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Children's Publishing in Cold War France

Hachette in the Age of Surveillance and Control

Sophie Heywood

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To Jack and Lena

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Author's note

All French material cited in this text has been translated into English. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author. Where possible and helpful, English translations of French legislation, political institutions, organizations and book titles have been provided in brackets.

Introduction

Open any book aimed at young readers published in France, and its front matter will contain the declaration that it conforms to the Law N° 49–956 of 16 July 1949 on publications for children.[1] This indicates that the publisher has deposited five copies of the new publication at the Ministry of Justice. In so doing, they have officially declared that they intend to sell it to readers aged under eighteen and that they accept there are special rules to follow. Enforced by the Commission charged with the Surveillance and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents (CSC), this legislation has sought to fix the boundaries of French children's reading matter and police the import of print publications since its institution in 1949.

For more than sixty years, until the text was substantially revised in 2011, the French law stipulated that publications for children must not contain content 'implying admiration for gangsterism, untruthfulness, robbery, indolence, cowardice, hatred, debauchery or any actions constituting crimes or offences of a kind likely to demoralize children or adolescents'.[2] As historians have observed, this bewildering list of crimes – how could emotions such as cowardice or hatred be banned from works of imagination? – reflected the impact of the war and collaboration with the Nazis, and the prominence of children and their education to the subsequent project to rebuild the French nation.[3] In the words of former resistance fighter, chief inspector of schools and leading advocate for education reform Gustave Monod: 'to think of the future is to think of our children's future.'[4] Chief amongst the policymakers' concerns in 1949 was therefore the prevention of material that was violent or glamorized crime from reaching young citizens' hands and corrupting their minds. It was motivated in large part by desire to control the American-origin comics that were wildly popular amongst French children, seen to be one of the causes behind the soaring rates of youth crime registered during and after the war: '88% of juvenile delinquents read comics' was the headline conclusion of a report carried out for the Ministry of Youth and Sport in 1948.[5]

These measures were implemented in 1949, in the aftermath of war, certainly, but also, as this book will show, in the tense early years of the Cold War. The introduction of legislation was, I argue, always more than just about the 'surveillance' of content; it was also about the 'control' of an expanding industry, to use the terminology of the sinister-sounding Commission for Surveillance and Control. The new regulator operated at an industry level. It was designed around post-production interventions – usually discreet warning letters to publishers first, asking them to modify or remove objectionable content, which were then followed by meetings between the publishers and the head of the CSC to discuss how they could improve their practices. The idea was to encourage children's publishers to self-censor, or, as the Justice Minister put it at the inaugural session of the CSC, to make the industry understand that it had patriotic responsibilities towards the nation's young.[6] In its guidelines for publishers, the CSC explained further that the industry 'shared educational responsibilities for children with families, schools and education professionals, cinema, and the information press'.[7] The problem in and after 1949 for a government seeking to make publishers 'responsible to the nation' was that the publishing industry was on the brink of huge growth, much of it fuelled by American content and investment. The most successful businesses producing children's books and comics in France were multinational media companies such as Disney, working in partnership with French publishers, with Hachette in the lead (its entire business model in this period pivoted to importing Anglo-American book series such as Nancy Drew and Disney comics). Bound up in the French state's introduction of protectionist legislation was therefore a series of questions around the children's publishing industry and its place within nation and society, and how far nation states can – and whether they should – intervene to restrict who can speak to their youngest citizens.

This book contends that the early Cold War era represented a watershed moment for children's publishing in France. The 1949 law inaugurated what I call 'the age of surveillance and control' in the two decades that followed, when the industry was subject to increased scrutiny and political interference. Not just children's publishers but the entire critical, mediating and distribution apparatus surrounding the industry were involved with and shaped by this new law, which in turn was a reflection of the entanglement of culture in the global ideological conflict of the Cold War. This period also had longer-term impact on the way that the publishing industry developed in France, and left a structural legacy in the form of the law and its regulatory commission. By writing the history of this important juncture in the history of French

children's books and comics, and using Hachette, the largest children's publisher in France in the period, to trace how the Cold War affected the development of the publishing industry, this book speaks to two key themes that have wider resonance for children's literary scholarship. First, it examines the role played by the Cold War in both the growth of and responses to the globalization of children's books and comics took in the decades after 1945, when the international distribution of children's media accelerated, led by US-based multinational companies.[8] As a study of how these tensions played out between a globalizing industry and local regulator, it historicizes a crucial moment in the development of the profoundly unequal, English-language-dominated cultural exchange that now characterizes the global children's book market.[9] Second, the history of this legislation and the children's publishing industry in France in the years around 1949 gets us thinking about the ecosystems that produce children's print culture and sustain it; specifically, how the gate-keeping mechanisms that are so central to drawing the boundaries around children's culture work, and the extent to which they are effective; how political pressures mould and distort the industry and publishing practices; and ultimately, how all of these forces affect children's books and comics, and children's ability to access them.

France may be unusual amongst contemporary Western democracies in having national-level censorship legislation for children's books, but it is by no means an outlier.[10] Notably in the United States, where book bans have been a long and well-documented phenomenon, activists and politicians are increasingly using state- and district-level laws to limit children's access to books in schools and libraries. A recent report recorded that nineteen out of fifty states in the United States adopted book banning laws between 2021 and 2023.[11] Moreover, age classification systems and national regulatory bodies are a familiar part of the film, television and games industries (and, historically, comics). While for books the 'special rules' governing the industry – to borrow the phrasing of the then director of the CSC, speaking in 2019 – may not usually be formalized, the idea that children's literature should be subject to limitations (including, ultimately, legal limitations on freedom of speech) is one of its defining characteristics.[12] Censorship, regulation and scrutiny in all sorts of forms are an integral part of children's literature and its history.[13] As many scholars have observed, and notably Karín Lesnik-Oberstein and Jacqueline Rose in their now canonical studies in the field, children's books are highly mediated; their form and content determined by adult understandings of who 'children' are, and what is therefore 'good' for them.[14]

This study offers new perspectives on this constitutive discussion within the field of children's literature studies, by writing the history of how and why the French government formalized these 'special rules', and the part this regulatory environment and wider political interference played as the publishing industry expanded and entered a new American dominated stage of globalization in the 1950s and 1960s. While there have been some studies of children's television, as the 'most heavily regulated' of all media formats according to Katalin Lustyik,[15] research into regulation and state control of children's books within contemporary Western democracies has been relatively rare.[16] In-depth studies of the impact of the French 1949 law on the children's literary field and industry have been thin on the ground, as the most extensive work on the legislation has been carried out by comics scholars.[17] However, the French regulator forms an important case for study precisely because it encompassed – and continues to do so – all print publications for children and the young. It was used for example by the Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin in July 2023 to ban a young adult novel (*Bien Trop Petit* by Manu Causse, 2022) for sale to under readers under eighteen. To understand the impulse to subject children's books to surveillance and control, we need to study them in conjunction with comics.[18] An industry-wide scope allows us to see more clearly how and why the French government, policymakers and campaigners wanted to place controls on publishers.

Likewise, as Lustyik and Norma Pecora underline, there has been even less research into the consequences of regulatory decisions for children's cultural production.[19] This book redresses this imbalance by studying the development of both regulator and industry together. It sees the regulators, policymakers and activists as being as much in dialogue as in conflict with the makers of children's culture. As Heather Hendershot writes, 'censorship is not a repressive act that simply impinges on passive texts' – power is productive in its effects as well as repressive.[20] Censorship and state interference in publishing are understood as discursive, iterative processes that can produce radically new texts, commercial structures and genres. The aim is to uncover how these two broad groupings understood the anxieties of the age, how their exchanges and rivalries shaped each other's ideas, approaches and decisions regarding what was appropriate for children, and what they thought might sell. To do so, we need to go behind the scenes at a publisher, to listen in to the debates and committee deliberations, go into the board rooms, look between the pages and head on to the assembly lines to work out how children's books and comics were made in the age of 'surveillance and control'.

Cold War and globalizing children's culture

Culture was central to the Cold War: that is, to the ideological conflict which pitted the United States, leader of what American rhetoric styled as the 'free world' of capitalist societies in the 'West', against the Soviet Union, head of the coalition of governments across Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America aligned with Soviet Communism. In 1947, President Truman inaugurated the Marshall Plan, the popular name for the European Recovery Programme of financial and economic aid to war-torn Europe in the form of loans and education (in practice, to Western Europe as Soviet-aligned countries refused to participate). Such largesse was by no means neutral; the Marshall Plan was an important weapon in the Cold War.[21] It was integral to what diplomat George F. Kennan famously called the 'containment' of Soviet expansion within a clearly defined sphere of influence, whereby its ideological sway in Western-aligned countries had to be checked. Dollar aid therefore came with strings, notably opening local markets to American products and by extension their ideas, values and ways of doing business. Meanwhile, the Soviet Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, known as Cominform, was launched in October 1947. This was the new body to coordinate local Communist parties and combat the Marshall Plan in the battle of ideas. The Soviet delegate Andrei Zhdanov immediately called on Communist parties everywhere to unite against American 'imperialism', and the 'collaborators' who worked with them. His speech set out how the Marshall Plan's economic aid and the cultural products that came along with it were part of a wider plan to create dependence and 'enslave' Europe to American capitalism.[22]

Children's culture was immediately swept up in the conflicts as well as the heady enthusiasm for expansion. US book exports had already begun to grow during the war, and the industry was set to ramp up its efforts further as American publishers acted on the US Office for War Information's assessment that 'the opportunity exists as it may never again for American books to have an inside track to the world's bookshelves', in what John B. Hench calls the 'battle for global markets'.[23] Book historians have written extensively on the use of literature as a 'weapon' in the Cold War.[24] Likewise, studies on children's literature in this era by scholars such as Cécile Boulaire and Leonard Marcus have traced a pattern of boom and growth in exports from the United States.[25] Economic prosperity in the United States meant American middle-class families could stock their children's playrooms with lavish amounts of toys and books,

and publishers developed and set up juvenile departments to meet demand, and the larger publishers were looking outwards to new markets as well.[26] With its baby boom very much in evidence, and economic recovery already promising, the French market was attractive to children's publishers. The war-ravaged French publishing industry was soon being courted and equipped by American companies and Marshall Plan officials. They could build on the huge interwar success of American comics, which had been the popular cultural product of choice for young readers in France from the 1930s onwards dating from the launch of Hachette and Opera Mundi's colourful and hugely successful comic book *Le Journal de Mickey* [*The Mickey Magazine*] in 1934. Buoyed up by American aid and expansionist ambitions, in the late 1940s French shops were swiftly filled with brightly coloured American children's books and comics: including Hachette's Disney film tie-in products, Tarzan comic strips and books, the revamped *Journal de Mickey* from 1952 and the French translations of the Little Golden Books series. This latter series was, as Cécile Boulaire details, the first major children's publishing phenomenon in post-war France thanks to the Marshall Plan, before it was overtaken (and eventually bought out) by their arch-rival, Hachette and its Disney partnership.[27]

Before introducing Hachette and its American publishing partners, this section first sets out the geopolitical climate within which these businesses had to work. On the broad policy level, as noted above, American economic aid was ideologically driven, and aimed at 'permit[ing] the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist', as Secretary of State George Marshall put it.[28] There were also clear signs of the political engagement of the American children's media companies; from Walt Disney's prominent role in the anti-Communist purges of Hollywood, and the 'anti-red' stance of Georges Duplaix of Little Golden Books (and his possible CIA connections according to Boulaire), to the more light-hearted suggestion from filmmaker Walter Wanger that Donald Duck would make an ideal ambassador for American efforts to combat Communism worldwide.[29] This context helped ensure that in France the presence of American children's books and comics on the shelves was received as an 'invasion'. While in the United States, children's book publishers and authors were spared the worst of the government scrutiny – in fact, Julia Mickenberg has shown how children's literature became something of a refuge and political outlet for leftists in the McCarthyite era – in France the very opposite was true.[30] The explanation for the French move to control the children's industry begins with comics: with the global campaigns against American comics, and the pivotal role played in these campaigns in France by the French Communist Party.

Anti-comics campaigns 'exploded' worldwide in the years after the Second World War, across at least twenty countries and four continents.[31] Comics were the easiest and cheapest form of mass-produced culture that children could get their hands on, and France was just one of many countries where youngsters were devouring copies in their millions each week.[32] Public outrage centred on the violence, sexual content, xenophobia and crude racism that was allegedly rife in comics culture. In the United States, the children's author Sterling North called parents' attention to 'sex-horror serials', which he characterized as 'a poisonous mushroom growth' and 'a national disgrace' in a widely quoted editorial for the *Chicago Daily News* in 1940.[33] Crucially, while anti-comics campaigns have a long history, they began to yield results in a very short space of time, mostly between the late 1940s and the mid-1950s. Governments launched hearings and committees to investigate their impact, and many then attempted to introduce anti-comics measures.[34] Examples of these measures include the Australian government's ban on the import of American comics in 1940; the establishment of a commission to look into the illustrated press by the Mexican Republic in 1944; the passing of special legislation targeting the children's press in 1949 in Canada and France – the French law then became the model that others tried to follow[35] – and the tabling of bills in Belgium and Italy in the early 1950s, while acts against 'smut and trash' in West Germany and Austria included boards and provisions on comics in 1953 and 1956 respectively; and the UK introduced the Child and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act in 1955. Elsewhere, industry pre-empted government intervention through introducing self-regulation, including in South Korea, the Philippines and the United States, where a series of congressional hearings and then a senate investigation prompted comics publishers to establish the Comics Code Authority in 1954.

That many of these measures materialized at the height of the early Cold War was no coincidence, I argue, and in this book we will explore how the desire to contain 'national' children's culture from outside influences manifested during and was shaped by the Cold War. Beyond the Unites States, the anti-comics movement centred on protecting children from American comics specifically, with campaigners ranging from educators, psychiatrists, to political and religious organizations and parents' groups. In 1953, UNESCO commissioned a report on children's media, and amongst its findings was that American superhero comics were 'undermining or warping the traditional values of each country'.[36] These campaigns became caught up in the Cold War because the popularity of American crime and horror comics proved a powerful weapon for Communist Parties internationally, for, as Paul Hirsch writes, 'comic books showed the

world that American society was racist, gruesomely violent and soaked in sex'.[37] Communist Party activists and newspapers were able to tarnish all American comics by association, even Disney comic strips (which were not so innocent either, as will be discussed in Chapter 3). For example, Walt Disney complained of being smeared by 'Commies' in Latin America,[38] while Hirsch quotes American government reports worrying about Communists using comics in their anti-American propaganda in China, South Asia, Africa and indeed across the decolonizing world.[39]

We can see these forces playing out in the French case, not least because the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) was particularly powerful compared to other countries within the Western sphere of influence after 1945.[40] Hostility towards comics in France predated the Cold War of course, and campaigns against American comics dated back to the 1930s, when they were led by cartoonists' unions, Catholic child protection groups and morality leagues, and the Communist youth groups and their publications. What interests us here is the very particular turn anti-comics campaigns took in the late 1940s. American comics were one of the first targets of the French Communist Party after Cominform was set up. In the same month of October 1947, on the exact day that the Zhdanov report announcing the Cominform anti-American stance was published in France, the PCF's daily newspaper *L'Humanité* warned mothers of the dangers of American comics, calling them 'the dollar offensive against our children's minds', while another headline asked later: 'will we let our young be corrupted by illustrated comics made in U.S.A.?'[41] The PCF polled at around 25 per cent of the popular vote in national elections throughout the period covered by this book, and – thanks to having been legal for most of the time since its inception in 1920 (unlike many of its sister parties in Europe) – it had acquired considerable soft power in education and cultural organizations. Not only was the PCF popular – Marc Lazar calls Communism 'a French passion' – but it was also the most devotedly pro-Soviet of all the international Communist Parties, nicknamed 'the eldest daughter of the Communist Church' (a subversion of France's ancient claim to being the 'eldest daughter of the Catholic Church').[42] It was this power, and the particular political priorities of the PCF, that ensured earlier campaigns to clean up comics became after 1947 a push to check the ambitions of American children's publishers in France, and impose quotas on foreign-origin content for children. Harnessing its own considerable influence with the reach of many other specialists and activist groups, most notably the powerful Catholic child protection lobby and its morality leagues, who were equally concerned about the popularity of these foreign-origin publications

amongst young French children, the PCF used the threat of comics culture as a powerful tool for arguing about the dangers of American incursion into French society, even family life. As Communist journalist Pierre Gamarra warned his readers: American publishers were turning books into weapons in an ideological war aimed at 'destroying all traces of national culture, starting with the youngest audiences'.[43]

My argument is that the PCF was instrumental in bringing about the regulation and then giving it shape – and teeth. To explore the strategies adopted by the PCF and its allies, and the role these activists played in the legislation and formation of the regulator, this book uses the CSC's archival records of its deliberations, alongside published guidelines and reports, and reads them in conjunction with the very public debates and campaigns against the publishing industry in the popular Communist press, the Catholic press and specialist reviews on education and children's culture.[44] In many countries, the anti-comics measures reflected the overt concerns of the campaigns and focused on regulating comics. The French law is unusual because it was so broad, but when viewed through the lens of the Cold War moves to contain childhood, it begins to make sense. Thanks in large part to the PCF, which was – I argue – intent on forcing systemic change in the children's publishing industry, the French measures went much further. This was about the political economy of production. It was about who controlled the industry, and who controlled the educators, the reviewing systems and the national debates on what constituted 'French' childhood. These were huge ambitions. The US Department of State archives and its files on the anti-comics legislation shed light on how far the American diplomats feared PCF manoeuvres but also the actions they and the industry took to parry these attacks on American businesses in France.[45] The interactions between these various actors shed light on how far the PCF managed to exert control over the industry through the new regulator but also the limits to its influence.

This approach adds a new dimension to current historiography on Cold War culture. This is a story of how fears of foreign influence over the youngest citizens became intensified in France, and many other countries, by the new, bipolar world order, the Marshall Plan and Cominform. The anti-comics measures were of a piece with phenomena identified by historians of childhood, who have shown how fear of ideological infiltration of the young was used by leaders to garner support, and led to the increased legal and professional surveillance of childhood, families and communities in this period by nation states on both sides of the ideological divide.[46] Focusing on structural changes – in this case,

the measures introduced against comics and foreign influence in this period – we can see how children's literature and comics are a key example of what Greg Barnhisel identifies as 'the unprecedented growth of institutions and their presence in all facets of life […] and these institutions exercised enormous influence over the creation, circulation, and reception of literature'.[47] In this schema, Barnhisel argues the Cold War struggles for control over ideas formed an important stage in the longer history of efforts by bureaucratic nation states to control the lives of their citizens, in the face of the growing challenge of the competing power of multinational companies and global media, and other non-state actors and institutions, such as transnational political movements. Regulation is one of the main levers states and activists can use to control flows of media into their countries.[48] The measures introduced by the anti-comics campaigns will be understood in this book as a muscular response to the acceleration in the mid-twentieth century of the globalization of American children's media.

Hachette and the transatlantic publishing industry

In France, the children's publishing landscape had long been dominated by the publisher Hachette. 'We *were* children's books in France', as one former employee at Hachette put it.[49] The publisher's symbolic capital was immense. Starting with the tale of Louis Hachette turning to textbook publishing in 1826 after his liberal sympathies led to him being banned from teaching by the restoration monarchy, Hachette became one of the leading education publishers in the land. It then played a leading role in children's literary publishing, thanks to its Bibliothèque Rose [Pink Library] series, established in 1856 and which launched the career of one of the most famous authors for children in France, the Comtesse de Ségur. When Hachette bought out its rival Hetzel in 1914, it became the publisher of Jules Verne, author of some of the great international classics of French children's literature. Children's literature scholars often focus on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Hachette was one of the great pioneers of children's book publishing in France.[50] However, the 1950s and 1960s represented, numerically speaking, a second golden age for Hachette's children's publishing. This time, the publisher's ascendancy was assured by the Anglo-American content in Hachette's catalogues. It was the publisher behind the *Journal de Mickey* comic book that first swept the French nation in the 1930s, and which in the 1950s would reach dizzying circulation figures of over 650,000

copies per week.[51] The cheap and brightly coloured books of translated Anglo-American series fictions such as Nancy Drew and The Famous Five – which the publisher launched in French translation in the mid-1950s – and the Disney books that Hachette's vast presses churned out in the millions became icons of the French consumer society and baby boomer culture. By the 1960s, one out of every four books for children sold in France came from Hachette's presses.[52]

Hachette was also the great, hated 'green octopus', whose tentacles stretched everywhere (and which recalled the giant squid in Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* from Hachette's catalogues). The publisher's powerful grip over French media in this period was indisputable. The French publishing industry was one of the most concentrated in the world; its market was dominated by a handful of large publishing groups whose interests spanned book production, print media and distribution – with Hachette the biggest of all by the 1960s.[53] Thanks to its vast network of newspaper and book distribution depots, the famous Messageries which had developed out of its newspaper kiosk network in the 1850s, Hachette enjoyed an effective monopoly over print distribution in France.[54] The Messageries network was to provoke a serious crisis for the publisher after 1944, when it narrowly missed being nationalized by the liberation government. Hachette's war record was murky, and many across the political spectrum perceived the monopoly to be a threat to democracy. The American Psychological Warfare Division had initially been reluctant to work with Hachette to distribute propaganda in 1944 for these very reasons.[55] The machinations to prevent nationalization of its Messageries led Hachette to acquire major stakes in leading newspapers and to buy off key politicians. By April 1947, Hachette's domination of distribution and print news media was assured.[56] As *Time* magazine observed later, 'just about the only important French printed matter that Hachette does not distribute is the telephone book'.[57]

To understand how the new regulator and the publishing industry interacted in the Cold War, we must therefore study Hachette. Given its size, and as the most enthusiastically Atlanticist of all French children's publishers, Hachette was one of the key presses which the government needed to act responsibly and put patriotic duty before profits. The Communist and Catholic press regularly attacked Hachette for being at 'forefront of this collaboration' (with the American imperialists), as the Communist Renée Michel put it; leading the way in the 'massive American colonization of French children's books', for colluding in the nationwide distribution of such material and for profiting from selling American pulp to French children.[58] Hachette's size and might are often considered to have protected the *Journal de Mickey* comic book. As

Thierry Crépin writes, 'it is unlikely that the Ministry of Justice would have risked entering into conflict with such a powerful publisher just to pursue a little magazine for children'.[59] Other scholars have argued that Hachette could have stood up to the CSC should it have so wished.[60]

No organization is immune to the ideological conflicts of its age, however. This book argues that Hachette was at the centre of the Cold War power struggles. It had just survived a bruising encounter with the liberation government during the Messageries nationalization crisis, and knew only too well how much damage the reformers were seeking to inflict on their enemies. As an educational publisher, attacks on its reputation could stick, particularly since the discourse on national responsibility and child protection was highly emotive. Moreover, for anti-comics campaigners on the political left, the intent was clearly on checking the ambitions of the transatlantic publishing business. As the 1949 legislation was being prepared, the PCF deputies sponsored a clause imposing quotas of no more than 25 per cent foreign-origin content allowed in any one publication for children. Hachette's archives contain files showing that it monitored parliamentary debates carefully; the sections on the quota and the efforts of the head of the Press Commission (a politician known to be sympathetic to Hachette) to denounce it as the work of the Communist 'Moscowteers' have all been underlined in the copy of the Assembly's *Journal Officiel* preserved by the publisher.[61] The publisher worked behind the scenes to rewrite the law and remove the quota clause. In one respect, this was a sign of Hachette and the transatlantic lobby's power. But in another sense, this was a sign of just how careful the industry had to be. Throughout the 1950s Hachette's contracts with Disney contained contingency clauses with alternative plans in the case of quotas on foreign-origin content in children's publications being imposed.

While the heavyweight transatlantic publishers may not have been able to ignore the legislation and the anti-comics campaigns, they were best equipped to thrive in the era of surveillance and control. First, they were able to influence the design of the legislation to protect their interests. Second, regulation is a discursive process. The letter of the law can often matter less than the deals struck behind closed doors. And the problem the CSC soon faced was that it was trying to substantially modify or even ban content that was multi-media and multinational, such as Mickey Mouse and Tarzan. The French censors therefore had to enter into transnational discussions with intellectual property holders based in the United States. They were both helped and hindered by the fact that anti-comics campaigns across the world were attacking Mickey and Tarzan at the same time and placing pressure on these same companies. It gave their

complaints heft, but it also attracted the interest of the US State Department. Larger businesses could call in favours that were necessary to handle high-level negotiations between ministers of state, as disputes over content became transatlantic and geopolitical. Powerful publishers could also turn the regulatory environment to their advantage. The threat of sanctions could force smaller publishers out of business, while Hachette and its American partners could be ready to flex their deals and practices.

Hachette's archives reveal a wealth of insights into how American media companies and publishers did business in France. Notably, Hachette had major contracts with Disney, with whom it had been doing business since the 1930s. The ways in which their dealings shifted and expanded in the Cold War era tell an important story of American globalization strategies in children's media, and specifically, how the Marshall Plan and American expansion forged new, far more unequal power relations between local publishers and their transatlantic partners. Further, it adds new dimensions to our understanding of the anti-comics campaigns, by showing how their global nature was shaping the way multinational media companies worked in local markets. Archive records of discussions around editorial decisions, deal-making and more fine-grained discussions around book content between creators and members of the editorial team are supplemented by interviews with former employees in order to understand the publishing process. While the archive files give the impression of being ordered and thorough, still the gaps are huge and the cataloguing chaotic, and they can only ever offer a partial record (not least because the most explosive discussions no doubt took place unrecorded). While the interviews I carried out with former employees have helped to address some of those gaps, memory is notoriously unreliable, and many of the key players are no longer alive. Reading and hearing their words in tandem with published discourse, and set against the backdrop of the intense debates of the era, offers new ways to piece together those conversations and analyse their decisions.

Focusing on the processes, business models, production structures and the broader economic and trade mechanisms being used to push American cultural products for children in a largely one-directional flow into the French market further underlines how cultural transfer was an important weapon in the Cold War.[62] This is a study not just about the diffusion of content and the material means by which this was done but also about the structural shifts being encouraged in the Marshall Plan era, shaping business practices and creating production structures that could facilitate the expansion of American businesses and products. In 1940s and 1950s Europe, in contrast to, say, Latin

America, American cultural diplomacy was not associated with propping up brutal military dictators. Instead, this was an imperium 'by consensus', or what Reinhold Wagnleitner has dubbed the 'empire of the fun'.[63] It was styled as promoting freedom and democracy, but, as Victoria de Grazia argues, its reach, force and impact on the receiving markets should not be underestimated.[64] This was 'the world's first regime of mass consumption', built in Europe, and which 'pressed its advantage from the outset of the Cold War', with the Marshall Plan 'to bind western Europe to its own concept of consumer democracy'.[65] This phenomenon played a key role in shaping the political economy of children's publishing in the second half of the twentieth century in France.

Structure

As indicated above, this book tells its story from the two intertwined perspectives of the regulators and activists, and the publishers and their business partners. In the first two chapters we listen in to impassioned debates over the influence of children's reading, and look at how they led to the preparation of the 1949 law, and the continued role of these heated debates in the setting up of the regulatory environment. At the same time, we follow more discreet conversations taking place to rewrite that legislation, led by agents of Hachette and its transatlantic partners with American Embassy officials, as well as later conversations between diplomats worrying whether the French really were going to ban popular American multi-media characters.

Chapter 1 argues the Cold War forced the direction of travel of the anti-comics campaigns into regulation, as the PCF weaponized anti-Americanism and fears around comics to draw transatlantic children's publishers and American intelligence into a power struggle over quotas on foreign-origin material. Ultimately, the transatlantic business lobby won, in as much as they succeeded in getting the quota clause removed from the 1949 law. However, publishers were now operating in a field that was highly contentious, carefully scrutinized and potentially subject to further protectionist reforms. The second chapter details how the new Commission sought to assert itself over the publishing field. This chapter details the struggle for predominance of the different agencies and political factions represented in its membership, as they interpreted and gave shape to the legislation. The CSC's ability to directly prosecute offenders was relatively weak given the Ministry of Justice's reluctance to be seen as actively censoring large mainstream presses. This is often cited by scholars to show that

its influence was, ultimately, limited. However, by focusing on the commission's first major intervention against the global multi-media phenomenon Tarzan, this chapter reveals the crucial role played by commissioners who were also critics and campaigners. These wider networks ensured they could inflict serious reputational damage on transatlantic publishers such as Hachette, and helped the CSC to become embedded in the publishing ecosystem.

The next three chapters shift focus onto the industry, and delve into the Hachette archives to detail how the large publisher responded to and thrived in this regulatory environment. Chapter 3 introduces the new Cold War ways of doing business that the French and American publishers adopted to face the challenges posed by local regulation and the global anti-comics campaigns, and to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the Marshall Plan. It argues that a transnational, global political economy lens is vital to understand that a substantial part of the output of the largest publisher for children in France was dictated by the priorities of Disney, as part of the much bigger American company's global expansion. Then Chapters 4 and 5 go onto the assembly line to explore how the second part of the Hachette Cold War business model was developed and implemented. Chapter 4 considers the sociology of Hachette's fiction factory, asking how its creative labourers were recruited, their decision-making processes and the discursive construction of 'Hachette' children's books. The fifth chapter focuses on the translation and editorial mediation processes in particular, to discover and demonstrate how self-censorship worked. It asks how the anxieties and ambitions of the era transformed content, using the vast production files to identify contested border sites. Self-censorship could be a radical and creative process, which was as much about working out what the limits were, and where they lay, and testing how far they could be pushed, as it was about policing them. Case studies of key publications, including the *Journal de Mickey,* the Nancy Drew series, Enid Blyton's detective fictions, Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, and Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, are used throughout the second half of the book, to show how structural and strategic changes would shape children's reading matter. It also underscores how the authors' names and the titles on these publications might stay the same, but regulation, debates, commercial decisions, translation and cultural transfer processes, and changing mores transformed the way these same products were made, and the way they told their stories.

The book closes in 1968, which marked a watershed moment in French children's publishing. This 'liberating moment' of countercultural rebellion in children's books in France was in many ways a reaction against the Cold

War culture of surveillance and control, and, specifically, the transatlantic publishing ethos of Hachette. It signalled the end of the Cold War publishing ecosystem, and reveals the extent to which it had – paradoxically – sustained Hachette's domination of the market with Anglo-American content.

This study contributes to our understanding of modern children's books and how they are made in a globalized publishing industry where translation flows are hugely unequal, and what happens when those geo-political power struggles inequities spill over into anxieties around child protection. In so doing I want to make the case for children's literary studies to engage with historiography and methods developed in children's media studies, in particular its interest in how global political economy shapes local production practices. Debates around cultural sovereignty in Cold War France still resonate: who should be allowed to speak to the nation's young? How to intervene and control the stories reaching children, when they are produced by a vast, booming, and global industry? How far, and why, might businesses respond to such controls?

Notes

1 Loi n° 49–956 du 16 juillet 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000878175 accessed 10 October 2023. While it is obligatory to mention the law, there have been occasions when publishers have refused to do so, such as the young adult series Collection Exprim' (Editions Sarbacane).

2 English translation of the original legislation taken from Philippe Bauchard, *The Child Audience: A Report on Press, Film and Radio for Children* (Paris, UNESCO, 1952), 178–81.

3 For example, Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'L'Ardent contexte', Thierry Crépin and Thierry Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page! La Loi de 1949 sur les Publications Destinées à la Jeunesse* (Paris, éditions du temps, 1999), 63–70; Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2007), 248.

4 'Éditorial', *Pour l'Enfance. Revue du Mouvement National Pour la Défense de l'Enfance*, January 1954, 2.

5 See Thierry Crépin *« Haro sur le Gangster ! » La Moralisation de la Presse Enfantine (1934–1954)* (Paris, CNRS éditions, 2001), 260–8.

6 René Mayer, speech delivered at the inauguration of the CSC, subsequently published in the *Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Commission de Surveillance et de Contrôle des Publications Destinées à l'Enfance et à l'Adolescence au Cours de l'Année 1950* (Melun, Imprimerie Administrative, 1952), 6–8.

7 *Recommendations by the Commission for the Control and Surveillance of Publications for Children*. These guidelines were published in the commission's first report, *Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Commission*, and reproduced in the appendices to the special issue of *Enfance* on the 1949 law, 6 (1953), 490–520; see especially 498.

8 See for example Janet Wasko, Mark R. Phillips and Eileen R. Meehan (eds) *Dazzled by Disney?: The Global Disney Audiences Project* (London and New York, Leicester University Press, 2001), introduction.

9 On France and the French-speaking world, see Luc Pinhas and Michel Manson (eds) *L'Édition de Jeunesse Francophone Face à la Mondialisation* (Paris, L'Harmatton, 2008). For recent scholarship on this topic, see for example Emer O'Sullivan, 'Translating Children's Literature: What, for Whom, How, and Why. A Basic Map of Actors, Factors and Contexts', *Belas Infiéis* (2019) (8), 13–35; Jan Van Coillie, 'Diversity Can Change the World: Children's Literature, Translation and Images of Childhood', Jan Van Coillie and Jack McMartin (eds), *Children's Literature in Translation: Texts and Contexts* (Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2020), 141–56.

10 For a comparative analysis of different legal and regulatory approaches, and the very broad and enduring nature of the French legislation, see Jean-Paul Gabilliet, 'La Criminalisation des *Crime Comics:* Le Canada et la Grande-Bretagne', Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page!* 189–97, especially 196–7.

11 PEN America report by Kasey Meehan and Jonathan Friedman, *Banned in the USA: State Laws Supercharge Book Suppression in Schools,* 20 April 2023: https://pen.org/report/banned-in-the-usa-state-laws-supercharge-book-suppression-in-schools/ accessed 11 October 2023; Tiffany A. Flowers, Divonna M. Stebick, Delane Bender-Slack and Joyce Farrow, *Special Policy Brief: Book Banning Policies and Laws across the United States,* report published March 2024 by the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.aleronline.org/resource/resmgr/files/legislative_briefs/aler_book_banning_report_fin.pdf accessed 12 April 2024.

12 Sophie Heywood, 'L'Affaire du *Petit Livre Rouge des Écoliers et Lycéens* (1969)', Marine Planche and Jean-Yves Mollier (eds) 'Ne Les Laissez Pas Lire! Censure Dans les Livres Pour Enfants', *La Revue de la BNF*, 60 (2020), 73–83, see 83. In both the jurisdictions of the European Court of Human Rights and the United States of America, child protection is one of the main restrictions on the democratic principle of freedom of speech. On the United States, see Marjorie Heins, *Not in Front of the Children: 'Indecency', Censorship, and the Innocence of Youth* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2007).

13 Planche and Mollier (eds) 'Ne Les Laissez Pas Lire! Censure Dans les Livres Pour Enfants'; Sarah McNicol (ed) *Forbidden Fruit: The Censorship of Literature and Information for Children and Young People* (Boca Raton, FL, Brown Walker Press,

2008). There is a flourishing literature on censorship under authoritarian regimes, for example, in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America: Ramón Tena Fernández and José Soto Vázquez (eds) *La Censura de la Literatura Infantil y Juvenil en las Dictaduras del Siglo XX* (Madrid, Dykinson, 2023).

14 Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, *Children's Literature: Criticism and the Fictional Child* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993); Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (London, Macmillan, 1984).

15 Katalin Lustyik, 'Media Regulation: The Protection and Promotion of Home-Grown Children's Television', Dafna Lemish (ed), *The Routledge International Handbook of Children, Adolescents and Media* (London, Routledge, 2013) chapter 46; Katalin Lustyik and Norma Pecora, 'Media Regulation and the International Expansion of Nickelodeon', *Journal of Children and Media*, 5 (2011), 4–19; Heather Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors: Television Regulation before the V-Chip* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1998).

16 In addition to Planche and Mollier's edited volume 'Ne Les Laissez Pas Lire! Censure Dans les Livres Pour Enfants' on the French 1949 law, there has been some research on the French legislation in relation to the contemporary French and francophone children's and young adult publishing industries, recent publications include Mathilde Lévêque, 'Une Liberté sous Contrôle: la Loi de 1949 sur les Publications Destinées à la Jeunesse', Sieglinde Borvitz and Yasmin Temelli (eds), *Liberté e(s)t choix: Verhandlungen von Freiheit in der französischen Literatur* (Berlin, Erich Schmidt, 2019), 189–202; Daniel Delbrassine, 'Censure et Autocensure dans le Roman pour la Jeunesse', *Parole,* 2.08, special issue 'Littérature et Censure' https://www.jm-arole.ch/Parole%20archives/08/208.htm accessed 12 November 2023. Beyond France, the first chapter in Helle Strandgaard Jensen's *From Superman to Social Realism: Children's Media and Scandinavian Childhood* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2017) covers attempts to regulate children's culture in Scandinavia. The development of book banning legislation in the United States is an emerging field of research – see for example Flowers, Stebick, Bender-Slack and Farrow, *Special Policy Brief: Book Banning Policies and Laws across the United States.*

17 The main reference work on the history of the 1949 law remains Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page!* (Paris, éditions du temps, 1999); see also Joel Vessels, *Drawing France: French Comics and the Republic* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2010) and Jobs, *Riding the New Wave,* chapter six. Bernard Joubert has compiled a dictionary of the use of the legislation to censor comics, and especially erotic publications for adults: *Dictionnaire des Livres et Journaux Interdits: Par Arrêtés Ministériels de 1949 à Nos Jours* (Paris, Cercle de la Librairie, 2007).

18 Hocine Bouhadjera, 'Interdit aux mineurs: Gérald Darmanin censure un livre jeunesse', *Actualitté*, 18 July 2023, https://actualitte.com/article/112709/

droit-justice/interdit-aux-mineurs-gerald-darmanin-censure-un-livre-jeunesse accessed 21 July 2023.

19 Lustyik and Pecora, 'Media regulation and the international expansion of Nickelodeon', 4.

20 Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors,* 58.

21 David W. Ellwood, *Shock of America: Europe and the Challenge of the Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 349.

22 The Zhdanov report was reproduced in full in the PCF's weekly newspaper *La France Nouvelle*, 25 October 1947, 7–11.

23 John B. Hench, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War Two* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2010), the OWI quote is taken from his introduction, 7–8.

24 For example Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner (eds) *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda, and the Cold War* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2010); Amanda Laugesen, *Taking Books to the World: American Publishers and the Cultural Cold War* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2017); Greg Barnhisel (ed) *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Cold War Literary Cultures* (London, Bloomsbury, 2022).

25 Cécile Boulaire, *Les Petits Livres d'Or: Des Albums pour Enfants dans la France de la Guerre Froide* (Tours, Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2016); Leonard S. Marcus, *Minders of Make-Believe: Idealists, Entrepreneurs, and the Shaping of American Children's Literature* (Boston, NY, Houghton Mifflin, 2008), chapter six; Leonard Marcus, *Golden Legacy: the Story of Golden Books* (New York, A Golden Book, 2007).

26 See Marcus, *Minders of Make-Believe,* 185.

27 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or.*

28 Act of 3 April 1948, European Recovery Act [Marshall Plan]; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789–1996; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/marshall-plan accessed 13 May 2024.

29 Walter F. Wanger, 'Donald Duck and Diplomacy', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 14 (Autumn, 1950), 443–52, especially 443.

30 Julia Mickenberg, *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).

31 John A. Lent, 'The Comics Debates Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues, and Commonalities', John A. Lent (ed), *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Postwar Anti-comics Campaign* (Madison Teaneck, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 9–41. Strandgaard Jensen's *From Superman to Social Realism* offers further perspectives on the Scandinavian anti-comics campaigns; there is an abundant literature on the anti-comics campaigns in France, notably Crépin,

« *Haro sur le Gangster !* »; Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page!;* Vessels, *Drawing France: French Comics and the Republic,* chapters two through to five; on the Catholic campaigns, Jean-Yves Mollier, *La Mise au Pas des Ecrivains. L'Impossible Mission de l'Abbé Bethléem au XXe Siècle* (Paris, Fayard, 2014).

32 There is no one source for comparative figures of comics consumption across countries. For the United States, Andrew O'Malley suggests by the early 1950s circulation figures had reached one billion magazines, '"The Innocence Project" – An Online Exhibition and Archive on Children and Comics in the 1940s and 1950s', *International Research in Children's Literature,* 10 (2017), 20–38, see 28.

33 Sterling North, 'A national disgrace and a challenge to American parents', *Chicago Daily News*, 8 May 1940, 56.

34 Information on government measures and anti-comics campaigns in this paragraph has been taken from Lent, 'The Comics Debates Internationally', 25–8; Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, Chapter IV: 'Legislation'; and Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* translated by Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 104.

35 According to Bauchard, *The Child Audience,* 120.

36 Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 37–8.

37 Paul Hirsch, *Pulp Empire: The Secret History of Comic Book Imperialism* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2021), 4.

38 U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, 80 Cong., 1 sess., Oct. 20–24, 27–30, 1947, 280–86.

39 Hirsch, *Pulp Empire*, 192.

40 On the popularity of Communism in France, see Marc Lazar, *Le Communisme: une Passion Française* (Paris, Perrin, 2005) and on the political party within the French political system since 1945, Andrew Knapp and Vincent Wright's *The Government and Politics of France* (London, Routledge, 2006) provides an excellent guide.

41 Armand Monjo, 'L'Offensive du dollar contre les cerveaux d'enfants: mamans, prenez garde aux illustrés américains!' *L'Humanité* 25 October 1947, 7; Jean Polbernar, 'Laisserons-nous corrompre notre jeunesse par les bandes illustrées made in USA: gangsters, pin-ups, supermen and Co.?' *Ce Soir,* 24 March 1948, 2.

42 Lazar, *Communisme,* chapter one, especially 28.

43 Pierre Gamarra, 'Livres de prix: instrument de diffusion de la culture', *L'Ecole et la Nation*, May 1952, 20.

44 The archives of the Commission charged with the Surveillance and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents are held at the Archives Nationales in Paris, and the deliberations of the commission recorded in the minutes of the commission's meetings, AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux.

45 The main records at the US Department of State relating to the passage of the 1949 law are held in the US National Archives and Records Administration, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.

46 Margaret Peacock, *Innocent Weapons: The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2014); see also Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, Basic Books, 1990).

47 Greg Barnhisel 'Introduction', Barnhisel (ed) *Bloomsbury Handbook to Cold War Literary Cultures*, 1–8, see especially 2–3.

48 Nicole Moore, Introduction, Nicole Moore (ed) *Censorship and the Limits of the Literary: A Global View* (New York, London, Bloomsbury, 2015), 1–10, see 1.

49 Author interview with Madame J, translator at Hachette c. 1960–1990s, 1 October 2013, Paris.

50 For example, Bénédicte Gornouvel and Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, *Les 150 Ans de la Bibliothèque Rose* (Rennes, Bibliothèque de Rennes Métropole, 2006).

51 On the *Journal de Mickey*'s circulation figures, see Sylvain Lesage, *Publier la Bande Dessinée. Les Editeurs Franco-Belges et l'Album, 1950–1990* (Villeurbanne, Presses de l'Enssib, 2018), 22.

52 Information taken from Hachette archives held at the Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC), Fonds Hachette, S14C156B2, file on Project Boutan, market research survey 1974 for Jeunesse; and S14C156B3 file Services Commerciaux, 18 December 1967, Situation du marché 'Littérature' et 'Albums jeunesse' en 1967.

53 Frédéric Barbier, *Histoire du Livre en Occident* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2000, 3rd edition 2012), 318; Pascal Fouché, Introduction, Pascal Fouché (ed) *L'Edition Française depuis 1945* (Paris, Éditions du cercle de la librairie, 1998), 17–27.

54 On the Messageries, see Jean-Yves Mollier, *Edition, Presse et Pouvoir en France au XX^e siècle* (Paris, Fayard, 2008), 49–54.

55 Hench, *Books as Weapons,* 153.

56 Mollier, *Edition, Presse et Pouvoir,* 228.

57 'Publishers: France's Giant', *Time,* 8 November 1963, http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,897053-1,00.html accessed 30 November 2021.

58 Renée Michel, 'Littérature Enfantine et Plan Marshall des Idées', *Revue Critique. Revue du Marxisme Militant,* March 1952, 115–20.

59 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 373.

60 Lesage, *Publier la Bande Dessinée,* chapter one.

61 IMEC archives, fonds Hachette, folder 'Proposition de loi tendant à limiter la surface réservée aux auteurs et dessinateurs étrangers dans les journaux pour enfants', S19C24B2, annotated version of the *Journal Officiel*, 22 January 1949 and 27 January 1949. The politician in question was Colonel Félix. See chapter one of this book and Jean-Yves Mollier, *L'Age d'Or de la Corruption Parlementaire*

1930–1980 (Paris, Perrin, 2018) especially 205 where Félix is identified as one of the 'Hachette deputies'.

62 Expanding on the ideas developed by Esmaeil Haddadian-Moghaddam and Giles Scott-Smith (eds) in their introduction to the special issue 'Translation and the Cultural Cold War', *Journal of Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 15 (2020), 325–32.

63 Reinhold Wagnleitner, 'The Empire of the Fun, or Talkin' Soviet Union Blues: The Sound of Freedom and U.S. Cultural Hegemony in Europe', *Diplomatic History,* 23 (1999), 499–524.

64 Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 2005), 5.

65 *Ibid.,* 4–5.

1

Rewriting the law

The anti-comics campaigns enter the Cold War

Following the devastation of the Second World War, the French publishing industry was in tatters. For Hachette, part of rebuilding its business involved reviving the comics and Disney publishing that had proved so successful in the interwar period. But comics had an image problem. They were often violent, filled with crude racial stereotypes and sexually suggestive content, because many were not designed for children, and from the 1930s onwards they came from across the Atlantic. After the war, the anti-comics campaigns were resurgent across multiple continents. For Hachette and its transatlantic business partners, most worrying of all was the French campaigners' determination to impose restrictions on foreign comics publishing.

While the global anti-comics movements were far more than a Cold War phenomenon, much of their impact – in terms of legislation being enacted, industry regulatory bodies set up, and codes being drawn up – took place against the backdrop of the emerging Cold War. In France the campaigns against comics culminated in the passing of the 1949 Law regulating publications for children and the young, and – as this chapter will show – the Cold War context shaped the very wording of the legislation. It nearly caused serious damage to the transatlantic children's publishing trade. Up until a few months before it became law, the bill contained a quota clause, written by the French Communist Party group in parliament, limiting foreign-origin material to 25 per cent in any single publication aimed at children and the young. The French anti-comics campaigns have been well-documented.[1] Much less well-known is the discreet removal of the quota clause by agents working on behalf of Hachette, its business partners Disney and Randolph Hearst's King Features Syndicate, and the American Embassy.[2]

It is tempting to conclude that this forceful response by a transatlantic business consortium to the regulation of the comics industry in Cold War France provides

further evidence of just how far the American State Department was prepared to intervene in the law-making process of another sovereign state to smooth the way for American businesses.[3] Moreover, somewhat paradoxically – given the anti-capitalist, anti-American motivations of many of the Communist activists and campaigners involved – the anti-comics movement helped to create an era of surveillance and control that favoured the large businesses who were best placed to protect their advantage. To test these claims, this chapter investigates how this partnership of businesses and American Embassy operatives came to rewrite the law of a sovereign nation within the Western sphere. In so doing it sets out one of the very concrete impacts of the age of paranoia on publishing and cultural production for children in Cold War France.

Hachette, Opera Mundi and the launch of Mickey Comics in France

The origins of the Cold War battles over children's culture lay in the 1930s – in 1934, to be exact. This was the date when Robert Meunier du Houssoy, then head of Hachette's children's section, signed a contract with Walt Disney and Paul Winkler of Opera Mundi to launch the *Journal de Mickey* [Mickey Mouse Magazine].[4] The deal sealed Hachette's growing investments in Disney content. It also marked the beginning of what comics specialist Thierry Crépin called the 'brutal' American domination of the French illustrated press for children.[5]

This new publication was a very different beast to the illustrated magazines for children on the French market at the time. For a start, it was entirely composed of American comic strips. And at just eight pages long, with five of those dedicated to comic strips, the *Journal de Mickey* was 'highly visual'.[6] The Mickey strips featured in the *Journal de Mickey* were translated from Floyd Gottfredson's newspaper comic strips bought from King Features, and he was joined by more content from Disney's Silly Symphonies, and King Features strips such as *Jungle Jim*, *Little Annie Rooney*, and the more humorous *Pete The Tramp* and *Pete's Pup* strips, amongst others.[7] The whole magazine fizzed and crackled with slapstick gags, colourful scenes of violence and thrilling cliff-hangers that promised more excitement the following week. The *Journal de Mickey* was an instant success, selling on average between 350,000 and 400,000 copies per week by 1939 (roughly four times the circulation of its French-origin competitors).[8] Franco-Italian publishers Ettore Carozzo and Cino Del Duca soon followed suit, importing other American titles into France, including *Tarzan*, and Italian comic strips, with comparable success.

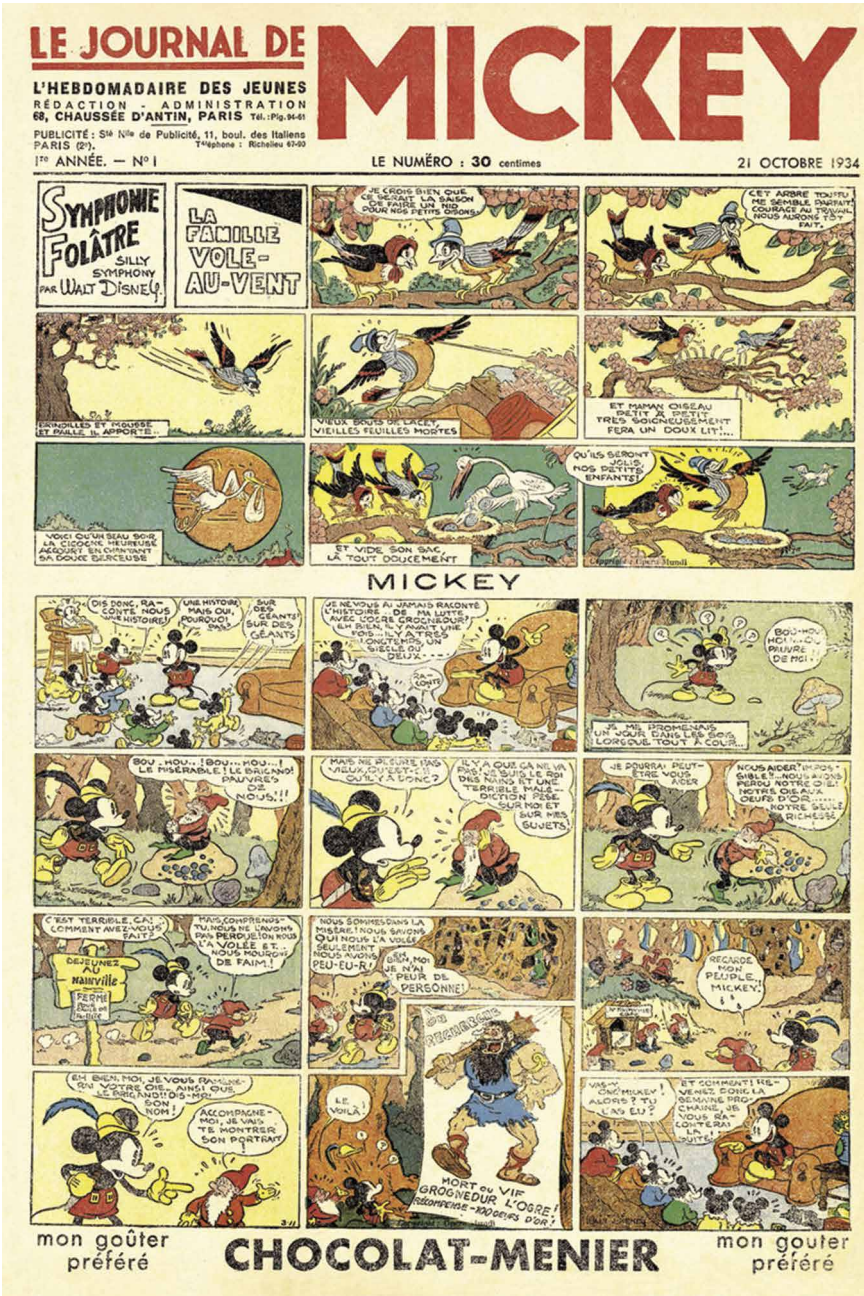

Figure 1 *Le Journal de Mickey*, Number 1, 21 October 1934.

Copyright Disney, Unique Heritage Presse.

The *Journal de Mickey* was the brainchild of Paul Winkler. Born in 1898, Winkler came from a wealthy Hungarian Jewish family and had pursued a career in journalism in several European countries before settling as a foreign correspondent in Paris. In the course of his work he encountered American press syndicates, and decided to set up Opera Mundi in 1928, which adapted this model to distribute different media content (such as books and plays) across Europe.[9] Winkler scored an impressive coup when he convinced the American newspaper magnate Randolph Hearst's press syndicate, King Features, to sign up as his agency's first client. He struggled, however, to place the American syndicate's comic strips in French newspapers, and so eventually Winkler decided to launch his own magazine instead. Immediately he became embroiled in a court battle with Disney. Winkler held the rights to the strips through King Features, and Walt Disney had apparently scribbled his authorization on a business card. However, Roy Disney considered the integration of the strips into a full magazine to be a breach of Disney copyright, and, according to former Disney executive Jimmy Johnson, 'a full-scale battle ensued'.[10] The decision went in Disney's favour. Winkler then obtained the licence to produce the magazine, but he badly needed funds. Eventually he turned to Hachette for help, having already acted as the intermediary in contract negotiations between Hachette and the various American rights holders for their use of characters such as *Felix the Cat*.[11] The large publisher agreed to invest in the new venture on the understanding its involvement in the venture would not be made public.

From Hachette's perspective, the deal was an excellent way to consolidate its investments in a new media format that was swiftly transforming the children's market. The publisher had already begun to expand into this field with comic strip and cartoon adaptations in the late 1920s; its successful titles included Alain de Saint-Ogain's *Zig et Puce* (1927), followed by *Felix the Cat* and *Mickey Mouse* from 1931.[12] Buying Winkler's services in 1934 gave Hachette control over the intermediary for the most popular American imports, and, crucially, provided it with a front company for its foray into comics publishing. The powerful publisher frequently used cover operations to protect its reputation.[13] With its quasi-monopoly over newspaper distribution giving its magazines an unfair advantage, Hachette could not be seen to be openly publishing such material. Moreover, the reputational issue was important for this family firm as it specialized in education publishing. Illustrated magazines had been a contested format even before the American invasion.[14] The publishers of popular comics such as *Cri-Cri* and *L'Epatant* had been taken to court several times and reprimanded for their 'shameful trade'.[15] Hachette knew it had to be careful. In 1933, just one year before it went into comics publishing with Disney and

Opera Mundi, Hachette's management had issued a circular to all its newspaper stockists, urging them to remove material that might be offensive or shocking and to refuse to sell such material to children. This was, the company explained, in response to the demands of morality leagues and charities.[16]

The 1934 deal was ostensibly less favourable for Winkler. He had been in a weak position and accordingly the terms of the deal he struck with Hachette's Robert Meunier du Houssoy were draconian. Hachette, it was agreed, would provide all the funds and assume ownership of the magazine. It would make all the decisions, but everything would be done in Paul Winkler's name: 'in short, you will be the director of the magazine under our permanent control.'[17] The promise of rewards, however, was great. Winkler's ambitions were to build a press empire across Europe, in the mould of American press syndicates. Hachette, with its enormous press distribution network, and international reach, was an excellent partner. Winkler understood his partnership with Meunier du Houssoy to be based on a 'gentleman's agreement', in which his share in their deals was small, but by working with a company the size of Hachette, he would have the opportunity to develop far more ambitious projects in the long term. According to Winkler, Meunier du Houssoy regularly promised him that he would eventually be placed at the head of Hachette's press operations.[18] In the short term, the *Journal de Mickey* proved to be a highly lucrative venture. The success of the magazine, and Winkler's operations exporting King Features content across Europe, made him, in the words of the French press magnate Pierre Lazareff, the 'King of European comics'.[19]

In the longer term, Winkler's broader ambitions for his partnership with the publishing giant proved to have been wishful thinking, and he paid a high price for accepting the role of Hachette's front man for the operation. He had effectively relinquished control over the publication that he considered to be his creation.[20] In the post-war period, as shall be seen, the comic book was regularly forced to give way to Meunier du Houssoy's more pressing priorities for Hachette, or even placed at risk of being sacrificed to them. To add insult to injury, as the public face of the venture, Winkler would have to endure highly personal attacks. Publishing an American comic in France was a profitable but delicate business. If comics were a highly controversial format, then foreign ones were even more so. Winkler's foreign and Jewish origins would be used as a slur against him by the many critics of comics. In this sense, from Hachette's perspective, he was the perfect public face for the new magazine, as his identity made Winkler an easy hate figure to distract attention from the real beneficiaries. It was an open secret that the *Journal de Mickey* was funded by Hachette; all anyone had to do was

check the copyright declarations, as the leading Catholic morality crusader Abbé Bethléem did in one of his many attacks on the comic.[21] Nevertheless, while Hachette was not completely spared criticism, as a target Winkler better suited the xenophobia that characterized the anti-comics campaigns.

'Mickey Go Home!':[22] The anti-comics campaigns

In France, the emergence of an organized, multi-agency and cross-party campaign against comics was in response to the sheer scale of the success of the American imported comics into the country in the 1930s. Mickey and his many imitators were swiftly interpreted by critics as an 'invasion' which threatened to undermine French culture and values. Native publications struggled to compete, it was argued, because the production costs on the imported comic strips had already been absorbed by the time they made it onto the French market. Home-grown magazines were forced to imitate, adapt or lose out. Cartoonists complained that Winkler, the uncontested leader of the field, only employed one French artist.[23] French cartoonists and unions made several unsuccessful attempts to secure government protection in the interwar period.[24]

There were several elements of the French anti-comics campaigns that made it distinctive amongst the global outpouring of anger at comics. First was the unlikely, but incredibly effective and enduring, coalition formed against comics by politicians and campaign groups affiliated with the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. As Philippe Bauchard later observed:

> the press campaign conducted in France […] succeeded in achieving, on this subject, that alliance between the different political and denominational interests which is so difficult to secure; Communist and Catholic papers, for instance, united in denouncing the danger that certain particularly harmful publications constituted for children. […] Other countries have conducted similar campaigns, without however arriving at the same unanimity of opinion as that achieved in France.[25]

The consensus he observed in the post-war period had its roots in the very early stages of the campaigns, when the Catholic morality leagues and campaigners, most prominent amongst them the priest Abbé Bethléem, led the charge.

By the 1930s the Catholic Church already had a long history of hostility towards expanding print culture.[26] The twentieth-century incarnation of activism against the spread of 'bad books' was virulently xenophobic and

anti-Semitic, in line with the rhetoric of the new ethnic nationalism of the far right. Its most prominent figure was the priest Abbé Bethléem, who was close to Charles Maurras, leader of the far-right political movement Action Française. Bethléem led excoriating attacks on many forms of modern culture, such as the Surrealists, and comics were another one of his targets.[27] The sudden appearance of the *Journal de Mickey* and its popularity with French children were interpreted by Bethléem and his fellow campaigners as nothing less than a national emergency. Bethléem deplored 'the moral and intellectual poverty' of this new publication, and Paul Winkler's Hungarian and Jewish origins meant he stood for everything Bethléem hated.[28] This hostility extended to a critique of its business practices, or as the Abbé put it in 1936, 'because this is a large financial and advertising operation, half-American, half-French, is there any point in asking whether there is any moral value in the *Journal de Mickey*?'[29] American capitalism and foreign domination of the French cultural industries was a point of concern for the Catholic campaigners. Bethléem cited the review *Choisir*, run by the Comité catholique du cinéma, on how the popularity of Mickey Mouse cartoons, comics and albums was leading to the 'Americanization' of French children, and 'teaching them to become a people of slaves'.[30]

These Catholic critiques dovetailed neatly with Communist arguments about the dangers of letting French children read American comics, articulated with force in the pages of the PCF's daily newspaper, *L'Humanité*.[31] The comics trade was presented by campaigners on both left and right as an attack by foreign capitalists seeking to profit from vulnerable French children. Thus, even though Catholic critics were by no means sympathetic to Communism (Bethléem denounced Communist publications as godless and deplored Marxism for children in their magazines, for example), the similarities between the rhetoric and concerns of both campaigns as they developed were striking. Both the Catholics and Communists were deeply worried that the American comics were attracting working-class children, the demographic they were seeking to mobilize in their various youth organizations. In the 1930s, Catholic and Communist organizations were expanding their use of sport and leisure activities for children and youth, inspired in part by the popularity of the Scout movement, in order to attract new recruits.[32] Linked to these movements were new illustrated magazines for children, which placed them in direct competition with the American and Italian imported comic books.[33] The major publication of the Catholic youth movements was *Cœurs Vaillants* [valiant Hearts]. It was set up in 1929, but really made a name for itself when the priests introduced Hergé's *Tintin* comic strip – which he had produced for the Belgian Catholic

newspaper *Vingtième Siècle* – in October of the following year. It had a fairly solid circulation of around 100,000 copies per week by 1937, which rose to 150,000 by 1939.[34] In 1933, the Communist publication *Mon Camarade* [My Comrade] was set up under the editorship of Georges Sadoul. By 1936 it was a colourful weekly filled with comic strips similar to those found in the *Journal De Mickey* (unlike Winkler's publication however, the artists were all French).[35] Still, the Communist publication could only muster a circulation of around 50,000 copies per week in 1938.[36]

As the 1930s progressed and the *Journal de Mickey* went from strength to strength – reaching circulation figures of around 350,000 and 400,000 copies per week by 1939 – the violence of the Catholic and Communist anti-comics rhetoric escalated. In 1938, the Catholic youth organization linked to *Coeurs Vaillants* arranged a bonfire of a 'gangster' made from comics, as a day-out for around 1,000 boys from the Parisian suburbs, and which was then recounted in the pages of its magazine.[37] Georges Sadoul denounced *Mickey* from 1934 onwards in the pages of *L'Humanité*, the Communist daily. In 1938, he consolidated his thoughts in a short book, *Ce que lisent vos enfants* [*What your children are reading*]. Sadoul warned readers that hiding behind this innocent little mouse was the great fascist beast, the American press baron and 'Hitlerophile' William Randolph Hearst, director of King Features Syndicate.[38] French children's minds were being targeted by sinister 'trusts', and their pennies were swelling American coffers, or going towards Mussolini's Italy. It did not matter to Sadoul that of the publishers in question Winkler was Jewish, while Cino Del Duca was an exile from Italian fascism.

Sadoul points to the second distinguishing feature of the French anti-comics campaigns, which was to become particularly important as France entered the Cold War; their great fear of the staggering success of American comics amongst French children, which by the late 1930s was unmistakeable. Comics were the most popular mass-media culture for children in the mid-twentieth century.[39] And, as Andrew O'Malley argues, the exclusive association between comics and children (as compared to films or dime novels) was central to the growing anxiety around comic books in many countries.[40] For the French, this was to become a matter of vital national importance, as it was used as evidence to argue that foreigners were targeting young French children's minds. This ensured that their anti-comics campaigns were far broader in scope than in countries such as the United States and the UK. Denunciations of horror comics and the violent excesses of comics culture dominated the attacks on comics in the States and the UK, and while this had an impact on public perceptions of comics culture generally, the

campaigns generally focused on cleaning up the industry. But for the two leading organizing groups behind the French campaigns, it was popular American culture per se that was the problem. Sadoul's argument crystallized the concerns amongst the anti-comics campaigners that American mass culture represented a hugely intimidating rival for the attention of their young target audiences. Comics were problematic because they were selling so well, and because they were American, and therefore represented in their eyes capitalist, foreign values.

The French Communist Party and the post-war anti-comics campaigns

The campaigning efforts of the 1930s laid the foundations for the movements that would spearhead the legislation and anti-comics campaigns of the post-war period. Following a brief hiatus under Vichy and Nazi occupation, when American and Jewish-run comics disappeared from the shelves, the anti-comics campaigns returned swiftly at the liberation.[41] Hitherto, the Catholic groups had been the most successful in achieving concessions from the government. The dwindling birth rates in interwar France had meant that the anti-comics discourse was more successful when underscoring moral arguments, and the Catholic campaigners were closely involved with pro-natalist morality leagues.[42] However, after the Second World War it was the PCF and Communist-affiliated campaigners who caused the most trouble for the transatlantic publishing industry. This was the third distinctive element of the way the anti-comics campaigns played out in France.

The French Communist Party (PCF) occupied a newly powerful position in French politics and society. Its proud resistance record, as 'the party of the 75,000 martyrs', meant the PCF was riding high on a wave of patriotic support, polling at around 25 per cent of the popular vote. In the UK, for example, the involvement of the Communist party in the anti-comics campaigns was considered to be problematic, and its contributions carefully disguised.[43] But in France the huge popularity of the PCF, and the key role it played in the institutions that led on the reconstruction of culture after the war, ensured that it came to play a dominant role in the anti-comics campaigns post-war, particularly moving into the Cold War era. The PCF was renowned both for its close links to the Soviets but also for its patriotic appeal through its strong presence in French cultural and social life.[44] This gave the PCF substantial soft power; Marc Lazar speaks of a 'counter society' that was tightly woven into the fabric of French civil society and culture

in the post-war period. This was in part, he notes, because unique amongst the European Communist parties, the PCF had – apart from under Nazi occupation – always been legal since its inception in 1920 and enjoyed local and later national electoral successes. Communist municipalities led large popular education and culture initiatives. PCF influence was strong in teachers' unions and amongst their ranks; it ran several large circulation newspapers and publishing houses, and membership of Communist youth groups swelled.[45] American observers understood the Party's work in education to be 'one of the most important areas for Communist propaganda and indoctrination'.[46] Last, was the PCF's energetic anti-Americanism. This was of course dictated by Cominform and the Soviets' global Cold War power struggle with the Americans. But anti-Americanism was also crucial to the PCF's patriotic image, and to sustaining its connection with the electorate in this period.[47] That the most dangerous aspects of comics were their American origins and popularity amongst children was to prove a potent mix in the Communists' battle against American cultural diplomacy.

The traumatic experiences of war, defeat and the Vichy regime's collaboration with the Nazis, combined with the need to purge children's culture of Nazi, Vichyite and other un-patriotic influences, injected a new sense of urgency into the comics debates. The youth groups and morality leagues who had led the attacks in the 1930s were now a key part of the infrastructure that was being mobilized to reconstruct French culture and society after the devastation of war. The resistance parties set out an ambitious reform aimed at democratizing culture, which was to become 'a public service, just like gas, water, electricity', in theatre director Jean Vilar's famous phrase.[48] Many culture industries were nationalized, or part nationalized – notably the radio – and the publishing sector was also considered to be ripe for reform.[49] Most important for the comics industry would be the push to develop a 'statut de la presse', namely a new regulatory framework to democratize the press and make it responsible to the national interest. This included a project for legislation to regulate the children's illustrated press. For many who had participated in the resistance, the idea of the 'responsibility' of culture was also important for children's culture, in part because it was so closely linked to education. Moreover, the sharp and rapid rise in juvenile delinquency registered in France, and across Europe, was considered to be one of the political priorities of the day.[50]

This context provided fertile ground for the old arguments of the anti-comics campaigns. The overbearing sense that the nation's children had been traumatized, corrupted even, by the horrors of war and collaboration, lent a new weight to calls to scrutinize what the specialists and psychologists called their

'moral environment'. It was now the patriotic duty of producers of children's reading matter to uphold their responsibility to the nation's young, by making culture of quality that would foster their well-being and nourish their education.[51] This idea easily degenerated into the nativist argument that foreigners were not capable of understanding such responsibilities. As Nord writes, the push for quality culture for all 'had always had a certain ambiguity to it, mixing aesthetic seriousness of purpose with a patriotism that at times spilled over into out-and-out xenophobia'.[52]

As France moved into the Cold War, the PCF escalated its campaigns against comics significantly. The Soviet Cominform instructed national communist parties to attack American culture as an instrument of imperialism. The French Communist anti-comics campaigners worried - correctly as shall be seen in chapter 3 - that the newly announced Marshall Plan would ensure renewed and expanded American domination of the war-ravaged and vulnerable children's publishing sector. Moreover, following the May 1947 crisis, when the PCF was excluded from government, the struggle against American culture became one of the major areas where the Communists continued to exert their influence. The PCF and affiliated campaigners adopted a twofold strategy: directing the post-war reform movement to target American culture specifically, and a concurrent press campaign against American mass culture. The mooted press reform and comics legislation became one important channel for the PCF group of deputies in the National Assembly to work through. The Ministry of Information, recently integrated into the Ministry of Sport and Youth, was working tirelessly on press reform, and this included the task of writing the bill to ensure the moral probity of the children's illustrated press.[53] To help him with the task, Minister Pierre Bourdan had gathered together a number of representatives from the anti-comics campaigns, including the Catholic Cartel d'action morale et sociale and several PCF deputies. However, disagreements between the PCF deputies and Bourdan soon emerged over the question of whether the bill should include protectionist measures against American comics. The project splintered into two bills.[54] The opening statement of the bill drafted and signed by the PCF deputies in the National Assembly stated that the children's illustrated press had a duty to provide children and young people with a solid civic and moral education, so must have a 'marked national character'.[55] In their version, the Communist deputies proposed a tax on foreign content, and a limit to be placed on the amount of foreign material included in any single periodical publication for children to be set at just 25 per cent, along with the creation of a '100 per cent French' label to promote indigenous production. However, the move to regulate comics was

beset by further problems, and by the summer of 1947, Bourdan's wider press regulation bill was facing fierce opposition from the right.[56] The comics project was spiked altogether when Bourdan left the government in June, and neither his version nor the Communist group's bill was even debated in parliament.

The disappointments of 1947 were swiftly reversed by March 1948, as the project to regulate comics moved into a new, far more serious phase. In January of that year, President Vincent Auriol ordered the Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature [High Council of the Judiciary] to investigate the issue of juvenile delinquency. The government was desperately looking for someone or something to blame for the soaring numbers of cases in the juvenile courts, so wanted action to be taken against the comics that were allegedly encouraging criminality. The following month the Minister of Justice announced that he was going to appoint an inter-ministerial commission on juvenile delinquency to look into regulating the children's illustrated press. It began work in early March of 1948, and included representatives from major ministerial offices, including Interior, Information, Education and Public Health. Crépin notes that this was the first time a commission looking into this question of children's comics attracted the high offices of state.[57] The commission studied the texts of the proposed laws from the previous year. By 12 March its members had agreed on their new version, which was then prepared and sent to the Council of State a few days later, where it was approved and sent on to the National Assembly. In addition, the awareness campaigns were given an important boost by a study on the role played by comics in juvenile delinquency undertaken by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, with its headline argument that '88% of juvenile delinquents are also avid readers of comics'.[58]

The second prong of the PCF's campaign was the sustained attacks in the Communist Party-affiliated press. These attacks turned the growing clamour against comics in the press and, increasingly, in government, into an excellent opportunity to reinforce the message that American culture posed a serious threat to French national values. The PCF's fears of American propaganda with the looming prospect of the Marshall Plan were ramped up by the signing of the Smith-Mundt Act in January 1948, which created 'an information service to disseminate abroad information about the United States, its people, and policies'.[59] The PCF was also at the forefront of the struggle to stem the flood of American films into France, by forcing a renegotiation of the Franc-American trade agreements, the Blum-Byrnes accords.[60] Further, as Hugo Frey notes, Maurice Thorez himself, leader of the PCF, 'saw the film industry as a key battleground in defence of national independence'.[61] While the comics industry

certainly did not have the same national prestige as cinema,[62] the political potency of the child protection argument gave the comics campaigns an emotional edge. And, it should be noted, the comics campaign also had high-level support; Thorez's wife, Jeanette Vermeesch, was one of the PCF deputies who sponsored the 1947 bill on comics. Comparing the attacks against American cinema and comics from 1947 onwards reveals important commonalities between the two campaigns being waged simultaneously, suggesting where some actions were deliberate strategies of the Communist Party.

The rhetoric in both the campaigns to denigrate American commodified culture in comics and cinema was often the same, referring to 'gangsters', 'pin-ups' and 'cowboys', in films or comics. Walt Disney and his films and comics were favourite targets, for not only were his products hugely and worryingly popular (and, indeed, they had to grudgingly admit to a certain respect for the art of Disney's films) but the man himself was an excellent example of everything that was problematic with American culture; or, as one headline put it, 'fascism in Hollywood'.[63] On the US release of *Song of the South* (1947), for example, *L'Humanité* denounced Walt Disney as 'an outspoken racist', and further noted his vicious public attacks on Communism at the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and his union-breaking tactics during the strike at his studio a few years previously.[64] These cultural products, the Communist newspapers warned, were dangerous capitalist propaganda. Patriotic mothers were warned to be wary of the 'Dollar offensive against young children's brains', led by the 'made in USA' *Donald* magazine and other American comics.[65] *L'Humanité* also reminded readers that 'the propaganda of Mr Truman flies across France on the wings of Dumbo, and French cinema is crushed under Dumbo's great feet'.[66]

The cornerstone of both campaigns was the argument for restrictions to be placed on the importing of American culture into France, in the form of quota systems. The PCF was concerned about American trade deals seeking to force European markets to open up to American companies.[67] It adopted tactics taken from the 1930s – which David Ellwood calls the 'heyday of European protectionism' – when the French had frequently imposed quotas on Hollywood films.[68] Post-war, to make the case for reinstating quotas on American films, and expanding them to more American cultural products, the PCF emphasised the economic angle. For both cinema and comics, the Communists contended that this debased material was being produced by American 'trusts', who dumped their products with the costs already amortized onto the French market, thus threatening French industry. In practice however there were significant

differences in approach. Where the quota system in cinema turned on the question of how much distribution space should be granted to American films (that were already made in the United States), in the case of comics, the publishing industry they were attacking was actually based in France, producing translated material. For the regulation of children's publishing, the Communist deputies pushed for legislation to include strict quotas on the amount of imported material that any single publication could carry. Opera Mundi's business was entirely based around the packaging and distribution of foreign material. Meanwhile, Hachette was contractually obliged by Disney to produce books and magazines using solely the American company's content.[69] This was a very deliberate attack on their business models.

Moreover, both of the PCF's campaigns targeted their attacks specifically at one particular hate figure, whom they used to symbolize 'traitors' and agents of capitalism. For the cinema campaigns, the Communists focused much of their venom on the figure of Léon Blum, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as if he had acted alone in the Blum-Byrnes agreements, rather than on behalf of the French government. Blum, as head of the French Socialist Party, was one of the leftist leaders in Europe that the Soviet Andrei Zhdanov identified as agents of American imperialism in his speech to the assembled Communist Parties at the inaugural conference of Cominform in October 1947.[70] The French Communists therefore vilified Blum as the 'traitor' who had allowed American films to flood French cinemas. Hugo Frey writes that the protests against the Blum-Byrnes agreement 'indulged in a kind of "national purity fantasy"', and for all involved 'national identity [was] based on cultural-ethnographic definition rather than legal citizenship'.[71]

Likewise, the PCF's anti-comics campaigns after 1947 also singled out one hate figure who was easily cast as a foreigner and a traitor; in this case it was Paul Winkler, the director of Opera Mundi, and Hachette's man. Winkler had long been the target of xenophobic and anti-Semitic attacks, from anti-comics campaigners of all political stripes.[72] Nevertheless, Sadoul's original pamphlet on comics from 1938 had excoriated not just Winkler, but also the Italian-origin publishers Ettore Carrozzo and Cino Del Duca, calling all three men the agents of foreign fascism in France.[73] In contrast, over the period 1948–9, the Communists singled out Winkler. This was for two reasons. First, his war record was still under investigation, which was vital in this period when the post-war purges of collaborators were ongoing.[74] Cino del Duca had been awarded the Croix de Guerre for his work in the resistance, and his publication *Tarzan* was reinstated in 1946. Winkler, by contrast, had been stripped of his French nationality under

the Vichy anti-Jewish laws and forced into exile in the States, where he worked as a foreign correspondent for major newspapers. His citizenship was reinstated in March 1945, but questions hung over his patriotism (he would later be fully exonerated), all of which made him vulnerable. Further, the principal client of Winkler's agency was Hearst's King Features, and the most popular comic strips they sold were made by Walt Disney. These connections fitted neatly with Cominform's renewed rhetorical emphasis after 1947 on Americans – and specifically both Hearst and Disney – as fascists. Winkler was therefore easily cast as the foreigner who posed a direct threat to French youth. The Communist deputy André Pierrard would argue in parliament that Winkler was the man who allowed the 'Hitlerophile' Hearst and his 'powerful American financial backers' to colonize the minds of French children.[75] In the discourse emerging around the idea of responsible publishers, the PCF needed to construct someone to embody the antithesis of this. Winkler was used to represent those publishers with no sense of national responsibility, who were accused of being purely driven by commercial gain.

This tactic allowed the PCF deputies and articles in the press to present the Communist Party and its publications as the true defenders of the French national interest. They pointed out that Winkler's operation did not use any French artists, and only published American material. This was contrasted with their own publication *Vaillant*, that was proud to use only French talent and French material.[76] Crucially, in spite of their claim to be exposing the dubious commercial practices and powerful connections of the publishing industry, at no point did the Communist deputies mention Hachette, Opera Mundi's partner in the venture. They preferred instead to paint a more sensationalist picture of Winkler as protected by powerful, unnamed, foreign interests. Jean Polbernar, for example, writing in the Communist daily *Ce Soir*, suggested that legislation without strict quotas would fail, because organizations such as Opera Mundi would no doubt find support for their cause in official circles.[77] While the PCF was happy to attack Hachette openly over other issues, in this instance, Communists chose to spare the larger French publisher, to focus on the Jewish foreigner Winkler, who fitted better the nativism of their attacks.

The step change in the government's interest in comics around late 1947 meant that the PCF's accusations were now being articulated in the lower house of parliament, and then relayed in the major Communist dailies. As detailed above, *L'Humanité* ran a series of articles in October and December 1947 on the dangers of American popular culture, specifically attacking Disney films and comics, King Features Syndicate and Opera Mundi. Ironically, the paper

continued to carry the *Felix the Cat* comic strip, with Opera Mundi's copyright clearly displayed, until it was withdrawn from all Communist press publications in early 1948. The American Embassy's subsequent summary of the affair suggested that 'groups close to this paper admitted then that this was imposed by "circles higher up."'[78] It certainly suggested that even senior figures in the PCF now saw the comics debate as a priority. Then, when the Minister of Justice announced the new commission on comics and juvenile delinquency on 26 February 1948, in the Council of the Republic, the Communist deputy Suzanne Girault seized the chance to launch an attack on Winkler and American-origin comics culture in the National Assembly.[79] Comics, she argued, should be recognized for what they really were; instruments of American imperialist propaganda, targeted at the youngest and most suggestible members of French society. She then added as a final flourish that Winkler had recently been implicated in the trial of Maréchal Pétain, former head of the Vichy collaborationist government (which was true, but what Girault failed to make clear was that Winkler had been a witness for the prosecution). This was the first instance – but by no means the last – of Winkler and his American business partners being directly accused of corrupting French children in the French parliament. We can see how the strategy of focusing on the figure of Paul Winkler allowed the Communists to draw connections between American propaganda, international capital, and the all-important desire to purge cultural production of people suspected of collaboration or at least of dubious loyalty to the French state.

1947: Reviving Disney publishing in France

However, in spite of the hostile environment towards comics, after the war Hachette, its partner Paul Winkler and his agency Opera Mundi, and their American partners Disney and King Features, were all keen to revive this profitable transatlantic trade. While the *Journal de Mickey* was still being refused permission by the government to return to print, the publication's main rival, Del Duca's *Tarzan* comic book, had been allowed to return in 1946 and was gathering in popularity during the Mouse's absence.[80] The success of *Tarzan* was a spur to act, and both Hachette and Disney were keen to resume their comics and book publishing operations together. Beneath the rubble lay solid foundations for rebuilding the business, and confidence in demand for American children's culture in France remained strong. Reinhold Wagnleitner points out that after the devastation and loss of the war, across Europe the desire for a return to

normal was strong: 'in this crisis, the strong attraction of the materially (and thereby culturally) most powerful competitor, the United States, surely cannot come as too much of a surprise.'[81] But this was not to prove as easy as Hachette optimistically hoped in the summer of 1947.

The deal to resurrect Disney publishing in France would not be signed until 1947. This was because in the immediate aftermath of the war, Hachette had been preoccupied. The company was dealing with an existential threat to its monopoly over newspaper and book distribution in France and accusations of collaboration with the Nazis.[82] The publisher skilfully quashed the accusations of collaboration and moved to avoid the nationalization of its nationwide distribution networks [Messageries] by buying off a number of influential politicians and through a series of behind-the-scenes acquisitions. It now enjoyed a controlling stake in the majority of France's newspapers. The move to nationalize the Messageries was then defeated in the French National Assembly in March 1947.[83] The nationalization crisis ensured the rise to power of Meunier du Houssoy. This genial, 'seigneurial' figure would become one of the most powerful men in French industry after the Second World War, and in 1952, he was appointed head of Hachette. However, already in the nationalization crisis he was one of the company's prime movers in building networks of well-placed sympathizers in business and parliament, controlling the press, and securing the support of embassies and consulates.[84] The publisher was arguably even more powerful than it had been before; Jean-Yves Mollier calls this the 'golden age of parliamentary corruption' in France, and places Hachette's leadership at the centre of the power and information nexus that sustained it. If the PCF was worried that comics publishers were powerful and protected by serious political influence, it was in large part because they were.

Across the Atlantic, the Disney Company had also experienced serious difficulties, and emerged from them aggressively anti-Communist in outlook and in need of European business. The decade had opened with industrial action by the company's animators in the summer of 1941. Production was stopped and a bitter standoff followed in which the company fired much of its drawing talent. Disney's financial woes were compounded by its failure to produce a box office hit film, and latterly, difficulties with its distribution studio, RKO.[85] The loss of its overseas profits during the war (economic sanctions and import bans on comics and media were commonplace after 1942 especially[86]) particularly from Europe where its publishing and merchandise had done so well, deepened the American company's crisis. Even once the resurrection of its film business was underway, this was beset by all sorts of problems, notably trade disputes, and the

reintroduction of protectionist measures such as tariffs, and quotas imposed on foreign films.[87] This ensured the growth in the importance of print media for the company. Internationally, comics had always played a key role in opening new markets for the Disney Company, and as its film outputs slowed in the 1940s, the success of a new partnership with the publisher Western had made comics albums and books newly important domestically for Disney.[88] Once markets in Europe began to open up, rebuilding the Disney publishing business was one of the company's first priorities.[89]

In July 1947, the two businesses signed a new, ambitious publishing deal, encompassing comics, magazines and books.[90] Hachette's Meunier du Houssoy evidently felt optimistic for the long-term health of the transatlantic children's publishing trade – even in comics – given that the two bills to regulate the comics industry had just been shelved along with the broader press reforms, and the Marshall Plan had just been announced in the previous month. Meunier du Houssoy agreed that Hachette would publish three magazines: two bi-weekly comics (the *Journal de Mickey* and *Hardi présente Donald*) and a monthly Walt Disney feature publication (which would become the *Belles Histoires de Walt Disney* series). The contract stipulated that the publisher would ensure minimum print runs of 100,000 copies for *Donald*, 150,000 for *Mickey* and 150,000 for *Belles Histoires*. This was somewhat surprising, given that the *Journal de Mickey* was still being denied permission by the government to return to print, while *Donald* had only recently received authorization (the first issue was published on 23 March 1947). Furthermore, the publisher committed itself to an annual payment of 500,000 francs to Disney, no matter what the sales were, and to producing at least six books or albums based on Disney films per year, in print runs of at least 30,000 copies each.[91] While such large print runs were by no means unusual for the children's books department (popular titles from the 1930s onwards were regularly produced in this number[92]), full-colour books and albums required considerable outlay. It was an attractive deal however, for if the interwar popularity of Disney material could be replicated, the royalties would be easily eclipsed by the potential profits. It also offered Hachette the opportunity to capitalize on the already perceptible growth in birth rates. Nevertheless, article seven of the contract hinted at the complicated nature of importing American comics, as Hachette agreed that in the case that the publisher failed to obtain the government's authorization to publish either *Walt Disney Comics* or *Le Journal de Mickey*, then both titles would revert to Disney, who reserved the right to grant the licence to another press.[93] Meunier du Houssoy was prepared to sign away Winkler's cherished creation in order to retain Hachette's right to publish other

Disney content. And Hachette was now particularly exposed to any protectionist measures against American content.

For Disney, the deal was just as important. The way the new sales representative for the company in Europe, Armand Bigle, tells the story is that Disney

> 'needed money for the pictures'. […] 'I wouldn't say that the Studio was waiting for money, but when I could have a good advance payment [*sic*], they were very happy to receive it as soon as possible.' […] 'They had a very bad time. And I remember I would transfer the money from my deal with Hachette right away. And we had problems to transfer the money. The French government had frozen the money. So I remember I was trying to do it as fast as possible.'[94]

Similarly, when recalling the 'grim' post-war years, Jimmy Johnson – then head of the new publishing unit at the Disney Headquarters in California – remarked that the slow recovery of the international market was little comfort as 'even when some money was made abroad, it was frequently blocked'.[95] After the Second World War, Hollywood's major problem was how to convert the proceeds taken in local currencies at the box office into dollars and get them back to the United States when governments were trying to hold onto hard currency.[96] According to Bigle, he found a way to get around the fiscal question using copyright law, which made merchandising potentially more attractive:

> I demonstrated to the fiscal authorities that this was 'author rights'. If you write a book, you have your author rights [droit d'auteur/copyright]. And this was free in France. I demonstrated that the fact of using a Disney character was an author right, so they had [to allow us] to send the money. The money from the films was blocked until a certain amount [*sic*]. But my share of merchandizing was author rights and they had to send the money.[97]

In short, the deal was important to both partners, and they were not going to walk away from comics publishing, even in increasingly complicated times.

Rewriting the law

The new Disney comics and books deal gave further urgency to the French publishers' regular pleas for authorization to relaunch the *Journal de Mickey*, but the government held fast.[98] It featured too much American material.[99] The Disney contract envisaged the comic would be back in print by July 1948.[100] But March of that year saw the convening of the commission to write the new comics legislation by the Ministry of Justice. Acting on behalf of Hachette, Disney and

King Features, their agent Paul Winkler now turned the comics debate into a full-blown Cold War affair, by seeking out the help of the Americans.

Winkler's task of getting Mickey back into print was proving to be a bureaucratic nightmare and far more complicated than everyone involved in the signing of the deal in the summer of 1947 had hoped. The *Journal de Mickey*'s fate lay in the hands of the government. Paper shortages in 1945 had prompted the government to suspend all publication of children's illustrated press. Subsequently, authorizations were only granted to educational and patriotic titles. These were almost all produced by publishers with impeccable resistance records. Eventually, however, as many of these comics failed to find favour with readers, a number of the interwar favourites were allowed by the Ministry of Information's Direction de la Presse to return (or found ingenious ways to fuse titles and so return to the shelves). Mickey was not amongst the titles allowed to return. Nevertheless, in December 1947, the team at Opera Mundi was confident that they were within a few days of securing paper from the Direction de la Presse for the return to print of the *Journal de Mickey*. This attempt failed.[101] By March of 1948 it was clear to Winkler that a new approach was required: 'in spite of numerous steps undertaken by us recently at the Direction de la Presse and at the Sous-Secrétariat d'Etat à la Présidence du Conseil chargé de l'Information, we were given no hope that the necessary authorization would be issued.'[102] Thus in early 1948 the publishers were faced with the return of the spectre of protectionist legislation, coupled with disappointing sales of *Hardi présente Donald*,[103] and for Paul Winkler in particular, the prospect of his cherished creation the *Journal de Mickey* being taken over by Disney. Winkler took drastic action.

Winkler contacted the American Embassy on 11 March 1948.[104] His request was simple. He wanted the Americans to place pressure on the French government to authorize the return of the *Journal de Mickey*. Winkler emphasized the American interests at play, explaining that his letter was written 'in full agreement with King Features Syndicate, New York' (although Hearst's Syndicate played no part in what was to become a substantial correspondence with the Embassy). He argued that the 'superior art' of Walt Disney was facing 'constant Communist opposition'. No doubt conscious that comics were also held in low regard in the United States, Winkler took great care to underline in rather improbable fashion the impeccable moral credentials of his publication: 'neither before nor since the *Journal de Mickey* has any children's publication in France ever accomplished such important educational and social work.'[105] It is interesting that Winkler's opening gambit was focused on the government

licence for the comic book, and Disney, rather than the looming legislation. 11 March also happened to be the day before the inter-ministerial commission was due to decide upon the bill to regulate the children's illustrated press. Possibly Meunier du Houssoy's sources had reassured them that the draft bill was not likely to include a quota on imported material.[106] They may have hoped in early March that their problems with the Disney contract could still be resolved relatively easily.

However, within a week of contacting the embassy, the situation became much more serious for the publishers. The new bill for the regulation of the children's press had just been passed through the Conseil, and it did include a quota clause (albeit not yet made official). The PCF deputies had won the argument this time.[107] Moreover, the publications covered by article one of the draft were not just comics but all publications aimed at children, whether periodical or not. The scope of the regulation had been broadened massively. Opera Mundi sent the Americans a second request for help.[108] The new letter explained that they had no objections to the bill's stated aim of 'cleaning up' the comics business. The problem was that the new law included a clause imposing a quota of 25 per cent on imported material in any single publication, which effectively placed the blame on such material, and, 'in practice, this refers to American production, since material from other sources is negligible'.[109] With the second letter, the Opera Mundi team included a copy of a rather smutty French comic, *Les Aventures Sentimentales de Lulu, Secrétaire Pin-up*,[110] 'which', the letter explained, 'is certainly a far cry from the Disney material'. This reinforced their argument that foreigners were not the worst offenders and that the quota clause was at the heart of a well-orchestrated smear campaign against the Americans. Worse still, the letter pointed to the scope, noting that such a law would create an unwelcome precedent 'which can open the door for regulation of all American newspaper interests abroad'.[111]

Officials at the American Embassy appeared baffled by the growing pile of comics on their desks. The Public Affairs Officer to whom they were addressed, Douglas Schneider, wrote that it was 'a little out of our (USIS) general run of business', and he sent the file on to the press attaché, John H. Tobler, to see if he was interested in taking on the case.[112] The United States Information Service (USIS) supplemented the Marshall Plan's public diplomacy plan, mainly through printed materials and libraries.[113] At this point, the focus of the Marshall Plan's mission was to win over French public opinion to the American way of life. The USIS's serious-minded publications were designed not only to educate but also to disabuse the French of the widely held perception that American culture was

low-brow. Commercially produced comics were liable to give precisely the sort of impression of American culture that they were trying to avoid (and at exactly the same time as in France, crime and horror comics were also being held up by experts, including J. Edgar Hoover and Fredric Wertham, as one of the main causes of juvenile delinquency in the United States[114]). Interestingly, the Embassy files included a copy of the *Donald* comic book alongside Winkler's letter with its wild claims about the wholesome nature of his publications. Its pages were folded open on the *Jungle Jim* and *Brick Bradford* strips, which were newspaper continuity strips and not intended to be exclusively for children, and in this publication were plainly displayed alongside the Disney strips. Perhaps the Embassy officials were less than convinced that Winkler's comic books were worth defending – after all, the genre of 'jungle' comics like *Jungle Jim*, for example, with their racism, violence and overt sexuality, formed one of Frederic Wertham's main targets for criticism. Paul Hirsch observes that comics in this period were a 'global embarrassment' for US cultural diplomacy.[115] The press attaché did not initially respond to his colleague's request to see if the Embassy could help Winkler. In a second memo, Schneider urged Tobler to take the matter seriously, as 'a very ugly situation might arise if Opera Mundi and the Hearst agencies could establish that their written and verbal requests have not been taken up seriously'.[116] He included a clipping taken from the conservative broadsheet *Le Figaro*, from 11 March 1948, which announced the new law in preparation by the interministerial committee, framed in the usual language of the threat to the young posed by 'les gangsters', 'les pin-up girls' and 'les cow-boys' in comics (all underlined by Schneider).[117] His handwritten note to Tobler underscored 'as you see it is not just the Communist Party which is hostile to the "comics"', while a second hand added that they would send comprehensive analysis of the 25 per cent quota clause. It appears that nothing came of this initial contact, however, and the trail in the Embassy archives goes dead until November 1948.

The dubious reputation of comics and the toxic nature of the accusations levelled at Winkler appear to have given the American Embassy officials pause. By the summer of 1948 Winkler was deeply concerned. While he was preparing a trip to the States and reflecting on his business plans, he began to consider his next steps. He wrote a seven-page letter to Meunier du Houssoy at Hachette (which he typed himself, Winkler noted, given the confidential nature of the contents) in which he expressed how, for the first time in their long collaboration, he felt as if he was wasting his time. He opened the letter by saying that he was not worried about *Donald* and *Mickey*, because everything

concerning them was in hand (which was patently untrue, but he needed to present himself to Meunier du Houssoy as an indispensable business partner). Instead, Winkler wondered why their mutual agreement to pursue newspaper ventures together had come to naught. Why had he been excluded from the merger between Hachette's newspapers *France Soir* with *Paris Presse* during the nationalization crisis, which had effectively created a large competitor for Opera Mundi? Winkler was convinced that the very public attacks on him were one of the main reasons Meunier du Houssoy had pushed him out of the major press deals of the post-war era, because 'some of your partners are convinced that my person would attract attacks'.[118] Although Hachette had managed to survive the liberation-era purges and avoid nationalization, associating with suspected wartime collaborators was still problematic. More seriously, collaborators were explicitly barred from publishing children's magazines, and rumours about Winkler's and his wife's war records were being perpetuated and further embroidered on by the Communist deputies in parliamentary debates on the children's press bill. These attacks were making the possibility of *Mickey*'s return to print even more remote, and Winkler was beginning to worry they would destroy his wider ambitions.

The real aim of Winkler's long, plaintive letter was to force Meunier du Houssoy to take an interest in Edi-Monde and *Mickey*, the original and cornerstone publication in their joint venture. The missive spurred Meunier du Houssoy into action, and a few days later he addressed a letter to the publishers' union, the Syndicat National des Editeurs (SNE).[119] The SNE had asked Hachette to respond to the bill a few weeks previously.[120] Winkler sent a copy of the bill and drafted Meunier du Houssoy's response. Hachette now officially denounced the protectionism of the bill in its current form and emphasized the harm such a law might do to French exports, should other countries decide to retaliate. This was a rare instance of Meunier du Houssoy breaking cover to openly defend Winkler. Hitherto, he had been content to let Winkler carry out all the actions in his own name, apparently acting alone. This had been, after all, the terms of the contract with Winkler, in which he assumed full responsibility for the publications he produced for Hachette. Winkler made no mention of Hachette in his correspondence with the American Embassy, nor would he make any reference to the publisher in his public statements throughout the entire affair that followed. Meunier du Houssoy's lack of action was not surprising given that Winkler had been hired to deal with the complicated details (and the publisher had something of a reputation – striking workers had famously chanted 'wake up Meunier!' in front of the Hachette central offices the previous year. He

was later caricatured as being more interested in yachting on the Côte d'Azur than running his business[121]). Possibly Meunier du Houssoy assumed that the protectionist clause in the new bill would only be applied to comics, and, with the *Journal de Mickey* still banned, it might be the time to cut his losses, and focus investment on a less contested format. However, book publishers could not be entirely sure of how far the new law would seek to limit American material. Cécile Boulaire suggests that Flammarion and Georges Dupleix of Little Golden Books were nervous enough about the proposed legislation to delay signing the contract for the French translations of the American children's book series until the law was passed.[122] And if restrictions were to be imposed on books as well as comics, then all the key elements of Hachette's highly profitable relationship with Disney, which was central to the business model of its children's section, were under threat.

Still the bill continued its passage through the National Assembly, unimpeded. It would not be until late November 1948 that the American Embassy picked up the case once more, following a further approach from Winkler. This time, however, it was placed in the hands of William R. Tyler, the new Counselor for Public Affairs.[123] He was very clear on the political sensitivity of the comics affair, and worked on the case with Winkler until it was closed in 1951. Tyler's background was in the secret service, specifically in broadcast propaganda for the Office of War Information. He had led radio operations in the Mediterranean before moving to Paris at the liberation to run information and psychological warfare programmes. He would later explain how in his new role at the Embassy, 'I had never considered that there was a sharp dividing line between information and cultural activities on the one hand, and political activities on the other'.

> [Ambassador Caffery] knew that I knew France unusually well and that I had been engaged in some activities which certainly didn't fall under the normal category of information work. I worked very closely with my – it was then OSS, but it shortly became CIA – colleagues, and although I was not employed by the CIA and was never on their payroll, I used to work very closely with them for political action work in the information field, in addition, of course, to certain cultural activities which are sometimes not as easy to distinguish from political activities as people think.[124]

His experiences in liberation-era Paris, where he had been involved in 'a lot of more or less official activities in the anti-communist area', and then working in Washington, under Bill Benton when the USIS was being formed, had given him a sound understanding of what was at stake, and 'the amount of money

and ingenuity in white, gray and black propaganda the communist Soviet Union was spreading throughout the international communist party'.[125] Tyler's assessment of the situation in November 1948 concluded that all the evidence (notably the PCF deputy Girault's intervention against Mickey and Winkler in the French National Assembly earlier in the year, echoed in the Communist papers) demonstrated that 'the Communist Party is concerned with spreading the notion that anything American is morally reprehensible and is calculated to corrupt the youth of France. The Communist strategy is to replace such American "infiltration" by their own children's publications such as "Vaillant" which is an instrument of Communist ideology.'[126]

It appears that Winkler and Tyler saw eye to eye on the PCF's role in the affair, and its interest in the 25 per cent clause. On close examination of the text of the draft bill, they worried that the legislation and the regulatory commission it would install would provide a way for the PCF to continue to exert influence over policy and business from behind the scenes.[127] In an annotated copy of the draft bill, Winkler drew the Embassy officials' attentions to the second article, which stipulated that such publications must not include […] [any material] 'which portrays in a favourable light crime, banditry, theft, laziness, immorality, insubordination to the authority of the family, the school or the nation [*displines familiales, scolaires ou nationales*], and of a nature that will demoralise children and youth' (text in italics underlined by Winkler).[128] He highlighted the question of insubordination to authority, no doubt because not only was the phrasing here a very explicit accusation against American comics for their depictions of crime but also the suggestion that they risked undermining the very pillars of French society. This was a much broader definition than found in previous iterations of this legislation, and it had the potential to be applied even to rather tame publications. As the American Embassy's Public Affairs Office pointed out several months later, it was not clear to what extent the activities of the proposed control commission would possibly exceed the main objective of weeding out indecent and violent material. The broad nature of article two suggested it might.[129]

Winkler's analysis of the proposed commission that was to be responsible for the surveillance and control of such publications further reinforced his argument that the law could be open to abuse. He suggested that seven of the members of this committee (the two representatives from the Ministry of Education, the two representatives from the teaching profession chosen by the Ministry of Education, and three representatives from youth organizations, designated by the Ministry of Education) were of 'Communist sympathies' [*d'obédiance C.*]. The nativist articles of the law went further than the earlier bill put forward by

the PCF deputies, which had focused on business practices. Here, foreigners were placed on a par with criminals and Nazi collaborators. All publishers were required to have an executive committee. Its members had to be of good moral standing: no criminal convictions, no disciplinary measures taken against them by the education authorities, and – underlined by Winkler –had to be of French nationality. However, it was article twelve which sealed the nativism of the post-war period, and because of the broad scope of the materials covered by the first article, it potentially placed all transatlantic publishing in jeopardy. The conditions for importing foreign publications aimed at children and the young were to be set out in two clauses to be agreed later, by Order in Council [réglement d'administration publique], as would the use of foreign-origin mats[130] and drawings in French publications. Unofficially, it was understood that this would adopt the PCF deputies' proposal for introducing a quota of 25 per cent for foreign-authored content.

In late 1948, the bill was due to be introduced before the National Assembly. It had already passed several hurdles, notably acceptance by the Assembly's Press Commission in August, at which point the 25 per cent clause had been officially added into the text. Winkler's sources indicated that the proposed legislation had been voted through by Press Commission members who were pleased to support the regulation of the comics industry, but who did not necessarily understand the importance of the quota clause to the PCF's anti-American strategy. On Winkler's advice, Tyler approached Colonel Félix,[131] the head of the Press Commission, to persuade them that the clause was 'equivalent to a discriminatory quota designed to exclude American material and favour the dissemination of Communist material in this category'.[132] Félix had been one of Hachette's staunch supporters on the Press Commission in the struggle against the nationalization of the Messageries.[133] We might surmise that Meunier du Houssoy discreetly leaned on him once more. Félix responded positively, and Tyler reported he was confident the clause would be removed.[134] An annotated copy of the parliamentary debates from 22 January 1949 in Meunier du Houssoy's files underlined Félix's energetic arguments for the removal of the clause (in which he exercised many of Winkler's and Tyler's points, and accused the PCF deputies of seeking to use the quota clause to replace Tarzan with 'the Moscowteers').[135]

Unfortunately for the transatlantic lobby, the motion to remove the quota clause was defeated and Félix was replaced on the Press Commission by the MRP Christian Democrat Party deputy Paul Gosset, both on the same day, 22 January 1949. Gosset's appointment brought about a new confluence of

Communist and MRP anti-Americanism, and the quota clause looked set to stay – indeed, the Communist deputies were now arguing for the amount of foreign content permitted to be reduced to just 5 per cent. According to the Embassy's analysis, there were 'strong currents among the MRP leaders and members of the party' against 'American cultural penetration' in France, and Gosset was 'one of [its] most outspoken representatives'.[136] Moreover, the attacks on American capitalist culture in children's comics by the Communist deputies, which just a few years previously had been rejected out of hand by the National Assembly, were now dominating the parliamentary debate. This time, it was the PCF deputy André Pierrard who put forward the same arguments, claiming confidently that this was their law, and the government should have listened to the Communists earlier.[137] He repeated at regular intervals that the danger came from across the Atlantic. The PCF's position was now that article two was too vague to be effective (not least because article eleven restricted the importation of material in contravention of the article two, and might easily be applied to Soviet translations). Instead Pierrard insisted the focus had to be on eradicating the business practices that were the source of the problem, and by this, he made it clear that he meant Winkler's Opera Mundi. He contrasted the American *Mickey* with the all-French, patriotic content of the Communist youth movement's publication for children, *Vaillant.* Finally, a further source of anxiety for Winkler and Meunier du Houssoy, as the joint proprietors of Edi-Monde, came from the clear desire expressed by the draftsman of the opinion [*rapporteur pour avis*], Pierre Dominjon, that this law on the children's press should be the first of many measures to stamp out immorality in the press.[138]

'Ha ha! Now I'm going to pull the trigger and blow you to the heavens!' This particularly choice quote was one of many violent episodes taken from the Communist comic *Vaillant* that Winkler selected for inclusion in the memo that he sent to members of the French parliament in early February.[139] André Pierrard had overstepped the mark. In his zeal to present *Vaillant* as 100 per cent French, and the most patriotic magazine that French children could be reading, the Communist deputy had invited scrutiny of this publication. Winkler seized his chance. In addition to detailing at length the misdemeanours of *Vaillant*, his memo argued that by ignoring the sizeable presence of scenes of a violent or sexual nature in French publications, and instead choosing to stigmatize foreign publications, the French were inviting reprisals against their exports (and not necessarily just comics). Meunier du Houssoy's official letter to the SNE had already warned of this possibility.[140] Next came the decisive move, deploying a tactic recommended to them by an unnamed, sympathetic source on the Conseil

de la République.[141] Winkler's informant advised him that for the article to be removed, it had to be done by the government itself. The surest way of doing this would be for the American Embassy to ask André Marie, the Justice Minister and sponsor of the bill, to remove the article from the law before it went back to the Assembly for a second reading. The source was confident both that the minister would be receptive to an official request from the Americans, and that he would ensure that the Radical party backed the initiative. Within a week, on 11 February 1949, Ambassador David Bruce contacted the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Maurice Schumann (another one of the alleged 'Hachette deputies'), and made a 'verbal note of protest'. The ambassador argued that if the aim was to clean up the comics industry, then article two would suffice. The problem was that article twelve was potentially in breach of article three, paragraph two of the GATT free trade agreements (which was something André Marie had already flagged up as a concern himself).[142] Schumann duly wrote and asked the Minister of Justice to remove the 25 per cent clause, and the bill passed back to the National Assembly in March 1949 shorn of article twelve.[143] The law was then passed on 16 July 1949, in its American-sanctioned form.

The PCF did not accept defeat easily. The day of the vote, the party's main daily *L'Humanité* protested, 'They want to steal our children!' The paper denounced the failure of the law to protect young French readers from the predations of American trusts.[144] The Communist deputies had voted against the law, arguing it to be unfit for purpose, and potentially even a threat to their own publications. In their appendix to the debate of 8 July 1949, the PCF openly accused Winkler of interfering in the process of law, noting that it was very strange that the law looked exactly like the version suggested by the publisher in his letter to all deputies.[145] This was by no means the end of the PCF's efforts to impose quotas on American comics. Winkler noted that the PCF could still count on the votes of the Socialist Party deputies in the Press Commission, and that to prevent any further attempts to reintroduce the quota would require the MRP to vote as a bloc against them.[146] The next serious attempt to reinstate the 25 per cent clause was in 1950, and this time it was sponsored by the Socialists, led by Maurice Deixonne. Once more Winkler rallied the American Embassy and William Tyler (or 'Bill', as he was now known to Winkler) to block the PCF's latest manoeuvre. The ambassador reminded the French Minister for Foreign Affairs of his verbal note from the previous year.[147] Winkler then wrote to Jay Lovestone, to ask him and his fellow trade union leader and CIA helper, David Dubinsky, to speak to Léon Blum (as it turned out, Blum would die unexpectedly a few weeks later).[148] The National Assembly passed the amendment without debate in December

1950.[149] At Winkler's behest, King Features Syndicate contacted the State Department to put further pressure on the Americans to act, and an exchange of telegrams between Secretary of State Dean Acheson and the Embassy in Paris confirmed that the ambassador made further written representations to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in early January 1951.[150] The Council of the Republic then rejected the amendment. Winkler, and this time, his American partner King Features, had been obliged once more to mobilize some of the key figures of the Cold War.

Possibly in return for the American assistance with the 1949 law, Winkler's press agency Opera Mundi then carried out a series of commissions for the USIS. Just one month after the legislation was passed successfully, Opera Mundi began to place articles for the USIS in its publications across Europe and the globe.[151] The agency proved less than reliable, however, and in 1952 the failure of a series of articles to materialize after they had been long promised led his collaboration with USIS to end rather unceremoniously.[152] Winkler's bid for Opera Mundi to take on the publication of the pro-American magazine published by the lead body of the Marshall Plan in France, Mission France's *Rapports France-Etats-Unis* magazine, on a commercial basis was rejected. The Secretary of State cabled the Embassy in Paris to stress that Winkler was not suitable for the role.[153] The PCF was quite correct to assume that Winkler was an American agent. However, the tone of later American State Department and Paris Embassy correspondence indicates that the Americans felt by this time that they were doing Winkler a favour and that he was ultimately untrustworthy.

Conclusion

The question is then, how far did this affair demonstrate American influence over French politics? This is the interpretation offered by Brian Angus McKenzie.[154] Certainly, the American Embassy had just rewritten the law of a sovereign nation to protect the business interests of Disney and King Features. While it is a compelling argument, this chapter offered two important nuances to his interpretation. First, it has shown how the Cold War comics affair was driven by the PCF: by the group of Communist deputies in the National Assembly pushing for legislation and quotas on foreign content in publications for children, by the attacks by PCF deputies André Pierrard and Suzanne Girault in parliament on Winkler and the *Journal de Mickey* in particular, and by the broader attacks on American-origin comics in the Communist press. It is clear that the

legislation, particularly the quota clause in article twelve, and the attendant campaigns calling for greater protectionism were used as potent weapons by the PCF in the Cold War. The Party's refusal to give up on the quota clause, pushing for it to be restored to the legislation each and every year, from 1947 until it was finally defeated for the second time in 1951, suggests its importance to its anti-American campaigns. Moreover, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Communist-affiliated activists played a significant role in the commission created by the 1949 law, just as Winkler and Tyler predicted.

Second, it is far from clear that the American Embassy officials would have acted without the repeated approaches to them made by Paul Winkler, acting on behalf of Hachette and their shared company Edi-Monde, to protect their deals with King Features and Disney. It is perhaps more accurate to see the Americans as having been co-opted into Winkler's and Meunier du Houssoy's struggle to protect their numerous transatlantic business interests that were directly threatened by the PCF's campaign for protectionism. The rewriting of the law was very much led by Winkler, but was made possible by Meunier du Houssoy's networks of influence and his well-placed informants. The affair might be described as one not only of American influence in France but also as a part of a wider story of Hachette's influence over French politics, and the publisher's long-standing power struggle with the PCF and the left.

Last, how far was this affair evidence of the ability of big businesses to dominate the field, and how little impact the anti-comics campaigns could have on such mighty companies? As noted in the introduction to this book, several eminent comics scholars, including Thierry Crépin and Sylvain Lesage, are sceptical about the extent the new regulator was able to intimidate the large businesses. However, the desperate measures taken by Paul Winkler on behalf of his transatlantic business partners were then followed by a rather different approach. Hachette and Disney were both concerned to protect their respective family-friendly brand images. The final three chapters in this book trace how the Cold War business model for children's culture that was forged by the anxieties around child protection and foreign imports was much more cautious and conciliatory.

Notes

1 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* and Crépin and Groensteen's *On Tue à Chaque Page!* are key reference works, while the Catholic campaigns are well covered by Mollier's *Mise au Pas des Ecrivains.*

2 The removal of the quota clause was first noted in a short section of a chapter on print culture in Brian Angus Mckenzie's *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan* (New York, Oxford, Berghahn, 2005, 2008), 217–21, and his research is discussed by Vessels in *Drawing France,* 118–20. However, neither of these brief accounts of the episode is aware of the publishing context, neither of them identifies the role of Hachette, nor do they discuss the context of networks stretching across French publishing and parliament that were pivotal to the whole affair.

3 This is the conclusion McKenzie draws in *Remaking France*, 220. For an in-depth exposition of what she calls American 'market imperialism', see de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*.

4 A copy of the contract is recorded in the Hachette Registres, HAC 89, registre 11. For an analysis of the deal struck between the French publishers and Disney, see Julien Baudry and Marie-Pierre Litaudon, 'Hachette entre héritage et renouvellement (1920–1960): comment « Faire collection » face au défi des albums « transmédiatiques »?', *Strenæ*, 11 (2016) http://strenae.revues.org/1631 accessed 3 May 2020.

5 This is the title of his first chapter in *Haro sur le Gangster!*

6 On the innovations of the *Journal de Mickey*, see Laurence Grove, *Text/Image Mosaics in French Culture: Emblems and Comic Strips* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), Chapter 8, especially 22–3.

7 For information on content and production, see Michel R. Mandry, *Happy Birthday Mickey! 50 Ans d'Histoire du Journal de Mickey* (Paris, Chêne, 1984).

8 See Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 42–4 for exact circulation figures.

9 Biographical information on Winkler in this paragraph has been drawn principally from Michel Mandry's preface to *Happy Birthday Mickey* (no page numbers), and Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 41–4.

10 Jimmy Johnson, *Inside the Whimsy Works: My Life with Walt Disney Productions* eds Greg Ehrbar and Didier Ghez (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 49, see also note by the editors on 181. Johnson was the director of Disney Publications, 1950–1962.

11 See Winkler folders in S19 C19 B2 and S03 C12 B3 Note confidentielle sur Edi-Monde (passé, présent, avenir) 6 October 1969, Paul Winkler.

12 Sylvain Lesage, *Publier la Bande Dessinée: les éditeurs franco-belges et l'album, 1950–1990* (Paris, Presses de l'enssib, 2018), 34–5; Baudry and Litaudon, 'Hachette entre héritage et renouvellement comment « faire collection » face au défi des albums transmédiatiques » ?', paragraphs 19–20.

13 Mollier, *L'âge d'or de la corruption parlementaire 1930–1980,* 39, 140, 260.

14 Lesage also makes this argument in *Publier la Bande Dessinée*, 37–8.

15 Annie Renonciat, 'Le temps des pionniers', Renonciat, Viviane Ezratty and Françoise Lévêque (eds) *Livre mon ami: Lectures enfantines, 1914–1954* (Paris, Mairie de Paris, Direction des affaires culturelles, 1991), 28.

16 Notably, the Abbé Bethléem's campaign to force distribution outlets and newsstands to 'clean up' the material they sold. Hachette and its Messageries were regular targets for harsh criticism in the pages of his *Revue des Lectures*. See Mollier, *Mise au pas*, 270 and 278.
17 Letter from Meunier du Houssoy to Winkler, 27 September 1934, S02C15B4. For discussion of this letter and how it fits with Meunier du Houssoy's approach to business, see Mollier, *Edition, Presse et Pouvoir en France au XX^e siècle,* 38.
18 Letter from Paul Winkler to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 6 June 1948, S19C18B4.
19 Quoted in Yves Courrière, *Pierre Lazareff ou le vagabond de l'actualité* (Paris, Gallimard, 1995), 211. See also Mandry preface in *Happy Birthday Mickey!* on the European expansion of Opera Mundi's comics operations, and Johnson, *Whimsy Works*, 49–50.
20 S03 C12 B3/ HAC 858 Note confidentielle sur Edi-Monde (passé, présent, avenir) 6 October 1969, Paul Winkler.
21 Jean de Lardélec (pseudonym of the Abbé Bethléem), 'Le Journal de Mickey', *Revue des Lectures*, 15 January 1936, 522–4.
22 This is the title of Pascal Ory's pioneering article on the comics campaigns and 1949 legislation, 'Mickey go home! La désaméricanisation de la bande déssinée (1945–1950)', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire,* 4 (1984), 77–88.
23 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 46; although the charge that it contained no French-produced material was inaccurate, Grove calls it a 'hybrid' French and American production, *Text/Image Mosaics,* 79–80.
24 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 173–81.
25 Bauchard, *The Child Audience,* 158–9.
26 On the French experience, see Jean-Yves Mollier, 'Du bon et du mauvais usage des « bons » et des « mauvais » livres en France des Lumières à Internet', *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études francaises,* 54 (2001), 347–59; Loïc Artiaga, *Des torrents de papier. Catholicisme et lectures populaires au XIXe siècle* (Limoges, Pulim, 2007).
27 On Bethléem, the most extensive source is Mollier, *Mise au pas*, and on his comics campaigns, see 282–87.
28 Lardélec, 'Le Journal de Mickey', 522.
29 *Ibid*., 523.
30 'Petit Courrier', *Revue des Lectures*, 1 January 1935, 377.
31 Georges Sadoul, '3 Millions d'Enfants Français? La Presse Enfantine, Sa Structure', *L'Humanité*, 17 April 1937, 8.
32 Susan B. Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar France* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2009).
33 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 37–40.
34 *Ibid*., 63.
35 *Ibid*., 66.

36 *Ibid*., 68.
37 Jean Vaillant, 'On a brûlé un sale bonhomme … ', *Cœurs Vaillants*, 12 (20 March 1938), 2.
38 Georges Sadoul, *Ce que lisent vos enfants: la presse enfantine en France, son histoire, son évolution, son influence* (Paris, Bureau d'Editions, 1938), 14–15.
39 O'Malley, 'The Innocence Project', 28.
40 *Ibid.,* 23.
41 On this hiatus, see Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 165–6.
42 Anne Urbain, 'Une croisade victorieuse. Généalogie des lois du 29 juillet 1939 et du 16 juillet 1949 sur la moralisation de la presse et de la librairie françaises', *Revue de la BnF*, 60 (2020/21), 23–31, see 23–4.
43 Martin Barker, 'Getting a conviction: or, how the British horror comics campaign only just succeeded', Lent, *Pulp Demons*, 69–92.
44 Lazar, *Communisme*, chapter one, especially 28.
45 Lazar, *Communisme*, IV and chapter four, especially 57; on the PCF and publishing, see Marie-Cécile Bouju, *Lire en communiste: les maisons d'édition du Parti communiste français 1920–1968* (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010); on youth groups, see Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth* and Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880–1960* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2002).
46 Robert P. Joyce, counselor of Embassy in Paris, Foreign Service Dispatch: Rise in price of *L'Ecole et la Nation*, French Communist Party publication for educators, 15 February 1955. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], RG 59, Box 5278.
47 Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 18–22.
48 Philip Nord, *France's New Deal from the Thirties to the Postwar Era* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010), 14.
49 *Ibid*., 311–12.
50 Sarah Fishman, *The Battle for Children: World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2002), chapter six.
51 See for example the manifesto 'Pour le Livre', produced in 1945 by a collective of children's publishers led by Michel Bourrelier, reprinted in Mathilde Leriche, *50 ans de littérature de jeunesse* (Paris, Magnard Éditions l'École, 1979), 147–8. For an overview of the critical discourse on children's books in this period, see Cécile Boulaire, 'La critique périodique de livres pour enfants depuis l'après-guerre', *Strenæ*, 12 (2017) http://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1703 accessed 11 June 2020.
52 Nord, *France's New Deal*, 215.

53 See Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 278–84; Vessels, *Drawing France*, 108. Bourdan was the Minister for Sports, Youth and Letters, which now included the Information Services. See Mollier, *Age d'Or*, 185–6.
54 Vessels, *Drawing France*, 108.
55 'Proposition de Loi Portant Protection de la Presse Enfantine', Assemblée Nationale, Première Legislature, Session de 20 mai 1947.
56 Mollier, *Age d'Or*, 255.
57 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 286.
58 Vessels, *Drawing France*, 103; Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 260–8.
59 The text of the Smith-Mundt Act can be found here: https://www.usagm.gov/who-we-are/oversight/legislation/smith-mundt/ accessed 13 December 2021.
60 On anti-Americanism and protests in French cinema in 1948, see Hugo Frey, *Nationalism and the Cinema in France: Political Mythologies and Film Events, 1945–1995* (New York, Berghahn, 2014) chapter 4; Jacques Portes, 'Les origines de la légende noire des accords Blum-Byrnes sur le cinéma', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine*, 33 (1986), 314–29.
61 Frey, *Nationalism and the Cinema in France*, 102.
62 Portes, 'Légende Noire', 319.
63 Unsigned, 'Fascisme sur Hollywood', *L'Humanité*, 26 October 1947, 4.
64 Jean Bauchart, 'Merci quand même Monsieur Walt Disney!', *L'Humanité*, 25 January 1947, 4.
65 Armand Monjo, 'L'Offensive du dollar contre les cerveaux d'enfants: mamans, prenez garde aux illustrés américains!', *L'Humanité*, 25 October 1947, 4.
66 G.L., 'Un éléphant, ça trompe!' *L'Humanité*, 27 December 1947, 4.
67 Chapter 3 explores the Marshall Plan and American companies' ambitions, and their impacts on the French children's publishing industry.
68 David W. Ellwood 'Introduction', David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (eds), *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony* (Amsterdam, VU University Press, 1994), 2–18, see especially 10.
69 This was written into Hachette's contracts with Disney from 1934 onwards; see Chapter 3.
70 Zhdanov report, *La France Nouvelle*, 25 October 1947, 7–11. On Cominform and French cinema, see Laurent Marie, *Le Cinéma est à Nous: Le PCF et le Cinéma Français de la Libération à Nos Jours* (Paris, L'Harmatton, 2005), 65–75.
71 Frey, *Nationalism and the Cinema in France,* 104.
72 On the attacks on Winkler's person since the 1930s, see Thierry Groensteen, 'La Mise en Cause de Paul Winkler', Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page!* 53–60.
73 Sadoul, *Ce que lisent vos enfants*, 14–15.
74 On Winkler's war record, see Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 141.

75 *Journal Officiel,* Assemblée Nationale, session 21 January 1949, 92.
76 For example, Jean Polbernar, 'Laisserons-nous corrompre notre jeunesse par les bandes illustrées Made in U.S.A.?', *Ce Soir*, 24 March 1948, and, as will be seen in this section and the final section of this chapter, PCF deputies Suzanne Girault and André Pierrard made this argument in parliamentary debates in February 1948 and early 1949.
77 Polbernar, 'Laisserons-nous corrompre notre jeunesse par les bandes illustrées Made in U.S.A.?'.
78 Background document prepared for State Department, 31 January 1949, National Archives and Records Administration, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
79 *Journal Officiel,* Assemblée Nationale, session 27 February 1948, 484.
80 On Tarzan's fortunes in Cold War France see Chapter 2.
81 Wagnleitner, 'Empire of the Fun', 506.
82 This episode was first documented by Jean-Yves Mollier in chapter five of *Edition, Presse et Pouvoir*, and then explored in more detail in his subsequent monograph *L'Age d'Or de la Corruption Parlementaire*. This paragraph is based upon these two sources.
83 See Mollier, *Age d'Or*, 185–7 and 205.
84 Mollier, *Edition, Presse et Pouvoir*, 216.
85 On Disney's financial difficulties in this period, see Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System: A History* (London, BFI/ Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 2008), 153–4.
86 See Lent, 'The Comics Debate Internationally'.
87 David W. Ellwood 'Introduction', Ellwood and Kroes (eds), *Hollywood in Europe,* 2–18, see especially 10.
88 On the importance of comics to Disney's business model, see Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version*: *The Life, Times, Art, and Commerce of Walt Disney* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1968), 165; on the role of print publishing at Disney in wartime, see Peter Cullen Bryan, *Creation, Translation, and Adaptation in Donald Duck Comics: The Dream of Three Lifetimes* (Cham, Palgrave, 2021), 66.
89 See Cullen Bryan, *Donald Duck Comics*, 66; and interview by Didier Ghez with Dominique Bigle, Didier Ghez (ed) *Walt's People: Talking Disney with the Artists who Knew Him*, Volume 26 (Skyway Press, 2022), 75–81, see 76.
90 Contract dated 9 July 1947, S10 C12 B2.
91 S10 C12 B2. For an extensive analysis of the Hachette's contracts with Disney, see Baudry and Litaudon, 'Hachette entre héritage et renouvellement (1920–1960): comment « faire collection » face au défi des albums transmédiatiques » ?'
92 Annie Renonciat, 'Fortune éditoriale de la comtesse de Ségur (1857–1939)', Isabelle Nières-Chevrel (ed) 'La Comtesse de Ségur et ses alentours', *Cahiers Robinson*, 9 (2001), 213–22.

93 Contract dated 9 July 1947, article seven, S10 C12 B2.
94 Bob Thomas interview with Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle, *Walt's People*, 60.
95 Johnson, *Inside the Whimsy Works*, 41.
96 Paul Swann, 'The Little State Department: Washington and Hollywood's Rhetoric of the Postwar Audience', Ellwood and Kroes (eds), *Hollywood in Europe*, 176–95, see 182.
97 Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle interview with Didier Ghez, *Walt's People*, 60.
98 Letter from Paul Winkler to Douglas Schneider, 11 March 1948, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
99 According to Winkler, this was the reason they were given. Letter from Winkler to Douglas Schneider, 11 March 1948.
100 Contract dated 9 July 1947, article seven, S10 C12 B2.
101 Letter from J. Pinchart-Deny, Opera Mundi, to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 16 December 1947, S19 C24 B2. The writer guessed this was due to the functions of the Direction de la Presse being taken over at this time by the Fédération de la Presse, with whom their contact did not have the same relationship.
102 Letter from Winkler to Schneider, 11 March 1948.
103 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 141.
104 Letter from Winkler to Schneider, 11 March 1948.
105 *Ibid*.
106 Vessels, *Drawing France*, 108.
107 And there were apparently lots of very heated arguments in this commission; see Paulette Charbonnel's account in her article 'Comment a été votée la loi du 16 juillet 1949', *Enfance*, 6 (1953), 433–7.
108 Letter from M. Delman to John H. Tobler, 22 March 1948, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
109 Letter from Delman to Tobler, 22 March 1948.
110 Published by Editions E.P.M. for two issues in 1948, it carried the strapline 'not for the under-16s'. Several titles from this publisher were subsequently reprimanded by the 1949 Law commission for surveillance and control.
111 Letter from Delman to Tobler, 22 March 1948.
112 Handwritten note, Douglas Schneider to John H. Tobler, 15 March 1948, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
113 On the USIS in France, see McKenzie, *Remaking France*, chapter five; on the aims of wider book programmes, see Greg Barnhisel, 'Cold Warriors of the Book: American Book Programs in the 1950s', *Book History*, 13 (2010), 185–217.
114 Lent, 'The Comics Debate Internationally', 11–12.
115 Hirsch, *Pulp Empire,* 9.
116 19 March 1948, memorandum from Douglas Schneider to John H. Tobler, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.

117 François Mennelet, 'On réclame une loi contre les journaux de gangsters "stupéfiants pour enfants"', *Le Figaro*, 11 March 1948.
118 Letter from Paul Winkler to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 6 June 1948, S19 C18 B4.
119 Letter from Robert Meunier du Houssoy to Jacques Rodolphe-Rousseau (president of the SNE), 15 June 1948, S19 C24 B2.
120 Letter from Jacques Rodolphe-Rousseau to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 22 May 1948, S19 C24 B2.
121 Gabriel Enkiri, *Hachette la Pieuvre: Témoignage d'un Militant* (Paris, Librairie La Commune, 1972), 42–3. The chant 'Meunier tu dors' (wake up miller) is taken from a French nursery rhyme.
122 She shows how the limited company that was set up to import the American picturebook series Little Golden Books into France was registered on 28 September 1949, and the books were in the shops by December of the same year, suggesting that they waited until the law had been passed. Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 109–112.
123 Biographical information for Tyler is taken from William R. Tyler, interview with Charles Stuart Kennedy, 17 November 1987, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Washington DC. See also Giles Scott-Smith, 'The US State Department's Foreign Leader Program in France during the Early Cold War', *Revue française d'études américaines,* 107 (2006), 47–60, especially 50.
124 Interview, 29. Frances Stonor Saunders also concluded that Tyler's official role was a cover in her study *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London, Granta Books, 1999), 308.
125 Interview, 20–2 and 26.
126 William R. Tyler, Paris Despatch to State Department, 23 November 1948, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
127 Background document prepared for State Department, 31 January 1949, National Archives and Records Administration, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
128 Projet gouvernmental, annotated by Opera Mundi, NARA RG 84, entry 2462, box 4.
129 Memo concerning proposed legislation limiting American comic strip material in French children's publications, American embassy, Public Affairs Office, c. November 1948, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
130 Mats were the plastic or cardboard trays used by some syndicates to distribute their comics strip plates for publication.
131 Colonel Félix was the resistance name of Jacques Chombart de Lauwe.
132 Tyler, Paris Despatch, 23 November 1948.
133 On Félix and Hachette, see the multiple references in Mollier, *Age d'Or*, especially 205 where he is identified as one of the 'Hachette deputies'.

134 Tyler, Paris Despatch, 23 November 1948.
135 Folder 'Proposition de loi tendant à limiter la surface réservée aux auteurs et dessinateurs étrangers dans les journaux pour enfants', annotated version of the *Journal Officiel*, 22 January 1949 and 27 January 1949, S19 C24 B2.
136 Background document prepared for State Department, 31 January 1949, National Archives and Records Administration, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
137 *Journal Officiel*, Assemblée Nationale, session 21 January 1949, 90–8.
138 *Journal Officiel*, Assemblée Nationale, session 21 January 1949, 93, this section is underscored in the Embassy copy on file; see also letter from Paul Winkler to William Tyler, 25 January 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
139 Copy included with letter sent to William Tyler, 2 February 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
140 Letter from Robert Meunier du Houssoy to J. Rodolphe-Rousseau, 15 June 1948.
141 Letter from Paul Winkler to William Tyler, 5 February 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
142 Transcript of verbal note delivered to Schumann by Bruce, 11 February 1949, in despatch to State Department 18 February 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
143 Letter from Paul Winkler to William Tyler, 5 April 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
144 Simone Téry, 'Ils veulent nous voler nos petits!' *L'Humanité*, 16 July 1949, 4.
145 Translation of the *Journal Officel* report, 8 July 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
146 Letter from Paul Winkler to Tyler, 26 July 1949, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
147 Note to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 9 March 1950, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
148 Letter from Paul Winkler to Jay Lovestone, 17 March 1950, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
149 Typescript of *Journal Officiel* report, 23 December 1950, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
150 See telegram from Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, to American Embassy, 31 January 1951, and Embassy response 1 February 1951, NARA, RG 59, Box 5951.
151 See correspondence in the Opera Mundi file in NARA, RG 59, Box 2388.
152 This was the so-called 'G.I. Ivan series', made up of interviews with Soviet defectors and Iron Curtain refugees; see the correspondence preserved in the Opera Mundi file in NARA Record Group 84, Box 46.
153 Cable from Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to American Embassy in Paris, 7 July 1953, NARA Record Group 59, Box 5951.
154 McKenzie, *Remaking France,* 220.

2

Taming the ape man

The Commission for Surveillance and Control finds its voice

The 1949 law on publications for children and the young criminalized 'illustrations, stories, reports, items or notes implying admiration for gangsterism, untruthfulness, robbery, indolence, cowardice, hatred, debauchery or any actions constituting crimes or offences of a kind likely to demoralize children'.[1] It also instituted a new regulatory body, the Commission charged with the Surveillance and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents (henceforth CSC or commission), which was to be 'responsible for proposing any steps likely to improve publications for children and adolescents' […] and for notifying 'the appropriate authorities of any violation of the present law, and of any action or infringement by the press likely to harm children or adolescents'.[2] These were huge, if not fantastical ambitions. The law had invented the new crime of demoralizing the young and expanded the criteria for harmful publications far beyond obscenity or pornography.[3] This was the first major piece of legislation produced by the global campaigns against comics, and the first attempt by a national government to regulate the vast and lucrative international publishing trade in comics and popular multi-media characters aimed at children. The eyes of many activists and governments across the world were therefore trained on the new French commission.[4]

Much was riding on its success, but it was not at all clear how the legislation would work, and there was little agreement over how it should be enforced.[5] Serious questions hung over the new commission: namely how interventionist in the publishing process it would seek to be; how strict it would be in its interpretations of the many new offences enumerated in article two; whether these offences could even be proved in court; whether it would seek to scrutinize all print publications aimed at children and young people, or just comics; and

whether it would prioritize its punitive or constructive roles. Moreover, in the Cold War context, the removal of the Communist-sponsored clause imposing quotas on foreign-origin content in children's publications meant that the CSC had to accept the premise that American comics would be allowed into the country. The focus would instead have to be on ensuring foreign imports were cleaned up and made to conform to French values. This raised questions about how powerful foreign rights holders could be made to comply with the 'special rules' of French publishing, and which local publishers would be targeted by the commission. In short, who would drive the agenda at the CSC, and therefore, what content and which publishers would they seek to surveil and control most energetically?

It would be the energetic men and women of the early years of the commission who grappled with these questions and who defined relations between industry and regulator. This chapter focuses on their struggles for predominance, as they interpreted and gave shape to the legislation, in particular through their first major intervention in the field against the global multi-media phenomenon Tarzan. It argues that the impact of the 1949 law was wider in scope than is accepted in current historiography. Scholarship on the law and its new commission has hitherto focused mainly on comics, and there has been a marked tendency to view it as a primarily French phenomenon.[6] However, the anti-comics movements of the mid-twentieth century took place on a global scale, and the publishing trade they were attacking was global in scope and with investments in multi-media characters and content across multiple media formats. Moreover, the new CSC retained important connections with the ongoing anti-comics and anti-American campaigns of the post-war and Cold War eras. It fused with and strengthened a pre-existing nexus of highly vocal child protection agencies and campaigners, many of whom hoped it would provide them with a powerful new platform for their arguments. For the PCF, whose deputies and newspapers had pushed for both the legislation and particularly for quotas on foreign content in publications for children, the commission offered a vital opportunity for its affiliated members on the CSC to argue transatlantic publishing posed a threat both to French children and cultural sovereignty (just as Hachette's agent and comics publisher Paul Winkler and operatives at the American Embassy had predicted back when the bill was being prepared in 1948).[7] Studying their interactions offers new insights into the successes and limitations of this pioneering attempt by the French to impose cultural sovereignty over the globalizing children's media industry, and ultimately how its implementation was complicated by the geo-political struggles of the Cold War.

The new Commission for Surveillance and Control

René Mayer, the Justice Minister, inaugurated the Commission for Surveillance and Control in March of 1950. His rousing speech to the assembled members set out the urgency of their work, stating that it was of the highest national importance. He reminded them that the task that lay ahead represented the culmination of the reform of the juvenile delinquency system and was the result of a collaboration between the highest authorities of the land.[8] France was in the grip of a serious youth crime wave, by youngsters widely held to have been traumatized, if not corrupted, by war, deprivation and the moral ambiguities of collaboration and Nazi occupation.[9] For this reason, the new commission was placed in the directorate of Supervised Education within the Ministry of Justice. The country was determined to save its young, and Mayer made it clear that cleaning up the children's publishing industry that was profiting from glamorizing crime and violence had to be central to these efforts. But their role, he explained, was not to censor; it was far more important than that. They must inspire children to have faith in national traditions and Republican ideals, and help publishers to understand their responsibility in this effort. The idea was to use post-publication surveillance to create a culture of self-censorship, for publishers to know that the committee was looking over their shoulder: 'their freedom has been preserved, but freedom entails responsibility, and it is on this principle of responsibility that the whole apparatus of this new law is constructed.'[10]

The serious nature of this responsibility to the French nation was reflected in the high-level inter-ministerial support that underpinned the new commission. Its meetings were attended by the director of Supervised Education; representatives from the Ministries of Justice; Interior; and Information, Education, Population and Public Health; and the Secretary of State for Technical Education, Youth and Sports. It also included deputies from the National Assembly's Press Commission, Education Commission and Commission for Population, Family and Public Health. The rest of the CSC's thirty members were drawn from the publishing industry, comics illustrators (mostly for Catholic and Communist publications), the teaching profession, and the wider education and youth protection sector, including religious leagues, youth movements, as well as, for symbolic reasons, a husband and wife. The membership reflected the multi-agency approach to child protection adopted by the government in the aftermath of the war. Many of the members had also been instrumental in driving through the legislation in the first place, and as such brought strong enthusiasm for the project, but

also the myriad motives and political agendas that had characterized the original campaign for the legislation.

Mayer's speech also highlighted the ambiguous and particularly delicate nature of the relationship between the commission's twin roles of surveillance and control. The commissioners had to coerce publishers into changing their ways, but without appearing to have recourse to censorship. The commission's work was designed to encourage self-censorship, for the state would only intervene after the product had been printed. As part of the legal deposit process, publishers were now required to submit five copies of publications destined for children to the Ministry of Justice. Those whose content was found to be in violation of the law would be sent a warning letter, and their output monitored for a period of one year, before any further action was taken. More serious offenders would also be asked to remove all copies of the publication from sale. The commission could only make recommendations to the Ministry of Justice, who would then decide whether to press charges. However, as Philippe Bauchard noted in a report for UNESCO, this created an important dilemma for the CSC. It could either judge publications harshly and inflict severe penalties (which was unlikely to happen, given the concerns about public opinion at the Ministry of Justice), or it could adopt a much more tolerant, constructive approach. The risk with the latter was that its own activities would be reduced (and its activist members were likely to resist this ferociously), and 'would mean that it would do little to improve the standard of children's newspapers'.[11] Given the conflicting motives amongst some of its most active members, the early years of the CSC were characterized by tensions between the factions who saw themselves as representing a constructive understanding of the problem, versus a punitive approach.[12]

The punitive faction was led by the CSC members who were affiliated with both the PCF, intent on breaking American commercial domination of the publishing industry, and also the Catholic campaigners, for whom the law was also the highpoint of their long-standing battle against Republican freedom of speech reforms. The Catholic and Communist commissioners came from remarkably similar backgrounds in youth movements and comics campaigns, and all had formed vital links with the two organizations' much wider campaigning and publishing networks in the children's sector. The main Catholic comics campaigning wing and youth group movement was represented on the commission by the priest Jean Pihan. Father Pihan had been part of the editorial team of *Cœurs Vaillants*, the interwar magazine for boys in the Cœurs Vaillants-Âmes Vaillantes youth movement. In the post-war period, he took over

the comics campaign, setting up a centre for research on child protection and an associated journal, *Educateurs*, in 1947.[13] He was joined on the commission by René Finkelstein, from the Catholic Union Patriotique des Organisations de Jeunesse [Patriotic Union of Youth Organisations]. Finkelstein also happened to be a shareholder in the parent publishing company of Pihan's *Educateurs* journal, which he would go on to direct when it became the publisher Editions Fleurus in 1952.[14] Representing the PCF was Madeleine Bellet, a former primary school teacher and editor of the Party's comic book for children, *Vaillant* (launched in 1945).[15] Alongside Bellet was the energetic and multi-talented Raoul Dubois, a teacher, leader in the Francs et Franches Camarades popular education movement and fervent activist for the PCF. Dubois was a major voice in the children's literary scene in France and an indefatigable reader of contemporary children's book production. He worked as a reviewer for several publications and was co-presenter of a radio programme on children's books with his wife Jacqueline.[16] Not only were many of the Communist and Catholic affiliated members of the CSC linked to the anti-comics movement, they were also key taste-makers in the children's sector, and several were magazine editors who wanted to promote their own publications. Now they were to work as the sector's regulators and censors. Their shared commitment to ensuring the commission took a more punitive approach, towards American comics in particular, further strengthened the sympathies between the Catholic and the Communist anti-comics movements that had characterized the campaign to bring about the legislation in the first place.

Initially however, it was the lawyers who held the upper hand on the CSC. The urgency of the issue of violent juvenile crime gave them greater say in determining the direction of the commission and shaping its interventions in publishing. The Department of Supervised Education, where the commission was placed, had just had its role significantly expanded as part of the liberation-era reforms to juvenile justice. Supervised Education was a central plank in the new system which asserted the 'complete penal irresponsibility' of children, and instead understood crime as the product of social circumstances.[17] Its role was to re-shape the main services for rehabilitating the young and protecting them from external criminal influences. However, as Jean-Jacques Yvorel observes, the new penal philosophy of the post-war era juvenile justice system was based around a fairly basic conceptualization of the social causes of juvenile delinquency, in which the blame was laid on broken homes, the trauma of war and the corrupting influences of cinema and comics.[18] The CSC was therefore one of the Department of Supervised Education's main positive actions to prevent juvenile delinquency,

and it was for this reason the justice minister presented the new children's press regulation as having a key role to play in the post-war juvenile justice reforms.

Jean-Louis Costa, the director of Supervised Education, was chief amongst the advocates for an interventionist, constructive approach on the CSC. A committed socialist, he was a passionate advocate for juvenile justice reform. During his training at the Toulouse school of law in the mid-1920s, Costa had been 'traumatized' by the appalling conditions he had witnessed in a visit to a children's detention centre at Eysses (which was soon to become notorious following the tragic death of one of its inmates).[19] Following a spell as a lawyer in the court of audit [*cour des comptes*], he became involved in the resistance during the war, which further shaped his commitment to reform. Costa was the first director of the new Supervised Education department in 1945, and he devoted all of his energies to transforming juvenile detention centres on a very modest budget. He was very much a man of the liberation era, and he brought this same dynamic spirit to the new commission. His emphasis was on action. This sense of urgency was shared by his fellow lawyers on the commission, in particular Robert Chadefaux of the Children's Court, and colleagues from the major ministries with responsibility for youth crime. Under their aegis, the supposedly quarterly meetings of the commission were made more frequent, with the commission convening monthly in its first year of existence, apart from a summer recess.[20] Their approach was aimed at encouraging publishers to modify their content and at targeting as many harmful publications as possible. As Costa explained in the first session, the legislator had deliberately written the law to be broad in scope to ensure that they would not be prevented from protecting children by rigid criteria.[21] They issued as many warnings as possible, of the highest level, which meant publishers also had to meet with Costa to discuss how to improve the content. They hoped in this way to force the industry to engage in dialogue about their publications.[22]

The first major document the CSC produced set out to define the law and the new offences it contained, because there was no jurisprudence. This took the form of guidelines for publishers on how to improve their content, and help them understand their responsibilities to the education of the nation's young – in other words what kind of charges they could expect to face in court, and how to avoid them. While not quite a legal doctrine, it would summarize the observations and principal conclusions drawn from the work the commission had carried out thus far with publishers.[23] The guidelines were drafted in late 1950 by Alfred Potier, Costa's colleague at Supervised Education and Judge at the Central Administration of the Ministry of Justice, who drew extensively upon

material prepared by one of the publishers on the commission, Jean Chapelle.[24] The document was prepared for distribution in France and abroad to ensure it reached all relevant publishers.[25] The discussions in the session for signing off the guidelines reveal the extent to which opinions diverged on how to present the work of the commission and its overall aims.

Somewhat paradoxically – given that in many ways the guidelines reflected the arguments on the pernicious influence of comics on children that had been put forward ceaselessly by the Catholic and Communist campaigns – the commission members from these groups seemed reticent about issuing directive guidance on content. There seemed to be a distinction in their minds between campaigning and actually setting out highly normative restrictions on comics producers, probably because a number of the Catholic and Communist commissioners were also involved in publishing. Father Pihan, for example, called for the guidelines to avoid being overly restrictive.[26] His view was they ought to ensure the mores of the Church were respected, but otherwise grant illustrators, writers and their publishers a respectable amount of artistic freedom. A similar concern was echoed later by André Basdevant from Technical Education, Youth and Sports, who worried the commission risked 'intellectual dirigisme' by issuing guidelines on aspects such as characterization and psychology. Raoul Dubois, seconded by the representatives of the comics illustrators' trade union, put forward the Communist party line, which was that the problem was foreign publishers and publications, and so the document ought to focus on them. Basdevant agreed, suggesting they should produce a guide for publishers and illustrators on how to adapt foreign productions to make them conform to French values. Meanwhile the Catholic René Finkelstein suggested that Supervised Education might commission a more in-depth scientific study of how images influenced children. Costa's dismissive response was revelatory of the mindset driving the document. He responded that a similar study was being produced on the impact of cinema on the young. But such research was long and difficult, and expensive. Waiting for such reports would waste precious time when positive action was needed, and besides, it was easy for all to see that children imitated their favourite comics heroes in their games.[27] In the debates that had produced the legislation the mimetic function of children's reading was assumed by many. Notably a study produced by the then Ministry of Youth and Sport in 1948 had found that 88 per cent of juvenile delinquents were also fans of comics.[28] In the context of fears of a war-traumatized generation and rising juvenile crime rates, this sharpened their sense of wanting to act, rather than think, on how and why to bring about change within the publishing industry. The dominant faction in

the CSC therefore placed emphasis on action, and the lawyers such as Costa felt they possessed all the information they needed to make such pronouncements.

The guidelines for publishers that made it into print were therefore ambitious and highly interventionist.[29] They set the parameters not just of what was unacceptable but also what was desirable in publications aimed at children, and included extensive guidance on improving the literary, psychological and aesthetic aspects of such content. The first section focused on defining how the contemporary children's press was committing the crime of 'demoralizing the young'. The concern was that adult tastes and trends were being adopted by certain children's comics. These publications were using the tropes of 'noir' pulp fiction, the guidelines explained, thereby presenting children with a profoundly pessimistic vision of the world. They were teaching the young that human existence was composed of crimes, extreme peril, and abominable wrongdoings. There were two ways in which such material could 'demoralize' the child reader.[30] Demoralization would occur if the child reader became distraught at the thought of the future that lay ahead; this, the document explained, was the classic form of demoralization envisioned by the legislator when writing article two of the 1949 law. Alternatively, the second form of demoralization came from the child accepting such a vision, and wanting to 'enter the game', and therefore imitate criminal behaviours. The second key term they defined was how such content could 'imply admiration for' the vices listed in article two. The guidelines were at pains to stress that the eventual triumph of good over evil could not be used as a way of getting around the law. Representing violence would still be considered as implying admiration for such actions, even if the wrongdoers were eventually punished.

What followed was a map for how to contain children's reading and the representations of behaviour available to them within a framework of French Republican values. The long list of positive recommendations indicated how the dominant faction on the commission aimed to lead its constructive dialogue with publishers. They covered plot construction, which included advice on avoiding excessively implausible plots, remaining logical and remembering to include scenes of honest and joyful labour. The guidance on characterization stressed the need to develop psychological depth and to include 'good honest people' in their stories, including representations of family members and work colleagues. Meanwhile the heroes had to clean up their act and draw prestige from intelligence as much as from strength; they should pursue villains out of a devotion to doing good. They paid attention to form as well, including considerations of the effect the visuals and overall design could have on a

vulnerable young reader. Notably, publishers were advised to be alert to the impact of a page covered in drawings rendered in tormented and tense lines in violent colours. There was, seemingly, a literary aesthetic that they wished comics to adhere to, and in their minds, it was committed to social and scientific realism and educational priorities, and was rooted in the values of the Republic. This was an aesthetic vision based upon an assumption that representation of violence and crime, and particularly in visual format, had a direct influence on the child reader. It was also clear that on the CSC at this point, many of the most influential industry professionals, publishers and critics did not have the upper hand, and, somewhat paradoxically, did not play a decisive role in defining the parameters of what was acceptable and appropriate content in children's print culture.

The question was then how to force publishers to comply with the guidelines and modify their content to such an extent. Initially, as noted above, the preferred strategy was to issue as many warnings as possible, including a large number of the highest level of warning. These warnings relied on the threat of court proceedings. However, in its first year of existence the commission had avoided requesting the Ministry of Justice to instigate proceedings against publishers. Bauchard surmised that 'it is probable that the judges would not have dared, immediately the law introduced, to inflict very severe penalties, which would merely have alienated a public opinion still attached to the principle of freedom of the press'.[31] Moreover, the legislation stipulated that the commission's activity must be carried out in the strictest of confidence, and as a result the details of its regular meetings were kept secret. Such reliance on warnings and secrecy were problematic. With the anti-comics campaigns having gone quiet after the passing of the legislation, and the new commission members required to keep their activities secret, the risk was that public opinion would assume that nothing was being done and that the law had turned out to be toothless. If the commission did not take any publishers to court, then its power to intimidate the industry into complying with its demands might be diminished. These looming questions were tested the following year by the Tarzan affair.

The Tarzan affair

The Tarzan affair lasted several years and ended with the eventual removal of all print publications for children and teenagers featuring the ape man from French shelves by the mid-1950s. It was the result of the commission's first major stand-off

with a publisher that refused to cooperate with them.[32] This was the first test of the CSC's powers, and it demonstrated the complex nature of the commission's task. In the struggle to make Tarzan conform to French values, the CSC was faced with challenging several large and powerful publishers, including media companies overseas. It also revealed the Cold War tensions simmering within the CSC, as the Communist Party members on the commission managed to drive the Tarzan affair, seeking to push the commission's work in an anti-American direction and target powerful transatlantic publishers.

Very quickly during its first sessions in 1950, Communist CSC member Raoul Dubois identified Tarzan as one of the most serious threats to French children. The *Tarzan* comic book was the most visible and popular title in the post-war era. While Hachette and Opera Mundi's *Journal de Mickey* was still absent, their rival Del Duca's publication *Tarzan* moved to become one of the most popular comics in France at the time, with a circulation of around 300,000 copies per week in the early 1950s (by way of comparison, *Tintin*'s weekly sales were around 76,000).[33] Moreover, the King of the Jungle derived much of his popularity from the Hollywood films, and was a multi-media success, to be found in comics, comic book albums and novels. All the comics were distributed by Hachette's vast Messageries press distribution network, and Hachette also produced Tarzan albums derived from the comics as well as adapted versions of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan novels for the young. Criticizing Tarzan led the commission and its affiliated campaign groups into a battle that ended up encompassing all publications covered in article one, and more besides. And it drew them into conflict with both Del Duca and Hachette, two of the major publishing interests who were profiting from the 'dangerous' comics industry. This was precisely what the PCF and Dubois wanted.

The publisher Del Duca complained in his public response to the commission that Tarzan the character had been chosen 'with simplistic malevolence' to be the symbol of everything they detested.[34] Throughout the campaigns leading up to the 1949 law, Tarzan had been cited in parliament, bracketed with Mickey Mouse and Zorro as one of the characters who posed the worst dangers to children.[35] For a society emerging from war and Nazi occupation, Tarzan was the favoured target for those concerned about representing violence to children. In 1944, an article in the Catholic *Cahiers du Livre* worried that he was 'more beast than man', and that his was a universe in which human life was cheap and brute force was celebrated.[36] Moreover, his superhuman strength, and that of other superheroes, was alarming on several levels. The writer for the *Cahiers du Livre* hated the total disconnect with normal, recognizable reality. This was both a

moral problem, because of the lack of representation of 'healthy' family life, and an educational one, because of the disregard for biological facts in depicting an ape man with superhuman strength.[37] Another bugbear for the Catholic critics was the lingering emphasis in the comics and films on Tarzan's muscular, semi-naked form, along with the inclusion of many curvaceous female characters in provocative attitudes. Similar arguments were made by Communist critics, but they also added the accusation of fascism to the charge sheet against Tarzan. This accusation was first made in the 1930s, when the Communist children's magazine editor and anti-comics campaigner Georges Sadoul had accused Del Duca (amongst others) of being a fascist.[38] They returned to this idea after the war. For example, a piece in the PCF daily *L'Humanité* about the dangers of American 'Hitlerite' comics argued the Ape Man and his fellow superheroes were products of American 'atomic capitalism's' embrace of the Nietzschean Übermensch.[39] As an exile from Mussolini's regime and decorated resistance fighter, the continuation of this slander may in part explain Del Duca's snarling response to the CSC.[40]

Raoul Dubois led the CSC's move against the *Tarzan* comic. In 1950 the commission's first public report and guidelines officially sanctioned the comic, echoing but also giving further institutional gravitas to the earlier campaigners' arguments.[41] The guidelines complained that the character's solution to everything was mindless violence. Tarzan's tiny head compared to his vast body summed up the triumph of physical prowess over intellectual endeavour, and the commission branded his kind of superhero a 'microcephalic Hercules'.[42] It concluded that this was no example to give the young boys of France. At the end of April 1950, on the recommendation of Dubois, the CSC issued a written warning to Del Duca, citing the comic's constant reliance on violence, its apology for brute force and its regular expression of sentiments or ideas that were dangerous to children.[43] *Tarzan* was subject to the strongest level of warning. Del Duca was required to meet with the commission to discuss how to modify the comic's content and to remove all unsold copies of the publication from sale.

Henceforth the affair would play out in two arenas: in the secret and tense negotiations led by the CSC with the publishers and rights-holders of *Tarzan*, and very publicly in the pages of the press. Del Duca made it clear that he would not be intimidated by the commission's threats. He published an open letter in the comic book, in which he complained that *Tarzan* was being scapegoated, and he cast scorn on the suggestion that the character could be held responsible for youth crime in France.[44] He concluded by arguing that *Tarzan*'s critics should back down, for there was now an official commission, and it had not issued any

sanction against the comic. Although this was a blatant lie, the commission was sworn to secrecy, and could not dispute the publisher's claims. But Del Duca met his match in the multiple networks of influence that were linked up by the CSC, and which now mobilized against him. The press was free to discuss the case of *Tarzan*, because Del Duca had (albeit obliquely) made the affair public. Commission member Father Jean Pihan swiftly published a riposte to Del Duca's claims, which he reprinted and responded to point by point. The priest campaigner scrupulously avoided breaking the secrecy of the commission with any mention of the warning. Instead, he wrote that fathers and teachers all knew that Tarzan, whether in comic, book or film format, represented a danger to their children, and they had no need of the commission to tell them this.[45] In the same month of April 1950, the Ministry of Education's official publication *L'Education Nationale* warned teachers to be suspicious of the savagery of Tarzan, using very similar language to the commission's report.[46]

Del Duca was summoned to the Ministry of Justice, to discuss the CSC's recommendations with Jean-Louis Costa.[47] Costa asked the publisher to remove certain violent episodes. Del Duca replied that his company's contract with the American rights-owner did not permit this, so the French Ministry of Justice contacted United Press Associations (UPA) and entered into negotiations with its Vice-President. The American Embassy's earlier prediction that the PCF would try to use the commission as a way to exert control over the children's publishing industry was not far off the mark, as Dubois' recommendations were now transmitted across the Atlantic to one of the largest news agencies in the United States.[48] UPA immediately contacted the Department of State to ask the American government to intervene to protect *Tarzan*. The news agency was worried that the French were about to ban the comic strip. It seemed to feel (or had perhaps been briefed by Del Duca) that this was an aggressive action taken by his competitors in children's publishing on the CSC to undermine their much more successful multi-media rival: 'UPA believes action part competitors underground action [*sic*] against US feature among most popular in France not only in magazines but books and movies.'[49] The ambassador reassured UPA that the 1949 law would not authorize a ban, but would only make it possible to refer the matter to the courts.[50] UPA and Del Duca agreed to at least some of the changes, and the comic then appeared in French translation with modifications, mostly to voluptuous female forms which were covered up.[51] However, the violent nature of the comic was preserved, as was the overall celebration of Tarzan's physical strength (although the extent to which it would it have been possible to do otherwise is debatable).

The question at this juncture was whether the Ministry of Justice was prepared to take the matter any further. Inevitably Dubois, supported by the Catholic campaigner and publisher René Finkelstein, argued fervently for the CSC to continue to push for charges to be brought against *Tarzan*. They wanted an example to be made of the comic. However, the commission decided for the moment that because only one comic strip in the whole *Tarzan* comic book could be considered truly problematic, while the rest of the publication was acceptable, it could not be tried under the 1949 law.[52] Nevertheless, the evidence from the American Embassy in this early episode in the lengthy story of Tarzan in Cold War France reveals that not only was the French Ministry of Justice prepared to place pressure on the American publishers to ensure its new rules were adhered to but it also meant that the American Department of State was now following the affair.

For the members of the CSC who wanted to see it taking more punitive action against the comics industry, what followed was to prove an object lesson in how the commission's threats could only work as part of a two-pronged attack. When they failed to achieve their goals using the tools of intimidation and warnings, they then exerted further pressure on publishers via the morality leagues, campaign organizations and the press. The PCF's frustration had been growing since its quota clause had been removed from the 1949 law, and the failure of subsequent attempts for it to be restored.[53] In the summer of 1949, the PCF founded the Comité de Défense de la Littérature et de la Presse pour la Jeunesse [Committee for the Defence of Children's Literature and Magazines].[54] It organized exhibitions designed to raise awareness about dangerous children's books and the press, and promoted the regular sales of Communist books. Although this Communist organization only lasted for three years, it nevertheless managed to lead some important attacks on *Tarzan* after the Ministry of Justice refused to pursue the matter further. This was no accident. The PCF's campaign enjoyed close links with the CSC, as two of its members, Madeleine Bellet and Raoul Dubois, were also amongst the 1949 law commission's most active members.[55] They were seconded in their awareness-raising work by the Communist press. Foremost was the new magazine for schoolteachers and educators, *L'Ecole et la Nation* [School and Nation] launched in 1951, and whose new children's literature critic Paulette Charbonnel, formerly a PCF deputy, had been prominent in the campaign for and writing of the 1949 law. The American Embassy observed that this particular publication was evidently considered crucial for party propaganda by the PCF, given the amount of money that was invested in it.[56] Catholic campaigners also applied similar methods, and this

ensured that publishers were attacked from both ends of the political spectrum. For, as Father Pihan explained to his campaigners, the CSC was only one element in the struggle against comics and 'bad books' generally. He noted the excellent work being carried out by what he called 'private commissions', under the organizations of Catholic child protection and morality leagues.[57] Their role was to raise awareness of the issues amongst the general public, and specific groups such as parents and teachers.[58] The role of reviewers in publications such as *Livres et Lectures* was equally important. Pihan claimed that a critical review in one of these publications was feared by publishers in the same way that film producers feared a condemnation from the Centrale Catholique du Cinéma.[59]

The vital role of grassroots campaigners and the press in keeping public opinion firmly on side was the first indicator of a shift in the power balance on the commission towards Catholic and Communist members. Although its activities were secret, the commission produced regular reports, guidelines and recommendations, but they were hardly documents with which to rally the troops or whip up public indignation. This was where the anti-comics campaign mechanisms became important. As soon as the first annual report of the CSC was published on 14 April 1951, Father Pihan followed this up with an article in his journal *Educateurs*, explaining just how the law was making a difference.[60] His tone was upbeat. He emphasized that the noise of the original campaign around the law had succeeded in making publishers more careful about what they printed. But, he continued, public awareness campaigns were key to achieving the commission's objectives. For this reason, he reassured the grassroots activists that their work was vital to the commission, because they could not see what was happening behind its closed doors. The connections between the commission and the critics and campaigners were to be essential; they became the unofficial 'voices' of the commission. This was crucial given the serious limits of the legislation that were becoming all too apparent in the *Tarzan* case.

The case then appeared to come to an abrupt close when Del Duca reluctantly withdrew the *Tarzan* comic from circulation in May 1952. The immediate cause was the government's press commission, which, having seen the CSC's reports, withdrew the comic's licence, with serious financial consequences for the publication.[61] Campaigners felt the unrelenting attacks in the press played their part as well. Paulette Charbonnel later claimed that the Communist Committee for the Defence of Children's Literature and Magazines had in no small measure helped to hasten the comic's demise.[62] In spite of having to withdraw *Tarzan* from circulation, Del Duca was not a man to accept defeat easily. Over the course of

the years 1952 and 1953, he became embroiled in a protracted battle behind the scenes to return *Tarzan* to print.[63] At the same time as the commission appeared to have achieved its goal, the specialist press and campaign groups launched an even more aggressive series of attacks against *Tarzan*, no doubt explained to a certain extent by a sense that the CSC had exposed its weaknesses, and by concerns that the makers of *Tarzan* had got off very lightly.

But there was more to it than this. The Tarzan affair was never just about *Tarzan* the comic, it was about the character and all he represented. This was in large part why during 1952–3, the critics escalated their public campaign against him. The campaign in the press against Tarzan the multi-media character by Communist and Catholic critics and press targeted all the publishers who profited from Tarzan, and notably Hachette as the largest publisher of all. Tarzan featured in films, comics, albums and novels – formats aimed at different audiences certainly, but many of them accessible to the young, if not directly aimed at them. It was no use to simply focus on comics alone, when children could easily go and see his films, or buy Tarzan albums. Hachette's children's section had been publishing Tarzan books since 1936, with its Albums Tarzan series, adapted from the comics. In 1948 it had launched the Collection Tarzan series, which reworked Edgar Rice Burrough's novels for a teenage audience. In March 1952, just a few months before the *Tarzan* comic was withdrawn, Communist Renée Michel alerted her readership to Hachette's Tarzan novels, noting that the brutal racism came across even more clearly in the book format, with bloodthirsty plots in which life was cheap; 'this is clearly fascist'.[64] Worse still, she wrote, the vast might of the Hachette Messageries was aiding and abetting the American imperialist cause by selling these novels and picturebooks in railway stations, newspaper vendors, stationers and other bookshops up and down the country.[65] Pierre Gamarra, writing a few months later in *L'Ecole et la Nation*, accused Hachette of aiding the cause of American imperialism 'since before the war it has inundated us with Tarzan and other Mickeys'.[66] The Communists' Cold War message about the dangers of greedy, powerful transatlantic publishers was energetically echoed by Catholic campaigners, which lent it further weight. The tireless Catholic comics campaigner Gabriel Soumille used strikingly similar language in *Educateurs*. He dismissed Tarzan as a typically American imperialist, 'a dime store hero', and urged his readers to remember 'muscles don't make morals'. He pointed out that Hachette's Messageries had sold ten million copies of the *Tarzan* comic in 1948 alone, and this figure must be assumed to be much larger, as it did not include Hachette's own Tarzan albums and novels.[67] The coalition was a highly effective one. For Hachette, the involvement of Catholic

campaigners and their awareness-raising work was particularly concerning. The Catholic press was an important part of Hachette's publicity and support. These very public accusations coming from both ends of the political spectrum, and in the press for teachers, all portraying Hachette as profiting from material explicitly designated as harmful to children, could inflict serious reputational damage on a publisher which specialized in education and children's books.

The campaigns appear to have had some effects. Although Del Duca succeeded briefly in resurrecting the *Tarzan* comic in March 1953, he then withdrew it permanently from the shelves in October of the same year.[68] This was by no means a clear victory for the commission. The comic's sales never revived properly as Del Duca had already launched a rival title *Hurrah!* in the meantime, and the *Journal de Mickey* was also back in business.[69] Nevertheless, at almost exactly the same time as Del Duca retired the king of the jungle, Hachette, the second major target in the educational and specialist press campaigns, also decided to stop publishing Tarzan. Both Hachette's album and novel series were discreetly stopped in early 1953, and Tarzan content in any format would not appear again in Hachette's catalogue until 1993.[70] The Hachette archive contains a manuscript for the Tarzan novel series, translated, corrected and ready to be signed off in February 1953, but which never made it into print. Given that the copyright declaration for the last Tarzan album was made in January 1953, this suggests the decision to halt production on both Tarzan series was taken in early 1953, and was relatively sudden.[71] It seems too much of a coincidence that both Hachette and Del Duca stopped publishing their main Tarzan products within months of each other, in the wake of ferocious attacks on them in the press. The two publishers were certainly in communication, for Del Duca took over Hachette's Albums Tarzan series, and continued publishing it until 1956. The results of the Tarzan Affair were mixed at best, but they reveal that the issue of reputational damage was important enough for Hachette to modify its publications strategy, even though the CSC had issued the publisher no warning.

1952–3: A turning point for the commission

The Tarzan affair marked a turning point for the CSC. Tarzan may have been conquered, but it was by no means the decisive victory the commission needed. As Bauchard noted in his report for UNESCO, the hesitancy of the public authorities and CSC had been exposed.[72] He suggested that while the comic had now disappeared, 'it is almost a pity that proceedings were not taken before

the eclipse of the paper, for the French law has served hitherto more to warn off offenders than to repress offences'.[73] Moreover, there were increasing signs that government ardour seemed to be cooling. The *Journal de Mickey* finally returned with a new issue in June 1952, while Cino Del Duca received the Légion d'Honneur for services to the French nation in 1953. During the years 1952–3 the CSC developed a new approach to dealing with problematic publishers and content. Perhaps more importantly for the children's publishing industry, these years also marked a turning point for the activist members and their affiliated campaign groups on the CSC. They did not want to lose this platform but were worried the CSC had been weakened.

The first court proceedings against a publisher for infringement of the 1949 law were brought in 1954 against serial recidivist Pierre Mouchot, who signed his works as Chott. Mouchot was a popular but rather small publisher and comics artist based in Lyon, specializing in violent, American-inspired crime comics.[74] The legal wrangles between court decisions and Mouchot's regular successful appeals meant the case dragged on over the course of seven years (1954–61).[75] The problem hinged on the phrasing 'implying admiration for' [présenter sous un jour favorable] in article two of the legislation, which proved to be particularly open to interpretation. According to the case put forward by the CSC, in line with its recommendations to publishers, a violent gangster story could not be redeemed by a happy ending where the wrongdoers were punished by a superhero crimefighter. The court disagreed with this argument and acquitted Mouchot in 1955. Several subsequent appeals and judgements followed. In the end, the case was resolved when Mouchot went bankrupt.[76] He was the only publisher against whom charges were pressed under article two of the 1949 law. The commission issued more low-level warnings, hoping that publishers would comply more readily now that they were faced with the spectacle of their colleague being dragged through the courts. However, it soon emerged that taking a publisher to court only served to prove, very publicly, what had always been suspected, namely that the legislation was not justiciable. Moreover, the decision to pursue Mouchot did little to satisfy the activist members on the CSC and their wider networks of comics campaigners. Mouchot was small fry when compared to the major publishers Hachette and Del Duca, and none of his publications had the international media presence of Tarzan.

This disquiet was reflected in a series of reports published in 1953, in which leading voices in the anti-comics movement and child protection discussed the legislation. Philippe Bauchard's report for UNESCO was the highest profile of these publications.[77] Bauchard was a journalist, media researcher and committed

man of the left.[78] The thrust of his argument was that the French law, while by no means perfect, had to be the leader for the rest of the world to follow. In this context, his stark points about the exposure of the limitations of the commission in the Tarzan affair cited above were no doubt addressed to its members and the wider community of anti-comics activists in France, just as much his report was about offering the French experiences to campaigners in other countries. It was a pointed reminder to the French that their work was part of a bigger picture, and that they had a responsibility not just to French youth but to their fellow campaigners across the globe. The second report was published in the November–December 1953 issue of *Enfance*.[79] It was produced through the collaboration of many members of the CSC (Communists and Catholics including Dubois, Bellet and Finkelstein, plus the Judge Chazal), the vice-president of the Communist Committee for the Defence of Children's Literature and Magazines that had been instrumental in the Tarzan affair, and numerous experts in the fields of children's literature, education, child protection and psychology. *Enfance* was a child psychology journal founded and directed by Henri Wallon, the former PCF deputy, famed co-author of the Langevin-Wallon education reform programme and a pioneering child psychologist in France.[80] This publication was written by and addressed to the French grassroots movements and agencies. It was highly critical of the 1949 law; Paulette Charbonnel called its impact thus far 'derisory' and wrote scornfully of how the only change to comics discernible was 'the pin-up girls are now wearing a bit more clothing'.[81] The overall argument was loud and clear: the problem of the children's illustrated press was that of the impossibility of encouraging globalizing American capitalist businesses to act responsibly. It therefore came to similar conclusions to the Bauchard report on the importance of tackling what Madeleine Bellet called 'an international problem'.[82]

The need for a correspondingly international response had already been highlighted by UNESCO's General Conference in 1950, when its Fifth Session adopted a resolution authorizing the director-general 'to collect and disseminate information on the methods used or contemplated in various countries to protect children from the undesirable influence which may be exerted by the press, the radio and the film, and especially to improve children's newspapers and literature'.[83] In March 1952 UNESCO organized a major international conference on the subject of children's media, involving delegates from twenty-two countries. Taking place at the very height of the Tarzan press campaigns (just a few months before Del Duca withdrew the comic), it offered the French commission another important platform for publicizing its work and

demonstrating its importance. The question of censorship, or at least 'control' of such media, dominated discussions, and Judge Alfred Potier from Supervised Education delivered a keynote speech on the French legislation and guidelines for publishers. The congress adopted a resolution underlining the urgent necessity of international cooperation on the issue.[84] The Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance also held a series of conferences on children's media in this period. In the latter part of the 1950s and early 1960s the CSC would pursue several projects to promote international cooperation, first by contributing to the various congresses on the issue held by UNESCO in this period and then by pushing for the construction of a group of European publishers from the six signatory countries of the Treaty of Rome. The result was Europress in 1960, which later became Europress Junior. Several of the key roles were led by men involved in the CSC, notably the publisher Jean Chapelle. They established a label for indicating publications by members that adhered to their moral code, which was drawn up by Pierre Morelli (who was none other than the secretary of the French commission).[85] The actual efficacy of this work seems doubtful, however, for Europress Junior has left few traces.[86] Nevertheless, the moves to recognize an international response to globalizing children's media proved particularly useful for the Communist members on the CSC, who had always placed the emphasis on the comics problem as being international.

The most active Communist-affiliated members of the commission, Madeleine Bellet and Raoul Dubois, were also the most abrasive in their assessment of the 1949 law and the CSC. They were openly critical of the legislation in the pages of the 1953 *Enfance* report. They had of course been critical of the legislation ever since the official removal of the quota clause in July 1949. Dubois re-stated this, arguing that without the clause the legislation was doomed to failure, and always had been.[87] The *Enfance* report reminded its readers of the lengths the transatlantic industry would go to in order to protect its interests. The appendices in *Enfance* reprinted the Communist deputies' letter of protest to the National Assembly after the law was passed without the quota clause, as well as the various attempts by the Communist and Socialist groups in parliament to reinstate it.[88] Now it was also a question of reflecting on the problems with the CSC. To regulate an internationally powerful industry, Madeleine Bellet explained, required outlawing the business practices that sustained it.[89] Bellet noted that only the USSR and Communist China had managed to prevent the spread of comics. This was, she argued, because the West's emphasis on 'freedom' had in fact enabled the 'reign of the international trusts', where large businesses 'extend[ed] their tentacles across the globe', suffocating the small local producers who could

produce educational material following national traditions, for the children 'future artisans of our country'.[90] By presenting the problem as international, she simultaneously pointed to the global struggle of Communism against capitalism, and to the PCF as the only force capable of protecting French national values. Bellet stressed the idea that the distribution system was weighted in favour of American content, as 'le Trust Hachette' helped those magazines with members on the board of the Messageries 'just like they have friends in the Ministries, and even in the Embassies'.[91]

The Communist press and affiliated campaigners intensified their attacks on 'le trust Hachette' and other similarly large transatlantic publishers. During the build-up to the 1949 law, the campaigns had focused almost exclusively on Opera Mundi, the cover company handling Hachette's comics publishing.[92] However, as seen above, from 1952 onwards Hachette was criticized in the Communist and affiliated press for being the main French publisher of Tarzan books, distributor of comics, and, crucially, publisher of Disney in all formats. Hachette's entire children's publishing business model was under fire. As the Marshall Plan programme of economic assistance came to an end in mid-1952, the positive effects of its investments in the book trade, and the expansion of American publishers on an international scale more generally, were becoming clear. The Communist writer for children Renée Michel worried there was an 'American Marshall Plan of ideas' in children's literature, noting that 'it is hardly coincidental if the latest surge in American publishing destined for the young has arrived at exactly the same time as the general American offensive against our cultural production as a whole'.[93]

The PCF's concerns were exacerbated by the fact that in the early 1950s the children's publishing field was undergoing a boom, driven in large part by American imports. Renée Michel was referring to the vast expansion of American content in children's picturebook publishing, with the launch of the Petits Livres d'Or series [French translations of the Little Golden Books], and the imitators it spawned, notably Hachette's Albums Roses, which used Disney content for its picturebooks.[94] As the runaway success of these American-origin book series became clear, Communist critics and campaigners turned their attention to this format and regretted their failure to pick up on the problem earlier. Pierre Gamarra wrote of how the Marshall Plan served to further accentuate the colonization of French children's books that had begun in earnest in the 1930s.[95] He lamented: 'we did not respond quickly enough […] Since then, translations from the Americans have multiplied, while sales of French-made picturebooks have suffered.' His conclusion was clear: 'these picturebooks

are weapons of propaganda designed to win over children by destroying all forms of our national culture, and from a very early age.' Likewise, Renée Michel castigated the 'vulgarity' of Hachette's Disney books. French culture, she wrote, was being trampled underfoot by this new invasion, and she argued that Disney was exploiting and destroying classic French tales by Perrault and La Fontaine, before selling them back to the French in degraded picturebook format via Hachette's Albums roses.[96]

Ultimately, the Communist activists and critics knew only too well that the political economy of this cultural production was weighted against them. For this reason, the CSC, campaigning groups, and the general and specialist press remained important ways for the PCF to try to counter-balance the power relations structuring the publishing ecosystem. It is important to remember that they were deeply invested in the 1949 law and its commission even when they were criticizing them. The case of *Tarzan*, where negotiations had involved rights-holders based in America, had, as noted above, given Raoul Dubois the opportunity to tackle this 'international problem' directly at its source, by going straight to the most powerful agencies of American cultural production. Moreover, as the Hachette archives and State Department records attest, each time they brought their case for the quota clause back to the National Assembly, the Communist deputies caused consternation amongst their targets.[97] As late as 1956, an attempt to revive the clause was still taken seriously by Hachette and the French publishers' union.[98] And of course, the Tarzan affair had represented a small, but nonetheless important success for the Communist activists, as they had succeeded in riling their great enemy Hachette. Henri Wallon's prefatory remarks to the *Enfance* report crystallized the major lesson learned by 1953. He noted that there was little appetite for censorship, and the CSC was really aimed at advising publishers, and so in these circumstances: 'we must not overlook direct action on public opinion.'[99]

Conclusion

The CSC regulatory body was initially dominated by the government ministries leading on it and the lawyers. They accepted the premise of the neutered regulation shorn of the quota clause, in which foreign-origin content was deemed problematic, but not the sole issue. They focused on a 'constructivist' approach that pushed for the publishing industry to think on its responsibilities and transform content for children. But the Cold War was raging, and the

Communist members of the CSC – and many others – were not going to let the Americans 'get away with it'. These activist members pushed for interventions against the large publishers who were dominating the market.

As this chapter has shown, the reach of the law and its commission had definite limits. But it is also clear that the CSC afforded French anti-comics campaigners substantial influence over the publishing industry. When Del Duca protested against being effectively forced by the state to stop publishing *Tarzan*, he noted that this meant children across the world could read Tarzan, even in the USSR, but not in France. The CSC offered an important opportunity to these non-state actors to exert influence and fight for audiences they considered to be strategic to their goals and to inflict reputational damage on international publishers. It was their place on the CSC, linking its work to much wider networks of activists, that ensured it could be effective. With the terms of the CSC framed around the politically potent questions of child protection and national interest, and the Communist CSC members and activists backed up by the Catholic child protection lobby, the threat they collectively posed to publishers' reputations and business was very real. The impact of the 1949 legislation is often presented as the product of post-war consensus.[100] This chapter has shown that this consensus was always fragile and did not hold for long. It is perhaps better understood as a key battle in the long-running cultural Cold War in children's media, aiming to undermine transatlantic publishing's massive commercial might. They eventually reached a hostile truce as businesses, campaigners and the commission found it most profitable, or preferable, to compromise.

The CSC and its attempts to regulate publishing may have been a very French attempt to protect its cultural sovereignty, but it was also part of a global movement reacting against American comics and mass culture, symbolized by Disney. Hachette's publishing operations were a channel for the influx of American multi-media content into French children's hands, and this was clearly in the sights of the CSC campaigners who understood this was an 'international problem'. The next chapter looks at this question of the 'Marshall Plan of children's literature', and also how, thanks to the global nature of the anti-comics campaigns, this was also an 'international problem' for Disney. The question of how this played out will be the focus of the next chapter.

Notes

1 Law No. 49,596 of 16 July 1949 on Publications for Young People, Article 2, English translation in Bauchard, *The Child Audience,* Appendix 2, 178–81.

2 *Ibid*., Article 3.
3 Jean Pihan, 'La Commission Travaille', *Educateurs*, September–October, 1951, 466–72, see 467–8; Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 130.
4 Notably, the juridical section of the International Congress on the Press, Radio and Cinema for Children held in Milan, March 1952, put forward a motion 'wishing to draw attention to the application of the law now in force in France', and expressing the urgent need for 'legislative, juridical and administrative coordination on the international level' to tackle the problem of regulating the global children's media industry. Reproduced in Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 192–3. See also Bauchard's survey of legislation in chapter four of *The Child Audience* report, in particular on page 129, where he noted the French law was the only one of its kind, but at the time of writing, several countries were preparing legal texts based on it. For an overview of some of the main global campaigns against comics, see Lent, 'The Comics Debate Internationally'.
5 Charbonnel, 'Comment a été votée la loi du 16 juillet 1949', 434–5.
6 On the commission, see Vessels, *Drawing France*, Chapters 4 and 5; and Thierry Crépin, 'Une Commission entre Intimidation et Répression 1950–1954' and Jean-Matthieu Méon 'L'Installation de la Commission de Surveillance et Contrôle: Les Commissaires et la Mise en Forme de leur Institution (1950–1965)', Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page*, 95–104 and 105–16; Michèle Piquard, 'La loi du 16 juillet 1949 et la production de livres et albums pour la jeunesse', *La Licorne*, 65 (2003), 219–35. Vessels is an excellent example of the school of thought that sees the legislation and work of its commission as being primarily about reconstructing culture and national identity after the war, in contrast to Pascal Ory's landmark article on comics 'Mickey go Home!', which emphasized the Cold War context.
7 See chapter one and Background document on the children's press bill prepared by the American Embassy in Paris for the State Department, 31 January 1949, page 3, NARA, RG. 84, entry 2462, box 4.
8 The archives of the commission are preserved at the Archives Nationales. The inaugural speeches were recorded in the minutes of the commission's meetings, AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 1st session, 2 March 1950. Mayer's and Teitgen's speeches were subsequently published in the *Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Commission de Surveillance et de Contrôle des Publications Destinées à l'Enfance et à l'Adolescence au Cours de l'Année 1950,* 6–8.
9 See Fishman, *The Battle for Children*.
10 *Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Commission*, 8.
11 Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 131–2.
12 Charbonnel, 'Comment a été votée la loi du 16 juillet 1949', 434–5.
13 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 201; Mollier, *Mise au pas*, 425, 442–3.
14 See Piquard, 'Loi du 16 juillet 1949', 220–1, especially footnote 6.

15 On *Vaillant* and its significance to the comics campaigns, see Chapter 1.
16 For discussion of his role in post-war children's literary criticism, see Cécile Boulaire, 'La critique périodique de livres pour enfants depuis l'après-guerre', *Strenae*, 12 (2017) http://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1703 accessed 16 July 2021; on the Dubois' activities in reviewing children's film, see the blog post 'Raoul et Jacqueline Dubois', 14 September 2014, by Cinédidac https://cinedidac.hypotheses.org/1473 accessed 12 August 2020. The Hachette archives contain many typescript versions of his reviews of their books, which he evidently sent to them.
17 Fishman, *Battle for Children*, 200.
18 Jean-Jacques Yvorel, '1945–1988. Histoire de la justice des mineurs', *Les Cahiers Dynamiques*, 64 (2015), 21–32.
19 Interview with Jean-Louis Costa by Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, 10 June 1980, Bibliothèque Numérique Patrimoniale de l'Ecole Nationale de Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse https://www.adolie.enpjj.justice.fr/idurl/1/50151 accessed 27 July 2021. In 1937 the death of Roger Abel, one of the young inmates at Eysses, caused a national scandal.
20 See the deliberations between Costa, Romieu from the Ministry of the Interior and Lacaze from Public Health, in AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 1st session, 2 March 1950, 10–11.
21 *Ibid.,* 10.
22 Crépin, 'Une Commission entre Intimidation et Répression', 96.
23 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 7th session, 16 November 1950, 5.
24 Vessels, *Drawing France*, 129–31.
25 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 7th session, 16 November 1950, 12.
26 *Ibid*., 6.
27 *Ibid*., 10. He was quite dismissive of such studies, in part because he was used to frequent power struggles with medical professionals, particularly psychiatrists, from the Department of Public Health, who felt Supervised Education belonged under their purview. Interview with Jean-Louis Costa, 11–2 and 18.
28 See Chapter 1.
29 *Recommendations by the Commission for the Control and Surveillance of Publications for Children*. These guidelines were published in the commission's first report, *Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Commission*, and reproduced in the appendices to the special issue of *Enfance* on the 1949 law, 6 (1953), 490–520.
30 *Recommendation*s, reproduced in *Enfance*, 490–1.
31 Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 132.
32 On the Tarzan affair, see Jobs, *Riding the New Wave*, chapter six; Crépin, 'Une Commission entre Intimidation et Répression', 99–102; Vessels, *Drawing France*, chapter five; Isabelle Antonutti, *Cino Del Duca: De* Tarzan *à* Nous deux*, Itinéraire d'un Patron de Presse* (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013) chapter six.

33 Jobs, *Riding the new wave*, 248.
34 29 April 1950, reproduced in *Educateurs*, July–August 1950, 395–6.
35 See the remarks made by the Communist deputy André Pierrard in the National Assembly debates, *Journal Officiel,* session 21 January 1949, 91.
36 'La Démoralisation de la Jeunesse', *Cahier du Livre/ Liber*, 5 (1944), 25–8, especially 27.
37 'Démoralisation de la Jeunesse', 29.
38 Sadoul, *Ce que lisent vos enfants,* 18–20. See also chapter 1 of this book.
39 Armand Monjo, 'L'Offensive du dollar contre les cerveaux d'enfants', *L'Humanité,* 25 October 1947, 4.
40 See Antonutti, *Cino Del Duca*, Chapter Five.
41 Recommendations de la Commission de Contrôle, 1950, published *Compte rendu des travaux de la commission de surveillance et de contrôle des publications destinées à l'enfance et à l'adolescence au cours de l'année 1950.* (Melun Imprimerie Administrative, 1952), reprinted in *Enfance*, 1953, 490–502, see especially 492–3.
42 *Ibid*., 493.
43 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 3rd session, 27 April 1950, 20–1.
44 29 April 1950, reproduced in *Educateurs*, July–August 1950, 395–6.
45 Jean Pihan, 'Le Mythe de Tarzan', *Educateurs*, July–August 1950, 395–7.
46 Armand Lanoux, 'Le Mythe Tarzan', *L'Education Nationale*, 27 April 1950, 1.
47 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 5th session, 29 June 1950, 6.
48 'Background document on the children's press bill'.
49 Telegram, Dean Acheson, Department of State to US Embassy in Paris, 14 July 1950, NARA RG 59 Box 2387.
50 Telegram, Ambassador Bruce to Dean Acheson, Department of State, 17 July 1950, NARA RG 59 Box 2387.
51 See Jobs, *Riding the new wave*, 249–54.
52 Crépin, 'Une Commission entre Intimidation et Répression', 101–2.
53 See Chapter One.
54 On this committee, see Thierry Crépin, 'Le Comité de Défense de la Littérature et de la Presse pour la Jeunesse: The Communists and the Press for Children during the Cold War', *Libraries & Culture,* 36 (2001), 131–42.
55 *Ibid*., 140.
56 Air Despatch, Robert P. Joyce, Counsellor, American Embassy in Paris to Department of State, 15 February 1955, NARA, RG 59, Box 5278.
57 Notably the Union Nationale des Associations Familiales and the Comité catholique de l'enfance.
58 'La Commission travaille (1)', *Educateurs*, November–December 1951, 540–56, see 555.
59 *Ibid*., 555.

60 Pihan, 'La Commission Travaille', 466–72.
61 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 366.
62 See Charbonnel's article 'Savez-vous ce que lisent vos élèves?' for *L'Ecole et la Nation*, December 1952, 24–5.
63 He appealed to the Conseil d'Etat, claiming the commission had breached its confidentiality clause by showing the report to the press commission; see Antoniutti, *Del Duca,* 119.
64 'Littérature enfantine et Plan Marshall des idées', 115–20.
65 *Ibid.,* 116–7.
66 Gamarra 'Les livres de prix, instrument de diffusion de la culture', 20.
67 'Tarzan L'homme singe', *Educateurs*, July–August 1953, 299–306.
68 For a full account, see Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 366–7.
69 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 368.
70 See Hachette's catalogues preserved in the Q10 publishers' catalogue collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France – where the Tarzan picturebooks series featured in early catalogues; he disappears from view in 1953.
71 S14 C162B1. The manuscript was *Tarzan et les rescapés ~~du liberator~~* [*sic*], translated by Pierre Martin from *Tarzan and the foreign legion* (1947).
72 Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 132.
73 *Ibid*., 132.
74 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 341.
75 See Piquard 'La loi du 16 juillet 1949', 225–6; Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 375–89.
76 Crépin, *Haro sur le gangster!* 374.
77 Bauchard, *The Child Audience*.
78 In the words of Yves-Marie Labé's obituary in *Le Monde*, 20 December 1998 https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1998/12/20/philippe-bauchard_3683054_1819218.html
79 *Enfance*, 6 (1953), Numéro Spécial 'Les Journaux pour Enfants'. https://www.persee.fr/issue/enfan_0013-7545_1953_num_6_5 accessed 24 March 2022.
80 All issues can be consulted online here https://www.persee.fr/collection/enfan accessed 23 September 2021.
81 Charbonnel, 'Comment a été votée la loi du 16 juillet 1949', 436.
82 Bellet, 'Problème de la presse enfantine, problème international', *Enfance*, 6 (1953), 423–7. Wallon's preface to the issue develops similar arguments.
83 Preface to Bauchard, *The Child Audience*.
84 On the congress, see Bauchard, *The Child Audience*, 172–3; Hélène Gratiot-Alphandéry, 'Deux congrès sur la presse enfantine', *Enfance*, 6 (1953), 429–32.
85 On the commission and Europress Junior, see Anne Crétois, *L'Encadrement de la Presse pour la Jeunesse par la Commission de Surveillance et de Contrôle des Publications Destinées à l'Enfance et à l'Adolescence (1955–1962),* Unpublished Master's thesis, Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne, June 2000, 201–2.

86 See the assessment by Jessica Burton, who suggests Europress Junior 'never in actual fact implemented any tangible policies or applications', 'A Coordinated Europeanization of the Comics Industry through Distribution. The Politics of the Global Journey of Astérix and Tintin through the Strategic Distribution of Their Magazines and Contents in the 1960s', *On Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture* 8 (2019). https://www.on-culture.org/journal/issue-8/europeanization-comics-industry/ accessed 24 August 2024.

87 Raoul Dubois, 'La loi du 16 juillet 1949', *Enfance*, 6 (1953), 439–50.

88 Annex to the debate of 8 July 1949, signed by PCF deputies Messrs Thuillier and Pierrard, and Mesdames Charbonnel, François and Braun, and the members of the Communist Deputy group. Reproduced in *Enfance*, 6 (1953), Annex 4. It was also translated into English by Opera Mundi for the American Embassy in Paris, NARA RG 59 Box 2387.

89 This was the overall thrust of her article, 'Problème de la presse enfantine, problème international'.

90 *Ibid*., 424, 427.

91 *Ibid.,* 427.

92 See Chapter 1.

93 Michel, 'Littérature enfantine et Plan Marshall des idées', 118.

94 See Boulaire, *Petits livres d'or*.

95 Gamarra 'Les livres de prix, instrument de diffusion de la culture', 20.

96 *Ibid.,* 119.

97 See Chapter 1.

98 Folder 'Proposition de loi tendant à limiter la surface réservée aux auteurs et dessinateurs étrangers dans les journaux pour enfants', S19 C24 B2.

99 Henri Wallon, Preface, *Enfance*, 6 (1953), 369–70.

100 See for example Vessels, *Drawing France,* 131; Jean-Yves Mollier Preface, Michèle Piquard, *L'Edition pour la Jeunesse en France de 1945 à 1980* (Paris, Presses de l'enssib, 2004) 11.

3

The 'Little Mickeys' in the Cold War

Hachette and the expansion of Disney's global empire

When Mickey Mouse staged his return to French books and comics, it marked the return of the great symbol of American capitalism to France. It had to be triumphant – and it was. His French publisher Hachette thrived in the new regulatory and economic environment. The publisher's agents had ensured that the 1949 law regulating children's publications had made it onto the statute books without its Communist-sponsored quota clause restricting imported material. With the Marshall Plan programme of economic aid to post-war Europe promising an influx of American investment and business confidence, a new era of expansion seemed likely. Thanks to its long-standing deal with Disney, and its monopoly over distribution, Hachette now looked set to dominate the field.

This domination was assured by Hachette's new 'Cold War' business model for children's publishing. Its growth focused in two major areas: Disney picturebooks and comics for younger children, and fictions for older children. The first partnership is described in this chapter, which shows how the revival and expansion of this transatlantic publishing operation was forged in the particular ideological and economic conditions of the era. Hachette had to deal with the regulator nipping at its heels, but also international pressures, with the escalation of the anti-comics campaigns internationally, the hardening of Disney's ideological commitments and empire-building mentality, and the dynamic competition of multiple American companies seeking to increase their presence in the French and European markets buoyed up by the Marshall Plan and cultural diplomacy. For the local companies who could handle the pressures, circumvent the regulators and seize the opportunities, there were huge profits to be made. As this chapter will show, however, withstanding the political and ideological pressures, and avoiding the trap of over-extension in transatlantic deals which made ever larger demands of local producers, was no easy feat.

Looking at French children's publishing post-1949 through this lens offers new insights into how print culture for children was produced. Histories of children's literature and comics for this period in France tend to overlook or play down the global political economy dimension to the children's publishing field after 1949.[1] But it is crucial to understand that the largest publisher of children's print culture in France in the 1950s and 1960s was just one part of Disney's much wider, global empire-building, and as such Hachette's autonomy as a publisher was increasingly restricted by the American company's priorities and the political pressures Disney faced in the Cold War. The production structures that made some of the most popular books and comics for French children, as well as the form and content of those materials, were shaped by the shift in power relations that was taking place in the global children's media industry, with the growing hegemony of American multinational corporations.[2] By applying political economy of communication methods to the study of children's books and comics, I am drawing upon a longtsanding approach used by children's media scholars such as Janet Wasko and Alexandre Bohas's work on global Disney, and Helle Strangaard Jensen's transnational history of Sesame Street.[3] Surprisingly, the local producers, marketing executives, agents, and their regional offices and studios, who played key mediating roles between Disney's Burbank headquarters and its consumers abroad are missing from most studies of Disney's global media empire-building.[4] Telling the story of the increasing imbalance in power relations between Disney and its French publishers reveals the impact of accelerated globalization in the Cold War years on local production structures, content, and business practices in children's culture.

The Marshall Plan and the expansion of transatlantic children's publishing

The American ambitions to reopen and expand into European markets in the post-war period transformed the scales of production and power relations that structured the French children's publishing sector. Thanks to the European Recovery Programme (ERP, to give the Marshall Plan its official title), the publishing industry across Western Europe was given a significant confidence boost by the promise of American funds. The programme of loans was accompanied by productivity missions to the United States, to learn more about how to increase their efficiency, along with American book diplomacy missions and propaganda designed to promote American literature and so-called

'American' ways of doing business. Promoting economic growth and improving living standards were understood to be key to containing Communism and achieving stability in post-war Europe, and this was to be driven by creating a virtuous circle of increased productivity, trade and consumption, and the integration of European markets.[5] With its emphasis on persuading Europeans of the superiority of advanced, American-style market capitalism, the ERP was, as Ellwood puts it, to prove a mighty weapon in the Cold War.[6] Publishing received an important boost from national reconstruction programmes and the ERP, and there was substantial investment in new printing presses. The financial incentives created by the Marshall Plan made doing business in Europe all the more attractive to American publishers with expansion on their mind.[7] Accordingly, there was a flurry of activity by American publishers in the French children's sector at this time, and this created the perfect conditions for what was to become a vicious competition between Hachette and a new breed of transatlantic publisher.

The shift in power relations was clearly perceptible in the deal that Hachette signed with Disney in 1947, which set the tone for the new Cold War business model in children's publishing that emerged over the course of the next decade. The contract between the companies was, as one Hachette negotiator later complained, 'rather leonine'.[8] As discussed in Chapter 1, it locked Hachette into a frenetic publications schedule that required considerable outlay from the publisher upfront. For the privilege of publishing Disney content and using its characters, Hachette agreed to pay 500,000 francs royalty fees per year, in addition to paying 2 per cent royalties on the comic books *Hardi Présente Donald* and the *Journal de Mickey* (once it relaunched), 4 per cent royalties on the French translations of *Walt Disney Comics & Stories* as sold and 6 per cent royalties on each book published, regardless of sales.[9] Given that the deal committed Hachette to publishing at least six new Disney titles per year with print runs of a minimum of 30,000 copies, and when picturebooks required an investment of approximately three million francs per title, the costs promised to add up.[10] Most importantly, Hachette was shouldering a lot more risk but had lost an important part of the gains: the publisher now had to pay both advance fees and royalties on very large print runs rather than on sales, and all this without guarantee of exclusive rights on new titles (it kept its exclusivity on the titles published in the interwar period). These terms were, the negotiator argued, 'against all the practices of the profession'.[11]

Moreover, Hachette's picturebook publishing schedule and catalogue were now dictated by Disney's priorities. Its global merchandising business, and

particularly print culture, became a much bigger priority for Disney, and this had important ramifications for Hachette and other local publishers.[12] In the post-war contract therefore, Hachette's publishing schedule for its new titles was aligned with Disney's film releases. This was a substantial change. After 1934 Hachette had introduced book versions of Disney animations (such as the *Silly Symphonies*), but these publications were not film tie-ins as such; in the 1930s there was usually a lag of around one year between the French film release and its book adaptation. Post-war, the French business committed to publishing at least three titles based on feature-length films and three titles from short films published per year, with the initial films stipulated according to recent and projected releases (*Bambi* and *Dumbo*, scheduled for release in France in the summer and autumn of 1947 respectively).[13] Hachette produced picturebooks, comic strip albums, and colouring and cut-out activity books for both films by early 1948. For the period 1947–9, all the new titles, apart from a handful of Mickey comic strip albums, were tie-ins for new film releases in France (*Pinocchio, Saludos Amigos, The Three Caballeros, Song of the South* and *Snow White*).

The Hachette and Disney publishing deal of 1947 was ambitious, but it was hardly revolutionary. It was therefore a mysterious newcomer to the French children's publishing scene that found the new type of product that really propelled the move towards American-style productivity in the sector. In December 1949, just in time for the New Year celebrations (when the French traditionally gave gifts, rather than Christmas), French bookshops were suddenly filled with brightly coloured picturebooks for pre-schoolers. They stood out on the displays, where most books bore the mark of the money-saving solutions publishers had been obliged to develop in the war and its aftermath. Moreover, these hardcover books with full colour illustrations cost only 95 francs each.[14] The low price point was key. In a country that was reeling from the effects of rampant inflation, where the average hourly salary was 73.68 francs, and a packet of twenty Gauloises brand cigarettes cost 65 francs, this put the new books within the reach of many more families.[15] They were being sold at a fraction of the price of the competition. Hachette's Disney picturebooks and albums retailed between 240 and 150 francs per volume. Larger picturebooks could cost between 300 and 400 francs, going up to 800 francs for books in Jean de Brunhoff's famous *Babar* series (first published 1931). There were cheap options available from other publishers, such as Flammarion's Père Castor imprint, varying from anything at 30 to 60 francs, to around 100 to 130 francs, but they could not provide anything like the same product for that price.

In spite of its decidedly Gallic trading name Cocorico [*Cock-a-doodle-do*], the newcomer was anything but French. Cocorico was in fact a cover company set up to export the American Little Golden Books series to France and act as a hub for their distribution across Europe.[16] At its helm was the Franco-American director of Little Golden Books, Georges Duplaix, in partnership with the French publisher Flammarion. Duplaix and his associates signed the contracts just one month after the passage of the 1949 law, once it was clear that this new American venture would not be subject to protectionist legislation.[17] The novelty of the Little Golden Books formula, which had launched in the States in 1940, was to radically reduce the retail price of full-colour illustrated hardbound children's picturebooks, from around $1.50 to $2 down to just 25 cents. This removed them from the realm of the Christmas gift and placed them in the price range of the everyday purchase.[18] A joint venture between the publisher Simon and Schuster, and the Western Printing and Lithography Company, they could achieve low prices through economies of scale, aided by powerful distribution strategies. Printing costs were brought down by making the books very small (in-quarto), and using cardboard, staple-bound covers. The gold foil covering the spine gave the series its name and made them instantly recognizable. In America the imprint called itself a 'supermarket success story', after reaching agreements with the big grocery chains in 1947.[19] The series' print runs tell the story eloquently: in 1940 in the United States the early print runs were set at 50,000 books, but it reached print runs of 500,000 by the 1950s.[20] In 1949, the rapid growth of the series along with other children's publishing imprints prompted the head of Random House, Bennett Cerf, to observe that 'the tail is now wagging the dog … Golden Books are now the biggest part of Simon and Schuster'.[21]

In contrast to the post-war gloom at the Disney headquarters in Los Angeles, the fortunes of Little Golden Books were soaring, and Duplaix had his sights set on further growth. In some ways the Petits Livres d'Or venture followed the classic American export publishing business model of 'dumping', whereby the company could undercut the local competition on price due to having already absorbed production costs on the vast American market.[22] But this new series was also a project shaped by the Cold War mission to bring American business practices to Western Europe.[23] The venture benefited directly from ERP investment in French printers, which ensured the publisher had access to the kind of large and expensive offset printing presses that were necessary to make its American productivity-era formula work. Offset printing had been relatively rare in France but expanded rapidly after 1948, thanks to the Marshall Plan.[24] Whether Western was directly involved in the funding process for new printers in France is not

clear. However, it seems a possible scenario, given that the company is known to have furnished equipment and technical support to Mondadori, who then became the publisher of the Italian translations of the Little Golden Books.[25] The Petits Livres d'Or were printed by Déchaux, one of the pioneers of colour offset lithography printing in France and a member of the committee promoting Marshall Plan-sponsored investment in new printing technology for French firms.[26] Offset lithographic printing used metal plates or lithographic films that could withstand the repeated reimpressions necessary for mass production of colour books.[27] The technique further facilitated 'dumping' by the American publishing industry, and particularly in co-production, as the use of plates or films meant that content could be sent across the Atlantic, and then on to further countries for printing in different languages. The books could then be piled high and sold cheaply across multiple markets, not least because the Little Golden books series had already been in existence for nearly a decade, so there was ample supply of ready-to-use content, with which to stimulate serial consumption. The Cocorico translations of Little Golden Books found an enthusiastic readership in Europe; by the mid-1950s the series had produced one hundred titles for the French market alone, and this climbed rapidly to two hundred in 1961.[28]

This was a deliberate effort to export American ways of doing children's publishing. How far it was ideologically driven is less clear, although it would seem that Georges Duplaix was a dedicated Cold Warrior. Cécile Boulaire argues Duplaix's lavish lifestyle was funded by the CIA. Noting his connections to key figures in the international struggle to contain Communism, such as Allen Dulles and Tom Braden, and the Frenchman Pierre de Bénouville, Boulaire quotes the businessman's daughter, Nicole: 'I'm sure that my father's investments in the Cocorico company were helped by the foundations. It was important for the businessmen sent to France to have a certain lifestyle; I'm sure those funds came from Allen Dulles.'[29] Nicole Duplaix describes her father as a committed anti-Communist whose greatest fear was that the 'Reds' would take over France and Europe. Whether some or any of its funding was covert or not, the Golden venture in Europe was certainly replete with cash, and its director Duplaix's dedication to the cause of American capitalism was not in doubt. Moreover, he was intent on bringing American commercial innovation to the French publishing sector, as his daughter recalled: 'It was a period of transition in France, much later than in the States. My father wanted to do things like they did in the US.'[30]

The arrival of Duplaix's Petits Livres d'Or on the scene certainly accelerated change in the French publishing industry. The new venture had stolen a march

on Hachette by developing an exciting new product for the age bracket where there was clear growth in the market. Looking back, an internal memo at the firm noted that due to the war Hachette's picturebook production had slowed to insignificant rates; the arrival of the Petits Livres d'Or on the market changed this.[31] The competition quickly leapt on the Petits Livres d'Or's new formula, and within the year, all manner of French versions of cheap American picturebooks started to appear in the bookshops. Their launch effectively started a price war in the French children's market, and a scramble for American content for picturebooks. Hachette moved quickest of all, because its close contacts with Disney meant that the publisher had access to privileged information on the Little Golden Books formula. Hachette's strategy for competing with the partially amortized production costs of the Petits Livres d'Or was to adapt titles from their 1930s comic strip album and picturebook stock, mostly by Disney and French cartoonist Alain Saint-Ogan, and the ever-popular *Babar* series. So, by April 1950, Hachette had launched what Boulaire calls 'almost an exact copy' with its new Albums Roses series: they were the same size, the same number of pages, same binding and cover (apart from the gold foil tape), and their cover price was even cheaper at 90 francs.[32] A letter to Cécile de Brunhoff, the *Babar* copyright holder, asking her if Hachette might include some Babar books in the new series, shows that the Albums Roses project was being developed at speed in January 1950.[33] To achieve the same ratio between cost and price, the Albums Roses were printed using the other main French offset printing specialist and beneficiary of Marshall Plan funds, Georges Lang, whom Hachette had been using for production of their picturebooks and Disney albums since the 1930s.[34]

For Hachette, the problem was not just about getting a rival product on the market quickly, however. The looming question in the early 1950s was how far the wily and ambitious Georges Duplaix was seeking to take his Franco-European publishing venture. Why had he chosen to partner with Flammarion instead of Hachette, when the larger company was the more obvious choice? Given the importance of bulk production and distribution to the Petits Livres d'Or formula, it seemed inexplicable to circumvent Hachette with its Messageries. The answer may lie partly in aesthetics; as Cécile Boulaire has studied in detail, and many at the time remarked, Duplaix's artistic vision for Little Golden Books owed much to Flammarion's pathbreaking Père Castor series. More serious for Hachette was the second probable explanation: in the United States, Western, the parent company of Little Golden Books, was the main publisher of Disney picturebooks and the *Walt Disney Comics & Stories* series.[35] The Disney comics in particular had proved to be a big money-spinner for Western, and in the 1940s

the company expanded into the market in a big way, even opening an office in Los Angeles, to be close to the Disney Studio.[36] In short, in the States, Western was publishing the books and comics that Hachette was now contracted with Disney to produce in French translation. It seems likely that Duplaix aimed to wrest at least some of the Disney work from Hachette, if not all of it – Western's move into Disney comics was proving highly successful in the United States, why not seek to expand into French comics as well? If Duplaix really wanted to export his business back to France and across the continent then Disney content was a logical part of the equation, and this would effectively neutralize his principal competitor on the French market and beyond. Moreover, such a move was – theoretically at least – entirely possible now that the 1947 contract no longer granted Hachette exclusive rights to Disney content. The moment looked propitious, given that the large French publisher had been weakened by the poor performance of the *Donald* comic book and its continued failure to get the *Journal de Mickey* back in print.

Hachette's 1947 contract with Disney was for five years, and by 1950 time was running out. Duplaix made his move to secure Disney content for the French Petits Livres d'Or. Western held an exclusive licensing agreement with Disney in the States covering all Disney characters in all print formats.[37] He could therefore withhold lithographic films or delay sending them across the Atlantic for Hachette to use for printing its Disney publications, and seemingly did so. Hachette's co-publisher, Paul Winkler, mobilized his networks, and by September 1950 the Disney sales representative for Europe, Armand Bigle, wrote to Meunier du Houssoy that the company's head of merchandising 'O.B. Johnston is 100% for Hachette', and so Meunier could 'rest easy, even for the Petits Livres d'Or [Little Golden Books]. I will make sure that Hachette obtains the positives of these little books'.[38] The contract that Hachette signed with Roy Disney in 1951 following this drama was even more one-sided than the first post-war deal.[39] By 1951, with *Cinderella* having done well at the box office, Disney's stock was rising, and the rivalry with Duplaix no doubt further forced Hachette's hand. The upfront royalty payment was increased from 500,000 francs to a fixed fee of 7,000,000 francs per year, to be paid even when sales did not reach this sum. Even taking into account the problems with spiralling inflation and the instability of the French currency at the time this was a substantial increase. The nature of the deal with Disney became even more asymmetrical, and Duplaix was to remain a major threat thanks to the immense success of the Petits Livres d'Or imprint in France and across Europe. As shall be seen in the final section

of this chapter, these issues were imminently to develop into serious problems for Hachette.

Still, while the terms of the renewal of Hachette's deal with Disney in 1951 was a sign of the large – and growing – power imbalance between American media companies and their local licensees, to be sure, it was also a sign of the French publisher's optimism. The Marshall Plan buoyed up the industry, and made substantial investment in American content and the American version of mass publishing attractive to French publishers. Just as salient was the fact that the Cold War business model of the Disney deal fitted with Robert Meunier du Houssoy's ambitious strategy for reconstruction and growth for Hachette, which called for a major structural overhaul of the company. As David Ellwood notes, 'structural' was 'the word of the hour' in the ERP era; the Marshall Planners saw structural change as vital for boosting productivity.[40] The new age of expanded mass production required structures that could cope with this; an internal memo on printing at Hachette observed that producing in bulk required careful planning and scheduling, which was crucial to balancing the all-important ratio of cost to price.[41] The modernization and rationalization of its operations were integral to Hachette's business expansion strategy as a whole in the early 1950s.

Appointed to be the new Chief Executive Officer of the company in 1952, Meunier du Houssoy continued the venerable Hachette dynasty tradition of aggressive buy-outs of smaller competitors. Hachette's financial might meant that soon only its main rival Presses de la Cité came close to its size.[42] The second pillar of Meunier du Houssoy's strategy was to massively expand productivity. While it may have been outflanked by Cocorico's Petits Livres d'Or imprint in children's book publishing, overall Hachette was leading the transformations taking place in the publishing field as a whole in the early 1950s. Thanks to its nationwide distribution network, the publisher launched the paperback revolution in France in 1954, with its 'Livre de Poche' subsidiary.[43] The scale of Hachette's operations, and those of its subsidiaries, press empire and distribution networks, led to a re-ordering of the organization. Meunier du Houssoy directly oversaw distribution and press (and kept a close eye on the largest subsidiary of all, the Livre de Poche), while the editorial sections were divided into four departments, which included a much larger children's department. Writing in 1964, author and Hachette employee Jean Mistler indicates how the whole modernization project was perceived to pose 'problems comparable to those Louis Hachette [who founded the company in 1826] had to solve when his publishing company moved from the artisanal to the industrial stage'.[44]

Communist lines of argument – echoing the Marshall Planners' argument – that such commercial approaches to children's books (or indeed cultural production as a whole) were an American phenomenon was doing home-grown French capitalism a disservice. French cultural historians argue forcefully that mass-market production was not an American import, in spite of many commentators in France (and by no means solely those of leftist persuasion) for whom this was a sort of dogma.[45] Scaling up production and stimulating consumer demand was not a new or unusual idea in the French industry; as Ellwood writes, the ERP simply represented a high point in a wider twentieth-century trend of Americans trying to superimpose their model of modernization on Europe's efforts to 'meet the challenges of the three modernities of 1920: mass democracy, mass production, mass communication'.[46] Certainly the American aspects of the productivity era at Hachette were in many cases developments of pre-existing partnerships and deals, or were grafted onto long-standing priorities and approaches. Moreover, studies of children's books and print culture in the interwar period by scholars such as Annie Renonciat and Matthieu Letourneux have identified many initiatives to transform the production of cheap children's publications – some using American imported material, others not.[47]

However, in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was American businesses and American funds that led the modernization of the children's publishing trade – and many of these companies were explicitly seeking to impose American business models. It was fuelled by American series imported with ready-made editorial formulae and amortized costs, and aided by American-funded printing technology. The new members of staff in Hachette's children's department were, for the most part, recruited for their English language skills, and affinity for American culture.[48] For them, such changes in their industry were 'American'. All of these factors ensured that the American companies held the upper hand in business dealings with their French partners.

Cold War *Mickey Mouse*: Bringing the French mouse to book

The transformations of the Disney content in the books and comics being published in France was just as dramatic as the structural growth in local publishing industries that American expansion promoted. It was in comics publishing that the increasing imbalance in power relations between the American Disney company and its local publishers in the Cold War

era was most pronounced. The *Journal de Mickey* comic book had been the most important and profitable Disney publication for the French publishing partners Hachette and Paul Winkler in the interwar years. But much had happened since then to change the publishing landscape. Close examination of the resurrection of the *Journal de Mickey* in 1952 reveals the impact of the ideological work of the cultural Cold War, and the threat that attacks on American comics culture posed to the large transatlantic deals that underpinned comics publishing. The effects on the publishing deals, the relations between the American company and its local publishers, and the local product itself were profound.

In June 1952, the *Journal de Mickey* was relaunched to great fanfare. Mickey's return in his much beloved comic form to France was spectacular, and designedly so. The publishers had in fact received authorization to revive the *Journal* in 1950, but they waited a further eighteen months to gain the tonnage of paper necessary to ensure the comic book went big when it came back.[49] This was much to the consternation of Communist campaigner and CSC member Madeleine Bellet, who studied the publicity campaign and how it ensured the comic 'could not fail'. Bellet detailed how posters announcing its return were posted in towns and villages up and down the nation, and the first issue was distributed for free in cinemas, in front of schools and other key locations.[50] And it was an incredible success. Within a year of *Mickey*'s reappearance, the magazine quickly reached unprecedented circulation figures of over 600,000 copies per week.[51]

After a hiatus of eight years, the publication that had transformed French comics culture was finally back on the shelves. Such was the Mouse's close association with comics culture in France that comics and their associated multi-media characters were often referred to as 'little Mickeys'.[52] The Communist critic Pierre Gamarra referred to Tarzan derisively as a sort of 'other Mickey', while in the 1949 law debates in parliament, the PCF deputy André Pierrard branded Tarzan, Zorro and Red Rider as the 'sons and grandsons of Mickey'.[53] This association meant Mickey's reputation had suffered considerably while he had been away, and had the potential to tarnish the Disney brand. Throughout the anti-comics campaigns and ferocious debates in parliament in the run-up to the 1949 legislation, Mickey Mouse was portrayed as posing a serious threat to the nation's children. Not only did he represent everything that was wrong with American popular culture, from capitalist values to violence and racism, but the *Journal de Mickey* was also argued to be the most flagrant and successful example of American companies profiting from dumping, and French publishers benefiting from amortized costs by importing comics 100 per cent 'made in USA'. But the Mouse himself had been absent throughout the whole

process. And he had continued to be so while the Commission for Surveillance and Control (CSC) had launched its work to clean up the French comics industry in 1950.

The return of the Mickey Mouse comic to France was also therefore the return of the flagship publication featuring the emblematic face of American capitalist culture to France. It was the resurrection of a business model that had been much criticized. As such, Mickey could not seem shamefaced, nor could he fail. Capitalism had to be seen to be triumphing. However, the Mickey who returned was an altogether different beast. His behaviour was substantially changed, he was presented in a number of new and revised formats, and the business practices behind his production were substantively altered. The reasons behind his transformations speak to several key changes that were taking place in Disney's publishing abroad, and specifically the ways in which the Cold War era represented an important new stage in its global export business. As Disney sought to extend its surveillance and control over its foreign-language publishing, the new regime also forced substantial changes in business practices on local French producers like Hachette and its partner Winkler.

A major shift in thinking on its position on the international stage had been taking place at Disney in the 1940s. The Second World War added the role of cultural ambassador to the Walt Disney Company's public image and signalled a new, imperialist mindset developing at Disney Headquarters.[54] The Disney studio produced wartime propaganda and training films, swiftly followed by an invitation from Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs for Walt Disney to become a government-sponsored goodwill ambassador in South America. Writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Walter Wanger gives a sense of the new prestige this brought to the Disney brand: 'Hollywood is as busy as a league of nations. In the Disney Studio, the one and only Walt is carrying on with the Army, the Navy, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Canadian Government, etc.'[55] Wanger, who was one of the spokesmen for, and fellow founder member of, the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, wrote a number of pieces arguing for Disney as one of the finest cultural ambassadors for the country that the United States possessed. There was a perceptible change in the company's rhetoric, moving towards emphasizing Disney's dominant position in world commerce, as Eric Smoodin puts it, 'creating a vision of an "American century" of imperialist control'.[56] Already in 1943 Wanger was boasting for Disney that its wartime film work was being delivered 'from the modernistic pastel-coloured fairyland plant where thousands are creating and delivering in the interest of the new education of the free world.'[57]

Walt Disney's own politics were becoming apparent. According to Steve Watts, the Second World War era 'inaugurated a sustained crisis that severely tested Disney's sentimental populism and ultimately twisted it hard in a new direction'.[58] This was a deeply conservative and patriotic direction, and it turned Walt Disney into a dedicated Cold Warrior. He became very vocal in his anti-Communism. He blamed the 1941 animators' strike that nearly ruined him on Communist infiltration of his studio. Walt Disney then became the first president of the newly founded Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals, the Hollywood industry group designed to purge the industry of Communism during the Second Red Scare.[59] In his testimony to the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities in October 1947, he spoke aggressively of his hatred of Communism:

> I don't believe it is a political party. I believe it is an un-American thing. […] I feel that they really ought to be smoked out and shown up for what they are, so that all of the good, free causes in this country, all the liberalisms that really are American, can go out without the taint of communism. That is my sincere feeling on it.[60]

This was at the same time as Communist and leftist critiques of comics culture and Disney films were being amplified by much broader post-war anxieties around children. Disney portrayed himself as the victim of a globally connected campaign: 'I even went through the same smear in South America, through some Commie periodicals in South America, and generally throughout the world all of the Commie groups began smear campaigns against me and my pictures.'[61] Walt Disney's very public Cold Warrior role fitted well with the company's emphasis on embodying and exporting American values. But there was also a paranoia to Walt's new role, a feeling that he was being targeted by the 'Commies', and which shaped his company's response to the anti-comics campaigns.

The new positioning of the Disney brand as 'all-American' in the Cold War represented the culmination of over a decade's work to make its content explicitly family friendly. In the United States, concerns about violence and other 'inappropriate' content in comics culture had begun in earnest in the 1930s and 1940s, and had 'built up a full head of steam' by the early 1950s,[62] when comics became caught up in Federal Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover and Senator Joseph McCarthy's war against Communism after 1948, and the psychologist Fredric Wertham's ferocious public anti-comics campaign.[63] The reshaping of the Disney characters had begun early on. A discernible shift in the appearance of the celluloid Mickey took place across the 1930s. Mickey became gradually plumper and shorter, his snout shrinking as his

eyes and ears grew more prominent and rounded, and his head became much bigger in relation to his body.[64] His behaviour changed too. A far cry from the slapstick ruffian of the early shorts, a Disney studio handbook from the mid-1930s explained: 'Mickey seems to be the average young boy of no particular age; living in a small town, clean living, fun-loving, bashful around girls, polite and as clever as he must be for the particular story.'[65] These attributes also served to make Mickey seem far cuter and more child-like, which Gary Cross links to the growing dominance of the 'cute' child in the expansion of consumer culture in the first half of the twentieth century.[66] Walt Disney's communications with the media put the message across loud and clear to his American audiences that Mickey Mouse was a reformed character; distancing the Mouse from the amoral reputation of comics and cartoons. In the late 1940s, just as Wertham's campaign against comics culture was gathering pace, Disney sought to reassure the public that the Mouse was now squeaky clean (while the Duck was allowed to be a little 'bad' still). In an interview with Frank S. Nugent for *The New York Times Magazine*, Disney explained how 'the modern Mickey […] is ringed about with musts and must-nots. In addition to not smoking and not drinking, he doesn't use any language stronger than a "shucks"'.[67]

This metamorphosis was going to be key to what the Disney Studio started styling as Mickey's global ambassadorial role. In the early Cold War, Disney's communications presented its content as all-American and decidedly anti-Communist. The company's unofficial spokesman Walter Wanger wrote a piece in 1950 entitled 'Donald Duck and Diplomacy', in which he argued that 'in these days when the United States is striving to oppose communist imperialism with American democracy, Hollywood has much to offer'.[68] While Wanger's title proposing Donald Duck as ambassador for American values was designed to raise a smile, it echoed Walt Disney's rhetoric casting the popularity of Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse as vital to fighting Communism: 'the sun never set on Mickey Mouse […] he even pierced the Iron Curtain'[69] – and Mickey was, of course, an anti-Communist: 'Walt wouldn't tell me about Mickey's politics, except to say that they do not resemble Chaplin's.'[70] (This was a reference to the 1947 FBI investigation into Charlie Chaplin's alleged Communist sympathies, and its accompanying smear campaign against him.) But the problem with Mickey's new role as global ambassador was his bad boy reputation in many countries. The anti-comics campaigns were a global phenomenon by the 1940s and 1950s.[71] Disney's creations were criticized for flooding European markets with American trash culture. In 1955, Walt Disney Productions were forced to intervene in Austria to overturn proposed censorship measures.[72] In France, as in

many countries, comic strips featuring Disney characters were just as popular, if not far more widely accessed in some countries than the company's films, but this content was only nominally under the American company's control. And France was important from a reputational perspective, because the French campaigners and regulatory body, the CSC, were setting themselves up as the world leader in combatting comics. It was time therefore for Disney to start taking notice of the impact of its merchandising business on the brand and its global reputation.

The French Mickey was a particularly troublesome Mouse. Thanks to the immense popularity of Hachette's books and comics, the French Mickey was in large part inspired by Floyd Gottfredson's comic strip interpretation of Mickey Mouse.[73] This was published by King Features Syndicate, launched as a daily strip in 1929 and then expanded into a properly continuous story style strip in March 1930, and which Gottfredson plotted and drew.[74] Gottfredson's creation was, as Bill Blackbeard famously wrote in 1973, a 'death-defying, tough, steel-gutted Mickey Mouse, quite unlike the mild, blandly benign mouse of contemporary Disney Studio usage'.[75] Mickey's adventures in comic strip format were thrilling, long-winded affairs with enticing titles such as *Race to Death Valley* (1930) and *High Noon at Inferno Gulch* (1932). In the strips, Mickey regularly became embroiled in murderous plots and complicated heists, was chased by thugs, spies and hoodlums, and got drawn into boxing matches and trick shooting displays. In translation, the early French Mickeys amplified the violence of Gottfredson's comic strips even further. In the 1930s, Hachette adapted and compiled these comic strip stories in large, hardback comic album format with a brightly coloured image of Mickey on the front cover, produced by local, and unnamed, artists.[76] While in some respects the adaptation process was designed to placate the many interwar critics of comics, Hachette's doctoring of this material often served to exaggerate aspects of the American comic strips that would be much cause for concern in the post-war and Cold War eras. It was in the visuals where the revelling in the comic violence was most obvious. The transposition of these materials into album format led to the need for extra drawings; notably for the cover and opening pages. Via these images, and the advertisements prominently displayed on the inside covers for the Mickey films at the cinema, the Hachette albums established a clear visual connection between their Mickey books and the violence of early Hollywood cowboy movies (as well as Disney cartoons, of course). They delighted in foregrounding the knockabout violence of the Gottfredson strips. The Mouse was featured brandishing pistols in two of the early album covers (*Mickey contre Ratino*, 1932 and *Mickey au Far-West*, 1935). As David Gerstein observes, the *Ratino* cover (for an album based

on *Mr Slicker and the Egg Robbers*) portrayed 'an out-of-character vigilante Mickey not actually seen in Floyd's story'.[77] Likewise the title page of *Mickey Boxeur* (1932) opened with a splendid close-up of Mickey's battered face, beaten black and blue by Creamo Catnera in the prize fight.[78] The unknown French artist had fun here, for the Gottfredson strip did not dwell on Mickey's injuries in the fight.

But it was the comic book that was most problematic. The Mouse's popularity and reputation in France were cemented by Paul Winkler's move in 1934 to showcase King Features comics strips content in a new comic book, published with funding from Hachette.[79] The decision to call his publication *Le Journal de Mickey* [Mickey Mouse Magazine] ensured that Disney characters were key to the magazine's branding and appeal. However, the Disney content was published alongside all manner of King Features content, so the Mouse kept some rather shady company, including strips, such as *Jungle Jim* and *Brick Bradford,* that were not aimed at young children. The brutal racism of the so-called 'Jungle' strips joined the stereotyping of indigenous Americans in Gottfredson's and Disney's Wild West. In other words, the French Mickey in his most popular form had been packaged up and received as part of a wider comics culture that could be violent, racist, sexually suggestive and targeted at both child and adult audiences. The *Journal de Mickey*'s immense popularity effectively turned Mickey Mouse into Public Enemy Number One. The Catholic and the Communist affiliated campaigners and youth movements formed an improbable union against the nefarious influence of the Mouse on young French minds. The question is how far was this hostility prompted by the magazine's content, and how far was it because of what Mickey was seen to represent? The answer was a potent mixture of both. Certainly, the Catholic and the Communist campaigns had attacked him as a symbol of American capitalism whose business practices threatened to choke local production. In the context of the Marshall Plan this was not such an unfair accusation. Likewise their equally vociferous objections to the violence and racism of the strips, and complaints that the comic book was not always designed with young readers in mind were equally justified.

After 1949, once France had a new regulator, these complaints turned into concrete actions against Winkler's and Hachette's Disney publication. After the war, Paul Winkler had returned to his tried and tested formula in his new publication *Hardi présente Donald*, launched in March 1947. This publication immediately fell foul of the new regulatory body instigated by the 1949 law, the CSC, once it began work in 1950. The regulator issued Winkler's *Donald* magazine with a warning for the 'violence and ideas considered dangerous for

the young' contained in its pages. The editors were required to remove the King Features' strips *Flash Gordon* and *Mandrake* from the publication.[80] But while Winkler removed *Flash Gordon*, the CSC issued several more warnings between 1951 and 1952, objecting to *Brick Bradford* this time, and the continued presence of *Mandrake*.[81] The American government and companies were all too aware of the problem of the violent, racist and adult content in these strips. The American Embassy preserved pages of Winkler's comic book, during their discussions with him regarding the ban on *Mickey* in 1948, and – rather pointedly – the pages that interested the embassy officials included the *Jungle Jim*, *Flash Gordon* and *Mandrake* strips alongside Donald Duck.[82] As one of the rights holders, and contractually in charge of the magazine, Disney – and certainly its European sales representative Armand Bigle – also knew of the building scandal around *Donald*, and the problem Winkler's mode of comics publishing under the names of Mickey and Donald posed for Disney's brand reputation in France.

Local knowledge and connections were to prove central to the taming of the French Mouse. The process was masterminded by Armand Bigle, Disney's premier European special sales representative from 1949 onwards.[83] Based in Paris, he was in a position to exert control over the publishing process and was much better apprised of the issues. The Disney Legends page dedicated to Bigle is unabashed in its praise of his work resurrecting and transforming their merchandising business, calling him 'Disney's Godfather of Europe', for his 'creation of Disney toys and publications in more than a dozen countries, [which] helped bring the Disney name to households throughout the continent'. A key part of Bigle's work to resurrect Disney's European publishing operations was to ensure the brand image was restored and protected, in light of the company's global ambassadorial role and ambitions in the Cold War. In France, his Disney office was to prove particularly energetic and hard-nosed in extending the editorial control it exerted over the Hachette publishing operations and in ensuring Disney's priorities were respected.

Crucially, Bigle was very much a product of Paul Winkler's Opera Mundi agency. He had trained with the so-called 'king of European comics' and had worked with publishers and newspapers across European markets that were key for Disney.[84] Born Armand Akhimoff (1917–2007), he was a self-described 'newspaper man'.[85] While training to be a lawyer, he had worked nights at the *New York Herald* just before the war. During the war he became active in the resistance in the South-West of France, under the cover name 'Le Bigle' ['The Squint'] running the underground newspaper *Vaincre*.[86] It was in this role that he met Betty Winkler (Paul Winkler's wife) and her publishing team, around

1944 in Toulouse. At that time, Betty Winkler had been running the *Journal de Mickey* in the zone libre, until it finally foundered, and she was mobilized as a correspondent for the American army in 1943, and returned to Paris in 1944 as press officer attached to the American army press corps.[87] Akhimoff was now going by his eminently French-sounding resistance name, Armand Bigle. Once in the pay of the Winklers he worked first as a war reporter for the US Army/International News Service, before they sent him to work as a journalist for Opera Mundi in Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as acting as their European agent for King Features comic strips.[88]

His experience as an Opera Mundi agent guaranteed he was politically aligned with the Americans. It also gave Bigle a sharp sense of the transatlantic journalism and publishing trades, as well as being well connected within the European press and publishing networks. This was no doubt what attracted the Disney Brothers, and their merchandising executive Kay Kamen (whom Bigle would later describe as his 'godfather'[89]). They encountered Bigle in his role as European agent for King Features, which involved placing Disney cartoon strips in the press. They promptly poached him. Bigle's first job for Disney was to set up his own company in 1947 to produce merchandising (comic strips mostly) to promote Disney film releases in Belgium. The Americans were impressed and in 1949 Roy Disney offered Bigle a commission-only sales job for Disney merchandising in Europe. Following the sudden and tragic death of Kay Kamen in a plane crash in that year, the company urgently needed someone in Europe to oversee its merchandising business. Bigle was to receive 30 per cent commission on merchandising sales – a sign of how little business the company was doing in Europe at the time. With a young family to support, Armand Bigle was wary of taking on a job with no salary, and all the expenses charged to him, 'and he loved Paul Winkler, both as a boss and as a human being'.[90] But, as Betty Bigle noted, 'Winkler was not a generous boss', and so he took the Disney job and moved back to Paris in the autumn of 1949.[91] From there, Bigle began making calls to Disney's erstwhile collaborators.

On the face of it the swift rise of Armand Bigle was good news for Hachette and Opera Mundi. The most important representative for Disney Europe in the publishing sphere was Winkler's man. Certainly Bigle's close relationship with Paul Winkler proved useful in the negotiations to keep the Disney licence in 1950.[92] Bigle also felt his long-standing relationship with Winkler facilitated their business dealings.[93] Bigle appointed another former Opera Mundi employee, Louis Ollivier, to work as his assistant general manager at Walt Disney Productions France.[94] However, Bigle, formerly an insider in the Hachette and

Opera Mundi publishing operations, was now working directly for Disney. He was very familiar with the functioning of Paul Winkler's business model, and the content of the publications that were being published under the Disney brand – which meant that he understood only too well the damage that they were doing to the reputation of Disney in France.

Bigle's first move to ensure the successful return of the *Journal de Mickey* to France in 1952 was to take control over the publication. The whole aim of the comic book was transformed. Bigle's concerns were first and foremost for the cultivation of the Disney brand across Europe and to promote the company's films (and latterly, television productions). For the original *Journal de Mickey,* Winkler's involvement with Disney had been through his deal with Randolph Hearst's King Features Syndicate deal, and so Disney content had simply been the foremost amongst all manner of comic strip material; in other words, as Bigle put it, it had been 'a Hearst operation'.[95] This new direction for the flagship comic book had been specified by Disney in the 1951 contract with Hachette, which stipulated it wanted the texts and images in the comic to be '100 per cent Disney materials' (or 50 per cent if the PCF and Socialist deputies were successful in their bid to restore the quota clause to the 1949 law).[96] The new *Journal de Mickey* had to be answerable to the Disney Company in Burbank in the United States.

Armand Bigle and his former boss Paul Winkler were heading towards an inevitable conflict. Winkler saw the *Journal de Mickey* as his creation, and it was one of his most successful titles, for which he had suffered personal attacks on his reputation during the campaigns of the 1940s against comics in France.[97] As such, he was not, it appears, especially receptive to Bigle's repeated suggestions that *Mickey* needed to be modernized.[98] He was going to have to be over-ruled. Once the comic was granted the paper supplies it needed to make a grand re-entrance onto the comics scene, Bigle went into action. In the early months of 1952, he hastily assembled a team of artists in a new 'studio'; in actual fact, his apartment, 'I put the designer in the kitchen'.[99] Pierre Nicolas, one of the first artists to work there and who helped to set it up, recalled how 'the beginnings were a real struggle. We let the rumor say that we were around 40, but were in fact only 3 or 4'.[100] This haste was in order to administer the coup de grâce to Winkler's comics publishing model. In March 1952, just a few months before the *Journal de Mickey* was due to be launched, Winkler's team received a new contract from the French Disney company, making it clear that the new Disney studio in Paris was going to take over production of the comic book. Bigle's team was to carry out all the design and drawing tasks, for which it would charge a

weekly fee to Edi-Monde, and 'naturally this contract will remain in vigour for the duration of our contract with Hachette for the publication of the *Journal de Mickey*'.[101] Subsequent letters asking for payment went unanswered. Bigle then contacted Meunier du Houssoy at Hachette, noting that he expected Edi-Monde to comply with their demands for the studio fees, following the verbal agreement with Paul Winkler: 'our position is very clear and not open for discussion.'[102] This was a takeover. Within just over a year, the new contract between Hachette and the Walt Disney Company France stipulated that the text and illustrations for the *Journal de Mickey* had to be produced by the Disney Studio in Paris, and that any other series had to be agreed by Disney via Bigle.[103] This was a serious blow to Hachette's and Winkler's autonomy. Not only was the contract with Disney becoming ever more leonine in its character but, even more importantly, the terms of the contract were now being vigorously enforced by the energetic Bigle. He knew the local scandals and debates surrounding children's reading matter, and was keen to scrutinize the content that was being published under the Disney brand. The message of this incident and the subsequent tightening of the contract was that Bigle was prepared to intervene and even take over production if they did not cooperate with Disney's demands.

The front cover of the very first revamped issue of the *Journal de Mickey* featured Mickey Mouse giving Donald Duck's three naughty nephews a bath. Disney comics, the image proclaimed, were being cleaned up. Following the stipulations of the Disney contract and under the helm of Bigle, the Mickey of the Cold War era comics in France was no longer the 'steel-gutted mouse' of the Floyd Gottfredson comic strips. The revived *Journal de Mickey* was a very different publication to its interwar predecessor. Not only was it now an almost 100 per cent Disney publication but its source material was changed. The magazine stopped using King Features' syndicated Mickey Mouse strips from Gottfredson, and they were replaced with American-origin strips and stories in the *Journal de Mickey* from the publishers Western and its associate Dell. Western had launched the Dell one-shot four colour series of Disney comics stories in 1939 and *Disney's Comic Books and Stories* in 1940, which became Disney's first modern comic book in the States.[104] This was a very different model of comics publishing, featuring exclusively Disney content, producing original material and firmly aimed at a young audience.[105] Western produced the comics under the oversight of the Disney Studio; while this was apparently light touch, nevertheless the artists and writers involved at Western were well aware of the main guideline from the Disney company, which was that the content had to be family friendly.[106] It proved to be a successful formula in the United States, as

Figure 2 *Le Journal de Mickey*, new edition, Number 1, 1952, cover page.

Gerstein writes, 'the Red Scare '50s were a high point for Disney comics', for they produced the 'kiddified' content the industry needed to placate the critics.[107] It is likely that the French case was part of a wider policy, and that this formula was deliberately exported across Europe. Certainly the comic books produced under Armand Bigle's watch reflected the new direction of Cold War era Disney content. Western comics now provided the source material for Gutenberghus Publishing Service Disney comic books in Norway (*Donald Duck & Co*., 1948), Sweden (*Kalle Anka & Co*, 1948) and Denmark (*Anders & Co*., 1949). Even in Italy, where, like France, *Topolino* had been particularly localized and delinquent, his new incarnation was also a digest of Western Disney strips, with only a few Italian-produced strips that drew upon the characters in the Western comics.[108]

Further indication of the new concern to protect the Disney company's family-friendly reputation was in Bigle's conciliatory approach to working with the CSC, the French regulator. There was to be no possibility of any warnings from the CSC or any grounds for accusations of inappropriate content from the anti-comics campaigners. The new studio invited the CSC actively to scrutinize its work by appointing a pedagogical advisor from the Ministry of Education. The new version of Mickey included French-produced materials: the prospect of quotas being imposed on foreign material remained a very real threat, and in any case it was politically expedient to include French-origin strips.[109] Artist Pierre Nicolas recalled how 'we had to please a bit [*sic*] everybody in France: left-wing parties, the Church, the patriotic parties, the Ministry of Education and many other people, to release a new magazine. It would have been bad for us not to have at least some French creation [*sic*] and at the time, most of the material was coming from the US'.[110]

The American-origin comic strips were subject to extensive modifications to make them fit the new French format and house style.[111] According to Nicolas, this was where the local artists and especially Bigle really took the initiative. Bigle's role was pivotal, for he acted as the mediator between the Americans and the French creative team. He was close to Roy Disney and made frequent trips to Los Angeles. As for the artists in France there was little in the way of direct contact with the American studio in Burbank, and certainly no model sheets or any design guidance. Nicolas noted this explained 'the strange look of my Mickey at first'.[112] The Paris studio's main work was editing, layout, design, designing and drawing the cover, doing the lettering, colouring and then producing some French strips for Mickey. This latter project was amongst the studio's most important tasks, in particular, the magazine's new French strip 'Mickey Through the Ages' [*Mickey à Travers les Siècles*], in which the mouse became a time

traveller through French history. The series was conceptualized by the French writer Pierre Fallot, who wrote many of the texts, while Nicolas drew and inked most of the images. The new French strip was designed to placate the CSC: it was given prominence as the first comic strip in the magazine, on page three, and Mickey's adventures took place in the historical periods taught in French schools, such as the revolution of 1789.[113] Nicolas complained that it was not a particularly great strip. He felt that Fallot and the other writers made them too verbose; dialogues and explanatory text took up far too much space, and that they lacked action.[114] However, while Nicolas's point the scriptwriters 'did not always have a feel for comics', and [Fallot] 'thought about it as if it were a book, which was ridiculous. Kids were not likely to like it and it was often not fun to draw';[115] the writers' job was to produce something that appealed to the CSC and educators, rather than to create a great comic strip.

Bigle and his team of artists had a tricky balancing act to perform, between meeting Disney's priorities for its international publishing to reflect more closely its American editorial line and the company's Cold War ambitions, but also keeping the regulators happy by reflecting French political and educational priorities. This was where Bigle's local knowledge was vital. Not all were convinced by the new *Mickey*, of course. As sales of the comic book increased exponentially in the years following its launch, placing the new *Mickey* far ahead of its competitors, campaigners and the CSC turned their attention to the publication once more.[116] The critic and publisher Eudes de la Potterie, writing in the Catholic moral campaigning journal *Educateurs*, was sceptical about the new 'educational' message of the *Journal de Mickey*.[117] It looked good, he wrote, and there were little phrases and pictures placed here and there in the magazine that were evidently designed to be pleasing to schoolteachers and parents. But he warned readers not to be duped by the packaging and reassuring talk of Mickey's new educational role: 'this new magazine is not very different to the old one.'[118] Which was a rather inaccurate judgement, to say the least. Likewise, the CSC tried very hard, but ultimately failed to find serious fault with the publication. This is evidence of the animosity of feeling towards Disney's business practices and the crushing success of its Mouse. Over the course of 1953 and 1954, the *Journal de Mickey* received several warnings from the CSC concerning an adaptation in comic strip form of J.-H. Rosny's fantasy novel *La Guerre du feu* [*The Quest for fire*] and the *Little Annie Rooney* strip in 1954.[119] But, as Crépin points out, the various CSC members could not agree on the issue, and eventually the criticisms halted, while the sales of the publication continued to break new records in France. It is worth comparing Bigle and

Disney's willingness to compromise in order to survive and flourish, with the fate of the *Tarzan* comics, where Del Duca the publisher refused to comply, and ended up forcing all Tarzan publishing out of the children's sector.[120]

Under the new regime, Hachette's books production looked very different too. By the mid-1950s, all the major French-language Disney publications were aligned with the modern, tamed 'aw shucks' Mickey of American Disney films and were very clearly demarcated from other, non-Disney comic strips. The gun-toting Mickey albums that had proved so popular in the interwar period disappeared from the Hachette children's list, to be replaced by the modern Mickey of the American Disney Studio usage in Hachette's picturebook series for young children, the Albums Roses. In *Mickey Chasseur* (Album 1945, Albums Roses 1950, adapted from *The Pointer*, animated short film, 1939), the accident-prone mouse is frightened by a bear. He might have had a hunting rifle, but he did not use it. In fact, in a dramatic about turn, Hachette slowed down and then halted production of all its comics albums between 1951 and 1954, having been the largest publisher of comics albums in the interwar period.[121] This was in part due to the press being targeted by the anti-comics campaigns and CSC around the years 1952–3, but it also needs to be understood in the wider context of Disney's move to clean up Mickey and its comics. As his role as global ambassador for the Disney brand was being developed, so the French case suggests the character branding was also being brought into line internationally – but with key changes to placate the local regulators.

The impact of the 1949 law on French comics publishing, and particularly American comics is often touted as a victorious battle to combat the rampant Americanization of the comics industry in the interwar period.[122] Joel Vessels concludes for example that the *Journal de Mickey's* comic strips 'had become fully French', as they were now drawn and produced in Disney's new French studio, and adapted to French settings and educational mores, which represented a triumph for French cultural sovereignty over the largest American comic book.[123] However, closer examination of the transformation of the vast Disney publishing operations at Hachette contradicts this. The cleaning up of the French Mickeys was a result of the Cold War environment of the global anti-comics campaigns, and not just the local French campaigns. Disney sought to extend control over its global brand image and bring its comics publishing firmly into the realm of children's culture. The Disney studio in Paris was in fact a sign of the ever-diminishing power that Hachette and Paul Winkler had over the vast amounts of Disney content they were publishing under their names.

The Cold War business model and its costs

The question then is, why Hachette continued to focus so much of its energies on Disney publishing when the American company was increasingly exigent in terms of its contracts and demanding over its content, and there was such local hostility to mass American culture? Was Disney content so lucrative that it was worth the effort?

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the answer was emphatically yes. The payoff for accepting the loss of autonomy was the enormous sales and revenues generated by the Disney material. The *Journal de Mickey* enjoyed unprecedented sales in the 1950s and 1960s. From its initial investment of eight million anciens francs in the Edi-Monde venture in 1947, Winkler calculated Hachette had received royalties fees of nearly fifty million anciens francs in return.[124] Moreover, he alleged that thanks to its regular and reliable revenues from the weekly sales of comics, Edi-Monde was used by Meunier du Houssoy to cross-finance other Hachette subsidiaries (notably Livre de Poche, its paperback publishing venture).[125] And with its Disney book publishing business now structured around film tie-ins, Hachette was part of a business that was booming. As several Disney films enjoyed huge box-office success, the publisher could run tie-ins across its different lists in all sorts of formats. Books as merchandising would prove highly profitable for Hachette. A popular Disney book title could easily sell hundreds of thousands of copies. By 1964, Didier Fouret, the head of the juvenile department at Hachette, was boasting to the board of directors that their latest Disney picturebook series for younger children had rapidly sold its print run of approximately one million copies. A few years later, he could happily report to the board that the *Mary Poppins* picturebook titles alone had sold almost 400,000 copies in 1966. The *Jungle Book* titles in 1969 sold almost a million copies in a number of different formats in just over six months.[126] In an internal memo Fouret spoke of the 'guaranteed added value' that Disney illustrations brought to their books.[127]

The second major attraction for Hachette was the chance to rebuild and expand its children's books sales internationally, as part of Disney's empire-building. The renewed deal that Hachette signed with Disney in 1951 may have demanded much higher payments from the French publisher, but it granted Hachette the licence to export Disney books and comics to Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the Principality of Monaco, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey.[128] With the Marshall Plan, market integration across Western Europe was one

of the great American ambitions, and business strategies were predicated on transcontinental expansion and distribution. Hachette, along with Georges Duplaix's Little Golden Books Paris-based imprint, became a key node in what was to become a large distribution network across the continent and beyond.[129] The two publishing groups (Hachette and Duplaix's parent company Western) envisaged working together to export this production and distribution partnership to South America as early as 1951, centred on Buenos Aires, according to archives consulted by Cécile Boulaire.[130]

However, the deeply one-sided contract in Disney's favour involved a substantial amount of risk, and potential for overstretching to the local publishers involved. Moreover, without even having exclusivity to Disney contract, licensees were always vulnerable to hostile competitors. This was the case in France, where Hachette faced Georges Duplaix's regular attempts to take over Disney publishing. By the 1960s, the relentless pace of publishing to Disney's schedule and requirements was starting to take its toll. Cracks were beginning to appear in the deals which upheld the Cold War transatlantic publishing business model. According to Georges Duplaix, Hachette's Disney sales were 'unfortunately inferior to the minimum guarantee of their existing contract with Disney'.[131] Hachette's juvenile department was certainly understaffed, and it sought to set up co-edition agreements to outsource picturebook production, which was particularly expensive and cumbersome.[132] In these circumstances, Duplaix once more made a move in France for Western to gain a stake in – if not take over – Hachette's Disney publishing licence. In March of 1960, Duplaix, acting on behalf of Western, signed a deal with Hachette to set up a new joint venture under Hachette's ultimate direction, called Editions Graphiques Internationales (EGI), to manufacture and print books, and share content in their respective catalogues. The idea was that co-editions produced under the Hachette imprint would both satisfy the pressure to produce six Disney titles per year and share the burden of risk.[133] This was followed by a further contract in 1961, launching Western Publishing Hachette International to produce co-editions of picturebooks in multiple languages with other Disney licensees in Europe.[134] EGI also bought Western printing material for Europe, England excepted, and consequently, outside France, passed licence agreements with other European publishers (e.g. Mondadori in Italy). The books were then published under the two separate brand names, Hachette and Deux Coqs d'Or.

The Disney Company raised serious concerns about one of their licensees sub-contracting publishing work out to Western – relations between Disney and Western in the United States had soured by the early 1960s according to Bigle.[135]

Roy Disney worried about the lack of quality control if Hachette did not assume full responsibility for the books being published under the Disney licence. Disney's concerns were well-founded. The Western partnership with Hachette ended in acrimony within a few years, when it became apparent in late 1964 that Duplaix's imprint was publishing Disney titles that should have been given to Hachette for first refusal as the main Disney licensee. The venture folded not long after, in 1965.[136] Hachette's chief negotiator complained bitterly to Armand Bigle of how Duplaix and his imprint had been disrespectful towards Disney France, and revealed his desire to wage relentless competition against Hachette, using EGI as 'a war machine against us'.[137] Bigle's exasperation with Hachette for agreeing to the partnership with Western was palpable; the disastrous project had all been Hachette's doing, and against Disney's advice: 'you left the door wide open, and [Duplaix] simply walked in and took the opportunity to push ahead with gusto.'[138]

By the mid-1960s, the ascendancy of Paris as a transatlantic publishing hub was halted. The troubles encountered by Hachette with Duplaix and Western were just one part of this story. Under Bigle, European merchandising had grown exponentially. Even accounting for the hyperbolic language used to describe Disney collaborators and business ventures, Jimmy Johnson writes 'of all of our many merchandising success stories around the world, none surpasses Armand Bigle's success in France', while the Disney Legends page adds that his merchandising success in Europe 'laid the foundation of what would become a multibillion-dollar enterprise'.[139] The Disney company increasingly sought to exert control over the phenomenon. In 1962, the Disney Studio in Burbank brought its overseas comics production in house, setting up the Overseas Comic Book Program.[140] Then in 1966, the Disney company moved its main European offices to London. The explanation given was a move to centralize Disney's international and European operations, and transfer them to London.[141] Bigle's son, Dominique, concurs, noting that Disney gradually took over the different offices his father had set up across Europe for merchandising.[142] For the American company to exert full control over its European operations, as Card Walker, senior executive at Disney, explained, 'we believed we could do a much better job based in an English-speaking territory.'[143] Henceforth, Disney licensees were summoned to London (and the Frankfurt Bookfair as well), to meet with senior executives O.B. Johnston, George Sherman and Armand Bigle, and the meetings were carried out in English.

The shift by no means affected Hachette's sales figures, according to Didier Fouret's bullish reports to the Hachette board of directors. Nor did it

dent Armand Bigle's rise to seniority at Disney.[144] Nevertheless, for Hachette and the French partners, the tone hardened; its chief negotiator with Disney campaigned vociferously against any further strengthening of the contract in Disney's favour, openly criticizing the contract for its 'leonine' character in one licensees meeting in London, and 'harsh' in another missive.[145] His negotiations succeeded in reducing Disney's royalty fees for certain book series.[146] The editors were well aware that they were locked into producing hundreds of titles that they cared little for, but felt obliged to publish.[147] Then, in the same year of 1966, Paul Winkler was side-lined completely from Disney publishing.[148] Meanwhile Georges Duplaix left France suddenly and without warning in 1968, never to return – Boulaire surmises the recent revelations about the extent of CIA interventions in European culture were to blame.[149]

Conclusion

In the 1950s, choosing to do business with the Americans and to inundate the market with American products were ideological choices in the Cold War context of the Marshall Plan era. American publishers and media companies were seeking to expand their presence in Western Europe, bringing their ways of doing business, and their values in the process. The political economy of the trade was weighted in their favour. Closer scrutiny of the Disney contracts with Hachette has revealed just how far its demands could stretch local licensees, and force them into a frenetic pace of production. For Hachette, this was hardly an imposition, and fitted with the company's overall strategies for growth. Nevertheless, the power relations between the companies became markedly imbalanced, as its chief negotiator complained by the mid-1960s. It also aligned the company very squarely with the Americans, which had political and cultural implications. For the CSC member and Communist activist Madeleine Bellet, the huge promotional efforts behind the relaunch of the *Journal de Mickey* meant it could not fail. This was evidence for her that Hachette was the chief 'collaborator', who helped the Americans to flood the market and dominate the distribution chains. In addition, the aggressive anti-Communism of Walt Disney, Hachette's main business partner, was famed. Disney and his company made very public assertions that they were promoting all-American values abroad.

Moreover, the contracts show how the deal was transformative of the very conceptualization of children's books. This was children's books as merchandising; Hachette's strategies were now directed by the film schedules and the priorities

of an American company. Disney's contracts were ever more restrictive, and its local agents ensured its priorities to forge a family-friendly, all-American brand were imposed on local publishers. In short, the Paris-based Disney studio led by Bigle worked carefully to compromise with the CSC on values and content. But Winkler and Hachette lost control over the Disney publications in France in key ways: scheduling of titles, scale of production and final editorial decisions over content. The transatlantic partnership prospered in the regulatory environment that favoured compromise. The entire operation was in many respects the realization of everything that the anti-comics campaigners were worried about and that the regulator had been set up to prevent.

Notes

1 For example, Michèle Piquard's excellent study of children's publishing in post-war France, *L'édition pour la jeunesse en France* says comparatively little on the Cold War, and treats the industry by and large as nationally bound. Cécile Boulaire's study of Little Golden Books in France, *Petits Livres d'Or*, is a notable exception.

2 For a summary of the literature on globalization of the media and its implications for children's media studies, see Wasko, Phillips, and Meehan (eds) *Dazzled by Disney?* 6–15.

3 Janet Wasko, *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy* (Cambridge, Polity, 2001), 28–9; Alexandre Bohas, *The Political Economy of Disney: The Cultural Capitalism of Hollywood* (London, Palgrave, 2016); and Helle Strangaard Jensen, *Sesame Street: A Transnational History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023).

4 For example, Bohas' *Political Economy of Disney* tends to assume a direct relationship between the Disney Company and its international audiences; see the diagram on page 7. Other notable transnational studies of Disney focus on audiences and reception, such as Janet Wasko et al. (eds.) *Dazzled by Disney?*, Cullen Bryan's *Creation, Translation, and Adaptation in Donald Duck Comics* studies the role played by translators, but again, his focus is on fandom and reception.

5 Ellwood, *Shock of America,* 390.

6 *Ibid.*, 349.

7 Hench, *Books as Weapons*, 258.

8 Henri Frenay notes on Disney licensees meeting, 5 December 1966, S14 C139 B5.

9 Folder Walt Disney Mickey Mouse S.A. années 1952. Contract 9 July 1947 between Walt Disney Mickey Mouse S.A. Paris and the Librairie Hachette, S10 C12 B2.

10 Maurice Fleurent, causeries: 1958–1969, file C121B01D38, in S14C121B1.

11 Henri Frenay notes on Disney licensees meeting, 5 December 1966, S14 C139 B5.

12 See Chapter 1.

13 Contract dated 9 July 1947, see clause seven, S10 C12 B2.
14 The information for prices has been taken from Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 114–17.
15 Price and wage comparisons taken from the website dedicated to the work of economist Jean Fourastié https://fourastie-sauvy.org accessed 25 July 2022.
16 The authority on this venture is Cécile Boulaire: see her book *Petits Livres d'Or*.
17 Thanks to Hachette's behind-the-scenes manoeuvres – see Chapter 1.
18 On the beginnings of the series, see Marcus, *Golden Legacy*, part two.
19 *Ibid.,* 107.
20 *Ibid.,* 168.
21 Quoted in Marcus, *Minders of Make-believe,*180.
22 De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire,* 209–17 discusses export strategies by American companies and their advantages over local producers from the late nineteenth century.
23 This is the argument developed by Cécile Boulaire in her article 'The "Little Golden Books" in the shadows of the CIA, or the Americanization of children's publishing in cold war France', *Book History*, 26 (2023), 390–418.
24 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 128–9.
25 Marcus, *Golden Legacy*, 131.
26 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 128–9.
27 Françoise Guerard, 'Livres pour enfants et progrès technique', *Enfance*, 9 (1956), 162–4, see 163. I would also like to thank Michael Twyman for his guidance on these points.
28 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 172–3.
29 Quoted in Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 219. On the role of foundations in the CIA's Cold War cultural strategy in Europe, see Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*
30 Quoted in Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 219.
31 Internal memo by Maurice Fleurent, head of picturebook production, 29 August 1969, S14C145B1. Fleurent was recruited to Hachette's children's department around 1949–50, to work on picturebooks. See S14C143B3, a memo dated 1959 mentions that he has been there almost ten years.
32 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 116. For the publication dates, the Inducks database suggests April 1950 for the first titles, https://inducks.org/compmag.php?country=&title1=hachette accessed 1 July 2020, which is the same date given on the titles in the Bibliothèque Nationale's copyright declaration.
33 HAC 90, letter to Cécile de Brunhoff, 6 January 1950. For an extensive analysis of Babar at Hachette, see Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, *Au Pays de Babar, Les Albums de Jean de Brunhoff* (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017), 273–92.
34 The Imprimerie Georges Lang had the printing contract for Mission France's *Rapports France-Etats Unis* magazine.
35 On Western and Disney publishing, see Marcus, *Golden Legacy*, part five: Cold War and Magic Kingdom; Michael J. Barrier, *Funnybooks: The Improbable Glories of the Best American Comic Books* (Oakland, California, University of California Press,

2015). Georges Duplaix also had very close personal associations with Disney comics publishing in the States; his wife, Lily Duplaix, had been the editor of the *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, one of the many precursors to the Western comic book venture which failed to get off the ground in the late 1930s, Barrier, *Funnybooks*, 21.

36 Barrier, *Funnybooks*, 23–4.

37 Marcus, *Golden Legacy*, 15.

38 Paul Winkler, Extrait de la lettre de M. Bigle du 22 septembre 1950, S19C18B4. It may have helped that O.B. Johnston was allegedly suspicious of Western and sought to reduce the publisher's contract with Disney at regular intervals, Johnson, *Whimsy Works*, 50.

39 Folder: Walt Disney Mickey Mouse S.A. annees 1952, Contract signed by Robert Meunier du Houssoy of the Librairie Hachette and Roy Disney, Walt Disney Productions, 20 October 1951, S10C12B2.

40 Ellwood, *Shock of America*, 352.

41 Internal memo by J. Vibert-Meunier, 'Note recapitulative sur le projet d'impression de certains classiques et de collections jeunesse sur rotative offset multichrome', 4 May 1959, S14 C140B3.

42 On publishing in post-war France, see Pascal Fouché, Introduction, Fouché (ed) *L'Edition française depuis 1945*, 17–27; Mollier, *Édition, Presse et Pouvoir*, especially 257 on Hachette's predominance.

43 For a good summary of this, see Mollier, *Géant aux Ailes Brisées*, especially introduction and chapter 4, and Fouché's introduction to his edited volume, *L'Edition française depuis 1945.*

44 Jean Mistler, *La librairie Hachette de 1826 à nos jours* (Paris, Hachette, 1964), 375.

45 Jean-François Sirinelli sets out the major historiographical trends in this field in his introductory essay to Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean-François Sirinelli (eds) *La culture de masse en France de la Belle Époque à aujourd'hui* (Paris, Arthème Fayard, 2002). The argument is set out clearly by Jean-Yves Mollier in his essay 'Le parfum de la Belle Époque'.

46 Ellwood, *Shock of America*, 386.

47 Annie Renonciat, *Les livres d'enfance et de jeunesse dans les années vingt (1919–1931): Années charnières, années pionnières* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, supervised by Anne-Marie Christin, University of Paris 7, 1997), 228–33. Many French initiatives in the 1920s were thwarted by inflation. On earlier pulp-style formats of mass children's books, see Matthieu Letourneux, 'Supports, réseaux, définitions – logiques sérielles et cohérences discursives dans les collections populaires pour la jeunesse de l'entre-deux guerres', *Strenæ*, 6 (2013), http://strenae.revues.org/1065, accessed 5 August 2020.

48 See Chapter 4.

49 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 368–75.

50 Bellet, 'Problème de la presse enfantine', 425.

51 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 373.

52 For example, Jessica Kohn called her history of the comics artists in this period 'Dessiner des Petits Mickeys' (Drawing Little Mickeys), and in the very first interview she cites, with the Catholic cartoonist Noël Gloesner on his career in religious comics publishing, the artist spoke of his work (which had nothing to do with Disney) in terms of 'making "little Mickeys"': Kohn, *Dessiner des Petits Mickeys: une Histoire Sociale de la Bande Dessinée en France et en Belgique (1945–1968)* (Paris, Editions de la Sorbonne, 2022), 12.
53 Gamarra 'Livres de prix', 20; Pierrard speech to the National Assembly in the 1949 law debates, *Journal Officiel,* session 21 January 1949, 91.
54 Eric Smoodin 'Introduction: How to Read Walt Disney', Eric Smoodin (ed), *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom* (London and New York, Routledge, 1994), 1–20, especially 6.
55 Walter Wanger, 'Film Phenomena', *Saturday Review of Literature*, 6 February 1943, 19, reproduced in Smoodin (ed) *Disney Discours*e, 42–3.
56 Smoodin, 'Introduction', 11.
57 Wanger, 'Film Phenomena'.
58 Steven Watts, 'Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century', *Journal of American History* 82 (1995), 103.
59 Wasko, *Understanding Disney,* 17–18.
60 U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, 80 Cong., 1 sess., Oct. 20–24, 27–30, 1947, 280–86.
61 *Ibid*.
62 Lent, 'Comics Debates Internationally', 16.
63 See Bart Beaty, *Fredric Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2005).
64 J. B. Kaufman and David Gerstein (text), and Daniel Kolthenschulte (ed) *Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse: The Ultimate History* (Cologne, Taschen GmbH, 2020), 227–8, 284–86.
65 Cited in Gary Cross, *The Cute and the Cool: Wondrous Innocence and Modern American Children's Culture* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 56.
66 Cross, *The Cute and the Cool,* 55–7.
67 *Ibid.,* 142. See also Walt Disney 'What Mickey Mouse means to Me', *Who's Who in Hollywood*, April–June 1948, and Irving Wallace's piece for *Collier's*, 'Mickey Mouse and How He Grew', 9 April 1949, both reproduced in Garry Apgar (ed) *A Mickey Mouse Reader* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 145–7, and 148–55 respectively.
68 Wanger, 'Donald Duck and Diplomacy', 443–52, especially 443.
69 Wallace, 'Mickey Mouse and How He Grew', 152.
70 Frank S. Nugent, 'That Million-Dollar Mouse', *New York Times Magazine*, 21 September 1947, reproduced in Apgar (ed) *Mickey Mouse Reader*, 140–4, see 143.

71 Lent, 'The Comics Debates Internationally', 9.
72 Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War,* 103–5.
73 The Mickey Mouse comic strips have been collected and edited in the *Floyd Gottfredson Library* series by David Gerstein and David Groth (Seattle, Fantagraphics Books, 2011–present).
74 See Thomas Andrae, 'Of Mouse and Man. Floyd Gottfredson and the Mickey Mouse Continuities 1930–31: The Early Years', and David Gerstein, 'Starting the Strip', both in Floyd Gottfredson, *Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse: Race to Death Valley* eds Gerstein and Groth, Volume 1 (Seattle, Fantagraphics Books, 2011) 10–13 and 227–30.
75 Bill Blackbeard, 'Mickey Mouse and the Phantom Artist', Don Thompson and Dick Lupoff (eds), *The Comic-Book Book* (New Rochelle, Arlington House, 1973), 37–62, see 38.
76 The first Hachette Mickey album was an adaptation of Gottfredson's *Race to Death Valley*, published as *Les Aventures de Mickey*, illustrations by Walt Disney (Paris, Hachette, 1931). The copyright declaration credits Walt Disney, King Features Syndicate, Paul Winkler and Hachette.
77 Gottfredson, *Race to Death Valley*, 263.
78 *Mickey Boxeur* Mickey Album number 4 (Paris, Hachette, 1932) adapted from Floyd Gottfredson, *Mickey Mouse, Boxing Champion*, 1931.
79 See Chapter 1.
80 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 3rd session, 27 April 1950, 21–2.
81 AN 19900208/2 procès verbaux, 9th session, 13 February 1951, 15.
82 See Chapter 1.
83 This is the official job title the Disney Legends page uses to describe Bigle, who was awarded the title in 1997 https://d23.com/walt-disney-legend/armand-bigle/ accessed 21 June 2023.
84 The quote is from Pierre Lazareff, Courrière, *Pierre Lazareff,* 211; on Winkler's dominance of comics publishing in the interwar period, see Chapter 1.
85 For biographical information on Bigle, see the interviews carried out by Didier Ghez and Bob Thomas with Bigle and key members of his family, published in Ghez (ed) *Walt's People*; Michel Mandry's introduction to *Happy Birthday Mickey!,* 18–19, Jimmy Johnson's memoir, *Whimsy Works*, 34; and Bigle's Disney Legends page https://d23.com/walt-disney-legend/armand-bigle/ accessed 5 August 2020.
86 See the interview with Betty Bigle and Gérald Bigle by Didier Ghez, *Walt's People*, 69. For further indications of Akhimoff/Bigle's role in the resistance networks around Montauban, see Roger Fichtenberg, *Journal d'un Résistant Juif dans le Sud-Ouest*, preface by Serge Klarsfeld, notes by Katy Hazan (Paris, Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, Le Manuscrit, 2019).
87 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 139.

88 Bob Thomas, interview with Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle, *Walt's People*, 54; Ghez, interview with Betty Bigle and Gérald Bigle, 68.
89 Thomas, interview with Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle, 52.
90 Ghez, interview with Betty Bigle and Gérald Bigle, 68.
91 *Ibid*., 69.
92 Letter from Paul Winkler to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 11 January 1950, S19C19B2.
93 Letter from Armand Bigle (Walt Disney Mickey Mouse S.A.) to Robert Meunier du Houssoy (Hachette), 7 April 1952, Winkler folder S19C19B2.
94 According to Olliver's CV in the folder S14 C139 B5, between 1937 and 1939 he was the chief editor for Opera Mundi Press Agency (King Features and International News Service, representative for France, Benelux countries, Switzerland), between 1945 and 1950 he was the chief editor of weekly magazine *Nuit et Jour,* and then worked in 1951–66 as the assistant general manager of Walt Disney Productions (France).
95 Thomas, interview with Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle, 52.
96 HAC 91, Registre 19, 17 October 1951, Journal de Mickey contract Mickey Mouse SA/ Hachette renewing right to publish *Journal de Mickey*.
97 Paul Winkler, Note confidentielle sur Edi-Monde (passé, présent, avenir), 6 October 1969, S03C12B3.
98 According to Michel Mandry, who worked as assistant editor of the *Journal de Mickey* in the 1960s and 1970s, in *Happy Birthday Mickey!*
99 Thomas, interview with Armand Bigle and Betty Bigle, 53.
100 Didier Ghez interview with Pierre Nicolas, 1991, *Walt's People*, 85.
101 Winkler folders, 4 March 1952, Letter from L. Ollivier to Paul Winkler, Edi-Monde, S19C19B2.
102 Letter from Armand Bigle to Robert Meunier du Houssoy, 4 April 1952, Winkler Folder, S19C19B2.
103 HAC 91, Register 21, New *Journal de Mickey* contract 16 November 1953.
104 Gerstein, 'Disney Comics: Back to Long Ago', 37.
105 Gerstein, 'Disney Comics: Back to Long Ago', 42. Western comics dropped Gottfredson's Mickey Mouse material from their publications after 1949, and where they did use Gottfredson content it was doctored versions of his older strips. For a comparison of the newspaper strips and the comic books, see Alberto Becattini, *Disney Comics: The Whole Story* (Theme Park Press, 2016), 64–6.
106 Cullen Bryan, *Donald Duck Comics*, 69–70.
107 David Gerstein, 'Disney Comics: Back to Long Ago!', *Comic Book Marketplace*, 103 (2003) 34–55.
108 *Ibid.,* 40.
109 The file in the Hachette archives on the legislation includes correspondence worrying about the quota clause being restored as late as 1956: 'Proposition de loi

tendant a limiter la surface reserve aux auteurs et dessinateurs etrangers dans les journaux pour enfants', S19C24B2.

110 Ghez interview with Pierre Nicolas, 1991, 85.

111 Mandry, *Happy Birthday Mickey!* 114.

112 Ghez interview with Pierre Nicolas, 1991, 88.

113 Crépin, *Haro sur le Gangster!* 372.

114 Ghez interview with Pierre Nicolas, 1991, 86.

115 Didier Ghez interview with Pierre Nicolas, 2008, *Walt's People*, 90–1.

116 For sales figures, see Crépin, *Haro sur le gangster!* 373.

117 Eudes de la Potterie, 'Le *Journal de Mickey* répond-il à son programme publicitaire?' *Educateurs*, March-April 1953, 137–8.

118 *Ibid*., 138.

119 See Crépin, *Haro sur le gangster!* 374.

120 See Chapter 2.

121 For a full exploration of Hachette's comics albums publishing, and its withdrawal from this sector in the 1950s, see Lesage, *Publier la Bande Dessinée,* Chapter One.

122 Notably Crépin, *Haro sur le gangster!* Conclusion; also Vessels, *Drawing France*, 132.

123 Vessels, *Drawing France*, 132.

124 Paul Winkler, 6 October 1969, 'Note confidentielle sur Edi-Monde (passé, présent, avenir)', S03 C12 B3/HAC 858.

125 *Ibid*.

126 For example, see S14 C137 B6, Rapport du conseil d'administration, 1964, 1966 and 1969.

127 S14 C120B02D02, dossiers de 1965, 13 janvier 1966 Mirman memo to Fleurent, quoting Fouret.

128 Hac 91, Registre 19, 17 October 1951, contract between Mickey Mouse S.A. Paris and Hachette.

129 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 130.

130 According to Boulaire, in her article 'Little Golden Books' at the beginning of the 1950s, Duplaix was tasked with setting up the same kind of production and distribution network in South America in partnership with Hachette, who had long-standing presence in the region. Rough draft of a letter sent to G. Duplaix, undated [1951], mentioning a publishing contract between Simon & Schuster, Western Printing and M. Palassi, manager of Hachette in Buenos Aires. Archives of Francine Richshoffer, secretary to G. Duplaix from 1951 onwards (private collection).

131 Letter from Georges Duplaix to O.B. Johnston on 'the Disney problem' for EGI, 13 February 1962, S14C139B5.

132 See the correspondence between Fleurent and Fouret on the subject of staffing across 1965 and 1967 in S14C131B1 and S14 C131B4.

133 Letter from Georges Duplaix to O.B. Johnston on 'the Disney problem' for EGI, 13 February 1962, S14 C139 B5.
134 Minutes of Meeting 11 January 1961, S14C139B5.
135 Letter from Armand Bigle to Henri Frenay 19 January 1966, S14 C139 B5.
136 See the contract signed between Ithier de Roquemourel of La Librairie Hachette and Western Publishing Company vice-president Georges Duplaix and administrateur of Coqs d'Or, 21 May 1965.
137 Letter from Henri Frenay to MM. Bigle and Ollivier, Walt Disney Productions, Paris, 20 October 1965, S14C133B2.
138 Letter from Armand Bigle to Henri Frenay 19 January 1966, S14 C139 B5.
139 Johnson, *Whimsy Works*, 34.
140 On this programme, see Becattini, *Disney Comics* Chapter 3, and Gerstein, 'Disney Comics: Back to Long Ago', 45–6.
141 Letter from Louis Ollivier to Didier Fouret, 25 July 1966, S14C139B5.
142 Ghez, Interview with Dominique Bigle on Armand Bigle, 77.
143 Letter from Card Walker to Mr Dan Seymour (pres, J. Walter Thompson) 15 June 1966, S14C139B5.
144 Although he resigned from the board of executives briefly, in protest at the firing of his French deputy, Louis Ollivier. *Walt's People*, interview with Betty and Armand Bigle, *Walt's People,* 62.
145 Henri Frenay, report for Didier Fouret on Disney meeting in London, 5 December 1966, S14C139B5; and letter 9 April 1966, Henri Frenay to Louis Ollivier, Disney.
146 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 224.
147 *Ibid*., 223.
148 Letter from Armand Bigle to Paul Winkler, 20 April 1966, S14 C139B5.
149 Boulaire, *Petits Livres d'Or*, 226.

4

The Hachette fiction factory

Making children's books in the productivity era

'Until recently, publishing was an industry on a human scale.'[1] So reflected Maurice Fleurent, head of production, illustrations and picturebooks in the children's department at Hachette in 1963. But now technological advances in printing allowed for much higher print runs to be produced at much lower costs and sold cheaply. The modern editor, in his experience, was increasingly akin to an administrator or an accountant, and therefore much less inclined to take creative risks. 'In short', Fleurent concluded, 'an editor is no longer a genius who discovers texts and shapes tastes; instead he is an inventor of a formula. He has become an industrialist who must meet and anticipate demand'.

Fleurent's story of mass consumption, huge step changes in production scales and the introduction of new management structures to oversee them is a familiar one, as is his notion that this new age required a different type of man to run it. It was the official narrative of the Marshall Plan missions, with their productivity mantra and obsession with 'new men' who could become the spearhead of this modern age and rescue Europe from the economic doldrums.[2] Somewhat paradoxically, given Fleurent's insistence on the dehumanizing impact of economic modernization on his trade, people were key to these processes of growth and change. In 1963, the same year as Fleurent was reflecting on his changing workplace, the Harvard economist Charles Kindleberger attributed the dramatic recovery of the French post-war economy primarily to 'new men and new attitudes'.[3] The most famous agents associated with this change in outlook were the 'cadres' or young men of the ascendant managerial class; men like Fleurent. Luc Boltanski's famous sociological study of this professional grouping argued that the change in values was an import rather than an imposition, which sprang from a 'fascination for America'. American-style social engineering and management strategies may have been brought to France by the Marshall Plan,

but they only worked because they were warmly received by the cadre class.[4] Likewise, Kipping and Bjarnar's study of the 'Americanization' of business as a process of cultural transfer underscored the importance of looking at the reception of such ideas by managers and workers. Salaried staff may not have been directly responsible for the decision to adopt American-inspired business models, but they were often charged with their implementation, and therefore played a key role in their ultimate success.[5]

The American-inspired business model in question in this chapter is the modernization of Hachette's children's fictions series, which formed the second pillar of the Cold War transformation of its business. This was where the market growth was in the mid- to late 1950s, as the baby boomers grew older, and reforms extended obligatory schooling to sixteen years of age. Hachette's strategy was to import in bulk Anglo-American series fictions for its two flagship publisher's series for school-age children. The proportion of foreign titles in Hachette's iconic Bibliothèque Rose series in the 1940s had been only 10 per cent, and that had been mostly classic texts by authors such as Hans Christian Andersen. By the late 1950s the list was made up of almost 50 per cent modern translations, mostly from Enid Blyton and the American Stratemeyer Syndicate.[6] They weren't just importing content; the department adapted the approach of the hugely successful Stratemeyer Syndicate (as *Fortune* magazine put it in 1934: 'as oil had its Rockefeller, literature had its Stratemeyer').[7] Stratemeyer specialized in serially produced books manufactured at speed – as if by conveyor belt – with large numbers of titles issued regularly and sold as cheaply as possible to encourage their serial consumption by young readers hooked on these thrilling adventures. Fictions production at Hachette was systematized, and scaled up. Print runs for best-selling titles (such as the Comtesse de Ségur and Jules Verne) had been 44,000 copies in the 1930s; by the end of the 1950s the average print run was 130,000 copies for best-sellers. In terms of sales, the story was even more pronounced. Sales from the two flagship children's fictions series were overwhelmingly dominated by imported material. The juvenile department's records from 1974 showed that the two best-sellers were Enid Blyton and Caroline Quine (Carolyn Keene, the 'author' of the Nancy Drew series), who had sold just over twenty-six million and twelve million books, respectively, in under twenty years.[8] Hachette's uniform, brightly coloured plastic and cardboard volumes quickly became the instantly recognizable symbol of the transformation of children's books into objects of mass consumption.[9]

This chapter goes on to the assembly line, to study the key role played by the many people involved in implementing this new approach to children's

books in the productivity age at Hachette. The traces left by the newly expanded creative assembly line provide a wealth of material on the industry in the late 1950s and 1960s, and shed light on the importance of the 'back-room' staff to the history of children's literature: from the series editors, editorial assistants and secretaries to the authors, illustrators and translators, many of whom also worked as anonymous pieceworkers doing the multiple reading, content selection, rewriting and correcting tasks on Hachette's intellectual production line. These men and women (and occasionally children) were the 'new men' of Kindleberger's vision who transformed children's books in the Cold War. Their words and stories help us to understand the reception of American-style ideas on productivity, and how high-level policy was enacted in production. This chapter looks at how they developed and communicated their vision of children's books in a modernized consumer economy in dialogue with their critics and within the department. Using Mathieu Letourneux's concept of the 'media imaginary', to identify the cross-pollination of themes, ways of writing and formats across media, it reveals the ways in which American content and modes of production were adopted and adapted by the teams to their local understandings of the market and competing media, and in the process shaped the books that came to define French children's culture in this period.[10]

The market

The department imported books in series, with a view to selling them in bulk. They did not like negotiating over individual titles, preferring instead to work on a large scale. For example, Cécile Cottenet has traced the department's lengthy negotiations with the American author Walter Farley spanning the first half of the 1950s. Hachette's team wanted to buy the author's books in series and became frustrated with Farley's insistence on being treated as a high-status author of individual best-sellers.[11] When they bought the rights from Grosset and Dunlap to publish the first two books in the Stratemeyer Syndicate's Nancy Drew series in French translation, they agreed to publish both titles in runs of 40,000 within six months. Hachette had the option on all other titles and future additions to the series, on condition that it published at least one title per year, again with minimum print runs set at 40,000 copies.[12] However, the sense of loss of autonomy this move to the highly commercial end of the publishing field entailed amongst the senior editorial team was acute. Fleurent felt his role was no longer creative; it was merely 'to anticipate demand'. Similarly, his fellow senior

editor Louis Mirman spoke of how 'our large print runs have a drawback – they restrict us to safe choices, and make us prudent when choosing new authors'.[13] Nevertheless, in another respect, there was nothing straightforward in anticipating demand, and the notion of what might constitute a 'safe' choice for children in Cold War France was not just highly subjective but also fiercely contested. Hachette's editorial team had to first adapt the business model to their interpretation of the French market.

The main person who led the development of the new fictions list was Louis Mirman (1916–99).[14] Recruited to Hachette in 1947, and made director of the main children's fiction series in 1953, his background was in English teaching, news agency work and radio journalism. He professed to a deep love of English culture, and his curriculum vitae suggested his political sympathies were pro-American, which is a pattern we see emerging amongst several of the new recruits and subsequent key collaborators with the department in this Cold War context. Just prior to joining Hachette, Mirman worked in radio at the Liberation, where he had been part of the North American section, as a writer on its programme 'Vers l'Amérique et Canada'. His experience of working closely with American broadcasting professionals, and his involvement in transatlantic cultural exchange would both be central to his understanding of what constituted 'modern' children's books. Likewise, his second in command Pierre Bonvallet spent five years working at the press office in the American Embassy in Paris (1954–9), before becoming head of translated fictions under Mirman, to assist with the modernization of the main children's series.[15] The second senior editor in the department was Maurice Fleurent (1918–2010), whose reflections opened this chapter. Fleurent oversaw picturebooks, illustration, and production. He joined the department around 1949, initially to work on the launch of the Albums Roses, before leading on production and illustrations across the department. Perhaps because of his background – according to one former colleague he was 'the archetypal autodidact' – Fleurent was the most passionate advocate of the transformative power of mass media within the department, and he was very engaged in questions of technical innovation and the modernization of his industry.[16] Mirman and Fleurent would lead the department into the late 1970s. Mirman's enthusiasm for English-language culture and Fleurent's technocratic world view would help to ensure the successful transfer of American values and modes of production into the department's publishing practices.

For the business model predicated on large print runs to work, children's consumption of books had to be transformed. Mirman understood the publisher's series to be the key to changing consumer habits.[17] Using publisher's series for

bulk selling products and generating brand loyalty was a marketing strategy that dated back to the eighteenth century. It had been an integral ingredient in the Hachette formula since the 1850s, when Louis Hachette launched the Bibliothèque des Chemins de Fer [Railway Library], with its different colours for the book covers to identify the different genres.[18] In the 1950s, Mirman saw this as a way to counter the conservatism of the market. Hachette's best-selling fictions in the immediate post-war period had been mainly well-known classics. This was down to what Mirman called the 'inertia' of the buying public. 'People don't read much, and even when they have read something, they forget it just as quickly. So they buy something they find reassuring; Robin Hood for example.' What this meant for the publisher, Mirman explained, was that books on their own did not sell, it was the publisher's series that did the heavy lifting. Consumers looked to the series for a brand they could trust. Series generated loyalty, and so a book that appeared within them had a ready-made readership and a much higher chance of selling. Editors at other publishing houses agreed: Alsatia admitted that even a mediocre book could sell within a popular series, while at Gauthier-Langureau the editor explained that once parents began to trust a series, success was guaranteed.[19] The conservatism of the market was, Michèle Piquard has argued, compounded by the lack of a serious literary criticism of children's books in this period.[20] When compared to the Americans, and to a lesser extent, the British, the French only had a handful of specialized children's libraries, and their librarians certainly did not have a powerful voice like that of their colleagues Stateside.[21] Moreover, thanks to the 1949 law and the anti-comics campaigns, any articles that did feature in the dailies tended to be on the dangers of children's reading. The specific nature of the critical establishment in France, with its anti-Americanism and close ties with the 1949 Law Commission, did little to legitimize the children's book trade in the eyes of consumers.

In this context, it was safest to introduce new products and expand print runs within a reassuring brand. Hachette had a clear advantage over its competitors thanks to its symbolic capital as an historic, well-known and respected educational publisher in a field where many of the key players were relative newcomers. As a result, when the department rolled out the modernization programme to the fictions in the late 1950s, instead of creating new publisher's series, they revamped two of their longest running series; the Bibliothèque Rose [Pink Library] for primary school children, and the Bibliothèque Verte [Green Library] aimed at secondary school-age readers. Set up in 1856 by Louis Hachette, the Bibliothèque Rose was by far the longest running series in French

children's books, and had published one of France's leading classic children's authors, the Comtesse de Ségur. It was an instantly recognizable, prestigious brand. Nevertheless, in the early post-war years its future had looked uncertain; the number of new titles in the Rose had been steadily dwindling to between two and five per year by the early 1950s.[22] Internally, it was perceived to be hopelessly outmoded. Was it going to be sacrificed in the great drive to modernize? In the end, the Rose was in part saved by the healthy sales of the Verte. This second series had been created in 1923, after the publisher acquired the rights to Jules Verne. Its cloth-bound books were cheaper than the Rose's famous red and gold percaline binding, and these factors ensured its retail price per volume was substantially lower.[23] As early as 1950 the editors were boasting to the board that the Verte was leading the field in school library acquisitions and its popularity with families.[24] The Rose would make an excellent foil for the Verte. With their historical prestige, associated with the two most famous authors for children in France, the two series were both immediately recognizable to the consumer. These would become the vehicles for selling the new Anglo-American series fictions. The Nancy Drew books were placed in the Verte in 1955. Blyton's books were initially sold in 1955 the Nouvelle Collection Ségur, an interwar series with large print runs for primary-age children, before being swiftly moved into the new Bibliothèque Rose.

For children in the mass-media age, the editors considered illustrations to be an important selling point, and the ratio of colour images to text was constantly being recalibrated.[25] Early discussions around boosting sales in their publisher's

Figure 3 Children's literature as standardized product. Modernized editions of Hachette's two flagship children's fiction series, the Bibliothèque Rose and the Bibliothèque Verte *c.* 1955–60s.

series suggested that their rivals had stolen a march on this front, and so Hachette deliberately introduced more colour illustrations for the same price.[26] Certainly the competitor in question – the Bibliothèque Rouge et Or [Red and Gold series], launched by Editions Générale Publicité, in 1947 – had created a splash in the post-war era by combining bright-red and yellow spines and covers with bold images to create an eye-catching visual identity for the new brand. When Hachette came to relaunch its two series, the books were dressed in bright glossy cardboard covers, onto which their colourful illustrations could be printed directly, identical for both series, but with pink spines for the Rose and green for the Verte. This was a visual cue indicating that these wares were cheap and mass-produced, but also reliable and uniform in quality, a strategy that had, as Janice Radway notes, been used to sell everything from Quaker Oats to Pearline soap.[27] Inside, the text was accompanied by black-and-white drawings, but also included several full-page colour illustrations. Their presentation of the project to Hachette's board of directors emphasized the importance to their consumers of the visual aspect of the new books.[28]

Most important was price. As the department's internal discussions noted, the Rouge et Or model was attractive thanks to its colourful illustration and packaging, but it had proved too expensive to reach the really broad market they were aiming at. Thus they set their new price point as low as they could. One volume in the new Rose and Verte series cost 250 francs, the price of a packet of cigarettes. This considerably under-cut their main competitor, the Rouge et Or series, which charged around 600 francs for a book with comparable colour plate illustrations. Sales prices were kept down by large print runs, with tightly standardized production which printed volumes in 12 × 17cm format, either 92 or 256 pages long, and spines were glued, instead of stitched. (This meant that many editorial discussions were centred on how to cut text down by number of lines, to fit on the machines). The revamped Rose and Verte were not just cheaper in price but also in feel. By dispensing with dust jackets, and printing the colour image straight onto the cardboard covers, Hachette's books were lighter, closer to paperbacks and cheaper forms of print culture. The flimsiness of the product was more of a departure; its binding was so cheap that librarians complained it would not stand up to repeated reading,[29] while the paper was coarse and the text was squashed onto the page, as if to further underscore the primacy of the image. These were books designed to be consumed rather than treasured.

To stimulate mass consumption, the new business model did not, however, just focus on price and print runs. The next major innovation – new to Hachette's children's lists – was the introduction of mass-produced series.

The mantra within Hachette's juvenile department was that contemporary children's books could and indeed must compete with cinema, radio, comics and the slow spread of television.[30] This was where series literature came in, as it was based around forms of media consumption associated with cheap, highly visual formats considered to be easier to consume. This element of the editorial formula would fall into place more gradually, thanks to the encouraging sales of their translations of Blyton's Famous Five series and the Stratemeyer Syndicate's Nancy Drew series – the first print run of the *Le Club des Cinq* (1955) [*Five Go Adventuring Again*, 1943] sold all 20,000 copies in a matter of weeks, while the Nancy Drew books with initial print runs of 40,000 were being re-edited within a few months.[31] Underpinning the soon-to-be-vertiginous sales of both Blyton's and the Stratemeyer Syndicate's books was their serial format. This kind of series literature was distinguished by the repetitive nature of the stories, in which the same characters reappeared, and never grew old. The plots followed similar lines, and while from one book to another there might have be a small amount of progression, they did not need to be read in a particular order.[32] Thanks to the success of the modernization programme and the new content, Mirman and his team quite quickly began to conceptualize the content in terms of sub-series, by author or character, within the large and growing lists of the Rose and the Verte. An internal memo from 1966 entitled 'series: past, present, future'[33] set out the trends in these sub-series after their respective launches. In 1961, the Rose and the Verte contained seventeen sub-series, with seventy-four titles between them. This number had tripled by 1966, with 204 titles. The most popular, according to the memo, were the ones with the most titles, which, at this point included Blyton's Famous Five and Georges Chaulet's Fantômette (launched in 1961) for the Rose, and Paul-Jacques Bonzon's Six compagnons (launched in 1961) and Nancy Drew for the Verte. In the context of the huge surge in sales this policy had generated, the memo decided that the intention was not to dispense with stand-alone works entirely, but that lone titles would henceforth be reserved for older 'prestige' books, or for trying out new authors. By the end of the 1960s, the Hachette children's catalogue was making this new structure of the Rose and the Verte a key feature of their marketing. The 1968 catalogue gave its readers 'a word of advice: there are lots of series in the Rose (*Le Club des Cinq, Le Clan des Sept, Fantômette*, etc.). Look out for them to find your favourite heroes'.

The memo on sub-series reveals how the team understood the evolution of consumer habits, and how this drove new modes of production.[34] Serial production and serial consumption are intrinsically linked, but how exactly the Hachette team sought to shape reading and buying patterns was dependent on the

rates of production they could achieve. The most popular sub-series, according to the memo, were the ones with the most titles. The copyright deposit archives from this period reveal the pace at which the department worked to create and then sustain this demand.[35] To begin with they created demand by introducing a series with a flurry of new editions, usually around three to four titles per year in the first few years of its launch. They would then drip feed further titles at a slower rate, and concentrate on re-editions of the series at a steady pace, but in lower numbers, while another new series was launched. Thus in 1963, the department declared they had sent forty-two Blyton titles to their presses by that year, of which seven were new titles, and four of these were the new Noddy series (he was launched in France as *Oui-Oui* in 1962). The new Noddy titles had print runs of up to 80,000, while the other Blyton re-editions were between 30,000 to 50,000 copies. Altogether, just for the Rose, seventy-seven books had been sent to the presses that year. The memo set out how they saw these series as working in cycles or fads. The slower production of series focused on just one new title per year and numerous smaller re-editions were for what they called 'established' series, while they cranked up the number of new titles for series 'on the rise' that would replace those on the wane. This worked in cycles of around three to four years, so they expected new series to peak four years after their introduction, and then go into decline. Compared to the consumption patterns for comics or television, this happened at a much slower pace, but the idea of creating an addiction, and sustaining it through regular drip feeding of novelties, which could then be replaced by a new series, worked on similar principles. Therefore, as the Nancy Drew series was starting to lose its novelty, new series featuring female detectives were introduced in the shape of Fantômette (1961) and the Stratemeyer's Dana Girls series (Les Sœurs Parker, 1966). Blyton's series could replace one another; initially they introduced the Famous Five in 1955, this was supplemented by the Secret Seven in 1958 and was swiftly followed by the Mystery series and Noddy for slightly younger readers in the early 1960s. This was as frenzied a pace as a book publisher could manage.

The marketing formula used for the new Rose and Verte series emphasized that these books were cheap, accessible and democratic. An advertorial for the new Bibliothèque Rose in the trade magazine *L'Imprimerie Nouvelle* declared triumphantly that 'a great wave of modernization and democratization has swept across children's books'.[36] This change was represented visually in the catalogues as well. The 1952 catalogue for the Rose used the subtitle 'Yesterday's classics, beautiful books for today,' to underscore its heritage appeal. In 1960 the catalogue described the Rose and the Verte as prestigious series, but added

that their 'modern', 'colourful' presentation had been 'renewed using the latest printing techniques', and pointed to their contemporary titles.[37] The 1961 catalogue playfully made the point that these were books intended for mass consumption. Large colour photographs featured children playing with piles of books, leaning on them, even using them as a windbreak on beaches. In this vein the 1960 edition of Hachette's children's department catalogue was the last to appear under the title 'Catalogue des étrennes' [gift book catalogue], subsequent catalogues appeared as 'Hachette jeunesse' [Hachette youth]. Hachette's editors were leading sector-wide change. The new section dedicated to children's book publishers within the Syndicat National de l'Édition [National Publisher's Union] was set up in 1958, under the directorship of Hachette's Robert Meunier du Houssoy, who was its first head (1958–63), and the senior team from the children's department at Hachette, Fouret, Fleurent and Mirman, all played prominent roles in the organization.[38] It was a clear signal of the ambitions of publishers to expand children's book consumption beyond Christmas presents and school prize-giving ceremonies.

Hachette's editors had to become vocal defenders of this publishing model, as it was an important departure from accepted ideas of children's books and consumption. In Cold War France, business practices were inseparable from ideology. The regulatory environment insisted that publishers for children had a responsibility to the nation. The pursuit of profits above quality – and particularly to create an addiction amongst the young to American-origin content – was viewed with suspicion. Hachette's move to the highly commercial end of the children's publishing field made it the leading 'American-style' capitalist publisher. For many prominent critics on the left and on the CSC regulatory board children were vulnerable to capitalist predation. The CSC's guidelines argued that children could not choose their own books, any more than they could be allowed to decide what they should eat.[39]

In contrast, Hachette's editors' argument for the American consumer capitalist book-selling and production model was that it put books within the reach of the masses. Consumption of books was itself understood to be a positive according to Fleurent's technocratic world view. He presented in lyrical terms how mass production ensured the book could be a crucial tool in modern society, providing the technology for aspiration and intellectual development.[40] He felt they were moving towards an American consumerist revolution where books would be sold in drugstores, and for him, this was generally a positive change.[41] Later on, Fleurent spoke of how, as an editor, he was often frustrated by parents and book reviewers who were only interested in children's books

at Christmas time, viewing them on a par with toys and roller-skates. In his opinion, reading was crucial to children's development and should be part of their everyday consumption.[42]

Mirman's argument was more cynical. According to Raoul Dubois, the influential Communist critic and member of the CSC regulatory board, with whom Mirman regularly sparred, the editor dismissed the suggestion that Hachette should be publishing critically acclaimed books: 'they don't sell' was always Mirman's laconic answer.[43] Mirman's tone was provocative: 'essentially, we target the masses. We're interested in the sweet but stupid kids.'[44] In Mirman's many encounters with critics and journalists, there emerges a strong sense that he felt embattled, and more than a little frustrated by the fact that although the books he was making were selling in their millions, the literary establishment, policymakers and education system all felt that what he was doing was deeply wrong. This sense of defensiveness was key to Mirman's presentation of his role at Hachette. His argument was that he made books for the underdogs, which was to say the majority of children whose tastes were belittled and ignored by teachers and literary critics. Mirman would later boast that he had signed up Blyton when all other French publishers had turned up their noses at her. Although the English agent Rosica Colin claimed she had been the one who had persuaded French and German publishers to take the author on, and in any case, one of Blyton's stories had already been serialized for French readers in *Spirou*, the Belgian comic Mirman's boast was indicative of his desire to react against the prevailing culture in French children's book world. Picking up content that was argued by English agents to be a money-spinner, and that had originally attracted a comics publisher, fitted with Mirman's narrative of Hachette being both a publisher going against the grain and one that understood children's tastes.

The assembly line and its workers

To produce children's fictions at this ambitious scale and speed required careful planning and processes. The creative labour of translating, writing and standardizing content and illustrating had to be atomized, planned and organized. This had been pioneered in children's books with staggering success by the American Stratemeyer Syndicate. Buying the Syndicate's content and adopting its serial publishing model also entailed adapting their assembly line approach to creative labour. Such practices were controversial in the United States, and in France in the Cold War context of the hostility towards American

commercial culture they were even more so. Mirman, as senior editor, was all too aware of this. His siege mentality shaped the way he approached building his team and processes, and it guided the mindset that developed on the assembly line amongst the people he recruited to put his vision into action.

The rhetoric about mass-market fiction revolved around the perceived paradox of industrial scale and romantic notions of creative labour. Could Fordist principals be applied to producing literature? Radway speaks of the critical disdain for 'machine-tooled' books, and the general idea was that mass-produced writing was pap (it could be 'the most delectable pap', as *Fortune* wrote of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, but pap it very much remained).[45] However, this rhetorical paradox disguised the enormous amounts of editorial work such 'pap' required. The Stratemeyer method for increasing creative productivity on an industrial scale was a Fordist-style endeavour in the literary field. Its founder, Edward Stratemeyer, had originally been a writer of dime novels for big publishers such as Smith and Street, before branching out on his own in the first decade of the twentieth century.[46] He developed the plot outlines along his trusted formula of adventure, thrills, and regular cliff-hangers to keep the reader reading on till the end. He published his stories in series, with the same characters recurring in book after book. According to Deirdre Johnson, Stratemeyer produced approximately eighty-two series, with between nineteen and thirty in progress each year, averaging around thirty-one new titles a year. Sustaining such a level of writing at the pace needed to keep readers coming back for more was clearly beyond the powers of one man. The actual writing of the stories was farmed out to a team of ghost-writers who were paid a flat fee, and Stratemeyer retained the copyright. Each manuscript was then returned, and polished up into a book that met with the Stratemeyer standard, or as *Fortune* magazine put it 'at the end of the chute stands a representative of the publisher who, acting like a U.S. government meat inspector in a packing plant, certifies the manuscript as factually fit for consumption'.[47] The publisher Grosset and Dunlap then assured nationwide distribution. The low costs of the writing process and the backing of a large publisher ensured they could produce these series books for fifty cents. This was American-style productivity, with all its science of process, standardization and effective management of resources, applied to the creative labour of making books.

The question of the relationship between public image and backroom procedures was vital. The Stratemeyer Syndicate was notoriously secretive concerning how their books were actually made. The family systematically blocked attempts to write Edward Stratemeyer's biography, while the rather

brutal 'exposé' of their methods in the *Fortune* magazine articles in 1934 cited above had caused them endless amounts of negative publicity and their exclusion from public libraries.[48] It was no surprise that Louis Mirman anticipated this issue when setting up his team and developing the public face of the work they were doing in the department. A sense of defensiveness underpinned Hachette's new children's fictions assembly line.

First, Mirman was very clear that he did not want teachers or intellectuals for the editorial tasks on his assembly line. Teachers chose 'didactic books', he said pointedly in a 1956 interview with the critic Marc Soriano, and 'were only interested in the most talented pupils in the class'.[49] His former editorial assistant, Madame S, returned to this idea at several points when I interviewed her, explaining that Mirman refused to hire 'teachers, and certainly no university-types for this line of work', suggesting this may well have been an oft-repeated dictum in the department.[50] Certainly, Mirman's team was unusual in having an editor in charge of translated fictions, Bonvallet, who had enjoyed a career as a clown named Punch at the famous Medrano Circus before working for the American Embassy and eventually taking up the red pencil at Hachette.[51] Plenty more of the team did have university diplomas, however; it was a narrative that Mirman spun about the department, rather than being strictly true.[52] He insisted that his staff focus on the customer, rather than worrying about pleasing the education establishment or literary critics. This meant that he was very interested in parents, particularly mothers, who were the great consumer base of the new consumer society. Both Madame S and Madame J – who worked for the department on a freelance basis as a translator, reader, corrector and occasionally writer – emphasized their suitability for this type of work by the fact they had children of reading age.[53]

Women were also cheap. They were happy to work on a piecework basis, in order to fit around their family commitments, or other jobs. During our interview Madame J repeatedly described it as minimum wage piecework: 'you couldn't earn your keep doing this type of work'. While she noted that the team was mixed, and by no means just women, still its nature meant that this was where the female creative labour was concentrated. Meanwhile Madame S recalled how her pay as editorial assistant had been much lower than that of her male equivalents; when she complained, Mirman's reply was that a woman could not expect to receive the same money as a male breadwinner. Her take-home pay effectively doubled when she took on extra reading work. Moreover, women provided a ready source of another important type of cheap labour, as the department regularly had recourse to the children of its staff to provide

opinions on books.[54] Madame J noted proudly that her son was the only one amongst the children to receive payment for this type of work.

The structure Mirman adopted for his assembly line was similar to the Stratemeyer Syndicate model, although Mirman's team appears to have grown in a more organic, ad hoc way, in comparison to the carefully designed processes that made the Stratemeyer Syndicate run so smoothly. New recruits to the Syndicate started out on a contract basis before becoming full time employees. They began by writing sample chapters, and then were given editorial work, such as rewriting older series books, or helping to prepare new titles. Only after this apprenticeship would they be entrusted with their own outlines and stories.[55] At Hachette, these staff operated on a piecework basis, although they might occupy a different full-time role within the organization. This meant that the roles of the core and the freelance workers were blurred through Mirman's tendency to rely both on the department's administrative and editorial staff, and indeed their children, as well as its authors and translators, for the tasks of content selection, correcting and proof-reading. For example, Madame S was initially recruited by Mirman to help out with reading work, before she joined the team definitively as his assistant, but as we have seen, she continued to supplement her earnings with editorial piecework. Madame J had begun her career as a maths teacher and then wrote adult detective fiction for the publisher Ditis. When she submitted a manuscript to Hachette for a detective novel, it was rejected, but they had liked her writing style, and kept her on their books through regular piecework as a translator and reader. For Madame S, freshly arrived from a role in the metallurgy industry, Hachette was a pleasant change, but she found the practices within the department arcane, if not downright disorganized: 'listen, I did all sorts of tasks, everything, because when I arrived [*c.* 1955] it was really very … [pause] … even the contracts [needed sorting out].' In terms of the process engineering of the content production chain, it might be more accurate to talk about an organic growth. However, staff still received an apprenticeship in writing and editing, in a similar, if less formalized, way than they did at the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Moreover, Mirman clearly knew who he wanted, and who he very much felt was unsuitable for the ethos of his team. The set-up meant that there was stability of staff along the production chain preparing content for the printers, and while each task was atomized, the operatives were familiar with the entire process of content selection and development. Authors working on series were guaranteed a steady flow of work, and secretaries and translators used such work to supplement their meagre earnings.

Most dramatic for the people working on the assembly lines was the flattening of the literary hierarchies that this atomization of creative tasks imposed. Series literature and its production processes challenged established notions of books and authorship. In France the book carried a cultural weight, a prestige that other forms of media lacked. But as Letourneux explains, series books are the polar opposite of the critical ideal of great canonical literature – with its emphasis on unique-ness of artworks, produced by the genius of one author.[56] By contrast the texts that appeared under the prestigious pink and green Hachette fictions branding had to fit the norms of the series; this was literature as standardized product. This meant that translators were just as important as authors in the structuring of the tasks, and both translated manuscripts and original manuscripts were subject to extensive editorial interference. Moreover, the entire business model was based on importing literature in bulk from the English language, which meant that much of the work was around translation. All the senior editorial team spoke English (apart from the head of the juvenile department, Didier Fouret, whose main qualification was that he was a scion of the Hachette family), and most of them had backgrounds in translation and teaching, rather than in literature.[57] The ready supply of imported content that only needed to be translated was one of the factors that allowed the department to produce its serial content at such speed.[58] Translators were given a tight deadline, usually two months, to produce the French manuscript, and were paid a flat fee.[59] As for authors, they were encouraged to produce French series along the same lines as the Anglo-American series. The most popular were virtually all variants on the child detective story: Georges Bayard's boy detective Michel (1958, Bibliothèque Verte), Paul-Jacques Bonzon's Six Compagnons (1961, Bibliothèque Verte), which featured working-class children, set against a backdrop of the rapid urbanization of the 1950s and 1960s, and Georges Chaulet's female superhero Fantômette (1961, Bibliothèque Rose). In the Hachette model, authors were responsible for 'their' series, perhaps even two series, and they had to produce them quickly. The manuscripts this system produced were often jumbled, linguistically sloppy and suffered from inconsistencies in the plot. The writers simply did not have the time to read through their work properly. It was at this point that the Hachette editorial team stepped in, and the manuscripts were placed on the same pile as all the translated texts, ready for drastic editing.

Then came the most important part: the working up of the manuscript into a 'Hachette book', which could be sold under the brand. This part of the assembly line work was made very public by Mirman. He introduced a rigorous,

bureaucratic process for polishing the manuscripts, and made sure to mention it in interviews he gave to major publications in the education and book trade. In an interview for *Enfance* childhood studies journal in 1956, Mirman explained:

> once we have accepted a book, we put it through a series of checks in order to let nothing through that might be dangerous from the point of view of morality, and our university-trained correctors look out for vulgarities, sections that are unclear, overlong sentences, archaic terms, technical vocabulary, etc. A team of quite exceptional correctors scrutinises the texts, analyses them for their overall coherence, and so forth. There is even a weekly meeting, under the direction of the most experienced members, which examines grammatical questions, recurring mistakes, etc.

Accompanying this explanation was a copy of the report that readers and correctors in the editorial team had to fill out for each manuscript, called the 'Note sur la Forme'. The form was divided into two sections. Section A asked the reader to focus on 'general' issues: 'plot, boring sections [*longueurs*], elegance and variety of style, diverse suggestions for improvement'. Section B prompted the team to study the language and content more carefully, and will form the focus of Chapter 5 of this book. Mirman mentioned it again in an interview in 1962 with the main trade magazine of the publishing industry, *Bulletin du Livre*.[60] Noticeably here, and in stark contrast with his other public statements about the team, Mirman was keen to highlight the academic credentials of his team. This labour was vital to the construction of the brand as reassuring, and therefore had to be made visible.

Both of the former employees who worked on the assembly line that I interviewed, Madame S and Madame J, concurred that the standardization tasks were the really enjoyable, creative part of their jobs. Their work was to homogenize, iron out mistakes and perfect the copy, but also to write and rewrite as necessary, helping to craft the perfect plot. 'We were on the lookout for all sorts of mistakes', Madame S remembered.

> We looked for repetitions, faulty punctuation, poor grammar, overlong sentences … in fact, it was our job to scrutinize even the tiniest details, and I really loved the nit-picking aspect of my work. […]
>
> I can't remember what we used to call it … we had a word … but we would often rework the texts […] so a story might be interesting, but it lacked dramatic progression or … we didn't like – and I don't think children like it either – things like flashbacks. So sometimes we would modify the whole construction of the book … yes, that's right ! So, for example, we would say things like let's move this chapter, it would be better before that one.[61]

Towards the end of the 1960s, Louis Mirman reflected that once the essential ingredients in the Hachette recipe for successful children's books were in place, then 'the rest, by which I mean the composition, can be developed, specifically developed with the editor'.[62] His failure to mention the author in his passive construction of books being made, where only the editor had agency, gives a strong sense of the place of the author within serial literature production. The extent to which members of the team were understood to be co-creators can be seen in the correspondence regarding a new series, where the editor encouraged the rewriter to be much more bold, and to use her 'lively writing style' to refashion the characters and inject a good dose of fantasy into this rather boring manuscript: 'Madame L just needs to allow herself free rein.'[63]

The invisibility of the creative processes in the production of the books was crucial. The author's role in series fiction was reduced to coming up with the ideas for the series overall, and then plot ideas for individual books. In the Stratemeyer Syndicate model, the 'author' in this sense was Edward Stratemeyer, and the 'name' of a made up author appeared on the cover. The Syndicate maintained the fiction that invented authors such as Carolyn Keene actually existed.[64] Similarly, at Hachette, the 'author' was the person who proposed the series to Mirman, and it was their name that appeared on the front cover. The author's name on the cover was just a further element of the series branding, and a recognition of their role as the originator of the series. The fact that many of these books were translations was also scrupulously hidden. All the external packaging of the new books was dedicated to advertising that the book belonged to the publisher's series and, through the author and title, which series it came from. Only by opening the book could the discerning consumer learn who the illustrator was and who had produced the French version of the text. In the case of Blyton's books, the foreign origins of the books were kept hidden from view. The new Bibliothèque Rose editions made no mention of translators, and even eagle-eyed readers who checked the copyright declarations in the front matter would be disappointed, as quite often the original English copyright date was omitted. The expansion of translation studies, particularly since Lawrence Venuti's pathbreaking work on the 'invisibility' of the translator, has highlighted the hidden creative labour of translators.[65] However, in the case of Hachette's fiction factory, as is usual for serial fiction, the translator was just one of many writers whose work was hidden behind the name of the 'author' on the front cover.

This new way of working could prove discomfiting for authors in the Hachette model, for they were not hired as ghost-writers, as the Stratemeyer employees were. They therefore found their expectations, conditioned by the

romantic construct of the author, could be seriously confounded by the new serial production methods. According to Madame S, Mirman's editorial assistant, it was not unusual for the office of the Hachette children's department to be disrupted by the arrival of a disgruntled author shouting loudly that they wanted to 'find the arsehole who has been messing with my text!'[66] Likewise, translators could also feel that their craft was being devalued. The archives contain a series of letters from one furious translator, who was fed up with the long list of corrections to her translations of Blyton that she received. She spoke of feeling distressed by the storm of correction slips that she was faced with, 'like little demonic creatures from a Bosch painting'.[67] Possibly, the translator concluded, she just did not possess the talent for 'colourless expressions' that was required for making Hachette books.[68] Just as Fleurent and Mirman found any romantic notions of their role as editor replaced by feelings of being at the mercy of the machines, so too did the complicated, sprawling and oftentimes messy processes of making books on this scale put to rest any sense of there being an author, translator or indeed any sole creator responsible for any one part of the creative process.

Finally, the flattening out of the hierarchies, and the regularity with which authors and translators also carried out other editorial tasks on the assembly line, had the important consequence of forging a strong understanding of the evaluation criteria and what constituted an 'Hachette book'. While working in this way could damage authorial egos, and not everyone involved in the processes appreciated the endless rewriting, for many others, it ensured steady and enjoyable work. Certainly Madame J recalled how the working practices of the fictions team helped to foster a very clear sense of what they were doing, and, likewise, where the boundaries lay – the sort of organization that they were not. In comparison to other publishers Madame J worked for, Hachette was a pleasant environment. Although she felt this was generally the atmosphere in publishing, there were some, such as Gallimard, that could be more stressful than others. Madame S echoed this sentiment, recalling with a shudder the violent temper of one famous literary editor for whom she worked briefly after leaving Hachette. The department's friendly working environment, where they came to know one another very well, and would discuss ideas on children's books together, fostered a shared understanding of what the editors wanted. 'We had no need for criteria', Madame S replied, tapping her nose, when I asked her about how they chose manuscripts, 'we just knew'. As for Madame J, she explained how they formed a little committee, and all knew each other well. She would often go to the department once or twice a week, 'to chat about the books' with

the editors and pick up work to take back home with her. She spoke of how she grew to know by instinct what constituted an 'Hachette' children's book, what would not work in their series, and which elements had to be rejected or cut. The reports preserved in the archives are peppered with references to the norms of the series, and statements such as 'this just isn't our type of book', without much further explanation.

Still, the image of the press and its national standing were key factors in their analysis. According to Madame J, Hachette's staff thought they were the best when it came to children's books. The nation's young were 'their' readers; their deliberations had national import. They were providing the books that millions of French children were going to read, and they also had the reputation of this large, historically important publisher to protect. Even if they felt they disagreed with the highly commercial direction it was taking, a strong sense of pride in Hachette nevertheless comes through quite strongly. The employees were passionate about their work, Madame J explained: 'we really wanted the books to sell.' In effect, these discussions were the soul of the department's books, in which its very ethos was being tested, debated and ultimately forged.

Making mass-market children's fictions

As the two flagship publishers' series developed and progressed, these notions of what constituted 'Hachette' books for children, and the kind of content that would work well for their mass-market serial formula, were refined through the editorial team's meetings. This was an iterative process, shaped as much by the discussions and debates that took place within the department, as it was by sales, managerial decisions and regulation. The mindset on Mirman's assembly line translated into an ambivalent approach to the content they were publishing. When numerous decisions were being taken under immense time pressure this mindset was crucial. Their discussions and decisions transformed content and packaging, and shaped the new type of American-style series literature that came to define children's books in this period.

For Mirman, the essence of the appeal of modern children's books was adventure. In fact, he explained, 'I'm tempted to say that all our novels are adventure stories', to the point that he suggested that the expression 'adventure novel' was close to being tautological. All novels transport the reader, be they tales of the high seas, detective stories, or even romances. And, in Mirman's view, all readers 'are seeking exaltation. They want to break out of the dull routines of

everyday life and finally feel swept away by things that are truly important'.[69] Nevertheless, for him, these strong sensations were something that children in particular felt the need for; 'they can feel like they are on the side-lines of real life', and exciting stories provide them with this sense of danger they lack.[70] According to the observations recorded by the critic Soriano, who collaborated with Mirman and his team on the modernization of Verne, the view was that new forms of mass culture had conditioned young readers to expect easy emotions and suspense. In order to compete, books had to be immediately gratifying and easy to consume.[71]

In terms of the writing that could create these big emotions and intense consumption patterns, Mirman wanted his authors, translators and rewriters to prioritize imagination, lively dialogue and movement.[72] The librarian Nic Diament would later comment on the direct, linear nature of Mirman's own writing (in his retirement he went on to produce a number of adventure stories for children).[73] These ingredients formed the basis of all adventure stories, in Mirman's view, and the team could then discuss how to add cliff-hangers, and 'shocking effects' of particularly exciting plot twists.[74] The author Chaulet recalled how Mirman told him 'the reader must be amazed or surprised'.[75] Likewise, *Fortune* noted of the Stratemeyer novels: 'in order to hold the reader breathless, the fifty cent plot whirls lickety-split from the first to the last chapter like an express train'.[76] The same ideas recur again and again: the immediacy of the reading experience through the use of linear plots – 'no flashbacks' as Madame S put it – the importance of keeping the reader guessing, the speed of the plot, which reflected the speed of both the book's production and its consumption. Such books were not something to be savoured but rather consumed at breakneck speed, in order to then get the next fix.

In discussions on the assembly line, the emphasis on gratification and the immediacy of the reading experience translated into a marked preference for writing that established 'direct' contact with young readers. In one review of a manuscript, an author who wrote series fictions for the publisher used these terms to praise a manuscript written by one of his fellow Hachette writers, an adventure story set in Papua New Guinea: 'this is an excellent novel in my view: its subject is original, the style is clear – agreeable without being boring, and yet filled with description. The characters are well-developed and picturesque in a captivating way […] the sort of book one would like to have written'.[77] It is easy to see how employing authors to do reading committee piecework helped to create the 'house style' at Hachette. Similarly, another reader's report described how they were struck by the 'freshness of the inspiration' in a manuscript;

and how impressed by the warmth and friendship between the group of young protagonists. The writing style – 'very clear, using short sentences, and almost entirely composed of dialogues' – was presented as the major attraction of the book.[78] The report form encouraged the team to be on the look out for 'longueurs' in manuscripts. Again, the language they used revolved around the idea of dynamism and movement – the idea of 'direct contact with the reader' was often evoked, and the usual recommendation was to shorten sentences and phrasing.[79]

Mirman's anti-intellectual ethos appears in the frames of reference the team used to conceptualize the books and what they could do to them. Madame S, when she read Blyton early on, felt she could immediately situate the books within the contemporary French media landscape: 'I tested her. […] She was the children's Delly. It was pure Delly. Always the same story.'[80] Madame S was referring to a French brother-and-sister writing team who published best-selling romance novels for young women in the interwar period under the nom de plume 'Delly', and whose books were currently enjoying something of a posthumous golden age in Tallandier's romance series in the 1950s.[81] For Madame S, Delly's books were one of the best examples at the time of how to write successful popular literature, and they were one of the measures she used in her reading work for the department, to judge whether a book might sell or not. During our interview, Madame S frequently had recourse to examples from the popular culture of the time, and especially to Delly, to help me understand their deliberations.

Interestingly, Madame S was also at pains to explain that she herself had not been a fan; that Delly books were rather 'stupid', and her parents had forbidden her to read such 'trash'. So, she had graduated from girls' magazines to 'real' literature – the great Russian novelists – thereby bypassing such material completely as a teenager. While his team may have been told quite clearly that they had been recruited because they were not 'intellectuals', this was not to say that Mirman's readers were necessarily enthusiastic consumers of popular culture. Some colleagues just did not know how to play the game. Madame S recalled how she had once debated with one of the other readers over whether to recommend the memoirs of a ballet dancer. Her colleague had wanted to reject the manuscript, deriding it as 'better suited to *France Dimanche*' [a popular gossip magazine],

> but I knew that if the books were to sell, then we had to produce quality versions of *France Dimanche* […] In other words, well-written, with a well thought out storyline, but a little trivial, so that … [pause] because my principal was that the

> reader must be able to identify with one or two of the heroes, otherwise they would not be interested.[82]

Madame S noted pointedly that this particular reader subsequently left to work for the more literary publisher Gallimard.

The team had a pronounced sense that their books were doing something new. Deliberations in the reports from across the 1950s contain numerous references to the idea that children's lives had changed and that their books needed to change too. Rejection letters consistently rebuffed manuscripts for fairy tales or folktales, myths, and legends of any sort, for they did not fit with their modernist understanding of books. They saw themselves as moving away from the nineteenth-century style of the classic author the Comtesse de Ségur and her interwar emulators. Madame J recalled how she had enjoyed Ségur as a child, but when working for the Bibliothèque Rose in the 1960s, it was very clear to her that the domestic education literature which was popularly associated with the Comtesse was out of fashion. Reports drew a clear distinction between children's books written before the Blyton and Nancy Drew era, and those produced afterwards. For example, a report from 1963 said of a manuscript that was rejected: 'to children that have become accustomed to the exciting adventures of the Famous Five, and the even more thrilling tales of Nancy Drew, this adventure will seem dull.'[83] Another reader rejected a manuscript that he described witheringly as 'pseudo Blyton', lacking in dynamism.[84] And a report from 1975 spoke of: 'carefully structured detective stories, conventional characters, a rapid style, focused on telling the story efficiently […] [the rules of the Rose are] rigor, clarity, realism and modern youth.'[85]

The books of Blyton and the Nancy Drew series swiftly became the backbones of the Rose and the Verte. They were used as the reference points that defined how the team approached the modernization of their content, and how they understood children's books. As Madame S recalled pointedly, when the literary agent sent new Blyton books over to the department, 'we didn't even read them … they were accepted automatically'.[86] Nevertheless, although these best-selling series were used as measures of what the Rose and the Verte were doing, it is worth studying more carefully the discursive constructions of those books and their appeal. The team were operating in a different media and regulatory environment to those in which the content had been produced (interwar America for Nancy Drew and 1940s and 1950s Britain for Blyton's series respectively). The standardization and repackaging processes changed the content and the way they were presented to child readers quite radically. This

was particularly the case for Blyton; the hefty production files for her books bear witness to the substantial number of modifications her texts underwent before they became Hachette books. As one translator, who had looked over some of the other Hachette editions of Blyton, put it: 'This isn't Blyton!', she exclaimed in a furious letter to the editorial team: 'the biggest mystery for me is how this rubbish is so successful – I'm not talking about Blyton's books, but rather these French versions!'[87]

Blyton's books further shaped the notion within the team that the books they were producing were not 'literary'; the team established a binary between 'literary' and 'large print run' books. Madame S's reply to my question of what the image of Blyton was in the department was characteristically blunt. She recounted how 'one of my friends once met Eddy Vartan, [pop singer Johnny Hallyday's manager], who explained that his music "is crap, but it sells". Basically, that was the attitude, although [looking back on it] she was not that bad'.[88] This had important implications for how Blyton's texts were treated. Madame J, who was one of the translators working on Blyton's Noddy series in the 1960s and 1970s, noted how agreeable she found translating these books.[89] She contrasted the care with which she translated a 'real' author such as Jack London, compared to the great liberties she took with Blyton's texts. Her method was to use Blyton's source text as a base for inspiration, rather than something to be followed particularly carefully. She recalled how she could 'embroider' as she wished – even make things up, or change elements from an 'aesthetic' perspective 'to make it more amusing for children', such as re-ordering the text or adding dialogue. Normally Madame J explained, she used a dictionary, but when translating the Noddy books, she dispensed with this. Their simple language meant it was not necessary. For the French text, however, her Grevisse grammar manual was indispensable; it was essential to write in a very correct language, which 'was quite a task!'

Unlike the Nancy Drew books, Blyton's texts had not been carefully proof-read and checked for mistakes. Her texts required a lot of work, and so we can see in much greater detail how standardized serial fictions were produced at Hachette. Blyton produced books at a breath-taking rate, averaging around 10,000 words per day.[90] This was, according to David Rudd's analysis, an output that she sustained by writing 'on the hoof'. She wrote stories as if she was telling them, with all the repetitions and inconsistencies that implies. Unlike many popular writers, however, she did not return to her texts to amend them after composition, and so they would remain riddled with mistakes (names that changed, strange holes in plots). Accordingly, as she became ever more popular

and in demand in the early 1950s, Blyton acquired a reputation for being an 'over-productive hack', a charge that has dogged her oeuvre ever since.[91]

Mirman's deputy in charge of translated texts, Pierre Bonvallet, was not a great Blyton enthusiast. His report on *La Boussole du Club des Cinq* (1963) [*Five Go to Demon's Rocks,* 1961] concluded that 'while still evidently in the tradition of Blyton, here is one that has produced a good quality French text'.[92] Elsewhere he complained that 'her composition lacked rigour'.[93] Generally speaking, the Famous Five books found favour with the readers. For example the corrector's report stated warmly that *Le Club des Cinq et le Coffre aux Merveilles* (1963) [*Five on Finniston Farm*, 1960] had all the right ingredients: 'the club, castle, treasure, poor peasants up against Americans interested in antiques.' While it was perhaps a little 'childish', the plot flowed nicely, making it 'a good Blyton'.[94] However, the plotting of many of Blyton's books in other series could be rather flabby, in the view of Hachette's team. The corrector lamented for example that the beginning of *Le Mystère de la Roche Percée* (1960) [*The Rubadub Mystery*, 1951] was very slow, and that the action only really began around page sixty. The corrector asked the translator to cut around six hundred lines to rectify this issue, and they responded by cutting out much of the chatter between the children and secondary adult characters.[95] Similarly, in their report on *Le Mystère du Pavillon Rose* (1963) [*Mystery of the Burnt Cottage*, 1943] the corrector complained that the plot dragged on a bit.[96] The disgruntled translator whom we met in the previous section vented her frustration at working on Blyton's texts:

> The *Ragamuffin* has caused me much more trouble than other Blytons! She really messed it up! When you read it closely you can see it's filled with contradictions, repetitions, pitfalls, incoherent sections, bits missing … There were plenty of pages where I had to make things up, rewrite bits, correct things, connect them, weed things out, and add in explanations …. I have tried my utmost with it![97]

While the team may have been disparaging about the quality of Blyton's writing, it was undeniable that her content ended up setting the tone for the new formula. Once translated, doctored and sold cheaply, Blyton's books became its runaway success. The juvenile department's director Didier Fouret reported to Hachette's board of directors in 1965 that 'one of the most significant events in the life of the children's department has been the remarkable growth in sales of titles by Enyd [*sic*] Blyton, which have reached a total of eight million copies sold in ten years'.[98] Nine years later, Blyton topped their 'hit parade' of authors, with her total sales for Hachette estimated to be twenty-six million copies, which was more than double the sales figures for the Nancy Drew series.[99] Madame J recalled how 'she was *the* writer, because of the big print runs. Everything Blyton wrote, sold'.[100]

Figure 4 The modern children's fiction series were packaged as American-style products for the new consumer society. Modernized editions for Nancy Drew, Enid Blyton and Jules Verne books in the Bibliothèque Rose and the Bibliothèque Verte *c.* 1955–60s.

The final, crucial component in the editorial formula was the packaging. The illustrations and visual elements of the packaging were central to the way the department understood the appeal of modern children's books, and to the way that they marketed them as series books. As set out above, the brightly coloured, uniform covers helped consumers to identify the books as part of a well-known series, and then, within this, to identify their preferred sub-series. It took the department a while to find an illustrator who could develop a clear visual identity for Blyton's Famous Five books. The initial covers were rather staid compared to the sense of adventure created by Eileen Soper's cover artworks for Hodder and Stoughton, with the adventurous children in various active poses, usually in front of exciting backdrops (such as cliffs, shipwrecks or ruined castles). The first *Club des Cinq* (1955) cover was set in a bleak landscape, with the four children in a relatively static pose.[101] In particular, the French illustrator Simone Baudoin's insistence on dressing the girls in voluminous feminine winter coats and rather conservative-looking headscarves struck a contrast with Soper's adventurous band, and was a betrayal of Blyton's famous 'tomboy' character, George. Subsequent covers were a little more focused on adventure,

but Baudoin's delicate lines lacked the energy of the stories. It was only when the more ludic Jeanne Hives began to work on her books for Hachette in the late 1950s that the visual identity of Blyton's books in France was sealed, and in particular Blyton was delighted with her re-imagining of Harmsen van der Beek's famous Noddy illustrations.[102]

In contrast, Albert Chazelle's artwork for the Nancy Drew series (translated as Alice) developed an aesthetic that was a pitch-perfect interpretation of the overall Hachette children's book project. He was almost entirely responsible for Nancy Drew's visual identity in France until the 1970s. His work highlighted the thrilling side of the series that the Hachette team felt had transformed children's books. The debut cover for the series featured the detective standing confidently with her hands on her hips, in fashionable contemporary clothes and with her signature blonde bob, in front of her shiny blue American racing car.[103] This visual pun – 'une belle américaine' was slang for a beautiful American car as well as a beautiful American woman – unmistakeably evoked the car as the symbol of the American-style modern consumer society idealized in the Marshall Plan era.[104] The idea of a teenage girl driving a fancy sportscar was irresistibly exotic (to American audiences too, of course), but it also echoed the discourse in pro-American propaganda; as the Communist Georges Soria would remark, if the Americans were to be believed, the nation's citizens were so wealthy they were practically born with a car next to their cradle.[105] The editorial team was attentive to the question of characters' dress and presented their books in modern, fashionable settings. According to Bonvallet this was central to their appeal to young French readers 'who are very sensitive to such details'.[106]

The French Nancy Drew books were packaged up as American-style products for the new consumer society, and so, as the series progressed, Chazelle's take on the girl detective further amplified her American origins. He presented consumers with an image of all-American girlhood that was adventurous and sporty. In the fifth title, *Alice au Canada* (1958) [*The Message in the Hollow Oak*, 1935] she was portrayed manoeuvring a canoe over rapids. This was a significant departure from the American source material. While Nancy Drew's famous roadster featured heavily in the texts, it did not appear in the original front covers published by Grosset and Dunlap. The American covers for the first editions projected a much more sedate vision of Nancy Drew's sleuthing. But it was the cover for the fourth book, *Alice au Camp des Biches* (1957) [*The Bungalow Mystery*, 1930] that perhaps expressed most clearly the team's interpretation of the series' appeal. The image depicted the girl and a female friend driving

a speedboat with an American flag fluttering on the back.[107] Chazelle and the book design team drew the consumer's eye to the American flag, positioned at the vanishing point under the book's title. This very French take on Nancy Drew literally flew the flag for the new, American-style consumer society in France.

Conclusion

Cultural exchange between French and American publishers was about far more than just importing content. Buying titles in series, on the promise of making minimum print runs of at least 40,000 copies within six months, involved importing a business model for stimulating serial consumption and the modes of production needed to sustain it. By going onto the assembly line to study the implementation of these innovations, this chapter has shown how interpreting new business models was a discursive, iterative process. The way the different members of the editorial team interpreted their roles, the content they were treating and the appeal of the books to French children helped to create new, very French, Cold War takes on Anglo-American series fictions.

This is not to argue that the backroom staff were all enthusiastic ambassadors for the American consumer society and this new type of content they were making. The work on the assembly line was shaped by the ambivalence of the editorial director Mirman and his team of recruits towards the content. They were fairly dismissive of the quality of the books they were importing. So, although the editorial team saw the Anglo-American series fictions as the new model for the books they were making, they also felt they had licence to make dramatic changes to make the material conform to their ideas of what constituted 'Hachette' children's books. The standardization processes for the series transformed any notions of a direct relationship existing between the names and titles on the covers and the content within. Nevertheless, Mirman was clear that these were the books that would sell to children, and along with his colleagues he became a very public apologist for the American capitalist book making model. Mass-market publishers made books for readers, rather than for the critics, and in the context of the hostile discourse around the dangers of children's reading, the focus on providing the market with 'what children wanted' was an ideologically charged stance. The children's books that this team made ended up very energetically flying the flag for the Americans, in terms of structures, content and visual messages.

Notes

1 Maurice Fleurent, causeries: 1958–1969, file C121B01D38, in S14C121B1.
2 For an excellent overview of the Marshall Plan's rhetoric, see Ellwood, *Shock of America*, chapter 10.
3 Charles P. Kindleberger 'The Postwar Resurgence of the French Economy', Stanley Hoffmann (ed) *France Change and Tradition* (London, Gollancz, 1963), 118–58.
4 Luc Boltanski, *Les Cadres: la Formation d'un Groupe Social* (Paris, les éditions de minuit, 1982), see chapter 2 and 155–6 especially. More recent studies have focused primarily on the cultural role of the cadre, such as chapter four in Kristin Ross' *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1996) or Richard Ivan Jobs's analysis of the part they played in the 'rejuvenation' of post-war France: *Riding the New Wave*, chapter two.
5 Matthias Kipping and Ove Bjarnar (eds) *The Americanisation of European Business: The Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models* (New York, Routledge, 1998), Introduction, 8.
6 This is based on calculations using the French national library catalogue, Hachette's catalogues and the copyright declarations, preserved in the depôt légal archives, held in the Archives Nationales.
7 'For It Was Indeed He', *Fortune,* April 1934, 86–9, 193–4, 204–9 see 87.
8 Market Studies, Collections: Sep 74, Hit-Parade Auteurs, S14C156B3.
9 For example, the economist Jean Fourastié – famous for coining the phrase 'Trente Glorieuses' to describe the French post-war economic miracle – used the price of a volume from the Bibliothèque Rose to illustrate how the cost of books was dramatically reduced in this period. See his data online https://stats.fourastie-sauvy.org/index.php accessed 23 August 2021.
10 Mathieu Letourneux, *Fictions à la chaîne. Littératures sérielles et culture médiatique* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2017), 17.
11 Cécile Cottenet, 'Open Water Jumping: Clearing Obstacles in the Negotiation of French Rights to The Black Stallion', *Transatlantica*, 1 (2023) http://journals.openedition.org/transatlantica/20751 accessed 27 November 2023.
12 HAC 92, Register 23, Contract with Grosset and Dunlap, 28 June 1955, signed by Mirman.
13 Interview between Louis Mirman and Maurice Fleurent with Marc Soriano and Françoise Guérard for the *Enfance* special issue on children's books, 9 (1956), 'Le Point de vue des éditeurs' 38–42.
14 Nic Diament, *Dictionnaire des écrivains français pour la jeunesse 1914–1991* (Paris, L'école des loisirs, 1993), 470; Raoul Dubois, In mémoriam, Louis Mirman, *Bulletin du CRILJ,* 66, October 1999, http://www.crilj.org/2010/06/12/louis-mirman/ accessed 16 October 2019.

15 On Bonvallet's career, see the French National Library's biography linked to his papers (related to his earlier career as a clown) https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc78893x accessed 26 March 2023.
16 Interview with Madame S, former editorial assistant at Hachette, c.1955–1967, 1 May 2014.
17 Mirman's comments in this paragraph are taken from the interview with Soriano and Guérard, 'Le Point de vue des éditeurs'.
18 Jean-Yves Mollier, *Louis Hachette* (Paris, Fayard, 1999). On the publisher's series, see Isabelle Olivero, *L'invention de la collection. De la diffusion de la littérature et des savoirs à la formation du citoyen au XIXe siècle* (Paris, Éditions IMEC/MSH, 1999); John Spiers (ed), *The Culture of the Publisher's Series* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2 vols.
19 Soriano and Guérard, 'Le point de vue des éditeurs', 10–51, especially 12 and 34. Hachette's consumer survey in the North of France confirmed this; see *Bulletin du livre*: 15 May 1959, issue 10, Comment les enfants choisissent leurs livres, 5.
20 Michèle Piquard, « Robert Delpire, un précurseur dans l'édition pour la jeunesse des années 1950–1970 », Strenæ, 1 (2010), http://journals.openedition.org/strenae/75 accessed 31 January 2020.
21 See Elizabeth West, *The Women Who Invented Twentieth-Century Children's Literature: Only the Best* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2023).
22 According to an analysis of declarations made to the Depôt Legal (records of copyright declarations), 1944–60, preserved at the Archives Nationales.
23 Data from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France BN Opale catalogue suggests that Verte titles retailed for around 165fr per volume in the post-war, while the rough equivalent in the Rose cost around 300fr (hardback as opposed to paper covers). Although some Verte titles were sold in double-decker form, the general model was that the Verte was cheaper.
24 *Rapport du Conseil d'administration* 1 March 1949–28 February 1950, S12 C08 B2.
25 For example, see the calculations in the file S14 C140B3, Dossiers collections.
26 Memo, Service des éditions pour la jeunesse, 14 September 1955, S14C143B3.
27 Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 221.
28 *Rapport du conseil d'administration à l'assemblée générale ordinaire du 27 juin 1958, Exercice 1957* (Paris, Lahure, 1958), 120.
29 See for example the correspondence between Hachette's production services and a librarian from the Isère central lending library in S14 C140B3; between May and June 1964, which referred to this question as an 'old problem', and a regular complaint they received from librarians. The explanation the publisher gave was that they had to keep production costs as low as possible.
30 Marc Soriano, 'Adapter Jules Verne', *L'Arc*, 29 (1966), 86–91, 87.

31 On Blyton, Jeanne Archambault, 'Département des éditions pour la jeunesse', *Hachette Bulletin*, 3 (1969), 9–14, see 11. The information on the Nancy Drew print runs was confirmed in correspondence with Grosset and Dunlap, 12 December 1955, HAC 92, register 23.

32 On theories of seriality, see Shane Denson, 'To be continued … ' 'Seriality and Serialization in Interdisciplinary Perspective' *Journal of Literary Theory Online* (17 June 2011) http://www.jltonline.de/index.php/conferences/article/view/346/1004; for a French literary history, see Matthieu Letourneux, *Fictions à la chaîne*; while for children and teens in particular, see Mavis Reimer, Nyala Ali, Deanna England, and Melanie Dennis Unrau (eds) *Seriality and Texts for Young People: The Compulsion to Repeat* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Special issue 'Livres en séries', *Revue des livres pour enfants*, 256 (2010).

33 This sub-folder is not in place in folder S14C121B1: see transcription in Marc Bauland, *Les collections de romans pour la jeunesse de la Librairie Hachette (1945–1980)*, Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, unpublished Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies 1997, 129–31.

34 *Ibid.*

35 Declarations made to the Depôt Legal (records of copyright declarations), preserved at the Archives Nationales.

36 'De Nouveau en France dans le Livre d'Enfants', *L'Imprimerie Nouvelle*, 15 January 1963.

37 This and subsequent references are to the catalogues for the Rose and Verte, 1945–present, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Q10 series.

38 *Ibid*., 35.

39 Dubois, 'La loi du 16 juillet 1949', 439–50, see 443. See also Henri Wallon 'Préface', *Enfance*, 9 (1956), 3–9, 3.

40 See his notes on children's publishing in S14 C121B1.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Letter from Fleurent to Jacques Monod, 23 December 1970, S14 C144 B4.

43 On Dubois and his importance for children's literature and the 1949 law, see chapter two; Dubois, In mémoriam, Louis Mirman.

44 Soriano and Guérard, 'Le point de vue des éditeurs', 39–40.

45 Radway, *Feeling for books*, 169; 'For It Was Indeed He', 209.

46 On Stratemeyer and his syndicate, see Deirdre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (Farmington Hills, MI, Twayne Publishers, 1993) and Carol Billman, *Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate: Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys and the Million Dollar Fiction Factory* (New York, Frederick Ungar, 1986).

47 'For It Was Indeed He', 194. See also Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer,* 6, and Billman, *Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate*, 22.

48 Johnson, *Stratemeyer*, 164–5.

49 Soriano and Guérard, 'Le point de vue des éditeurs', 39–40.
50 Interview with Madame S.
51 Bonvallet's first career was successful enough to warrant his papers relating to his clowning years to be preserved at the French national library.
52 The translator and author Claude Voilier listed university diplomas on her CV, S14C133B2, while Madame J also had a university degree.
53 Interview with Madame S and interview with Madame J, translator at Hachette c. 1960–1990s, 1 October 2013, Paris.
54 Even if Mirman denied they did this in the *Enfance* interview from 1956, the archives contain many reports on children's responses to books.
55 On the workings of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, see Ernie Kelly, 'Inside the Stratemeyer Syndicate' *Yellowback Library*, 52 and 54, October and December 1988, 5–11, and 5–12.
56 Letourneux, *Fictions à la chaîne*, 8–9.
57 Louis Mirman did translation, and manuscript reading work focused on American crime and mystery novels for Hachette in the liberation era. See Hac 90, register 14, contract 29 July 1946, as did Pierre Bonvallet, contracted dated 17 March 1950.
58 For an exploration of the aesthetics and theorietical implications of translating in serie, see Mathilde Lévêque, *Les Voix de la Traduction* (Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2023) 155–69.
59 HAC 92, Registre 22, for the first Famous Five books there were two translators, Hélène Commins, contract signed 15 November 1954 and Colette Rosenblum on 1 January 1955.
60 'Pour maintenir la qualité des livres d'enfants', *Bulletin du livre*, 15 November 1962, 19–20.
61 Interview with Madame S.
62 Archambault, 'Département des éditions pour la jeunesse', 11.
63 S14C29B4, 'Note on the manuscript', 29 October 1969.
64 Billman, *Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate,* 22.
65 Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Abingdon, Routledge, 1995).
66 Interview with Madame S.
67 Letter to Pierre Bonvallet, 8 March 1962, S14C30B4.
68 *Ibid.*
69 Soriano and Guérard, 'Le Point de vue des éditeurs', 39.
70 Interview with Louis Mirman, *Bulletin d'analyses de livres pour enfants*, Special issue on adventure stories for children, June 1968, 13.
71 Soriano, 'Adapter Jules Verne', 86–91, 87. For more details of the Verne project, see the final section of chapter five.
72 Archambault, 'Département des éditions pour la jeunesse', 11.

73 Nic Diament, *Dictionnaire des ecrivains francais pour la jeunesse 1914–1991* (Paris, L'école des loisirs, 1993), 47. Ironically, Mirman published all of his books with rival Gallimard: *Le Silex noir* (1984), which won the Grand Prix du Livre pour la Jeunesse du Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports; *Youg* (1985); *Grite parmi les loups* (1987); *À la recherche de Tiang* (1990).
74 Archambault, 'Département des éditions pour la jeunesse', 11.
75 Georges Chaulet, *Les Secrets de Fantômette* (Paris, Hachette, 2011), 54.
76 'For It Was Indeed He', 87.
77 Fiches techniques, notices de publication 1958–1967, S14C48B1.
78 Fiches techniques, dossiers de mise en fabrication 1956–1970, S14C47B3.
79 Fiches techniques, notices de publication, 1958–1967, S14C48B1.
80 Interview with Madame S.
81 On the Delly publishing phenomenon, see Letourneux, *Fictions à la chaîne*, 154–9.
82 Interview 1 May 2014.
83 44HAC/6133.
84 Comptes rendus de lecture 1945–1979, rapport daté 10 octobre 1973, Fonds Hachette, S14C15B2, IMEC.
85 S14C22B4, report from 22 October 1975.
86 Interview 1 May 2014. Certainly there is no reason to doubt her, for the archives show that Madame S signed several of these contracts: HAC 93: Registres, contract signed 14 August 1957 Strassova *Five on a Hike Together* – signed Madame S; 27 February 1957 – Strassova – *The Ring O' Bells Mystery* – 149,836 fr Signed Madame S. The deals were handled by the French literary agent Helena Strassova, acting on behalf of Blyton's English literary agent Rosica Collins. According to Madame S, this was during a period when Mirman was unwell.
87 Folder: *Le mystère de la roche percée/ The rubadub mystery* 28/7/60 (Rose), note from the translator, S14C30B4.
88 Interview with Madame S.
89 Interview with Madame J.
90 David Rudd, *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Literature* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000).
91 David Rudd, 'From Froebel teacher to English Disney: the phenomenal success of Enid Blyton', Julia Briggs, Dennis Butts, and M. O. Grenby (eds) *Popular children's literature in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008), chapter 13, 265.
92 S14C27B4 (1955–68).
93 Report on *The Island of Adventure* (1944) [*Le mystère de l'île aux mouettes* (1964)], Fiches techniques pour publication (1955–1965), Fonds Hachette, S14C30B4, IMEC.
94 S14C27B4 (1955–68) Note sur la Forme, 31 January 1963.
95 S14 C30B4 (1955–65) Fiche techniques pour publication. Note sur la Forme, 28 July 1960.

96 *Ibid*., Note sur la Forme, 5 December 1963.
97 Letter to Pierre Bonvallet 8 March 1962, S14C30B4.
98 17/5/1965, Didier Fouret, Projet de rapport au conseil sur les activités du dept jeunesse pendant l'exercice 1964, S14 C137 B6 Conseils d'administration.
99 S14C156B3 Market Studies, Collections: Sep 74, Hit-Parade Auteurs.
100 Interview with Madame J.
101 Enid Blyton, *Le Club des Cinq*, translated by Hélène Commin, illustrated by Simone Baudoin (Paris, Hachette, 1955) Bibliothèque Rose.
102 Armelle Leroy and Laurent Chollet, *Le Club des Cinq, Fantômette, Oui-Oui et les Autres … Les Grands Succès des Bibliothèques Rose et Verte* (Paris, Editions Hors Collection, 2005), 54.
103 Caroline Quine, *Alice Détective* [*The Secret of the Old Clock*] translated by Hélène Commin, illustrated by Albert Chazelle (Paris, Hachette Bibliothèque Verte, 1955). The car resembles a 1954 Lincoln Capri, such as the one that won the Carrera Pan-American race of that year (its front has been adapted slightly).
104 See Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, chapter 1.
105 Georges Soria, *La France Deviendra-t-elle une Colonie Américaine?* (Paris, Editions du Pavillon, 1948), 186–7.
106 Pierre Bonvallet's response to Mme Bradley, P.L. Travers' agent, 3 February 1964, S14C138B6.
107 Caroline Quine, *Alice au Camp des Biches* [*The Bungalow Mystery*] translated by Hélène Commin, illustrated by Albert Chazelle (Paris, Hachette Bibliothèque Verte, 1957).

5

Policing the borders

Editorial mediations on the assembly line

French censorship of publications for the young is incredibly severe.
– Herbert Lottman, Paris correspondent for *Publishers' Weekly*, 1966[1]

We proceed by elimination: nothing racial, nothing sensual, political, or that could be considered religious or metaphysical. There is about one quarter of Moby Dick *that is absolutely excellent.*
– Louis Mirman, Senior editor at Hachette children's department, 1956[2]

Translation and, by extension, cultural mediation were integral to the communication of Cold War culture. Recent studies have emphasized the intensity of 'background debates' involved in every act of cultural transfer during the 'politically-charged context of the Cold War'.[3] French borders were protected by the 1949 law and its regulatory body, along with a critical reviewing system that watched over the children's industry like hawks, to ensure publishers met their responsibilities where the education of the nation's children was concerned. As Hachette's fictions catalogues were increasingly dominated by Anglo-American series, and all books were moulded to fit this new vision of children's books, translation and standardization constituted a large part of the juvenile department's tasks on the assembly line.[4] The processes on the Hachette assembly lines in the 1950s and 1960s reveal much about the ideological work done by translations and editorial mediations of content at all stages in the writing and production processes, including reading for potential problems, 'correcting' work and rewriting texts. As Gisèle Sapiro observes, what is currently called 'sensitivity reading' (the term itself is hotly disputed), namely the practice of reading and modifying texts to ensure they do not cause offence and reflect the values of the society they are speaking to, is all about 'responsibility' – and

the notion of responsibility of the publisher has a long history.[5] Tracing how this concept of responsibility shaped the processes of editorial mediations and self-censorship at Hachette reveals an important episode in that history.

Hachette's juvenile department tightened up its editorial processes in the 1950s, and was very public about the reporting system – 'like an alarm system' – that had been put in place on its creative assembly line.[6] The result was a scrutiny of content that could be, as Herbert Lottman put it in 1966, 'incredibly severe'. Senior editor at Hachette Louis Mirman may have been given to provoking the critical establishment with his cynical statements, but he was not exaggerating when he spoke of his team slashing classic, popular or critically acclaimed texts down to a fraction of their original length. The antics of the children in the books by the notoriously conservative English author Enid Blyton regularly raised concerns amongst Mirman's team of readers. And after the Hachette team had finished with the anarchic Swedish heroine *Pippi Longstocking*, a trilogy written by Astrid Lindgren, only two volumes were left (*Pippi Långstrump,* 1945–8, *Fifi Brindacier*, 1951–3 and 1962). Hachette was eventually forced to produce a new translation in 1995, with an apologetic preface from the editor, explaining that 'for reasons specific to the time, Hachette, after the War, gathered the material from the three Swedish volumes into two for the French edition', the preface noted sheepishly that critics had also recently objected to the attenuations to the text 'and a tone that was too sensible and, perhaps, overly policed'.[7] This last verb and the accusation of excess by Lottman speak to the controversial nature of textual modifications of this kind.

Certainly, the policing of borders at Hachette often led to drastic changes in content. Drawing upon the current of thought within censorship studies that sees the potential for creativity in censorship, and seeing 'censors' as readers, narratologists, reviewers and even 'co-authors', this chapter argues Hachette's self-censorship could be a radical and creative process.[8] It was as much about working out what the limits were and where they lay, and testing how far they could be pushed, as it was about policing them. The focus is on the day-to-day interventions, reading and writing tasks required by the translation and standardization of the fictions in the two large flagship publisher's series, the Bibliothèque Rose and the Bibliothèque Verte. It looks at the production files to see how different boundaries were identified, policed and forged, as books and approaches to making them were imported across national borders. This included differentiating between French and American visions of literature and childhood; between adults' and children's cultures; and between comics culture, Hollywood films and children's literature. Archival traces of the team's

deliberations, in combination with oral histories, interviews and the wider discourse on children's books and reading, and fears of American cultural imperialism are used to analyse why they might have made their choices. As in the previous chapters, the discussions are read as constitutive of the Hachette vision; they allow us to map the boundaries of the acceptable and measure just how important the fear of reprisals for making a mistake could be. They provide insights into how people were reading books for children in Cold War and how political anxieties profoundly marked the book-making processes for children in this period.

Reading and responsibility

The 1949 law was predicated on making publishers understand their work as being responsible to the nation; the content they produced for children in Cold War France had to conform to the values of French society. Hachette launched its modernization programme just as the criticisms of the children's publishing industry reached their peak in the mid-1950s.[9] This tense climate profoundly influenced the editorial team's understanding of their role, their product and consumer base. But how far did publishers take that responsibility seriously, and how did they interpret these notions?

Fear of comics culture and anxieties around American cultural imperialism dominated discourses on children's culture, and all media were understood through these lenses. In January 1955 Raoul Dubois of the 1949 Law Commission (CSC) was granted a double-page spread in the Ministry of Education's publication for teachers, *Education Nationale*, to alert the profession to the dangers of children's reading.[10] In May 1954 the same publication denounced a new edition of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) for its illustrations, in which 'armed with a rifle, he is an unfortunate reminder of the man-monkeys and this Tarzan that we would all like to forget'.[11] If the department intended to transform Hachette's children's fictions using imported content, it was running a serious risk of sustaining further attacks in the press and worryingly, in reviews for teachers. The Communist-affiliated critics had already identified American series fiction, notably western adventure novels, as posing a comparable threat to comics, owing to its promulgation of American imperialist values.[12] In 1952 the Communist writer and literary critic Claude Prévost had accused Hachette of being the 'French accomplice' of Hollywood in its efforts to target French schoolchildren, who she described as 'their dream

prey'.[13] The crime in question was Hachette's publicity for its Bibliothèque Verte translation of H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). They had set up a competition in schools, timed to coincide with the French release of MGM's film version.[14] While they tended to share Communist concerns about comics, Catholic reviews were generally better disposed towards Hachette's fictions for older children. Nonetheless, Hachette could not be sure that the department's new direction would be well received by the Church's morality leagues. The first analysis of Blyton in *Livres et Lectures*, in 1956, for example, had been a double review of the first two releases written by two critics.[15] Both expressed serious reserves about this sort of literature, and indicated they were scrutinizing this content carefully – effectively sounding a warning note to the editorial team. In this context, it was imperative to insist upon the department's strong sense of responsibility towards its readers.

The extent to which the reporting system was a cynical move to deflect the department's many critics, or whether the editorial staff at Hachette really saw themselves as having a moral responsibility is not always clear. However, the language Mirman used to describe his role, even his philosophy as an editor, suggests that he was very much a man of his time and that he was particularly concerned about installing a 'moral' regime in his section of the department. The children's editor, he explained, is 'much more active than is permissible in literature for adults. And this is for a very simple reason: children's literature must conform to very strict imperatives, moral imperatives first: certain forms of violence must be banned, all types of sectarianism are to be avoided, and certain sentimental situations circumvented'.[16] Similarly, Maurice Fleurent was alert to the impact of the newly enhanced visual element in their books. He also deployed a cautious vocabulary, suggesting children's books could be potent, even somehow dangerous. In one interview, Fleurent's exaltation of the new technological possibilities for colour printing was interrupted by his interlocutor, who asked him whether he ever worried about fostering 'intellectual laziness' in young readers with books that contained too many pictures. (This was one of the central tenets of the French attacks on new media such as comics and film.[17]) While Fleurent's spirited response was that the evidence simply did not bear out such criticisms – 'more children are reading than ever before' – he nevertheless made certain to qualify his positivism with the reassurance that he understood his role: 'illustrations have the power to profoundly affect the reader, a child may remember an image for many years to come. […] It is incumbent on those who have the power – and the considerable responsibility – to publish images, illustrations, photographs or drawings, static or animated, for cinema or

television, to always be mindful of this responsibility.'[18] Clearly Hachette's editors were well-acquainted with the ideas of their time and knew to regularly refer to their 'responsibility' when talking about their work in public. Mirman kept a close eye on critical debates about children's books and reading, albeit with one eyebrow raised sceptically: 'we read the press reviews attentively, or at least the handful of authorities in the field', he explained in 1956, although 'it would be interesting to study how influential they truly are'. For him the 'most serious ones are the critics in the professional publications such as *Livres et Lectures* (Catholic press) and the teachers' review, *Education Nationale*'. In other words, the publications that he cared about were talking about his books in ways that would not play well with parents, teachers and school librarians, who were all essential target markets for Hachette.

Mirman and Fleurent therefore broadcast the news far and wide that they had introduced extensive new procedures to ensure the strict morality of the Hachette product.[19] As discussed in the preceding chapter, the first section of the report the readers had to fill out for each manuscript before it went into development focused on plot and tightening the storytelling. This chapter focuses on the second 'more important' section – as Mirman put it in one interview – which featured a table prompting the team to look for and weed out: (1) grammar and syntax errors; (2) slang, regional words, technical, specialist or foreign terms; (3) any insults or curse words, violent or vulgar expressions, licentious allusions; and (4) political, religious, personal or racial attacks.[20] Mirman discussed these procedures, and gave a copy of the report sheet for reproduction in an interview with *Enfance*. This publication was edited by Henri Wallon, the leading child psychologist, and widely respected former Communist deputy and education reformer. *Enfance* had played an active role in reflecting on the successes and failures of the 1949 law. In this way Mirman was speaking to the critics, specialist, teachers and members of the 1949 Law Commission who had formed some of his department's most ferocious critics. A few years later, addressing the main trade magazine of the publishing industry, *Bulletin du Livre*, Mirman explained that he had introduced a new report sheet for every manuscript.[21] The 'censor' had to grade each manuscript according to the criteria of style, language and morals, using a traffic light system to indicate whether it was green for satisfactory, amber for small problems or red for serious problems. These were then listed on the back of the report.

Such backroom procedures and discussions are often hidden from public view. The adaptation process is an aspect of their work on which editors generally prefer to remain silent.[22] The opposite was true for Mirman and the

juvenile department in the 1950s and 1960s. They were keen to ensure that the book-buying public was aware of their team's commitment to the careful surveillance of content. The editors gave interviews to the book trade press and to publications whose core readership were the intermediaries who advised parents and children about which books to buy. They explained the extreme prudence they adopted and the protocols they had put in place. As will be seen, the team even engaged the services of literary critic and educational specialist Marc Soriano, who published several articles on the adaptation process in literary and educational reviews.[23] The department provided extensive details on their procedures, including their report sheets that had to be applied to every manuscript for publication. Sharing these internal safeguarding procedures was a way of guaranteeing to the consumer that Hachette's series were safe for children, and pointing to the long-standing reputation of the publisher as a family-run and conservative educational book business. This public relations campaign appears to have resonated with at least some of the readers that Mirman wanted to target. In 1957 the main Catholic book review, *Livres et lectures,* wrote of Hachette's 'solid' new censorship policy in their review of the Verte, quoting Mirman's interview with *Enfance*.[24]

Were the department's team of readers aware of the legislation regulating the trade? There are no direct references in their reports to the 1949 law, nor to the CSC. However, their discussions regularly made reference to external scrutiny, and the serious consequences of publishing inappropriate material. For example, a sense of unease dominated the deliberations around several titles by the famous interwar author, André Demaison, who had been convicted of collaboration in 1945. Mirman liked Demaison's animal stories, and regularly asked his team to consider this author. In 1950, one of the readers wrote forcefully that 'our press' should not publicly support such a troubling writer, and particularly not by publishing him explicitly for children. Meanwhile, another reader noted that the sexual references and scenes of violence in Demaison's *La Nouvelle Arche de Noë* (1938) [*The New Noah's Ark*] while not particularly strong 'might attract the attention of the I.P.' [Insitut Pédagogique].[25] In one memo to Mirman from 1956, the team of correctors warned him of 'potential recriminations' if he published a novel that contained 'indecent passages'.[26] In interviews with former employees of the department, the notion that dominated was that of avoiding 'shocking' people. Madame J listed the aspects 'they all knew' to look out for when reading manuscripts: 'no coarse words, nothing religious … yes, well nothing ostensibly that might … [pause] […] anything that might shock'.[27] Madame S stated that she had never heard of the 1949 law, but

she had been very concerned by the Catholic leagues. She recalled one incident where she had got so carried away cutting the 'indecent passages' from a book, possibly George Sand's *La Petite Fadette* (1849) that not much had been left. The correctors asked her to repair the damage. Crucially, she emphasized that it had been the thought of what the Catholic leagues might say, not the suitability of the material for children that had led her to such extremes. Once again, just like Madame J, the word she used was 'shock'.[28] While Madame S may not have been aware of the legislation, she was certainly worried about the reactions of its enforcers. This sense of 'responsibility' that Mirman and his team felt so keenly seemed to have boiled down to a concern not to attract attention, not to cause outrage and, by extension, not to sully the public image of Hachette's series for children.

No murders, no blood, no cursing: Detective series for children

Hachette's most successful imports were children's detective series. Virtually all of Blyton's books featured child sleuths or mysteries of some kind, and the heroine of the Stratemeyer Syndicate's Nancy Drew series was dedicated to solving crimes. Before the 1950s detective stories for children had been the preserve of comics, popularized by the Belgian publications Hergé's *Tintin* strip (1929) and *Journal de Spirou* (1938). Children's detective novels were relatively rare, and there were no series fictions in the genre. A few single novels in the genre had caused a sensation. Erich Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* (1929) had been an international hit in the early 1930s, while Paul Berna's *Cheval Sans Tête* (1955) reaffirmed the genre's potential.[29] Hachette pushed new frontiers in children's publishing, forging a hybrid Franco-American, comics-inspired culture of adventure stories focused on crime-fighting. The problem with children's detective novels, as many studies have noted, is that the subject matter of crimes and violence is considered to be rather adult, as was its emotional register of fear, dread and horror, all of which were the very opposite of the values supposed to be taught by children's culture, such as innocence and how to behave.[30] Specifically in Cold War France, anxieties around delinquency and containing the young were heightened. Hachette's team had to be particularly vigilant.

Mirman acknowledged that, 'what is known as the detective novel for children' had sometimes come in for criticism:

> Blyton for young children, *Langelot*, and *Fantômette* for older children. But truth be told, the 'detective' label is misleading. Children want action. They want the good guys to beat the bad guys, who they see as the 'villains'. This is why the plot in the form of the detective investigation in fact has very little in common with the 'Série Noire' [American hardboiled detective novels in translation published by Gallimard] or a book from the 'Masque' series [an older, iconic publisher of detective fiction, including Agatha Christie].[31]

Mirman explained that he advised authors to think of the book not as a crime story but rather as 'an adventure novel' (which, as was discussed in the previous chapter, was what he saw as central to the appeal of children's books).[32] He was clear that the children's version of the detective series was very different to the adult genre. This line between adult's and children's detective genres was one of the main boundaries that had to be policed. This was Stratemeyer's great innovation in the 1920s, adapting dime novel content for series fiction presented in more 'respectable' cloth-cover format, aimed solely at children – as *Fortune* magazine put it: 'keeping the fifty-center close, but not too close, to adult fiction is perhaps the greatest problem of its publishers.'[33] In the midst of the anti-comics campaigns in the United States in the 1950s, the Stratemeyer Syndicate's editorial team revised all their major series and emphasized to the media how squeaky clean Nancy Drew et al. were. Andrew E. Svenson explained the formula was simple: 'a low death rate, but plenty of plot … and there was to be no use of guns by the hero, and certainly no "smooching"'.[34] Meanwhile in the UK, Blyton presented her books as a bulwark against American popular culture, particularly comics, and underscored her very strict rules for writing material suitable for children: 'No murders. No ghosts. No horror. No blood'.[35] When these Anglo-American children's detective series made their appearance in France in the 1950s, the anxieties around representations of crime and violence had been heightened and, more importantly, formalized by the 1949 Law. The published deliberations of the CSC demonstrate the extensive concern about violence and criminality in publications for children, and a pronounced suspicion of American adult detective fictions. These so-called 'série noire' series, the guidelines explained, were filled with cruelty and cynicism, and the adoption of such themes in comics and children's print culture risked 'demoralizing' children, by making them pessimistic about the future, cynical and inured to violence.[36] This was amplified by the sense of the vulnerability of the child reader in the aftermath of war, formalized in the legislation.

Mirman was quite stern with his authors; the writer Georges Chaulet remembered him as 'a very serious man, who looked like an English gentleman,

hardly the sort of man who published fun books'.[37] Mirman impressed upon them the importance of caution when writing in this genre. When Chaulet pitched his idea to Hachette for a series featuring a female superhero who solves crimes (which became Fantômette), he recalled how 'Monsieur Mirman told me: there are conditions. You must modify your text: there are to be no murders, no blood, and the villains must speak in a refined language without cursing'.[38] Mirman later explained that he would guide his authors away from the conventions of the adult detective genre that so troubled the CSC, telling them to focus instead on positive emotions and achievements: '[do not] dwell on the sordid details of the crime, or the motives of the villains, or on the desire for revenge; instead bring to light the pleasure that the heroes take in solving the mystery, in rescuing the victims, and the joy of taking risks, seizing the initiative and demonstrating bravery.'[39] In Hachette's children's detective novels, the crime was simply the catalyst for the children's adventures: a plot device, rather than something to be dwelled upon. The readers' reports often had to work to find suggestions on how to write about crime, while avoiding descriptions of violence. As one reader's report suggested, the skill lay in writing about crime detection while drawing 'a discreet veil' over the crime itself.[40] The department wrote to Paul-Jacques Bonzon, another of their major series authors, asking him to flesh out the psychological details of the characters in one of his new books, to ensure that it did not become 'just a detective novel' and alienate younger readers.[41] Faced with a manuscript that described an attempted murder, another reader wondered whether such a book was really suitable for the children's series, where 'the young reader is used to reading about thieves or criminals who are stupid rather than villainous, and plots that are rather "saccharine"?'[42] This way of describing the type of villains that were suitable for the Bibliothèque Rose can also be found in a report on one of the Stratemeyer Syndicate's other detective series, *The Happy Hollisters* [*Les Joyeux Jolivet*], noting that it included 'the classic bandits or thieves who are more stupid than they are villainous'.[43] Their tone in both reports suggests that this was a well-worn formula in the department, and integral to the conventions of children's detective novels published by Hachette. One review of another Hachette detective series, which appeared in the *Education Nationale*, suggested that critics were very much aware of the rules of the game too: 'this is a short detective novel that is perfectly suited to children: with mysteries to solve, moments of suspense, but never any scenes of violence or brutality.'[44]

Nevertheless, even if their 'bad guys' were bumbling rather than sinister, detective series needed criminals whom the young gumshoes could outwit. Translating villains in Cold War France was complicated. This was because, all

too often – perhaps most famously in the case of Blyton – authors had recourse to crude racial stereotyping when it came to villains. They had to be adults the presumed readership of white middle-class children would instantly find suspect or who it would be easy to feel superior to. Xenophobia, racism and othering of adults in order to cast them as criminals and outsiders were a key part of the children's detective genre. The Cold War context and decolonization in both France and the United States created heightened awareness of racial stereotyping in the media. The PCF pointed to race relations in America as a way to undermine the Americans' claims to be the leaders of the 'free world'. Internationally, Communist parties trained many of their attacks on the racism of American culture: in France the PCF regularly detailed American protests against racism in Hollywood for example, such as Disney's *Song of the South* (1946). Writing about the film in the PCF daily, *L'Humanité*, Jean Bauchart called Disney a 'flagrant racist'. The newspaper frequently carried pieces decrying Disney's anti-Communism and fascism.[45] For Mission France, which led American cultural diplomacy in France, one of the ongoing priorities in its propaganda was to counter Communist accusations of American racism.[46] And specifically to France, article two of the 1949 law was revised in 1954 to include a new ban on material that might 'inspire or foster ethnic prejudices'.[47] This had always been a theme in the discussions of the CSC, energetically supported by the Communist members of the committee and included as an important issue within their guidelines to publishers for children.

This tense context prompted the modification of popular cultural products to pretend the problem of racism did not exist.[48] In the early 1950s, the American editions of Nancy Drew and other popular series were being modified by the Stratemeyer Syndicate to tone down the offensive racial and ethnic stereotypes.[49] In France, Hachette's juvenile department 'correctors' looked very carefully at the issue of race and othering in its books. The fourth section of the report system established by Mirman and his team described above focused specifically on all kinds of attacks that could cause offence, including race. This echoed Mirman's earlier list of elements that needed to be removed from their books, where 'race' was listed first. The CSC's guidelines were nuanced: they wanted publishers to be alert to the fact that their readership extended across the French overseas territories and colonies, and should not therefore contain material likely to offend readers from different backgrounds, or indeed inspire feelings of superiority on the part of white children from the metropole.[50] This extended to sanctioning the use of racial stereotyping in construction of plots, or pitting 'good' white characters against 'bad' people of colour. Mirman's language was

ambiguous, however: did he mean for race to be removed? Or simply references to race that could be considered problematic? Was he worried about racism, or causing offence?

The discussions around the construction of 'villainous' types using racial stereotypes, and particularly the elements the readers chose to focus on as being problematic, reflected this ambiguity surrounding the substance of the revisions. Direct speech was the form that attracted the most modifications, perhaps because it was one of the most blatant ways in which racist stereotyping was expressed. For example, in the Nancy Drew mysteries, in *The Secret of the Old Clock* (1930), the caretaker Jeff Tucker is Black. He is portrayed as being untrustworthy, is treated with disdain by Nancy Drew and the police, and is easily hoodwinked by the robbers. These negative aspects of the character were left intact in the French translation, and only his speech was modified. For example, Jeff's description of his drugging at the hands of a band of thieves was rendered in the original American text from 1930 as: 'I comes to. I sees I ain't in no chariot no mo', but I's in a ho-tel. And I's in bed and I's feelin' pow'ful sick-ish like and discouraged.'[51] In the French translation, Jeff's account was grammatically correct, including the tricky negative construction: 'd'un seul coup, voilà que je me réveille. Il n'y avait plus ni anges, ni chariot: j'étais tout seul dans une chambre d'hôtel, couché dans un lit, et plutôt mal en point … ' [Literally: 'suddenly, that was when I woke up. There were no more angels or chariots: I was alone in a hotel room, in bed, and in a rather bad way'].[52] In the United States, where the editors were also revising the texts, they went further than the modified French editions; Jeff Tucker in the 1959 revision of *The Secret of the Old Clock* was made into a white man instead, and consequently his dealings with Nancy and the police became far more cordial. In Hachette's French edition it was only Tucker's speech that was modified, and the book's illustrations rendered the caretaker in crudely stereotypical manner. Blyton's language was regularly flagged as problematic.[53] In a note accompanying her French text of the English author's *The Mountain of Adventure* (1949) [*Le Mystère de l'Hélicoptère*, 1963] the translator explained she had specified that the Black character, Sam, was an American who did not speak French very well. This meant she could avoid having to translate Blyton's offensive rendering of his speech, while retaining the fact that the children had difficulties understanding him, which was central to the plot.

Clearly, the readers were alert to the offensive use of caricatured forms of speech and racial slurs in language. However, the Nancy Drew example begs the question of how far the Hachette team was truly concerned about racism in their books. Was it simply that any attempt by the author to replicate different accents

and registers was a red flag for the readers? There are several key examples that suggest that while language was the priority, the problem was perceived to go further. Notably, the French editions of *Noddy* [*Oui-Oui*] in the early 1960s excised all references to the subsequently much criticized 'golliwog' [*sic*] characters. Her characterization of people of colour as criminals or lacking in intelligence was regularly the subject of modifications by the team. The corrector reading through the translated manuscript of and Blyton's *The Island of Adventure* (1944) [*Le Mystère de l'Ile aux Mouettes*, 1960] suggested that the handyman Jojo be made into a white character. Blyton's text depicted Jojo as dim-witted, with 'rolling eyes', although this was ultimately revealed as an act to cover his criminal activities. The published French version makes no reference to the character's ethnicity.[54] Over the course of 1959, as the corrector was preparing the text of Blyton's *The Rubadub Mystery* (1952) [*Le Mystère de la Roche Percée*, 1960], they flagged up the representation of the people who ran the fairground. The corrector asked the translator to look again at 'the negative portrayal of the fairground hands and circus performers', and to add the modifier 'certain' to the criticism of the fair workers. (The fact that Pierre Bonvallet, the head of translated fictions, had been a clown at the Medrano Circus before joining Hachette may in part explain his antipathy towards Blyton.)

The readers at Hachette had a tendency to conceptualize this as a specifically Anglo-American problem. The reports for *The River of Adventure* (1955) [*Le Mystère de la Rivière Noire*, 1964] contain one reader's objection to the representation of the Black characters in the book as servile, which they described as being a 'very British' condescension. Still, the team's modifications to Blyton's books – just as with the Nancy Drew text – were carried out mainly in order to avoid attracting attention, and were usually rather conservative. The books still caused some consternation amongst critics for this reason. Notably Dubois, the Communist critic and member of the CSC, who in a review of *Le Clan des Sept va au Cirque* (1966) [*Secret Seven Adventure*, 1950] picked out the racism towards the travellers community ('gens du voyage' in his phrasing). He threatened that there were some of Blyton's books that 'they' (written by an active member of the 1949 Law Commission this phrase carried more weight than most critics) would like to see banned for 'inciting segregationist hatred'. The use of the American terminology here was far from accidental, and another example of the French tendency to 'other' racism.[55] By way of contrast, the English critics were much slower to denounce Blyton specifically for her racism. This aspect of her work did not become a critical issue until the late 1960s. David Rudd's research suggests the first critique of Blyton's racism was in an article written by politician Lena

Jeger for *The Guardian* in 1966.[56] The relative influence of the Communists and the Cold War in both France and the United States forced publishers to become sensitive to the question of race relations and accusations of imperialism much earlier. However, all sides in the debate in France understood it as a primarily Anglo-American problem.

The second major red line that emerges in the production files for the children's detective series was the representation of authority and social order. The need for the containment of the reading matter of the young fused post-war concerns about the impact of trauma and the disintegration of family and morality in wartime with Cold War anxieties about what constituted 'French' childhood within the new Anglo-American sphere of influence. Hachette's translation strategies reveal how alert they were to these concerns, and to both representing children as contained within social and familial structures and protecting French notions of childhood. The editorial team worried far more about such questions than other key aspects of the genre, such as the villains, or even the crimes themselves.

The readers seemed to be picking up on the carnivalesque nature of the genre; for much of its outlandish charm revolved around the tender age of the gumshoes. The heroes of series such as Nancy Drew, the Famous Five, Secret Seven, Noddy and their French counterparts such as Michel, Fantômette and Les Six Compagnons, all featured as their protagonists detectives who were well under the age of majority. These young protagonists outsmarted adult criminals, and succeeded where the police had usually failed, or not even noticed there was anything untoward. It was an empowering and exciting genre, but this also made it potentially disruptive, and there was a fine line between depicting children triumphing over dim-witted criminals, and showing outright disrespect for adult authority. In the United States in the 1940s and 1950s, the Stratemeyer Syndicate was cleaning up its act. Nancy Drew for example was no longer 'sassy' with police and other adults; she stopped having a 'temper' and instead became much more well-behaved and respectful towards police procedure.[57] The discussions around this issue reveal just how sensitive the readers had to be to this question. As Nash writes, in the US context, the critique of the subversive behaviours of young detectives reflected fears about the threat that teenagers and their 'turbulent desires' posed to social order.[58] In post-war France, children's disobedience and disrespect for adult institutions was considered a threat not just to the social order but also to national reconstruction efforts. The disintegration of the patriarchal family structures during the war was thought to have encouraged juvenile delinquency, and there was, consequently, heightened anxiety around

proper representation of the family and institutions of the state. Early drafts of article two of the 1949 legislation had specifically included 'insubordination to the rules set down by the family, school and nation'.[59] The guidelines to publishers issued by the CSC stressed the importance of defining the relationship of the child to its family and society: 'except where nature of the story does not permit it, set the characters within their familial, professional or social context.'[60]

The language adopted by the readers to discuss the books and their potential impact on child readers reflected these multiple concerns and visions of children and youth. It is striking how the readers at Hachette were concerned that the child be represented within a clear system of authority structures. They were particularly alert to how the individual child behaved with respect to the family and institutions of the state. Hachette's books were expected to inculcate a proper respect for these institutions. The intertwined notions of containment and control of the young recur frequently within the editorial discussions on the assembly line. Imported detective fictions were regularly revised to place the child characters more clearly within – and subordinate to the authority of – adult social structures such as the family, school, social welfare and the justice system. The deliberations over the manuscript translation of Blyton's *Five Get into a Fix* (1958), [*Le club des cinq aux sports d'hiver*, 1964] for example, worried about the children's independence from all adult supervision while they were staying at the winter chalet, and one reader suggested that the book explain that they were being looked after nevertheless: 'it would have been preferable if the author or the farmer had, from the outset, explained that the children are living there independently, and eating their meals there, under the care and watchful eye of the chalet staff.'[61] Blyton had trained as a Froebel teacher, and believed passionately that freedom to explore and enjoy autonomy was crucial to children's development. She relegated her adult characters to the background, and her young protagonists often ridiculed adults for seeking to interfere in their activities.[62] Her books often caused concern. *Five Get into a Fix* featured a six-year-old girl, Aily, who runs wild, and whose parents do little to prevent her from playing truant. One reader suggested the mother ought to display proper maternal concern for the situation, and express hope that school will cure the girl; 'otherwise one might ask why the social services, neighbours and authorities are not doing anything, and whether the parents are happy with this situation'.[63] (The published version avoided such a heavy-handed solution, but did make the mother more concerned for her daughter.) Similarly, when reading the translator's manuscript of *Le Mystère de la roche percée*, 1960 [*The Rubadub Mystery*, 1952], the readers asked the translator to

remove disrespectful language, to soften the story of the protagonist's parents' separation and to remove the section where the boy says he can get by without a father.[64] They further recommended the excision of disrespectful language of the children towards adults and attenuating Blyton's regular use of what they called 'slang'. Similar criticisms were levelled at the translation of Blyton's *Island of Adventure* (1944) as *Le Mystère de l'île aux mouettes* (1964). This aspect of her work remained problematic, even after the Hachette editions of Blyton had toned down the impression of children's autonomy. The *Bulletin d'analyses de livres pour enfants* criticized Blyton for presenting 'a world dominated by children where the adults are mere puppets',[65] while Marc Soriano worried that her model of writing risked 'distorting the educational relationship between children and adults in society'.[66] Although some British critics also noted this issue, overall they were less concerned.[67]

The detective genre necessitated representing criminality, violence and outsiders, and through its empowerment of young sleuths had a potential to disrupt adult authority; all these elements were located at the edges of what was considered acceptable in children's literature. At Hachette, these issues were being interpreted through the lens of the law and its attendant discourses on the national responsibilities of children's culture. The regulation and discourse structured the way the French were reading these imported materials. They shaped what the editorial team at Hachette did with the translations, but they were also echoed in the reviews of these books. The 'Anglo-Saxon' other was used to construct an ideal of French childhood as well-disciplined, civilized and respectful; part of an ordered society with proper institutions that structured the family. Discussing translations was also a way of expressing anxieties about uncertain times: the difficulties of French education and identity in the US sphere of influence, anxieties around cultural dominance, and how to assert the French values of these translated fictions.

Fantômette and *Fifi:* Hybrid superheroines

In the search to create new hybrid genres to attract young comics fans to books, gender became a new frontier. Girls were a lucrative market, and Hachette's team was always keen to find new ways to appeal to them. Translation can play a disrupting role, bringing new ideas on gender into a literary system, or it can be a normative process where gender non-conforming characters and stories are subject to invasive interventions.[68] Both of these tendencies can be observed

in the adaptation of American comics culture to the French crime series Fantômette, and in the translation of the subversive Swedish Pippi Longstocking into French as Fifi Brindacier. Both were read as hybrid superheroines, mixing comics culture with more respectable fiction forms of girls' culture, and French concerns about gender normativity and the changing place of girls in consumer society. It was precisely because comics culture was perceived as American and equated with modernity at Hachette in the 1950s and 1960s that as a genre it offered scope for new ideas on gender. Its very strangeness, its foreign identity, offered possibilities for experimentation.

The translation processes and editorial mediations at Hachette reflect the uncertainties around girls' culture and the multiple and conflicting messages on girlhood communicated in French mass media in the 1950s and 1960s. School textbooks, advertising campaigns and many books aimed at girls made it clear to them that they were destined for marriage, home-making and motherhood.[69] The 1950s represented a high point for the nuclear family model, and reinforced gender hierarchies within family, workplace and politics, as part of the desire for 'normality' after the war. But at the same time, the growing prosperity of the post-war era – referred to as the Trente Glorieuses – with its burgeoning consumer culture, combined with the expansion of education opportunities, and the bubbling subversion of teen culture, suggested to girls that there might be wider horizons. Moreover, the mass consumer society centred on the home, and housewives as consumers par excellence.[70] Getting them young meant that girl consumers assumed a new importance. And while overall culture for girls remained very staid, at Hachette, a number of series appeared that sought to appeal to girls in new and engaging ways, most notably Alice (Nancy Drew), Pierre Probst's Caroline picturebooks for preschoolers (launched in 1953), Fifi and Fantômette. The intersection of gender, comics culture and mass consumption children's books involved striking a delicate balance between satisfying the critics and the regulators, and creating exciting, hybrid characters who could appeal to young girl readers. Fantômette and Fifi were both girls on the cusp of becoming teenagers – their stories depicted them as ambiguous and troubling. The editorial deliberations over these characters and their stories reflected these uncertainties. Could readers identify with such heroines? How could they be contained?

Hachette's Bibliothèque Rose catalogue was home to France's gender radical superheroine: Chaulet's Fantômette. Fascinated by the explosion of Anglo-American detective series for children, Chaulet spotted a gap in the market for a female superheroine. Twelve-year-old Françoise Dupont was an ordinary

schoolgirl in a small French town by day, but at night she donned her cape and mask, and transformed into Fantômette, scourge of the local criminals. The violence and tone of the books were inspired by the author's love of comics and pulp fictions. He later recalled:

> my desire to write came from the terrible frustration that I had experienced under the [Nazi] occupation. Everything that I liked reading, and particularly *Mickey* and what back then we called the illustrated press [comics], just disappeared. I missed them so much, I was like a drug addict in need of a fix. [… and so] I felt inspired to write for myself what I could no longer buy in the shops.[71]

His books for Hachette certainly reflected his sources of inspiration, and featured many scenes of exaggerated violence and crimes. The first book in the series, *Les Exploits de Fantômette* (1961), opened with descriptions of the heroine's previous exploits, which included apprehending the murderers of old ladies, fraudsters and a gang responsible for a series of bank robberies with machine guns.[72] Fantômette's signature was to deliver her victims bound and gagged to the police, with her calling card pinned to them. The character paid homage to the classics of French crime fiction, notably the turn-of-the-century series about the high society thief Arsène Lupin, while her name referenced the other fictional master criminal of the Belle Epoque, Fantômas. In short, Chaulet had developed a new genre – a fizzy brew of American comics culture, slapstick humour and classic French crime fiction served with a feminist twist.

Chaulet's new series immediately raised concerns amongst the editors about violence and the challenges that Fantômette posed to authority. As noted above, Mirman asked Chaulet to modify his original manuscript for the first Fantômette book and remove references to murders, blood and cursing. Going by the version of the text that made it into print as *Les Exploits de Fantômette* (1961), the original manuscript must have been a little too close to the adult fictions revered by Chaulet. There was certainly a generous amount of violence in the published version, some of it not even related to the main plot. Such scenes included one of Fantômette's schoolfriends imagining her teacher being tied up and whipped,[73] or when the criminal gang she was tracking attempted to do away with Fantômette by tying the terrified girl up in a sack and burying her in sand.[74] Subsequent titles in the series featured villains devising ever-more baroque ways of trying to kill the teenage masked avenger, including drowning her in a large washing machine.[75] Everyone was armed, and guns were brandished regularly. The heroine herself was nifty at pistol-whipping baddies, usually with their own weapons that she had wrestled out of their hands, that is when she was not

sticking her 'Italian dagger' into their ribs. Was this evidence that French authors were given an easier ride by the readers and critics than foreign ones? So long as the series sold, and no one objected too fiercely, it appears that Chaulet could continue in this vein. Fantômette was one of the department's most popular series in the mid-1960s,[76] and ranked seventh in the department's overall big-sellers by 1974, with almost three million copies sold over the course of its thirteen years in existence.[77]

The situations of violence and crime-fighting described above were all the more daring – and potentially troubling – because of their subversion of gender and power in France in the early 1960s, which was still a rigidly patriarchal society. The premise for the whole series was the contrast between the heroine's bland, obedient, gender-conforming identity by day and her wild exploits at night. The modifications the department carried out to later Fantômette texts point to where some of the most important red lines for the department's conventions on children's books were sited. The outrageously unrealistic crime-fighting and comics-style violence in Fantômette were seemingly lesser offences than the challenges to adult male authority. While over the course of the series the violence in the Fantômette stories remained central to the plots, and the supersleuth schoolgirl's parents were never mentioned, more respect towards social structures and authority figures was introduced. The number of episodes mocking teachers and the police were reduced. Chaulet also added more references to Fantômette calling the police, and introduced an adult character, the journalist Oeil de Lynx [Eagle Eye], whose investigations led him to accompany Fantômette in her crime-fighting missions. The female crime-fighter was given an adult male chaperone. Chaulet made him a slightly ridiculous figure, nevertheless he drove a car (as far-fetched as Chaulet's stories were, he seemed reluctant to go so far as having his French schoolgirl heroine driving a Nancy Drew-style roadster), and he often saved Fantômette from perilous situations.[78]

The critical response was mixed, but it appears there were serious concerns around the series, particularly the gendered and hybrid nature of the genre Chaulet had created. Fantômette's reception, or rather, lack thereof, would suggest that she was located at the limits of what was considered acceptable. Unusually for a headline title from Hachette none of the major reviewing publications deigned to talk about the book. This was in spite of the superheroine having been featured in a full-page advert in the official book trade publication *Bibliographie de France* when she was launched. Silence was another way of expressing opprobrium, by depriving the series of advertising.[79] When the reviewers did eventually speak about the Fantômette series, by the mid- to late 1960s, the response was mixed.

Reviewers writing for *L'Education Nationale*, for example, were divided between those who liked the excitement of the series, and those who found it unrealistic and did not like young girls depicted fighting criminals on their own.[80]

This reading of children's books through the lens of comics culture extended to titles that ostensibly bore little relation to comics. The case of the French translations of the Pippi Longstocking trilogy reveals further insights into the ambiguous nature of how the editorial team's understanding of children's books was shaped by notions of gender norms and comics culture. The team appears to have feared the comparison with comics and sought to defend the books from potential reprisals. However, at the same time, the obsession with comics culture also conditioned them to look for certain elements in their books, and, in this case, to have understood Pippi and her superhuman strength as a character in the superhero(ine) mould.

Pippi Longstocking was something of an outlier in post-war children's literature. She was created during the war by the Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, who imagined Pippi as a little girl strong enough to defy the male authorities who were causing such devastation in the world. Pippi lives on her own in the beguiling Villa Villekula in a 'tiny little town' in Sweden. Her mother is dead and her sea captain father is lost at sea – probably king of the cannibals by now, Pippi surmises.[81] With an endless supply of gold coins, herculean strength – 'in all the world there was no policeman as strong as she' – a horse and monkey to keep her company, she can do as she pleases.[82] Her adventures range from the sweet to the nonsensical, punctuated by Pippi's many tall tales. The books posed a spirited challenge to the overwhelming impulse after the war to get back to 'normal' – in other words, to rebuild the patriarchal family unit and return children to the reassuring hierarchies and authority structures that had been destroyed by war. Pippi evaded all attempts to make her conform to the usual path of childhood, including being sent to school, going to bed at night or being taken to a children's home. In translation, as she travelled across various countries devastated by war and seeking to rebuild their societies, the character underwent multiple transformations.[83] But it was in France in the 1950s and early 1960s at Hachette that the translation process led to the most dramatic interventions.[84]

Pippi landed in the conservative publishing context of Cold War France like a 'model girl for the Sputnik age', as one Catholic priest reviewing the book put it.[85] The translation of the title alone speaks to the editorial team's unusual reading of the character. Most translations over the years have opted to keep the idea of Pippi's eccentric appearance by keeping 'Longstocking' in

her name.[86] In French, however, she became *Mademoiselle Brindacier* [Miss Little-bit-of-steel], published in the Bibliothèque Rose in two volumes (1951–3).[87] The editorial team had evidently been struck by the child's super-human strength, for an explanatory note on the first page stressed that: 'this character of a young girl endowed with extraordinary physical strength is not inspired by real life. It is simply a product of the author's imagination' [*'Il ne doit son existence qu'à l'imagination de l'auteur'*]. The use of the masculine pronoun in the French to describe this personage, while grammatically perfectly correct, served to further underscore her strangeness. Hachette's team read Pippi as closely related to the superhero genre, and this was both an important part of the appeal of the book to them but also an element they found worrisome. A reader's report from 1950 written by a ten-year-old girl refers to the book as *Fifi Brasdefer*, [Pippi Iron-arm], a translation that was an unmistakeable nod to the American comic strip *Brick Bradford*, which in French became *Luc Bradefer*. The American comic strip featured a muscle-bound hero and was a regular target for criticism during the French anti-comics campaign.[88] Given that the girl's mother was a member of Hachette's reading committee, it is quite likely that *Fifi Brasdefer* was either the original working title of the translation in 1950, or that discussions within the reading committee had already raised this comparison. By highlighting her strength in the title and further emphasizing this in the first few pages (even if to signal it as problematic), the Hachette edition foregrounded this element of Pippi. In the years 1950 and 1951 the decision to point to her physical strength and link it to comics culture was a rather odd decision from a reputational standpoint. In the wake of the Second World War, characters suggestive of the Übermensch had fallen out of favour with critics. At exactly this point in time, the *Tarzan* comic, as well as Hachette's translated Tarzan novels, were being accused of fascism for celebrating the character's physical prowess.[89] But it was of a piece with the developing vision of what Hachette's children's books should be doing commercially, namely competing with comics culture. The fact that they drew the comparison suggests possibly they saw Pippi as potentially the sort of character who might share comic strip heroes' appeal with children.

The editorial team returned to Pippi Longstocking in the early 1960s. The production files for Pippi are filled with numerous reports from readers and the head of translated fictions, over the course of the years 1960 to 1962, as the team deliberated on what to do with this character.[90] What is striking is just how the concerns around delinquency and comics culture remained strong, close to ten years on from the height of the anti-comics campaigns in France. Fifi's

strength caused concerns over how far readers could identify with her. Thus one of the reports produced in 1960 worried that while the girl was physically recognizable as an ordinary 'little girl with plaits and freckles', any identification was 'impossible'.[91] She was, according to this report, sited at an awkward and potentially worrying juncture, calling to mind such comics characters as the bumbling soldier, the Sapeur Camembert. More worryingly still, girls were being encouraged to identify with a character whose rebellious behaviour and loud declarations invited comparisons with delinquent youth culture: 'Fifi is a liar from the beginning to the end of these two books. […] And what is her ambition in life? "To become a ferocious pirate and spread death and terror in my wake." This Fifi seems to be the little sister of our blouson noirs.' Just as with Fantômette, the reports underscored the importance of ensuring that characters in books submit to authority and remain contained by social institutions. Several of the reports underscored the problem of Pippi's insolence in relation to authority. As one of the team put it, 'the character of Fifi does not conform to the norms of the Bibliothèque Rose.' The head of translated fiction agreed. Where the first translation of the trilogy (reduced to two books published in 1951–3) had not differed greatly from the Swedish source text, when reprinted – and this time with a much larger print run (from 10,000 per volume to 50,000 in 1962–3) – it was drastically cut, reduced by about a third of its original length.[92] The new edition removed all instances of Pippi's resistance to adult authority. For example, one chapter was removed because the heroine was depicted outwitting two lumbering policemen who were trying to take her away to a children's home. Another episode, in which a visit to school went awry, was modified to add in an apology stressing the importance of the family in socializing the child: 'I am insufferable, but, you know, when you live on your own, you end up becoming a little different to everyone else.'[93]

Nevertheless, the book's presentation, packaging and visuals also confirmed the perceived appeal of Fifi's hybrid, superheroine identity. The blurb proclaimed that Fifi was not a girl like any other, 'for a little girl, she is endowed with strength that is … incredible!' An earlier draft of the cover text had developed the superhero comparison even further, describing how 'when she is faced with an enemy – which sometimes happens to her – Fifi grabs hold of him, throws him in the air, even if he weighs one hundred kilos!'[94] The new title of the first volume removed the stuffy 'Mademoiselle' from its title, and she became simply *Fifi Brindacier*. The head of production and illustrations, Maurice Fleurent, gave the job of producing new illustrations and the front cover to Noëlle Lavaivre, whom he greatly admired and considered one of his experimental illustrators.[95]

Lavaivre was an illustrator who worked in fashion and children's television, and later collaborated with the avant-garde publisher Delpire on children's picturebooks.[96] Hachette, she recalled, found her 'too self-assured': 'they knew I was not a dutiful girl.' But, as she put it, 'I was cute and worked in television', which she thought was probably why they gave her the project as 'it was quite lively!'[97] She was pleased with the work she did for *Fifi Brindacier*. She certainly responded to the character. Lavaivre's Fifi was exuberant and revelled in her own strength. In her front cover for the book, Lavaivre further amplified the girl's outlandish physical prowess and little-girl-meets-Tarzan-like qualities by depicting Fifi in a strong man pose, effortlessly lifting a green tiger on her shoulders. On page sixty-five, a full-colour illustration showed her bullfighting in a comically balletic style, giving Fifi a rather full skirt with petticoats, whose line echoed the curve of the raging bull's tail. This outfit once more highlighted the incongruous nature of the strong girl, but it was also a little out of character, as Pippi Longstocking's dress is described as 'quite odd' because Pippi had made it herself; no petticoats are ever mentioned.

Still, while visually the 1960s editions might have embraced and even highlighted Pippi's subversiveness, the cuts ensured that her story ended with everything restored to its proper order. The restructuring of the chapters in the iconic first book returned the girl to the safety of the home. In the final chapter of Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, Pippi had two pistols which she was firing randomly, and was encouraging Tommy and Annika to join her 'band of robbers'. The book's concluding sentence provocatively included the young reader in the carnivalesque fun: 'I'm going to be a pirate when I grow up', Pippi yelled. 'How about *you*?'[98] In contrast, Hachette's *Fifi Brindacier* closed with Fifi preparing to go aboard her father's ship, but she sagely agreed with him that she should stay at home, where her life was 'more ordered' because as he barked 'that's what young people need' (she cheekily added 'especially when the children are giving the orders to themselves'). The book's final sentence, echoed in a little sketch by Lavaivre, depicted Fifi riding sensibly on her horse into the sunset, making her way home.

When we view the French case in comparison with Pippi Longstocking's reception in other countries in the Western sphere, we can see just how conservative the Cold War business model encouraged French publishing to be. The French regulator and its attendant protectionism constructed an idea of child readers who were vulnerable, thus easily influenced. The readers at Hachette appear to have absorbed this idea, and worried greatly about how children would identify with their heroines, and the potentially dangerous role

of fantasy or departures from reality. By way of contrast Pippi was accepted enthusiastically and with far fewer modifications in North America and Britain.[99] However, Hachette's editorial mediations of Fantômette and Fifi Brindacier also demonstrated how creative these interpretations of girlhood could be. The anxieties around comics and gender involved repressing certain aspects of their stories, but they also provided new lenses through which these characters were read and created.

Jules Verne: Action heroes for the atomic age

Jules Verne's scientific fictions and cerebral action heroes spoke to the anxieties of the atomic age, and consequently he was celebrated by both superpowers in the Cold War as an icon. Two very different visions of Verne dominated the cultural landscape of the Cold War. Hachette, both as the rights-holder to Verne's books in French and as publisher of film tie-in merchandising with Disney, refashioned Verne for the new Americanized era. This was a potentially lucrative, but also rather tricky border to navigate, for the regulators at the CSC and the French Ministry of Culture took a very dim view of the spoliation of French national literature.

For decades prior to 1945, Verne's oeuvre had been suffering from neglect in his home country. No one quite knew where to place him. From the interwar period onwards Hachette had tried to package him as an adventure novelist, but his three-volume sets and verbose, didactic style proved off-putting to young audiences. The strong association with children's literature meant that he struggled to find a serious adult readership. Moreover, his steam-age educational project was beginning to seem rather outdated as the twentieth century progressed. All this was to change in the 1950s, around the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Verne's death. As Soriano explained, 'after 1945, everything changed. The atrocities of the Second World War, the brisk acceleration of scientific research and interplanetary travel; it was the stuff of a Jules Verne novel. We rediscovered him.'[100] Both sides in the ideological culture wars hailed Verne as their own – similar to the rivalry between the Americans and the Soviets over Leo Tolstoy on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian author's death in 1960.[101] With the advent of the atom bomb and the race to develop space exploration by the two superpowers, Verne's books, with their fascination for great power rivalries and the emancipatory, but also dangerous, potentials of technology, suddenly seemed prophetic once more.

For the Soviets, Verne was quite simply one of the great authors in the modern leftist tradition. His popularity had remained strong in the USSR, compared to France.[102] In 1955, Jules Verne's complete works in Russian translation were reissued with a new preface by Kirill Andreev, literary editor at the Soviet state children's publishing house Detizdat, and specialist in *Nauchnaia Fantastika* [scientific fantasy].[103] Verne was fashioned in this major publishing project as the perfect anti-American, anti-imperialist socialist hero whose books could teach Soviet children about the importance of scientific discovery tempered by humanist values. Andreev hailed Verne as 'a utopian socialist', whose ideas on equality and freedom had been shaped by the 1848 revolution and whose critique of imperialism made his writings more relevant than ever before.[104] In France also those on the left were energetic in their praise for Verne. Soriano exhorted his fellow educationalists to 'rediscover Jules Verne' in the socialist-leaning *Vers L'Education Nouvelle*. Writing on the 'Marshall Plan of ideas' for the Communist press, Renée Michel hoped that Verne's books could be best weapon in the struggle against the American cultural invasion.[105] Returning to him was all the more urgent, Michel noted, as a new Disney film was in the pipeline.

At the same time as the Soviets were celebrating Verne, Disney's live-action feature film *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1954) was taking box offices by storm. Verne had long been a cultural icon in North America. Touring theatre companies and then Hollywood had found rich source material in his books.[106] In the 1950s, Disney turned to the Frenchman's books for exciting family entertainment and to provide a much-needed hit film for their new distribution channel Buena Vista.[107] While the company would not initially turn a profit with *20,000 Leagues*, owing to the high production costs, the film was both popular and critically acclaimed. According to Brian Taves, it was 'undoubtedly the most influential Verne movie ever made', and led to a surge in enthusiasm for Verne in Hollywood, after which at least one Verne adaptation was made per year, into the 1970s.[108] Hollywood's fascination for Verne should not be understood as state propaganda, certainly not as compared to the USSR publication which was very much a product of a Soviet state publishing house's priorities. In fact, the Cold War also played out within these different Hollywood takes on Verne. His books attracted big studios like Fox and MGM, but also many screenwriters and others on the left who had suffered under the McCarthy era. Nevertheless, it reflected Verne's status in America as one of 'their' great scientific writers, and his cultural importance to the American atomic age. The Americans launched the USS *Nautilus* (named after Captain Nemo's famous submarine in *20,000 Leagues*), the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine in 1954, not

long before the Disney film was released.[109] Then when the Russians successfully launched the satellite Sputnik into space in 1957, sparking the space race, the Americans ramped up science education considerably. Children's culture responded with the notion that eggheads could be heroes too – something at which Verne had been past master.[110] Disney's adaptations of Verne took advantage of this moment, with the film *In Search of the Castaways* (1962) featuring in top-billing Maurice Chevalier, playing the geographer and savant, Jacques Paganel.

Hachette turned its attention to Verne's books in the 1950s as part of the publisher's broader modernization of all the content in the Bibliothèque Verte and Bibliothèque Rose catalogues. If its classic authors were to remain in print, then they had to be adapted to fit with the American-style series fiction that now characterized the Hachette brand. As the quote from Mirman in the introduction to this chapter explained, they proceeded by 'elimination'. He was deeply sceptical about the appeal, but also the suitability, of the canonical authors of the nineteenth century for 1950s children. They were too long, and included too many elements that were likely to cause offence. But Verne's type of adventure was back in fashion, as noted above. Moreover, the Disney contract and Verne's popularity in Hollywood determined the shape of the modernization process. Hachette was contractually obliged to publish new editions of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1955) under its deal with the American company.[111] As a film tie-in, the picturebook adaptation was a mixture of the Disney script and visuals, and the Verne text. The American and English translations of Verne's books from the turn of the century were already heavily doctored versions of the French originals, so the classic story was being viewed through very different lenses. This new, close link between Disney and Jules Verne served to accelerate the Hollywoodization of Hachette's Verne. His scientific value was left to the Soviets. From the 1920s onwards, Hachette had used its full-colour front covers to turn Verne's books into adventure stories. Dynamic images depicted muscular men engaged in hyper-masculine activities: fighting leopards, shooting down eagles, rowing kayaks up rapids. This practice was continued in the 1950s revamp. However, in Hachette's interwar editions the texts inside had been left more or less intact, and did not always live up to the excitement promised on the cover. The emphasis in the 1950s and 1960s rewrites of his books was on pace and length. The old-fashioned three-volume sets of the interwar period were reduced to slim one- and two-volume editions, abridged by hundreds of pages. Dialogues were removed, repetitions dispensed with, and, where it was possible, the lengthy dissertations on biology, botany, geography and other useful areas

of knowledge were cut.[112] Verne's texts were sliced, reordered and repackaged to fit their new function as fast-paced adventure stories. Or, as Fleurent put it in typical laconic fashion in a memo about another classic title in need of modernization, the idea was for Mirman's team to 'spruce up the text', while he would 'make its illustrations a little more rock and roll [yé-yé].'[113]

Fleurent's light-hearted tone belied the delicate nature of the task. Hachette's Verne project reveals another key facet of how the Cold War business model transformed books in Hachette's catalogue, namely the way political pressures shaped the decision-making in Hachette's adaptation processes for authors from the French literary canon. Works by authors considered to be of national importance could not be tampered with so easily, and certainly not in the ways Hachette treated content from foreign authors such as Blyton or Lindgren. The CSC saw Verne as a model for the science and fantasy genre. In its guidelines to publishers the regulator explained how Verne's approach represented a very French antidote to the perversion of science and fantasy by foreign comics.[114] The Hachette team went about the Verne adaptations project very carefully; notably they took the unusual step of engaging the children's literature expert, and committed socialist, Marc Soriano, as a consultant for the adaptation process. He even carried out some of the adaptations himself and became an apologist for the Verne adaptations when many critics inevitably took issue with the new books. This seemingly incongruous choice of asking a leading leftist critic to aid the Americanization of Verne at the height of the Cold War speaks to the political sensitivity of adaptations of classic texts in general at this point, but also the very specifically contested nature of Verne. The Verne project was another example of how the Hachette team sought to be open about their editorial processes, as Soriano wrote extensively in specialist reviews about his work on the project, and the need to adapt Verne for a new generation of readers. They had to make the case for their adaptations of such a nationally important writer, and Soriano was well placed to make a credible defence of the project. The multiplying of the media in which a text could be adapted meant that cultural policy was increasingly alert to the need to protect classic literary texts. Copyright law in France was revised in 1957, stipulating that the author's name and the integrity of their work must be respected. In 1963 the publisher and adaptor who had produced a bowdlerized edition of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862) were both taken to court.[115] Moreover, Soriano explained the importance of avoiding what he called 'le rewriting' or 'le digest'.[116] These were commercial 'American' forms of adaptation, which, along with film adaptations, were subject to suspicion in Cold War France.[117] In this context, Soriano took care to explain

that the Hachette adaptations 'proceed by regrouping selected sections' (which was not entirely accurate, as we shall see).[118] A responsible adaptation showcased the author's style and ensured the survival of his or her work. Inescapably, this was also political adaptation, shaped by the rival visions of Verne by both Soviets and Americans. Soriano was only too aware of the Soviet ideas of Verne and engaged in discussions with his fellow Verne specialists from behind the Iron Curtain.

The great Vernian action hero for the atomic age was Captain Nemo, from *20,000 lieues sous les mers* [*20,000 Leagues under the Sea*] (1871) and *L'Île Mystérieuse* [*Mysterious Island*] (1875). Verne's Captain Nemo was a mysterious and ambiguous figure. Having lost his wife and children in a struggle against an unnamed power, he was sworn to vengeance. Using his submarine, he waged a covert war against the ships of the unnamed nation. He also took as prisoners the marine biologist Professor Pierre Arronax, his manservant Conseil and the harpooner Ned Land, who formed the protagonists of the first book. The novel climaxed with the Nautilus attacking and sinking one of this mysterious nation's ironclad warships, before Nemo propelled the submarine headlong into a swirling maelstrom, while the professor and his companions escaped. Verne's narrative expresses sympathy for Nemo, whose 'heart beats with desire to help oppressed races and individuals'.[119] In its sequel, *L'Île Mystérieuse,* we discover that Nemo was fighting a great colonial power, and his people had been its victims. In the 1950s, his story was adapted to cover many of the major concerns of the age: reflections on science and Western technical superiority, with its attendant violence and colonial abuses; and huge moral ambiguities surrounding ultra-modern weaponry and the question of whether mass destruction could be morally justifiable.

For the Soviets, the renegade submarine pilot was a hero for their times. Kirill Andreev hailed him as 'a passionate defender of freedom, an enemy of slavery and colonial oppression'.[120] In Disney's hands, the story of Captain Nemo expressed the nuclear fear gripping the nation, and the anti-imperial dimension was removed. Nemo became a sinister figure, 'demonic' even, in director Richard Fleischer's words.[121] Fleischer recalled how they could not work out his motivations and scoured the English translation for clues – given that the translations doctored the character extensively, and often reversed his anti-colonial stance, it was perhaps inevitable this dimension to the character would be lost.[122] The Nautilus submarine became atomic – the 'veritable dynamic power of the universe' – which could revolutionize the world – 'or destroy it', as Nemo growled. The film asked whether Nemo's argument that sinking his enemy's

ships and destroying the cargo it uses to make weapons would save thousands of innocent lives. The film encouraged the audience to sympathize with Nemo, and see his actions as motivated by intense trauma and grief – but ultimately, he has built a 'destructive machine', and so he was depicted as an aggressor who did not play by the rules.[123] The protagonist of Disney's film was in fact Ned Land, who was turned from a secondary character into an all-American action hero.[124] Land cared little for scientific discovery (he tossed away the precious specimens that Aronnax has collected and drank the preserving alcohol), and was pitted against the menacing figure of Nemo. Both Kirk Douglas as Land and James Mason as Nemo received top billing, and the scientist Aronnax was a supporting character. This sanitization of Nemo and his anti-colonialism, and minimising of the scientific, educational aim of the story was compounded by Walt Disney's desire to see the story leavened by humour to make it more family-friendly, by adding in a pet seal and raucous sailor songs sung by Land.

Hachette's picturebook tie-in for the film from 1955 also foregrounded the young and vigorous figure of Ned Land, clad strikingly in red, and who featured in far more of the images than Aronnax or even Nemo.[125] For Hachette, the paradox was how to fulfil the promise of mystery and adventure often set out in the books' covers and blurb, when the text itself was in fact famous for its endless enumerations of species of fish, and a plot rather thin on action. The front cover for volume one featured two men in the foreground, evidently shipwrecked on the top of the submarine, their clothing in tatters to reveal their bulging muscles, making them a far cry from the scholarly gentleman figure of Aronnax in the text. Volume two promised the excitement of Nemo's crew, guns in hand, trooping on the seabed, and echoed the promotional material for the Disney film. In fact, the first volume of the 1963 Bibliothèque Verte edition of *20,000 lieues* preserved the notorious lists of marine life. In contrast, the second volume of *20,000 lieues* bears the scars of multiple cuts, following quite a distinctive method of removing extraneous details and indeed whole paragraphs of information from the lengthy lists. Given the production schedules and time pressures, it is likely that the adaptation of the two volumes was assigned to two different members of the editorial team. Just as Madame S indicated earlier in this chapter, cutting and rearranging texts was by no means a scientific method, and practices could vary quite significantly. Soriano's insistence that the Verne project was carried out carefully and with educational views in mind was wishful thinking on his part.

Where they were systematic, however, was in policing offence. Hachette's editions followed the Americans, and systematically suppressed Verne's

critiques of colonialism. This was made imperative by the French wars of decolonization in the 1950s, and the controversies surrounding them – several anti-imperialist books and films relating the atrocities committed by the French in Algeria had been censored by the government. The adaptations published to tie-in with the Disney film's release in the Idéal Bibliothèque (1954) and its re-release in the Bibliothèque Verte (1963) toned down the narrative's explicit sympathy for Nemo. For example, the reference to Nemo's heart beating with desire to help oppressed races and individuals was removed.[126] In *L'Ile Mystérieuse* we discover that Captain Nemo is in fact Prince Dakkar, the son of an Indian Rajah, and his struggle is against the British Empire. Verne presented Nemo's role in the 1857 Indian uprising in a positive light: 'he risked his life like the most humble of those heroes who fought to liberate their country', while the British victory was lamented: 'right, once again, had fallen before might.'[127] Both of these passages were cut from the Bibliothèque Verte edition.[128] The adaptor reduced Nemo's story from seven to two pages, and all references to freedom, heroism and a country's right to independence were edited out.[129] These passages are still missing from the current Poche Jeunesse edition.[130] This followed a pattern that can be found across the Verne project. While the adaptors removed much of Verne's racism and descriptions of indigenous peoples as 'savages' or 'cannibals', they also attenuated or removed his portrayals of the horrific violence meted out by European imperial powers against the peoples they colonized.[131] It seems likely that the aim was less to 'attenuate Verne's chauvinism', as Soriano suggested, than it was to expunge anything that might attract unwanted attention.

The Verne project was a commercial success, but a critical disaster. Soriano felt pleased with the sales, crediting the project with helping to reverse Verne's decline amongst French children and allowing the books to enjoy a new popularity with young readers.[132] Hachette's new versions of Verne sold almost a million copies between 1957 and 1970. Critically speaking, however, as an increasing number of literary studies of Verne were published (including by Soriano himself), Hachette's adaptations of Verne came under fire. Luce Courville, the founder of the Jules Verne Museum in Nantes, charged the publisher with restricting Verne's previously broad audience to 'young boys looking for easy adventure stories', which had prevented Verne from receiving the recognition he was due.[133]

While something of a simplification, this narrative tells us much about the competing conceptions and discourses around children's reading and their books. Soriano found himself engaged in a debate with two Verne specialists from Czechoslovakia, following an article he was invited to write about the adaptations project for the review *Zlatý máj* [Golden May].[134] News of Hachette's

treatment of Verne had reached behind the Iron Curtain. Soriano's defence of the adaptations was predicated on the idea of there being two publishing models, and therefore two versions of Verne. The Soviet publishing model respected the sanctity of Verne's original texts. Soriano responded by saying that this was only possible in the Communist Soviet system because education and quality books for everyone were founding principals, and American-style series fiction had no place on state-controlled publishers' lists, which ensured that readers could handle such sophisticated texts. In a capitalist society such as France, Communist-style publishing practices for children would not work. Verne's books had to compete with the influx of American mass media, notably comics and series fictions, and therefore had to be slimmed down if children were to read them. The success of these new versions of Verne's books, Soriano argued, represented an important victory in the struggle against poor-quality commercial fictions for children. Soriano's endorsement represented something of a triumph for Hachette, for the eminent critic was effectively (and in a rather qualified way) praising their standardization model.

Conclusion

The ideological work and intense background debates forced Hachette to make some of the labour on its editorial assembly line very public. Much of what was often referred to as 'rereading' or 'correcting' was largely focused on form and avoiding attracting unwanted attention from a hostile press and regulator. The question of the morality and modernity of the product were intertwined, and both were key to the new branding of the children's books. In many ways, this chapter has argued, the various procedures were not just about perfecting the texts but they were also important in a performative sense, for giving the impression of scrutinizing texts in an anxious age. Hachette's team's deliberations reveal the messy and inconsistent nature of book production on such a large scale, and the ways in which there was often a wide gulf between the systematic image of their editorial processes that the team projected in public and the actual text and images that made it into print. Still, there were several core organizing principals on modern children's books. What Hachette stood for came through loud and clear in their discussions.

But the procedures were also creative. If we understand these processes as being about reading and interpreting content, and if we focus above all on the new books that were being created by them, we can see how the media

environment and the anxieties it generated were forging a new type of literature. This was a very French take on American mass-produced series literature for children, and produced some series now considered contemporary classics, such as Fantômette, and revived the fortunes of authors such as Verne who had become unpopular with young readers. These series helped to define the norms of the Hachette children's catalogues and shaped how they understood making books to be easily consumed. It had been a key part of Hachette's team of readers' job to ensure that so-called 'commercial' series fiction could be accepted as literary enough to be distinguished from other 'debased' forms of mass culture.

The regulation of this new media format was forged in a very public dialogue between a critical establishment concerned to police books as the guarantor of French national values and the energetic scrutiny of this content carried out by a team of editors who were keen to defend their practices but also secretly shared some of their perceptions. As the epilogue will now explore, series fiction ultimately came to be perceived by many critics as little better than the worst kind of cheap American comics. Hachette lost much of its symbolic capital with critics. While the editorial team managed to navigate a steady course protecting its reputation, their brand lost favour with key institutions – schools, libraries, critics – whose voices and institutional sway were gaining in the 1960s. The fallout of this would play an important part in the collapse of Hachette's Cold War business model.

Notes

1 Herbert Lottman, 'No Time for Childhood', *Library Journal*, 91 (1966), 5709–12, 5709.

2 Interview with Soriano and Guérard, 'Le point de vue des éditeurs', 10–51, especially 41.

3 Haddadian-Moghaddam and Scott-Smith, 'Translation and the Cultural Cold War: An Introduction', 329.

4 On creative labour and the Hachette 'assembly line', and the processes involved, see Chapter 4.

5 Gisèle Sapiro: 'La question des sensibilités se pose depuis que l'édition existe', interview with Antoine Oury, *Actualitté*, 23 November 2021, https://actualitte.com/article/103500/interviews/gisele-sapiro-la-question-des-sensibilites-se-pose-depuis-que-l-edition-existe accessed 28 September 2023.

6 'Pour maintenir la qualité des livres d'enfants', *Bulletin du Livre*, 15 November 1962, 19–20, see 20.

7 Astrid Lindgren, *Fifi Brindacier* translated by Alain Gnaedig, accompanied by Ingrid Vang Nyman's original illustrations (Paris, Livre de Poche Jeunesse, 1995).
8 For example Kirsten Cather, 'I know it when I hear it': The Case of the Blind Film Censor', 'Censorship, Regulation, and Media Policy in the Twenty-First Century: A Roundtable on Critical Approaches', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 63 (2009), 58–60; see also Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors*, Introduction.
9 See Chapter 2. See also Crétois, *L'Encadrement de la Presse pour la Jeunesse.*
10 Raoul Dubois, 'Revenons à de saines lectures', *L'Education Nationale*, January 1955, 10–11.
11 E. Manciet, Review of Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* translated by Valentin Pecnik, illustrated by Henri Dimpre (Monte Carlo, Editions Vedette, 1953), *L'Education Nationale*, xiv.
12 Gamarra, 'Livres de prix'; Michel, 'Littérature Enfantine et Plan Marshall des Idées'.
13 Claude Prévost 'Concours ou collaboration?', *La Nouvelle Critique. Revue du Marxisme Militant*, March 1952, 120–1.
14 *King Solomon's Mines* 1950, directed by Compton Bennett and Andrew Marton, MGM Studios, French release October 1951; H. Rider Haggard, *Les Mines du roi Salomon*, translated by René Lécuyer, illustrations by André Hofer (Paris, Hachette Bibliothèque Verte, 1951 first edition).
15 M.-T. Latzarus, review of *Le club des cinq*, and X. Pattyn, review of *Le club des cinq contre-attaque*, *Livres et Lectures*, March 1956, 168.
16 Archambault, 'Département des éditions pour la jeunesse', 9.
17 For an example of this line of reasoning, see Alfred Brauner, 'Poison sans Paroles', *Enfance,* 6 (1953), 407–11; in her article on children's literary criticism, Boulaire speaks of a strong 'iconopohobia' amongst reviewers in the 1950s, 'La Critique Périodique'.
18 Maurice Fleurent, causeries: 1958–1969, file C121B01D38, in S14C121B1.
19 Soriano and Guérard, 'Le point de vue des éditeurs', 39.
20 *Ibid.,* for a reproduction of the grid, 39.
21 'Pour maintenir la qualité des livres d'enfants', *Bulletin du livre*, 15 November 1962, 19–20.
22 Marc Bauland, *La Bibliothèque Verte (1923–1959): l'Esprit d'une Collection de Littérature pour la Jeunesse* (Unpublished Master's thesis, Université de Paris Sorbonne Paris IV, 1996), 58.
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Epilogue

Hachette challenged

The breakdown of the Cold War publishing ecosystem

By the mid-1960s, Hachette was incontestably the leader of the children's publishing field in France. However, seismic shifts on the international scene and profound social, economic, cultural and political changes at home signalled the beginning of the end for the Cold War publishing ecosystem. This process was accelerated after the watershed moment of May 1968. The Cold War consensus whereby everyone could agree on the need for tight regulation of children's publishing – even when they were divided on which values were being defended – was under attack. The breakdown of the Cold War business model and the regulatory environment that sustained it sheds further light on the ways in which the global ideological conflict of the superpowers and American expansionism shaped children's publishing in France, and its enduring legacies.

An Americanized industry?

Hachette achieved huge growth in children's book production and sales in France in a relatively short space of time, across the mid-1950s and 1960s. Its business model was predicated on a virtuous circle of growth; large print runs of colourful books and comics sold serially and cheaply, made possible thanks to the increasing prosperity and pocket-money spending power of a youthful population that was staying in school longer. According to the trade publication *L'Imprimerie Nouvelle* in 1963, sales of children's books in France had doubled in less than five years and children's books accounted for 15 per cent of book sales in that year in France overall.[1] Given that Hachette was the largest publisher for children at the time, it is fair to surmise that the vertiginous book sales recorded by Hachette had played a key role in turning children's books into mass consumer items in France.[2]

This expansion transformed all aspects of the publishing process, and the books and comics it produced. In the words of senior editor Maurice Fleurent: 'it is not only just the technology [of the mass-market book] that has changed, but everything at the same time: the packaging, the content, and the target audience.'[3] Hachette's output was now overwhelmingly Anglo-American translations, and even books that were home-grown or French classics were standardized to fit the new mould. In fact, all books, including the Enid Blyton and Nancy Drew series, were cut, spliced, reformed and repackaged into a Gallic take on an American-style product that sold to French baby-boomers by the millions. Meanwhile, production at Hachette's comics publishing arm was discreetly taken over by Disney's agent Armand Bigle and turned into Disney-only content. The deals with Disney transformed and mobilized Hachette's vast book publishing structures and distribution networks in the service of Disney film merchandising. This model was helped by Disney's string of blockbuster hits such as *Mary Poppins* and *The Jungle Book* in the 1960s, which boosted the tie-ins and re-issues of these titles in the catalogue.

In short, it was looking very much as if the French children's publishing industry had been Americanized. Was Communist Pierre Gamarra's prediction that the American invasion of French markets would eradicate French national culture, starting with the very young, coming true?[4] This apocalyptic scenario was of course an exaggeration. The French Communist Party had in any case set up its own publishing company for children, La Farandole, in 1955, that was enjoying modest success.[5] Moreover, as comics scholars have demonstrated, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a great boom in French-language comics publishing, thanks in part to the actions of the French regulator.[6] The CSC managed to impose important changes to the foreign-origin content that was being given to French children. French republican history lessons were introduced into Disney comics, and Hachette's team scrutinized its American-origin content carefully to ensure it conformed to French values and their conception of children's books before going to print. It is nevertheless clear that in the early Cold War, up until the late 1960s, French children's book publishing was dominated by Anglo-American products. American dollars had helped to 'modernize' publishing structures in France, and this modernization was very much driven by American content, and in the case of Hachette's deal with Disney, by the American company's business priorities. These changes certainly affected Hachette, as the publisher leading the field. Hachette's brand identity was transformed, and to a certain extent the changes corroded the substantial symbolic capital it had hitherto possessed in

the children's literary field. As Fleurent would lament in 1970, 'Hachette is – occasionally! – capable of making something other than Mickey Mouse books.'[7]

The ascendancy of American products over French children's culture was sustained by political, economic, social and cultural forces that were starting to mutate by the mid-1960s. Notably, the geopolitical context was changing considerably. The ideological pressures placed upon the publishing sector in the preceding decade had all but gone. American cultural politics was undergoing a move away from international work and interventionism, in large part due to the Vietnam War, and this was then compounded in the 1970s by the global economic downturn.[8] From the French perspective this did not ease the issue of the power imbalance, however, which had in fact grown by the 1960s in the children's sector. As I observed in Chapter 3 of this book, Marshall Plan era Paris became an important hub for the distribution of American children's content across Europe, which was in and of itself an indicator of the power imbalances in transatlantic publishing. By the 1960s, the centre of gravity in European children's publishing shifted away from Paris to London. Disney's European publishing operations offers insights into how this happened. During the Cold War the Disney Company started to see itself and its content as global ambassadors for American values. Prompted by the attacks on its publications in the anti-comics campaigns that erupted in many countries in this period, the company worked to extend editorial control over the local publishing operations that used its characters and brand name in wildly popular comics and books, and the role these publications played in its global brand. Its success was only ever partial. David Gerstein points out that the popularity of Disney comics publishing in countries such as Denmark and Italy as compared to the United States ensured that the company could not keep up with either the demand or the quality of comics being produced abroad.[9] Nevertheless, in France at least, the entire production process was shifted into the hands of Disney's agent, and Chapter 3 showed how structures and overall strategies can shape content in key ways, not least by excluding non-Disney content from popular publications. The power imbalance with its licensees became more pronounced as Disney enjoyed exponential growth thanks to the popularity of Disneyland and its move into television, along with a string of box office hit films. The success of its Buena Vista distribution company confirmed Disney's status as a major Hollywood studio.[10] The move of the Disney European offices to London in 1966 was accompanied by increasingly formalized co-edition practices amongst Disney publishers in Western Europe, through regular meetings in English, at the Frankfurt book

fair and in the company's London offices. Moreover, for the local publishers, the nature of the Disney contracts meant there was a real risk of over-stretching, as the scales needed to keep down the costs of producing colour picturebooks relied upon producing large quantities, which could be expensive in the case of low sales (and which the Disney contract forced the local publisher to absorb). The place of Disney in Hachette's commercial decisions reminds us that the French company was part of Disney's global empire-building.

The deals with Disney were one-sided, to be sure, but they formed only one – albeit important – part of Hachette's children's publishing business. Its fictions lists boomed in this period, and the dynamic expansion here was led by the French publisher. Most of the books were imported on French terms. The adaptation of what could be termed 'American' production processes and business models was a deliberate choice on the part of series director Louis Mirman and his team, and was something they designed according to their understanding of the French market. Adopting a capitalist approach in order to transform the book into an object of everyday consumption was hardly a foreign idea to Hachette, the famed and reviled great green octopus. But in the Cold War era it was also an ideological choice to use American products and content to fuel this expansion – and in the case of the French translations of Nancy Drew, to place the American flag prominently on its front cover. The ambiguities in Mirman and his team's understanding of the books they were making are striking, however, and this was to become more pronounced – and problematic – as the market and the industry underwent major transformations from the mid-1960s. Children's publishing in France was about to change dramatically.

The twilight of the moral order years

From the French government's perspective, the 1949 legislation and its Commission for Surveillance and Control (CSC) had been pushed through in the aftermath of war and emerging Cold War as essentially an emergency response to rising juvenile delinquency rates. Fears of the violence and bad behaviour in comics culture aimed at children, and a widespread concern about American influence in children's culture became prevalent as the French nation was seeking to rebuild. This sense of urgency gradually subsided, and the major government ministries involved in the legislation consequently lost interest in it, but the CSC remained. It was embedded in the children's publishing ecosystem.

Reflecting on the CSC five decades later, former commission member René Finkelstein mused that in the 1950s and 1960s its work had been essentially conservative and focused on preserving the 'moral order'.[11] What Finkelstein termed the 'moral order', in order to draw a line of continuity between the regulator and the traditional values espoused under the Vichy collaborationist government, I have called 'containment' in this study. Through the anti-comics campaigns and the work of the regulator, the Catholic far right's hostility towards 'bad books' became fused with Communist anti-Americanism and a broader Cold War impulse towards surveillance and 'containment' of children within the family and social structures. In short, everyone agreed on the need for tight regulation of children's publishing, even if they differed on the details of how that should work.

This conservatism was sustained by discourses that perceived children as vulnerable, and needing to be protected, particularly from foreign influence. It was then compounded by the continuity in the CSC's membership and its methods throughout this period. The system relied on ensuring publishers were aware that the CSC was watching them, and that it was backed up by a critical reviewing system and press that would savage publishers who stepped out of line. Its steadily increasing reliance on dialogue with publishers behind the scenes through its system of warning and recommendation letters ensured the commission became institutionalized, and an enduring part of the French children's publishing sector. As Jean-Matthieu Méon notes, this was a way of maximizing the commission's role and power over the industry.[12] While the tenor of debate gave a sense of two vastly opposing world views, there was a cosiness to what was in effect a rather small world. Critics and publishers dined together, collaborated on projects, or at least where friendship was not possible, settled into a grudging respect for one another, and an enjoyment of sparring together over children's books.[13] There was a general understanding between publishers and the regulator around this conservatism, and it worked well in a system that was dominated by a small number of large education publishers. They shared a sense of the need for moral probity and agreed upon the notion of the responsibility of the publisher. Certainly at Hachette, this environment, paired with the economic pressure of large print runs, discouraged risk taking. Self-censorship permeated the culture of the juvenile department; it shaped the editorial team's understanding of what constituted 'Hachette' books, and the notion of responsibility and special rules were central to their conceptualization of the role of the editor in children's publishing.

The first signs of change came from within the children's field. As the huge anxieties of the post-war and early Cold War pressures subsided, a new tone in the critical reviewing system began to emerge. Comics were no longer considered the root of all evil. As noted above, this was thanks in part to the regulation and the stigmatization of American comics, which helped a home-grown comics industry to flourish. This French-language wave included titles such as René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo's *Astérix* (1959), which were rooted in French Republican values and history (the Gauls resisting the Romans – 'our Wild West' – as Goscinny put it).[14] Comics studies was welcomed, albeit warily at first, into the academy.[15] The thaw also led to a new approach to children's media. For example, the Catholic, liberal magazine *Loisirs Jeunes* reviewed all types of different media, not just books. This was testament to a sense that film, comics and television could have a place in young people's education. The concerns around Anglo-American commercial culture, and suspicion of comics, did not exactly disappear overnight, however. The condemnation of comics culture was often displaced onto Anglo-American series literature. Raoul Dubois warned teachers in *L'Education Nationale* that Blyton's detective novels had replaced the worst type of comics.[16] Later, in the early 1970s, Marc Soriano argued that the detective novel structure was too formulaic and too easy to read to hold any educational value for children, concluding that 'these are simply comics disguised as books, and that they have all the negative aspects of comics, without any of the positives'. In this case, it was better to give children quality comics than 'regressive' books.[17] This mirrored the sense amongst the editorial team at Hachette that serial literature could, and indeed must, compete with comics. This was the lens through which critics and editors alike continued to view children's culture. But the sense of national emergency had gone, and this led to the second important change. There was a slow but distinctive move towards a critical apparatus that increasingly prioritized aesthetic and literary criteria for evaluation alongside moral, medical and pedagogical concerns. This process was accelerated by the opening of an innovative new library for children in the suburbs of Paris in 1965. Its *Bulletin d'Analyses de Livres pour Enfants* magazine joined several important voices on children's reading who were taking the field in this new direction.[18]

This cosy, conservative world was destabilized by the rise in teen culture and the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The CSC's battles in the mid-1960s focused on the 'slightly erotic' images and stories in romance magazines for teenage girls. It was also concerned by the mildly sexual references in the letters page of the *Salut les Copains* magazine (1962), which was a spin-off from the popular radio

programme of the same name (which launched in 1959 and is usually cited as the first sign of burgeoning teen culture in France). The commissioners were worried such publications could awaken young girls' sexuality.[19] The legislation dated back to 1949, when the concept of specific culture for teenagers was unheard of in France,[20] and as Laurent Gerbier has observed, the law was vague on the exact age boundaries concerned.[21] There was little in the early guidelines to distinguish between culture for young and older children. Likewise, the publishing culture of the period struggled to cater for them. As the baby-boomers entered their teenage years, they began chafing against the conservatism of the 1950s Cold War culture of containment. The impact of paperback publishing, the rising spending power of teenagers and the encroachment of television into French houses all spelled trouble for an industry where the large presses were so entrenched in models based around self-censorship and protectionism. While Mirman's strategy was paying off handsomely in the Bibliothèque Rose, Hachette was, by the mid-1960s, increasingly struggling to keep hold of readers at the upper end of the age range. The critic Yette Jeandet observed that Hachette's Bibliothèque Verte had built its business around bowdlerizing adult adventure novels for teens, but that this age group was now turning to the Livre de Poche paperback series to read the unabridged versions for the same price. She noted that teenage consumers were abandoning the Bibliothèque Verte, and this was a trend registered by other publishers.[22] For the publishing industry, the critics and the regulator, the risk was a growing disconnect with its young audiences.

May 1968: Publishing as revolution

The timid moves towards change became a full-scale rebellion in the late 1960s. Children's culture became swept up in the massive protests of May and June 1968, and the wider social, sexual and cultural revolutions that took place in the surrounding years. This date is widely understood to represent a watershed moment for children's books in France.[23] Inspired by the liberationist politics of the era a new generation of small, avant-gardist publishers, writers and artists sought to shake things up and loudly proclaimed war on the hyper-protectionist culture that they argued 'swaddled' children, patronized them and wrought creative decline. As Isabelle Nières-Chevrel put it, 'children's literature enjoyed for a short period the quasi-status of "counter-culture"'.[24]

The new players were changing ideas on what children's books and publishing could be.[25] Notably, the Franco-American publishing partnership

Harlin Quist/Ruy-Vidal (founded in 1967) scouted for young talent on both sides of the Atlantic, and engaged their artists to work with luminaries of the French literary avant-garde. Eugène Ionesco's *Contes* [Stories] told by a father to his young daughter, illustrated by Etienne Delessert and Philippe Corentin, trusted 'children over three years of age' to engage with material that was by turns playful, whimsically absurd and surreal.[26] Other titles involved established writer Marguerite Duras, and new artists including Nicole Claveloux, Patrick Couratin and Bernard Bonhomme. Surreal storylines accompanied by wild colour schemes using jagged blacks, browns, purples, or queasy greens and nightmarish aquatic blues seemed an energetic rejection of the aesthetic vision developed by the CSC guidelines and critics, anxious to protect children (and would soon provoke the ire of child psychologist Françoise Dolto).[27] Meanwhile references to political protests such as the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam movements were further provocations to the Cold War consensus, designed to challenge adults, as well as engage children. The artist Etienne Delessert recalls the passion, and how they were 'persuaded that we were going to break down all barriers and transform the world of children's books. No more cosy bedtime stories! […] We were going to make books that took readers on journeys into parallel imaginary universes and act as mirrors for our age'.[28] L'Ecole des Loisirs [Playtime School] (founded by two Frenchmen, Jean Fabre and Jean Delas, and the Swiss Arthur Hubschmid in 1965) was influenced by innovators abroad. The trio set up a new publishing department following a trip to the Frankfurt book fair, where they spoke of discovering a world of children's books and publishers with ideas unlike anything they had ever seen before.[29] One of the early books they published was Iela Mari's *Il palloncino rosso* as *Les aventures d'une petite bulle rouge* [*The adventures of a red balloon*]. Its bold and graphic front cover featured a bright-red circle on a vivid green background and was reminiscent of an independence movement flag. According to the publisher, they made it: 'in May '68 to be precise. It was a revolutionary book: without words, it was a graphic poem about a bright red bubble, a colour resonant of the time. This picturebook became emblematic of our publishing house!'[30] This was above all a visual revolution, a reaction against the hostility towards visual media for children that characterized the critical and regulatory systems of Cold War France. While teen culture and rebellion were shaking the foundations of French society, including the publishing ecosystem, it was in picturebooks that the initial innovations took place.

The newcomers presented themselves as a reaction against the culture of protectionism and caution that prevailed in French publishing. Their new ideas

on children's books reveal much about how contemporaries experienced the Cold war ecosystem. The most vocal was Harlin Quist/Ruy-Vidal. As François Ruy-Vidal recalled: 'my question was always the same. Why did we have to be so prudent, so timid, so timorous, so boringly reassuring as soon as it became a question of children's books?'[31] He referred derisively to the idea that children's culture had to be adapted to their needs as 'masticatory explanations'. He railed against 'this condescending, reassuring, concession to their age and mental level, to this category of the child […] It is in the name of this racism, this protectionism by adult-judges of books for children and educational psychologists, that most books for children are produced and the best ones are rejected'.[32] At Harlin Quist/Ruy-Vidal, the watchword was freedom. The artist Patrick Couratin recalled how illustrators usually had very little room for manoeuvre, while Quist and Ruy-Vidal 'offered us an artistic freedom that was a real blast of fresh air'.[33] Nicole Claveloux said she did not enjoy working for adult audience publishers who were too concerned about making books that would sell to worry about changing the world. Children's books suited her much better: 'children's publishers have ideas about how to revolutionise what currently exists.' When they engaged in dialogue with the critical establishment, the diverging visions of children and reading were apparent. Jean Fabre of L'Ecole des Loisirs warned adults not to be domineering but instead let children discover picturebooks for themselves; Soriano, part of the older generation, disagreed: 'I tend to believe that adults can and should adopt much more of a guiding role.'[34] Internationally, the years around 1968 witnessed conflicts over radically differing visions of children's education, culture and child-rearing. In France, the role of the regulator and particular conditions of production of children's books ensured that this moment played out as a particularly violent culture clash, led by a radical and highly creative, dynamic publishing movement.

Certainly the so-called 'new society' of the years around May 1968 created a market that was receptive to such ideas and produced alternative circuits for distribution. Arthur Hubschmidt of L'Ecole des Loisirs observed that May 1968 made their existence possible. With the expansion of higher education in the 1960s, and particularly women's access to it, a growing number of mothers were educated to university-degree level. A market studies report at Hachette noted that the juvenile department was losing market share in picturebooks in part because 'publishers are betting on increasingly intellectual parents. In this domain, only elegantly presented (if not avant-garde) books are sure to sell (the latest example of this trend is L'Ecole des Loisirs)'.[35] In terms of distribution, François Maspero, the leftist publisher and bookseller whose paperback series

was credited with helping to spread the revolutionary theories of 1968, also had an excellent children's section in his shop in the Parisian Latin Quarter. He became the first serious stockist of L'Ecole des Loisirs. Across France, specialist children's libraries were beginning to emerge in the early 1970s. Moreover, the new review magazines of the children's libraries and critical establishment generally were keen to engage in debate, to listen to the new ideas on children's books, and gave the newcomers plenty of publicity and podiums at their conferences.[36] Further official recognition came in October 1973, when the Musée des arts décoratifs du Louvre (Paris) held an exhibition celebrating avant-garde picturebook art for children. The exhibition featured renowned New York picturebook artists Maurice Sendak and Tomi Ungerer, for example, but also many French names of the new avant-garde, and the publishers Delpire, L'Ecole des Loisirs and Editions Harlin Quist were well represented. A review of the exhibition by the author Michel Tournier announced, 'Children's books: now everything is possible'.[37]

The industry sensed changes were afoot. Fleurent, head of picturebooks at Hachette, felt excitement about the radical changes he was witnessing in his trade: 'this is publishing as revolution.'[38] The new publishers were influential far beyond their tiny size and restricted circulation. More pragmatically, May 1968 had rekindled interest in progressive pedagogies. Educational reform looked increasingly possible. These efforts were still on a tiny scale compared to Hachette's operations – but if schools could be taken on board, then publishers who reflected the new zeitgeist posed a potentially serious threat to the huge publisher. Senior management at Hachette was very much aware that it needed new blood to shake up the ageing publishing house. To this end, Simon Nora, one of the politicians who had heralded the so-called 'new society' in 1969, was appointed its new chief executive in 1971. In the juvenile department, Fleurent set out to court François Ruy-Vidal, whose work he particularly admired. When they met at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, Fleurent (jokingly, one presumes) called Ruy-Vidal a Maoist, and said to him, 'you are the trailblazers – and Hachette will follow you'.[39] Fleurent remained sceptical about the degree to which the public's taste had truly evolved, and he was convinced that these smaller publishers needed the support of the big ones. In an interview he referred to the small publishers as kamikazes, aesthetic adventurers on a suicide mission in a market that could not sustain them.[40] This same interview floated the possibility that Hachette might distribute Editions Harlin Quist's books. Ruy-Vidal refused the offer; he had found Fleurent's overtures rather clumsy.[41] Eventually, it was Simon Nora, the new chief executive officer at Hachette, who would hire Ruy-Vidal, for Nora shared Fleurent's vision of setting up an innovative children's

department.[42] In early 1973, Editions Harlin Quist/Ruy-Vidal folded. Nora entered into negotiations with Ruy-Vidal to see, once again, whether he could be recruited for Hachette. Ruy-Vidal agreed, but on condition that he would work for the literary house Grasset (owned by Hachette), rather than Hachette itself, and only for two years initially. In fact, Ruy-Vidal stayed until 1976 and published thirty-four picturebooks for Grasset, including Nicole Claveloux's critically acclaimed illustrations for *Alice in Wonderland* (1974). However, the project encountered difficulties; a combination of many factors, including concerns over sales and disagreements over book projects.[43]

In the end, the publisher who followed most successfully in the trail of the avant-gardists was the large literary press, Gallimard. Inspired by the developments in the field, in 1972 two young editors, Pierre Marchand and Jean-Olivier Héron, took an outline for a children's publishing project to Gallimard. Their idea was to develop picturebooks, encyclopaedias and activity books, and to use Gallimard's back catalogue to launch a new, richly visual and intellectually ambitious approach to publishing books for children.[44] They had arrived at just the right moment: following the critical success of 'their' author Ionesco with Harlin Quist/Ruy-Vidal, the Gallimard family had taken an interest in the new current within children's literature. An approach to Ruy-Vidal and Delessert had failed, and so this new proposal was received with interest. Moreover, the publisher had just ended its long-standing distribution agreement with Hachette and was in a phase of transition and expansion, so the idea of rejuvenating its backlist was particularly timely.[45] As the art director at Gallimard, Massin recalled: 'They explained something to me that I had not fully realised, which was that in this domain too, things had changed after '68, and that children and adolescents should no longer be deprived of access to forms of expression that hitherto had been the preserve of adults.'[46] Thus it was that Gallimard, which had only sporadically produced books for children (albeit successfully, in the case of Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*), opened its first children's department.

The success was such that within a few years the new department launched a paperback list, Folio Junior in 1977. The new children's publishing projects at both Grasset and Gallimard – particularly the instant healthy sales and critical acclaim for the Gallimard lists – were signs of just how far the children's field had shifted in a new direction. Major literary presses were working with the French avant-garde and granting to children's books a respect that befitted its new literary, intellectual status: 'Gallimard oblige' as the department co-director Marchand liked to say.[47] Devices such as author biographies, critical introductions and the crediting of translators were indicators of this approach. This was the polar

opposite approach to Hachette's strategy based on importing Anglo-American serial literature. The result of Gallimard's triumphant entry into juvenile publishing was that the children's literary field was more balanced and diverse. It was no longer dominated by the three mass-market publishers, Hachette, Flammarion-Deux Coqs d'Or and Nathan, but now included an increasing number of literary or avant-garde presses such as Gallimard, Grasset and L'Ecole des Loisirs, who, for the sake of their reputation and symbolic capital, had to be more receptive to experimentation and intellectually challenging books.

The last piece in the puzzle was the regulator. Would the heavy-handed and conservative Commission charged with the Surveillance and Control of Publications for Children and Adolescents – so clearly a product of post-war anxieties and Cold War containment culture – be able to stay relevant? The CSC sought to recruit new members, with a view to developing its approach in line with the new visions of children's literature. Janine Despinette, who was one of the editors of the innovative *Loisirs Jeunes* magazine, and a respected critic of children's literature, was approached to join the CSC after 1968.[48] Jacqueline de Guillenchmidt, director of the CSC in the late 1990s, was clear that 'the spirit in which the commission worked changed profoundly in the 1970s'. By this, she meant that the moralizing approach of the 1950s and 1960s was abandoned, and their focus was simply to prevent 'any old publication' making it into 'anyone's hands', and the CSC's energies focused on policing adult comics and erotica in the name of child protection.[49] However, the CSC did not renounce its scrutiny of the children's field, nor did this liberalization mean that the new avant-garde in children's publishing was left to do as it pleased. For example, in 1976 the CSC reprimanded the radical Sourire qui Mord publishing collective [The Smile that Bites], whose books were accompanied by manifestos which saluted the 'winds of change' blowing in children's books, and advocated for the discussion of 'taboo themes'. The collective's first book, *Histoire de Julie qui avait une ombre de garçon* [The story of Julie who had a boy's shadow] (1976) was a dark exploration of the emotional fallout experienced by a little girl when her parents could not accept her failure to conform to gender norms.[50] Her boy self appears as her shadow, and distraught at being unable to escape it, Julie decides to dig a hole for herself in a graveyard, so she can be 'where it is always dark and there are no shadows'. Shortly after its publication, the collective received a warning letter from the CSC, in which the regulator accused *Julie* of being 'morbid', 'depressing' and 'pornographic'.[51] The collective's production was then subject to scrutiny by the CSC for the next year, according to the provisions of the law. However, and no doubt a sign of how attitudes to children's publishing had changed since 1968,

the CSC took no further action, and the book remained on sale, uncensored. In short, the CSC remained in place, and it continued to operate discreetly in dialogue with publishers. Its focus now was on scrutinizing the production of book publishers sited at the avant-garde that was deliberately seeking to push the boundaries. This was evidence of the collapse of the 'hyper-protectionism' identified by Ruy-Vidal, and of the profound shift in the location of the borders of the acceptable in children's literature in France after 1968.

Hachette challenged

Hachette's juvenile department was well aware that it was struggling to keep up with competitors who had proved better able to adapt to a fast-evolving market.[52] Most of the key factors that had forged and sustained the Cold War business model had either disappeared or been radically transformed. Hachette's business model had developed it into a publishing juggernaut, designed for domination. But it was not agile. The editors had long complained of how their large print runs discouraged experimentation and risk-taking, which had worked well in the Cold War containment era, but encountered problems in the new context post-1968. The ways in which the staff diagnosed the publisher's problems, sought to find solutions, and the extent to which it was able to respond illuminate further the legacies and impact of the Cold War business model.

Viewing the juvenile department in the mid-1970s through the eyes of a new recruit, the atmosphere was pleasant as ever, but, in his words, 'very staid'. The newcomer in question was Ronald Blunden, who joined the team in 1976 and would go on to have a distinguished career in publishing.[53] He found himself in a department run by 'two gentlemen' who had been in the job for a long time, and that was designed around 'cranking out incredible breadwinners'. Blunden was given an office and left to 'rubber stamp' reprints for the Bibliothèque Verte. 'Bored out of my skull', he started reading them, and he said, 'what I found was astounding'. The abridged texts were filled with mistakes, and he marvelled at 'how kids could possibly follow the plot because of all the holes'. The young Blunden started to modify them, 'translating stuff and adding it in to make it more intelligible', and 'after one month they noticed these expensive changes. The senior editor came running down the hall yelling "stop!"'.

Blunden's recollections point to two of the key issues that the department faced in the post-1968 era. First, there was the growing dissatisfaction with

the texts produced by the fiction factory production line and its reliance on the 'breadwinners'. The readers' reports from the 1970s reflected a sense of weariness with the model. Referring to the 'literary' quality of a text was code for 'reject immediately' – albeit with some reluctance – such as in the case of this reader's report from 1973: 'the writing is magnificent, its rhythm has just a hint of French-Canadian cadence; like a sort of poem. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to what we make in the Rose, it is so much better that it would be almost sacrilege [to include it]. We absolutely must publish it (there is no hope).'[54] Likewise, the readers' reports on the Stratemeyer Syndicate's Happy Hollisters [Joyeux Jolivet] series, while generally perfunctory (this was the kind of content that would be bought in bulk and repackaged for the big fictions lists), were nevertheless written in a similarly jaded tone. One report on a translated manuscript called it a 'story written in the same style and the same spirit as all the other Jolivet. Same canvas, same stitching. Only the colours change'.[55] Second, the lengthy standardization processes set out in the last two chapters of this study worked well if the books were selling, as was the case with Blyton. However, once the sales of a series started to tail off, or, as in the case of the Bibliothèque Verte, when it started to lose market share to Gallimard and Livre de Poche, it began to feel like a lot of extra editorial work for poor returns. This was especially the case as such scrutiny was no longer necessary in the more liberal regulatory environment of the 1970s. Reviewing one book from a series by an author popular in the 1960s, the editor wrote a damning report:

> This product, which was rejected by the readers in its original form, has been completely overhauled by the manufacturer and reorganised following the reader's recommendations. It appears that all the other models in the series have been turned out by the same process. There is no issue with the resulting product. Each sentence contains a subject, a verb, and an object, and sometimes even a relative clause. It is a new volume in the series, no more or less publishable than its predecessors. The quality is the same. Poor. NB the worst detail is that the books in this series are not selling. In these conditions, it should be considered the last of its species and removed from the catalogue as soon as possible.[56]

The Cold War generation of editors was nearing retirement, and its successors increasingly rejected the industrial approach to literary production.

This is not to argue that the department failed to respond positively to the challenges it faced. Fleurent set out his position in the 1973 Hachette picturebooks division catalogue, which was really a manifesto for change: *10 Millions de Jeunes Lecteurs* [10 Million Young Readers]. Produced in collaboration with the literary critic Claude Bonnefoy and with a preface by Soriano, the booklet certainly

struck a new note (this was the first time that a Hachette children's catalogue had quoted Roland Barthes or Marshall McLuhan). In it, the senior editor declared war on 'pink rabbits' and argued that television could entertain children, while encyclopaedias, reference books and activity books would furnish them with the tools they needed to become 'citizens who stand up, rather than lie down'.[57] Multiple new series and formats were experimented with. Some were to prove successful, such as the expansion of its encyclopaedia series, which produced some acclaimed publications, and Claude Voilier's popular continuation of Blyton's Famous Five series. Others, such as what Mirman referred to as the new 'young adult' genre, for fourteen and upwards, proved more of a struggle for the department.[58] This was one of the areas where the legacy of the era of surveillance and control caused the greatest problems. In the same correspondence file from late 1974 where one editor was explaining how their new young adult series Bibliothèque Rouge was inspired by realist teen novels from the United States, such as Paul Zindel's *Pigman* (1968), another editor was reassuring a concerned parent about the 'serious controls' they subjected books to in the Bibliothèque Verte.[59] Gritty and explicit materials were difficult to publish when the press's overall reputation and ethos were so heavily invested in family friendly education publishing.

Most seriously of all, the legacy of the Cold War publishing era was the dent it had made in Hachette's reputation. The revivified critical establishment and the growing legitimation of children's books as 'real' literature led to the rediscovery and careful study of the classic authors that Hachette had been publishing in adapted form. Chapter 5 of this study closed with the scandal that arose around Hachette's treatment of Jules Verne's texts. While his books arguably benefited from being shortened for younger readers, and the critic Soriano hailed the project as a huge success for bringing the author to a new generation of readers, there was a clamour of voices around the perceived despoiling of this classic author.[60] The question resurfaced very publicly again in the 1990s, when an academic alerted Astrid Lindgren to the extensive liberties Hachette's French translations of her Pippi Longstocking trilogy had taken with her text, and the eminent Swedish author demanded a new translation be produced.[61] The damage to the publisher's reputation was dangerous in a field with large new competitors in possession of plenty of symbolic capital. In 1978, Hachette's internal assessment was that teachers had overwhelmingly transferred their allegiance to Gallimard's 1000 Soleils and Folio Junior series, thanks to what the market report called the 'halo effect' of the prestigious literary reputation of the publishing house.[62]

At this end point, it is important to note that the history of Hachette's juvenile department cannot be considered separately from the history of the publisher's fortunes overall. The department's capacity to manoeuvre and for experimentation were hampered by the serious financial and strategic difficulties the company was facing in the 1970s.[63] The editor described by Blunden as running down the corridor to protest expensive changes to content was under pressure from his management to cut costs and keep churning out the best-sellers in their millions. The period covered by this study ends with the 1968 years, and the challenge they posed to the Cold War business model and the highly conservative children's publishing ecosystem it had created. However, for Hachette's publishing operations across the board, the dramatic cut-off point to this period came in 1981, when the press was bought by Jean-Luc Lagardère's giant defence company Matra. The era of conglomeration and international multimedia buyouts of publishing companies had begun in France.

Hachette is now one of a handful of multinational publishing companies that dominate global publishing. After experiencing difficult decades in the 1970s and 1980s, its children's lists have revived spectacularly.[64] Crucially, the series literature model and Disney collaboration remain central to its children's imprints. As Mirman always dryly noted, he made books that children wanted to read. The juvenile department may have lost much symbolic capital, but the 'breadwinning' series that Mirman and his team selected remain in heavy rotation on the shelves. The Cold War business model is no more, but at its core, the best-sellers they identified – Blyton's Famous Five, Georges Chaulet's Fantômette, the abridged Vernes, Nancy Drew and, of course, Disney content – have been enduring. The Cold War era now represents a pivotal part of the publisher's understanding of its modern history, as its website attests: 'Today, the classic heroes from the early days of the Bibliothèque Rose and Bibliothèque Verte (The Famous Five, Fantômette) have been joined by contemporary characters (Pokémon, Star Wars) to continue the adventure with this timeless and lively imprint.'[65]

Conclusion

The words, ideas and actions of the numerous people and organizations involved at all levels in thinking about children's print culture in France have restored in vivid colours an image of a vastly changing landscape. The Cold War era understood children's reading to be politically potent; it was

something to be contained and controlled by the state, but also invested in, and nurtured by, multiple agencies. In my introduction to this study, I pointed to the enduring legacy of eras of intensified ideological conflict; in France the impact was twofold. First, the Cold War played a key role in forging the shape and distinctive development of children's print culture production in France. The immense and rapid expansion of children's publishing in this period, fuelled by the ambitions of American companies and their French partners, pushed multiple boundaries and redefined children's books as something to be consumed, devoured even. The senior editor Maurice Fleurent believed passionately that this represented progress. Selling books in bulk was a way to encourage children to read and promote social mobility. Many of these books remain popular today, and in the form established by the juvenile department's editorial team. But the rapidity of this expansion, and the conditions under which the field bulged enormously at the same time as government, regulators and activists sought to contain foreign influence, provoked a quite distinctive and, in some areas, violent and provocative creative reaction in the 1968 years. The shape of the contemporary French field, and the creativity of its picturebook publishing, owes much to this era.

Second, the regulator that the conflicts produced remains in place. This study has shown how it became embedded in the networks of activists and critics who shaped the children's literary field in France. The consensus between all who were involved in the children's book world that some form of scrutiny was desirable in the decades following the passage of the legislation ensured its survival beyond the national emergency that produced it. The 1949 law is still on France's statute books, and the CSC still operates within children's books and publishing in France. It remains a law that has, for the most part, caused relatively little controversy or concern in the children's book world since 1968. However, as the banning of Manu Causse's young adult novel *Bien trop petit* (2022) in July 2023 demonstrated, its continued existence means it is a tool that politicians and political activists may wield against children's books during culture wars at any given time.[66]

Notes

1 'Du nouveau en France dans le livre d'enfants', *L'Imprimerie Nouvelle*, 15 January 1963.

2 Marc Soriano, 'Les thèmes de la littérature de jeunesse en France depuis la 2e guerre mondiale', *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France*, 1965, n° 1, 1–10 http://

bbf.enssib.fr accessed 23 November 2023; on Hachette's dominant position in the highly concentrated French publishing field overall, see Pascal Fouché's introduction to Fouché (ed) *L'édition française depuis 1945*, 17–27.

3 Maurice Fleurent, causeries: 1958–1969, S14C121B1, file C121B01D38.

4 Gamarra, 'Livres de prix', and introduction to this book.

5 On La Farandole, see Hélène Bonnefond, 'Amitiés et complicités: Du côté de La Farandole', blog for the Centre de recherche et d'information sur la littérature pour la jeunesse, 19 March 2010, http://www.crilj.org/tag/la-farandole/ accessed 16 November 2023.

6 See for example Ory, 'Mickey go home!'; Matthew Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art: Bandes Dessinées and Franco-Belgian Identity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

7 Letter from Maurice Fleurent to François Ruy-Vidal, 23 December 1970, S14C144 B4.

8 Laugesen, *Taking Books to the World*, 131–2.

9 Gerstein, 'Disney Comics', 46–55.

10 Wasko, *Understanding Disney*, 20–3.

11 'Table Ronde', Crépin and Groensteen, *On Tue à Chaque Page!* 217–33, see 223.

12 Méon, 'L'Installation de la Commission', 114.

13 See for example Louis Mirman's correspondence with Marc Soriano, where they discuss publishing projects, reviews that Soriano will write and dinner engagements. S14 C82B1 Correspondancier, Service des éditions pour la jeunesse classé par o.a. de S à Z. Similarly, Raoul Dubois' obituary of Louis Mirman evoked their conversations together, and was written in a tone of gruff respect.

14 On *Astérix* see Screech, *Masters of the Ninth Art*, Chapter 3.

15 On changing perceptions of comics in France, and the growth of comics studies, see Ann Miller and Bart Beaty (eds) *The French Comics Theory Reader* (Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2014), 9–10, and the chapter by Luc Boltanski 'The Constitution of the Comics Field'.

16 Raoul Dubois, Review of Enid Blyton, *Le Mystère de la Cascade*, *Education Nationale*, Supplément *Les Livres: Bulletin Bibliographique Mensuel*, May 1963.

17 Marc Soriano, *Guide de Littérature pour la Jeunesse* (Paris, Flammarion, 1974), 73.

18 Boulaire, 'La Critique Périodique'.

19 Crétois, *L'Encadrement de la Presse pour la Jeunesse,* 115.

20 'La Commission de Surveillance Aujourd'hui', Interview with Guillenchmidt, Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On Tue à Chaque Page!* 211–16, see 212.

21 Laurent Gerbier, 'Entre petits et grands: les incertitudes de l'adresse à la jeunesse dans *Pilote* (1959–1966)', *Neuvième Art*, 2.0 (2018) special issue on May '68 and comics, https://www.citebd.org/neuvieme-art/entre-petits-et-grands-les-incertitudes-de-ladresse-la-jeunesse-dans-pilote-1959–1966 accessed 26 November 2023.

22 Yette Jeandet, 'Coin Jeunesse', *Livres et Lectures*, 198 (1965), 249.

23 For example, '1965–1975, la mutation d'un paysage?', special issue of *Revue des livres pour enfants*, 244 (2008); Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, *Introduction à la littérature*

de jeunesse (Paris, Didier Jeunesse, 2009), 46–9. The period is considered important for children's media in many countries; see Sophie Heywood and Cécile Boulaire (eds), 'Le '68 des Enfants/ The Children's 68', *Strenae*, 13 (2018) https://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1769 accessed 26 November 2023.

24 Isabelle Nières-Chevrel, 'La Réception française de Max et les Maximonstres: retour sur une légende', *Strenae,* 1 (2010), https://journals.openedition.org/strenae/83 accessed 26 November 2023.

25 Information from this paragraph is drawn from Sophie Heywood, 'Power to Children's Imaginations. May '68 and Counter Culture for Children in France', *Strenae*, 13 (2018), http://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1838 accessed 26 November 2023; and Sophie Heywood, 'The Publishers' Spring? May '68 and the "Radical Revolution" in French Children's Books', *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendliteraturforschung* (2018) https://doi.org/10.21248/gkjf-jb.23 accessed 26 November 2023.

26 *Stories/ Contes*, published in Paris and New York by Harlin Quist/ Ruy-Vidal, *Number 1*, 1968 (US) 1969 (France), *Number 2*, 1970, and *Number 3*, 1971.

27 Jannick Jossin interview with Françoise Dolto, 'Littérature enfantine: attention danger!' *L'Express,* 11–17 December 1972, 139–40. On the aesthetic guidelines of the CSC, see Chapter 2.

28 Etienne Delessert, *L'Ours bleu* (Geneva, Slatkine, 2015), 78.

29 'Témoignage d'un éditeur: quarante ans à l'Ecole des loisirs', *Regards sur le livre et la lecture des jeunes: la Joie par les livres a 40 ans !* (Paris, La Joie par les livres, 2005), 83–90, see 86–7.

30 '1965, naissance d'une grande maison d'édition: L'École des loisirs. Entretien avec Jean Delas', *Revue des livres pour enfants*, 244 (2008), 125–33, see 127.

31 François Ruy-Vidal, 'Les enfants soumis à l'expression contemporaine', *Trousse-Livres*, 30 (1982), 4–7, see 5.

32 'Dialogue avec un éditeur. François Ruy-Vidal (Harlin Quist)', *Bulletin d'Analyses de Livres pour Enfants*, 19 (1970), 31–2.

33 'Patrick Couratin: Artiste de l'Edition. Entretien graphique avec Etienne Delessert', Ricochet-jeunes.org magazine, February 2009, http://www.ricochet-jeunes.org/articles/patrick-couratin accessed 28 February 2018.

34 Discussion following Jean Fabre's talk 'L'Album, miroir de l'enfance', Denise Escarpit (ed) *Les Exigences de l'Image dans le Livre de la Première Enfance* (Paris, Magnard, 1973), 25.

35 Market Studies 1967 S14C156B3.

36 See the references in the preceding paragraph: these interviews and conference proceedings are strong evidence of the willingness of the critical establishment to listen to the newcomers to the publishing industry.

37 See the press cuttings in the François Ruy-Vidal archive, Mediathèque Françoise Sagan, Heure Joyeuse Collections, carton 18.

38 Letter from Fleurent to François Ruy-Vidal, 23 December 1970, S14C144 B4.
39 François Ruy-Vidal, 'Philosophie d'un jeune éditeur 1972', Escarpit (ed) *Les exigences de l'image*, 91–9, see 92.
40 Jacques Jaubert, 'Les livres pour enfants souffrent du "complexe de Ségur"', *Le Figaro Littéraire*, 3 December 1971.
41 Letter to Marie-France Ionesco, 28 December 1997, HJ Ruy-Vidal archives, carton 16.
42 Cécile Vergez-Sans, 'François Ruy-Vidal: les Collections en Question. L'Apport des Archives', *Strenae*, 11 (2016) http://journals.openedition.org/strenae/1658 accessed 26 November 2023.
43 *Ibid.*
44 Alban Cerisier and Jacques Desse, *De la Jeunesse chez Gallimard: 90 ans de Livres pour Enfants. Un Catalogue* (Paris, Gallimard, 2008), 25–6 and 165–8.
45 Fouché, *L'édition française depuis 1945*, 24–5.
46 Massin, *L'ABC du metier* (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale Editions, 1988), 178.
47 Cerisier and Desse, *De la Jeunesse chez Gallimard*, 167.
48 Author interview with Janine Despinette, 8 December 2016, Paris. With thanks to Viviane Ezratty for her help organizing this meeting.
49 Interview with Thierry Groensteen in Crépin and Groensteen (eds) *On tue à chaque page!* 211. Former CSC member from René Finkelstein agreed with this interpretation, see *ibid*., 223. See also Joubert, *Dictionnaire des Livres et Journaux Interdits.*
50 Christian Bruel and Annie Galland, *Histoire de Julie qui avait une ombre de garçon*, illustrated by Anne Bozellec (Paris, Le Sourire qui mord, 1976).
51 Nathalie Beau and Éliane Meynial, 'Rencontre avec Christian Bruel', *Revue des livres pour enfants*, 212 (2003), 66–70, see 67.
52 Market Studies 1967 S14C156B3 was an early study that recognized this, but it would be echoed in later market studies, for example S14C156B2 Market Studies, folder 'Etude Blunden Jeunesse-Collections, 1977'.
53 This paragraph is based on my interview with Ronald Blunden, via telephone, 11 May 2015. On his subsequent career in publishing, see Catherine Andreucci, 'Ronald Blunden aux commandes de la communication d'Hachette Livre', *Livres Hebdo* online, 15 April 2015 https://www.livreshebdo.fr/article/ronald-blunden-aux-commandes-de-la-communication-dhachette-livre accessed 25 November 2023.
54 Readers' reports, 1945–1979, S14C15B2, Report dated 29 April 1973.
55 Reports on the Jolivet series are in the J folder in S14 C32 B6 Fiches techniques 1955 to 1971; see especially report on *Les Jolivet au Far West*, 24 March 1971.
56 Folder on the series (anonymised to protect the identities of its creators). Note by the editor, 19 April 1979, S14C108B2.
57 Maurice Fleurent and Claude Bonnefoy, Claude (eds) *10 Millions de Jeunes Lecteurs* (Paris, Hachette, 1973), 31.

58 Mirman's reference to 'young adult' literature; see 20 December 1974 response to a series of questions from Mlle Michelle Thielent, Correspondancier, S14C40B4.
59 S14 C40B4 Correspondancier Mirman et al., 1974; 12 December 1974 Jacques R Leclerc (in charge of Bibliothque Verte) responding to a reader's complaint; letter 6 November 1974, JFC to the agency McKee and Mouche.
60 See Chapter 5 and for a full analysis of the reception of Hachette's Verne series, see Heywood, 'Adapting Jules Verne'.
61 Christina Heldner, 'Une anarchiste en camisole de force. Fifi Brindacier ou la métamorphose française de Pippi Langstrump', *Revue des livres pour enfants*, 145 (1992), 65–71; Lindgren, *Fifi Brindacier*.
62 Bibliothèque Verte 1978, S14C33B5.
63 See Mollier, *Géant aux Ailes Brisées,* 131–4; to place the Hachette buyout in international context, see Iain Stevenson, 'The Global Market 1970–2015: Producers', Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (eds) *Companion to the History of the Book* (Hoboken, New Jersey, John Wiley and Sons, 2019), 592.
64 See the *Revue des Livres pour Enfants*, 252 (2010) Special issue on 'L'Economie du Livre de Jeunesse en France'.
65 Hachette Livre: La Bibliothèque Rose and Verte https://www.hachette.com/en/publisher/la-bibliotheque-rose-et-verte/ accessed 25 November 2023.
66 Bouhadjera, 'Interdit aux mineurs'.

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