

The Art and Politics of France's Legacy to America: Revisiting the Statue of Liberty

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In 1946 during a speech given at small college in Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill coined the phrase “a special relationship” to describe what he saw as the unique alliance between Britain and the United States, a foreign policy term that is still widely used today in the foreign policy literature and press. The conservative policy institute, *The Heritage Foundation*, for example, goes so far as to label it as: “a relationship that is the oldest, closest, and most important of all the U.S.’s alliances” (Heritage). While it is doubtful the average American is aware of or even remembers the status of this unique alliance (Stokes), the relationship continues to be widely invoked by past and present administrations and policy analysts and throughout the press, particularly during the past two decades of the post-9/11 era, reaching “a new peak under British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, with London playing a key role in the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq” (Knigge).

How odd this preoccupation with the British-American special relationship must seem at times for those of us involved in French studies, certainly once it is placed within the historical framework of America's founding as a nation. After all, the young colonial republic-to-be received important military and financial aid from France that contributed to the general war effort to fend off its British oppressor. Yet, today's high school or college student of French likely knows less about the historical Franco-American alliance than she does Americans' ongoing love affair with the Royal Family or the BBC's hit television drama, *Downton Abbey*. Relations between the U.S and France are rarely emphasized or discussed in the news despite the fact that Paris remains among the top three destinations for Americans vacationing abroad.¹

Recalling that early post-9/11 era referenced above, a generalized suspicion on the part of the American public vis-à-vis France grew particularly bitter during the campaign against terrorism beginning in 2003, which did not help foster France's good image. Unlike Britain's participation in the Afghan and Iraqi wars, France, by refusing to join the “coalition of the willing,” ignited a good deal of American anger. By February 2003, U.S. lawmakers were generating a variety of protests against the French that spilled over into the general public, resulting in some restaurants offering “Freedom Fries” in lieu of French ones, wine-producing states demanding Americans boycott French wine (Day), and the congressional House Speaker going so far as to propose new health standards be imposed against French bottled water (Galliger).²

Tensions between France and the United States have unfortunately been felt on both sides of the Atlantic since at least the sixties. Nothing contrasts France and the U.S. more baldly than their respective attitudes toward what is valued as “culture.” In the name of *exceptionalism*, the French have railed for a good many years against the invasion of

American culture and attitudes which, they accuse, have corrupted national forms of art, music, film, cuisine, and the like. Whether referencing a Hollywood blockbuster bleeding audience attendance at French films or decrying the demise of the Paris café due to the arrival of Starbucks at the Place du Terre, Montmartre, many French denounce this U.S. invasion as “la standardisation des goûts,” (Paris Fierté)—anathema against everything unique to French culture and attitudes.³

While these examples drawn from popular sentiment can be easily debunked as caricatures, essentially harmless attacks upon a longstanding friendship between the two countries, deep philosophical and political differences expressed among French and American intellectuals on questions of national identity, multiculturalism, and integration since the *affaire du foulard* of the early nineties seem to place in doubt the very possibility of a Franco-American dialogue these days (Mathy 134-135). The irony of this reciprocal squabbling, particularly when it addresses issues of national identity, the politics of diversity or political ideals, is that these *frères ennemis* share a certain common history as well as a common healthy chauvinism toward their respective forms of self-declared “greatness” and “gloire.” For example, nothing more patently binds France and America together than the fact they have both served as the world’s twin cultural hegemon for several centuries. Their globally powerful images are reflected in similar colossal, monuments—the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty—whose meanings have equally evolved from symbolizing beacons of enlightened liberty and modern progress respectively, to objects of kitsch, molded into key chains or bottle openers for the vast tourist trade important to Paris and New York alike. Both nations have opened their shores to numerically important populations of immigrants since at least the establishment of their respective republican institutions, and both struggle, in good and bad faith, with the strains this immigration influx has placed on their respective societies “de souche.”

The fact is all too often forgotten (among Americans) that our most iconic *national* monument, “Lady Liberty,” is thoroughly *foreign*, that is, French, or at least began that way, as the project of an enthusiastic professor of American history-turned-Third-Republic politician, Edouard Lefebvre de Laboulaye. He convinced a young, patriotic sculptor from Colmar in Alsace, whose homeland had been lost to the enemy Prussians in 1870—to become the artistic creator of that dream: Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi. It was a dream that would eventually take the form of a “gift” from France to its “sister republic,” offered to the United States on the anniversary of its centennial 1876 celebration that took place in Philadelphia to commemorate their “eternal friendship.” The Statue of Liberty has since been transformed into a much different symbol, which unfortunately no longer showcases this international alliance between the two nations. It is now part of Liberty Island National Park complex, comprised of the Statue of Liberty National Monument proper and Ellis Island next to it, with its newly renovated “National Museum of Immigration.” And yet, not so long ago, the Liberty Island museum was visited by a French delegation of scholars in the planning stages of creating a new museum in Paris, the *Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration*, which opened in Paris in October, 2007 (Green 245). Perhaps no two western nations have been more preoccupied with immigration and identity politics at the end of the 20th century to the present than the U.S.

and France whose publics and politicians treat these as a veritable pox on society and democratic institutions.⁴ Yet, these questions were already being touched upon at the beginning of a project to gift America with a colossal monument to liberty, questions tied to two young 19th-century republics with some common political and social concerns.

France's gift to the United States, the monumental colossus, *La Liberté éclairant le monde*, serves as an extraordinarily rich vehicle to explore comparative cultural perspectives on art and politics, the story of "Lady Liberty" allowing instructors and students to examine: (1) some of the deep, historical and political ties that bind France and the U.S since the latter's inception as a nation and the continued adherence of France to America as one of its most important political allies; (2) France's contribution to the formation of American "high" culture (or at least its recognition of it) through architecture and monumental art; and (3) the surprising endurance of the Statue of Liberty to continue offering the world a symbol of freedom for any number of diverse political movements of liberation and pop culture political critiques. As importantly, the study of the history of the Statue of Liberty underscores how often these rival brothers (or sisters) continue to find common ground historically and even culturally, which will hopefully serve to undo the prevailing notion of a deep-seated Franco-American animosity.

Deep historical and political ties binding France and the USA

It is fitting to begin with the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904) whose extensive monumental output opens the exploration of aspects of the historical and political ties binding France and the U.S. Bartholdi gave us not only the Statue of Liberty but also a bronze sculpture of General Lafayette standing in Union Park in Manhattan; another one of Lafayette with General Washington, side-by-side shaking hands in friendship (Place des Etats-Unis, Paris and Morningside Park, New York City); a bronze "Fontaine du Capitol" centered in Bartholdi Park in Washington DC; and even a stunning Christopher Columbus (Providence, R.I.) to name just four other American works.⁵

Using Bartholdi's Lafayette sculpture as a point of departure, students can familiarize themselves with the unusual, if not extraordinary actions of a nineteen-year-old French officer engaging in America's war of independence, followed by years of troubles he faced for that support during the French Revolution. His life stands in for the close affinity between ideals and events the two nations share. A wealthy aristocrat who espoused the liberal ideals of Enlightenment politics, Lafayette's contribution was tremendous, not only to the American War of Independence at the side of General Washington in several battles, but more importantly to efforts in persuading the French monarch, at first reticent, to come to the aid of the American cause through financial and naval assistance against the British. In turn, Lafayette's participation in French Revolutionary politics of the early Constitutional Assembly was directly influenced in part by what he read and discussed among the young American founders; for example the "Declaration of Independence" and drafts of a Constitution were documents and debates

he carried forward to the Estates General and Constituent Assembly deliberations of 1789.

Unfortunately for Lafayette and France, as its own revolution grew decidedly more radical, Americans grew more reticent to reciprocate aid devoted to France's revolutionary cause, especially its wars. Moreover, as Philippe Roger's sobering account of the emergence of French anti-Americanism in this early stage of the two nations' relations reminds us, French radicals fell away from the American federal republican model (Thomas Paine was imprisoned during the Reign of Terror after all), while the American government worried they'd be pulled into French wars from their own shores, when France threatened to use its troops already stationed on American soil to wage attacks against the British Antilles (Roger 56). Decidedly, the two nations were taking very different republican forms that would strain their young yet historic alliance. America's fickle, if not hostile attitude towards its political ally of the 1780s was confirmed in a secret 1794 treaty of alliance between the U.S. and Great Britain against French interests (Jay Treaty), discovered under the Directorate (Roger 57). Patrick Henry's ringing phrase about freedom—"Give me liberty or give me death" -- which earlier had so moved French republican friends of the American War of Independence, no longer echoed quite the same in France's revolutionary motto: "Unité, Indivisibilité de la République; Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité ou la mort."⁶ More friendly and/or hostile historical events will be referenced in our next section touching directly upon the decades of the Statue of Liberty's creation. Suffice it to say that Bartholdi's bronze narratives of two great revolutionary heroes, Lafayette and Washington, weave rich connections between France and the U.S.

France's contribution to the formation of American culture: Architecture and Monumental Art

Conceived in Edouard Laboulaye's mind as early as 1865, partially completed by 1876 for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition and delivered *in toto* for final construction and commemoration during the years 1885-1886, the Statue of Liberty belongs to an era of frenetic activity tied to 19th-century nation building and empire, when governments sought to burnish their brand by erecting monumental artworks, commemorative or otherwise. As Kathryn Robson notes, "Monuments are expressions of cultural memory [...] the nexus of a series of political, artistic and public debates" (557). The case of the Statue of Liberty is rather unique since it not so much referenced history as invented a cultural memory as yet, still largely ignored, of a national identity waiting to be articulated. Furthermore, it was an uninvited project hoisted on the American public by a foreign country itself in dire need of restoring its own national identity. Even more astonishing, the entire enterprise took years before it garnered enough public support to come to fruition, being the brainstorm and pet project of a small circle of elite French and later, American social and political leaders.⁷ Political and social circumstances were such, however, that Bartholdi's colossus found itself in the right place and the right time. What precipitated and ensured its realization?

1. “These New Republics.”

In 1865, the College de France professor of American history-turned-politician, Edouard Laboulaye—an acerbic yet ineffective “liberal” critic for years of Louis-Napoleon’s sinking imperial regime—took the liberty to invoke American history and its republican model as a sort of blueprint he hoped to see imitated in France one day when it would return to democratic rule. By 1871 his ideas held some hope once he was elected to the new National Assembly of France’s Third Republic where he proposed his project in earnest to his colleagues. The Third Republic represented, however, a political body fractured on the one hand by the humiliating and costly defeat to the Prussians a year earlier, on the other, by the all-too-recent memory of civil strife and class violence resulting from the Paris Commune. What would the Republic’s new constitution and institutions look like? Laboulaye embraced the conservative “liberal” model he saw embodied in the American constitution as a means to fight against the eternal resurgence of populist radicalism of former revolutionary movements or worse yet, against an emerging Marxist-socialist radicalism that was on the rise. That his government should invest in a gift to America, the “model republic” of liberalism, to commemorate its centennial birthday, was just the shot in the arm Laboulaye believed the French republican cause needed.⁸ Furthermore, the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Commission was looking to include prestigious entries in its “art and sculpture” exhibition hall—a newly added building to the “world exposition” venue (Rydell 21).

With regard to the U.S., its identity and people had been badly, if not irreparably damaged by the horrendous destruction of the Civil War only a decade earlier. Furthermore, the failure of a Reconstruction plan, which rebuilt little of the South while making fortunes for hundreds of shifty politicians and businessmen only added fuel to the fire to an anemic industrial and financial economy by 1873, the worst economic crisis to hit the American workforce in decades. Politics, class relations, and national cohesion were at a low point. The Republic wasn’t quite sure who or what it stood for or where it stood internationally when Frederic Auguste Bartholdi made his first voyage to the U.S. in 1871 to muster interest in the Liberty project. On the eve of the American Centennial Exposition that was to celebrate a glorious one hundred years of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, these “sister republics” were in desperate need of a make-over.

2. The Fashionable Trend in Nation Building: The International Industrial Exposition or “World’s Fair” Phenomenon.

With letters of introduction from Laboulaye and other friends of the U.S., Bartholdi was introduced to East Coast social, political, and artistic high society, during which time discussions of a project to gift the U.S. with an enormous sculpture representing liberty were entertained and enthusiastically adopted by the American elite from Newport, R.I. to Washington D.C., especially by members of the Philadelphia Centennial Commission (19). News from the *Franco-American Union*, Laboulaye’s project committee formed to solicit contributions from the French public toward funding the work, was well received by New York and Philadelphia Francophiles who eventually went about their business to sell the idea of a grandiose symbol of Franco-American friendship to government

officials for reasons still not clearly grasped by everyone in the public. France would gift the statue to America and the U.S. would in turn build the enormous pedestal needed to erect it at a site Bartholdi had found during his earlier visit, on a small island (Bedloe) in New York Harbor. “Liberty Enlightening the World”—its original name—would symbolize the long-standing friendship between two allies whose political struggles found common ground in the establishment and defense of republican values: freedom and progress through enlightened reason. Architect and sculptor, Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to graduate from the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, would design and oversee the construction of the pedestal.⁹ There grew such an intense competition among Americans to showcase the Liberty colossus that at one point toward the close of the Centennial Exposition, New Yorkers accused Philadelphians of conspiring to steal the statue for themselves:

The hackmen of Philadelphia have only to subscribe a few thousand dollars each out of their enormous wealth and the statue will be secured. The danger that this will be done is unpleasantly real, and however much astonished we may be at the boldness of the attempt to carry off a lighthouse¹⁰ intended for our own harbor [New York], we must take immediate measures to defeat it, unless we are willing to lose the lighthouse. (“A Philadelphian Conspiracy”)

Nineteenth-century international fairs, beginning with London’s Crystal Palace Exposition of 1851, followed by fairs in Paris and Vienna, developed a pattern of showcasing first and foremost the host nation’s industrial and cultural prowess as well as celebrate the general industrial progress being made throughout western nations at large. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition made no exception to the self-congratulatory dimension of world expositions though it also sought to contribute to the ongoing project undertaken by American elites of rebuilding the image of a post-Civil War “United” States: an image make over particularly important in the wake of the 1873 financial panic and industrial depression that had sorely tarnished the image of America’s emerging corporate powers and government leaders (Rydell 17-19). The Centennial was to crush previous fairs in size, scope, and tenor: both “classical” in its imitation of European taste and “modern” in its design for original and “practical” architecture and machinery. The size of the main exhibition hall built to house the most astonishing of this new industrial machinery was a “monster edifice,” the largest in the world at the time at 1,880 feet in length and 464 feet in width (Howe 635); within the main hall international exhibits would be organized “on a racial basis, with the more Anglo-Saxon nations awarded more central locations” (Rydell 23). Moreover, as Jonathan Howe has argued, the Philadelphia Centennial addressed not only the rebuilding of national pride in terms of showcasing industrial, financial, and military strength, and it also sought to address American anxiety about a perceived lack of “high culture,” when compared to its European friends in this area (636). President Ulysses S. Grant, giving the opening address at the Exhibition, clearly articulated the nation’s inferiority complex about its cultural shortcomings:

One hundred years ago our country was new and but partially settled. Our necessities have compelled us to chiefly expend our means and time in felling forests, subduing prairies, building dwellings, factories, ships, docks, warehouses, roads, canals, machinery, etc. Most of our schools, churches, libraries, and asylums have been established within a hundred years. Burdened by these great primal works of necessity, which could not be displayed, we yet have done what this Exhibition will show in the direction of rivaling older and more advanced nations in law, medicine and theology; in science, literature, philosophy and the fine arts. Whilst proud of what we have done, we regret that we have not done more. (Böger 66)

A piece of Bartholdi's huge Liberty statue, the hand holding the torch, made its way to the "blockbuster" Philadelphia fair where it was prominently displayed beside the Exhibition pond, installed with a staircase spectators could climb from inside to reach the rim of the torch in order to view the fairgrounds from far above.¹¹

The Philadelphia Centennial Commissioners had their work cut out for them when it came to changing attitudes toward high culture, particularly in the area of developing attitudes among the American masses to understand that if it sought to elevate and increase its cultural image it needed the Europeans, particularly the French, to assist in this endeavor. The Centennial Exhibition architecture reveals a plethora of styles and models borrowed from a variety of European buildings; even the design for the "monstrous" Main Hall had been lifted from an earlier Prix-de-Rome French architectural student by its Exposition architect (Howe 644). Richard Morris Hunt, who wrote a lengthy review essay of the Philadelphia fair, was quite critical of the Main Hall and many other buildings; yet, he nevertheless recognized the progress made in American architecture and engineering as the chaos of the Centennial design reflected knowledge and adaptation of the finer styles of European architecture with the added and novel value of practical elements such as restroom and dining facilities:

Hunt also praised the role of the exhibition in fostering the art education of the masses, noting approvingly the contemporaneous building of museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston by the architects William Ware and Henry Van Brunt, the new Industrial Art Museum which was to be housed in Memorial Hall, and the new building for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by Frank Furness.¹² (Howe 639)

As for the sculptural exhibits, public monumental art in American culture, even by mid-19th century, was relatively unknown and thus underappreciated; therefore the Centennial provided a rich display of grandiose, allegorical sculptural pieces—Bartholdi's "torch" being the most spectacular—though certain public viewers disdained the bold character of the art work presented in general. Curiously, Lady Liberty had to share the "freedom" stage with another work by an Italian sculptor who also entered an allegorical "liberty" statue, which was frankly more *à propos* given America's recent past: a larger than life

figure of an African-American man breaking the bonds of his enslavement called *The Abolition of Slavery in the United States*, or *The Freed Slave*. Ironically, one of the more important viewer's comments (author and editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, William Dean Howells) took on a decidedly Francophobic and racist tone describing his disgust with the statue's symbolic power: "This is not his fault [the sculptor's], perhaps, and I am not so sure after all that his Washington is as bad as the bronze statue of Emancipation (I suppose), a most offensively Frenchy negro, who has broken his chain, and spreading both his arms and legs abroad is rioting in a declamation of something (I should say) from Victor Hugo; one longs to clap him back into hopeless bondage" (Howe 646).

3. Old Wounds in Need of Healing

The Statue of Liberty project would become a reality during a time when the Franco-American alliance didn't really lend itself to this sort of unusual rapprochement because of the very sorry state of political and diplomatic relations the two republics found themselves in. Relations were in dire need of repair, primarily for self-interest, though for France bettering one's external relations with any and all nations, particularly one that was emerging as a potential industrial rival, was also important. If Americans in general had a poor opinion of France by the 1870s, this was largely due to France's generally perceived support for the Southern cause during the Civil War under Napoleon III's government. Furthermore, American state officials had not forgotten Napoleon's alarming political ambitions to establish a French presence, if not a French Empire in the Americas when he sent 40,000 troops to invade Mexico in 1861 (Roger 125).¹³ These policies were of great embarrassment to the newly formed Third Republic who otherwise now wished to regard the U.S. as an ally in republicanism. Likewise, many patriotic Frenchmen found it difficult to forgive America's support for the German cause during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, this German enthusiasm probably due to the high number of German immigrant communities which had established themselves in the U.S. by mid-19th century. Moreover, on the topic of German-American immigrants, the French regarded them not only as connected in culture and language to their most hated enemy, the Prussians, but also as "les Rouges" that is, socialist revolutionaries at the core of the burgeoning international labor movement threatening the entire western industrial machine (126). To assuage these and other political and diplomatic tensions, politicians and officials on both sides of the Atlantic saw in Laboulaye's project of gifting a statue of liberty a way to mend the old alliance and to lend more credence to republican rather than imperial, or worse, socialist ideals.

With regard to labor politics, American industrialists had their work cut out for them in 1876 as they grappled with their very tarnished image before the masses of American workers who were still suffering from unemployment in high numbers, the ears and hearts of these latter open to the growing appeal of the international (socialist) workers' movement. Embarrassingly, no American trade union or labor association deigned to make its presence at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition—a first, since during previous fairs, labor had always been represented as an important piece of the ideological message being conveyed of industrial progress (Foner 257). Workers did appear at the fair, but these were Frenchmen, not Americans. The sole labor delegation to attend was made up

of some twenty French unionists who traveled from Paris, representing a variety of trades who, after the disastrous suppression of the Commune in 1871, sought the public stage of world fairs (the first one being Vienna's in 1873) in order to reinvigorate their cause. Too afraid of a confrontation, the French government tacitly supported the trade unionists' plans, it contributed a small subvention to the travel fund for funds, however, the delegation was still short of money in early 1876. They would organize their own public rallies for support. Victor Hugo, no less, was drawn into a general call for contributions to the delegates' fund (alongside Louis Blanc), enthusiastically urging the public for support; and, ironically, Hugo's words precisely echoed Laboulaye's obsession with the historical ties between the U.S. and France:

The future is becoming visible. It belongs to democracy—universal and peaceful—and you, our delegates to the Philadelphia Exposition, you reveal before our eyes the superb fact that the twentieth century will see the embrace of the United States of America and the United States of Europe.

Go workers of France, go workers of Paris, who know how to think. Go women workers of Paris, who know how to fight. Useful men, valiant women, go carry the good news. Go tell the new world that the old world is young. You are the ambassadors of fraternity. You are the ambassadors of Gutenberg to Franklin and of Pappen to Fulton. You are the deputies of Voltaire in the country of Washington. In that illustrious America, you will arrive from the East. You will carry the dawn as a banner. You will be the enlighteners. The flag poles of today are the torchlights.

Be followed and blessed by human acclamation, you, who after so many disasters and so much violence, with the torch of civilization in your hands, go from the land where Jesus Christ was born, to the land where John Brown was born. (*Long applause*) May civilization which is composed of activities, agreements, and gentlemen, be satisfied. The rapprochement of the two great Republics will not be without good effect. Our politics will be the better for it. A breath of mercy will dilate the heart. The two continents will exchange not only their products, their commerce, and their industry, but their ideas as well, and progress in justice as well as in prosperity. America during the era of slavery obtained from us the great example of liberation, and we in the presence of the condemned of the civil war, we will adopt from America the great example of amnesty. (*Sensation! Tremendous applause! Vive l'amitie!*) May peace reign among men! (*Long acclamation! Vive Victor Hugo! Vive la République!*). (Foner 261-262)

It is not certain that Hugo was aware of Bartholdi's exhibition entry, the Liberty "torch." For Hugo and many other supporters of the labor movement, the Centennial afforded the opportunity for the French labor movement to cite a most important political and legal

commitment, that of “amnesty.” Just as the U.S. government had offered amnesty to defeated Confederates a decade earlier, so too, did Hugo and his labor brothers hope that a similar peace offering would be extended to exiled Communards who had fled the nation in 1871. In sum, even Frenchmen living during the same period held contradictory views of America; Hugo’s vision was of an America eliminating oppression to embrace freedom and fraternity among classes, and Laboulaye’s, an America of democratic institutions, progress, and friendship. Bartholdi’s vision probably lay somewhere in between the two, as a native Alsatian son of Colmar whose homeland now occupied by Prussia, cherished political liberty—freedom and justice—which subtends much of his public works of patriotism.

Curiously, one area where the U.S. and France were in complete agreement was domestic surveillance! “From at least 1873 on, the prefecture of police in Paris had been receiving reports from agents in the United States on developments of the International Workingmen’s Association in the country, especially the role played by French fighters of the Commune who had sought refuge in the U.S. or other foreign countries” (Foner 263).¹⁴ Upon their return, the French delegates expressed enthusiasm for the Exposition, however, their eyes had been open to the fact that the American Dream, according to their Yankee homologues, was a grand illusion. Remarks from one of these American speakers to the delegation were reported in the *American Social Democratic Workingman’s Party* weekly publication in July 1878:

Brothers from France. I am afraid that your visit in the United States will not give you as much satisfaction as you expect. They are thinking of erecting a Statue of Liberty at the entrance to the Hudson Bay. It is a mockery, a pure mockery, for here Liberty is an illusion; here there is no equality. Even more, and this is sad to say, there is no fraternity. We have a Republic. We have freedom. But we also have a despot more bloody and tyrannical than all the kinds of the world. (Saying this, the speaker pulls a bank note from his pocket and displays it.) Here it is, this despot. With this one has everything. Without this, one dies of hunger. Here there is no pity for the one who has no money. Here, with money, everything can be bought—men, women, and things. Here misery has put people into an unbelievable and shameful state of degradation.

You were sent here to study the social and industrial questions in the century which has been called the ‘Century of Civilization.’ All right, go, look, and may your report be a sort of protest to help your unhappy American brothers emerge from their torpor. (Foner 274)

France’s gift of a liberty colossus, in the late-19th century, was a loaded and perhaps unwanted symbol.

The Statue's Legacy from the 1886 Commemoration to the Modern Era

Edouard Laboulaye, the man behind the idea for “Liberté éclairant le monde” would die before the colossal monument was erected in New York harbor, dedicated on October 28, 1886. During the inaugural commemoration he was replaced by Ferdinand de Lesseps of Suez Canal legendary fame who served as part of the official French delegation alongside Bartholdi. A huge, day-long celebration took place with President Cleveland presiding over a massive military parade that wound its way through the streets of New York City with perhaps a million onlookers lining the streets. On Bedloe Island various American civic organizations, foreign societies, and the French delegation were present, their dignitaries speechifying at length on the many ties that bound the sister republics together, referencing a friendship that began with Lafayette and Washington. Yet, a secondary theme was being sounded, even more important: that of progress as power. Echoing the work of earlier Industrial Expositions (it should be recalled the Statue of Liberty's massive head was exhibited at the 1878 Paris fair only two years after Philadelphia), America's “liberty” was now a part of the larger, nationalist ideology tied to its progress and stature as an industrial and military power. Ferdinand de Lesseps speech sums up this idea:

People will know that they have reached a land where individual initiative is developed in all its power; where progress is a religion; where great fortunes become popular by the charity they bestow and by encouraging instruction and science and casting their influence into the future. (Khan 179)

By 1886, the Statue of Liberty was shedding its “Frenchness” (to borrow the term from the *Atlantic* editor) and beginning to grow an American skin of a different stripe (Howe 646). True, Bartholdi had included Laboulaye's ideal of the struggle for political freedom—a look back in history—which he inscribed on Liberty's stone tablet with the date of 1776 and sculpted as a broken chain under Liberty's foot. But, this romantic recollection of a war of independence, its fight for freedom—including the more contemporary struggle of the American slave—was being pushed aside in 1886 by the momentum of power symbolized in that modern, ticker-tape parade¹⁵ kowtowing to American industrial might (Khan 178). The Statue of Liberty, enormous and foreboding, stood erect to the world in an outward gesture, one of hubristic pride.

This is not the end of the story of the transformation of Liberty's meaning. Only three years earlier in 1883, another more radical dimension to its significance was in the making; it would eventually become officially integrated within the monument by 1903 in the form of an inscription plaque placed on statue's scaffolding. A wealthy New York poet interested in a number of liberal causes, including the emerging Zionist movement among European and American Jews to counteract growing anti-Semitism on both sides of the Atlantic, Emma Lazarus, had been invited to compose a poem in honor of Bartholdi's work for the 1883 gala fundraiser, organized by Joseph Pulitzer to raise the necessary funds needed to finish the construction of the statue's pedestal. Lazarus's sonnet entitled “The New Colossus” produced the two verses which have since been

etched into our memories as Liberty's motto: "Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free." Whereas Bartholdi's name for the colossus, "Liberté éclairant le monde" was clearly grounded in an 18th-century Enlightenment notion of freedom, Lazarus transformed the female figure into a protective, maternal goddess, inviting the world's masses to come find refuge and a new life in a new land. Yet, her rendition of Liberty was not purely allegorical. In 1883, Lazarus' sonnet aggressively pointed to a living reality: her "tired and poor" most likely referencing foreign Jewish refugees fleeing the most recent pogroms in Russia (Cavitch 4). While mainstream, elitist American opinion pitched a nationalist brand of freedom when invoking the Statue of Liberty,¹⁶ Lazarus planted a decidedly universalist notion of a freedom standing for the inalienable right belonging to all, but especially belonging to those enslaved or oppressed. Few among our students have probably read the entire sonnet and so are likely unaware of its garish intensity:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman, with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she,
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free;
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore—
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me—
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Lazarus suggests American freedom be understood as a radical overturning of the Old Order, an America that opens its arms like no other nation in the western world or beyond to all immigrants and newcomers fleeing poverty, persecution, and other forms of oppression.

The irony of Lazarus' foresight in designating the Liberty allegory as the beacon of light inwardly calling for immigrants and oppressed peoples alike to seek the American life is that she composed her work during one of the darker moments of American attitudes toward immigration and foreign workers, not to mention the pervasive lack of concern toward the plight of the freed African-American or hostility against the women's suffrage movements. 1882 marked the year of the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, enacted to keep out all Chinese immigrants or forced laborers, along with that of the Immigration Act of 1882, which set up a pan-federal bureaucracy to oversee all immigration and more tightly define those individuals arriving on American shores who could qualify to enter the country—in other words, more tightly defining those who would be turned away: criminals and the poor. It was also a period of intensely negative attitudes on the part of many Americans toward the international labor movement,

foreign workers, and Jews. In sum, at the time of the Statue's commemoration, no official opinion would have included in its idea of liberty that of Lazarus' "Mother of Exiles" opening arms to the "wretched refuse" washing up on America's shores. Lazarus's poem reflects the ambivalent tension, the contradictory meanings of this new public monument that would see new layers of a collective memory continue to rewrite itself just as it did during the politically tense years of Lazarus's America. As Max Cavitch notes:

In this atmosphere Bartholdi's statue was surcharged with liberty's contradictory meanings—from transnational republicanism to international socialism; from open immigration to exclusionary nativism; from democratic universalism to liberal nationalism; from self-possession to licentiousness; from incitement to enlightenment; from promise to threat. (5)

Ironic indeed that the Statue of Liberty, is now associated more often with our immigrant history than with any notion of political freedom.¹⁷ This appears even more ironic given the fact that the monument was a gift from France whose own national identity has been questioned, if not subjected outright, to continual crisis by the weight of its colonial past and contemporary socio-economic situation that affect its immigrant communities. Beginning in the 1990s, Socialist, followed by Conservative French governments had to grapple with growing ethnic unrest, especially in the "banlieues" surrounding Paris and other major cities, periodically exploding in riots and protests by the "sans papiers," and controversies addressing *laïcité* and religious freedom of expression. With membership within the Front National party adding to its electoral victories in regional contests on the uptick, certain governmental ministries promoted the idea, among others, of the creation of a museum of French immigration that would demonstrate official inclusiveness of minority communities within the idea of what it means to be "French." Such a museum could thus serve as a vehicle reinventing French national identity around its "immigrant roots," to be inclusive of France's now variegated demographic make-up. Already in 1991 a delegation of academics from the *Association pour un musée de l'immigration* in France organized a mission to visit the then "newly-opened" Ellis Island museum for ideas (Green 245). A French immigration history museum was officially approved under Chirac's government in 2004 with a projected opening date of 2007.

Just as the Liberty Island complex was established as a site of memory commemorating American immigration history—a site little interested in the real history of the island and monument, that is, an ideological invention to meet the demands of a constantly changing narrative important to American citizens and politicians alike since at least the seventies (the narrative of "ethnic renaissance," liberation politics, programs of reconciliation, multiculturalism, and so forth)—the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration or CNHI, was built to house a largely ignored history and archive of modern French immigration (Green 240-241). Similar to the Ellis Island Museum, which periodically becomes embroiled in race-based and/or ethnic controversies, so too, would the CNHI. A recent *New York Times* article notes that the Ellis Island museum's newly added display, "The Journey: New Eras of Immigration" (immigration since 1954) has opened well aware of trying to avoid controversy:

The subject is, of course, too vast and polarized to be captured in a way that will please everyone. Those who despise immigration of any kind (well, except for whichever incoming wave brought their ancestors to American shores) will scoff at the presentation here; there are no in-depth treatments of immigrants who came to conduct criminal enterprises or milk the government. That is not to say, though, that anti-immigration sentiment is ignored; rather, it is one element among many in an approach that looks for recurrent themes and influences instead of hot-button talking points. (Genzlinger)

The CNHI has had its own share of embarrassments, the most glaring being the choice of its location. Housed in the stunning Palais de la Porte Dorée, the CNHI now occupies what was formerly the main entrance hall built for the Colonial Exhibition in Paris of 1931—“a legacy to the mission civilisatrice” of France. Its numerous bas-reliefs on the outer walls and frescoes within the main hall preserve illustrations of the Metropole’s hierarchical relations to its former colonies in all-too-explicit detail (Green 244).¹⁸

For many Americans the Statue of Liberty symbolizes the country’s own unique “civilizing mission,” that of carrying the torch of freedom (and let us add, a particular “way of life”) to an oppressed world they assume desiring to imitate their country in everything. The 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing is a case in point. Engraved in the minds of Chinese is the taboo memory of a defiant student bravely challenging a government tank charged to stem the advance of sea of protesters. At the time of the protests, Americans on the other hand were exposed to media images equally focused on the carnival atmosphere of student protesters, walking in the streets with a cardboard and plaster statue, “The Goddess of Democracy,” resembling Lady Liberty, hence connecting the Chinese protest movement to the ideals of western-style democracy and free-market economics. Would Americans be disappointed or shocked to learn that Bartholdi’s design for the Statue of Liberty was not original? That on an earlier visit to Egypt to contemplate ancient monuments, Bartholdi was so taken by Lesseps’ Suez Canal project, he set out to design and build a colossal lighthouse for the Canal’s entrance (Khan 53)? A drawing and several small models exhibited in the Bartholdi Museum in Colmar, France clearly reveal Lady Liberty’s inspiration; the name given to this project was “Liberté éclairant l’Asie.” We might say how fortunate for the United States that Bartholdi never found his funding for the Suez Canal colossus and instead held on to his idea to build the Liberty monument at a later date for another cause. Fortunate also for France that Bartholdi’s chief engineer for the construction of the statue’s supportive scaffolding, Viollet-Le-Duc, unexpectedly died before the end of the project, which meant hiring another structural engineer to fill his place, Gustave Eiffel (137). Was it Eiffel’s work on the Centennial Exposition colossus which inspired him to pursue his most ambitious (and controversial) project: building the tallest tower in the world—“a monument to the god of scientific progress”—for yet another Universal Industrial Exposition, this time in Paris in 1889 (Brown 9)?

Perhaps another piece of artwork gifted, so to speak, by France to New York City, the gilded panel façade of the Maison Française in Rockefeller Center, sums up best this eternally ambivalent relationship between these *frères ennemis* (or are they *cousins germains*?), France and the United States. Its sculptor, Alfred Auguste Janniot, the very

artist who designed the colonial bas-reliefs for the Palais de la Porte Dorée, offers the viewer an allegory of two female figures sitting side by side: Paris (astride the city's legendary river merchant vessel and holding a cathedral) and New York (sitting on what looks like an iron girder with a background of skyscrapers crowning her locks) float above the three muses of Poetry, Beauty, and Elegance. Above the gilded panel sits yet another Janniot sculpture: a stone figure of "Gallic Freedom" holding a torch in one hand, which according to the Rockefeller Centre website, symbolizes "the flame of revolution and its triumph." Or is it a nod to Bartholdi's the now thoroughly American Torch of Freedom standing in New York Harbor? Sister republics in search of distinct national identities find themselves reflected in the other's unique public monument, and yet, these works have been bound culturally and politically to a most unusual yet common history.

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APPENDIX: DISCUSSION TOPICS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

**“The Art and Politics of France’s Legacy to America:
Revisiting the Statue of Liberty”**

Diane Fourny
(University of Kansas)

Activity No. 1 : Expressions des préférences collectives 102

Activity No. 2. Art monumental et patriotisme 103-8

Activity No. 3. Travaillons nos chiffres!! 109-12

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Activity No. 1

Expressions des préférences collectives

[Niveau: avancé – lycée; intermédiaire et avancé – université: cours de conversation ou de culture]

1. *Comparez les devises officielles qui symbolisent les aspirations sociales et politiques des deux républiques. Réfléchissez à ce qu'elles ont en commun et en quoi elles diffèrent.*

Liberté-Egalité-Fraternité ! (France)

(Source: d'origines diverses datant de l'époque révolutionnaire entre 1789-1790; puis adoptée comme devise officielle sous la IIe République en 1848).

Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness (USA)

(Source: *The Declaration of Independence*, 1776)

Les lignes qui suivent ont toujours été associées à la Statue de la Liberté. Elles sont tirées d'un poème composé en 1883 par Emma Lazarus et intitulé "The New Colossus". Elles sont inscrites sur la plaque de bronze placée au pied de la statue.

**Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free!**

Et traduites en français:

**Donne-moi tes pauvres, tes exténués,
Tes masses innombrables aspirant à vivre libres.**

2. *Pensez-vous que ce deux vers apportent une nuance à la devise officielle de la république américaine?*

Activity No. 2

Art monumental et patriotisme

[Niveau: avancé – lycée; intermédiaire et avancé – université : cours de conversation ou de culture]

This activity will ask students to think about the sculptor's imagination in creating works that reflect important historical figures, events or ideas important to national identity and ideals. Students will examine works by French sculptor, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi and two important American sculptors who created monumental art more or less during the same period as Bartholdi: Daniel Chester French and James Earl Fraser.

Students will be asked to do a bit of research at their public library or on the internet to find information about various works of art. *Questions* prompt students to provide historical information about the figures or to interpret the symbolic messages alluding to patriotism some of these works convey.

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ART MONUMENTAL ET PATRIOTISME

A. Bartholdi aimait surtout la sculpture de grande taille, soit le colosse, soit la statue d'une figure historique importante, c'est-à-dire des oeuvres qui évoquent un événement historique important ou qui symbolisent une valeur culturelle ou politique nationale.

QUESTION: Faites un travail de recherche pour identifier l'importance historique ou politique des quatre oeuvres de Bartholdi ci-dessous. Expliquez la signification du monument ou de la sculpture du point de vue historique, politique et patriotique:

1. Lafayette et Washington (1876, Paris, France et Union Park, NYC)



(Photo by Siren-Com. 2010. License: CC BY SA 3.0)

2. Vercingétorix (1903, Clermont-Ferrand, France)



(Photo by Marie-Lan Nyugen.2012. License: CC BY 2.5)

3. Le Lion de Belfort (1880, Belfort, France)



(Photo by Thomas Bresson. 2014. License: CC BY 3.0)

4. Liberté éclairant le monde (Statue of Liberty: 1886 New York)



(Photo by Giorgio Martini, 2006. License: CC BY SA 2.5)

B. Comparez les oeuvres de deux sculpteurs américains: Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) et James Earl Fraser (1876-1953), tous deux contemporains de Bartholdi :

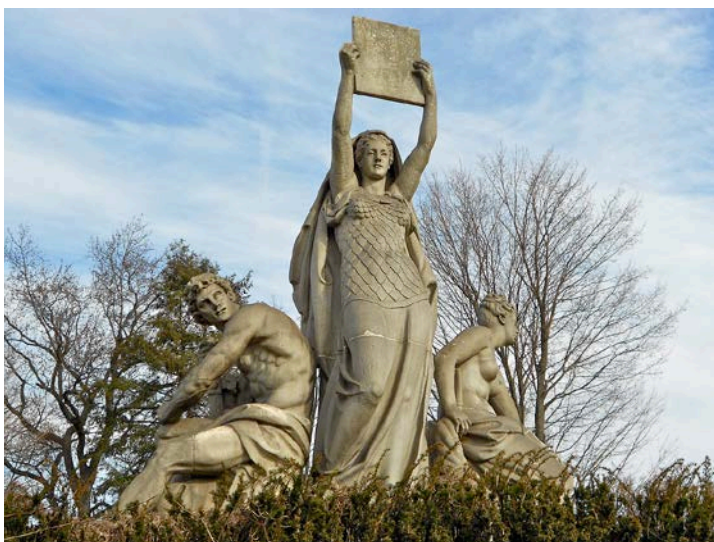
B.1 : Voici deux oeuvres de Daniel Chester French :

1. “Abraham Lincoln” (The Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC, 1920)



Wikimedia Commons.
(Public Domain)

2. “Law, Power, and Prosperity” (1884, Philadelphia, PA).



Wikimedia Commons.
(Public Domain)

QUESTION: *Qu'est-ce que cette sculpture a en commun avec la Statue de la Liberté de Bartholdi?*

B.2 : Voici maintenant deux sculptures de James Earl Fraser :

1. Abraham Lincoln Memorial de New Jersey ou “Lincoln as Mystic.” (1929)



(Photo by Hudconja. 2013. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0)

QUESTION: Comparez l'interprétation du président Lincoln de Fraser avec le président Lincoln de Daniel Chester French.

2. “End of the Trail” (Copie en bronze d’après la sculpture de Fraser, l’Exposition Internationale de Panama-Pacific, San Francisco, 1915)



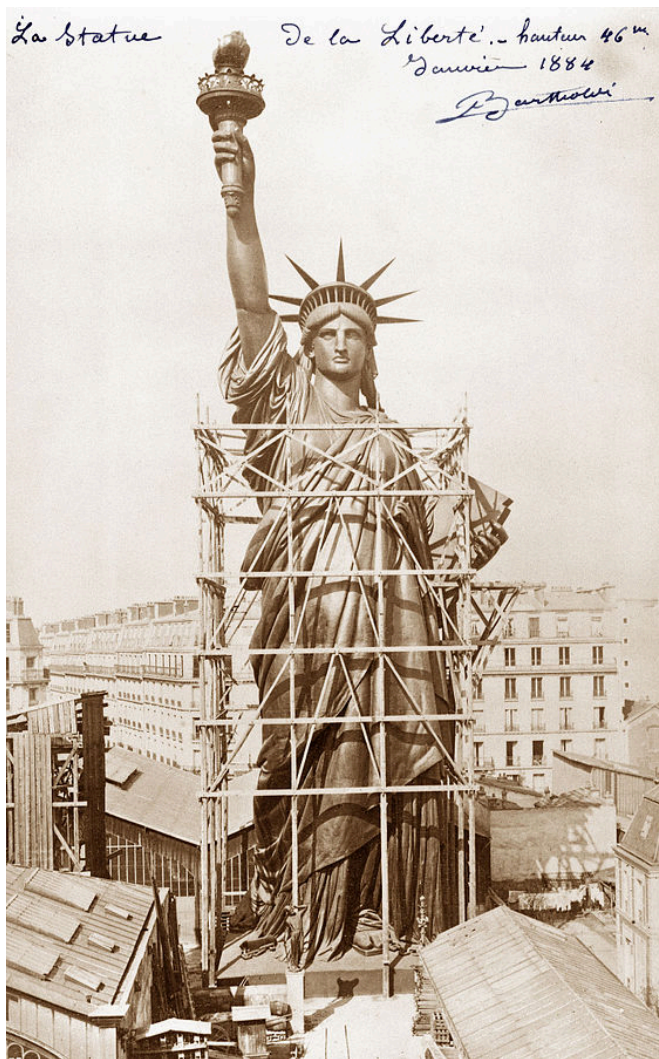
(Photo by Shawn Conrad. 2013. License: CC-A-SA 3.0)

QUESTION: Comparez la sculpture ci-dessus avec la statue de Vercingétorix de Bartholdi. Trouvez-vous des thématiques historiques comparables?

Activity No. 3 Travaillons nos chiffres!!

[Niveau: Français intermédiaire – lycée ou université]

Regardez cette belle photo de la **Liberté éclairant le monde** (la statue de la Liberté) en pleine construction à Paris en **1886**. A côté des immeubles qui l'entourent, on voit combien la Statue est imposante!



(Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain)



(Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain)
Ellis Island, NY (ca. 1900)

Pouvez-vous décrire les dimensions de la statue ?

Vocabulaire :

la tête	the head	le bras	the arm
le sommet du crâne		le top of the head	
le nez	the nose	la jambe	the leg
les yeux	the eyes	le doigt	the finger
le menton	the chin	la main	the hand
la bouche	the mouth	la taille	the waist
le talon	the heel	le pied	the foot
la torche	the torchlight	les marches	the steps (f.pl.)
la tablette	the tablet		
la hauteur	the height	la longueur	the length
la largeur	the width	l'épaisseur	the thickness (f.)
la livre	the pound	la tonne	the ton
le poids	the weight	le sommet	the summit or top
le cuivre	copper	l'acier	steel

Voici les dimensions de la Statue:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Système impérial</u> (pieds et pouces)	<u>Système métrique</u> (mètres et centimètres)
la hauteur du pied à la torche	151 ft 1in	46,50 m
la hauteur du sol à la torche	305 ft 1in	92,99 m
du talon à la tête	111ft 1 in	33,86 m
la longueur de la main	16 ft 5 in	5,00 m
l' (doigt) index	8 ft 0 in	2,44 m
la tête, du menton au crâne	17ft 3 in	5,26 m
la distance des yeux	2 ft 6 in	0,76 m
la longueur du nez	4 ft 6 in	1,48 m
la longueur du bras droit	42 ft 0 in	12,8 m
l'épaisseur du bras droit	12 ft 0 in	3,66 m
le tour de taille	35 ft 0 in	10,67 m
la largeur de la bouche	3 ft 0 in	0,91 m
la longueur de la tablette	23 ft 7 in	7,19 m
la largeur de la tablette	13 ft 7 in	4,14 m
l'épaisseur de la tablette	2 ft 0 in	0,61 m
de la base au sommet	154ft 0 in	46,71 m

- Les visiteurs doivent gravir 354 marches avant d'arriver au sommet de la Statue. Il y a 25 fenêtres dans sa couronne qui symbolisent les 25 pierres précieuses du monde. Il y a 7 rayons dans sa couronne qui représentent les 7 mers-océans et les 7 continents du monde.

- Il est gravé sur la tablette que la Statue tient dans sa main gauche : 4 juillet 1776.

- Le poids total du cuivre de la Statue est de 62.000 livres ou 31 tonnes.
- Le poids total de l'acier de la Statue est de 250.000 livres ou 125 tonnes.
- Le poids total de la base bétonnée est de 54 million livres ou 27,000 tonnes.

(Source: *Greatbuildings.com* : www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Statue_of_Liberty.html)

Exercice 1 (à deux personnes):

Avec une règle ou un centimètre prenez les mesures de votre partenaire. Notez-les selon le système impérial (feet/inches) et le système métrique (mètre/centimètre):

Exemples de réponses:

- a. (5'4") Moi, je fais 5 pieds 4 pouces = 1,65m Moi, je fais un mètre soixante-cinq
- b. (2'2") Toi, ton bras fait 2 pieds 2 pouces = 0,67m Toi, ton bras fait soixante-sept centimètres

Répondez:

- a. la taille (la hauteur)
- b. la longueur de votre bras
- c. le tour de taille (waist)
- d. du menton au sommet du crâne (la tête)
- e. l'index
- f. la largeur de votre bouche
- g. la longueur de votre main

Exercice 2 : Etudiez les dimensions de la Statue de la Liberté ci-dessus et donnez la réponse correcte à haute voix aux questions suivantes:

Exemple de question et réponse:

a. Quelle est la hauteur de la Statue de la Liberté du pied à la torche?

Réponse: Elle fait 151 pieds et un pouce. - OU -
Elle fait 46 mètres 71.

b. Quelle est la hauteur de la Statue du talon à la tête?

c. Quelle est la longueur de son bras droit?

d. Quelle est la longueur de sa main?

e. Quelle est la largeur de son tour de taille?

f. Quelle est la longueur de son index?

g. Quelle est la largeur de sa bouche?

h. Combien de marches faut-il gravir pour arriver au sommet de la Statue?

i. Combien de fenêtres y a-t-il dans la couronne de la Statue?

j. Combien de rayons y a-t-il?

k. Quel est le poids total du cuivre dans la Statue?

l. Quel est le poids total de l'acier?

m. Quelle est la date gravée sur la tablette de la Statue? Quelle est l'importance de cette date?

Activity No. 4

La Diversité culturelle et linguistique de l'Alsace

[Niveau: avancé – lycée; intermédiaire et avancé – université : cours de conversation ou de culture]

Contexte:

Né en 1834 dans la ville alsacienne de Colmar, Alsace, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi sera témoin d'événements politiques tumultueux, en particulier l'invasion prussienne en 1870. (Bartholdi fera partie des francs-tireurs volontaires contre l'ennemi allemand). Hélas, la défaite de la France rendra l'Alsace aux Prussiens et Colmar devient alors une ville allemande en 1871. Du jour au lendemain, les Alsaciens sont ainsi transformés en étrangers dans leur propre pays D'où sans doute l'intérêt fervent de la part de notre sculpteur Bartholdi dans toutes les causes pouvant toucher à la liberté. Bartholdi quitte tout de suite son pays natal pour se rendre à Paris qui deviendra sa résidence permanente et où il rencontrera Edouard de Laboulaye qui l'invite à participer au projet de la statue de la Liberté.

Après la Première Guerre Mondiale en 1918, l'Alsace revient de nouveau à la France, mais cette libération sera de courte durée. Elle retombe aux mains des Allemands en 1940 au début de la Deuxième guerre mondiale. L'occupation nazie est stricte et troublante pour les Alsaciens qui ne seront libérés qu'en 1945.

QUESTION: Réfléchissez sur la question de l'identité nationale si vous aviez habité l'Alsace avant et après l'occupation allemande: Français un jour, Allemand le lendemain.

Un aperçu historique sur la diversité culturelle de l'Alsace :

Mais l'Alsace n'a pas toujours été française ni sur le plan politique ni du point de vue culturel ou linguistique. Les racines de la diversité culturelle du pays natal de Bartholdi sont profondes. Une région de langues et coutumes germaniques, l'Alsace appartient aux territoires du Saint-Empire (romain germanique) pendant des siècles après la chute de l'Empire romain. A partir de 1354, la ville de Colmar participe à une ligue urbaine: la Décapole, un groupe de dix villes "libres" alsaciennes sous la protection impériale. Au 16e siècle l'Alsace, et ses villes importantes, surtout Strasbourg, deviennent un centre important de la réforme luthérienne. Le protestantisme se répand dans beaucoup de communautés et les conflits entre catholiques et protestants tourmentent la région pendant près de cent ans. (La cathédrale de Strasbourg, église catholique, se transforme en une église protestante en 1524 pour redevenir catholique en 1681).

Quoique la région subisse les invasions françaises depuis le 15e siècle ce n'est qu'au 17e siècle que l'Alsace sera intégrée au royaume français. Les armées de Louis XIV confirment la victoire sur la plus grande partie de l'Alsace et elle devient un territoire français en 1697 par le traité de Ryswick. Bien que français, le peuple continue à parler

alsacien (dialecte germanique) tandis que les bureaucraties administratives font leur travail en français. L'architecture, les habits, la cuisine, les arts et les métiers demeurent "alsaciens", c'est-à-dire, de nature germanique. Néanmoins, l'intégration politique continue sans faille et l'Alsace embrassera la cause révolutionnaire avec enthousiasme en 1789. Un des officiers les plus importants des guerres révolutionnaires et napoléoniennes, celui qui "a sauvé la vie de Bonaparte Napoléon" sera le général Jean Rapp, un autre "fils de Colmar". Bartholdi lui consacra l'une de ses plus belles sculptures en bronze en 1860.

QUESTION: Faites une recherche sur le site Colmar Tourisme, Alsace¹⁹ pour visiter la ville natale de Bartholdi. Faites une liste des particularités locales, historiques et linguistiques qui sont uniques à cette ville et sa région. (NB: Cherchez surtout sous la rubrique: "Découvrir la ville: Patrimoine, Histoire, Musées").

Au sujet de la religion, l'Alsace représente une région unique par sa diversité de cultes: catholique, luthérien, réformé [calviniste], et israélite. (Il existe également aujourd'hui une communauté musulmane assez importante, surtout dans les centres urbains d'Alsace). Comme à travers toute l'Europe durant le moyen âge, la communauté juive est victime de persécutions virulentes qui ont lieu surtout durant des périodes d'épidémie (la peste noire) et de guerre où le peuple et les autorités tuent ou expulsent un bon nombre des Juifs d'Alsace en-dehors des villes. De la Renaissance jusqu'à la Révolution française, le statut des Juifs restera précaire, soumis aux humeurs des autorités régnautes. La liberté de culte et le statut civil leur seront accordés à partir de la Révolution française. Sans doute la diversité religieuse d'Alsace sera-t-elle en partie à l'origine de l'instauration d'un statut juridique, le Concordat de 1801 de Napoléon (connu, par la suite, sous le nom du Concordat en Alsace-Moselle) qui "établit les relations et la hiérarchie entre l'Etat français" avec et les religions organisées, surtout l'Eglise catholique. Mais il fallait aussi prendre en compte, en Alsace, les diverses confessions chrétiennes protestantes et juives.²⁰ L'importance de ce nouveau statut est considérable: l'Etat établit officiellement le statut juridique des cultes et confessions différentes. Il est aujourd'hui question de savoir si l'Islam sera également intégré au régime du Concordat en Alsace-Moselle.²¹

QUESTION: En quoi l'Alsace est-elle unique à cause de sa diversité religieuse? Consultez les articles mentionnés ci-dessus entre d'autres sources que vous pouvez consulter.

NOTES

¹ According to *The New York Times*: “A research team at Bing, Microsoft search engine, revealed a similar forecast [Europe as favored vacation spot], with London, Paris and Cancùn topping its list of 2015 international destinations” (Rosenbloom).

² “House Speaker Dennis Hastert said he’d like to target bottled French mineral water and wine. He has instructed Republican colleagues to determine whether Congress should pass laws that would impose new health standards on bottles of Evian and other French waters” (Galliger).

³ Even recent protests by French female parliamentarians and ministers against sexual harassment (May 2016), leading to the departure of the National Assembly’s vice president, Denis Baupin, have provoked anti-American sentiments on the part of public intellectual and philosopher, Alain Finkielkraut, who says: “Even if few male French politicians have stepped up to denounce Mr. Baupin, nobody is defending him, either. The prominent right-leaning philosopher Alain Finkielkraut grumbled on the radio that ‘France is Americanizing itself in a hurry,’ but added that he condemned ‘unseemly actions’” (Nossiter).

⁴ “[...] France and the United States have the highest proportion of immigrants in the North Atlantic region. Both societies are faced with similar challenges and have tried to meet them by drawing on their respective political and cultural national histories, which are different but not altogether incomparable.” (Mathy 144-145)

⁵ Referencing Bartholdi Park in Washington DC obviously opens an additional topic of exploration: the contribution of Pierre L’Enfant, French military engineer turned urban architect, to early American history whose plan for a Federal City lay the blueprint for much of what would become the American capital today with its broad avenues, parks, public buildings, and monuments.

⁶ The motto has been attributed to the Hébertiste Antoine-François Momoro, 1793 (“Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité”).

⁷ A sampling of these elite men count: among the French, besides Laboulaye, were Oscar de Lafayette (grandson to the famous general), Paul de Rémusat, Alexandre de Toqueville, and President Thiers (“The Bedloe’s Island Statue”); among the New York elite, Theodore Roosevelt, John Jay, William M. Evarts, and Edwin D. Morgan (“The Statue of Liberty. An Address from the Committee”).

⁸ This is not to say that Laboulaye was unaware or uninterested in contemporaneous meanings or interpretations of “liberty” tied to such projects as the abolition of slavery. As an honorary member of the Philadelphia branch of the Union League Club, he was an advocate of the Union cause during the Civil War, certainly in the Club’s advocacy of abolitionism. For Laboulaye, America’s example (abolition of slavery as an outcome of the Civil War), would serve, he hoped, as an ideal example to the French to further the cause of democratic rule while living under the repressive rule of the Second Empire (“Abolition”).

⁹ Hunt is probably the most important figure in the history of American architecture since he founded the first school of architecture in 1855 and the American Institute of Architecture. Besides his work designing the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, he is best known for having designed New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. During his

apprenticeship at Paris' Ecole des Beaux Arts, he assisted architects working on renovations to the Louvre museum under Napoleon III.

¹⁰ At its inception, the project was conceived to serve as a beacon or lighthouse as well as a monument, which perhaps explains why the Statue of Liberty was initially under the control of the U.S. War Department.

¹¹ If more of the statue had not appeared at the Centennial celebration it was due to a lack of funds necessary for its completion since both French and American sponsors responsible for raising money for the project fell woefully behind in their efforts; Hunt's pedestal had procured nothing in the way of financial contributions by 1876.

¹² William Ware and Henry Van Brunt of Massachusetts both worked for Richard Moore Hunt, the founder of the first American school of architecture. They formed their own firm, Ware & Van Brunt, which famously designed buildings in Boston and its surroundings, for example the Ruskinian Gothic revival Memorial Hall at Harvard and the Cambridge Public Library, Mass. Van Brunt translated the influential French architect, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's *Discours sur l'architecture*. Viollet-le-Duc's firm undertook the engineering work for the Statue of Liberty's scaffolding though he died before the completion of the project, at which point Gustave Eiffel took over the work.

¹³ Philippe Roger discusses how most of the elites supported the Southern cause for ethnic and moral reasons as they saw the South as a region of French and Spanish, that is, non-Anglo-Saxon, population and culture. The 1860s saw the development of a "pan-Latin" movement among certain French intellectuals: the desire to answer the perceived growing impingement of the decidedly Anglo, German or "Saxon," and even Russian or "Slav" industrial, military, and cultural empires that would leave France out of the western advancing nations. The "Anglo-American" threat was one primarily living in the North and looked to control or even eradicate the more "latinized" and Negro South: "Dans l'arsenal pro-sudiste, ce parallèle entre Russes et Yankees n'est guère qu'un engin tactique. L'arme stratégique et à longue portée, celle qui agrandit au 'monde civilisé' le champ de bataille d'outre-Atlantique, c'est l'idée d'un affrontement entre race anglo-saxonne et peuples latins. Idée chère à l'Empereur: on a vu qu'elle guidait son 'grand dessein' mexicain visant à contenir la pression des Etats-Unis. Idée séduisante pour bien des Français, prompts à s'émouvoir de la menace que représenteraient des Etats-Unis dominés par l'élément 'anglo-saxon' et faisant bloc avec une Grande-Bretagne toujours aussi inquiétante" (125-126).

¹⁴ Foner points out that the Paris prefecture estimated the International had about 400,000 members in the U.S. and by 1876, they were very concerned about contact between these radicals and the French trade union delegation on its way to the Centennial Exposition with several weeks of side trips to New York City and other East Coast industrial towns (263).

¹⁵ Khan asserts that the Statue of Liberty parade inaugurated Wall Street's first use of ticker-tape thrown out of windows in celebrations of parading entities in New York streets (178).

¹⁶ By 1903 the oversight of the monument had been given to the War Department, and by 1916, the government began exploiting the Statue of Liberty as a patriotic icon for recruitment and the sale of "Liberty Bonds" ("Statue of Liberty").

¹⁷ “The association between the statue and humble immigrants, moreover, represents in some ways an attempt by the state and the middle class to reinvent an old tradition. When France presented the statue to the United States, western nations were literally preoccupied with the creation of festivals and statues that reinvigorated the ideals of eighteenth-century republicanism, especially the belief in liberty, equality, and fraternity. It was important for nations such as France and the United States to celebrate those ideals at a time when they also facilitated the emergence of industrial economies that made the attainment of individual liberty and social equality for all citizens difficult realities to achieve” (Bodnar “Symbols and Servants” 150-51).

¹⁸ The CNHI found itself embroiled in immigrant labor protests in October 2010 when 500 “sans papiers” immigrant laborers—many from former colonial state—staged a lengthy sit-in within the museum hall to demand regularization of their status. (Piquemal).

¹⁹ *Colmar Tourisme. Alsace*. May 20 2016. Web. <https://www.tourisme-colmar.com/fr/>

²⁰ Voir : “Le Concordat en Alsace”. *JDS-sorties en Alsace*. Accessed May 20 2016. Web. http://www.jds.fr/tourisme-et-loisirs/guide-de-l-alsace/le-regime-concordataire-en-alsace-34263_A

²¹ Voir par exemple l’article “Faut-il intégrer l’islam au concordat d’Alsace-Moselle?” France bleu Alsace. 15 juin 2015. Web. <https://www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/faut-il-integrer-l-islam-au-concordat-d-alsace-moselle-1434360383>