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# *The Place of Civilization in Modern Foreign Language Teaching*<sup>1</sup>

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(*Author's summary.*—This paper is an attempt to show to what extent the teaching of the civilization of a country may be correlated with the teaching of its language for students at different levels. Some of the books, selected from the bibliography which follows the article, have been briefly characterized, and one of the magazine articles analyzed. When the teaching of modern foreign languages is approached with this as one of its aims, it seems inevitable that greater tolerance toward nations with customs other than our own will result.)

At a time when we hear so much about the study of contemporary society's problems in a changing world, the teachers of almost all subjects seem to be challenged to justify their existence by answering the question: "What do you contribute to the study of civilization and to the solution of social problems?" It usually is agreed that civilization embraces the cultural and economic development of a country. The cultural, of course, would include the intellectual, emotional, ethical, and esthetic background of a people, and it is toward this that the study of modern foreign languages can contribute a great deal both directly and indirectly. The problem is to show the extent to which the student experiences something of the cultural history or civilization of a foreign country whose language he is studying. In this, two phases are to be considered: the facts about the foreign civilization which the student learns in connection with the language or literature class, and the conception he has of the foreign country as a result of studies carried on in a class devoted wholly to the study of the civilization of the country.

During recent years, we find the ever-recurring question: "What does a modern foreign language contribute to the study of the civilization of a foreign nation and of our own?" referred to in articles with titles such as the following: "The Modern Languages and Social Sciences in Harmony";<sup>2</sup> "Can Foreign Languages Integrate?";<sup>3</sup> "The Generalist's View of Foreign Languages."<sup>4</sup> We are told that even the student who is not linguistically gifted will be interested in hearing about a foreign people, in taking imagin-

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<sup>2</sup> Richebourg and Moehlmann, "The Modern Foreign Languages and the Social Sciences in Harmony; A Dialogue." *Modern Language Journal*. xx: 195.

<sup>3</sup> *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, "Berichte und Mitteilungen," xxviii: 124.

<sup>4</sup> Kaulfers, Walter V., "The Generalist's View of the Foreign Languages," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, xxviii: 70-74.

ary tours to its country and studying its customs.<sup>5</sup> When he compares what he has learned of the foreign people and sees similar characteristics in his friends of foreign descent, he will know the origin of and reasons for these traits. If he has heretofore been irritated by some peculiarity, now that he understands it, he can forgive it.<sup>6</sup>

In my classes in the civilization of France and of Germany, I always ask the students the first day to write what the term civilization means to them, and usually receive answers similar to the following: "Civilization consists of a study of the geography, history, art, music, literature, science and philosophy, manners, customs, and modes of life in general of a nation."

It is my plan to discuss the teaching of civilization as applied to elementary and intermediate classes in modern foreign languages and then the manner of procedure in the class in civilization. I shall furthermore differentiate between what the student does actively and what falls to the rôle of the teacher.

In the first two years of work, the student's part can be carried out by the study of textbooks which treat the important facts of civilization. More and more effort is now being made on the part of editors to offer some interesting facts about the geography and culture of the country and to enhance the appearance of the textbook by the addition of attractive illustrations. Books of this type are doing their share in demonstrating to the generalist in education that something worthwhile is being studied during the first two years of language work. This something worthwhile, according to those who challenge the justifiability of modern foreign languages in the curriculum, usually is the study of books which tell the students something about real people and contemporary life.

In the first part of the bibliography published herewith will be found a list of books which students can use for the study of the foreign civilization during their first two years. In the first-year classes at State Teachers College, Talbot's *La Nouvelle France* has been found interesting and stimulating. I think *En France*, by Alexis, would appeal to students. One of our instructors has been for several years using Macy and Malakis's *Petite Histoire de la Civilisation Française* with success in an intermediate class. Bagley's *Great Men of France* has also proved very satisfactory. It has been found advisable to alternate the study of civilization with short stories and plays. This is feasible enough, because readings can be made illustrative of certain epochs. For example, when we study the seventeenth century

<sup>5</sup> Moehlmann, Nellie D., "Non-College Preparatory Courses in French," *Modern Language Journal*, xix: 537.

<sup>6</sup> Purin, C. M., "The Importance of Foreign Language Study in the General Scheme of American Education," *Modern Language Journal*, iv: 326.

Zdanowicz, C. D., "By-Products of Modern Foreign Language Study," *Modern Language Journal*, xiii: 257.

Tharp, James, B., "A Test in French Civilization," *French Review*, viii: 283-287.

in this brief book of civilization, we read a comedy of Molière. Cramer's *Ça et là en France* has always been a favorite with conversation classes, and frequently one student has taken the part of someone from the north of France, another of someone from the south, and in a dialogue, the background of which was obtained from Cramer, many arguments as to advantages and characteristics of the respective parts of the country were discussed in French. Déléry and Renshaw's *France d'Amérique* would be most interesting in comparing French and American civilizations.

To mention a few books from the list of German texts for elementary and intermediate work, I might name Purin and Rose's *Kulturkunde*, which combines in an interesting fashion short articles on centers of culture with a review of applied grammar. Leopold's *Reise durch Deutschland* and Roeseler and Evans's *Rheinsagen* show the romantic Rhine. Fleissner's *Deutschland von Heute und Gestern* is what its name implies; it gives interesting chapters on rural and urban Germany.

In the class in civilization, the question of what text to use will be determined by whether the class is of senior or junior rank and whether the book is to be used intensively or extensively. In our class in French civilization, we have found Rutherford's *La France et les Français* well adapted to the needs of a class for which the prerequisites are only two years of college French. In order to obtain a general background of history, we have always used *The Growth of the French Nation* by Adams for the study of historical background up to the twentieth century.

The rather long list of English books, especially the illustrated ones, serves a double purpose in that these books furnish valuable supplementary material.<sup>7</sup> In the beginners' class, even though none of the above-mentioned French readers would be used, the teacher may take at least twenty minutes a week to give short talks on the foreign country and show pictures from various books. I know from experience that this interests the students, for when some of them returned several years after graduation, they told me how much these talks had helped them in their general reading and in their travel. They can be used by the students in connection with their special reports on some particular phase of civilization which interests them. However, the whole class must have a knowledge of the background of history, art, music, and the like.

A great deal of this material can be used for illustrated talks in the language club. The books which have especially impressive illustrations are the Académie Goncourt's *Color of Paris*, Nolhac's *Versailles and the Triansons*, the two books on Brittany and one on the Riviera. Among the books which have been published within recent years, and which present material in an interesting and varied fashion, are Cohen-Portheim's *The Spirit of France*, a philosophical study of the evolution of the French mind

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Henry Lester, "Modern Foreign Languages in a Changing Curriculum," *Modern Language Journal*, xx: 134.

showing its heritage from the past, which is indicated by chapter headings such as: "Latin France," "Gothic France," "Bourgeois and Romantic"; and Curtius's *The Civilization of France*, which aims to give in fewer chapters an introduction to French civilization and a discussion of the French outlook upon world affairs.

The books which might be designated as studies in contrast are Sieburg's *Who are these French?*, which shows us a contrast between French and Germans, and André Siegfried's *France, A Study in Nationality*.

In the course in German civilization, Kaufmann and Balduf's *Cultural History of Germany*, known as *Inductive Readings in German*, Book III, has been used as a basic text. The division of the material into political and cultural history is valuable, but the vocabulary and the style are too difficult for the average student. Jockers's *Die Deutschen, ihr Wesen und Werden* was used to supplement this book. Kron's *German Daily Life* may be used to advantage for conversation work. In the general list, the best photographic reproductions are found in the monographs mentioned first. Herzog's *Deutschland, mein Deutschland* has unusually fine engravings, and *Romantic Germany* most interesting color illustrations.

In the list entitled *General Traits*, the books by Danton, Diesel, and Gooch are among the best of their kind. Kuno Francke's books are satisfying both from a content and a stylistic standpoint. Manthey-Zorn and Coar offer valuable studies of the German mind as affected by the War and the results of the War.

Some of the characteristics of a nation are always shown in its music and plays. I have suggested a few collections of songs and have indicated where lists of plays can be obtained. It always adds interest to the foreign language class to read as many magazine articles as possible on France and Germany. Naturally, since the topic of civilization is very complex and comprehensive, it is not so easily discussed in a short article as in a book, but the fact that articles have appeared is shown in the short list at the end of the bibliography. This is not at all meant to be a comprehensive survey of the periodical literature on the subject.

One of the articles which I found very interesting was Charlotte Muret's *On Becoming French*. This article can be divided into three parts, according to content: The French as Social Beings, The Frenchman as an Individual, and The French Woman. Each part in turn treats an internal or spiritual and an external manifestation of certain characteristics. As a social being, we find that the Frenchman's emotional attitude is very different from ours. His tolerance of the shortcomings of human nature is far greater than that of the American, with his latent Puritan strain. He does not indulge in moral indignation about anyone's private life, nor does he waste time in gossip. The worst that he says of wicked people is that they are unfortunate. He may become angry at evil, but seldom is astonished at it; he accepts human nature and the world as it is. Although the Frenchman may seem

excitable, he is very cool in crises. Externally, we find the characteristics of tact, politeness, and intuitiveness. By a gentle suggestion or hint, he may show his dissatisfaction with something, and if the other does not notice it, he will not make it more evident. The French feel that so much of our time is spent in casual relationships, that delicacy and agreeableness must be brought into these too.

The second part, on *The Frenchman as an Individual*, discusses his life of the soul and his life with things. The Frenchman has great respect for intelligence. The intellect is placed far above personality and externalities of conduct. If an intellectual person has odd mannerisms, nothing is said of them. Keeness of intellect shows itself in the desire of the French to exchange ideas. Thus we find that the French grow far more excited about a new play than about the latest mechanical labor-saving device. The exchange of ideas is what makes French conversation so stimulating and delightful. It is sufficient for intelligent French people when together to talk together. The ability to judge the merits of a book or a *première* means far more to them than all the electrical appliances in the world.

The last part, *The French Woman*, is the one which interested me most. The French woman is characterized as a being in whom the desire to help and work with others is uppermost. This is evident from the fact that the French woman with an alert mind and great intelligence seldom longs for a personal career which brings great power, and even if she has attained this, she admits that she always works best when under the guidance and encouragement of some man, be it husband, teacher, or friend. There is evident here the longing for an exchange of ideas of different types which one naturally has in intellectual work of this kind and which leads to interesting results, as is evident in French and other intellectual circles where men and women work together. There seems to be an intangible similarity in this and the truest essence of French conversation: the exchange of ideas, and often the ability to be an intelligent listener by showing appreciation of the words of another and by suggestion leading others to express thoughts they perhaps would not do otherwise. The characteristic of the French woman is to create an harmonious atmosphere and to give appreciation. To be desired and needed is more to the French woman than to be independent. Thus we find the maternal instinct very evident in her also, in a literal sense, in that she feels herself to be her husband's and her children's companion and confidante and desires to devote a great deal of time to them; and in a figurative and spiritual sense, so that nieces and nephews may completely satisfy her desire to help and sacrifice as a mother would.

In elementary texts, in a class in civilization, in the foreign language club, in magazine articles, the student can find material to increase his knowledge and understanding of the foreign people whose language he is studying. The study of foreign civilization contributes much to an intelligent comprehension of and respect for varying human customs and broad-



ening of social outlook, which are necessary first steps in establishing bonds of sympathy and understanding between different peoples.<sup>8</sup> This will lead to peace and tolerance toward one another: individual toward individual, nation toward nation.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR READINGS IN FRENCH AND GERMAN CIVILIZATION

### FRANCE

#### TEXTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND INTERMEDIATE WORK

##### *Readers*

- Alexis, J., *En France*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Midwest Publishing Company, 1934.  
 Allen and Schoell, *French Life*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915.  
 Bacon, E. F., *Une Semaine à Paris*. New York: American Book Company, 1901.  
 Bagley, C. R., *Great Men of France*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1931.  
 Bond, O., *Terre de France*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1928.  
 Clément and Marinoni, *Voici la France*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1924.  
 Déléry and Renshaw, *France d'Amérique*. New York: American Book Company, 1932.  
 Dodge, <sup>§</sup>Mendel, and Caro-Delvaile, *La France Vivante*. New York: American Book Company, 1934.  
 Hills and Dondo, *La France, Cours Élémentaire*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1931.  
 Lavis, Ernest, *Histoire de France*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1919.  
 Lebert, Schwarz, and Ernst, *Visages de la France*. New York: American Book Company, 1936.  
 Macy and Malakis, *Petite Histoire de la Civilisation Française*. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1932.  
 Maloubier, Eugène, *Au Jour le Jour*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1923.  
 Pargment, M. S., *La France et les Français*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923.  
 Schoell, F. L., *Le Paris d'Aujourd'hui*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921.  
 Smith and Roberts, *French Book One*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1930.  
 Talbot, L. Raymond, *La France Nouvelle*. New York: Benj. H. Sanborn and Company, 1922.

##### *Stories Illustrative of Certain Characteristics of French Provinces*

- Bazin, René, *Les Oberlé*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1916.  
 Cameron, A. L., *Tales of France*. New York: American Book Company, 1904.  
 Clavel, Marcel, *Terres et Gens de France*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924.  
 Daudet, Alphonse, *Tartarin de Tarascon*. New York: American Book Company, 1902.  
 Deulin, Charles, *Contes de Flandres*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1928.  
 Le Braz, Anatole, *Contes Bretons*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915.  
 Giduz and Holmes, *Sept Contes de la Vieille France*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1930.  
 Méras and Roth, *Petits Contes de France*. New York: American Book Company, 1916.

##### *Suggestions for a Class in French Civilization*

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 Gifford, George H., *La France à travers les Siècles*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936.  
 Malet, A., *L'Histoire de France*. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> Feise, Ernst, "Aims and Values of Foreign Language Study," *Modern Language Journal*, xiv: 636-637.

- Michaud and Marinoni, *France-Tableau de la civilisation française*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928.
- Pargment, M. S., *La France et les Français*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927.
- Rutherford, A. and M., *La France et les Français*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935.
- Saillens, E., *Toute la France*. Paris: Larousse, 1928.
- Sauilière, F. J. L., *Civilisation Française*. New York: Silver Burdett Company.

*For Supplementary Reading*

- Cramer, J. Grant, *Ça et là en France*. New York: American Book Company, 1913.
- Lanson and Desseignat, *La France et sa Civilisation*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930.
- Pargment, M. S., *Coutumes Françaises d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1932.
- Rimbaud, A., *Extraits de la Civilisation Française*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925.

READINGS IN FRENCH CIVILIZATION

*Geography*

- Blanchard and Todd, *Geography of France*. New York: Rand, McNally and Company, 1919.

*History*

- Adams, G. B., *The Growth of the French Nation*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1896.
- Bracq, J., *France under the Republic*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.
- Taine, H., *Ancien Régime*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1896.
- Vizetelly, E., *Republican France: 1870-1912*. Boston: Small, Maynard and Company.

*General Traits: Description*

- Bethaim-Edwards, *Home Life in France*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1905.
- Brownell, W. C., *French Traits, an Essay in Comparative Criticism*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889.
- Cestre, Charles, *Ideals of France*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1923.
- Cohen-Portheim, P., *The Spirit of France*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1933.
- Curtius, E. R., *The Civilization of France*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932.
- Dell, F., *My Second Country, France*. New York: The John Lane Company, 1925.
- Green, S. G., *French Pictures*. London: The Religious Tract Society.
- Guérard, A. L., *French Civilization*. Three volumes: I. *From Its Origins to the Close of the Middle Ages*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921. II. *The Life and Death of an Ideal. France in the Classical Age*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928. III. *The Nineteenth Century*. New York: The Century Company, 1914.
- Huddleston, S., *France and the French*. New York: Peter Smith, 1929.
- Hueffner, O. M., *French France*. New York: D. Appleton Company, 1929. (Treatment of the provinces.)
- Jerrold, L., *France, Her People and Her Spirit*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1916.
- Jerrold, L., *The Real France*. New York: The John Lane Company, 1911.
- Kron, R., *French Daily Life*. (Dent's Modern Language Series.) New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.
- Sieburg, F., *Who are these French?* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932.
- Siegfried, A., *France, A Study in Nationality*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.
- Wendell, Barrett, *The France of Today*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907.

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- Blondel la Rougery, ed., *Les Provinces de France illustrés et leurs divisions départementales*. Paris: Blondel la Rougery, Éditeur, 7 rue St. Lazare.



- Bougier, L., *Géographie de la France et de ses Colonies*. Paris: Alcan, 1897.  
 Bournon, F., *Paris Atlas*. Paris: Larousse. (595 gravures photographiques.)  
 Gage, A., *Ce qu'il faut savoir des colonies françaises*. Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1931. Memento  
 Larousse, encyclopédique et illustré. 850 gravures Larousse.

### Paris

- Bensusan, S. L., *Souvenir of Paris*. London: T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1911.  
 Académie Goncourt, *Color of Paris*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1908.  
 Lucas, E. V., *A Wanderer in Paris*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909.  
 Singleton, E. *Paris as Seen and Described by Great Writers*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1900.

### Versailles

- Nolhac, P., *Versailles and the Trianons*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1906.

### Brittany and Normandy

- Dodd, *Three Normandy Inns*. New York: American Publishing Corporation, 1892.  
 Edwards, G. W., *Brittany and the Bretons*. New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1910.  
 Gostling, F. N., *The Bretons at Home*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1909.

### The Valley of the Loire

- Goldring, D., *Along France's River of Romance*. New York: McBride, 1913.  
 Wharton, A. H., *In the Château Land*. Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott Company, 1911.

### The Pyrenees

- Baring-Gould, S., *A Book of the Pyrenees*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1907.

### The Riviera and South Eastern France

- Baring-Gould, S., *The Riviera*. London: Methuen and Company, 1905.  
 Scott, Wm., *The Riviera*. London: A. and C. Black, 1907.

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- Brownell, W. C., *French Art*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892. (Classic and Contemporary Painting and Sculpture.)  
 Dimier, L., *French Painting in the 16th Century*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.  
 Rilke, Rainer Maria, *August Rodin*. Translated by Jesse Lemont and Hans Transit. New York: Sunrise Turn, Inc., 1919.  
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 Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène Emmanuel, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*. Paris: 1854-1869. 10 volumes. 3745 engravings.  
 Underwood, Eric G., *Short History of French Painting*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1931. (1200 to the present day.)

### Music

- Chants de France*. Edited by R. P. Jameson and A. E. Heacox. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1922.  
*Chants de France*. Ithaca, N. Y.: The Thrift Press, 1935.  
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- L'Illustration*. Weekly. Paris: 13 rue Saint-Georges.

*La Nouvelle Revue Française*. Twice a month. Paris: 3 rue de Grenelle.

*Les Nouvelles Littéraires, Artistiques et Scientifiques*. Weekly. Paris: 146 rue Montmartre.

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*Le Petit Journal*. Montreal.

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Briffault, R., "French Civilization and the Crisis," *Current History*, xxxviii: 137-141. (May, 1933.)

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Sieburg, F., and Moussinac, L., "Spirit of France," *Commonweal*, xix: 453-445. (February 23, 1934.)

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## GERMANY

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Bach, E. A., *In Heidelberg*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1933.

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Purin and Rose, *Deutsche Kulturkunde*. Richmond, Virginia: Johnson Publishing Company, 1928.

*Suggestions for a Class in German Civilization*

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- Henderson, E. F., *A Short History of Germany*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902.

## READINGS IN GERMAN CIVILIZATION

*Geography*

- Die schöne deutsche Stadt*. A series published by Piper of Munich. In this series are: T. Baum: *Süddeutschland*. G. Wolf: *Mitteldeutschland*. G. Wolf: *Norddeutschland*. F. Luckner: *Die Tiroler Stadt*.
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- Brooks, S., *America and Germany, 1918-1925*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928.
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