I was enrolled in a women's studies class in Grenoble, France when I first heard of the children's literature series *Martine* that became the focus of my thesis. The class had begun to study how popular culture reinforces traditional gender roles, and my professor mentioned this highly nostalgic and sexist series that is geared towards young French girls. As I was the sole American in a classroom of French students, I was the only student who was not familiar with the series; every female student had read at least a few of the stories growing up. This series chronicles the life of a young girl named Martine, who is the traditionally ideal girl; she is feminine, maternal, kind and graceful. The world she lives in is similarly nostalgic; located in the picturesque French countryside, the series recalls the rural myth of French purity and wholesomeness. Though her environment has elements of modernity, the series as a whole maintains a simple, old-fashioned air.

After reading a few of the stories, I decided to use the *Martine* series as a method of examining the nature and relationship of gender roles and nostalgia in modern France. This series is exceptional in that it has remained remarkably popular for five decades. Though the first book was published in 1954, the series remains popular; its mention in a gender studies classes in 2007 is proof of the series' influence on contemporary French culture. Despite its overtly sexist aspects, *Martine* has over 50 titles and still sells a million copies a year.

As I believe *Martine's* popularity is indicative of a larger reality of lingering sexism in France, I pose two major questions within this thesis: One, which aspects of sexism and to what degree do gender stereotypes still exist in modern France? Two, why have these traditional gender roles remained largely in place despite numerous attempts made to achieve gender equality?

Methodology

How does one measure a society's progress on issues so multifaceted as gender equality? Certainly, one can must legislation and concrete reforms; however, studying objective data alone is not sufficient to gauge the evolution of gender roles within a society. For example, I will discuss a number of equal pay reforms laws that were passed in the 1970s yet were hardly implemented and thus did little to improve inequalities in the workplace. Furthermore, while legislation can be an indicator of the government's agenda, such as the repressive anti-abortion and birth control laws passed as part of a lost-lasting pro-natal campaign in France, studying certain cultural indicators—such as popular culture and entertainment—can reveal how people responded to these policies and indicate to what degree people absorb or resist prevalent ideas of the time. *Martine* is an excellent text for this thesis for multiple reasons: one, the series has only one author and one illustrator, making an analysis of the text and illustrations as a *whole* possible; two, the series, though known elsewhere, is written for a French audience and has an almost exclusively French customer base, allowing me to study which aspects of the series hold specific appeal for the French; three, the series is mainstream and its books are widely available in France, sold in most bookstores and many large superstores such as *Carrefour* or *Géant;* four, I could find very little analysis of the *Martine* series. In

addition to allowing me an opportunity to conduct original research on this topic, the lack of literature written on *Martine* implies that the French do not consider the series to be remarkably sexist; this "accepting" attitude towards certain sexist aspects of French society will be analyzed throughout this thesis.

Within this thesis, I argue that nostalgia, the patriarchal tradition and a state-supported pro-natalist campaign are vital to the persistence of traditional gender norms as seen in the popular series *Martine*.

The first chapter will introduce *Martine*'s context. In order to adequately understand the ideas presented within *Martine*, one must first be familiar with the evolution of the ideas of childhood, gender roles, and the long struggle of feminism in France. After a brief introduction to medieval conceptions of the child, I will analyze the important role Enlightenment thinking and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's text *Emile* played in creating modern Western ideas of childhood and more specifically, of girlhood.

The second chapter will be an in-depth analysis of the *Martine* series, examining specific examples taken from the series that reinforce traditional ideas of gender roles, girlhood, and nostalgia in France. Placing the examples within their political and social context, I will offer possible explanations to why various aspects of the book held such appeal for *Martine's* readers.

Finally, the third chapter looks at the coming of age of the "Martine generation"—girls who grew up reading the earliest "Martine" stories—and how these women reacted to the events of 1968 by pushing for greater sexual autonomy and reproductive rights during the 1970s. I will contrast the progression of gender equality in the past few decades in France against the continued popularity of a series such as

Martine that espouses traditional gender roles and pose my theories on why this contradiction exists.

Chapter One:
Childhood, Feminism, and *les Trentes Glorieuses*

Contemporary Western society respects—sometimes even reveres—the child. It is difficult to imagine a modern family structure that is not child-centric, or at least acknowledges the child as distinct from adults. Before we can engage in a detailed analysis of the *Martine* series and its espousal of traditional ideas of gender roles and girlhood, we must understand how the concept of the sexed child has changed in Western—and more specifically, in French—society. Until the fifteenth century, the concept of the "child" did not even exist in Western thought; children were understood and treated as "little adults".

As parenting and medical practices became more advanced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, child mortality rates dropped and parents became more emotionally invested in their children; however, Western society still lacked a consensus on the difference between adults and children. The concept of childhood did not suddenly appear; rather, it gradually expanded to include a multi-faceted image of a child, including the separation of the child and adult spheres and the resulting emergence of specialized literature and scholastic practices. As society identified the child's nature as being distinct from adults, the child became subject to public scrutiny and debates arose as to how this new classification of human being should be regarded.[1] By the seventeenth century, most of Europe tended towards the *tabula rosa* theory—children are neither bad nor good; they are simply a blank slate to be written upon.[2] Thus, what and

[1] deMause, 13.
[2] Ibid., 20.

how children were taught took on a new significance. John Locke crystallizes this zeitgeist within his 1693 treatise “Some Thoughts Concerning Education”.

Among Locke’s key points within this text is that children have the ability to reason. Though their cognitive skills may be considerably less developed when compared to a mature adult, Locke maintains that children nevertheless have a burgeoning capacity that should be continually challenged in order to allow the child to reach his full potential. One of the best ways to do this, reasons Locke, is through the practice of reading: “When he can talk, ’tis time he should begin to learn to read. But as to this, give me leave here to inculcate again, what is very apt to be forgotten. That great care is to be taken, that it be never made as a business to him, nor he look on it as a task.” [3]

Early didactic picture books appeared by the 15th century, but it was Locke who introduced the idea that reading should be a pleasurable task for a child—it “should be made a play and recreation to children.”[4] Furthermore, Locke stresses the importance of supplementing words with pictures—this “stresses the intimacy between mental operation and material objects.” In associating the known—pictures of everyday objects—and the unknown—combinations of letters that form words—children can rapidly expand their knowledge base.[5]

In addition to helping them learn how to read and write, children’s literature also gives children a method of understanding and judging their world. These books often contain plots with positive lessons on good behavior and moral character, but they may also present children with negative messages concerning gender roles or race. Whereas adult readers have the intellectual maturity to question a book’s content, young readers

[3] Locke, 148.
[4] Brown, 3.
[5] Ibid, 2.

often take concepts and ideas found within children's literature as unquestionable truths. Often children's literature is used as a method to teach Children's inability to understand the inequality of messages implicit with stories, however, does not impede on their ability to perceive these stereotypes within the literature. Thus, in studying a series such as *Martine*, both the explicit and implicit messages found within the text and the illustrations must be examined to understand their effect on readers, as we will see in Chapter Two.

Though the concept of the child had gradually begun to materialize over three centuries, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1762 text "Emile, or On Education" was instrumental in creating a mainstream understanding of the child in the West and its proper upbringing. In addition to defining clearly the nature of childhood and its distinct stages of maturation, "Emile" also addressed the differences between the sexes and the proper social roles each should fulfill.

Rousseau divides childhood into four stages, each receiving its own chapter: age of nature, up to 12 years old; from age 12-15, the age of reason, with practical applied intelligence; from 15-20, the age of force, with the discovery of sexuality, and finally the age of wisdom, from 20-25, which yields the culmination of Emile's education. Within these first four chapters, he expounds upon the nature of the child. Rousseau argues in his preface to *Emile* that the most common mistake of even the wisest writers who write of children's education is that "they are always looking for the man in the child without considering what he is before he becomes a man."[6] In the fifth and final chapter, Emile is fully grown, and now ready for a partner: "Man should not be alone. Emile is now a man.

[6] Rousseau, 3.

We have promised him a companion; we must give her to him."[7] Rousseau introduces Sophie, an "ideal woman". She is everything Emile is not—dependent on public opinion, overly concerned with her appearance, and submissive to her marital partner. While an ideal woman should complement her husband, Rousseau did not consider women as equal to men.

One of the most debated topics during the Enlightenment was the equality of the sexes. As the presence of religion on Western societies decreased, Christian ideas of women as sinful and inferior to men were less influential in the European consciousness; the nature of men and women became open to increased debate. While the Enlightenment aspired to "emancipate the female sex maintained in ignorance," it also saw the necessity of maintaining a social order in which women were required to bear and raise children.[8] Thus, from its inception, the Enlightenment's idea of equality among all human beings posed a problem to the social structure.

In addition to arguing that women's intellectual capacity is inferior to men's, Rousseau considers the development of intellectual thought within women unnatural. [9]Their education should be restricted to tangible, practical subjects, for "works of genius are beyond [their] reach"; while "women observe, men reason."[10]

Women are furthermore "glorified" for her feminine traits: "She loves virtue because there is nothing fairer in itself, she loves it because it is a woman's glory and because a virtuous woman is little lower than the angels."[11]

---

[7] Rousseau, 1248.
[8] Steinbrugge, 4.
[9] Ibid., 57.
[10] Rousseau, 1357.
[11] Ibid., 1386.

In examining *Emile's* fifth chapter, one can find recurrent ideas that play important roles through the twentieth century when deciding gender roles. One prominent idea is that men and women must complement each other; men and women have innately different qualities that should be cultivated in order to form a lasting and moral union.[12] They must depend on each other, for if the two sexes could live independently of one another, Rousseau believes they "would live in eternal discord."[13] Thus, we see an emphasis put on the patriarchal structure as the best guarantee of stability. Rousseau viewed society as an "unnatural" structure, full of contrived rules that confined the nature of man. Thus, a woman must help create a constant feeling of domesticity and harmony. She must also use her sexuality as a way to keep a man faithful to his family and must constantly strive to be deserving of a man's care, which she does through remaining pure and modest. As Rousseau puts it:

> Men and women are made for each other, but their mutual dependence is not equal. Man is dependent on woman through his desires; woman is dependent on man through her desires and also through her needs. He could do without her better than she can do without him. For women to have what is necessary to them; for them to fulfill their role we must provide for them, we must want to provide for them, we must believe them to be worthy of it.

The Enlightenment belief that men are independent beings while women are incapable of functioning without a man's care had considerable staying power in Western society. Twentieth- century feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir explores this idea of women as the "Other" who can only define themselves through men in her groundbreaking 1949 work *The Second Sex*. Adopted as the canonical text for the French feminist movement of the 1970s, de Beauvoir protests against women's inability to gain

[12] Bradshaw, 78.
[13] Rousseau, 377.

autonomy from men. Written three centuries after Rousseau's introduction of "appropriate" gender roles in *Emile*, *The Second Sex* reveals the persistent gender inequalities in twentieth-century French society. Chapter Three will explore in further detail the philosophy of the 1970s women's movement in France and how women reacted against their position of the "Other".

Rousseau uses his assertion of the "natural" differences between the sexes to justify distinct education for males and females: "Once it is demonstrated that men and women neither are nor ought to be constituted the same, either in character or in temperament, it follows that they ought not to have the same education…They should learn many things, but only such things as are suitable" (1272, 1277). He writes that women should be educated with the goal of being a good mother and a wife, and uses Sophie's tasks as a model for all girls' education:

> Needlework is what Sophie likes best; and the feminine arts have been taught her most carefully, even those you would not expect, such as cutting out and dressmaking. There is nothing she cannot do with her needle, and nothing that she does not take a delight in doing… She has also studied all the details of housekeeping. She understands cooking and cleaning; she knows the prices of food, and also how to choose it; she can keep accounts accurately, she is her mother's housekeeper. Some day she will be the mother of a family; by managing her father's house she is preparing to manage her own.[14]

Thus, Rousseau does not advocate that women be uneducated, only that they receive an education that is most relevant to their domestic tasks. As we will see more clearly in Chapter Two, Martine is an ideal girl in the sense that she only engages in activities that are traditionally gender appropriate.

Why would women willingly subject themselves to this inferior position? Historian Bradshaw argues that Rousseau's social structure depends on the extent to

[14] Rousseau, 1378.

which women need or want protection of their children and themselves.[15] In exchange for protection, women sacrifice their independence and maintain the image of the male as the head of the household. In studying the history of gender equality in France, it is important to consider that women often viewed societal order and domestic security as a worthwhile trade for their independence. This "exchange" helps explain the tendency of many women to oppose measures improving gender equality.

In addition to the fear that the eradication of traditional gender roles would destabilize society, rhetoric of the Enlightenment that described women as fragile, in need of protection from and unable to exist independently of men further influenced women's decision to exchange independence for protection. While the French Revolution played an important role in the history of French feminism, marking the first time women—besides queens—actively participated in the political sphere, the Revolution only "asserted the sovereignty of citizens and deposed the traditional authority of patriarchal monarchy."[16] France's new-found liberty and equality were exclusive to those in the "fraternité." The new Enlightenment discourse, heavily influenced by Rousseau's *Emile*, considered only men to be "natural" citizens and to participate in the formation of a new Republic; women were excluded from this public sphere on the basis of politics being "unnatural" for women, who were incapable of such elevated, rational thought.[17]

Understandably, many women believed the stereotypes endorsed by both the government and society; with little to no civil rights, women were powerless and had virtually no identity, especially after marriage. Women became the property of their husbands, and society allowed married women no autonomy outside the domestic sphere.

[15] Bradshaw, 79.
[16] Stone, 239.
[17] Steinbrugge, 20.

Women's rights only worsened at the turn of the nineteenth century when Napoleon I introduced the Civil Code of 1804.

If the Civil Code of 1804 theoretically granted equality to all citizens, it severely restricted the rights of married women and reduced their status to that of children and the mentally instable. Women could not deal with any financial or property matters, including inheriting or owning land. Without a husband's signature, the Code denied virtually every right to a wife.[18] Gender relations under the Civil Code can be summed up in a phrase from the Code: "The husband must protect the wife; she must obey her husband."[19] In return for safety and protection from the patriarch, the female must entrust all her decisions to the rational and reasoning head of the family—the father.

Even the children's fates were placed within the realm of the father's power, despite the fact that women's only vocation under the Code was that of mother and wifehood. In the event of the death of one or both parents, the father's relatives automatically began the legal guardians. The Civil Code states: " [a child] remains subject to [his father and mother's] control until his majority or emancipation. The father alone exercises this control during marriage."[20] Though the Civil Code demands "respect" for the mother, it gives her no authority over her children and very little self-autonomy. This lack of authority, even when dealing with one's own children, would galvanize even the more conservative Catholic French feminists to unite in future years to reform the Civil Code.[21]

[18] Parry and Girard, 15.
[19] Boneparte, Title IX, 369.
[20] Boneparte, Title IX, 371.
[21] Smith, 154.

Until War War One, "women's rights were not yet a particular priority, and organized feminism was in its infancy."[22] Though women were "outside" of the political sphere in the early twentieth century because of their status as disenfranchised citizens, they were more politically active than ever before.[23] Women challenged two distinct forms of *puissance* during this time—*puissance marital (*marital power) and *puissance paternelle* (paternal power).[24] While the marital power was not a key issue for more conservative feminist parties—such as those of the Catholic Church—both secular and religious feminists fought against the *puissance paternelle* and stressed the impotence of the mother as protector of her children under the Civil Code. It was largely as mothers needing the right to protect their children that Catholic women had slowly started supporting suffrage.[25]

Fighting to abolish the Code was a unifying factor for a wide range of feminists; despite difference in opinions on other issues, feminists agreed that women were being repressed under the Code and its abolishment was necessary. Thus, feminists began to concentrate their efforts against the Code in the interwar period, after World War One had revealed its inefficiency and its extreme inequalities.[26] For example, women needed written permission from their husbands in order to make most important financial or legal decisions—the obvious complication being that most husbands were either away at war or had already been killed in battle.

[22] McMillan, 158.
[23] Ibid., 161.
[24] Smith, 163.
[25] Ibid., 171.
[26] Ibid., 173.

Many feminists wanted to simply abolish the outdated code, but France's legal structure favored a reform rather than a complete rejection of the Code.[27] The belief that the right to vote would soon be given to French women led most feminists to argue that, once armed with the vote, women could elect officials that would right these civil inequalities. Paul de Lauribar was among the very few feminists who opposed this view. She believed the legal codes were so intrinsically male-oriented that without civil rights women would remain unable to achieve political power, even with the vote. However, she was among the minority; Louise Weiss summed up the majority view regarding the Code Reform: "The Civil Code was a diversion from the campaign to win the vote. Only our political rights were important. From them all the others would follow." [28] In Chapter Three, I will examine the 1970s women's movement that fought for greater sexual autonomy and reproductive rights in the face of a strongly pro-natalist Gaullist government that granted few rights to French women.

Many of the women who led the feminist movement between the wars in France were lawyers. Women were first admitted to study law at the turn of the century and many took up the opportunity; these *avocates* would play an important role in the call for Civil Reform and the right to vote in the 1930s and 1940s. They could not become notaries, which had the exclusive right to deal with family matters, particularly relating to property and marriage settlements. A bill admitting women to the notariat was proposed in the1930s but it failed to pass until the start of the Second World War. Historian Paul Smith emphasizes the impact women lawyers had on the movement for reform,

[27] Smith, 162.
[28] Ibid., 174.

especially in considering the intimate knowledge of the law and the high standard of debate that these advocates contributed to the pool of limited resources.

As far as gaining reproductive rights, the interwar period bore little fruit. Fears of increased immigration, coupled with the enormous death toll from the World War One—an estimated 1.45 million French men were killed—and the possibility of another war with Germany all founded an impetus to return to "the stable and fecund French family."[29] The French state endorsed an "intense" pro-natalist campaign and pressured Frenchwomen to have children, both to compensate for the losses incurred from the war but also as a way to commemorate the millions of Frenchmen who had died in battle.[30] Legislation restricting contraceptive methods in the early 1920s was among the most extreme in Europe, making abortion illegal and banning all publicity for birth control.[31] This campaign continued into the 1930s, and only increased with the creation of the collaborative government "Vichy France" during World War Two.

According to General Pétain, leader of Vichy France, German's swift defeat of France in 1941 was a result of "too few children, arms, and allies."[32] Restoring the traditional family structure became a cornerstone of the Vichy Regime, which constructed the defeat of the French army as an emasculation of the French spirit. A return to conservative gender roles—women in the private sphere and men in the public sphere—would reestablish order and help make the French happier and more wholesome. Furthermore, the Vichy Regime encouraged a return to rural life. The rural exodus that had taken place in the previous decades was viewed as the "inevitable demise of France";

[29] McMillan, 131.
[30] Fortescue, 151.
[31] Pollard, 33.
[32] Ibid., 18.

thus, the Regime generated nostalgic propaganda glorifying the domestic rural life and the traditional gender roles and patriarchal structure that accompanied it.[33] Thus did General Petain envision a "New France".[34]

While the Vichy regime was not synonymous with repression for all French *citoyennes*, it nevertheless affected all men and women and left a profound impression on the French consciousness. Evidence of this can be seen in the pro-natal and pro-family policies that remained "remarkably the same [under the Fifth Republic], even after one of the greatest ruptures in contemporary French history."[35] . The Fifth Republic did not discard the traditional policies re-introduced by the Vichy Regime but incorporated them into the new state; these policies remained an important aspect of France's post-war reconstruction efforts in the 1950s.

The political and economic condition of 1950s provided an p must be studied in order to give a better understanding of *Martine*'s popularity.

The years of reconstruction following World War Two marked the beginning of *les trentes glorieuses*, a period of unprecedented economic growth in France that reestablished France as a respected world power. Achieving such prosperity, however, was only possible with the aid of the United States While the French government appreciated the military and economic support, there was also an undeniable element of resentment towards America as American culture . Many Frenchmen and women, especially those within intellectual circles, feared that the dissolution of French culture was imminent as American culture became increasingly available.[36]

---

[33] Pollard, 19.
[34] Ibid., 7.
[35] Ibid., 207.
[36] Stovall, 42.

These fears were not without justification. Every country that received aid from the Marshall Plan was required to make economic accommodations for America. In France's case, this meant a removal of all barriers to trade and investment, allowing an inundation of "not only American products but also by propaganda selling the American way of life."[37] *Martine,* thus, can be seen as a revolt against the Americanization of French markets. Produced by Casterman Publishing House, one of the largest and oldest publishing houses in France, "Martine"—both the series and its protagonist—represented a France unsullied by American culture while catering to the burgeoning children's markets of the 1950s.

Between 1946 and 1975, France's population increased by 12 million, an average of 800,000 babies a year.[38] Even after the fall of Vichy France, the new French Republic continued to emphasize the importance of family life. This post war baby boom was key to launching France's new consumer society, one that targeted not only women, but particularly mothers as consumers. Both French women and men seemed to embrace the ideal of the woman as mother whose primary duty was to create a comfortable, loving home life for her husband and children. The rapid expansion of the home appliances industry reemphasized this view of women as domestic beings. However, women bought appliances to quicken and simplify their household tasks, not to return to the "lives of their mothers."[39] Jokingly changing the classic Revolutionary phrase of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" to "Liberty, Equality, Maternity", France wanted to give its newest generation the comfort and joy of living that the Second World War had deprived them

[37] Gildea, 11.
[38] McMillan, 132.
[39] Stoval, 36.

of. France's newfound joy of parenting—and of consuming goods—created a new consumer: the child.[40]

Thus, the *Martine* series emerged at a pivotal moment in French history; the French were eager to boost the new consumer economy—and more specifically, to buy products created for their children—while maintaining the nostalgia of France's pre-war years. The *trente glorieuses*, while introducing many modernistic elements such as technology into French life, simultaneously placed men and women back into traditional gender roles, roles most In the following chapter, an analysis of the *Martine* series and its reoccurring gender stereotypes and cultural myths will reveal French attitudes regarding issues such as the status of women, motherhood, race, and nationalism.

[40] Stoval, 33.

Chapter Two:
The *Martine* Series

Martine, sweetness and tenderness in a world of horror and nonsense![41]

After four decades of social and political upheaval, post- World War Two France yearned for the social stability and structure of the early twentieth century. As men returned from war and re-entered the workforce, many women gladly returned to the familiarity of the domestic sphere, eager to outfit their houses with new technology such as refrigerators and washing machines that would aid them in their daily tasks. Creating a modern home and a comfortable life for one's family became "all-consuming tasks."[42]

French women in the 50s and 60s took comfort in the paternalistic, albeit misogynistic, aspect of Charles de Gaulle's presidency. That 64 percent of French women in 1962 were satisfied the leadership of a man who, when asked about creating a women's ministry, responded 'A ministry? Why not an under-secretaryship of state for knitting?" suggests French women's willingness to exchange personal autonomy and sexual equality for a guarantee of stability.[43] In this context, *Martine*'s success makes sense; her nuclear family with its clearly defined gender roles provided welcome predictability to mothers in the 1950s. Gradually, however, the giddy effects of a new consumer culture began to wear thin and, by 1968, the average women would demand an alternative to the traditional gender roles they willingly embraced years before. Yet *Martine* has remained popular, implying that there are other factors at work that contribute to the series' lasting success.

For example, one of Martine's distinct features is its immutably French essence—from the clothes she wears to the sports she plays, Martine is a rare specimen of a French

[41] "*Martine, douceur et tendresse dans un monde d'horreur et de bêtises !* [user comment from Casterman's Martine website]
[42] Gildea, 144.
[43] Ibid., 145.

child untouched by the American culture that flooded France in the 1950s. Anachronistic though it may be, every page of every *Martine* story exudes *l'air français,* reminding French readers of the richness and beauty of traditional French culture.

The *Martine* series presents readers with such an unabashedly nostalgic and sweet image of French life that the sexist and xenophobic elements of the series can become overshadowed. However, a discerning adult reader could easily identify these negative sexual and cultural stereotypes. One must assume that after 50 years, the French are cognizant of the series' inherent inequalities. That *Martine* remains enormously popular despite the last five decades of supposed progress on racial and gender equality raises two important questions: One, has France outgrown its imperialistic and misogynistic ideas of the past, or are these inequalities still present in the French system? Two, why have efforts to improve gender, social, and racial conditions within France been met with such resistance?

Studying *Martine* for indications of lingering social and cultural prejudices within the French system and the possible motives behind them can provide insight that will strengthen theories based upon exclusively empirical data, such as women's participation in political parties or the history of legislation attempting to increase women's rights—i.e. abortion and contraception rights, equal wages, rights in the workplace.

Analyzing *Martine* as both a series and a character is not an easy task. It is not necessary to examine every page of every Martine story; studying the series' general trends and recurring characteristics enables one to trace the series' ongoing use of gender stereotypes and provides sufficient evidence to formulate answers to these questions.

The themes of gender and nostalgia will be the foci of this thesis. More specific themes found within the Martine stories—such as domestic life, motherhood, rural life, and race—fall into one or both of the two broader categories. In examining these phenomena both individually and collectively, one can examine specific examples that contribute to the series' larger purpose: the idealization of the return to a traditional rural lifestyle with prescribed gender roles as a method of coping with an increasingly complex and multicultural France.

One of the most striking aspects of Martine is its racial homogeneity. With very with few exceptions, the Martine tales contain no ethnic diversity and feature exclusively white characters. In this sense, *Martine* is a return to the glorified image of the powerful white, "pure" France of yesteryear—a France that, if ever existed, was long since changed by postwar immigration and colonialism, yet still persists in the minds of many French citizens.

Interestingly, one of the earliest Martine stories contains blatantly racist elements. In "Martine's travels", published in 1954, a black character is introduced for the first—and last—time in the entire series. Her name is Annie, and she is "*une poupée extraordinaire"* who talks, dances, and walks without falling, just like a real girl. However, Annie is *étourdie*–foolish—because she cannot even remember her own name "that isn't even hard to remember".[44]

In every situation, the text portrays Annie as inferior to Martine; a logical relationship, given that Annie is in reality a doll, and thus does not have the same intellectual capabilities as Martine. However, "Martine's Travels" holds a unique significance because of Annie's race. In a series of 51 titles, over 90% of them contain

[44] *"qui n'est pas très difficile á retenir."*

exclusively white characters, including the most recently illustrated stories. Why, then, did the creators of Martine choose to make Martine's "foolish" doll a black girl?

One possible explanation is the Algerian War of Independence and France's defeat in Vietnam at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Beginning in 1954—the same year as the publication of "Martine's Travels"—these conflicts revealed the failure of France's colonial reign.[45] If Martine is interpreted as a nostalgic, nationalistic text, Annie's role in the story becomes clearer. Wishing to hold on to Algeria and its other colonies, Annie and Martine's relationship mimic the "natural" relationship between France and Algeria—that of two nations of people with one as obviously superior. Furthermore, Annie's portrayal as a well meaning but ignorant doll, incapable of autonomy serves as an intriguing metaphor for the French paternal attitude towards colonial peoples. Whether or not the authors and Casterman Publishing house had a particular political agenda when they released this book is unclear; however, in considering the nationalistic undertone found throughout the series the possibility cannot be easily dismissed.

The plotline itself offers further proof that "Martine's Travels" responds to the Algerian struggle for independence. As the story begins, Martine decides she wants to go on a trip to Africa with Annie. She knows it is far away and that they must first take a train, then a boat to get there. However, neither of the girls knows how to read, write, or count. They wait all night for the boat to Africa in the wrong spot on the pier because they cannot read the signage, and subsequently they miss their boat. Disappointed, they find their way back home and quickly get lost in the woods because they cannot follow the numeric directions a farmer gave them. With the help of some woodland creatures,

[45] Andrews, 12.

the girls make it home, tired but very happy to be back where they belong. Ostensibly, the moral of the story is the importance of being educated and knowing how to read, write, and count. A more subtle interpretation, however, is that the two girls, while trying to get to Africa, only meet misfortune. They realize quickly they do not want to leave France. In the final frame of the story, the girls are seen running joyously towards Martine's house, where her mother, who represents the height of French beauty and sophistication/domesticity, waits with open arms to welcome them.

These original images appeared in a 1985 edition of the volume "Martine en Voyage"—shocking, considering how crude and provocative the story's illustrations are. Annie's features are caricatured and oversimplified, and are reminiscent of racist minstrel shows performed in blackface at the turn of the twentieth century.[46] Only in 2002 was "Martine's Travels" re-illustrated with Martine traveling with a bunny instead of Annie. Thus, the failure to remove these racist images and replace them until the 21st century testifies to France's hesitation to accept modern multiculturalism. More specifically, it suggests a hesitation to regard colonial peoples as equals. Since 1848, the French government has officially supported an assimilation policy that decreed colonies as part of France and thus their citizens as French. However, citizens of mainland French did not consider colonial peoples of the same caliber as the "true" French like those seen in the *Martine* series.[47]

The lack of racial diversity within the series is furthermore highly unrealistic, even in 1954. According to *recensements* taken during that year, four of every hundred persons living in France was a foreigner; almost 1.8 million habitants at the time. By

[46] Illustrations A and B.
[47] Andrews, 3.

1968, 2.6 million of the 49.6 million were of foreign origin—roughly 5.2% of France's population.[48] France actually encouraged a level of immigration into cosmopolitan centers where laborers were needed. Yet having few industries that necessitated a large labor force, most of rural France failed to attract much immigration and thus remained much more culturally and racially homogenous.[49] Thus, Martine's rural setting gives greater credibility to the series and helps disguise the series' racist overtones.

Rural life is another element that contributes to the nostalgic tone of *Martine.* The countryside is where Martine's lives, where her beliefs and values have been formed, and where her innocence is maintained. Our understanding of Martine's world is from an exclusively rural standpoint, as no story is ever played out in an urban environment. This is not to say Martine never leaves the countryside. There are instances where Martine travels to visit a city; for example, in "Martine on an Airplane", she and her mother fly on vacation to Rome. Another tale, "Martine on a Boat", shows Martine en route to New York City with her beloved English tutor. Yet readers are not allowed a glimpse of Martine in these cosmopolitan hubs. The stories end just as she arrives, and we can only imagine how Martine will react to these new, exciting places. The text always implies that Martine never stays too long in these foreign lands and always returns happily to her home in the countryside, where she belongs. Thus do the authors equate Martine's innocence with her serene rural existence, and extended periods of time in the city could ruin the French purity she so gracefully embodies. [50]

There are numerous possible explanations for this idealized rural setting. The simplest explanation is the series, known for its illustrations, takes advantage of France's

[48] McDonald, 115.
[49] Ibid., 116.
[50] Illustrations C and D.

beautiful landscape and capitalizes upon the pride the French take in their picturesque beaches and countryside. Furthermore, France was and is one of the top producers of agricultural goods in Europe; in addition to symbolizing purity and natural beauty, French rural life is economically significant as well.

The decision to place Martine in a rural setting could also have been influenced by the remnants of the conservative ideologies introduced by the Vichy regime. At the time of the first book's publication, less than ten years had passed since the regime's control over France; one should not underestimate the lasting affects of Vichy France, especially when considering how precise and planned the diffusion of these ideas were during the Occupation. General Pétain viewed the rural exodus as leading to the "inevitable demise of France" and believed that it was indirectly responsible for the German occupation. The Vichy Regime carefully created propaganda nostalgic for the old-fashioned rural life, including its traditional gender roles and large, patriarchal families.[51]

Martine's rural setting also helps give the series its timelessness, its tranquil beauty, and most importantly, its isolation from a flawed, complicated and increasingly modern world. Yet there are still elements of modernity in Martine's life. In "Martine at the House" for example, Martine uses all modern appliances, such as a vacuum cleaner and a washing machine, to clean the house.[52] Martine's family is certainly not old-fashioned or lacking style; rather, they understand the merits of living in a traditional manner and thus do so because it is the most fulfilling lifestyle. Martine is given the privilege to grow up the way every child deserves—away from violence and poverty,

[51] Pollard, 19.
[52] Illustration E.

with a spacious home, a loving family and a beautiful view from her bedroom window. Though the series is unrealistically idyllic, its appeal is undeniable—especially for a generation of parents who grew up surrounded by the immense suffering and loss inflicted on France during the Second World War.

Stability was key to *Martine*'s initial success*;* without it, the series would not have captivated its first audience—a generation of Frenchmen who grew up during the Great Depression with practically nothing. France owed much of its economic success of the 1950s to these enthusiastic parent- consumers who wanted to give their children the best life possible; *Martine* not only represented what parents yearned for in their childhood but also offered a way for parents as consumers to support their country's economy—and by extension, improve their children's future—by purchasing a book published by the French about the perfect French girl.

What makes a French girl "perfect"? How does she act, and more importantly, what does she look like? Illustrations play a significant role in all young children's literature, but in Martine's case, her appearance is of particular consequence. Martine has become an icon of French girlhood and her physical appearance is thus of paramount importance, giving the youngest generations of *filles* an image they can strive to imitate and emulate. Traditional ideas place emphasis on beauty, elegance, and style as prerequisites for true femininity; if Martine were not depicted as having these traits, even from a young age, she would fail to function as an archetype for the perfect girl.

Due to the myriad depictions of Martine over the last four decades, analyzing Martine's appearance is a complicated task. Though the series had only one illustrator—Marcel Marlier—her look was constantly evolving. In theory, this was in order to keep

Martine's look modern and up-to-date, yet most of the Martine stories retain their original—i.e. 1950s—illustrations despite numerous re-publications. Though these "changing faces of Martine" fail to establish a cohesive image of Martine, it does present readers with a visual timeline of Martine's evolution. These disparate images of Martine have become apparent to readers only in more recent decades; by the 1980s, Martine's appearance had been significantly altered, revealing the changes in the French archetype of girlhood.

While Casterman Publishing House originally published each story separately, by the 1980s their principal method of publishing *Martine* was in *albums*, books that are comprised of eight stories and are focused on a certain theme, such as sports, traveling, or vacation. Within the *albums*, stories are not organized chronologically; for example, in the collection *Bravo! Martine*, a story published in 1954, including original illustrations, precedes a story published in 1996. Thus, in analyzing the series from a modern-day standpoint, each "face" of Martine is equally relevant.

Martine always appears feminine, even in the most recent stories. However, the emphasis placed on her femininity in stories published before 1980 reaches ridiculous proportions—luscious eyelashes, full lips, dainty outfits, and, of course, perfectly manicured hair. In these earlier stories, Martine often resembles a small woman instead of a girl.[53]

Within these illustrations a reader can see the societal contradictions in defining girlhood; at times Martine appears perfectly sophisticated, a miniature replica of her

[53] Illustration F and G.

mother, a stylish and beautiful French housewife. Yet in other instances, she appears innocent and child-like. Which of these images is the *vraie Martine?*

Martine's dual identities are indicative of the many pressures exerted on girls. On one hand, there is the desire to act like a child, and yet there is also a desire to imitate the maturity and sophistication of the maternal figure. It is natural for children to look up to the parent of the same sex, and to imitate their facial expressions and actions. Martine is no exception; in various stories, she can be seen gazing rapturously at her mother or adopting poses that mimic those of adult women.[54]

In fact, Martine often appears as a small woman, especially when occupied with domestic or mothering tasks. The series suggests that Martine is ultimately in training to become a good wife and mother. In "Martine at Home", Martine shows great competence in cleaning the house, handling the appliances with skill; when the milkman comes to give them their daily quantity of milk, he asks if her mother is home. Martine replies, "No, I'm replacing her." [55] In "Martine, Little Mommy", Martine is left in charge of her 13-month-old brother Alain. Once again, the term "replace" is used: "Quickly Martine gets up because she must replace her mother and take care of Alain, her little brother".[56]

"Martine Little Mommy" shows readers in detail the challenges and rewards of caring for children. In the world of Martine, motherhood is a noble position to hold in life, one that requires intellect and skill. None of the women in Martine's family have discernable careers; rather, they consider their domestic duties to be a respectable job.

"Martine Little Mommy" illustrates Martine's beginning experiences in motherhood. She is inexperienced in certain situations but intelligent enough to find a

---

[54] Illustration H.
[55] *"Non, c'est moi qui la remplace."*
[56] *"Vite, Martine se lève car elle doit remplacer Mamn et s'occuper d'Alain, le petit frère…"*

solution: “Martine is confused. How should she dress the baby? If Mama were here, it would be simpler. But no matter; Martine knows how to solve the problem.”[57] After a day of playing mother, however, readers see that Martine is understandably incapable of taking care of a child for longer than a day and is ready to return the responsibility to her mother: “Martine loves her little brother a lot… But she is happy that Mom and Dad are coming home soon. Because of course, it’s not easy taking care of a baby the whole day!”[58] However, readers can see that Martine is a talented caretaker and seems destined to be an ideal mother in the future.[59]

French women’s views on choosing to become a *femme au foyer* remain surprisingly traditional. A poll taken in 1976 asked a number of questions regarding women working outside of the home to French women across the country. In response to the statement, “Being a housewife is now out of date; that was all right for our grandmothers”, 73% disagreed, indicating that a majority of French women believed being a housewife was compatible with a modern lifestyle.

Looking at certain statistics makes this number seem less surprising. Despite the equal opportunities for education, most women’s professions during the 1950s-1970s could not be described as intellectually fulfilling. Still highly restricted to professions that were traditionally female, in 1973 women accounted for “96 percent of typists, 88 percent of receptionists, 78 percent of cashiers, and over 70 percent of primary school teachers, social workers, and nurses…[their] supervisors [were] invariably men.” [60] Until

---

[57] “*Martine est perplexe. Comment va-t-elle habiller bébé? Si maman était ici, cela serait plus simple. Cela ne fait rien. Martine saura bein se tirer d’affaire.”*
[58] “*Martine aime beaucoup son petit frère… Mais elle est contente que Papa et Maman rentrent tout à l’heure. Car bien sur, cela n’est pas facile de s’occuper de bébé toute la journée!”*
[59] Illustrations I, J, and K.
[60] Gildea, 148.

1965, women did not even have full legal control over their earnings from these lower-paying, less-respected jobs. Working in professions with little pay and few benefits, many women opted to stay home with their children, where their opinions were not continuously challenged by men and where they could practice a certain degree of autonomy.

In the series, Maman is the expert on all things within the home, and will always give Martine helpful advice in matters such as cooking, dancing, or babysitting.[61] Never is her father's opinion heard in domestic matters, perhaps simply because he is not at home in the majority of the Martine stories. Papa remains a vague, undefined character. Though he is a generous father, giving Martine a turtle for her garden and a surprise fireworks show for her birthday party, he is nevertheless absent in the large majority of the Martine stories. Papa remains however, the ultimate authority in decisions. When Martine wants to take ballet lessons, she must wait for her father's permission, and in "Martine Moves", she hopes that "Papa and the renter will agree on a deal so [they] can move soon".[62] In business matters, it is Martine's father who becomes the authority.

Outside the home, Martine's mother is still present yet loses her position of power. Papa is in charge of the paperwork and the contracts; even when the family goes "to choose a chandelier for the living room"—a fairly domestic task—Papa is clearly in control when he declares that the lamp they want is "much too expensive".[63] Simone de Beauvoir comments on this relationship in *The Second Sex* "… if the father's authority is not that which is most often felt in daily affairs, it is actually supreme; it only takes on more dignity from not being degraded to daily use; and even if it is in fact the mother

[61] Illustration L.
[62] *"[Elle espere que] papa et le propriétaire se mettront d'accord et que [elle peut] emménager bientôt"*
[63] *"On est allé choisir un luster pour la sale de séjour."*

who rules as mistress of the household, she is commonly clever enough to see to it that the father's wishes come first…"[64] Man's ultimate authority, even within the home, is a concept similarly expressed in *Emile*: "Woman's reign is a reign of gentleness, tact, and kindness; her commands are caresses, her threats are tears. She should reign in the home as a minister reigns in the state, by contriving to be ordered to do what she wants. In this sense, I grant you, that the best managed homes are those where the wife has most authority. But when she despises the voice of the head of the household, when she desires to usurp his rights and herself take command, the result of this disordering is never anything but misery, scandal, and dishonor."[65] Even when women are playing their "natural" roles in the domestic sphere, they are expected to submit to the father's authority when he demands.

Martine's relationship with her father is reminiscent of traditional views on fatherhood that advocate a loving yet somewhat distant relationship with children. A father's responsibility is to serve as head of the family in the public sphere, earning a living to support his wife and children. It is unquestionably more acceptable for a father to remain apart from his children than a mother; this belief dates back as far as Jean-Jacque Rousseau's *Emile:* "The children's health depends in the first place on the mother's, and the early education of man is also in a woman's hands. His morals, his passions, his tastes, his pleasures, his happiness itself, depend on her."[66]

Women are given the responsibility of education yet their ultimate goal in this task is to create well-rounded men—to whom they are inferior. This means, however, that women's education should be focused on their future responsibility of educating boys to

[64] de Beauvoir, 287.
[65] Rousseau, 1429.
[66] Ibid., 1287.

become men: “all the education of women must be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make oneself loved and honored by them, to raise them when they are young, to care for them when they are grown, to advise them, console them, make their life pleasant and sweet -- these are the duties of women at all times and what one ought to teach them from their childhood.”[67]

Is Martine in the process of such an education? Are all her adventures ultimately for the sake of her future children as opposed to her personal fulfillment? Examples from the text reveal that although Martine has the talent and drive to achieve, she only participates in activities that reinforce her future within the domestic sphere.

Even activities such as sports in *Martine* are meant to reiterate Martine’s femininity. She does not engage in any activity that leads to excessive sweatiness or dirtiness or that push the limits of social acceptability. The “sports” Martine plays consist of the following: horseback riding, ballet, swimming, bicycling, flying in a hot-air balloon, and sailing, with the occasional session of jump-roping during recess.

Traditionally, French society has justified girls’ participation in sports on the condition that they are playing sports in order to remain healthy and thus be able to sustain the trauma of childbirth and the rigors of child-rearing. There is one distinction between the “development of strength” in girls and boys however, expressed in *Emile:* “This order is common to the two sexes but the aim of this nurturing [of the body] is different: in the one this aim is the development of strength, in the other of grace. Not that these qualities should be exclusive to either sex, but their order is reversed. Women should be strong enough to do anything gracefully; men should be skillful enough to do anything easily…. Women should not be strong like men but for them, so that their sons

[67] Rousseau, 1279.

may be strong."[68] Martine's sportiness, then, is not only for her enjoyment, but also to maintain a healthy body that will be instrumental in one, attracting a partner and two, in facilitating motherhood.

In addition to being traditionally "girly" sports, all of Martine's sporting activities are costly endeavors and thus limited to upper-class children. All of them require not only formal training, but also access to expensive equipment. To take swimming lessons, one must have a membership to a pool; for sailing, a boat, and so on. Even bicycling requires owning a bike and living somewhere open enough to ride.[69]

Furthermore, Martine is never depicted as "strong". Her sports—horseback riding, ballet, and swimming—certainly require strength, but ultimately showcase her graceful ability.[70] In "Martine the Ballerina", Martine "Martine must learn to hold her arms like picking a flower, or raise her hands above her head with grace… like a queen who wears her crown."[71] Subtlety and reserved beauty are what Martine must strive for—both in her ballet class and in her general demeanor.

Yet a contradiction in Martine's appearance arises. Martine is intelligent, sweet, sometimes even sophisticated. Yet, she is repeatedly drawn showing her panties. This occurs often and gratuitously throughout the series. Out of 28 stories examined, girl's panties—mostly Martine's—are seen in over 30 frames.[72]

What is especially peculiar about these "panty shots" is how painstakingly they are drawn. Always a scrupulous illustrator, Marlier's frames are highly detailed and leave

---

[68] Ibid., 1283.
[69] Illustration M.
[70] Illustrations N and O.
[71] "*Elle doit aussi apprendre á balancer le bras comme pour cueillir une fleur, ou bien á lever les mains au-dessus de la tête avec grâce. Ainsi ferait une reine qui porte sa couronne"*
[72] Illustration P.

nothing to the imagination. But why make the skirts ridiculously short, and why draw Martine in such compromising positions? Even if in reality, little girl's panties do show—as they will occasionally—it is unnecessary to show them as often as four times in one story. In the case of "Martine plants a garden", for example, Martine is seen in a mini-dress throughout the entire novel, even when she is performing manual labor like weeding flowers or raking.[73] Published in 1970, it seems perfectly reasonable that Martine might don a pair of pants to work outside in the garden. And yet she does not.

Prolific panty shots seem out of place in such an otherwise respectable, middle-class setting, and Martine's cotton briefs present us with a disturbing prospect. Are girls even at young ages defined by their sex organs? Is Martine ultimately only a future wife and mother? Does a girl therefore have to flaunt herself and show her panties to be cute? The Martine website claims that the "world of Martine is one where adults respect children", but it is difficult to imagine respecting anyone who flashes her panties with such frequency.[74]

True, Martine is young—but not that young. She organizes her own birthday party in "Martine's Birthday Party". Her parents leave her alone for the day to care for her 13-month old brother in "Martine Little Mommy" and she even baby-sits for her aunt's three children in "Babysitter Martine". Yet despite all her competence, Martine continues to be reduced to a little girl who shows her panties, as if the authors are making sure to "show Martine her place." She is a female; thus, it is acceptable to objectify her.

This gender-based objectification is a specific example of a more general trend of sexual discrimination in France; the glass ceiling exists above women in French culture.

---

[73] Illustrations Q and R.
[74] www.casterman.com

Readers see that Martine is determined and a hard worker through her ballet class; that she is competent and mature by seeing her as a "little mother". Martine succeeds, but she never does it outside of the feminine domain. Even the stories published in the 1990s cannot be considered as feminist, as they never address Martine's career aspirations or place her in a traditionally masculine setting, such a science lab or a workshop.

Despite their intellectual capabilities, their creative talent and their competency, women will inevitably be reduced to their sex; French society estimates a woman's worth on her capability as a wife and a mother.[75]

Her clothes and hair may have become less overtly "feminine", but ultimately Martine remains the same "petite maman" from the 1950s. She is allowed a certain amount of freedom—riding her bike, participating in sports—yet never completely escapes the confinement of traditional gender roles. Martine is not given the opportunity to interact in the masculine world; thus, the possibility of Martine considering herself as equal to men disappears and she always allows them to dictate her behavior. It is the denial of this privilege of autonomy that overshadows her many other privileges.

Martine's expulsion from the masculine sphere is symbolic of the inferior status of women in French society, even in the present. Although women comprise the majority of university students—up to 55% in 1992, they are highly underrepresented in both professional and political life.[76] Gildea describes an "ingrained sexism in French society" that reaches into the highest strata of society, including politicians, the upper classes, and even intellectuals.[77]

---

[75] Steinbrugge, 6.
[76] Gildea,150.
.[77] Ibid.,153.

This deeply pervasive sexism has led to great difficulty in passing legislation intended to promote the status of women. When a poll in 1985 revealed that more than a third of French women considered themselves to have been at least once the victims of sexual harassment, efforts to make it punishable under law were met with seven years of resistance. Gildea states that many government officials—both from the Left and the Right—viewed sexual harassment as " [a] Gallic seduction [and a] noble art that could not be outlawed by an essentially American obsession with sexual harassment."[78] Such backward attitudes regarding limiting inappropriate male behavior further indicates that French society remains entrenched in social inequalities and its values remain based on a patriarchal structure.

The events of the May 1968 revolution were a backlash against this patriarchal structure and acted as a catalyst for a new wave of women's feminist movements. In the following chapter, I will examine how the girls who grew up reading *Martine*—the "Martine generation"—became active participants in the May 1968 Revolution and the subsequent movements for women's equality. Furthermore, I will provide insight into how and why French women's push for equality in France ultimately failed.

[78] Gildea., 154.

Chapter Three:
1968 and Beyond

At the time of de Gaulle's return to politics in 1958, the French were in need of a stable and functional state. The Fourth Republic was ineffective and disorganized, crippled by disputes between factions and parties, and facing a colonial struggle in Algeria that threatened to bring the entire government to a halt. In publishing a new constitution in September 1958, Charles de Gaulle rid France of what he believed to be the source of her problems and created a "new political world."[79] Under this constitution, the president was allotted more power than ever before in French history, and the newly established Fifth Republic undertook the task of becoming "the incubator and promoter of a new economic and social order." [80] This new order, however, came at a price—in return for the stability he was to provide, de Gaulle demanded that his authority remain unquestioned. His presidential power was unlike that of any previous republics in that it required an increasingly authoritative head of state to facilitate national unity. [81]

Although de Gaulle's republic gave France the stability it needed, many French citizens grew discontent with his authoritarian approach to politics, including the generation of the baby-boomers born in the late 1940s and 1950s. French youth understandably felt little solidarity with de Gaulle whose appeal depended on two conditions: his ability to invoke feelings of nostalgia due to his role in the liberation of France—and his image of France that recalled its pre-war glory days as a great nation—

[79] Knapp, 8.
[80] Andrews, 285.
[81] Knapp, 10.

and his personification of stability.[82] For many French citizens of earlier generations, his aura of stern paternalism offered a welcome change from the ineptitude of the previous republics: the Third Republic defeated by the German Army and the Fourth Republic weakened by internal power struggles.[83] In addition, De Gaulle's stability served more than a sentimental purpose. After three decades of tumult, France needed a stable government in order to fully recuperate and rejoin the great world powers both politically and economically.[84]

The newest generation of young adults, however, viewed France in a very different manner from the older generations. They clearly shared no common memory of the war with de Gaulle. This nostalgic element of his appeal was lost on them, and with it, a large part of de Gaulle's charisma. Spared the deprivation of wartime France, French youth did not interpret the economic boom of the 1950s and 60s as a glorious change from the economic impotence of 1940s France, but as a way of life that isolated the individual and homogenized culture. Similarly, this young generation had not lived in times of great political and social turmoil and thus did not comprehend the merits of supporting a politician who was authoritative and conservative simply because he could provide a sense of stability. Memories of the war were still fresh in the minds of the French; many older citizens considered the shortcomings of deGaullism and the inequalities of the French system as peccadilloes.[85] In comparison to the harsher realities of Vichy France and the ineptitude of the Fourth Republic, Gaullism was progress. For the Martine generation, however, it was regression.

---

[82] Knapp, 11.
[83] Macridis and Brown, 3
[84] Stovall, 27.
[85] Ibid., 71.

The generation of young women coming of age in 1968 had grown up in a very different France from their mothers, women who had known little predictability during wartime France and who associated traditional gender roles with the comforting nostalgia of the pre-war era. At the time of its initial publication in 1954, the *Martine* series presented readers with a depiction of the traditionally ideal French family; its appeal was considerable for many women from this older generation for reasons discussed in previous chapters. Looking at the events of May 1968 and the rejection of social norms, however, it is obvious that many of those who grew up reading *Martine* did not view Martine's world as "perfect" but as heavily flawed. Dissatisfied with its limitations and restrictions, young women began to demand a new reality to replace the stifling patriarchal ideas of de Gaulle.

Those fighting for gender equality in the 1960s and 1970s faced many different challenges than the women of past generations. As far as "abstract civil and political rights were concerned", women and men in France were on fairly equal terms; however, French women were still incapable of defining their identities independently of men[86]. While influencing legislation remained an important part of the struggle on issues such as abortion and birth control, policy reform alone was no longer a sufficient means of improving gender relations. 1968 symbolized the battle against an entire ideology of patriarchy and male dominance.

"Revolution may be possible, but it didn't happen in France in 1968".[87] Calling the events of May 1968 in France a revolution in a literal sense is inaccurate. While participants dreamed of toppling the patriarch, their efforts resulted in the reform and not

[86] Gildea, 145.
[87] Kurlansky, 236.

the destruction of the existing system. The May Revolution acted as a catalyst for the new wave of feminism in 1970s France. However, the women who were active in the revolution were not fighting for feminist causes; they contested the repression and inequality of the state without making their rebellion about feminism.[88] While all students in the revolution chanted for free love and the banishment of sexual propriety, the implications of sexual freedom were very different for the two sexes. For young women, increased sexual activity could come at the high price of unwanted pregnancy without proper birth control. Women could not achieve true sexual autonomy until the French government increased access to birth control and legalized abortion. Women began to recognize, furthermore, the impossibility of a self-formed identity as long as the patriarchy was in existence.

Simone de Beauvoir's text *The Second Sex*, though published twenty years earlier, become the canonical text of the women's movement after the Revolutions of 1968. De Beauvoir argues that men have established stereotypes of women to keep the patriarch legitimized, and only when women free themselves economically from men will they have the power to establish an identity:

> … the girl, since childhood and whether she intends to stay within or go beyond the bounds of femininity, has looked to male for fulfillment and escape; he wears the shining face of Perseus or St. George; he is the liberator; he is rich and powerful he holds the keys to happiness, he is Prince Charming…. She has always been convinced of male superiority; this male prestige is not a childish mirage; it has economic and social foundations; men are surely masters of the world.[89]

[88] Accampo, 249.
[89] de Beauvoir, 324.

De Beauvoir writes that instilling the superiority of men over women begins from the earliest stages of childhood, and that all of society reinforces the notion of the inferiority of the female sex:

> Everything contributes to confirming this hierarchy in the eyes of a girl. Her culture's history-- its literature, songs, legends that nourish it-are an exaltation of man. These are the men that founded Greece, the Roman Empire, France, and all the nations…Children's literature, mythology, fairy tales, reflect the myths created by the pride and the desires of men… It is through the eyes of men that girls explore the world and figure out their destiny.[90]

Indeed, this Martine generation had grown up in a conservative patriarchy, where motherhood and domestic life were still touted as the "natural" career of a woman. The *Martine* series, glorifying the traditional roles of the women, was both written and illustrated by men. This follows in a long tradition of men "defining" women—a prime example is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's depiction of Sophie in *Emile*.

Furthermore, women in the 1970s rebelled against the idea of marriage being the only acceptable way of expressing sexuality. De Beauvoir describes marriage as "not only an honorable career and one less tiring than many others: it alone permits a woman to keep her social dignity intact and at the same time to find sexual fulfillment as loved one and a mother."[91] The women of the 1968 revolution wanted sexual freedom and the opportunity to define their sexuality without a husband.

To find this autonomy, De Beauvoir calls for women to be assertive: "… the passivity that is the essential characteristic of the 'feminine' woman is a trait that develops in her from the earliest years. But it is wrong to assert that a biological datum is concerned; it is in fact a destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society."[92]

---

[90] de Beauvoir, 37.
[91] Ibid, 329.
[92] Ibid, 280.

Women must thus actively work to overcome this engrained passivity if they hope to achieve economic independence and true equality with men.

Women's top priority in creating an independent identity lay in promoting the autonomy of the female body. 1968 had revolutionized sexuality, and both men and women were having sex at younger ages in less serious relationships. While the average couple waited eleven months before having sex in a relationship formed between 1960 and 1973, couples formed between the years 1973 to 1983 waited only four months. Furthermore, sixty percent of women born around the year 1960 became sexually active while still in school, compared to fourteen percent of women born around 1940.[93] The use of birth control, however, remained low. Only twelve percent of women under the age of twenty-nine were using some method of birth control in 1968, though by 1973 the number had risen to forty-seven percent.[94] An explanation for the low percentage of birth control use despite a spike in sexual relations was the limited availability and variety of contraceptives. At the end of the 1960s, over fifty percent of women used no form of birth control at the time of their first sexual relation.[95] The lack of readily available birth control meant the risk of accidental pregnancy was significant. French women's new sexually progressive lifestyle was dampened by the threat of being reduced to their biological role as mothers. In order to create an identity defined independently of men, women needed the freedom to explore their potential without the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy.

The issue of abortion became a particularly important one because it is a "condensational issue"; in addition to addressing the definition of gender roles, the

[93] Toulemon and Laredon, 23.
[94] Ibid., 15.
[95] Ibid, 25.

legalization of abortion involves larger questions of sexual and social morality and the sanctity of life.[96] Modern feminist philosopher Susan Bordo argues that the current battle over reproductive control emerges as an assault on the personhood of women.[97] Whereas Western cultures have passed legislation protecting the integrity of one's body, pregnant women become "mere fetal container[s]".[98] From the moment she knows she has conceived, a pregnant woman ceases to exist as herself; all further actions must be in the best interest of her baby. It is not only women's reproductive rights that are currently being challenged but women's status as *subjects*, within a system in which the protection of "the subject remains a central value." Thus in "a conflict between the fetus' right to life and the woman's right to choose we are fooled into thinking that it is only the fetus whose ethical and legal status is at issue."[99] Other aspects of women's identities are dismissed as the issue of motherhood is introduced; Martine's "panty shots" are a prime example of this objectification, as the series reduces her to her biological function of mother. In demanding that the government acknowledge a female identity capable of controlling its ability to reproduce and thus able to define itself outside the traditional domains of wifehood and motherhood, French women could be seen as a threat to the entire patriarchy.

The movement to repeal the laws of the 1920s and 1930s that criminalized abortion and severely restricted access to birth control did not begin in 1968 but a few years earlier, in the mid-1960s. Those who pushed for reform—a number of left-wing organizations and women's interest groups—were searching for a solution to lower the

[96] Jelen ,2..
[97] Bordo, 72.
[98] Ibid., 77.
[99] Ibid., 93.

startlingly high number of illegal abortions performed each year in France. Though difficult to measure because of to its clandestine nature, estimated numbers for illegal abortions range from 200,000 to over 1 million a year. In 1967, deputy Lucien Neuwirth from the right Gaullist RPR party, proposed a bill into the National Assembly allowing the legalization of birth control by prescription only.[100] The Neuwirth Law did not, however, allow any advertisement for birth control and those who received a prescription were required to pay for it out-of-pocket. The committee that reviewed the decision to pass the bill emphasized that this was a law to combat illegal abortion in France and that the French government did not consider birth control as a woman's right.[101]

After May 1968, however, control of the body became the uniting cause for young French women and led to mass support for an increase in access to affordable birth control and legalized abortion. In 1971, 343 prominent French women " had the courage to sign the manifesto 'I have had an abortion.'"[102] Labeled the "Manifesto des 343 Putaines," it was a "first act of revolt" that included women from the Women's Liberation Movement (MLF), the Movement for the Right for Abortion and non-affiliated women who either worked outside the home or remained housewives.[103] Furthermore, the publication showed the public that the issue affected all women and was not limited to a specific class. Many of the women who signed had not actually had an abortion; rather, their signature symbolized their struggle against women's "social and

[100] *Union des démocrates pour la République*. UDR became the RPR in 1976 under Jacques Chirac.
[101] Accampo, 249.
[102] "La liste de 343 Francaises qui ont le courage de signer le manifeste "Je me suis fait avorter".
[103] Though it is commonly translated into English as the "Manifesto of the 343", a faithful translation would be "the Manifesto of the 343 Whores".

sexual submission, and economic and emotional dependence on men" that the issue of abortion represented.[104]

There was, of course, considerable resistance against the diffusion of birth control and the legalization of abortion. The conservative right, along with the Catholic Church, cited the disappearance of sexual morals and rising promiscuity as concerns that threatened the purity of women as mothers. More importantly, birth control allowed women to prevent pregnancy and thus interrupt God's plan of giving women the "incomparable honor" of bringing up children.[105]

Another more mainstream concern was the reoccurring fear of population decline. France's birth rates have consistently been among the lowest in Western Europe, and as France neared the end of *les Trentes Glorieuses*, birth rates had already begun to drop slightly.[106] In order to restore France to its former prominence, de Gaulle needed birth rates to remain higher and had thus endorsed pro-natalist policies. President Georges Pompidou followed suit, introducing pro-maternal reforms during his time in power that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In her book *Blessed Motherhood, Bitter Fruit*, gender historian Elinor Accampo argues that fears of population decline and decreased sexual morality were only a small fraction of the battle against the legalization of abortion.[107] The notion of the "natural" French woman was key to the patriarchy; since the Enlightenment, the French state had justified subjugating women by citing the allegedly inherent feminine qualities that women were unable to escape—among them vanity, emotional sensitivity, physical

[104] Duchen, 52.
[105] Fortescue, 89.
[106] Parry and Girard, 228.
[107] Accampo, 245.

weakness, hysteria, and irrational thought. Giving women the autonomy to *choose* whether or not they wanted to be mothers—the highest position a woman could strive for according to the French patriarchy—could lead to a dismantling of the entire female image as constructed by the state. Traditional gender roles require that all women *want* to be mothers; although they may have other pastimes, it is motherhood and family life that is their most important job and their greatest passion. Although Martine is talented and participates in many activities throughout the series, readers understand that it is within the domestic sphere where Martine truly wants to be. It is inconceivable that Martine would ever consider denying her "natural" career as a mother by using birth control or getting an abortion.

Despite the government's knowledge of the immense number of illegal abortions being performed each year, it was hesitant to legalize abortion because it would be a public admittance to the weakening of the patriarchal state. Despite great efforts, the state could no longer deny that women wanted to be much more than mothers, and in 1975 the Veil Law was passed, allowing abortions until the tenth week of pregnancy. The Veil Law, however, was only a five year preliminary law and did not allow Social Security to reimburse women for abortion costs.[108]

Two factors are responsible for the success of the push for greater reproductive rights: one, the sheer size of the movement, and two, the united efforts of a large range of feminist and interest groups. Abortion and birth control were two issues supported by most feminists, and the solutions to the problems were logistically simple—legalize abortion, lower the costs of birth control, and increase its availability. The state, furthermore, could not deny women the right to contraceptives as the illegal abortion rate

[108] Duchen, 58.

skyrocketed. Other inequalities in the state, however, were less sensational and more problematic in their solutions. Equal pay policy reform was slightly less visceral and lacked the immediacy of the issues concerning birth control and abortion. Equal treatment in the workplace was—and is—a problem whose solution is much more complicated.

Women had considerably more difficulty achieving equality within the professional sphere. Whereas abortion and birth control concerned a woman's sexual and maternal identity—both thus within a "feminine" sphere—the struggle for equal treatment within the workplace dealt with women's identities in a sphere that, at least theoretically, was sexless. Despite increased reproductive rights given grudgingly to French women, policy makers—and in the case of Equal Pay Policy (EPP), employers as well—were highly reluctant to implement any concrete changes in the gender-biased professional world.[109]

Although the primary reason for little EPP reform was the lack of government initiative, other factors contributed to the tardiness of EPP reform. The first was a lack of a unity among French feminist groups. The *Mouvement pour la Liberation des Femmes*—the largest and most influential French feminist group during the 1970s—had no interest in improving women's status in France through public policy, but instead wanted to "change society".[110] Distrusting the capitalistic and patriarchal elements of mainstream politics, the MLF avoided associating with trade unions and large political parties.[111] Many feminists refused to participate in politics at all, claiming that in addition

[109] Mazur, 95.
[110] Ibid., 79.
[111] Ibid., 81.

to being ignored by most political parties, these parties "tacitly or actively perpetuated women's oppression" and thus could not be supported. [112]

While the restrictive abortion laws of the 1920s were a "clear target for organization and collective action" for feminist groups to unite against, gender discrimination in the workplace included a number of issues—discrimination in hiring, gender-differentiated training, and wage inequality—that made adopting the cause more complicated.[113] Though all feminists agreed that gender roles needed to be redefined in the public sphere in order to achieve equality, there existed no consensus on how this should be done. The fight for abortion rights was an issue that appealed to the large range of feminists in France and thus gathered a mass following, but the struggle for equality in the workplace required more cohesion among feminist groups than was present in the 1970s.

The second major challenge was how women could influence political decisions and achieve power themselves; women were few within the government, and those who held positions were often over-qualified.[114] The new constitution of 1958 introduced single-member representation, which lowered the chances of women being elected; in the National Assemblies of 1958, 1962, 1967, and 1968, women deputies numbered between eight and ten and represented less than 2 percent of the total deputies.[115] The lack of women's participation in government had numerous explanations. One factor contributing to the absence of women in the political process was that they did not receive the vote until 1944, by which time women had learned to influence society

[112] Duchen, 106.
[113] Mazur, 81.
[114] Gildea, 149.
[115] Ibid, 145.

through different means, such as "social work, voluntary associations, or influence in the family."[116] Furthermore, the French state has historically not allowed for much influence from collective interest groups, and under de Gaulle's Constitution of 1958, the consolidation of presidential power was unprecedented. De Gaulle's reinforcement of traditional gender norms ensured the difficulty of the struggle for EPP reform.

De Gaulle required that the intermediary bodies bend to the higher authority of the central state.[117] This proved problematic for interest groups, as the system was specifically designed to consolidate power into the position of the president and to keep collective interest groups relatively impotent. Only with a strong sense of national unity did de Gaulle believe he could he restore France to its pre-war grandeur.[118] De Gaulle was quoted as saying, "If I want to know what France thinks, I ask myself", indicating the level to which he influenced the decisions of the French government.[119]

When de Gaulle defined the role of the president as being "obviously alone in holding and delegating the authority of the state", the clash between interest groups and the omnipotent ruler became obvious.[120] The relative weakness of interest groups, however, is rooted deeper in French history than de Gaulle's era. Following traditional Jacobin thinking from the French Revolution, interest groups hinder the state's ability to follow the general will of the people and fail to recognize the "one and indivisible will of the Republic."[121] This was a convenient tradition that de Gaulle, who was determined to create single-handedly his vision of France, could reference when his incredible

[116] Duchen, 105.
[117] Knapp, 11.
[118] Ibid., 35.
[119] "Down from Olympus", 3.
[120] Knapp, 12.
[121] Mazur, 14.

presidential power was contested. The revolutionary ideal of the "one and undivided Republic" was used as a pretense to limit the influence of minorities—including women—on the French state and to keep power concentrated within the patriarchy.

Thus, the government was not receptive to the demands from interest groups arguing that equal pay was an important step towards eradicating the sexist elements within French society. Though there was a "minimal" pressure on politicians to deal with inequalities in salary from these groups, the reforms implemented were highly symbolic and were intended to appease critics of the patriarchy while doing little to improve conditions.

One of the first bills passed, the 1972 Equal Pay Law, neither "transformed the capacities of the state" nor "affected the social identities, goals and capacities of the groups" directly implicated by EPP. [122] Beyond the symbolic worth given to the law—and the legitimacy it afforded the state in the international community by ostensibly improving gender equality in France—Pompidou was not concerned with its impact or its implementation. It was, as one historian noted, "a dead letter." [123]

Often the policy reform that the post-1968 government implemented was to improve mothers' rights, not women's rights, in the workplace. Under Pompidou, for example, maternity leave reimbursements increased to ninety percent of women's pay in 1970 and what had previously been labeled as the "salaire unique"—a stipend given to poorer mothers based on the number of children in the family in order to give them the opportunity to remain *femmes au foyer*—housewives—was not abolished but instead only

[122] Mazur, 106.
[123] Gildea, 148.

renamed as the "allocation familial".[124] Pompidou tread the fine line of passing reforms that did not present a challenge the status quo; while the reforms may have benefited women, they only did so within the traditional context of motherhood and were not intended to place men and women on equal terms outside the home.

The third—and most difficult—obstacle to overcome in achieving gender equality in France was the conflict French women themselves felt in regards to which roles they should play in society. Polls taken by two prominent French newspapers in the mid 1970s, the *Nouvel Observateur* and *l'Express*, are proof of a split within French women's attitudes. In one survey, over fifty percent of women agreed with the statement that "a woman must work in order to be truly free". In the second survey, however, fifty-six percent of woman believed that a woman's main motivation to work should only be to supplement her husband's income, not for personal autonomy, and should return to the home once they have children.[125] These opposing views of what French women themselves considered as acceptable reasons for employment weakened collective interests groups by failing to provide unified set of demands. Thus, the push for reforms in addition to the reforms themselves were lacking in effectiveness.

While the 1970s gave women more autonomy within the feminine context of motherhood and reproductive rights a, gender roles in a professional and traditionally masculine context improved only slightly. The persistence of *Martine* is further proof of the indecision of French women regarding appropriate gender roles and the limited success of the feminist movement of the 1970s. There was a brief time in the 1980s when it appeared as though France was making steady gains toward gender equality; social

[124] Mazur, 85.
[125] Mazur, 82.

security reimbursed women for abortion costs, the gap between men and women's wages was closing, and women filled six significant ministerial positions within the government. [126]

The victories of reproductive rights are offset by the government's fear campaign of plummeting birth rates. French women have consistently produced fewer offspring than their European neighbors, and pro-natalist policies and rhetoric remain standard fare; in 1992, Jacques Chirac was quoted as saying birth control is one of the two threats "plaguing" European society.[127] Though there is certain element of legitimacy in the threat of low birth rates—a country with fewer youth and an aging population cannot stimulate its economy as easily as countries with higher birth rates—one can argue the promulgation of pro-natalism is a tactic intended to pressure women into fulfilling traditional mother roles and thereby ensuring the survival of the patriarchal family structure.

Furthermore, women continue to struggle to gain respect in the political sphere, despite a parity law passed in 2000 that required an equal number of male and female candidates to be presented on the ballot during each election. Though this parity law was expected to have a "revolutionary effect" by allowing women an equal opportunity for election, it has been relatively ineffective in increasing women's participation in politics.[128] In the French presidential elections of 2007, Ségolène Royal was the first female candidate in French history to have had a realistic chance of winning the presidency. During her campaign, she was subject to overtly sexist comments both from the press and from within her own party. Laurence Fabian, for example, a Frenchman

[126] Ibid., 127.
[127] Chirac, 3.
[128] Murray, 9.

who ran against her for the Socialist nomination, publicly asked Royal who would take care of her children if she won the presidency.[129] Such blatant sexism, paired with the reality that men continue to staggeringly outnumber women within the French government, indicates the staying power of the French patriarchy despite legislation attempting to improve equality within the system.

As the *Martine* generation aged, the realities of the revolution became less idyllic. Fighting against the patriarchy proved a difficult task, and, as many women did become mothers, they were understandably torn between the state's endorsement of the "good mother" who becomes a *femme au foyer* and the appeals of working a job outside the home despite having a family. The women of the *Martine* generation were forced to have dual identities; on the one hand, 1968 made it acceptable to be more sexually free and to postpone motherhood until a later age, but as these women became mothers and wives, the familiar pressures to obey the status quo increased.

Ironically, the *Martine* generation returned to exactly what they were rebelling against. For this generation, however, the nostalgia was not for pre-war France, but for the nostalgic simplicity of childhood. In the *Martine* series, there are no questions of identity; Martine's mother has no doubts about her profession, because in the world of Martine, it is the best—and only—profession she could have. Motherhood is both her duty and her destiny. Martine is a typical, arguably vapid little girl, but she is undoubtedly feminine. Instead of feeling shame or guilt about her femininity, however, she takes joy in it. Likewise, all the characters in the series appear to enjoy the confining structures of traditional social and gender norms. In the world of 1970s France, intelligent, independent women knew of the impossibility of enjoying life in such stifling

[129] bbc.co.uk "Segolene Royal:Profile" November 17, 2006

society. Still, this did not detract from the simple, nostalgic appeal of *Martine* and more generally, from the temptation to take the path of least resistance and obey the status quo.

"Changing society" (as the MLF hoped to do) is a tiring and often disappointing task. In the face of continuous struggles for respect and equality, the women of the *Martine* generation yearned for Martine's certitude that their lifestyle choices were not mistakes. The *Martine* series served these women as a welcome respite from the uncertainties and complications of reality.

Conclusion

Even after understanding the social and political climate of France in the 1970s, the continued popularity of *Martine* after 1968 is puzzling and inherently contradictory. Why would a generation of women teach children the very principles they rebelled against?

Based on my research, I conclude that *Martine* has survived so many changes in French society precisely because the series itself has changed so little. The series has served as a cultural constant, something to cling to as the nation experienced—and continues to experience—significant cultural and political changes. While this paper has focused on traditional gender roles within the series, *Martine* in fact embodies the "French myth" on many levels; the "racial purity" myth, by presenting little to no racial diversity, despite myriad opportunities to integrate different races and cultures into the series; the "rural myth", which idealizes the rural, agricultural life, despite the lack of opportunity and diversity present in less populated areas; and the myth of pre- world war French "grandeur".

The coalescing of all these myths within *Martine* contribute to the series' most powerful element: nostalgia. Nostalgia remains an incredibly strong force in the French consciousness, and the patriarchal structure has used nostalgia as a tool to justify limiting the power of minority groups with the government and society, and it has been exploited both culturally and politically to maintain the status quo. Under the guise of an "indivisible Republic", the patriarchy has limited the power of those who attempt to reform the existing system.

A common slogan in the May 68 revolution was "no re-plastering, the structure is rotten." Of course, the Revolution of 1968 did not achieve its dream of eradicating the established patriarchy; it did, however, prove the system was capable of being reformed. Today, it is not a question of whether or not the French system is "rotten" or worth keeping; the Fifth Republic is firmly established and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. Thus, the current challenge is rooting out the causes of continued inequalities within the established system and determining how these weaknesses in the structure can be "renovated".

Even after

> feminists found themselves in the position of being able to have only those children they chose to have, to a great extent, [they] realized the evasive nature of desire. Not knowing what their desires actually were, many women were incapable of making a conscious decision about whether to have a child or not, and for many, ironically, the easiest way to deal with it was to act as if the choice did not exist at all.[130]

Thus we can see the conflict *les françaises* felt over their identities as modern women; although government had given them the right to choose, women still felt pressured to forgo their identities to become dedicated wives and mothers. Furthermore, the events of the 1970s were a "double-edged sword" for many women; those who marched for birth control and abortion rights in the streets were torn between their desire to have children and their desire to resist the patriarchal traditions of French state—i.e., restricting women to wives and mothers.

Although women today are in many ways "equal" to men in French society, the struggle continues for women to find a balance between motherhood, femininity, and modern French identity. Based on my research, it seems unlikely that French society will

[130] Duchen, 61.

rid itself of gender inequalities in the near future. The agenda of the patriarchal state coupled with women's own inability to decide upon an identity even in modern-day France has guaranteed the persistence of gender norms despite considerable resistance among certain demographics. The key to achieving gender equality in the state hinges upon a significant change in French women's self-perceptions. Women who engage in state-endorsed nostalgia, for whatever reason, are only bolstering the power of the patriarchy, and buying sexist children's literature like *Martine* only completes the cycle of female oppression. Undoubtedly, society must change to achieve gender equality; in order to for this to happen, however, French women must better understand their own belief in certain gender stereotypes in order to avoid perpetuating them. Clarie Duchen, a prominent feminist historian, questions French women's ability to find they answers they seek until they have adequately formulated the questions they are asking.[131]

There is evidence to suggest that French women's self-perceptions are indeed changing. Among the younger generations especially, books like *Martine* are accepted only with an amount of irony. On the popular networking site *Facebook*, for example, French youth have created a group called "Martine: Or Real Life" in which students have contributed altered versions of classic Martine covers, usually to mock the series' traditionalism and ridiculous illustrations.[132]

However, I believe that even younger French women underestimate to what degree *Martine*'s messages affect their society's attitudes towards gender roles. As previously discussed, children's literature is often used a tool to teach children the rules and norms of society; while adults may see *Martine* as a harmless and obviously

[131] Duchen, 102.
[132] Illustrations S and T.

anachronistic series, the youngest generation of French girls is unable to understand its irony. Regardless of their mothers' intentions in buying *Martine,* the sexist and nostalgic messages within the series remain influential upon young girls. The continued popularity of *Martine* ensures the survival of certain aspects of sexism within French society; if French women want to achieve true equality, they must recognize the series' inherent inequalities and choose literature that discourages, not encourages, traditional gender roles for their children.

Bibilography

Ed. Andrews, William G. and Hoffman, Stanley. *The Impact of the Fifth Republic on France.* State University of New York Press. Albany, New York, 1981.

Andrews, William G. *French Politics and Algeria.* Appleton-Century-Crofts. New York, 1962.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *Le Deuxieme Sexe.* Gallimard Publishing. Paris, 1949.

Belotti, Elena Gianini. *What Are Little Girls Made of? The Roots of Feminine Stereotypes.* Schocken Books, New York.

De Boer, Connie. "The Polls: Women At Work". T*he Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 2. (Summer, 1977), pp. 268-277.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. University of California Press. Berkeley, 2003.

Brown, Gillian. "The Metamorphic Book: Children's Print Culture in the Eighteenth Century." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 39.3 (2006) 351-362

Chirac, Jacques. "Jacques Chirac on French Population Issues". *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Mar., 1985), pp. 163-164.

Cole, Alistair and Mendras, Henri. *Social Change in Modern France.* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1991.

Cook, Daniel Thomas. *The Commodification of Childhood.* Duke University Press, 2004.

Delahaye, Gilbert. *Martine et les sports.* Casterman Publishing, 1996.

Delahaye, Gilbert. *Bravo! Martine.* Casterman Publishing, 1996.

Delahaye, Gilbert. *Martine à la maison.* Caterman Publishing, 1996.

Delahaye, Gilbert. *Martine en voyage.* Casterman Publishing. Belgium, 1985.

Dreyfus, Francine Muel. *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine.* Duke University Press, 2001.

Duchen, Claire. *Feminism in France; From May '68 to Mitterrand.* Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. London, 1986.

Fortescue, William. *The Third Republic in France 1870-1940. Conflicts and Continuities*. Routledge Publishing. London, 2000.

Gildea, Robert. *France Since 1945.* Oxford University Press, 2002.

Jelen, Ted G. and Wilcox, Clyde. "Causes and Consequences of Public Attitudes toward Abortion: A Review and Research Agenda'. *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 4. (Dec., 2003), pp. 489-500.

Knapp, Andrew. *Gaullism Since de Gaulle.* Darmouth Publishing Company Limited. Aldershot, England. 1994.

Kurlansky, Mark. *1968*. Random House Publishing Group. New York, 2004.

Ed. Lange, Lynda. *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.* Pennsylvania State University, 2002.

de Launay, Jacque. Tr. Albertyn, Dorothy. *De Gaulle and His France. A Psychopolitical and Historical Portrait.* Julian Press, Inc. New York, 1968.

Locke, John. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Vol. XXXVII, Part 1. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. www.bartleby.com/37/1/.

De Mause, Lloyd, ed. *The History Of Childhood.* The Psychohistory Press, New York 1974.

Mazur, Amy. *Gender Bias and the State: Symbolic Reform at Work in Fifth Republic France.* University of Pittsburg Press. Pittsburg, 1995.

McDonald, James R. "Labor Immigration in France, 1946-1965". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 59, No. 1. (Mar., 1969), pp. 116-134.

McMillan, James. *Modern France*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2003.

Murray, Rainbow. "Explaining French Parties' Response to the Parity Law". Paper presented at the annual meeting of The Midwest Political Science Association, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, Illinois, Apr 20, 2006 Online <PDF>. 2008-04-12 <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p137760_index.html>

Parry, D.L.L. and Girard, Pierre. *France Since 1800.* Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2002.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Emile Or On Education.* Paris, 1762. Tr. Barbara Foxley and Grace Roosevelt. http://projects.ilt.columbia.edu/pedagogies/rousseau/index.html

Shennan, Andrew. *Rethinking France.* Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1989.

Singer, Daniel. *Prelude To Revolution: France in May 1968.* Hill and Wang. New York, 1970.

Smith, Paul. *Feminism and the Third Republic: Women's Political and Civil Rights in France 1918-1945.* Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1996.

Sommerville, John C. "Review: Why Studying Children's Literature Isn't Fun Anymore." *History of Education Quarterly,* Vol, 23, No. 4. (Winter, 1983) pp. 515-522.

Steinbrugge, Lieselotte. *The Moral Sex.* Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment. Oxford University Press. New York, 1995.

Stovall, Tyler. *France Since the Second World War.* Pearson Education Limited. London, 2002.

Toulemon, Laurent and Henri Leridon. "Twenty Years of Contraception in France: 1968-88". *Population: An English Selection*, Vol. 4. (1992), pp. 1-33.

Wright, Ernest Hunter. *The Meaning of Rousseau.* Oxford University Press, 1929.

Viansson-Ponté, Pierre. Translated by Elaine P. Halperin. *The King and His Court.* Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964.

"Down From Olympus." Time Magazine. December 17, 1965.

Code Napoleon; or, *The French Civil Code.* Literally Translated from the Original and Official Edition, Published at Paris, in 1804. By a Barrister of the Inner Temple. Translation attributed to George Spencer. London: Published by William Benning, Law Bookseller, 1827. xix, 627 pages. (online source: www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/c_code.html)