotyped Frenchman, bestows upon his figure a valentine-shaped heart imprinted with a tiny, smiling head which wears the proud blue, white, and red cocade of France. The accompanying "anatomical explanation" reads: France sur le coeur. (France on the heart.)

It is true that the realistic, logical Frenchman maintains a deeply sentimental love for his native land.

The French tendency to react defensively against the State is a completely different response from the positive attitude manifested toward la patrie. This traditional love for the native land has nothing to do
with politics, but rather is a form of adulation directed toward the almost mystical concept of France as a personality--as "Marianne"--the French ideal of love, honor, and glory.

It was Michelet, the great French historian, who coined the phrase: "L'Angleterre est un empire; l'Allemagne un pays; la France est une personne." 62

Writing about the "soul of France," Gaultier said:

Si l'âme française est le produit de son sol, elle l'est non moins de son histoire ... De tous les pays d'Europe ... la France est l'un des plus anciens. Il lui a fallu des siècles pour se constituer et réaliser son unité, à la fois géographique et morale. Elle a pris une âme en prenant un corps. (p. 21)

(If the French soul is the product of her soil, it is no less the product of her history. Of all the countries of Europe, France is one of the oldest. It took centuries to bring about her unity, both geographic and moral. She developed a soul while forming a body.)

There is a definite psychological link between the French love of la patrie and the French love of the land itself. It is sometimes said that, whereas English patriotism is dominated by pride in being English, French patriotism is linked firmly with the soil of France. Some writers describe it as a sort of passion, based on the knowledge that only the earth which gave Frenchmen the means of living could assure them independence and liberty. 63

It is not surprising that the spirit of wander-
lust has never been a potent force among the French. The poet Ronsard expressed the opinion early that only fish, birds, and forest animals continually change their abode, but man, calm and reflective, lives content on his land. ("Mais l'homme bien rassis en sat terre demeure.") This contentment with hearth and home is also reflected in the history of exploration. Paul Morand points out that thirteen journeys around the world had been undertaken by the great nations of Europe before any Frenchman was motivated to make the attempt, and the frigate which finally ventured forth went reluctantly: its name was La Boudeuse (The Pouter).

The love of la patrie, the concept of France as a unity, and the appreciation of a long heritage of art and intellect have done much to create the French idea of civilisation. Curiously, one of the most moving passages about the civilization of France has been written by a German:

When we ... wend our way back to the little village of Les Eyzies; when we stand before the memorial tablet to the soldiers who fell in the world War and read the inscription: "À tous ceux qui sont morts pour la civilisation" -- this word civilisation gains a fullness of tone, a dignity and consecration which we had not hitherto dreamed it possessed. In Germany you will not find the word civilisation upon any war memorial. Our people do not understand this word, and we cannot render it into German. It belongs to the sphere in which highly educated and cultivated people move. France alone, of all nations, is able to express with this word civilisation its most sacred treasures. (Curtius, p. 8)
CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to present a delineation of the French character as it is reflected in the development of the individual and in his relationship to family, to society, and to his native land.

The writer who makes such an attempt remembers with dismay the verdict of many of the participants in the U.N.E.S.C.O. poll of 1948, who, when asked to sketch a portrait of the typical Frenchman, replied, "Impossible to characterize!"65

What is needed, perhaps, by those who attempt a national character study, is a bit of the confidence displayed by Toulouse Lautrec as he worked to capture on canvas the essence of a personality. When Yvette Guilbert objected to one of his portraits of her, he is said to have replied with calm simplicity:

"Madame, je vous totalise."
NOTES


2. M. Pierre Mantel, "Réactions critiques" to Thèmes de culture de la France, p. 149.

3. Ibid., p. 154.


9. Ibid., p. 11.


17. Ibid., p. 19.


27. Ibid., pp. 132-133.
31. Ibid., p. 213.
34. Reboulet, "Image de la France à l'étranger," p. 17.
40. Ibid., p. 191.


47. Métraux and Mead, *Themes in French Culture*, p. 27.


50. Cocteau, quoted by Curtius, p. 225.


55. Pierre Mantel, "Réactions critiques," to *Thèmes de culture*, p. 150.


58. Gaultier, *l'Ame française*, p. 35.


64. Curtius, *The Civilization of France*, p. 44.

65. Reboullet, "Image de la France à l'étranger," footnote, p. 16.
CHAPTER III

FOLK LITERATURE IN FRANCE

Folklore and Folk Literature

Folk literature is one sub-division of the larger segment of cultural content known as folklore. The latter term--folklore--is a relative newcomer to the world of scholarship. It was coined in 1846 by the Englishman William Thoms, who suggested it as a substitute for the less succinct "popular antiquities."

In France the term traditions populaires was widely used in the 19th century, but "folklore" has been accepted today by French scholars and is defined as "... l'ensemble des traditions, légendes et usages populaires d'un pays." (Petit Larousse, Librairie Larousse, Paris, 1962)

Just as the term "culture" has been defined in many ways, so has the word "folklore" given rise to many different interpretations. It has been described in terms of its origin, its form, its function in society, and the method of its transmission. Although it is usually thought of as being something in oral circulation, some types of folklore circulate exclusively in written form--
epitaphs, jottings in autograph books, and graffiti, for instance. Other forms are transmitted from strictly visual encounters, such as the observer who learns the steps of a dance from watching the dance itself, or the folk artist who sees a design, admires it, and copies it for his own purpose.

The folk who practice the lore are not limited to unlettered peasants or rustic peoples in the backwash of civilization. The term can refer to any group of people—the city dweller, the suburbanite, the astronaut, as well as the mountaineer—provided that the members of that group share at least one factor in common. The commonly shared trait may be language, profession, religion, or place of habitat, and the size of the group may vary from a single family unit to an entire race.

In The Study of Folklore, the American folklorist Alan Dundes gives a definition of folklore which consists of an itemized list of the forms which folklore may take. For the classroom teacher who is not familiar with the scope of the materials included in the term folklore, such a definition provides a capsule introduction to the field.

Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas (e.g., See you later, alligator). It also includes folk costume, folk dance,
folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g., fiddle tunes), folk songs (e.g., lullabies, ballads), folk speech (e.g., slang), folk similes (e.g., as blind as a bat), folk metaphors (e.g., to paint the town red), and names (e.g., nicknames and place names). Folk poetry ranges from oral epics to autograph-book verse, epitaphs, latrina (i.e., writings on the walls of public bathrooms), limericks, ball-bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes (to bounce children on the knee), counting-out rhymes (to determine who will be "it" in games), and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers (e.g., graces); practical jokes; folk etymologies; food recipes; quilt and embroidery designs; house, barn, and fence types; street vendor's cries; and even the conventional sounds used to summon animals or to give them commands. There are such minor forms as mnemonic devices (e.g., the name Roy G. Biv to remember the colors of the spectrum in order), the envelope sealers (e.g., SWAK—Sealed With A Kiss), and the traditional comments made after body emissions (e.g., after burps or sneezes). There are such major forms as festivals and special day (or holiday) customs (e.g., Christmas, Halloween, and birthday).

As for the term folk literature itself, Francis Lee Utley, noted American literary folklorist, defines it simply:

...folk literature is orally transmitted literature wherever found, among primitive isolates or civilized marginal cultures, urban or rural societies, dominant or subordinate groups. ²

It is this definition which serves as the foundation for discussion of French folk literature in this paper.
The Genres of French Folk Literature

A teacher who wishes to make use of folk literature in the language class must have a general grasp of the genres which make up the corpus of folk material. In this chapter the genres most frequently encountered in France will be discussed with the intent of providing an overview of folk literature.

The teacher should also have an understanding of the terms "type" and "motif" as they apply to the analysis of folk narrative. A "type" is a tale that has an existence all its own; it is a narrative complete in itself, and may be told independently from any other tale. A "motif" is the smallest unit in a tale--one of the narrative building blocks which is combined with other motifs to make up the complete story. A motif may be an actor in the tale (witch with goose feet), an object or concept essential to the tale (talking ring; animals speak to one another at Christmas), or a single incident (man sells soul to devil).

One of the most valuable tools for the student of folk literature is the Aarne-Thompson Types of the Folk Tale, published in 1928. The original type index was devised by the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne in 1910; the
1928 revision was the work of the great American folklorist, Stith Thompson. The index is a classification of tale types, organized into three principal groups: animal tales, regular folk tales, and humorous tales. Each tale is listed by number, which makes for easy identification and reference across linguistic boundaries.

An equally valuable tool is the Motif Index, completed in 1936 by Stith Thompson. This index brings together narrative elements from the worldwide store of oral literature and from literary collections as well. The motifs are classified by letters indicating major categories (Creation, Animals, Tabu, Marvels, etc.), and by numbers which pinpoint the various elements even more closely.

The tales and motifs discussed in this chapter will be identified by their index numbers whenever possible.

Märchen

The American student who is asked to define "folk tale" will usually offer the term "fairy tale" as a synonym, undisturbed by the fact that the tales he has in mind—Goldilocks, Red Riding Hood, and Hansel and Gretel—have no fairies in the cast of characters. The French have given the term *conte populaire* to this type of folk-
tale, but it is the German word Märchen which has gained international acceptance.

The Märchen in its role as "household tale" was described by the French writer Noël de Falil as early as 1547 in his Propos rustiques. The venerable institution of the veillée comes to life under his pen—that mellow interval between the evening meal and bedtime when the family clustered around the hearth to hear again the old tales:

Et ainsi occupés à diverses besognes, le bon-homme Robin, après avoir imposé silence, commençait un beau conte du temps que les bêtes parlaient, comme le Renard dérobait le poisson aux poissonniers, comme il fit battre le loup par les lavandières, lorsqu'il lui apprenait à pêcher, comment le Chien et le Chat allaient bien loin; de la Corneille qui en chantant perdit son fromage; de Mélusine; du Loup garou; de Cuir d'Anette.3

(And the family thus occupied by various tasks, the father, after requesting silence, would begin a beautiful tale of the time when animals talked, when Renard the Fox stole the fish, how he got the wolf beaten by the washerwomen when he taught the wolf how to fish, how the dog and cat traveled together, of the crow who, while singing, lost his cheese; of Mélusine, of the werewolf, and of Donkey Skin.)

While Noël du Falil was writing with sympathy about the household tale, most writers of the period looked upon the tales and contes de fées with disdain. They called them Contes de la cigogne (Swan Stories) or Contes de ma mère l'oye (Mother Goose Tales), in reference to the cluckings and quackings of the nurses and
serving women who fervently told the tales. 4

In the next century (by 1685) the fortunes of the Märchen in France took a bizarre turn. They became the darlings of high society and were scribbled avidly in the notebooks of the litterati. Unfortunately, the scribbling were a far cry from the honest tales told round the hearthside of "le bonhomme Robin." The galants of the day peopled them with genii and fairies and marvelous sprites, adding a shepherdess here and there and setting flying chariots aloft in the sky.

The first really sober collection of Märchen was compiled by young Pierre Perrault-Darmancour, who as early as 1695 offered to a lady of the court a manuscript entitled Contes de ma mère l'oye. His collection included such favorites as Le Petit Poucet, Cendrillon, Barbe-Bleue, Le Petit chaperon rouge, Les Fées, and Le Chat botté.

Two years later came the formal publication of this material under the title Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités, which, although signed by Pierre, is generally thought to be the work of his father, Charles Perrault.

Marcel Aymé, amused by the controversy which has arisen over the authorship of the contes, once remarked that it matters little whether Perrault Père or Perrault
fils wielded the pen—they are still the "Contes de Perrault." He recalls the conclusion drawn by Mark Twain as to the authorship of Shakespeare's plays:

C'est à peu près la conclusion préconisée par l'humoriste Mark Twain pour le théâtre de Shakespeare, qui n'est pas de Shakespeare, dit-il, mais d'un autre auteur qui s'appelait comme lui.5

(It's a little like the conclusion reached by Mark Twain about the plays of Shakespeare, which were not written by Shakespeare, he said, but by another author of the same name.)

To a literary world accustomed to the antique glories of the Classical school, the charming tales offered by Perrault must have come as a surprise. Concerned over their possible rejection, Perrault attached a preface to his tales in which he hastened to point out that the stories were not mere "bagatelles." With an eye to the Classicists' admonition that literature had the duty to please and instruct (plaire et instruire), he insisted that the contes had instructional value: "Ils tendent vous à faire voir l'avantage qu'il y a d'être honnête, patient, avisé, laborieux, obéissant, et le mal qui arrive à ceux qui ne le sont pas."6

Fortunately for the world of folktale scholarship, Perrault's uneasiness did not sway him from his intention to present the tales in the simple, oral narrative style in which they were recounted. Indeed, the natural-
ness of the tales à la Perrault accorded well with the Classicists' penchant for purity, clarity, and simplicity of style.

Marcel Ayme, who calls Perrault "... un de nos plus grands auteurs," shudders at the thought of what might have happened if some other writer of the period had compiled the tales:

On tremble en effet à l'idée que le soin de transmettre pareils trésors à la postérité avait pu incomber à un Boileau ou à je ne sais quel metteur en scène de l'époque. Mieux vaut ne pas penser à ce qu'aurait pu devenir le Chat Botté revu et étayé par Boileau. Dans l'opération il eût probablement perdu ses bottes et aurait été mué en figure allégorique. (From Ayme's Preface to Perrault's Contes, Edition Club des Librairies.)

(One shudders at the idea that the task of preserving such treasures for posterity might have fallen to a Boileau or some other writer of the period. It's better not to think of what would have happened to Puss in Boots, re-examined and propped up by Boileau. He probably would have lost his boots and been decked out as an allegorical figure.)

Perrault's restraint was not to be emulated by any other recorder of tales for over a hundred years. Madame d'Aulnoy, inspired by the success of Perrault's work, brought out a little volume in 1698. Its title is significant--Contes nouveaux ou les fées à la mode--for she was more concerned with the desire to be "à la mode" than to present the contes with fidelity. She embellished the tales with pretty frills and destroyed the
poignant simplicity of traditional oral style. Other followers of Perrault were even worse. Repulsed by folk heroines who cried pearls and spit rubies, Madame de Murat guaranteed that the "moderne" fairies in her collection were "toutes belles, jeunes, bien-faites, et galamment vêtues."

It is understandable that such snobbish manipulation led to grotesque results, and the taste for Märchen soon waned among the cultured classes.

In 1704 Galland introduced France to the fabled wonders of the Orient through his ten-volume translation of the Mille et une nuits. The success of this work prompted Pétis de la Croix to translate Mille et un jours. Containing tales from Turkey, Persia, and Arabia, this version was made elegant by the facile pen of Le Sage, author of Gil Blas, who collaborated with de la Croix to produce their oriental masterpiece. Imitations of both works appeared overnight, and France was flooded with an exotic host of Chinese, Tartars, and Turks.

Near the end of the century, publishers in Geneva and Amsterdam brought out an enormous 41-volume work entitled Le Cabinet des fées. (1785-1789) It began with the contes of Perrault and ended with the last of the oriental imitators. Buried in the depths of this giant compilation were some authentic French folk tales,
although one had to peer intently at the caliphe to re-
cognize Jean le Sot.

Many of these stories found their way early into
the little blue "paperbacks" that were sold at country
fairs and by the colporteurs. They are sometimes referred
to as La Bibliothèque bleue, and indeed were circulated
as early as the 16th century. 8

As the centuries rolled and folklore scholarship
came into its own in other countries, the authentic
approach of Perrault was forgotten. Foreign respect for
French folklore scholarship reached its nadir; the French
conte was characterized abroad as "smelling of perfume
and Iris powder." (Il sent l'eau de Cologne et la
poudre d'iris.) 9

In 1812 the Grimms of Germany had brought out the
first edition of their laudable Kinder und Hausmärchen,
and by 1860 Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Russia, Poland,
Serbia, Hungary and Greece had all proudly begun their
national folk collections. It was not until 1870 that
France tardily gathered her forces and began scientific
research on the conte populaire.

The years between 1870 and the First World War
are known as the golden age of folklore collection in
France. The tales of every province were brought toget-
her and published in such scholarly journals as
Mélusine (edited by Gaidoz) and La Revue des traditions populaires. Others came out in book form, including the great collection published as Les Littératures populaires de toutes les nations (Éditions Maisonneuve, 47 volumes from 1881 to 1930.)

Paul Sébillot and P. M. Luzel collected the tales of Brittany, J. Fleury worked in Normandy, E. H. Carnoy in Picardy, J. F. Bladé in Gascogne, and J. Vinson in the Pays Basque. Sébillot also made a collection of tales from Auvergne, and L. F. Sauvé compiled those from the region of the Vosges. Laisnel de la Salle gathered the lore of Berry, and F. Chapiseau recorded legends and tales in Perche and the Beauce. E. Rolland compiled his works on the proverbs, legends, and superstitions related to plants and animals in France. Arnold van Gennep, with a background in anthropology, concentrated his efforts on collecting folk beliefs and customs which influenced French life from the cradle to the grave. E. Cosquin was considered the greatest French folklorist who worked with tales across international boundaries.

In 1893 Joseph Bédier published his study Les Fabliaux, which cleared up some misconceptions as to the origin and dissemination of tales, but which also had a negative effect on comparative folktale studies. Not until after World War II did folktale research revive in
France. Then, under the vigorous leadership of Paul Delarue, and later of his follower Marie-Louise Tenêze, collection, study, and publication of folk literature began an exciting new era.

Our discussion of the Märchen in France has led to a review of the history of folktale collection in that country. As for the content of the Märchen, most of the types in international circulation have been collected somewhere in France. Stith Thompson, in his celebrated study The Folktale, gives to France an important role in the origin and spread of tales: "... available evidence," he maintains, "points to the development in France of some of our most important and widely accepted folktales."10

Although it would be impossible to discuss here all the Märchen circulated in France, a few of the most frequently told tales might be mentioned.

The Cupid and Psyche theme (Type 425, The Search for the Lost Husband) is found most often in France in the tale of La Belle et la bête. High school students may be familiar with Jean Cocteau's beautiful treatment of this folk theme in his film version of the same name.

Another significant Märchen in the French corpus is known as La Bête à sept têtes. The tale type known as The Dragon Slayer (T. 300) seems to have fused with T. 303,
The Two Brothers, to form this Märchen. Essential elements usually include the rescue of a maiden from a dragon, an impostor who claims to be the rescuer, the hero who comes forth with the tongues of the slain dragon as proof that it was he who really killed the beast, and the subsequent marriage of hero and princess. Professor Kurt Ranke 11 conducted an exhaustive study of the two types, and after analyzing over a thousand variants concluded that T. 303 originated in France. It is here that the best versions occur, he found. As the tale spreads out from France, it becomes increasingly weakened. For examples of how a tale may become garbled as it passes from one country to another, the reader is referred to the collection of French folktales found by Carrière near Kaskaskia and Old Mines, Missouri; 12 and to the collection made by Saucier in French Louisiana. 13 La Bête à sept têtes would scarcely recognize itself.

One of the longest and loveliest tales in international circulation is Type 313, The Girl as Helper in the Hero's Flight, sometimes shortened to The Magic Flight. This tale, which stems from the same folk source as the myth of Jason and Medea, is represented in France by more than 120 versions. Paul Delarue presents an excellent version under the title of La Belle Eulalie 14 which contains most of the key elements; a soldier named
Jean stays the night at the house of an old man who is really the devil. The devil sets a series of impossible tasks for the lad to perform. He accomplishes them with the aid of Eulalie, the devil's beautiful daughter (Motif H 310, Son-in-law tests). The two young people escape together, leaving behind two magic cakes which reply for them when the devil shouts questions from another room. Finally realizing he has been duped, the devil pursues the young people, who transform themselves into various objects to deceive him. (Motif D 671, The transformation flight) Eventually they escape, but Jean pays a visit to his family, breaks some tabu, and instantly forgets Eulalie (Type 313 C, The Forgotten Fiancée). By magic she regains his love on the eve of his marriage to another girl, and the two celebrate their own wedding in memorable style.

The Nivernaise version presented by Delarue is a fine example of oral style, of the inclusion of rhythmic formulae, and of the use of a closing formula to bring the tale to a conclusion:

La noce dure toute une semaine,  
Tant qu'on trouve des vivres dans le pays.  
Tout l'mond' dansa, grands et petits  
Jusqu'à la mère Bardichon  
Qui sautait comme un cabri  
Avec ses quatre-vingt-cinq ans.  

(The wedding lasted a whole week—as long as anybody was still alive in the territory.
Everybody danced, young and old; even old lady Bardichon, who jumped like a young goat in spite of her 85 years.)

The French teacher searching for an example of an authentic folktale would find Paul Delarue's version of *Little Red Ridinghood* (T. 333) a fascinating choice. In its oral form as found in the Loire basin it is a far cry from the storybook version popularized by Perrault and the Grimms. The elements lacking in the literary story were doubtless eliminated by Perrault as being too cruel (the little girl unknowingly eats the flesh and drinks the blood of her grandmother) or too shocking (the girl questions the wolf about his hairy body, and later makes good her escape by pretending the need to go outside to answer a call of nature). At the same time, the folk version contains the dramatic dialogue and the true flavor of oral narrative which represents folk literature at its finest. Delarue published a version in French in *Le Conte populaire français*, and an English translation with interesting commentary in the Borzoi *Book of French Folk Tales* (pp. 380-383, and p. 230-232).
Animal Tales

Animals appear frequently in the Märchen, but usually in the role of helper to the hero, or as a human being under a temporary enchantment. When animals themselves become the central figures, the tales are categorized as animal tales. When a moral is stated as a conclusion, the animal tale crosses over into the realm of fable.

Animal tales are usually constructed to show the cleverness of one animal as opposed to the stupidity of another. With the Gallic appreciation of wit and guile, the animal tale has always been a popular genre in France.

One tale particularly beloved in France is known to the children's storybook world as The Three Little Pigs (T. 124). Walt Disney's film was based on a version of this tale found in an English storybook. France, however, is almost the only country where the tale is known in an unbroken line of oral tradition. The French raconteur does not insist on a cast of piglets; the animals who build the three types of houses may be as varied as a sow, a goose, and a cock. It is usually a pig or the sow, however, who builds the strongest house and captures the wolf.

A second animal tale which is found only rarely
in other countries but is very popular in France is The Goat and Her Kids (T. 123). American children know the version in which Mother Goat goes off on an errand, forbidding her kids to open the door to anyone. The wolf who knocks is rejected because his voice is too harsh and his paw too black. But he sweetens his voice with honey and covers his paw with baker's dough and thus gains admittance. This theme is found in an early collection of fables inspired by Aesop and Phaedrus known as Isopets in the French translation. But Delarue finds the literary form a poor contrast to the more vigorous version which has existed for centuries in French folklore.

Another animal tale extremely popular in France is Demi Coq (T. 715, Half-Chick). Although Delarue refers to it as "... un des contes les plus populaires de France et les plus authentiquement français," Ralph S. Boggs cites Spain as the country of origin in his article "The Half-Chick Tale in Spain and France," in Folklore Fellows Communications, No. 111 (Helsinki, 1933). Thompson points out, however (The Folktale, p. 77), that the tale is known internationally by its French title "... because he appears so frequently in French tales." The tale is interesting to literary historians because it is mentioned by name in a play of Philippe
Destouches, *La Fausse Agnès*, as early as 1759. A serving maid is asked, "Et de la fable, que savez-vous?" and she replies, "Je sais le conte de *Peau d'Ane*, de *Moitié de Coq* et de *Marie Cendron*." A Spanish literary version attributed to Fernana Caballero in the 19th century has Half-Chick punished by Saint Peter and turned into the weathervane on top of a steeple (Boggs, p. 11). In spite of the many roosters which adorn French steeples, this attempt to turn Half-Chick into a *pourquoi* story has met with little success in France, where the traditional oral form of the tale is the one that is circulated.

Mention should also be made of the tale in which a group of domestic animals occupy the cottage of a band of thieves under cover of darkness and frighten away the wicked owners (T. 130, *Animals in Night Quarters*). This is very widely circulated in France, but is best known to Americans through the famous version of Grimm, *The Musicians of the City of Bremen*.

By far the most famous group of animal stories in Europe are those which appear as part of the "beast epic" known as *Le Roman de Renard*. From the standpoint of literary controversy, *Renard* has provided scholars with an unusually meaty bone to worry and gnaw. The question of the origin of the Renard materials is complex, but it may be briefly sketched.
The twenty-seven branches of the epic, all but three anonymous, are contained in three 13th century manuscript collections known to scholars as Alpha, Beta, and Gamma. No collection contains all twenty-seven branches, and each differs in presentation and arrangement of the materials.

One group of scholars, headed by P. Foulet, held that the tales in the Renard epic are derived from Latin sources such as Ecobasis Captivi, Ysengrimus, and the Disciplina Clericalis (which contains much material from the Panchatantra, early collection of animal tales from India).

An opposing group, whose most outstanding spokesman was Léopold Sudre, asserted that the tales were of genuine folk origin and were not the product of monkish pens. The most recent champion of this position is the Dutch scholar J. Van Mierlo, who in 1943 published a comparison of Renard with Ysengrimus in which he tried to show that Ysengrimus, a finely developed artistic product, could not have been the source or model of the rambling, loosely structured Renard. If Ysengrimus had been the source, Van Mierlo contends, its unity would have carried over. In addition, Ysengrimus is satiric (a more sophisticated literary development) while Renard in its earliest branches is humorous and gay (an early
characteristic). *Ysengrimus* has a definitely moral and erudite point of view, Van Mierlo points out in conclusion, while *Renard* is lively and realistic.

Another scholar approached the controversy from a different angle. Kaarle Krohn, the great Finnish folklorist, used his "historical-geographic" method to analyze the animal tales still vigorously alive in Finland and Russia by 1890, most of which also form a part of the *Renard* cycle. He concluded that one group of these—five tales which tend to form a cohesive unit and are listed by Aarne-Thompson as Types 1-5 inclusive, really originated in the folk tradition of northern Europe. In this group the stupid wolf or bear is placed in opposition to the wily fox, an opposition which Krohn says does not exist in the literary fables (Thompson, p. 219). He finds that the chain of five tales has existed both as a group and as separate tales for over 1,000 years.

Regardless of ultimate origins, it is clear that many of the tales which make up the *Renard* cycle are now in oral circulation and have been for many years. *The Animals in Night Quarters* (T. 130) is believed by Aarne to be derived from an Oriental tale which penetrated Europe so long ago that as early as 1280 it had been taken into the Latin *Ysengrimus* and had also
become a part of the *Roman de Renard* (Le Pèlerinage de
Renart, Branche 8). Delarue offers a French folk
version collected in 1895 with the intriguing title,
"The Journey to Toulouse of the Animals that Had Colds." Of all the stories belonging to the *Renard* cycle,
the one telling how the fox played godfather (T. 15)
is perhaps the best known in parts of the world other
than Europe. Sébillot collected a typical French ver-
262) in which the fox and the wolf bury a pot of honey,
agreeing to share it after their work is done. The
fox, pretending to hear church bells, leaves the work
to attend three imaginary christening ceremonies for
three non-existent godchildren. Their names, he re-
ports, are "Well Begun" (Entamé), "Half-Done" (Mitan),
and "Finished" (Finissement). The names, of course,
describe the state of the honey supply. One version
from the Pays de Saint-Pol gives the improbable names
of "Bien léché" (Well-licked), "Petit trois-quarts"
(Little Three-Fourths), and "J'ai vu son cul" (I've Seen
the Bottom--of the pot). No matter how broadly the farce
is painted, the wolf remains obligingly gullible.

Of the three branches of the *Roman de Renard* whose
authorship is known, the one ascribed to Pierre de Saint
Cloud contains an account of the creation of the various
animals of the world. After chasing Adam and Eve out of Paradise, the story goes, God relented and gave Adam a magic wand. Adam had only to strike the waves of the sea with the wand to produce whatever he needed. With the first blow Adam caused a fat sheep to rise up and trot off to the meadows. Eve insisted that she be given a turn, but as soon as she struck the waves a great wolf leaped out and pursued the sheep. Adam hastily created a dog to protect the sheep, but Eve's next blow produced yet another fearsome creature. This motif of the "Creation Duel" (A 1751: The devil's animals and God's) describes a contest between either Adam and Eve, as in Renard, or between God and the Devil. An excellent list of the "Oeuvres de Dieu et Celles du Diable" collected in Brittany is found in the Revue des traditions populaires, Volume I, 1886, p. 202.

Some animal tales in oral circulation probably came originally from the literary fables of India and Greece. An example of T. 34, The Wolf Dives into the Water for Reflected Cheese, has been collected in Basse-Bretagne.23 The fox tells the starving wolf that the shimmering reflection of the moon at the bottom of a fountain is really a chunk of butter. The wolf gulps the water avidly to lower the water level, but instead of finding the butter, drinks so much water that he becomes ill. In another Breton version the fox tells the
wolf that he has just seen a beautiful woman bathing in
the river. He parts the willows and shows his hungry
companion the moon's reflection in the deepest part of
the water. "Mieux vaut toucher que voir, et croquer
que toucher," pants the wolf. He dives headfirst into
the water as the fox dances gleefully on the bank.24

Another literary fable, T. 56 B (Fox Deceives
Magpie Who Is Avenged by Dog), shows the special touches
added by Jacques Bonhomme after it passed into oral cir-
culation. The tale opens with an onomatopoetic version
of the bird's song (Hé! Rouge car car car! Hé! Rouge
car car car!) and ends with some blunt facts: the dog
ate off the fox's two front feet and the fox died two
hours later.

Pourquoi Tale

A third genre of folk literature is the pourquoi
tale, which, as its name suggests, is used to explain
the why or the wherefore of something. Other terms
for this genre include "etiological tale," "Just-So
story," and "Natursage." (Thompson, The Folktale, p. 9)

A great many pourquoi tales explain the
appearance or behavioral characteristics of animals,
such as the tale told in Brittany about the swallow and
the mouse.25 A mouse agreed to sit on a swallow's eggs
for three days. When they hatched, the baby birds were covered with skin instead of with feathers; their bodies and heads were like those of a mouse; their wings were strangely crooked—like the devil's own. The horrified mother swallow died of shock, never realizing that the combined influence of bird and mouse had produced the first bats.

Another pourquoi tale explains why dogs greet each other with a sniff. Under the tail of one dog in the world is a special sign. When it is located, its bearer will become king and all other dogs will recover the power of speech.

Some pourquoi tales attempt to explain a custom or belief. Carnoy cites a tale from Picardy which tells of the haunted sneezer of Englebelmer. On a certain stretch of road near this village, midnight travelers were often startled to hear an invisible man sneezing in the dark shadows by the road. The ghost was known locally as "l'Éternueur" (The Sneezer), and many were the villagers who had been terrified by his disembodied sneeze. Finally one traveler, harder than the rest, stopped in his tracks and called boldly into the darkness, "Que le bon Dieu vous bénisse, vous et votre rhume!" Instantly a phantom shape took form. It explained that as a result of earthly sins, his spirit
had been condemned to haunt the village until someone said, "God bless you." At last, after 500 years of sneezing, he was free to follow the road to heaven. Since that day, the custom has been observed of saying "Dieu vous bénisse" to anyone who sneezes.

This is an example of the kind of folk literature which--dropped spontaneously into a classroom session--can relieve boredom and present the cultural content at the same time. Suppose a discussion is interrupted by a loud sneeze. The unimaginative teacher will glare pointedly at the offending student; a creative teacher might respond with the traditional rejoinder--Dieu vous bénisse--and then underline it entertainingly with the *pourquoi* tale of l'Éternueur.

Sage

A fourth genre in the French corpus is the *Sage*, a general narrative pattern found all over the world. It is not to be confused with the term "saga," which refers to a literary tale of the heroic age. Sometimes the expressions "local tradition," "local legend," "migratory legend," and "tradition populaire," are used as a synonym for *Sage*. (Thompson, *The Folktale*, p. 8)

In contrast to *Märchen*, *Sagen* are usually simple
in structure, built around a single narrative motif. They tell the legend of something which happened long ago at a particular spot, and are thought by the teller to have actually taken place. They frequently describe the moment when the life of a mortal brushes against the supernatural—an encounter with a revenant, a warning from a mysterious portent, a glimpse into the au-delà. The teller, who swears that the incident took place "just up the road" or "over by that crooked tree," is unaware that his counterpart in the adjoining province fully believes that a similar event happened "just up the road" or "over by that crooked tree."

From the rich storehouse of French Sagen, one might select a few representative samples. The "Lenore" legend (Motif E 215, The dead rider) is frequently collected as a local legend. Le Braz 28 cites the fate of René Pennek, most handsome lad in Bégard, and Dunvel Karis, the loveliest maiden in the district. One day René was thrown from a horse, hit his head on a stone, and died instantly. That night, Dunvel, unaware of the accident, heard him knock on the door, calling her to come away with him. She slipped out into the night and rode off with her sweetheart. When dawn broke, Dunvel's parents went to the village to seek their daughter at René's home. Instead they found René's body laid out on
a bier in preparation for the funeral service. They accompanied other mourners to the cemetery where the horrified group found the disfigured corpse of Dunvel lying face down in the waiting grave.

The Sagen include many legends pertaining to the exploits of Gargantua. For example, residents of the tiny Béarnaise village of Bastide-Villefranche are fond of telling how the giant passed through their town one long-ago day, sat down on the round tower of their château, and took a leisurely footbath in the little lake at the foot of the mountain. Students who had previously thought of Gargantua as an invention of Rabelais are entitled to learn of the earlier folk heritage.

Sagen dealing with submerged cities are also frequently collected in France. Most famous is the legend of the sunken city of Is, a splendid city on the Bay of Douarnenez in the time of the ancient kings of Brittany.

The King of Is, Grallon, had a wicked daughter named Ahês, who corrupted the townsfolk through a series of mad orgies and midnight debauches. One night she stole the key which opened the giant door in the dike surrounding the city. Ahês and her evil lover intended only to drown the king; but the sea swept in so swiftly that not a soul escaped, and so deeply that the entire city was engulfed beneath the waves.
Sometimes today, when the sea is calm, one can perceive the silhouettes of great buildings below the surface and hear the muted tolling of the sunken cathedral bells. One of Claude Debussy's *Preludes* for the piano, "La Cathédrale engloutie," is an impressionistic attempt to capture the tonal harmonies of this scene.

The basic Is legend has given rise to several satellite *Sagen*. A group of sailors from Douarnenez, fishing one night in the bay, tried to hoist anchor and found it hooked on some mysterious object. One sailor dived overboard and followed the anchor chain downward. He returned, gasping, to say that their anchor was hooked on the bars of a window--a church window--through which a strange, luminous glow was shining out into the murky waters. He had stolen a peek into the window and was astounded to see a richly costumed congregation partaking of Midnight Mass. Later, the rector of Douarnenez explained to the fishermen that they had seen the sunken cathedral of Is, and that if the sailor had only responded to the underwater Mass he would have brought the whole city back from its watery grave.

(Recounted by Prosper Pierre, Douarnenez, 1887)

George Sand, in the novel *André*, cites a legend of Berry dealing with a château whose châtelain signed a pact with the devil. One night the devil planted his
pitchfork under the foundations and made off with the entire château. In its place the next morning stretched a scummy green pond which no one could approach without sinking waist deep in mud. The pond still bears the name of "Château Fondu" (the melted château).

Dévigne speculates that the many legends of submerged cities in the Alps and the Pyrénées originate in the confused recollection of a time when prehistoric lake dwellers built their thatched houses on stilts in the lakes and pools of these districts. 31 (p. 218)

Another Sage, always localized in relationship to a particular cathedral, tells how animals conducted themselves with almost human intelligence to aid in the construction of the building. At Chamalières in the Auvergne 32 the old Roman cathedral is said to have been built with the aid of a great mule and two white oxen that hauled the stones from the quarry to the city, stood patiently while they were unloaded, and returned to the quarry for another load, repeating this day after day without human supervision. At Laon the silhouettes of six huge oxen adorn the top of the church towers, set there by nameless sculptors of the 13th century to honor the beasts who toiled to carry the stone. Local legend recounts how one day as the oxen were dragging the wagon up a steep slope, one fell exhausted by the roadside.
Suddenly, another ox appeared as if from nowhere and came forward to be yoked as a replacement. Once the wagon reached the end of its journey, the mysterious ox disappeared. 33

Other Sagen relate local encounters with the Lavandière de nuit, ghastly washerwoman doomed to launder clothes on the banks of a stream for all eternity; or the sighting of the dread Bag-noz, phantom ship which carries the souls of drowned sailors; or how a neighbor's grandfather stumbled upon a ruined church at midnight and took Mass with the ghostly throng assembled there. Infinitely varied in plot and content, there is nevertheless an undercurrent of familiarity which runs through the narrative fabric of the Sagen.

Jests and Anecdotes

One large group of tales, simple in structure, is listed by Thompson under the category of "Jests and Anecdotes." It is difficult to define this form of folk narrative. It contains such diverse materials as num-skull tales and tales of cleverness; stories of contests won by bluff or trickery; stories of deceptive bargains, of impostures and seductions—all told with the primary intent of amusing the listener. Sometimes the French
call these tales contes pour rire; sometimes the term facétie is used for the shorter jest.

A great many of these tales are built around the idea of "the stupid ogre." Be he monster or devil, bear or wolf, rich overlord or pompous dignitary, such a villain is inevitably outwitted by the underling who represents the little man—Jacques Bonhomme. The French delight in the triumph of craft and guile is nowhere more evident than in such tales.

A well-known example is the episode of The Crop Division (Motif Kl71.1; Types 9B and 1030), one of the folktales which found its way into Rabelais' Gargantua and also appears in the Renard materials. Dévigne gives a typical version (pp. 212-214) in which a peasant agrees to divide the harvest of his field with the devil. The devil, who had seen the man plant the seed under the soil, claims all that grows below the ground, while the man is to receive what grows above. The wily peasant's crop is wheat, and he wins the better portion. The next year the devil is quick to claim the portion that grows above ground, so the man plants carrots. The third year the devil insists on all that grows below ground and on the seeds and flowers above. The peasant plants hemp and claims the valuable stalks as his own.
The deceptive bargain idea appears again in a tale given by Seignolle. Here a peasant in the Périgord offered his soul to the devil in return for a sackful of gold coins. When the devil came to fill his part of the bargain, he found the man astride the barn, mending the roof. The devil clambered up and began to pour gold into the little sack which the man held in his outstretched arms. The coins flooded into the sack in a golden torrent, but the sack never seemed to fill up. The devil poured and poured, with no results. Finally he heard the tinkle of coins far below in the barn, and realized that the man was holding a bottomless sack over the chimney hole. Disgusted with having filled the barn half full, the devil disappeared in a rage and never returned. (T. 1130, Counting Out Pay Over Pit; Motif K275)

The devil is outwitted in another cycle of tales dealing with the construction of bridges. Usually he promises to build a difficult span overnight in return for the soul of the first living being to cross the bridge. The mayor of the city waits until the bridge is built, then chases a tomcat across, which the devil must accept as "the first living being." Seignolle speculates that the many variants of this theme (a cat at Saint Cloud, Saint Cado, and Beaugency; a rabbit at
the Pont du Gard; a dog at the Pont de Rily) are vestiges of the time when living sacrifices were made to placate the water spirits upon the completion of a new bridge.\textsuperscript{35}

In a related building episode, the devil is to receive a man's soul if he can build a château for the man between midnight and cockcrow. All the demons of hell come to the devil's aid and it is obvious that the château will be finished before dawn. The man's wife runs to the window and simulates the cry of a rooster. The devil laughs gleefully and tells her she has not fooled him for a minute. But her tuneless crowings awaken the whole poultry flock and the real cock crows raucously a few minutes before sunrise—catching the frustrated devil with two tiles still to be placed on the roof.\textsuperscript{36}

Sometimes the stupid ogre appears in the form of a wealthy master. The tale of Pipete (T. 1000-1029, The Labor Contract; Anger Bargain) contains many of the free-floating motifs which crop up repeatedly in trickster tales.

Pipete agrees with his master that whoever complains first must have a strip of skin cut off his backbone. After hoodwinking his master on several minor points, Pipete is sent to guard hogs in the Devil's Woods. He clambers into a treetop with a big white cheese in hand. The devil stalks up and asks what the
cheese is. Pipete replies that it is some of his spittle. Asked to demonstrate his spitting ability, he shoots a pistol into the devil's face. Impressed, the devil invites him to engage in a boulder-throwing contest. The devil throws a rock against a tree, and the rock cracks in two. Pipete tosses his cheese, and it splatters into a million fragments. The devil heaves a boulder into the air and it falls a mile away. Pipete tosses a partridge and it never returns to earth. The last contest is to see which can carry the larger bundle of wood. The devil makes a bundle from six cartfuls of lumber. Pipete takes a ball of twine and starts to wind it around the whole woods. Convinced that Pipete is the stronger, the devil allows him to herd pigs in the woods. Pipete sells them and pockets the money. The master's wife tries to trick him by climbing into a tree and crying "coo coo." Pipete pretends to think she is a bird and shoots her. This is the last straw; the master complains! Pipete, in triumph, peels off the master's skin "de la nuque au coccyx."37

Perhaps the most popular story involving a series of cheats is the tale of The Rich and the Poor Peasant (T. 1535). Its first literary appearance was in the Latin poem "Unibos" in the 10th century, but it has had a long and rich life as an oral tale, appearing in
collections from Iceland to the Dutch East Indies. It appears in the French tradition of Missouri, Louisiana, and Canada, and there are eleven North American Indian versions. (Thompson, *The Folktales*, p. 165)

As one episode in the series of cheats, the poor peasant claims to have a magic flute which will bring the dead back to life. His wife, in cahoots, pretends to be dead, before the startled eyes of the rich peasant he "revives" her. The wealthy man eagerly buys the flute, kills his own wife, and then discovers that he is unable to bring her back to life. Further encounters with the poor peasant bring more frustrating deceptions, until finally the rich peasant loses all his wealth to his opponent and commits suicide.  

The story of the ogre blinded by his captive, who escapes by ruse (T. 1137), is best known to the western literary world through the version in the *Odyssey*, where Ulysses escapes from the cyclops, Polyphemus. An oral version of this type has been collected in the French Pyrénées, however, which gives evidence of being a primitive antecedent of the Homeric tale. In the early French version, the ogre gives the person who blinds him a magic ring which can talk. When the hero tries to escape, the ring cries, "Here I am! Here I am!" Unable to remove the ring, the desperate hero
bites his finger off and throws it into a crevasse. The ogre, deceived by the voice of the ring, hurtles into the abyss and is killed. Delarue offers the theory that Homer, familiar with this primitive oral version, modified it to avoid the mutilation of his hero.39

Another large group of anecdotes deals with the adventures of fools and numskulls. With the French disdain for the dupe and the poire (sucker), these tales have been very widely circulated.

The story is told around Puy-en-Velais40 of the seven fools who went for a walk to the mountain (T. 1287). On their return they counted to see if all were present, and since each failed to count himself, they concluded that their number had been reduced to six. Bewailing the seventh who must have been lost on the mountain, they raised such a fuss that a passerby stopped to help them. Hearing their tale, he pointed out a pat of cow dung in the road and suggested that each put a finger in it. When they withdrew their fingers, they were overjoyed to discover that the pat was decorated with seven holes and trooped off to celebrate their togetherness at the nearest tavern.

Sébillot (Auvergne, p. 90) tells another numskull tale collected near the Puy-de-Dome. Some men were building a bell tower and would let the workmen up and
down in a basket attached by ropes to the top of the
tower. One day the man who was holding the rope at the
top screamed out just as the basket was dangling in mid-
air, "Help! The rope is slipping!" "Spit on your
hands!" came the frenzied cry from the basket. The
fool above let go of the rope to follow instructions,
and the men in the basket plummeted to earth (T. 1250;
Motif J2133.5). The foolish advice, "Crache dans les
mains!" appears frequently in variants of this theme.

A similar tale, built on the theme of *la grappe
humaine*, is told of the naive villagers who wanted to
climb to the moon (T. 121; Motif J 2133.6). They
waited until it was full so that it could accommodate
more of them, and then placed all the ladders in the
village end to end, one atop the other. The mayor and
other dignitaries scrambled up to the end of the
ladder chain and were dismayed to discover that it did
not reach to the moon. "We need more ladders," they
shouted down. "There aren't any," came back the reply.
"Send up the ones at the bottom that nobody is standing
on," they cried. The numskulls on the ground jerked
out the bottom ladder and the moon seekers came tumbling
to earth. (Dévigne, *Le Légendaire des provinces*, p. 54)

Occasionally numskull tales have a happy ending,
such as those of Jean le Sot (or Jean le 'Diot). Cosquin
has recorded a version of *Les Trocs* in Lorraine (Dévigne, *Le Légendaire des provinces*, pp. 55-57) which tells how a none-too-bright man sets out to trade his cow. He exchanges it for a goat, which he barter for a cock, which he ends up trading for a sack of manure. His neighbor twits him for his gullibility and warns that his wife will be furious when she learns of his poor trades. The man bets 200 francs that his wife will not scold him, and sure enough, she manages to find some consoling feature for each increasingly undesirable bargain. As for the sack of manure, she concludes, "Tant mieux. Il en fallait pour le jardin. Nous ferons venir un beau bouquet." The neighbor was forced to pay his 200 francs and did it with good grace, admonishing Jean le Sot never to trade off his wife, for he would never find another like her.

The wily sorcerer Grillon is another French favorite. Through guile, a hungry man named Grillon (cricket) convinces the lady of a château that he is a skilled sorcerer. Her skeptical husband insists on one final test and hides a cricket between two plates. "Tell me what's hidden in here," he taunts the "sorcerer." Completely at a loss, Grillon moans, "Ah, he's got you now, poor Cricket." The astonished husband is convinced of his authenticity and rewards him with gold.
Blason Populaire

A sixth genre in the corpus of folk literature is the blason populaire, or "ethnic slur." Today when sociologists, psychologists and educators all talk glibly of "the group image" and "the self-concept," an understanding of the social role of the blason is important.

William Hugh Jansen has discussed the blason in terms of "the esoteric-exoteric factor." He points out how closely-knit, isolated groups, often with special skills or special characteristics, tend to develop an "esoteric" view (what they think of themselves and what they think others think of them). Such a group also develops an "exoteric view" (what they think of others and what they think others think they think). These viewpoints crystallize in the form of jokes, rhymes, and traditional sayings which in effect constitute national or regional character studies. Unfortunately, blasons serve to perpetuate prejudices between groups; but they have a positive effect in their tendency to create cohesiveness and group spirit.

The French have inter-group blasons which reflect their attitudes toward citizens of other countries. Toward the English, for example, the folk viewpoint,
doubtless influenced by the Hundred Years War, insisted that:

D'Angleterre,
Ne vient ni bon vent ni bonne guerre.¹⁴³

(From England comes neither a fair breeze nor a good war.)

Another traditional view was that the English were drunkards. Rabelais described Gargantua's précepteur as being "saoul comme un Anglois." Gaidoz and Sébillot, in their study Le Blason populaire de la France, cite a pageful of jibes built on the theme of English drunkenness (p. 333). Whether this particular outlook toward the English would hold true today is a matter for study. Images across international boundaries are subject to change—but very slowly.

Sometimes, too, they mirror reverse images. The English saying "To take French leave" (to sneak off without permission or without giving notice) is matched by the French counterpart, "Prendre congé à l'anglaise" (to leave in the English manner, i.e., to sneak off). Here each group blames the other for the same negative concept, a frequent occurrence in the battle of the blasons.

The various geographic régions within France also have their own esoteric-exoteric views. Inhabitants of the northern half of France are proud of their heritage
of Nordic seriousness, solidity and steadiness, and tend
to look with disapproval on the expansive, out-going
Meridional. The southerner, on the other hand, con-
siders himself to be hospitable, charming and gay, and
reacts with disfavor toward the heavy, unresponsive
lack of imagination in the northerner.

The Norman sees himself as a man of good sense,
endowed with prudence and a sense of caution; to the
rest of France he is grasping and sly. The Breton is
generally thought of as honest and a man of courage;
the Dauphinois as uncouth and canny; the Alsatian--
perhaps reflecting his German ties--is noted for his
stolid calm; the Gascon is pictured as proud, a great
bragger, but very charming withal.

**Blasons** occasionally celebrate a virtue, but
usually they are derogatory in nature. In the Hautes-
Vosges the inhabitants of Bresse are ridiculed by their
neighbors in this uncharitable fashion:

Les Bressauds ... sont les derniers animaux
que le bon Dieu a créés. S'ils ne marchent
pas sur quatre pattes, c'est qu'il ne restait
pas de matière assez pour les achever. Leur
langage est le dernier, le tout dernier de
ceux que l'on parle en ce monde; s'ils n'avaient
pas fini par le trouver, ils auraient été
forcés d'aboyer. ¹⁴

(The Bressauds are the last animals that God
created. The only reason they don't walk on
four legs is because He ran out of material
to finish them. Their language is the last
to be spoken in the world. If they hadn't succeeded in finding it, they would have been forced to bark.)

The members of certain professions are also subject to the barbs of the blasonneur. Millers are consistently portrayed as greedy and dishonest. Members of the clergy are frequently disparaged. Judges are traditionally accused of self-interest and injustice. "Aujourd'hui pendu, jugé demain" (Hanged today, judged tomorrow) describes the fate of many a hapless victim hauled up before a provincial judge.

Bladé cites an anecdote from Gascogne aimed at the incompetence of judges:

Un vieux juge a dormi toute l'audience.
On le réveille pour opiner.
--A mort. A mort.
--Mais il s'agit d'un pré.
--Qu'on le fauche!

(J. F. Bladé, Contes populaires de la Gascogne, III, p. 372.)

(An old judge had slept through the trial. The bailiff woke him to pass sentence. Blinking, the judge screamed, "Death! Death!"
"But, Your Honor, came the reply, "it's a case about a field."
"Then reap it! Reap it!"

This particular blason illustrates what Bergson meant when, speaking of the idée fixe and its relation to humor, he said, "At the root of the comic there is a sort of rigidity which compels its victims to keep strictly to one path." It is doubtful that the Frenchman who laughs ruefully at the old judge's one-track
sentence has ever analyzed just why he laughs, but laugh he does.

Teaching a unit on the regional slur can open up interesting discussions in an advanced language class. A product of the celebrated French esprit critique, the blason is admirably adapted for teaching French attitudes toward les autres, and also illustrates certain aspects of the French sense of humor. As Sauvè put it, "Le caractère national ne s'affirme nulle part davantage que dans ces jeux d'esprit ..." (L. F. Sauvè, Folklore des Hautes-Vosges, p. 59).

The teacher interested in coordinating language study with sociological materials could use the blason as a basis for an exploration of the nature of stereotypes and prejudices. The student will immediately recognize that we have examples of blasons in our own culture--the Texas millionaire, the crafty Vermonter, the California driver, the hick from Iowa, the crooked lawyer, the butcher with the heavy thumb, the old-maid librarian. When a student is aware from personal experience that one stereotype is inaccurate--and that it hurts--he becomes much more sophisticated about the stereotypes he is willing to accept. Perhaps no other source is as fruitful for a study of stereotypes as the folk genre of the blason populaire.
Saints' Legend

The genre known as the saints' legend was primarily a literary creation, but many have entered oral circulation and they have been extensively collected in France.

The great era of the saints' legends was from 1100 on to the end of the Middle Ages. The most important collection is the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, a 13th century Bishop of Genoa. Medieval art made much use of the "Golden Legend" and found it a rich store of motifs for depiction in stained glass windows and cathedral carvings. Émile Male cites numerous examples of these saints' legends captured in glass and stone in his fine work, *The Gothic Image*.46

The legends are characterized by a charming blend of pious faith and cheerful irreverence. One group presents the lives of the saints: Alexis, who died an unknown pilgrim in his own father's house; Christopher, who carried a little boy across a flooded stream and learned it was the Christ Child; Hubert, hunter of the Ardennes who encountered a stag with a cross of gold gleaming in his antlers.

Another group deals with the journeys of Christ and Saint Peter through the French countryside. The holy men, sometimes accompanied by other disciples,
wander from village to village, preaching the gospel, helping the poor, and chastizing the wicked. They are not above dabbling in the humdrum business of seedtime and harvest, of barter and begging. To the sophisticated reader of the 20th century, these tales seem incredibly naive; yet they depict the struggle of the common man to come to grips with problems of ethics and theology which can be pondered in the cool dark naves of the great cathedrals, but must be solved in the give and take of daily life.

The problem of how honest one must be in selling faulty merchandise is one example. The Bretons rationalize their traditional bartering practices with the legend of Saint Peter's cow, which also illustrates why French méfiance may be justified. On market day, Peter felt compelled to inform each prospective buyer that the cow he was selling was a fence-jumper. When his scrupulous honesty resulted in "No sale," Christ upbraided His disciple with the words: "Vieux sot! Dans ce pays, on ne déclare jamais les défauts d'une bête en foire, avant qu'ell soit vendue et que l'on tienne son argent."⁴⁷ (Stupid old man! In this country they never reveal an animal's faults until it's sold and the money is pocketed.)

The problem of why heaven permits evil to fall
upon the just as well as the unjust is also a subject of the saints' legends. One tale from the region of the Gironde tells how a greedy peasant woman refused to give any of her fresh bread to the hungry Jesus and Peter. As she shooed them off, Jesus said to his companion, "Peter, not another grain of wheat will grow in this whole village!" Peter objected, saying that God should not punish an entire population just because one woman refused to feed them. Jesus did not reply and they walked on through the rain. Soon they came upon a swarm of bees and Christ asked Peter to shelter the swarm under his shirt. After a few paces, one of the bees stung Peter. Enraged, the disciple crushed the entire swarm. Jesus said, "How do you justify this, Peter? A single bee stung you, yet you punished them all."

Other legends conclude with a bit of practical philosophy. Once Christ and Peter came upon a man standing beside an overturned cart, wringing his hands and whining for help. To Peter's amazement, Christ passed by without a flicker of compassion. Around the bend of the road they found another cart overturned. The peasant owner heaved and strained to right the load, all the while swearing terrible oaths to encourage his oxen. Peter stood aghast at the profanity, but Christ put his
shoulder to the cart and pushed it upright. The proverbial "Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera" (God helps those who help themselves) is the obvious theme of such a tale, a theme which illustrates the French values of individuality and self-sufficiency. (Bladé, Contes de Gascogne, p. 154) In one variant, Christ sets the cart on its wheels, but when the owner neglects to say "Thank you," He tips it back over again.

The folk imagination has vested Christ with startling physical characteristics. Several tales recount how Peter disobeys the Lord while trudging along the roads. Once they pass a frog pond and Christ tells Peter to give the hungry frogs his bread. Peter drops a few paces behind, secretes the bread in his robe to be eaten later, and deceptively plunks some pebbles into the pond. Later as Jesus is kneeling in prayer, the wind parts the long hair on the back of his head and reveals a third eye, unwinkingly surveying the world behind. Paralyzed with astonishment, Peter realizes that the Master has seen his every move. "C'est vrai, Pierre," said the Lord, "je vois tout, et le mal et le bien."49

One of the most interesting saints' legends, built around the unsuccessful imitation of a miracle (T. 753, Christ and the Smith), usually casts Saint Eloi (or Saint Martin) as the principle character.
Luzel gives a version from Basse-Bretagne in which Éloi, smitten with his own prowess as a blacksmith, erects a sign over his smithy:

Éloi, Forgeron et Maréchal-Ferrant
Maître des Maîtres
Maître sur Tous

(Eloi, Blacksmith. Master of Masters. Master of All)

Christ passes by, smiles at the sign, and applies for a job. When Éloi demands an exhibition of the stranger's skill, Christ rolls up His sleeves and makes four horseshoes in a wink. Then, before the flabbergasted Éloi, He cuts off the horse's foot, shoes it, trims it, and sticks it back on the horse. Éloi watches bug-eyed as the new smith repeats the procedure for the other three feet. He sends Christ on an errand and tries the new method on the horse of a wealthy client. He severs one foot but gets no farther, for the horse flops down in a pool of blood and the customer flies into a rage. Christ returns in time to replace the foot and save Éloi from his client's wrath, but He reprimands the crestfallen smith for his former arrogance: "Vous êtes peut-être maître des maîtres," He says, "mais 'maître sur tous' est de trop." Éloi removes the sign, accepts Christianity, and ultimately becomes a saint.

For all their tendency to invest Christ with human weaknesses (in one variant of T. 330, The Smith and
Death, Christ tumbles the devil headfirst into an outdoor privy and imprisons him for eternity) the attitude of the folk is never disrespectful, even when the Saviour's conduct is enigmatic in the extreme. One very primitive tale describes a visit by Jesus, Peter, John and Phillip to a tiny Breton village. The Master goes on to Cornouaille, requesting the saints to stay behind and build a church. His only stipulation is that they should do no work on Sunday. When He returns, the church is ready for dedication, but Phillip admits that he had made the cross and set it atop the steeple on the Sabbath. As punishment, Jesus orders Phillip to enter the church and set it on fire. Phillip obeys and is burned to death in the blaze. "Pauvre Phillipe," is the Lord's only comment. Christ searches through the rubble until He finds a charred remnant of bone. "Ah ha," says He, "this bone is shaped just like a soup spoon," and He puts it into His pocket. Later, eating soup at a farmer's house, Christ offers the serving girl a taste from the spoon. She gulps, and the spoon slides down her throat. As a result, she becomes pregnant, gives birth to a child in the stable, and names him Phillip. Two years later the toddler miraculously grows to adult height and is recognized by Christ as Phillip the erring disciple. Rejoicing, the Master and his followers
continue their journey through Brittany.

The central motif of this legend (E 607.2: Person transforms self, is swallowed and reborn in new form) is found in the tale of The Two Brothers (T. 303), one of the oldest tales known. The first version on record is in an Egyptian papyrus dating from 1250 B.C. (Thompson, The Folktale, p. 275). The European version of The Two Brothers, which is thought to have originated in France, may or may not be related to the Egyptian tale, but they do share motifs in common. That this central motif—in circulation at least twelve centuries before the birth of Christ—is still told today as an integral part of a saints' legend, gives the student an appreciation of the roots which stretch deep into the primitive layer of oral narrative.

In contrast to the antiquity of some motifs is the modern twist given to an anecdote collected near La Gironde in 1918.52 God, disguised as an old man, is turned away from door after door in Southwest France, but is finally welcomed by the owner of a dismal hut. The "phylloxera" has killed off the peasant's vines and he can offer le bon Dieu only a cup of water. As recompense for his hospitality, God turns to the empty wine cask and causes a stream of excellent vintage to flow perpetually from the open spigot.
The Gallic tendency toward irreverence is mirrored in the matter-of-fact, almost fraternal attitude displayed toward the saints and Christ in these legends. The tales also illuminate such social values as the dignity of hard work, the need to be honest, the responsibilities of hospitality, the value of Christian obedience, and the pitfalls of vanity and greed.

The Proverb

The proverb in France has played an important role in both formal and folk literature. It is not easy, however, to pinpoint a definition. Archer Taylor, who has studied the proverb on an advanced level, maintains that "... the definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking ... An incomprehensible quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not ... Let us be content with recognizing that a proverb is a saying current among the folk."53

Literary collections of proverbs have been used mainly for pedagogical and didactic purposes. The proverb on the lips of the folk has served essentially the same function--it captures the ethical standards of society in a form that is readily remembered, swiftly said.
Sometimes the folk incorporate a proverb as the punch line of an anecdote, such as the saints' legend previously discussed built around the proverb "Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera." Another legend, which might also be listed as a pourquoi tale, recounts how Christ and Peter strolled past a woman who was sitting idly beside the road, staring into space with a bored and vacant look. Le Seigneur reached into His pocket, pulled out the first fleas known to mankind, and tossed them at the woman with these words: "Femme, l'oisiveté est mère de tous les vices; voilà de quoi t'occuper."\(^{54}\)
The proverb "L'oisiveté est la mère de tous les vices" is listed in a very early collection of French proverbs\(^{55}\) along with a similar expression, "En chômant, on apprend à mal faire."

Closely akin to the proverb is the proverbial phrase. While the proverb is inflexible in form, the phrase can shift its grammatical content according to time and person. For instance, the phrase "To build castles in Spain" (Bâtit des châteaux en Espagne) may occur as "Let's build castles...","You are only building castles...","They might as well build castles...", and many other forms. This versatility makes the proverbial phrase especially valuable as an oral drill in the audio-lingual classroom.
Proverbial comparisons, such as "Il est bon comme le pain," or "Elle est belle comme le jour" are also a part of folk literature and should become a working segment of the language student's vocabulary.

One type of proverb especially popular in Germany and Sweden is the "Wellerism." It is named after the Charles Dickens character, Sam Weller, who sprinkled this type of proverb liberally throughout his speech. The distinctive feature of a Wellerism is that it consists of a direct quotation followed by a phrase telling who said it and under what circumstances. The form itself is much older than Dickens. Plato made use of the Wellerism ("The water will tell you," said the guide when the travelers asked how deep the river was.")\(^56\) So did the medieval monastic tradition ("Something is better than nothing," said the wolf when he swallowed the louse.")\(^57\)

Balzac records a French example in *Les Paysans*: "Faut pas cracher sur la vendage," a dit le papa Noé. (You musn't spit on the harvest," as Papa Noah said.) French Wellerisms have never been collected. It would be an interesting project for students spending the summer in France.
The genre known as the formula tale (sometimes called chain tale or cumulative tale) is also found in France. A typical formula tale well-known to English-speaking people is The House That Jack Built. This is not widespread on the continent of Europe, but other chain tales, such as The Death of the Little Hen (T. 2022) and The Fleeing Pan-cake (T. 2025), known to Americans as The Gingerbread Man, are found in France and other European countries. (Thompson, The Folktale, pp. 230-231)

Students of French familiar with the popular song "Madame La Marquise" might be surprised to learn that this "modern" variant is based on a cumulative tale dating back to a 15th century Latin work entitled Disciplina Clericalis. The Disciplina itself is a translation of a group of Arabian tales known as Kalila and Dimna, which in turn is based on the ancient Indian collection of animal tales called the Panchatantra. The Panchatantra was composed in Kashmir about 200 B.C., but many of the individual tales it contains were already ancient by that date. Thus the popular song may represent a tradition going back over 2000 years.

"Madame La Marquise" deals with a telephone con-
versation between La Marquise and her servant, "James." The Marquise is away from home on business and calls her servant to check on things at the manor. The greeting, "Allô, allô, James. Quelles nouvelles?" is repeated with each verse, and each time the servant responds that all is well—except for a minor little incident. As the chain builds, it develops that the Marquise's favorite horse has died—burned in a fire that destroyed the stables—which caught ablaze from embers when the manor house went up in smoke—incidentally burning Madame's husband to a crisp.

Mais à part ça, Madame La Marquise,
Tout va très bien, tout va très bien.

The tale is typed as T. 2040, Motif Z41.10, and is known to folklorists as The Climax of Horrors.

Another sub-division of the formula tale is the round, or circular tale, usually a very short, often silly little anecdote which turns back upon itself and has no ending (Motif Z 17).

Paul Delarue (Borzoï Book of French Folk Tales, p. 355) cites the following circular tale, collected in the Sologne in 1944:

Three brigands were seated on a stone. The youngest said to the oldest,
"Tell us a story, Edward." And Edward began:
"Four brigands were seated on a stone. The youngest said to the oldest: "Tell us a story, Edward." And Edward began: "Five brigands were seated on a stone ...
The circular tale is more common as a folksong than as a tale. The well-known collection of Jameson and Heacox, Chants de France, includes a fine example:

Ils étaient quatre
Qui voulaient se battre
Contre trois
Qui ne voulaient pas.
Le quatrième dit:
"Moi, je n'm'en mêl pas!"
Mais ça n'empêch' pas
Qu'ils étaient quatre
Qui voulaient se battre
Contre trois
Qui ne voulaient pas.
Le quatrième ...

The Riddle

The riddle (devinette) is still popular in France and supplies one further illustration of the French pre-occupation with the intellectual puzzle, the play on words, the wittily turned phrase. Almost every major collection of folk materials contains a liberal sprinkling of riddles which could be used in the language classroom.

The Comptine

Traditional counting rhymes (comptines) are in current use today among French children. An excellent collection of these was published in 1961 by La Communauté Radiophonique des Programmes de Langue
Française under the title *Les Comptines de langue française*. The magazine *Le Français dans le monde* (No. 30, Jan.-Feb., 1965) contains an interesting article by R. Nataf which defines the comptine, presents several examples, and shows how comptines can be used effectively in the classroom.

Even high school students appreciate such a contemporary comptine as the one allegedly chanted under the balcony of President and Mrs. Kennedy by an enthusiastic Parisian throng:

Kenne-un  
Kenne-deux  
Kenne-trois  
Kenne-quatre  
Kenne-cinq  
Kenne-six  
Kenne-sept  
Kenne-huit  
Kenne-neuf  
Kenne-dix! (Kennedys!)

Advanced students enjoy creating their own comptines involving French numbers to produce puns.

Other Genres

Other genres are scattered throughout the French folk corpus. A fluid form somewhere between tale and ballad appears in versions of *l'Os qui chante* (T. 780), known in English as *The Singing Bone*, and in *La Marâtre* (T. 720, *The Step-Mother*), where poetry or
song is interspersed with the narrative. Marie-Louise Tenèze\textsuperscript{61} discusses \textit{La Marâtre} as an illustration of the close bond which lies between this category of tale and the folk song.

Vinson\textsuperscript{62} cites another genre, the \textit{pastorale}, which he uncovered in the Basque country and claims is a remnant of folk drama.

Examples of the folk sermon have also been recorded by collectors. One of these, "Le Sermon de Bacchus," was the special oral property of an old man who delivered it at village weddings. The sermon purported to explain why a good Christian should drink wine instead of water. Water, as every reader of the Bible knows, was used by God to destroy the world; the only man saved was Noah, a vintner by trade. The sermon continued in this vein and was virtually guaranteed to aroarse the thirst and quiet the conscience of every wedding guest. Its merry delivery also insured the old man with invitations for many a hearty wedding feast.\textsuperscript{63}
CONCLUSION

It is evident that French folk literature covers a wide scope of both form and content. From the complex Märchen to the simple proverb, from the poignant légende to the ribald facétie, folk genres offer a versatile and many-faceted adjunct to the teaching of culture.
NOTES


8. Ibid., p. 27 (footnote).

9. Ibid., p. 29.


15. Ibid., p. 203.


17. Ibid. p. 394.


22. Ibid., pp. 285-287.


25. Revue des traditions populaires, I (1886), p. 120.


27. E. H. Carnoy, Littérature orale de la Picardie,


29. Revue des traditions populaires, XXIX-XXX, p. 82.


31. Ibid., p. 218.


35. Ibid., p. 739.


38. F. M. Luzel, Contes populaires de Basse Bretagne, III, Les Littératures populaires de toutes les nations, p. 414.


42. William Hugh Jansen, "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore," in The Study of Folklore, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey;

44. L. F. Sauvè, Folklore des Hautes-Vosges, I Les Littératures populaires de toutes les nations, XXIX, p. 69.


49. Ibid., p. 169.

50. Luzel, Légendes Chrétiennes, p. 93.

51. Ibid., p. 40.


54. Sébilelott, La Littérature orale de l'Auvergne, p. 120.


57. Ibid., p. 205.


CHAPTER IV

CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOLK LITERATURE
TO THE TEACHING OF CULTURE

In Chapter II an attempt was made to delineate
the French national character in so far as it is re-
lected in societal themes and value systems. Chapter
III introduced the reader to the various genres of
folk literature in France. Chapter IV will attempt to
show how French folk literature can be used in the
secondary language classroom to impart insights into the
French character and French patterns of living.

Folk Literature: A Link with the Past

There is currently a trend among educators toward
the use of contemporary materials. "Bring today into the
classroom" is the prevailing motto. No one would argue
that "today" does not deserve a stellar role in the cur-
riculum. The dimension of the "now" is important--but
it is not enough. Perspective comes with the intellec-
tual awareness of other dimensions--those that draw the
mind's eye backward to pathways traveled long ago and
provide a basis for projecting the horizons of the future.

This idea was stressed in the Report of the Literature Committee of the School and College Conference, 1942.¹

Even when a student reads what may be for him the most appropriate contemporary work, it is important that he should be encouraged to view it as something with roots, which may not be properly judged or understood apart from the literature of the past ... Students should be guided to see literature as a continuous process with its yesterdays, its today, and its tomorrow all closely related.

Those language teachers who are concerned with imparting the dimension of the past frequently turn to history for the solution. "Culture books" are filled with chronological junkets from ancient Gaul to the battlefield at Verdun. Too often, however, the tables of dates and regimes leave a sterile imprint of the past which has little relevance to the world of today. As Roger Dévigne put it:

L'histoire, avec ses graphiques et ses synchronismes, passait à côté de notre peuple sans le connaître, comme une marquise dans son carrosse.²

(History, with its diagrams and tables, passed to one side of our people without really knowing them, like a marquise in her carriage.)

It is this element of humanity--the feeling of rapport with generations past--which folk literature can give
to the student of today.

Douglas Kennedy, in an article on "Folklore and Human Ecology,"\(^3\) speaks of two kinds of awareness which modern man possesses. One, represented by the head, is used calculatingly to probe and analyze. The other, represented by the heart, is a sort of "ageless instinctive awareness" which comes from an inner folk layer and is reflected in the tales, sayings, songs, and dances of the people. "The head in our modern educational system receives a degree of cultivation that is intense and sustained," writes Kennedy. "The heart is fobbed off with a little art, a dash of poetry, some music, some dancing, all already boned, filleted, and dehydrated by calculating heads."

**Folk Literature: A Link with Others**

The awareness of the past which folk literature can impart leads to an appreciation of the universality of folk thought and belief. "We need only scratch the surface of our dearly bought civilization," Stith Thompson reminds us, "to find much that we share with all men."\(^4\)

Paul Brewster emphasizes that "... the study of folklore is not narrowing but broadening, leading not only to a knowledge of the traditions, beliefs, and
mores of other peoples, but also to a realization of the essential and fundamental likenesses existing between national and racial groups. 5

And the same idea was expressed by Paul Hazard when he wrote that the task of language professors is "... to make others understand that humanity is not limited to a single moment—the present—nor to a single nation, however powerful it might be; rather it is their task to link the present to the past and the nation to all other nations ..." 6

By its timeless nature, folk literature expresses those joys and sorrows, those fears and hatreds which are common to "the common man" the world over. There is a bond created when two people realize that they love the same good yarn, relish the same funny joke, weep at the same lonely ballad. "The truths we keep coming back and back to" 7 are shared by men across all boundaries. Folk literature can give this sense of the universal to today’s student.

How, then, can it also be used to illuminate what is essentially "the French way" of looking at the world?
The Functions of Folklore

Anthropologists have made clear that it is important to understand just what folk literature "does" for the folk. William R. Bascom has found that it fulfills four separate functions. The first is simply that of providing entertainment; the use of humor and fantasy to bring pleasure. The second is less obvious—the role folklore plays in validating culture. It justifies institutions and rituals to those who are influenced by them. Its myths are "charters for belief" on the religious level, while its proverbs provide models for action on the secular plane. Closely allied to this is the third function of folklore, which deals with the education of the young. It is here that fables and tales which incorporate morals or convey attitudes and principles for daily living play a major role. The fourth function is that of forcing conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior held by society. Social approval or disapproval is brought to bear through the cleverly timed proverb, riddle, or anecdote.

To the extent that folklore sets the pattern for behavior and pressures its audience to conform, it can be said to serve as a "mirror of culture." But there is a paradoxical element involved: some tales deliberately
violate the existing social norms and take great pleasure in doing it. These tales, Bascom believes, act as a social safety valve. They permit the teller and the listener to engage vicariously in an act which is really prohibited by society. The rebellious feelings which must be suppressed in daily life are thus released in an acceptable way. In the long run, such tales have the effect of preserving existing social institutions.

In French folk literature, the facéties which place the clergy or the overlord in a humiliating—sometimes obscene—position provide an example of this aspect of folklore.

Keeping in mind this limitation to the "mirror of culture" concept, it would seem an exciting prospect to take a typically French folktale and analyze the "culture" that is "mirrored" therein. The only flaw in this reasoning is that the "typically French folktale" is not easy to find.

As the preceding chapter emphasized, tales are international coin. The comparative study by Ralph S. Boggs on the folk tales of ten countries made clear that the corpus of folk tales varies but little from country to country. France was not included among the countries studied by Boggs, but his findings that the entire range of variation among all ten peoples in the different
groups of tales lies within a range of about 20% has significance for the student of French lore. Boggs concludes that "... the common stock of folktales remains, on the whole, unchanged as it passes from people to people." 9

Thus the teacher who uses French folk literature to teach cultural content must be aware of the limitations. Obviously an 18th century tale told in 20th century France does not "prove" that Frenchmen wear sabots, set out cream for the hearth brownie, and believe in werewolves. Nor does it validate such a statement as, "French peasants hate authority more than any other peasants--see what they did in the French Revolution." Nevertheless, French folk literature can make a real contribution to the cultural content.

There may be no exclusively French tale, but the French do have a preference for certain types of tales. Those which express their feelings about the world are told more frequently than those with which they do not identify. And though tales do not prove that a trait is exclusively French, French traits do tend to give a characteristic flavor to many of the tales that they tell. Stith Thompson confirms this when he says that where the French have taken over tales from other cultures "... they have imbued them with an unmistak-
ably French style and spirit." (The Folktale, p. 18)

An Outline of Relationships

In Chapter II a simple organizational scheme was devised which could be used by the language teacher in discussing the French personality. The "patterns for living" which influence the personality were shown to begin with l'Individu and grow outward in widening circles which included La Famille, Les Autres, and La Patrie. Aspects of the French personality were discussed under each section.

But the entire scheme becomes useful to the classroom teacher only when specific genres of folk literature are added to the outline. These are the genres which may be used to illuminate a characteristic trait or concept.
### Relationship Between Concepts and Genres

**Characteristics and Concepts**  
**Folk Genre**

#### INDIVIDU

**I. Intellectual self-sufficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Esprit critique; esprit non-conformiste; esprit anti-totalitaire.</th>
<th>Blason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Humor: closely linked to intelligence; characteristically irreverent; esprit gaulois.</td>
<td>Animal tale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**II. Egocentricity: stress on individual; "sens de l'équipe" rare; intéressé.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proverb</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**III. Emphasis on rationality**

| A. Logic | Cross-cultural comparison of Märchen |
| B. Clarté | Proverb |
| C. Équilibre | Märchen |
| D. Mesure | Proverb |

#### LA FAMILLE

**I. Child molded within foyer**

| A. Art de vivre: societal values; savoir plaire; formules de politesse; respect. | Sage |
| B. Religious training | Proverbs |

**II. Intra-family relationships**

| Märchen |
| Devinette |
| Comptine |
| Animal tale |
This survey of the relationship between social patterns and folk genres shows that two of the four areas—l'Individu and Les Autres—find much illustrative material in folk literature. Folk genres are less helpful in depicting French family life.

In their chapter on the French family, Métraux and
Mead suggest that the relationship between sisters is the relationship most often fraught with hostility and conflict in the French family. According to these authors, sisters frequently compete openly for the affection of their father and complain that their mother displays favoritism toward the other sister. For Métraux and Mead, this sororal tension is mirrored in French folk literature:

Des soeurs aînées vindicatives et des jeunes soeurs mal traitées sont des figures que l'on rencontre constamment dans les légendes françaises. Lorsque le film contemporain cherche à traiter le sujet des relations entre soeurs, l'hostilité prend volontiers les traits de l'envie—la soeur aînée déçue éprouvant de l'envie pour ce qu'elle a perdu ou n'a jamais eu, la précoce soeur plus jeune enviant ce pour quoi elle n'est pas encore prête. (p. 61)

(Vindictive older sisters and persecuted younger sisters are figures which appear constantly in French tales. When the contemporary movie treats the subject of relationships between sisters, hostility frequently takes the form of envy: the older sister, disappointed, feeling envy for what she has never had; the precocious younger sister wanting what she is not yet ready for.)

It seems unfair, however, to point to wicked sisters in folk tales as evidence of animosity between sisters in contemporary family life unless one is also willing to point to cruel stepmothers in folk tales as evidence of cruel stepmothers in modern society. It is more likely these and other intra-family relation-
ships in French folk tales are simply the conventional motifs of international folklore.

Métraux and Mead discuss another aspect of folklore in relation to the education of the child within the foyer. This is the croquemitaine—French equivalent of the "bogeyman" in American society. A French folk-song which describes this "terreur de tout pays," depicts him as having "... les doigts crochus, les grosses dents, et un grand sac pour les méchants." Métraux and Mead explain his role in the life of the French child in this way:

En France, les enfants apprennent de bonne heure qu'il existe en un lieu vague, hors de la maison, un sinistre personnage mythologique du sexe masculin auquel on attribue une violence extraordinaire, une sexualité destructrice et d'autres formes caractéristique d'agressivité. Ce croquemitaine a de nombreux noms et prend diverses apparences: loup-garou, Ramponneau, Lustucru, Croquemitaine, etc.; les noms et les histoires de meurtriers sadiques peuvent aussi lui être associés, ou, d'une manière encore plus vague, l'homme noir, ou les Bohémiens ou les gendarmes, etc. (p. 46)

(In France children learn early that there exists in a vague, far-away place a sinister person of masculine sex to whom is attributed great violence, destructive sexuality, and other forms of aggressiveness. This bogey-man has many names and takes different forms: the werewolf, Ramponneau, Lustucru, Croquemitaine, etc. The names and legends of sadistic murderers may also be associated with him, or more vaguely, the black man, the gypsies, the police, etc.)

Métraux and Mead hold that the child's fear of the Croquemitaine is suppressed as he grows older, but
often re-appears in adolescence or adulthood as a symbol of the fear or hostility the individual has suppressed toward his father. As supporting evidence, they point to the results of Rorschach tests given to their French informants: with "remarkable regularity" the ink-bLOTS evoked dark and threatening monsters. Card No. 4, which specialists say is likely to evoke the father image, brought forth the most direct references to a menacing figure--named by one informant specifically as the croquemitaine.

This linking of the folk monster to the father image by Métraux and Mead has proved especially irritating to French readers. But Henri Mendras, in his discussion of the "mentalité paysanne" writes along somewhat similar lines:

... les contes pour enfants sont peuplés d'êtres fantastiques--le garafatounas, l'ogre, le loup-garou, ou simplement le Père Fouettard--qui emportent les petits garçons et les petites filles et leur infligent toutes sortes de tourments; les bonnes fées sont bien plus rares que les méchantes. Il n'est pas étonnant qu'une telle image du monde extérieure, imprimée dès l'enfance, crée chez l'adulte un besoin éperdu de sécurité, un refus systématique de tout ce qui comporte un risque, enfin un souci permanent de protection.

(Tales for children are peopled with fantastic beings--the ogre, the werewolf, or simply Old Father Whipper, who carries off little boys and girls and inflicts all kinds of tortures on them; good fairies are much rarer than wicked ones. It's no wonder that such a view of the world, reenforced from infancy on, creates in
the adult a desperate need for security, a consistent refusal of anything that carries the element of risk; in short, a permanent concern for protection. (H. Mendras, La France Contemporaine, p. 333.)

While such speculations are of interest to the teacher, it would be unwise to use them as the basis for classroom generalizations. The role of folk literature in the pattern of family life is primarily for amusement and for informal instruction. It is difficult—if not impossible—to find tales which illuminate intra-family relationships.

The fourth category, La Patrie, is not richly endowed with pertinent folk literature. There are isolated anecdotes referring to kings and warriors, some dating from the literary source of the medieval romance; but France has no great national folk epic such as the Finnish Kalevala in which heroes of gigantic stature battle for the fatherland.

But if folk literature can be used only with reservations in illustrating aspects of La Famille and La Patrie, it can be most helpful in teaching cultural insights relative to l'Individu and to his relationships with Les Autres. Here, indeed, there is much overlapping, for the esprit critique fostered by the emphasis on intellect and reason in the individual is heightened by
the feeling of méfiance directed toward les autres. And the concept of intense individualism (chacun pour soi) is the foundation for la réserve and for attitudes toward the stranger.

Making the Irrational Rational:

A Study of Märchen

The language teacher who wishes to gain insights into the French emphasis on rationality would find a comparative study of Märchen a fruitful approach. Paul Delarue, one of the greatest French folklorist of this century, presents an admirable discussion of this trait in his book Le Conte populaire français. Having examined some 10,000 tales collected in France, Delarue sets forth some observations that carry weight. To illustrate his points, he compares the French tale to the tales of other European countries and finds that the French tale illuminates the rational approach to life which has been the "French way" since Descartes.

Setting

The German tale is usually set im finstren walde --deep in the black heart of a sinister forest. An air of foreboding hangs over the scene. The Celtic tale takes as its setting some far-away, mystic isle, or a
sea-swept coast bordered by mysteriously beckoning moors. The French setting, on the other hand, is usually prosaic—a vineyard, a sunlit farm, the road going past the mill.

Supernatural Characters

The German tale is endowed with a rich variety of gnomes, dwarfs, wild men, swan maiden, water nixies, talking horse heads, men of iron and men of wood. The French cast of characters is much more restricted; fairies and ogres make up the usual roster, with a few imaginative exceptions in the Midi and in Brittany. The brownies of Brittany have a close affinity to the Celtic lore of Ireland and are unpopular elsewhere in France.

There is a consistent French tendency to simplify the supernatural element. The international tale of the Swan Maidens (Filles-Cygnes) provides a good example. In France, the tale is found in many stages of transition from the marvelous to the real. Only a few versions still exist where the maidens actually fly to the forest pool as swans, remove their feathers, and bathe in the form of young ladies. In most French versions the girls are strictly human beings. The supernatural element has been so suppressed that the only
trace of the original metamorphoses lies in their names: "La Plume Verte," "La Plume Jaune," "La Plume Blanche"; or perhaps "Tourterelle," "Colombe," and other birds. The actual robes of feathers have become colored dresses. And in the final stage of rationalization, the filmy plumage is reduced to a green garter.

Magical Objects

The French tale relies much less frequently on magical objects than do the tales of the Celts or the Germans. The talking mirror in the German version of Snow White, so picturesquely portrayed by Walt Disney, has disappeared completely from the French versions of Blanche-Neige. The wicked step-mother becomes jealous of her daughter's beauty because she notices it herself, or because she overhears the servants admiring the lovely girl. In contrast, in the Celtic tale the wicked step-mother questions a talking trout in a fountain; in Italian and North African versions she talks to the sun which sees everything.

The French desire to make the irrational rational is seen in a bit of scholarly controversy dealing with the famous glass slipper in the tale of Cinderella (Cendrillon). In Perrault's version of the tale the slipper is referred to as being made of verre (glass).
But Balzac, 150 years later, could not bear the improbable thought of a slipper concocted in crystal. To his logical mind, there must be an explanation for such an illogical idea. Finally he worked out a neat theory: the slipper had originally been made of vair, a type of squirrel fur which was formerly used to line clothing. Because the term vair had fallen out of common usage, the editor of Perrault's manuscript had mistaken it for verre and had thus produced the preposterous glass slipper. Balzac's theory was adopted immediately by the rational French: Littré wrote this tidbit in his dictionary under the word vair:

C'est parce qu'on n'a pas compris ce mot maintenant peu usité qu'on a imprimé dans plusieurs éditions du conte de Cendrillon souliers de verre, ce qui est absurde, au lieu de souliers de vair, c'est-à-dire souliers fourrés de vair. (Delarue, Le Conte populaire, p. 40)

Littré's "ce qui est absurde" is a perfect summation of the French preference for the logical.

Delarue, on the other hand, points up that to the world of folklore, glass slippers are no more absurd than seven league boots. Perrault, when he wrote "pantoufle de verre," was only conforming to tradition, for the glass slipper motif occurs in tales from Spain, Scotland, and Ireland in versions older than that of Perrault and in languages where there is no possibility
of a homonymn which permits confusion between "slipper of fur" and "slipper of glass." (Delarue, p. 41)

Human Characters

The human beings who populate the French tales are more inclined than their foreign counterparts to exercise human capacities rather than to rely upon magical powers. The tale of Bluebeard (Barbe-Bleue) provides a ready example. In German, Scandinavian, Italian and Greek versions the villain is a monstrous ogre, a wizard, a troll in animal form, or a dwarf. In the earliest French versions he is a genuine ogre, but he quickly becomes merely a wicked man, and by the time of Perrault, the villain has virtually turned into a member of the bourgeoisie. The only element of the supernatural which remains is the spot of blood which cannot be removed from the key to the forbidden chamber.

The ballad of Jean Renaud illustrates a similar paring-away of the supernatural. The Scandinavian version tells of the meeting of a knight with an elfin maid, his refusal to dance with her, the fatal curse which she inflicts upon him, his subsequent death, and the questions which his wife asks as, having given birth to their child, she hears the tolling of his funeral bells. The Breton version shortens the fairy episode: a count
meets a korrigane (fairy) while hunting game for his wife and newborn child; she asks him to marry her, but he refuses and death is his punishment. The questions of the young wife as she hears the funeral bells become increasingly important. In the French version, all the elements of the fantastic have disappeared. Only the dialogue between the bereaved wife and her mother-in-law remains—a strictly human drama.

Delarue ascribes to the French tale a certain douceur humaine which is lacking in the tales of some neighboring countries. The French desire to eliminate barbaric detail is in accord with their characteristic adherence to a sense of proportion, moderation, and balance. It is true that in French tales, wolves eat grandmothers, children push witches into ovens, and murderers are put to death—but there is never a deliberate reveling in the agonized details.

A comparison of the French and German versions of Cinderella illustrates this point. In the Grimm version, the wicked sisters, trying desperately to squeeze into the dainty slipper, finally whittle their feet with a knife to force them into the shoe. It is the oozing of the blood onto their white stockings that reveals the hoax. After the wedding, pigeons swoop down on the hap-
less sisters and tear out an eye from each. These elements of vengeance and gore are missing from the French versions. In the Italian version, Cinderella herself is not above a bit of skulduggery: yielding to the urgings of her evil governess, she slams the heavy lid of a clothes press onto her stepmother's head and crushes her skull.

In all of these examples, the characteristic tendency of the French people to make the unreal real becomes evident. Delarue's own summary provides a fitting conclusion to this discussion:

Mais ce qu'on peut reconnaître avec certitude, c'est que les caractères acquis par notre conte au terme de son évolution répondent à un trait dominant de l'esprit du pays qui fut celui de Descartes. Lorsqu'il simplifie le merveilleux, élimine les êtres fantastiques, substitute à l'enchaînement merveilleux un enchaînement humain, humanise et adoucit ce qui lui paraît barbare, le bon peuple de France obéit à une tendance qui est bien en effet de chez lui: le goût du rationnel. (pp. 45-46)

(One can recognize with certainty that the characteristics acquired by our folktale in the course of its evolution correspond to the dominant trait of the country that was Descartes'. When they simplify the marvelous, eliminate supernatural beings, substitute a logical chain of events for an illogical one, humanize and soften what seems to them barbaric, the good people of France are following a well-entrenched tendency: an appreciation for the rational.)
TEACHING UNIT I

LE GOÛT DU RATIONNEL: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF TWO MÄRCHEN

I. Considerations.-- The Märrchen to be used in this study is Cinderella. The approach is geared to advanced high school students of French. Because the intent of the unit is not to teach Cinderella as a "fairy story," the dignity of the adolescent student should not be threatened. The purpose is to use a folk tale as told by the French in contrast to the same tale as told by the Germans in an attempt to analyze certain cultural differences.

One weakness is the use of the English translation of the Grimm version, although the English text is only read silently to convey content and is never used orally. The discussion contrasting the two versions will be conducted entirely in French.

The time spent on the unit is flexible—probably three or four days, depending upon the response of the class and their interest in dramatizing the tale à la mode de Grimm as contrasted to la mode de Perrault.
II. **Teacher preparation.**—The teacher should first deepen his own understanding by reading the Delarue discussion in *Le Conte populaire français*, I, and then reading as many versions of T. 510 as he can find. (See Delarue and Tenèze, *Le Conte populaire français* II, pp. 245-255, for the text of *La Cendrée* (version poitevine) and for a complete list of other versions. The Grimm version should also be studied. The Perrault version may be found in *Les Contes de Perrault*, Union Générale d'Éditions et Libraires Associés, Paris, 1964, pp. 173-186.)

III. **Listening skills.**—The teacher introduces the theory of Paul Delarue:

   ...le bon peuple de France obéit à une tendance qui est bien en effet de chez lui: le goût du rationnel.

The teacher then presents in lecture form the broad points of comparison between French and other European tales (see preceding section).

To insure that communication is taking place, the lecture is frequently interrupted for questions such as:

1. Donnez-moi un synonyme pour le mot prosaïque.

2. Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'une métamorphose? Pouvez-vous citer des exemples?
3. Décrivez la mise en scène des contes allemands; des contes français.

4. Commentez la phrase: Le contes français ont une certaine douceur humaine.

5. Expliquez les mots: "le goût simplificateur."

If the students have failed to grasp a point, the teacher re-phrases that portion of the material. He may then call for a student to paraphrase the troublesome phrase or idea. At all times the teacher should encourage the students to initiate questions or observations of their own.

IV. Reading skills.-- The Perrault version of Cendrillon is passed out to each student. Unfamiliar vocabulary items are discussed and clarified. Because the plot is already well-known to the students, the usual guidance-type questions are unnecessary.

Students read the story through once. Then they listen to a tape of the text read by a native speaker, following the text from their own copy as they listen. The teacher may ask the class to read selected passages aloud, with the tape and then without the tape.

The Grimm version of the story is passed
out in English translation and is read silently by the students.

V. Speaking skills.— The teacher conducts an oral comparison of the two versions, taking up one by one the following points:

A. Le milieu
B. Les êtres fantastiques
C. Les objets et les matières magiques
D. La douceur humaine
E. Le contenu social

Students are frequently asked to read aloud the sentence or paragraph which substantiates their response.

As an interesting sidelight, the teacher may introduce the controversy over verre v. vair, presenting Balzac's theory as evidence of the French goût du rationnel, the rapid adoption of his thesis by Littré, and Delarue's effort to correct the misunderstanding.

As the comparison unfolds, the teacher keeps a running tally on the blackboard of Caractéristiques allemandes and Caractéristiques françaises. Thus the oral forms of the language are reenforced by the written forms.

When the comparison is tabulated on the board, the teacher asks such questions as:
A. l'Opinion de M. Delarue est-elle justifiée?

B. Qu'est-ce qui permet de dire que les Français se dirigent vers le rationalisme?

C. Quels sont les dangers de tels jugements?

VI. Advanced activities.-- Superior students might be encouraged to dramatize a well-known folktale before the class, first à la mode de Grimm, and then à la mode de Perrault. A French text of the tale could help supply correct grammatical structures and ideas for vocabulary. Even advanced high school students are probably not ready for creative use of the language, and should be urged to employ familiar structures and recombinations of material. This should not stifle the satire and humor inherent in the dramatizations.

VII. Evaluation.-- Students may be asked to consider a list of traits and characteristics and to decide if these are or are not representative of French folktales. They are asked to summarize in one paragraph the meaning of le goût du rationnel.
TEACHING UNIT II

THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUALISME

I. Considerations. — The French concept of *individualisme* has many facets. The purpose of this unit is to show how contemporary French materials may be combined with materials from French folk literature to illuminate some of these aspects.

The aspects of *individualisme* which serve as the focus for this unit are:

A. Intellectual independence, which fosters:
   1. l'Esprit critique
   2. l'Esprit anti-conformiste
   3. l'Esprit anti-totalitaire

B. *La méfiance*: mistrust of the motives of others, and resultant need to rely on oneself; one must not be outwitted nor made to appear the dupe.

The general plan of the unit is to first use contemporary, 20th century texts which illustrate the above aspects. These include a cutting from a speech delivered by André Siegfried to a group of French teenagers, and four brief cuttings which
show that \textit{la ruse paysanne} and \textit{la ruse parisienne} are current realities in France.

By starting with "the now," the unit establishes a feeling of rapport with contemporary Frenchmen and their way of looking at the world. Once students have grasped the concepts involved as they are reflected in the actions of their French contemporaries, materials selected from folk literature are introduced to show continuity with the past. A 19th century cutting from the folklorist Sébillot which outlines French characteristics is used as a basis for discussion. Then a series of folk materials, illustrating line-by-line quotations from Sébillot and Siegfried, are read and discussed.

Proverbs, riddles, and \textit{traditions populaires} are incorporated into the unit, and a visual display illustrating the \textit{trompe l'oeil} technique is suggested as an enrichment device.

Hopefully, the students will conclude the unit with a better understanding of \textit{l'esprit critique}, \textit{l'esprit anti-totalitaire}, \textit{l'esprit anti-conformiste}, and \textit{la méfiance}--as they are reflected in French folk literature from the past and in the current thinking of today.
They will also have had the opportunity to enjoy authentic folk genres which they might otherwise never have encountered.

II. Aspects of individualisme as reflected in the contemporary scene.--


À la base de l'individualité française il y a une revendication d'indépendance. D'abord indépendance intellectuelle. Le Français est étonnament individuel dans sa conception de l'intelligence ... c'est un homme qui se fait son jugement par lui-même; c'est un esprit critique, un esprit anticonformiste, un esprit antitotalitaire. Il n'accepte jamais volontairement aucun mandarinat, que ce soit l'État, que ce soit un prêtre, que ce soit un professeur ... Un Français n'est jamais de l'avis de celui qui parle...

En ce qui me concerne, je suis épouvanté lorsque dans une réunion quelqu'un me dit: "Excusez-moi cher ami, je ne suis pas tout à fait de votre avis." Je sais bien qu'il n'est pas du tout de mon avis et que personne n'est jamais de mon avis, en sorte que chaque Français a un avis différent. Il y a en France une vingtaine de partis, mais en réalité il y en a bien davantage: autant de Français, autant de partis, parce que chaque Français veut juger par lui-même.

Cette indépendance intellectuelle, le Français est assez sage pour se rendre compte
qu'elle a besoin d'un appui matériel. Le Français est arrivé très vite à la notion qu'il n'y a pas d'indépendance intellectuelle si cette indépendance intellectuelle ne s'appuie pas sur une certaine indépendance économique. Voilà pourquoi le rêve traditionnel du Français est d'être indépendant économiquement. Comment a-t-il conçu traditionnellement son indépendance? Par la recherche de l'épargne, par la recherche d'une retraite, par la recherche d'une maison, par la recherche d'une propriété.

Cet individu qui est à la fois très intellectuel et très indépendant, qui peu avoir une indépendance économique et sait qu'il doit avoir les deux pieds sur la terre, donne lieu à la constitution d'une personnalité très particulière et contradictoire. D'un côté, il est intéressé ... vous savez que la vie en Europe est difficile; que la vie, après deux guerres mondiales demande beaucoup d'efforts; vous savez aussi que l'argent que l'on a, il ne faut pas la perdre, et que, si on la perd, la vie n'est pas assez longue en Europe pour en refaire une seconde--aux États-Unis on refait deux, trois, quatre fortunes dans la même vie ... par conséquent, votre fortune, vous ne pouvez pas la perdre, sous peine d'alléger dans une certaine mesure votre indépendance et de sentir votre individualité menacée. Donc le Français est intéressé, et je crois que c'est une nécessité.

**Procedures:**

1. The teacher introduces the author and the text:

   André Siegfried--historien, géographe, économiste, professeur à l'Institut des Études Politiques, membre de l'Académie Française--est mort en 1959. Ce texte a
été adapté d'une conférence faite devant les élèves d'une école de jeunes filles françaises--les teen-agers comme vous.

Une des caractéristiques traditionnelles des Français c'est l'individualisme. Celui qui veut comprendre la mentalité française doit s'informer au sujet de ce trait essentiel.

2. The text is passed out to the students. Vocabulary words which might interfere with understanding are explained in French. Definitions are elicited from students whenever possible, and they are called upon to use the new word in a sentence of their own.

3. The excerpt from Siegfried, recorded in advance by a native speaker, is played on tape. Students follow the text as they listen. The tape is played a second time.

4. The teacher and the class explore the text together, searching for the key ideas. Questions of the following type might be used to guide the class:

   (a) Regardez le premier paragraphe.

   Qu'est-ce qui caractérise l'esprit
français, d'après l'auteur?

(Esprit critique, esprit antitotalitaire, esprit anticonformiste)

(b) Quelle est l'attitude du Français envers l'autorité?

(Il ne l'accepte jamais volontairement.)

(c) M. Siegfried, que pense-t-il dans une réunion quand quelqu'un lui dit: "Excusez-moi cher ami, je ne suis pas tout à fait de votre avis?"

(Il sait bien que personne n'est jamais de son avis, parce que chaque Français a un avis différent.)

(d) Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un slogan? Est-ce une sentence brève? Frappante? Que veut dire le slogan: autant de Français, autant de partis?

(Chaque Français veut juger pour lui-même.)

(e) L'auteur dit que l'indépendance intellectuelle a besoin d'un appui matériel. Cet appui, comment se manifeste-t-il?

(Une indépendance économique; une retraite; une maison; une propriété.)
(f) Regardez le dernier paragraphe.

l'Auteur croit que le Français est intéressé. Qui peut lire les phrases qui montrent pourquoi ce trait est une nécessité?

5. At this point the students close their books and listen to the tape for the third time. It will be noted that a great deal of listening practice is included in the unit. Too frequently this skill is ignored on the advanced levels.

6. The teacher conducts a period of discussion, guided by questions which are now less bound to the text. A sample question of this type would be:

Dans un livre publié en 1930, Siegfried a dit que les Français ne donnent pas généreusement à la charité. Vous savez qu'aux États-Unis il y a beaucoup d'hommes riches qui donnent de grandes sommes aux hôpitaux, aux bibliothèques, aux universités. Cela ne se fait pas en France. D'après cet article, à quoi peut-on attribuer cette différence?
(Le Français est intéressé; la vie en Europe est difficile; il ne faut pas perdre la fortune sous peine d'aliéner votre indépendance.)

This discussion period will serve as an evaluation of the students' grasp of key concepts and new vocabulary.

B. Selections illustrating la ruse paysanne, 20me siècle


This article tells how the peasants of the Auvergne resist the dairy cooperatives which they see as a threat to their individualism.


This article deals primarily with the fast-developing ski industry in the French alps. It gives several examples of la ruse paysanne (i.e., spreading manure on the ski slopes to encourage the wealthy
developers to purchase the peasant's land at a high price.)

C. **Selections illustrating la ruse parisienne.**

20me siècle


   Especially valuable are the two paragraphs on pages 282-283 which contrast the American and French techniques of conducting business. ("Les mille détours qui sont de rigueuer à Paris ne pourraient que vous nuire en Amérique.") The French tendency to "se débrouiller" by a series of complex strategems and *formules de politesse* is compared to the more direct American approach. The Frenchman's attitude is summed up in this way: "Il croyait, comme le croit inconsciemment tout Parisien, que l'on n'arrive au but que par des moyens obliques ..."

2. Any anecdote which demonstrates that *la ruse parisienne* is still alive in the 20th century. As an example one might use the following anecdote, related by a Frenchman who lived in Paris during World War II.
Pendant les jours tristes de l'Occupation allemande, le commandant allemand à Paris a donné l'ordre que chaque petite boutique parisienne a dû étaler en pleine vue des photos de Hitler et de Goebbels. Le propriétaire d'une des librairies les plus célèbres de Paris a remplacé tous les livres dans la vitrine par deux énormes photos de Hitler et de Goebbels—sauf un vieux bouquin: *Les Miserables* de Victor Hugo.

**Procedures:**

The teacher may handle the presentation of these contemporary texts in any of several ways. One technique would be to divide the class into small groups, assign a strong student as group leader, and let each group read and study one of the selections. The goal of each group would be to see how their assigned reading illustrated the key concepts in Siegfried's article. The members of each group would prepare oral reports to give to the entire class. Some members could review the content of the article; others could tie it in with the previously studied texte de base. The group leader could conduct a short discussion or question-and-answer period with the whole class.

Such a procedure is based on the assump-
tion that the class is sufficiently competent in the use of the language to handle relatively independent assignments of this type. In any case, the teacher should follow closely the progress of each group and offer help and advice when necessary.

The teacher must also see that the generalizations regarding l'esprit anti-conformiste, la méfiance, and other aspects of individualism which are brought out in the discussions are clearly understood by all students.

III. Aspects of individualisme as reflected in folk literature. —

A. Le texte de base: As an introduction to the folk literature phase of the unit, the teacher could introduce the class to another brief quotation from the Siegfried article:

La description que j'ai faite des Français, je la crois encore strictement actuelle, mais vous êtes bien obligées de remarquer que les sources profondes, les racines lointaines de tout ce que j'ai dit, ce sont des racines du passé. ("Aspects," French, Level Four, A.L.M., p. 139)

The salient point of this paragraph could be brought out with such questions as:
1. Selon l'auteur, quelles sont les sources de la description qu'il a faite des Français?
   (Les racines du passé)
   (Les contes populaires)

B. **Le texte de base II:** This is a paragraph from the introduction to Paul Sédillot's collection of tales, *La Littérature orale de la Haute-Bretagne*, p. 17.

   Ce qui caractérise ses contes facétieux, c'est le peu de respect pour les puissances établies; le héros est presque toujours un pauvre garçon, parfois faible d'esprit, qui finit par arriver à la fortune après s'être moqué des rois, des seigneurs et du clergé. Les moyens employés ne sont pas toujours d'une moralité irréprochable; mais les auditeurs ne s'en indignent pas, car au-dessus de cette question, secondaire pour eux, il y a la pensée maîtresse de la plupart de ces contes, qui est le triomphe d'un enfant du peuple, en qui se personnifie le peuple lui-même, sur ceux qui ont été pendant si long-temps ses maîtres. Et sans vouloir faire ici une dissertation politique qui serait déplacée, je puis dire que la note dominante de ses contes facétieux est une note profondément démocratique.
Procedures:

1. The teacher calls to the students' attention the fact that the speech by Siegfried was delivered in the last twenty years, while the article by Sébillot was published in 1881. He then asks the students to compare the two, pointing out the similarities and the differences.

2. The students analyze the Sébillot paragraph, listing the traits which characterize the facétie, according to Sébillot. A record should be kept of these for reference during the reading of the folklore materials.

C. Selections from folk literature

The selections from folk literature which follow are chosen because they illustrate a specific quotation from either the contemporary Siegfried article or the 19th century Sébillot article. These tales are only suggestions, however. There are countless other folk materials which would serve equally well to illuminate the textes de base.
1. "Les Trocs." This tale is discussed on pp. 31-32 of Chapter III above, and is found in Dévigne's Légendaire des provinces françaises, pp. 55-57.

   It illustrates Sébillot's statement:
   "Le héros est un pauvre garçon, parfois faible d'esprit."

2. "Le Jeu du bandeau," from Dévigne's Légendaire, p. 44. This tale relates to Sébillot's: "... les moyens employés ne sont pas toujours d'une moralité irréprochable."

   "Le Jeu du bandeau" also provides a good entrée for a discussion of the well-known Système D, discussed in Chapter II above. It tells of the successful efforts of a trio of hungry men to bilk a rustic innkeeper out of a free meal through a game of Blind Man's Buff.

3. "Le Sorcier Grillon," found in Dévigne (pp. 174-176) and discussed in Chapter III above, provides an excellent example of the triumph of cleverness over authority.

4. "Le Voleur et le Cure" (Dévigne, pp. 30-31) is an appropriate illustration of
Sébillot's contention that "... le héros finit par arriver à la fortune après s'être moqué des rois, des seigneurs, et du clergé."

In this tale, Scambaronu the master thief steals the priest's silver shoe buckles while kneeling to receive absolution for his sins.

5. "Le Diable agriculteur." It is found in Dévigne, pp. 212-214, and is also discussed in Chapter III above. It illustrates Sébillot's "... triomphe d'un enfant du peuple," and the typical Frenchman's "... peu de respect pour les puissances établies."

6. "Le Diable dupé," presented by Bladé in his Contes populaires de la Gascogne (pp. 221-224), illustrates the same theme as "Le Diable agriculteur" above. It also serves as proof that craft and guile go many a mile.

7. "La Couverture Coupée" (Dévigne, pp. 68-70) is a type of fable which provides a fine example of the French preoccupation with the need for indépendance économique.

8. "Merlicoquet" (Dévigne, pp. 42-43) is a
short tale built on the theme of the trickster tricked (à trompeur, trompeur et demi).

Procedures:
The tales may be read and discussed in small groups or by the class as a whole. It is suggested that the most popular be read aloud, with students dramatizing the dialogue portions whenever possible.

These tales provide many opportunities for discussion and analysis of the French sense of humor. (See Chapter II, pp. 55-59, above.) l'Esprit gaulois is evident in such a selection as "Le Voleur et le Curé," and may be introduced as a topic for further exploration.

As a concluding exercise, the teacher can hopefully guide the class to the realization that both the contemporary materials and the folklore materials highlight the same traits and characteristics of the French.

IV. Trompe l'oeil: A visual display
Since one of the aspects of individualisme is an attitude of suspicion toward others and the fervent desire that one should never allow oneself to be duped, a logical artistic adjunct to this
unit is an introduction of the technique known as trompe l'oeil. Larousse defines this technique as: "Peinture qui donne à distance l'illusion de réalité."

Excellent examples in color may be found in house and garden magazines of the last few years. A familiar depiction would be the painting of a chest of drawers; two drawers are pulled partially open and a realistic jumble of ribbons, socks, and twine seems to be spilling out. Or the old ice box with the door sagging slightly ajar—a cold chicken, a bottle of milk, and a slab of cheese visible through the crack. Students respond to the humor in trompe l'oeil and are eager to bring in examples which they have found. Some create original trompe l'oeil effects. All of the examples should be mounted attractively and displayed in the room.

V. Proverbs.-- Proverbs appropriate to the theme of how to outwit one's opponent are easily found in French folklore. Printed in colored inks and mounted on gay, free-form cutouts, the proverbs may be interspersed with the examples of trompe l'oeil which decorate the room.
A few of these proverbs would include:

A trompeur, trompeur et demi.

C'est double plaisir de tromper le trompeur.

On n'est jamais trompé, on se trompe soi-même.

La défiance appelle la tromperie.

A tricheur, tricheur et demi,
Le petit oiseau a dit;
Ce qu'il t'a fait,
Fais-le lui.

Other proverbs tell how to extricate oneself from a tight spot, or how to be prepared for possible trouble in the future:

Ne mettez pas tous vos œufs dans le même panier.

Souris qui n'a qu'un trou est bientôt prise.

A bon chat, bon rat.

Il faut opter des deux: être dupe ou fripon.

Le papier ne refuse pas l'encre.
(II ne faut pas croire tout ce qui est écrit.)

Suggestions for incorporating proverbs orally into the lesson plan are found in Teaching Unit III which follows.

VI. La devinette (the riddle).— The verbal equivalent of trompe l'œil may be found in puns (calembours; jeux de mots) and riddles (devinettes). It is difficult to find examples of puns that are in oral circulation since they are usually spontaneously
generated in the conversation of the moment, but there is a rich supply of devinettes from which to make a selection.

**Drills:** One obvious use of the devinette in the language classroom would be to provide practice with the interrogative form: *qui est-ce qui.*

*Qui est-ce qui* entre partout sans demander permission? (Le vent)

*Qui est-ce qui* marche sur la tête?

(Les clous sous les chaussures)

*Qui est-ce qui* a les cheveux aux pieds?

(Les poireaux)

*Qui est-ce qui* tremble quand il voit approcher son maître? (Le pain)

*Qui est-ce qui* monte au ciel sans ailes et sans échelle? (La fumée)

*Qui est-ce qui* dit très bien ce qu'il ne sait pas? (Une horloge)

Students should be encouraged to make up their own devinettes and try to "stump" their classmates.

**VII. Traditions populaires.**—Whenever appropriate, the teacher should be able to enrich the students' cultural understanding of the French scene by mentioning popular customs and traditions. One of
these which is particularly suitable for a unit dealing with *la ruse* and *la méfiance* is the concept of the *Poisson d'Avril*, which corresponds roughly to our own "April Fool."

In an article entitled "Les fêtes," Joffre Dumazedier (in *La France contemporaine*, p. 217) makes the following comment:

Le ler avril, la tradition du poisson semble se maintenir; les plaisanteries habituellement interdites deviennent possibles et même attendues sans risque de sanctions; occasion de faire une blague à un grincheux ou à un supérieur; pour une collectivité restreinte, c'est le moment de manifester son hostilité à ceux qui la troublent par excès d'originalité ou d'autorité. N'a-t-elle pas tendance à jouer un rôle assumé jadis par Carnaval?

Such a paragraph makes an ideal launching platform for a discussion. (Commentez l'expression: "sans risque de sanctions"; Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un grincheux? Racontez à la classe une bonne blague que vous avez faite. Quel rôle joue le 1er avril dans la société française contemporaine?)

The class should also be made aware of the pleasant custom of selling chocolate fish in the confectionary shops to celebrate le 1er avril, and of the triumphant cry, "Poisson d'avril!" when an opponent has been successfully hoodwinked.
TEACHING UNIT III
THE PROVERB

I. Considerations.-- Of the many folk genres appropriate for classroom use, the proverb is perhaps the most versatile. The proverb has a way of slipping into the memory and staying put. Its brevity makes it economical; its phraseology makes it memorable.

There is good reason for including the proverb in the language curriculum. Psychologically, the stranger who is conversant with the proverbial expressions of a people and is able to use them easily has a distinct advantage. Ernest McCarus, discussing the use of proverbs in the teaching of languages, makes this advantage clear:

Researchers in the field have found that proverbs provide an excellent entrée into a new community. If the newcomer has taken the trouble to learn their values before visiting them, local people will welcome him more readily. Knowledge of their proverbs shows interest in them and ties the outsider to them and their traditions. In a social situation, a proverb will often "break the ice."
II. Morphology and syntax. — Proverbs contain examples of a variety of morphological and syntactical structures, and since they are so easily memorized, they provide the student with a built-in repertoire of correct patterns.

For example, the student familiar with the proverb, "Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée," will have little difficulty remembering that *il faut que* is followed by *soit* instead of *est*. Other proverbs could be grouped which bring out the same subjunctive point. (*Il faut lier le sac avant qu'il soit plein,* and so on.)

It is relatively easy to convert proverbial expressions into oral drills—from the complex substitution or transformation drill down to the simple drilling of an *er* verb in its present tense forms.

**Proverb drill:** *Il faut garder une poire pour la soif.*

**Teacher:** Henri, *gardes-tu* une poire pour la soif?

**Henri:** Non, madame, *je ne garde* pas une poire pour la soif, mais *Marie garde* une poire pour la soif.

**Teacher:** Les élèves, demandez à Marie si elle *garde* une poire pour la soif.

**Élèves:** Marie, *gardes-tu* une poire pour la soif?
Marie: Non, je ne garde pas une poire pour la soif, mais Nadine et Henriette gardent une poire pour la soif.

Teacher: Les élèves, demandez à Nadine et Henriette si elles gardent une poire pour la soif.

Élèves: Nadine et Henriette, gardez-vous une poire pour la soif?

N and H: Oui, nous gardons une poire pour la soif.

This proverb also illustrates the values attached by French society to prudence and caution, and the necessity of providing security for the future.

Proverb drill: Il faut opter les deux—être dupe ou fripon.

This drill includes the cluster vocabulary:
dupe, dupeur, dupeuse, fripon, friponne. Students familiar with its form know that they have the option of choosing to be (a) dupe, (b) dupeur ou dupeuse, or (c) fripon ou friponne. They also have the choice of asking, "Et toi?" or "Et vous?" This is a broken chain drill. Students are responsible for keeping it moving, and they may call on any classmate in any order.
Student: Moi, je suis fripon. Et toi, Raoul?

Raoul: Moi, je suis dupe. Et toi, Barbara?

Barbara: Moi, je suis dupeuse. Et vous, Madame?

Teacher: Moi, je suis friponne. Et toi, Nicole?

Nicole: Moi, je suis dupe. Et toi, Édouard?

Édouard: Moi, je suis dupeur.

III. **Pronunciation.**— Proverbs may also be used to focus on certain pronunciation problems. A teacher who wishes to drill the sound /r/, for instance, will find such proverbs useful as:

Qui ne risque rien, n'a rien.

Rira bien qui rira le dernier.

Qui terre a, guerre a.

The sound /u/ is emphasized in such an expression as:

Qui goûte de tout, se dégoûte de tout.

The difference between /u/ and /y/ may be drilled in a proverb such as:

Une fois n'est pas coutume.

Some interesting vowel contrasts are found in:

Main de velours, coeur de beurre;
Main d'ouvrage, coeur de courage.
With a little diligent searching, the teacher can find proverbs to drill almost any pronunciation problem he wishes to bring before the class.

IV. Vocabulary.—In the teaching of vocabulary, proverbs are an especially efficient aid. They provide a significant context for new words which is difficult to match with the ordinary conversational prose. The word *nid*, for example, might be encountered by the student in a prose context such as: "Il m'a dit que les garçons cherchaient le *nid* du rouge-gorge." The meaning of *nid* might be determined from the context, but there is little in the sentence to aid in recall of the term. On the other hand, the proverb:

Petit à petit,
l'Oiseau fait son *nid*,

has the advantage of rhyme to aid in recall as well as the significance of the entire proverb to help fasten the meaning of *nid* in the student's mind.

Rhyming proverbs are particularly easy to remember and are easy to find in the French corpus:

Vouloir c'est pouvoir.
Qui s'excuse s'accuse.
Un de ces jours
C'est aucun de ses jours.

Ce n'est pas tout évangile,
Ce que l'on dit par la ville.

The teacher may wish to group proverbs into clusters containing vocabulary items that relate to a particular dialogue or discussion. When the class is learning the names of various parts of the body, for instance, proverbs which contain appropriate vocabulary items may be used for oral drills and for a basis of discussion. The opportunity for variety, interest, and humor which they provide can lift an otherwise pedestrian unit onto a more stimulating level:

Cela coûte les yeux de la tête.
À coeur vaillant, rien d'impossible.
Il a bon dos.
Je donne ma langue au chat.
Elle marche sur la pointe des pieds.
La vérité sort de la bouche des enfants.
Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreilles.
Mon petit doigt me l'a dit.
Il prend ses jambes à son cou.
La chair de poule.

Proverbs might similarly be grouped to illustrate the important role that the preparation and
appreciation of food plays in French life. The fact that there are so many of these in comparison to the number found in English is in itself culturally significant.

The conventional audio-lingual dialogues—built invariably around people ordering food in a restaurant or students complaining about the menu in the school cafeteria—can be supplemented to advantage by the creative use of proverbs. Not only do they enrich idioms and vocabulary, but they can give new insights into societal attitudes and values.

For example, proverbs illustrate the significant role of bread in the life of the French. A cross-cultural comparison between the English "Good as gold" and the French "Bon comme le pain" might lead to an interesting discussion. Even minor cultural differences are spotlighted:

Teacher: Il y a un certain proverbe anglais: "Je sais de quel côté mon pain est beurré." Louis, exprimez ce proverbe en anglais.

Louis: He knows what side his bread is buttered on.
Teacher: Oui, il sait de quel côté son
pain est beurré, et moi, je sais
de quel côté mon pain est beurré.
Mais qui peut expliquer comment on
saît que ce n'est pas un proverbe
français?

(Class is silent.)

D'ordinaire en France on ne met pas
de beurre sur son pain. En effet,
on ne voit pas des tranche de pain
en France. (Could demonstrate the
French method of breaking off bread
into morsels, scraping up the crumbs
to avoid waste, popping them into
the mouth, etc. Could also mention
the French custom of buttering rad¬
ishes instead of bread, although
in some dairy-oriented sections of
the country, the morsels of bread
are buttered.)

V. Cultural themes and value systems.-- Our discus¬
sion of the use of proverbs in teaching vocabulary
has already touched upon the possibilities for
using this genre to shed light on cultural themes
and value systems. It should be emphasized, however, that proverbs cannot be quoted glibly to "explain why" or to "prove" that a theme exists. Teachers should guard against the tendency for students to make this mistake.

In one classroom report, a student who had checked a proverb book out of the library made this confident statement to the class: "The French are very fickle. They have this proverb, 'Loin des yeux, loin du coeur.' And they have another saying, 'Amour fait passer le temps; le temps fait passer l'amour,' which really proves the point." When the teacher asked what conclusions one could draw about Americans from our own proverb, "Out of sight, out of mind," the student was nonplussed.

When sociologists have come to agree that a certain trait or themal value does exist in a society, however, proverbs may be introduced which underscore the existing trait. Their function in the language classroom is not to say, "This proverb proves that the trait exists," but rather, "The trait probably exists; this proverb illustrates it in a way that is easy to remember."

A few examples might be cited to show how
proverbs illustrate certain themes. The characteristic French méfiance is seen in the proverbs:

Quand le renard se met à prêcher, fais attention à ta poule.
La défiance est mère de sûreté.
Chat échaudé craint l'eau froide.

The French emphasis on individualisme is underscored by such sayings as:

Mal prie qui s'oublie. (Fou est qui s'oublie)
Chacun prêche pour son saint.
Chacun ira au moulin avec son propre sac.
Chacun mouche son nez.
Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tous.

Particularly illuminating is the commentary supplied by the French editor of a proverb collection when he discussed the last proverb: Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous.

Chacun s'occupe uniquement de ses intérêts, et se repose sur Dieu du soin de veiller aux intérêts des autres. Ce proverbe énonce un fait et non un conseil. Il constate que les hommes sont naturellement portés à être égoïste, mais il ne les engage pas à l'être.

(Recueil des proverbes, by Leon Martel, Paris, Librairie Garnier Frères, 11me edition)

That the French editor considered the egocentric viewpoint "a fact" (ce proverbe énonce un fait)
lends credence to the concept of intense individualism as a French trait. Other traits might be cited:

**Reason:** Raison fait maison.

**Mesure:** La gourmandise a tué
Plus de gens que l'épée.

**Intelligence:** Mieux vaut un sage ennemi qu'un sot ami.

**Equilibre:** (The French delight in balance and harmony are illustrated by the many proverbs whose form is based on balanced structure.)
Le temps est tantôt une mère, tantôt une marâtre.

Pas de nouvelles, bonnes nouvelles.

C'est bonnet blanc et blanc bonnet.

Bon nageur, bon noyeur.

Aux grands maux, les grands remèdes.

Plus me hâte et plus me gâte.

**Esprit critique:** Il n'y a femme, cheval ni vache, Qui n'ait toujours quelque tache.

**Esprit caustique:** Après la mort, le médecin.

Mauvais herbe croît toujours.
Secret de deux, secret de Dieu;  
Secret de trois, secret de tous.

**Humor:**  
Il n'y a point de vieux chau-dron qui ne trouve sa crêmaillère. (Old maids end up marrying eventually. "Every Jenny has her Jack.")

Tous les méchants sont buveurs d'eau; c'est bien prouvé par le déluge.

Sometimes a proverbial expression cloaks an historical fact or finds its roots in the social customs of a by-gone day. The French distaste for fisticuffs among children is seen in the expression: "Jeu de mains, jeu de villains." The **villains** were the inhabitants of the villages and cities in the Middle Ages who were not of noble birth. Custom of the times decreed that members of the lower economic classes were not permitted to fight with weapons. This was a privilege granted only to gentlemen; the peasantry had to fight with fists. The belief persists in contemporary society that "... s'entre-frapper pour se divertir est le fait de gens mal élevés." (Martel, *Receuil des proverbes*, p. 49)
VI. Proverbs strengthen rapport.-- A class that is proverb-oriented is a class with a potential for shared insights and for moments of humor which can be gained in few other ways.

One activity which is enjoyed by advanced classes is to divide into small groups and devise original skits built around a proverb. The rules of the game are simple: vocabulary employed must be familiar to the class; structures used must be well-known and well-drilled (to avoid Anglicisms). After 25 or 30 minutes of small-group preparation, the skits are staged before the class. The class tries to guess the proverb illustrated by the skit.

One proverb skit created by a Level III class consisted of a lively discussion among members of a "family" as to what style, make, and color of automobile to buy. The discussion was profitless; nobody could agree; tempers flared dramatically, to no avail. The proverb illustrated was: Des goûts et des couleurs il ne faut pas discuter.

It will be noted that the teaching units in this study provide opportunities for small-group
planning sessions, discussions, and skit production. Too frequently the audio-lingual class session is teacher-dominated, with the result that spontaneous communication among students in the foreign language is almost non-existent. Activities such as the proverb skits—with their potential for humor, surprise, and competition—help to stimulate the use of the foreign tongue.

A commonly shared proverb is an esoteric factor which helps create that intangible sense of rapport which makes a language class come alive. Quoting proverbs becomes a sort of linguistic game—an intellectual dual between pupil and pupil, between teacher and class.

The writer recalls one hectic morning when a burly student, scuffling with another before the bell rang, bumped against the teacher's desk and knocked a crystal bud vase to the floor. Seeing the smashed ruins of the vase, the teacher whirled on the embarrassed youth and cried, "Je suis furieuse! Blaise, votre bouffonnerie est insupportable! Asseyez-vous tout de suite et pas de discussion!" The boy did not budge, but remained staring down at the fragments. The
whole class seemed to be holding its breath.
Then Blaise shook his head and mournfully intoned last week's proverb: "Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe." (Everything wears out, everything breaks, everything passes away.) The tension went down under a tidal wave of laughter.

On another occasion the teacher was trying to arouse the class from a temporary lethargy. She exhorted them to speak up, to volunteer, to remember that oral participation is vital. As a final sally she turned to one lad who, although usually talkative, had recently been silent. "Qu'as-tu, Richard?" she demanded. "Tu es muet comme une carpe!" The boy's eye suddenly gleamed. "C'est vrai, Madame, que la parole est d'argent--mais le silence est d'or."
The resulting merriment had the effect of loosening the tongues which until then had been reluctant to wag.

As a final example, there was the time when Pierre, hurrying into the room to beat the tardy bell, tripped over the flag stand and rolled over
and over down the aisle. Pony-tailed Marie grinned impishly and proclaimed:

"Pierre qui roule n'amasse pas mousse."

**Folk Literature and Symbolism**

One further contribution which folk literature can make to the cultural enrichment of the student lies in the realm of symbols and their interpretation. Elton Hocking has pointed out that French literature is full of allusions and references which stem from the heritage of the French people. These are obvious to the Frenchman, but either misleading or baffling to the non-French reader.

Combien de non-Américains associent par exemple le cerisier avec George Washington? Ce fameux cerisier est pourtant aussi familier à notre peuple que le vase de Soissons l'est aux Français. Le folklore peut être banal, mais il tient une place importante dans nos vies aussi bien que dans la littérature.¹³

The report of the Conference on Basic Issues in the Teaching of English speaks, in a similar vein, of the need for "... a continuous furnishing of the mind, first with such basic matter as mythology, folklore, and fairy tale, Biblical lore, and national legends, which, interwoven inextricably into the moving pieces of our literary heritage, form the texture of allusion and symbol."¹⁴
Archer Taylor, in "Folklore and the Student of Literature," writes of the contribution the discipline of folklore can make to "... the identification and interpretation of popular elements in a piece of literature."

To cite one example of a popular element in contemporary literature, one might consider the oblique reference made by Camille Bauer to Tale Type 123 (The Goat and Her Kids) in a discussion of l'enseignement in France.

Dans le système actuel, seuls comptent les examens qui mesurent les capacités intellectuelles et qui ouvrent toutes les portes. C'est avec un diplôme qu'on montre patte blanche en France, même si on est un loup.10

The patte blanche refers to the trick used by the wolf who wished to gain entrance into the home of the little kids. By coating his black paw with white dough he fooled the kids and was admitted. Without an understanding of the folk reference, one might overlook the implications of Bauer's statement.

Sometimes folk literature provides an entire theme for a contemporary literary work. Such is the case with Camus' play Malentendu, which tells the story of the son who returns incognito to surprise his family and is murdered by his unsuspecting mother and sister. Camus himself believed that this was "a true story."
He had read a newspaper clipping before the war which related the event as having happened somewhere in Czechoslovakia. He was unaware that this is actually a folktale (T. 939A) which has been in oral circulation for hundreds of years. So impressed was Camus with the irony of this "true" tale that he incorporated it again his the novel *l'Étranger*.

Bringing an insight such as this to the French class which is studying *Malentendu* or *l'Étranger* can add real interest. It can be made even more relevant to American students by pointing out that Tale Type 939 A is told today in southern Ohio—only there the villain was Billy Potts, member of the notorious Cave-in-Rock gang which terrorized travelers in the early 19th century.17

By thus pointing out the universality of Camus' plot, the teacher introduces the student to the great pool of international folklore from which writers of every age have garnered their plots and motifs.
CONCLUSION

It has been the intent of this paper to show that French folk literature can be an effective medium for the teaching of cultural themes and values.

The link it provides with the past and the sense of the universal which it contains add the dimension of humanity to the total French learning experience.

Because it is largely expressionistic, folk literature can help to produce students who—if they do not see the world through French eyes—at least know feelingly how the eyes of the French see the world.
NOTES


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