The Role of the Past in French Life Educating the Nation


1660-1814: under ancien régime history footnote to Classics and was primarily thought to serve a moral function; restricted to princes, ruling class, and rich bourgeoisie

19th century: 1814-1914: initial steps rocky but under July monarchy flourished

"At a deeper level, the period coincided with the Romantic movement which rediscovered the past in general and the Middle Ages in particular, just as the first humanists of the Renaissance had rediscovered Antiquity: as eras that were gone forever." 19 must remember this and rectify it with musing on colonial views and the concept of modernity towards the past; this Romanticisation was not the same folk as it was in Germany, the idea was to find cultural milieu; it also did serve to encourage interest while at the same time reinforcing the break as a time of the past in the past and not relevant to the present except as sentiment, longing, and a cultural pot that produced modern France; cooking pot no longer needed...

"In the same way the watershed of the Revolution conferred a mythical dimension on French national history, and in the early nineteenth century learning about it was akin to engaging in a sacred quest for the origins of the nation. Finally, at the political level, King Louis Philippe sought to steady his shaky throne by appealing to history to support the claim that his regime was the “happy medium”, the necessary outcome of the whole of French hisotry and the only government capable of reconciling the ancien régime and the Revolution.” 19

in a way the movement of the 19th century sought to delineate the past as a primordial formation process from which the modern nation of France emerged independent of its past in a way because it was the end product of that time and the beginning of a new project concerned with what the parts could achieve together (something assumed impossible to correlate with the past since the separate entities did not work together then...)

under Second Empire history again vilified and not supported until the later liberal years; checked by military disasters in Prussia and Paris Commune

revival in history still had disagreements about what past to teach Catholics wanted to teach the idealized Middle Ages as an inspiration for the salvation of France academic focuses on Christianity also undoubtedly tied up in the understanding of the passivity towards the Middle Ages with the history of the Protestant uprisings and the growth of secularization

under Third Republic history extended to primary schools to promote the political ideals of patrie and the nation as a custodian of unity, democracy, and FRENCH values

1919-1989:

what are the major medieval moments figures in French medieval history and how are they interpreted/venerated?

The Song of Roland

Gregory of Tours?

Louis the IX?

Clovis?

Childeric?

Charlemagne