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**Becoming a destiny: The Nietzsche vogue in French intellectual  
life, 1891-1918**

**Forth, Christopher Edward, Ph.D.**

**State University of New York at Buffalo, 1994**

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**BECOMING A DESTINY: THE NIETZSCHE VOGUE IN  
FRENCH INTELLECTUAL LIFE, 1891-1918**

by

Christopher E. Forth

May 1, 1994

A dissertation submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



**Dissertation Abstract**  
**Christopher E. Forth**  
**Becoming a Destiny: The Nietzsche Vogue in**  
**French Intellectual Life, 1891-1918**

This dissertation explores the reception of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy in various sectors of French intellectual and cultural life at the turn of the century. Recognizing that numerous and often mutually-exclusive interpretations of Nietzsche have abounded throughout the twentieth century, this study inquires into the conditions that rendered such multiplicity possible. Following the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, which examines intellectual production in terms of social struggles for cultural legitimacy, the author has sketched the field of forces and divisions that constituted intellectual life in France. Taking into consideration the spheres of literature, academe, and radical politics, the author shows that commentaries on Nietzsche carried an implicit commentary on the state of the intellectual world by those groups who had a stake in that world. That is, the struggle among competing groups to posit the legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche was but one element in a continuing struggle to institute their own programs as the dominant mode of intellectual activity. What emerges is a relative uniformity of readings corresponding to shared positions and trajectories in the intellectual world.

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## **General Introduction: Nietzsche in France and the Question of Interpretation**

In 1992 the Parisian periodical, Le Magazine littéraire, devoted one of its monthly issues to the topic of Friedrich Nietzsche, with special reference to the philosopher's important role in French intellectual life since the 1950s as well as his continuing relevance for contemporary thought.<sup>1</sup> It should come as no surprise that such a feature would appear in a specifically literary periodical. As many know, the German enjoyed a rather subterranean popularity during the 1950s in the work of Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot, only to emerge in the 1960s in the work of a philosophical avant-garde which, from positions that were marginal to both the official neo-Kantian philosophical establishment at the Sorbonne and the existential or phenomenological establishment at the interstices of academic and literary life, sought to overturn the established hierarchy in French intellectual and cultural life. This latter group of young thinkers, notably Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, employed the ideas of Nietzsche in philosophical projects which would become very well-known in cultural circles, but which ultimately failed to secure for them positions of real academic power in France. That is, while their writings could not be considered rigorous philosophy in the traditional sense of French epistemology, their marginal positions vis-à-vis academe permitted them to enjoy tremendous power within the sphere of cultural production in France and, ultimately, abroad.<sup>2</sup> As the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu writes of the social condition of his contemporaries:

In their relations with the philosophical high priests of the

Sorbonne, who, like most of them, are products of the 'great lay seminary', the École Normale Supérieure, which is the apex of the whole academic hierarchy, they appear like religious heretics, or, in other words, rather like freelance intellectuals installed within the university system itself, or to venture a Derridean pun, encamped on the margins or in the marginalia of an academic empire threatened on all sides by barbarian invasions (that is, of course, as seen by the dominant fraction).<sup>3</sup>

While it would be an exaggeration to reduce this marginalization simply to the problem of using Nietzsche for academic philosophy, one cannot deny that such an appropriation--as evidenced in the content and form of their work--did play an important role in this academic exclusion. It would also be simplistic to assert that the popularity of Deleuze, Foucault, and Derrida in unorthodox philosophical circles was due exclusively to their application of Nietzsche. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the philosopher's name wielded a considerable amount of symbolic weight in French intellectual life and performed specific functions in various sectors of the intellectual world. Depending upon one's definition of legitimate philosophical activity--itself formed by one's position in pre-established intellectual hierarchies--Nietzsche could serve as either a sign of ennoblement or as a stigma for exclusion. A glance at contemporary North American academic debates should demonstrate that this dynamic is not merely a French phenomenon.

In current French philosophy, in the wake of the so-called structuralist revolution, Nietzsche still carries a degree of notoriety and serves in some spheres as a rationale for exclusion--not only of Nietzsche as a suitable source of philosophical inspiration, but also of those thinkers who choose to enlist the

intellectual support of this German. The circle of philosophers associated with the review Le Débat, represented chiefly by such liberal thinkers as Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, published in 1991 a collection of essays by like-minded philosophers trying to demonstrate Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzschéens (Why We Are Not Nietzscheans).<sup>4</sup> This text, obviously aimed at siphoning off some of the prestige enjoyed by heirs to the structuralist tradition, closes a full century of the Nietzsche controversy in France. It also inaugurates what will no doubt prove to be a new era in Nietzsche's French reception. That Nietzsche could still merit such critical attention--that his work could provoke such bitter polemics in intellectual life a full one hundred years after his introduction to France in 1891--attests as much to the truly rich and explosive content of his work as it does to the symbolic power of his name in various intellectual milieux, which are themselves the products of historical and social conditions which have their genesis in the 1890s and even earlier. In short, the story of Nietzsche's legacy in France spans a century of bitter debates and controversies that contribute to our understanding, not only of French intellectual life, but of our contemporary intellectual situation in North America.

This dissertation provides an analysis of the reception of the works of Nietzsche in French academic and cultural life at the turn of the last century. In some ways this project fits into a long tradition of Nietzsche scholarship, admirably exemplified by the spate of historical works examining the influence of the philosopher in various countries. This historiographical tradition includes

notably David Thatcher's Nietzsche in England, Geneviève Bianquis' Nietzsche en France, Eric H. Deudon's Nietzsche en France, Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal's Nietzsche in Russia, R. Hinton Thomas' Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, Seth Thomas' Left-Wing Nietzscheans, and most recently Steven E. Aschheim's The Nietzsche Legacy in German Politics and Culture, 1890-1990. In most cases, however, these studies have tended to focus so exclusively on cataloging the various readings of the philosopher that a critical perspective on the intellectual worlds within which such interpretations were made possible is lost.

Despite its apparent kinship with this body of scholarship, then, the present work differs markedly in both scope and analysis, and contains at its center the rather fundamental question of the social and historical conditions of intellectual interpretation. That is, rather than demonstrating that various and often mutually-exclusive representations of Nietzsche coexisted (and continue to coexist) over time, I have taken this apparent given as the central problem of my analysis.

To this end I have dispensed with many of the traditional approaches to the history of ideas contained in these studies. Unlike most other studies of Nietzsche's reception, this investigation seeks to discern the social, cultural, and historical bases upon which the reception, processing, and ultimate appropriation of cultural goods are effected. In short, rather than endeavoring to show how specific individuals received the writings of Nietzsche, I am more



interested in the production of Nietzsche as an object of admiration or scorn within various intellectual milieux at the turn of the century. Beyond the narrow question of how Nietzsche was interpreted by various intellectuals, this study explores the function that Nietzsche's name served in French cultural life at the turn of the century. Already such an approach eschews certain conventions of Nietzsche scholarship: 1) It does not engage in the often futile game of discerning the unacknowledged "Nietzschean" strands within the works of certain major writers. Undoubtedly, the ideas of Nietzsche invariably became mixed with those of many other figures to form a network of common cultural references which could become easily internalized and unconsciously articulated. Unfortunately, studies which argue for the influence of Nietzsche upon the works of those who never explicitly mention the philosopher are easily countered by suggesting the possible influence of other contemporaries. Given the fact that ideas are never received (or produced) in a pure state, the search for such distinctly Nietzschean elements is highly suspect from an historical perspective: in short, to do so one must rely on a rather impressionistic reading of these texts. 2) This approach does not concern itself with individual reading idiosyncracies in the production of different versions of Nietzsche, but demonstrates the extent to which social dynamics of intellectual production molded individual modes of cultural perception and appreciation. The question of Nietzsche's reception in France, I contend, is inextricably linked to these social divisions that themselves engender different forms of cultural vision.

Hence, to address the reception of a particular thinker it is necessary to reconstruct as fully as possible the system of assumptions and divisions which constituted the intellectual world at a given time.

This question of interpretation, which has received a great deal of currency in recent times, may be expressed in a number of ways, and itself raises a host of similar questions. When confronting the existence of various interpretations, where should one's analytical gaze be concentrated when endeavoring to explain them? Should the emphasis be placed on the opacity of the texts themselves, which may be dismissed as undecidable and capable of innumerable interpretations? A stance which assumes the infinite task of interpretation--and which therefore denies the author the ability to convey his or her ideas transparently through language--seems to displace attention away from the creative author to the creative "writerly" reader, who therefore comes to center stage. As Roland Barthes has noted, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."<sup>5</sup>

In the historiography of Nietzsche reception scholars have generally avoided the problem of interpretation by opting for a traditional and rather innocuous explanation that focuses attention (at first) directly on the texts themselves. Nietzsche's texts are typically not described as infinitely interpretable because of the opaque nature of language itself, but because of the author's own prosaic and often self-contradictory style of writing philosophy. In short, both the content and the form of Nietzsche's idiosyncratic writings are

typically viewed as the causes of the numerous interpretations that have arisen, a stance which implies that the work of a stylistically more precise and rigorous philosopher would be relatively insulated from such interpretive liberties.

Readers of Nietzsche's texts, it is suggested, cannot help but be creative in their readings, and naturally respond to the texts according to their own subjective interests--the initial focus on Nietzsche's texts is deflected immediately onto his readers. Had Nietzsche been more specific and precise, it is implied, many questionable and even dangerous interpretations might have been avoided. To each reader, therefore, his or her own Nietzsche.

Contrary to traditional historiography, I am less concerned with the influence of Nietzsche in French intellectual and cultural life. I do not conceive of cultural transmission as the reception of a pre-existing though internally-heterogeneous body of writings by individual intellectuals, who selected parts of a real Nietzsche to be metonymically inflated into the whole of their individual "Nietzsches." I do not contend that an indeterminate number of Nietzsches became freely constructed by individuals through the necessarily creative--and therefore subtly subjective--act of reading. Nietzsche did not merely exist in the eye of the beholder; rather the subjective eye itself was the product of objective social relations that actually limited the number of Nietzsches that could possibly be envisioned. That is, while infinite interpretations of Nietzsche may indeed be possible given the indeterminate nature of language itself, external historical and social considerations always tend to intervene in the act of

reading to delimit the number and type of interpretations that are actually produced at a given time.

In this dissertation I contend that individual variations in Nietzsche interpretation in fin-de-siècle France are less significant than the overwhelming uniformity of interpretation in certain intellectual circles. The creation of Nietzsche as an object of approbation or outrage was a dynamic process which can be understood by reference to the social and cultural circumstances of French intellectual life as well as the texts themselves. In many ways, Nietzsche was less the cause than the effect of the objective social relations of the intellectual world. This is not to assert that Nietzsche was merely the pure fiction of groups of intellectuals; nor does it claim that a pre-existent and pristine Nietzsche remains despite these various (mis)readings. Against such oppositions I simply assert the fundamentally social nature of reading: interpretations of Nietzsche cannot be understood independently of definite contexts with inherited modes of reading and implicit notions of self-definition which stand in contradistinction to the perception of other groups. Apprehension of a text always involves the dynamic relationship between text and context which is irreducible to either of the two traditional poles. The notion of a single definite reading is as much a social construction, I contend, as is the belief in infinite interpretations: both strategies can only exist within milieux where such an approach to reading is practiced, valued, and encouraged.

### **Intellectual Fields and the Historical Sociology of Ideas**

In many ways this dissertation aims at approximating what Roger Chartier hoped for the cultural history: that it "might find a niche at the crossroads of textual criticism, the history of the book, and cultural sociology."<sup>6</sup> Chartier suggests a triangular approach to the cultural history of reading that accounts for: 1) the ideal, abstract text itself; 2) the material support that conveys the text; and 3) the act of reading that grasps the text. Above all, it is imperative to formulate an approach to modes of reading that considers the contrasting responses to a single text as competitions that give expression to strategies of distinction or imitation.

Like Chartier, I have found Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of intellectual and cultural life to be the most insightful and empirically rigorous theoretical approach to the thorny issue of interpreting interpretation.<sup>7</sup> According to Bourdieu, social science disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and history vacillate between the two apparently incompatible perspectives of subjectivism and objectivism when thinking about the social world. On the one hand, some might opt for subjectivism by identifying the individual self as the autonomous seat of intellectual and creative activity. From this perspective, the social world is reduced to the ways in which individual agents perceive it, thus neutralizing the effects of external factors by privileging consciousness in the production and reception of ideas. From the subjectivist vantage point Nietzsche is directly apprehended by individual readers who enter into an intimate relation with the text at hand, and produce an interpretation based on

such subjective immediacy. One may notice such a "phenomenological" approach to the act of reading in the works of those who study the "aesthetics of reception," such as Wolfgang Iser.

On the other hand, the objectivist perspective effects a break with immediate experience by describing the objective social structures and representations upon which immediate experience depends but cannot itself grasp. From this point of view individuals themselves become neutralized as their practical activities are reduced to mere applications of a rule or the realization of a structure. Viewed from an objectivist stance, individuals view Nietzsche from a structured perspective that cannot be explained by their individual interaction with the text.<sup>8</sup>

Bourdieu's sociology is motivated by the need to avoid the limitations of the objectivist standpoint without lapsing into a traditional philosophy of the subject: that is, by the need to recognize the formative power of objective structures of perception while accounting for the practical activities of the individuals who produce and reproduce these structures. To this end Bourdieu introduces his concepts of the habitus and the field. The habitus is a set of socially-acquired dispositions which inclines agents to act and react in certain ways, though without strictly determining them. The dispositions of the habitus are acquired and structured because they reflect the social conditions of individual development. Yet they are durable, generative, and transposable in that they endure throughout a person's life, but are capable of generating a

number of practices and perceptions in contexts other than those in which the habitus was originally formed.

A truly rigorous cultural history of reading differences must formulate a concept of historical context that is adequate to the task of understanding intellectual activity without recourse to convenient yet vague contextual references to a "milieu," "mentalité," "social base," or "Zeitgeist." Because individuals both act and are acted upon in specific contexts, Bourdieu contends that particular practices and perceptions should be seen as the product of the relation between various habitus and a "field." Such a field functions not unlike a market in which the value of material and symbolic goods are determined and accepted. The notion of the intellectual field provides one way of avoiding such generalities by situating individuals within a relatively autonomous conceptual space of interrelationships that has a logic all its own. That is, the intellectual field mediates between individual agents and "external" political and social factors: rather than ignoring such realities the field translates them according to its own internal logic. Thus, intellectual change cannot be conceived as either the mere mechanical reflection of broad historical phenomena or the result of conscious individual or collective resolution.

Following Bourdieu, I contend that Nietzsche functioned on the symbolic level in French intellectual and cultural life. As opposed to the empirical Nietzsche, a proper name that merely designates the fact that an object is different without demonstrating the manner in which it differs (an object of

recognition rather than cognition), Nietzsche as a constructed and "epistemic" individual refers to a finite set of properties standing in relation to mutually-reinforcing representations on a predefined conceptual space, an intellectual market within which the specific value of the name may be determined. While the empirical Nietzsche is inexhaustible, the epistemic Nietzsche contains nothing which evades conceptualization. Those who read works by or about this latter construction will respond to it according to their own positions on the conceptual field which generated it. In short, Nietzsche was apprehended by various readers as a spectacle or a representation. This model suggests therefore an indefinite number of epistemic Nietzsches corresponding to all possible conceptual fields, and posits the act of epistemic constitution as endemic to the process of cultural reception.<sup>9</sup> Motivated by strategies of distinction or imitation, the differences of reading Nietzsche may therefore be understood as competitions between groups of intellectuals in their larger struggle for cultural legitimacy.

As an object of knowledge, Nietzsche was never received in isolation from other cultural products; instead, the philosopher had to be processed according to the cultural classifications already established. In the process of defining the author one had to cite similarities and differences between Nietzsche and others in ways that allowed one group of valorized names seemingly to confront others which could be deemed illegitimate. For example, when Nietzsche was perceived as intellectually proximate to Ibsen and Stirner,



durable associative links were forged between the three writers, constituting a conceptual "constellation" of thinkers that would prove so cohesive that the subsequent discussion of one rarely failed to invoke tacitly the others. While a cultural constellation formed and valorized in one sector of the intellectual field will retain its cohesiveness in others, it often undergoes a valuational inversion corresponding to the hierarchies and divisions of the field as a whole. Thus, while Nietzsche's perceived kinship with Ibsen and Stirner might contain positive connotations within the literary avant-garde, academic philosophers could readily cite the same correspondence as a rationale for exclusion.

This stellar metaphor of a "universe" of literary and academic thought had great significance for the turn of the century, where many writers described configurations of thinkers in terms of constellations. In his Journal d'un homme de 40 ans, for example, Jean Gu  henno wondered "Should I say what the poetic sky was like during these years, after which stars we oriented ourselves, Barr  s, Gide, Jaur  s, Romain Rolland, and, this most distant star, with a hard and exalting fire, Nietzsche?"<sup>10</sup> The writer Andr   Gide proved quite sensitive to the power of cultural constellations when he insightfully criticized the associative link between Nietzsche and Stirner, which permitted one to "judge one with the other in order better to englobe the two in a more facile reprobation or admiration."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Gide himself envisioned the philosopher in a very specific stellar configuration: "Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Browning and Blake are truly four stars in the same constellation."<sup>12</sup>

The struggle to name the principle of legitimate hierarchy in the intellectual world was essentially a struggle for the dominant representation of the intellectual field. Such distinctive strategies were often aimed at destroying the representations posited by rival groups, which meant undermining, among other things, their cultural constellations. Because cultural constellations are intimately bound to the representation of the groups in which they are forged, they are often attacked as an indirect means of warfare upon particular groups. One's enemies and their cultural equipment--their intellectual means of continuing the struggle--often become identified in the conflict of representations. Understood as an object invested with symbolic and social value, Nietzsche was invoked for the specific weight that his name conferred upon arguments conducted in particular fields. This symbolic strategy of undermining cultural icons was often employed in the intellectual battles of the Third Republic. In most intellectual pursuits, one does not cite an author's name unless one can count on its being recognized by one's readers: that is, the author to be cited must already enjoy a priori either the approbation or condemnation of a given group in order for that citation to have the desired effect--or, indeed, to have any effect whatsoever. While Nietzsche himself posed little threat to the hegemony of established literary critics and republican professors, Les nietzschéens were the real problem. Hence, to undermine a cultural symbol was one means of attacking the more dangerous group whose members most often invoked it. The struggle over the legitimate representation

of Nietzsche was one battle in the larger ongoing war for the legitimate representation of the intellectual world.

When discussing the dynamics of the intellectual field one must keep in mind that the relationships and hierarchies cited between various sectors of the field are the product of modes of perception that are both inherited and reproduced by agents as they participate in specific forms of social life. For example, while one may reasonably challenge the reality of such categorical distinctions as "literature" and "science" in intellectual life, one must keep in mind that such divisions were (indeed, they still are) fundamental structuring principles of the field itself. That is, those who choose to practice a certain style of intellectual activity are compelled to accept the rules which inevitably govern that activity--implicit criteria that define those who may legitimately participate in the game as well as those who are a priori to be excluded from play. A republican academic philosopher, for example, depended greatly upon the definition of his own activity as legitimate or sanctioned philosophy as opposed to those who produced more literary (and therefore illegitimate) versions of the same. Hence, this rigid division between science and letters was quite real for those who had a stake in maintaining such a distinction--they had an "interest" in promulgating the self-image of disinterested scholarship. By the same token, those who dared practice philosophy from a literary perspective had a great deal of interest in subverting such a hierarchical and exclusionary principle. Such divisions within and between fields greatly contributed to the type of

intellectual activity produced, and significantly structured the reception of cultural goods produced internally and externally.

Some scholars have justly raised the question of the boundaries of an institution or a field. Accepting that conflicts take place within a predefined space, how are the boundaries of that space arrived at? To a great extent, such boundaries are themselves moveable and arbitrarily invoked by those with a need to maintain a social division between themselves and others. For example, while the distinction between legitimate (scientific) sociological practice and its illegitimate (literary) other was easily facilitated by the consecration of such institutions as the Sorbonne or the École Normale Supérieure, such legitimacy was hardly reducible to these institutions. The boundary between fields were generally invoked and recognized through practice and defended by reference to precedents. Rather than a hard-and-fast dividing line it is more useful to conceive of generally blurry and permeable boundaries that are ever susceptible to sudden clarification when the need arises.

Nietzsche was never an autonomous object of knowledge for the French at the turn of the century. Rather, Nietzsche as a symbol entered into the pre-existing intellectual relations that constituted the intellectual field and through which these intellectuals perceived his writings. Academic and literary considerations of Nietzsche were rarely restricted to the philosopher alone, but usually included some tacit commentary on the state of the intellectual field and the place of the commentator within it. In short, by classifying Nietzsche these

intellectuals classified themselves and others.

In terms of the politics of academic and literary life, one rarely invokes a thinker unless that source is recognizable to a group which has tacitly accepted or rejected that source as legitimate. An academic philosopher wishing to describe to his or her colleagues the dangers of dilettantism could raise the specter of Nietzsche and be clearly understood. Conflicts of interpretation took place when marginal or subordinate agents invoked the authority of the philosopher in inappropriate fora: to raise Nietzsche with the aim of legitimating an argument in a field where the legitimacy of Nietzsche himself has not been established or has been already undermined led to even further marginalization and/or exclusion.

It must be stressed that by contending that Nietzsche was constructed by various intellectual groups with interests in either conserving or subverting the hierarchical principles of their particular sectors of the intellectual field does not imply that Nietzsche was a totally fictional construct. By invoking instead the blurred boundary between text and reader (and text and context) I hope to demonstrate the complex interaction between readers and the texts of Nietzsche without collapsing one entirely into the other. While some may argue with reason that texts may be interpreted infinitely, the simple fact is that historically this has not been the case: modes of appreciation and ways of reading have always been highly structured by cultural factors which make certain readings possible, but which act to disqualify others from the start. In

fact, one might argue that the belief in infinite interpretation is only possible within those spheres which have the most to gain by claiming such unlimited power over the text.

In methodological terms I have been primarily concerned with demonstrating how scattered and apparently unconnected references to the philosopher corresponded to certain categories of thinking linked to the various intellectual, cultural, and political interests of the period. That is, I have endeavored to provide a sociological analysis of reading and comprehension seeking to explain how and why the ideas of Nietzsche were valorized within certain circles and anathemized in others. Within the various cultural milieux where the issue of Nietzsche had any significance the writer had to be constructed in a manner that would best serve its own interests.

To this end I have generally been less concerned with the content of the various commentaries on Nietzsche than on the form in which they were cast and, above all, on the systems of relations within which such forms attained significance. This is to say that the extensive thoughts of an Émile Faguet or an Alfred Fouillée on the topic of Nietzsche--while certainly important--have been less significant than examining just what such commentaries represented at the time. This methodology entails dispensing with a fairly narrow textual focus--that of Bianquis and Deudon--in order to approach more fully the myriad casual references to the philosopher that abounded during this period. Rather than focusing exclusively on key essays and books on the philosopher, I have tried

to reconstruct the cultural networks within which such larger studies must be understood by studying the casual references to Nietzsche. In order to demonstrate the relative uniformities in the interpretations of Nietzsche I have in most cases provided numerous testimonies. For the most part, I have avoided paraphrasing in order to allow the statements of individual figures to emerge more clearly. I would hope that this contextual study would serve as a background for those wishing to examine the reception of Nietzsche in the texts of individual writers.

To study the reception of Nietzsche in all sectors of the intellectual field would go far beyond the scope of this study. I have therefore restricted my attention to those areas where I consider his reception to have been most significant: the subfield of literature (poetry, novels, theatre, literary criticism), the philosophical and sociological fields, and the field of political thought. It is important to note that all of these fields were only relatively autonomous, and that an understanding of Nietzsche's reception in one requires an analysis of the others. While I have restricted my analysis of French cultural and intellectual life to the spheres of literature, academia, and politics, I am not unaware of the important role of Nietzschean thought in the formation of avant-garde painting at the turn of the century, most notably in cubism, orphism, and futurism.<sup>13</sup> Yet an examination of these areas would exceed the scope of this already ambitious project, and may be incorporated at a later date.

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## Notes

1. Cf. "Les Vies de Nietzsche" Magazine littéraire avril 1992 (No. 298), 18-105.
2. Pierre Bourdieu, "Preface to the English Edition," Homo Academicus (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), xviii-xxiv.
3. Bourdieu, "Preface to the English Edition," Homo Academicus, xix.
4. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, eds., Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzschéens (Paris: Grasset, 1991).
5. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in Image-Music-Text Steven Heath, ed. (Glasgow, UK: Collins, 1977), 148.
6. Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printing, Readings" in Lynn Hunt, ed., The New Cultural History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 175.
7. While the methodology of Bourdieu has been widely and successfully applied in France, notably by Christophe Charle, Jean-Louis Fabiani, and Victor Karady. Aside from the recent work of Fritz Ringer, its use has been quite limited in North American historical circles.
8. Cf. Bourdieu, In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 123-126; John B. Thompson, "Editor's Introduction" Language and Symbolic Power by Pierre Bourdieu (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 11-12.
9. Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 21-24; In Other Words, 98.
10. Jean Guéhenno, Journal d'un homme de 40 ans (Paris: Grasset, 1934), 126.
11. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle: De Stirner et de L'Individualisme" L'Ermitage janvier 1900 (20), 61.
12. André Gide, quoted in Béatrice Didier, Un Dialogue à distance: Gide et Du Bos (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976), 46.
13. Ivor Davies, "Western European Art Forms Influenced by Nietzsche and Bergson Before 1914, Particularly Italian Futurism and French Orphism" Art International March 20, 1975 (19), 49-55.

**PART ONE:**  
**NIETZSCHE AND THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS**

The wrathful and reverent attitudes characteristic of youth do not seem to permit themselves any rest until they have forged men and things in such a way that these attitudes may be vented on them--after all, youth in itself has something of forgery and deception.

--Friedrich Nietzsche  
Beyond Good and Evil

**CHAPTER ONE:  
ANTI-WAGNERISM AND CULTURAL REGENERATION:  
THE EMERGENCE OF AN AVANT-GARDE**

Art is the great stimulus to life:  
how could one understand it as  
purposeless, as useless, as l'art  
pour l'art?

--Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

Any inquiry into the reception and appropriation of Nietzsche's philosophy in France must begin with an analysis of the structure and crisis of the literary field during the late-1880s. Within this highly-determined yet continually-changing representational space, it will be shown that his ideas would become enmeshed and ultimately appropriated by agents in their quest for cultural legitimacy. Perhaps the most pervasive characteristic of the initial reception of Nietzsche in France was that appropriation and rejection of the philosopher always exceeded the texts at hand. Reading Nietzsche at the turn of the century was always a reading from a particular position within a conceptual field, specific sites which have no meaning without repeated reference to other and often hostile positions. In short, to classify Nietzsche was implicitly to classify oneself differentially in respect to others.

**The Structure and Crisis of the Literary Field, 1880-1891**

In Les Règles de l'art (1992) Pierre Bourdieu presents a sociological description of the genesis and structure of the field of cultural production in France from the mid-nineteenth century through the present. This literary field--the population of which almost doubled from 4,173 writers in 1876 to 7,432 in 1901--may be seen as being structured by two mutually-reinforcing hierarchies that

defined the social space within which one could practice various forms of literary activity and, it is implied, within which one consumed cultural goods.<sup>2</sup> These mutually-reinforcing hierarchies, which were perceived and reproduced by those involved with literature, divided commercial writers from practitioners of pure art on the one hand, and established or academic writers and critics from young newcomers on the other. The autoperception of a writer was highly informed by the position that he or she occupied within this perceptual field.

One fundamental tension existed therefore between those writing for a relatively general audience (commercial literature) and those writing primarily for the smaller audience of fellow writers ("pure" literature), which might be conceived along a horizontal axis. At the turn of the century agents falling into the category of commercial art--that is, those who saw in literature a legitimate means of making money--might be involved in a number of enterprises, such as the bourgeois diversions of Boulevard theater, or the more popular fare of vaudeville or the roman feuilleton. The opposite end of the spectrum was occupied primarily by the avant-garde poets of the Parnassus or les petites revues, who wrote mostly for the consumption of other producers who--in a paradoxical economy which rejected mundane rewards for the promise of spiritual riches in another world--shared a common disdain for the mercenary art of the market for mass consumption. Between these two extremes was situated the genre of the novel, whose form was dominated in the 1890s by both Émile Zola and the naturalists, and Paul Bourget and other practitioners of the psychological novel. Of the hierarchy of genres that

emerged from this division between art and argent, the novel was perceived as the most ambivalent, and typically made concessions both to the aesthetic purity of the avant-garde while nevertheless recognizing the need to appeal to a broad audience.

This literary field, where agents were themselves divided between the poles of pure and commercial art, is also described by Bourdieu as being cut by a vertical axis featuring the opposition between older and/or highly consecrated writers and younger and/or less consecrated writers. For example, the fraction of commercial literature would contain the hierarchy of cultural legitimacy between the University, the Académie Française and the Boulevard theatre as opposed to vaudeville and the roman populaire; at the other extreme one would find the opposition between the older and more legitimate school of the Parnassians and the younger post-symbolist avant-garde of les petites revues and bohemia. Once again the genre of the novel occupied a central position on the literary field, suggesting the mutually reinforcing dynamic of both divisions of literary perception.

According to Bourdieu, agents who are engaged in cultural production do so from definite positions within a representational field structured by the two hierarchical principles described above, stressing finally that the distinctions behind this fundamental division form the basis for vision in the literary world. A relatively unknown poet writing for an avant-garde review, for example, would distinguish his or her activity from the "vulgar" commercial art of the general literary market as well as from the more consecrated aesthetic of the older Parnassians or even the

symbolists. Within this analytical framework one finally problematizes the functional principle of the entire field of cultural production--the belief in the existence of the artist as an uncreated creator, who draws primarily from the depths of subjectivity to express himself or herself through various media. A creative genius such as Flaubert, therefore, could produce Madame Bovary through a steadfast refusal of all existing modes of literary expression from across the literary field.

The avant-garde of the 1880s propagated the aesthetic of l'art pour l'art, which placed it in an structurally ambiguous position in relation to both the dominant and dominated classes. While vigorously opposed to participation in the dominant literary market, which celebrated the "vulgar" naturalism of Zola and Guy de Maupassant, and likewise resistant to the dominant academic definition of literature of the time, proponents of this detached aesthetic--whether older Parnassians or young decadents and symbolists--most rejected the engagement of the artists in political issues, clinging resolutely to the literary margins which a significant public was not likely to patronize.<sup>3</sup> As Claude Digeon points out, what was striking about many of this generation was their apparent indifference to the defeat of 1870-71. As members of the first "republican" generation in France, many saw Napoleon III and the Franco-Prussian War as the experiences of their elders, and none of their concern.<sup>4</sup> Many agreed that the primacy of France in the world arena had been decisively ended by the defeat, and that the Third Republic formed soon after would, due to numerous political scandals, collapse at any time. This perceived lack of energy and will resulted in the resignation to, and even the



glorification of "decadence."<sup>5</sup> An attitude of systematic detachment manifested itself most visibly in the literary school of symbolism, which arose during the 1880s and counted as its most illustrious practitioners Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Gustave Kahn, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Philippe Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. As a response to the dominant school of naturalism, which was officially (and prematurely) pronounced dead by Jean Moréas in 1886, symbolism offered its adherents a conception of the world and a state of mind which would for a time prevail, but which would become transformed in time. Positing the absurdity of political action and the inevitable suffering of human existence, the symbolists rejected external reality in favor of a new kind of idealism, which in its variety of forms included solipsism, occultism, mysticism, and a fascination with the morbid. Paramount to this movement was the artists' resolve to flee reality through a variety of means, such as hallucinatory drugs, dreams, or other altered states of mind, producing in their work images that transcended empirical reality. Finally, the decadent symbolists refused to participate in political and social life.<sup>6</sup>

This position suggested, in effect, a utopia where artists freely pursued their muse in ignorance of the social forces which still determined their literary practices and intellectual ideologies. It was the site of the purportedly "pure" aesthetic gaze unencumbered by the distortions and distractions of social, political, and economic realities, the pure cult of form.<sup>7</sup> As Christophe Charle has demonstrated, this ostensibly detached posture vis-à-vis political issues espoused by the proponents of l'art pour l'art actually constituted, in its function and position in social life, a

concurrence between the literary field and the political field, a tacit alliance which would be contested by a number of newcomers during the 1890s. That is, the imminent rejection of this aesthetic entailed a wholesale rejection of a purportedly outmoded literary lifestyle.

The crisis of the literary field and the emergence of a social aesthetic was manifested in the various surveys or enquêtes of the early 1890s, in particular the famous one conducted in 1891 by the journalist Jules Huret.<sup>8</sup> For many young symbolists, this poll represented an opportunity to reach a much larger audience than their own small reviews could provide, and in this forum they eagerly proposed their own theories and supported the projects of their contemporaries, which often conflicted with the programs of the dominant schools. It was also an opportunity to herald the extinction of the aesthetics of their more established rivals. "Oh yes!" Maurice Barrès began, "what has been called naturalism is a formula of art which is today certainly dead."<sup>9</sup> "There is no doubt about the tendencies of the new literary generations," Remy de Gourmont declared: "they are rigorously antinaturalist."<sup>10</sup> In response, many established writers used the tactics of political polemic to devalorize these young offenders. Placed on the defensive by the naturalists, who denounced the symbolists as reactionaries, and by the parnassians, who charged them with fomenting decadence and anarchism, the symbolist movement broke into three different tendencies.

Despite the generalizing condemnations by the literary establishment, symbolism itself was less an organized movement than an unstable alliance of

mutually-maligned young writers. That is, besides being dismissed en masse by the establishment as aesthetically illegitimate there was some reason to feel the sting of class distinctions. As Remy Ponton has shown, very few (15%) of those who would call themselves symbolists, decadents, and naturists during this period hailed from the middle classes, while most were from the lower or aristocratic classes.<sup>11</sup> This common social condition as poètes maudites provided a powerful unifying principle for writers who otherwise had very little in common. Responding to the question "Is there really a symbolist movement?" Adrien Remacle observed: "A movement, no: [rather] movements without direction, without common direction overall."<sup>12</sup> "There is no school in the strictest sense of the word," noted Jean Moréas. "Each keeps his individuality."<sup>13</sup> Moréas would illustrate this point later that year by heralding yet another literary movement, the *École romane*, which in its stress on classicism "renews the 'gallic chain' broken by Romanticism and its parnassian, naturalist and symbolist descent."<sup>14</sup> "Symbolism," Moréas continued, "which was only interesting as a transitional phenomenon, is dead."<sup>15</sup> In short, by late-1891 literary youth was united less by a shared aesthetic than a common social condition.

The largest number of these young writers confined themselves to literary polemics to defend their besieged aesthetic, while a second group followed Mallarmé and Verlaine in their rejection of naturalism and the parnassus through a new-found patriotism. A third and smaller fraction pressed their nonconformist logic onto political grounds, testifying finally to radical positions on the extreme left.

"There is no art pour l'art anymore," concluded René Ghil. "It is l'art altruiste, with a humanitarian goal, for intellectual and moral Betterment."<sup>16</sup> That is, despite the persistence of l'art pour l'art among certain symbolists, this 1891 rupture meant the end of the general apolitical posture of the literary avant-garde, and heralded the rise of a social aesthetic that was closely linked to the changing role of the writer vis-à-vis social and political issues.<sup>17</sup> This new social consciousness, however, tended to focus on the creative freedom of the artist, and did not entail a rapprochement with the committed literature of the naturalists.

Despite the cool response by most official critics of the dominant reviews, by the late-1880s the symbolists had earned the favor of Ferdinand Brunetière, the influential editor of the Revue des deux mondes. This recognition conferred a degree of official consecration for symbolist proponents of l'art pour l'art that carried them further from the pole of the unconsecrated avant-garde. Years later one writer would even describe Brunetière's review, perhaps with some irony, as "one of the boulevards of 'Symbolism'."<sup>18</sup> Hence many young writers of the avant-garde, wary of the literary compromises such recognition entailed, contributed to les petites or jeunes revues which, with varying degrees of political commitment, participated in the social aesthetic that challenged the naturalists as well as the decadent symbolists. From the political left to center were featured the following notable periodicals: Les Entretiens politiques et littéraires, La Revue blanche, L'Ermitage, Mercure de France, and La Plume. In addition were several lesser-known and ephemeral reviews, including the specifically symbolist La Vogue and

La Conque, the spiritualist Le Saint-Graal, and Maurice Barrès's own Cocarde. Situating themselves around the literary cafés of the Parisian left bank, les petites revues distanced themselves socially and spatially from the milieu of the Boulevard and the salons of the right bank.<sup>19</sup> Whereas a few decadents might contribute to these reviews, the general program had moved beyond the aesthetic of l'art pour l'art towards an active engagement in political issues.

### **Wagner, Symbolism, and Decadence**

As an artist one has no home in Europe, except Paris: the délicatesse in all five artistic senses that is presupposed by Wagner's art, the fingers for nuances, the psychological morbidity are found only in Paris.  
--Nietzsche<sup>20</sup>

The writers of the burgeoning French literary avant-garde seized upon the philosophy and figure of Nietzsche in their struggle to establish a new socially-engaged aesthetic, an appropriation which was effected in two ways. First, a negative campaign was waged to undermine the decadent strand of the symbolist movement through an attack on one of its main pillars, the composer Richard Wagner. This anti-Wagnerian sentiment was also directed against the culturally consecrated dominant literary fraction, represented by the Revue des deux mondes and the Revue bleue, which to a lesser degree also embraced the cult of Wagner. Second, a positive tactic was initiated simultaneously to employ the ideas of Nietzsche in a campaign to legitimize a variety of socially-engaged aesthetic positions. These two concurrent developments pinpoint a critical moment in the structural shift of the literary field, and establish the framework against which much

of the later controversy over Nietzsche may be understood.

Between the mid-1880s and the mid-1890s, the French literary field experienced an extensive importation of foreign literature, especially from Russia and Scandinavia but also Italy and Germany. This trend towards "cosmopolitisme" has been identified as a literary strategy designed to combat the naturalist aesthetic, and resulted in 1897 with a marked return to French literature as an expression of national literary distinction. These strategies of importing foreign literature into France began in the 1880s when E. Melchior de Vogüé published several articles in the Revue des deux mondes that would later form the influential study Le Roman russe. Many of the culturally consecrated writers rejected the vulgarity of the school of naturalism currently dominant on the literary field, which they felt made a spectacle of human degradation and which they therefore dismissed as materialistic and pornographic. Rather than pursuing this negative tack, de Vogüé exploited the fact that Russia had been making headlines in the newspapers in order to promote the Russian novel as a counterweight to the naturalist school. Through the vehicle of the Revue des deux mondes de Vogüé achieved a concurrence with the conservative pole in its mission to drive away bad literature, to spread the Christian spirit, and to effect a Franco-Russian entente by rendering likable this country which had suffered from a "universally negative" image. It was not deemed morally healthy that French society should reflect upon the literary mirror of naturalism with its portraits of human misery; instead, the French should contemplate Russian realism, which breathed primitive Christian pity

and rendered bearable the hardships of life, affording them a divine meaning.<sup>21</sup> Within five years, the essential works of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky were translated and published by the publishing houses of Hachette et Perrin and Plon, respectively, thus transforming Russian literature into the latest Parisian fashion. The immense popularity of Tolstoy would endure throughout the fin de siècle, and the Christian mysticism of the Russian was often cited as the antipode of Nietzschean radical individualism in the universe of contemporary literary thought. Dostoyevsky, whose French reputation existed in the shadow of his more popular countryman, would appear later as a specifically literary confirmation of Nietzschean philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

This importation of foreign authors was reproduced by a number of different sectors of the literary field: the naturalist Théâtre Libre of André Antoine and the symbolist Théâtre de l'Oeuvre of Lugné-Poë, despite their marked aesthetic differences, struggled together against the bourgeois theatre of the Boulevard by producing the plays of foreign writers, especially the Scandinavians. From this distinctive strategy arose the cultural fashions for the works of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, August Strindberg and, above all, Henrik Ibsen.<sup>23</sup> In addition, symbolist poets turned toward foreign sources for inspiration, not only to Russians and Scandinavians, but also to Germans like Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, all of whom were invoked in the continuing struggle against naturalism. This literary "cosmopolitisme" was manifested above all within les petites revues which, in an effort to establish a public for themselves, promoted

these foreign literary models.<sup>24</sup> As Maurice Barrès observed in an early defense of this trend, "It is certain that we are going towards a culture which will be more cosmopolitan than national."<sup>25</sup>

The foreign figure who was most important to decadent symbolist literature was Richard Wagner, whose music and writings would elevate him to a cult figure in Paris during the 1880s and 1890s. While the operas of Wagner maintained their popularity throughout the fin de siècle, these did not capture the interest of these writers; in fact, few symbolists possessed any considerable knowledge of his music. As Adolphe Retté noted, paraphrasing Nietzsche: "it is not with music that Wagner had carried away the young people, it is with the idea."<sup>26</sup> Wagnérisme was seen as an extreme idealism which, by advocating aesthetic escape into legends and mythology, provided the primary imagery for decadent literature and art. For a time during the 1880s it was even fashionable to make a pilgrimage to Bayreuth, where Nietzsche himself became acquainted with a number of French intellectuals, including Gabriel Monod, Édouard Schuré, Judith Gautier, and Catulle Mendès.<sup>27</sup> Three of the composer's disciples, Édouard Dujardin, Téodor de Wyzewa, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain formed the Revue wagnérienne in 1885, the chief organ of French Wagnerism. Both Dujardin and Wyzewa were important theoreticians of symbolism, and the latter translated Wagner's essays for the movement's high priest, Mallarmé, who was a great admirer of the composer.<sup>28</sup> From the start links were made between Wagnerism and this literary movement, and even the editor of La Revue wagnérienne, Dujardin, noted in the



late 1880s that Wagner's conception of the soul "had been exactly that which Mallarmé and the symbolists had made of poetry."<sup>29</sup> And in a collective "Hommage à Wagner", the brightest stars of French symbolism, including Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, and René Ghil, professed their faith to the "god Wagner."<sup>30</sup>

Although the Revue wagnérienne collapsed in 1888 due to internal tensions, provoked primarily by its financial supporters' desire to dissociate the journal from the decadents,<sup>31</sup> by 1891 Wagner was still popular in France--the year when Nietzsche made his debut among Parisian intellectuals. André Billy notes that 1891 also marked the apogee of French decadence,<sup>32</sup> after which would ensue the crumbling of the symbolist edifice due to several counter-tendencies within the movement itself, especially the shift towards a social art. The advent of Nietzsche's ideas during this transitional period of the literary field partly accounts for the end to which his thought was wielded--that is, as a weapon against decadence--and at the same time it highlights the transformation of the field itself.

When considering the proliferation of the ideas of Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche in Europe at the fin de siècle, it is important to note the difference between France and other countries. The young intellectuals of Austria and Russia, for example, received the early writings of Nietzsche first and, because these works lauded both Wagner and Schopenhauer, they were easily incorporated into their existent cultural programs. The members of the Pernerstorfer Circle and the Telyn Society in Vienna read Nietzsche's early works shortly after publication in the

1870s, and even drafted a group letter to the philosopher. Even after Nietzsche's celebrated break with Wagner and his denunciation of the composer in his later writings, many of these young Austrians tended to interpret these later works within the framework of his earlier praise of Wagner. While some would of course follow Nietzsche in his rejection of the composer, many would retain the idea of a Schopenhauer-Wagner-Nietzsche triumvirate.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in Russia during "The Silver Age" (1890-1917) the ideas of Nietzsche were often associated with those of Wagner, despite the fact that the polemical Case of Wagner was his first work to be translated into Russian in 1894.<sup>34</sup> Hence, in these countries the Wagner-Nietzsche break was not keenly felt, and was even ignored by those who had favorably received the early writings.

This was not the case in France. Indeed, while the first of Nietzsche's works to be translated was the laudatory "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth", this 1877 authorized translation by the Alsatian Marie Baumgartner attracted little attention outside of a small circle of Swiss Wagnerians,<sup>35</sup> and contained nothing that could displease a member of the Wagner cult. Among French Wagnerians during the 1880s the ideas of Nietzsche played no significant role, and may even have been discouraged by the English Germanophile Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who was a co-founder of La Revue wagnérienne. A fervent disciple of Wagner and later known for his proto-Nazi racial theories, Chamberlain regularly visited Bayreuth and even married the composer's daughter. It is likely that he had met Nietzsche at Bayreuth, and during the 1880s may have even been familiar with his works--

especially with his split with Wagner. Given his attachment to Wagner, his later hatred of Nietzsche, and his influential position within French Wagnerism, it is plausible that Chamberlain would have counseled his colleagues against a serious consideration of Nietzsche's writings. Another possible agent of discouragement may have been Édouard Schuré, a French literary critic and Wagnerian who had met Nietzsche at Bayreuth in 1876. Unlike other Wagnerians who later renounced their youthful faith--such as Édouard Dujardin--Schuré remained indignant about Nietzsche's heresy, and explained the philosopher's insanity and violent philosophy as the necessary result of his break with Wagner.<sup>36</sup> That either Chamberlain or Schuré actually counselled French Wagnerians against studying Nietzsche is of course pure conjecture. However, the fact stands that Nietzsche remained unknown to most Parisians until Téodor de Wyzewa's 1891 article--in the midst of a structural shift of the French literary field away from decadence.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the situation in Russia and Austria, the first translated book by Nietzsche to have a significant impact on French intellectual circles was a venomous diatribe against the composer, Der Fall Wagner. Here the French found not the unmitigated praise of "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth", but a virulent rejection of the composer as a major source of contemporary decadence. In addition, the translated fragments of Nietzsche's texts which appeared thereafter were almost exclusively excerpted from the later writings, such as Also sprach Zarathustra, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Nietzsche contra Wagner, and Der Antichrist, all published after the break with Wagner. The introduction of Nietzsche to the French

therefore effected a rupture with the Wagnerian "church" rather than the continuity found in other countries, a break which would by implication seriously undermine one of the foundations of decadent symbolism as well.<sup>38</sup>

**Antiwagnerism in France:  
Le Banquet Group and the Rise of Social Art**

Erotic precociousness: the curse in particular of French youth, above all in Paris, who emerge into the world from their lycées botched and soiled and never free themselves again from the chain of contemptible inclinations, ironical and disdainful toward themselves--galley slaves with all refinements.

--Nietzsche<sup>39</sup>

A good writer possesses not only his own mind but also the mind of his friends.

--Nietzsche<sup>40</sup>

Two literary events in 1892 hint at the burgeoning mood in the French literary field, and dealt very decisive blows to decadent symbolism and to the Wagner church in France: the inaugural issue of the ephemeral avant-garde journal Le Banquet and the French translation of Der Fall Wagner. These two publications, produced by the same group of young writers, were most clearly responsible for the Nietzsche industry which was manifested within the literary avant-garde during the 1890s, and contributed to the attenuated social concerns of many French writers which anticipated the political divisions of the Dreyfus Affair.

The literary review Le Banquet was formed in 1892 by several graduates of the Lycée Condorcet, the most prestigious of the right-bank schools. The leader of this literary coterie was Daniel Halévy, and grouped around him were a number

of young Jewish intellectuals, including Fernand Gregh, Robert Dreyfus, and Marcel Proust.<sup>41</sup> In addition to this circle from Condorcet were several from the Lycée Henri IV, most notably Henri Barbusse and Léon Blum, the latter having dropped out of the École Normale Supérieure two years earlier. While the journal was dedicated to their teacher and discussion leader, Mallarmé, the direction that the magazine chose seemed at odds with the dominant symbolist program; in fact, Mallarmé and his fellow symbolist Verlaine had inspired the young writers to set out on their own rebellious directions.<sup>42</sup> Robert Dreyfus recalled that Le Banquet, despite the dedication to Mallarmé, had been "founded in reaction against symbolism", and that one of its chief aims was to "renew the pure and rich French tradition by an intelligent fusion of classicism and romanticism." "Enough of Shakespeare," Dreyfus declared in an early article for Le Banquet, "enough of Ibsen, enough of Tolstoy, enough of [Maurice] Maeterlinck. Let us return to France, que diable!"<sup>43</sup> Presumably impressed by Nietzsche's effusive praise of French culture, and above all disillusioned with the large-scale importation of foreign literature, Dreyfus suggested the writings of the German thinker for his "return to France." In the eyes of the symbolists, Fernand Gregh remembered, "we seemed a bit like heretics. The literary public had gone to the great [symbolist] church of the Mercure de France and neglected our little chapel."<sup>44</sup> A statement by René Ghil suggests the anxieties of literary youth in relation to the older leaders of symbolism, who are "'old youths', old by age, young by l'oeuvre."<sup>45</sup> Hence, an attack on the symbolist establishment as an audacious literary debut was one of

the primary aims of these writers, an end for which they effectively used the ideas of Nietzsche.<sup>46</sup> In short, by providing the necessary accoutrement with which to distinguish themselves from more consecrated writers and critics, Nietzschean philosophy functioned as a radical means of entry into the field for many relatively unknown writers.

In the April 1892 issue of Le Banquet, Halévy and Gregh presented an article entitled "Frédéric Nietzsche", a ringing defense of the philosopher against the first French commentators whom they believed had grossly misrepresented and distorted his ideas.<sup>47</sup> The article with which the young men were most angry was "Frédéric Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien", written by the well-known literary critic and German specialist, Téodor de Wyzewa.<sup>48</sup> A Wagnerian, formerly of the avant-garde, Wyzewa had undergone a religious conversion which also became manifested as a literary conversion: throughout the 1890s he would contribute articles to the most culturally dominant literary reviews, especially the Revue des deux mondes, which acted as a primary organ of the Académie Française. Writing in the conservative academic journal La Revue bleue, Wyzewa pointed out that while Nietzsche was one of the best writers of the German language, he was nonetheless a nihilist who delighted only in destruction. "Nothing," Wyzewa wrote, "there has never been anything, there is never anything, and there never will be anything: such is, in one phrase, the philosophy of Nietzsche [sic]."<sup>49</sup> Like Bazarof, the nihilist hero of Turgenev's Pères et enfants, Wyzewa contended, Nietzsche was born without illusions, and with "an imperious

need to destroy, . . . [and] to simultaneously laugh and cry over what he had destroyed." Never "in the entire history of human thought" has there been such a destroyer.<sup>50</sup> Despite this provocative presentation of Nietzsche as a pessimist and a nihilist, Wyzewa did make a very acute prophecy that would be fulfilled shortly after the publication of his article:

In France, no one knows him; but I feel certain that [on] the day when he will be known, his action will be as lively, and his renown as strong as in other countries. For the French youth, unhappy with the gods which had satisfied its elders, aspires towards an unknown god; and no one as much as Nietzsche [sic] has the qualities which are best-suited to fill this office.<sup>51</sup>

This article also marked the first of a series of essays which Wyzewa would devote to Nietzsche over the next several years. In these writings Wyzewa always retain a critical stance toward the ideas of the German and especially toward those young avant-garde writers who were using them, contemptuously described only as "les nietzschéens." As this and many other negative essays on Nietzsche appeared in organs of literary conservatism, the interpretation contained therein would henceforth be associated with that of literary orthodoxy. And, it must be added, Wyzewa's own efforts to maintain this impression were exemplary. Towards the end of his life, he would confide to his daughter that Nietzsche had been the cause of all the ills of the Western world.<sup>52</sup>

Despite his avant-garde past, Wyzewa represented for the young writers of Le Banquet the judgment of the culturally dominant, which only prompted them to frame their response in the shrillest and most combative terms.<sup>53</sup> Halévy and Gregh rejected Wyzewa's characterization of Nietzsche as a pessimist, asserting

rather that "he is the philosopher of confidence, of health, of joy." Several journals--all of them from the literary establishment--had already written about the philosopher, the authors conceded, "but those who have spoken have hardly read him. The most substantial of the articles . . . that of M. Téodor de Wyzewa [sic], should be considered null and void: he has greatly surprised those who have known Nietzsche."<sup>54</sup> What is worse, the authors continued, Wyzewa's erroneous view of Nietzsche had misled other commentators, causing even greater confusion. The music critic Camille Bellaigue's negative essay on Nietzsche,<sup>55</sup> they claimed, was informed only by the interpretation of Wyzewa, "that is to say less than not at all, [but] falsely."<sup>56</sup> These distorters of Nietzsche's message had obscured the optimism at the heart of his doctrine, which was embattled against the decadence prevailing in modern culture:

There is an aesthetic of decadence, born of the decadent moralities, and which it is necessary to combat as such. This aesthetic is that of Wagner. Nietzsche had believed in Wagner so much that he had been a Schopenhauerian; but from the day when his eyes opened to life and he regained confidence before nature, the music of Wagner appeared to him as a public menace.<sup>57</sup>

Wagner represented the "decadent type", and by implication the symbolist world view, which had renounced reality for mystical inner states in both its aesthetic content as well as its social stance. In opposition to this, Halévy and Gregh wrote, Nietzsche preached the affirmation of life "in-itself, to accept life wholly, and to live it as completely, as richly as possible."<sup>58</sup>

That these writers responded so emphatically to Wyzewa's portrait of Nietzsche highlights their subordinate position on the literary field, and also



suggests that the ideas of Nietzsche had been circulating within avant-garde circles before Wyzewa's initial article. In fact, it is possible that the editors of Le Banquet became acquainted with Nietzsche through their contact with the Belgian Société nouvelle, the first francophone periodical to present translations of Nietzsche's writings.<sup>59</sup> Barrès himself had praised this "most interesting" petite revue from Brussels for its commitment to producing the works of international authors, including those of Nietzsche.<sup>60</sup> Robert Dreyfus remembered years later that the first article on Nietzsche in Le Banquet created a sensation in Parisian literary circles, offering "the first glimpses received in France on the poet-philosopher, whose originality immediately seemed so robust and so moving."<sup>61</sup> In Nietzsche an alternative to decadent symbolism was offered, a philosophy of vitality and action rather than impotence and escape. The following month, Dreyfus contributed his own essay about "the mortal enemy of Richard Wagner", where he continued the attack on Wyzewa and stressed the optimism of the German philosopher. "Frédéric Nietzsche has spent his staunch life struggling against nihilism and pessimism," Dreyfus remarked, "What interests us in [him] is the effort he made to withdraw from the first masters of his youth, Wagner and Schopenhauer." In The Twilight of the Idols, one of Nietzsche's last works, Dreyfus found a "grand declaration of war [emphasis in original]" against the old idols of decadence and pessimism, a critique which Dreyfus was able to apply to his own position--it was time to rebel against the established literary and political order. "The error of Mr. de Wyzewa consists in confusing historical pessimism . . . with

philosophical pessimism, which details precisely, according to Nietzsche, the conception of the universe proper to epochs of decadence."<sup>62</sup>

The writers of Le Banquet occupied a doubly subordinate position on the intellectual field: as literary producers they were already dominated by the possessors of economic and political power, and as members of the avant-garde they were also dominated by les grandes revues and the University. Given the reality of their social position, this group of writers entered into relations of competition with both the symbolist present of the avant-garde and the continuing hegemony exercised by the culturally powerful Revue des deux mondes and Revue bleue, where the first three commentators on Nietzsche had published their disapproving essays. Moreover, judging from the largely Jewish editorial board of Le Banquet, one can agree with the scholar Jacques Le Rider that Halévy's insistence on the opposition between Nietzsche and Wagner served to cleanse the philosopher of any suspicion of anti-Semitism while nevertheless stressing his cultural elitism.<sup>63</sup> This symbolic struggle for recognition helps explain the manner in which Nietzsche became appropriated by these writers, and illuminates the strategic ends for which his thought would be used.

Throughout the short life of Le Banquet (less than a year) the journal's staff continued its presentation of the philosophy and biography of Nietzsche, as well as the most up-to-date German commentaries on his work.<sup>64</sup> In fact, the devotion with which Le Banquet conducted its mission to introduce Nietzsche to a French audience was surpassed only by that of Henri Albert and the Mercure de France,

who together published the collected writings of Nietzsche in French. While the literary impact of Le Banquet was slight, it is indicative of a counter-movement in French letters involving a redefinition of the social and political role of the homme de lettres that prefigured the intellectual bifurcation of the Dreyfus Affair. Aligned with the ideas of the conservative Maurice Barrès in a return to traditional French values, if not revanche for the defeat of 1870-71, this tendency toward nationalism and energy would gain momentum as France rushed toward war after 1905. Ironically, many of Nietzsche's ideas would be used to help legitimate such nationalism. In an article about Nietzsche's friend Peter Gast, for example, Dreyfus cited the latter's misgivings about the potential effect of Nietzschean thought in France:

What must one understand by this conception of the Uebermensch? A French romancier, according to [Peter] Gast, would fantasize about making the Overman be born in Alsace, and would have him reconquer Lorraine and Alsace for France. "However much flattery it was for we other Germans, continues Mr. Peter Gast, . . . we always continue to wish that a people as full of spirit as our neighbors to the West will not mislead themselves . . . about one of the most grandiose conceptions of humanity."<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, several writers associated with the Action Française did adopt such an nationalistic interpretation of Nietzsche's thought.<sup>66</sup> After the collapse of Le Banquet in 1893, the avant-garde and engagé journal La Revue blanche absorbed many of the writers into its own ranks, where Halévy and Dreyfus would publish further translations and studies of Nietzsche.<sup>67</sup>

The second attack on Wagner and, by extension on the symbolist world-view, was contemporaneous with Le Banquet and was dealt by two members of

its staff, Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus: the first French translation of Nietzsche's Der Fall Wagner (The Case of Wagner). While this translation was originally published in the Belgian anarchist journal, La Société nouvelle in January 1892, the bound French edition did not appear until later that year.<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, Le Cas Wagner created quite a stir among French intellectuals, for whereas the first French rendition of Nietzsche, as mentioned above, had been the little-noticed essay, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" (1877), this second book gained immediate attention for its condemnation of Wagner as a major source of decadence, and especially of Wagner's Parisian disciples for propagating his degenerate religion. In fact, many cite this work as the first and most devastating critique of Wagner of the time--even Wyzewa called it "the only reasonable product of antiwagnerian literature."<sup>69</sup> "My greatest victory," Nietzsche declared in the opening pages, "was a recovery. Wagner is merely one of my sicknesses."<sup>70</sup> As Schopenhauer had been the philosopher of decadence, Nietzsche wrote, Wagner was its artist. "How closely related Wagner must be to the whole of European decadence to avoid being experienced by them as a decadent. He belongs to it: he is its protagonist, its greatest name.--One raises oneself when raising him to the clouds."<sup>71</sup>

After wrecking on the reef of Schopenhauerian pessimism, Nietzsche explained, Wagner identified the wreck as his goal, and adopted the pessimistic attitude in his operas. "Everything goes wrong, everything perishes, the new world is as bad as the old." Across Europe many have deceived themselves about Wagner, but nowhere as seriously or as alarmingly as in Paris:

That people in Germany should deceive themselves about Wagner does not surprise me. The opposite would surprise me. . . . But that people in Paris, too, deceive themselves about Wagner, though there they are hardly anything anymore except psychologists!<sup>72</sup>

The problems that ultimately concerned Wagner, Nietzsche noted with regret, were only those "which preoccupy the little decadents of Paris. Always five steps from the hospital. All of them entirely modern, entirely metropolitan problems."<sup>73</sup> Nietzsche's understanding of what most Wagnerians tended to represent was uncannily accurate: "Look at these youths--rigid, pale, breathless! These are the Wagnerians: They understand nothing about music--and yet Wagner becomes master over them."<sup>74</sup> As Max Nordau would do several years later, Nietzsche identified Paris with the modern--and with the decadent; but Nietzsche proposed a way out for Wagnerians everywhere. As the composer was perhaps a necessary sickness, Nietzsche ventured, overcoming him would result in a renewed vigor and youthfulness: "To sense that what is harmful is harmful, to be able to forbid oneself something harmful, is a sign of youth and vitality. . . . Sickness itself can be a stimulant to life: only one has to be healthy enough for this stimulant."<sup>75</sup>

Clearly, given Nietzsche's well-known and later exploited love for France, he hoped that a new vitality to end European decadence would take root in Paris. Yet such a cure had to be at the expense of the Wagner cult, Schopenhauerian pessimism, and decadent symbolism as well. The writers of Le Banquet recognized this and, with the hope of provoking a regeneration in French letters, sustained Nietzsche's attack throughout the short life of the journal. That Le Cas Wagner was translated as an assault upon decadence is clearly expressed in Nietzsche's

foreword, which conveyed the same situation of many French writers. "Perhaps no one," Nietzsche wrote, "has been more dangerously plunged into wagnérisme than I; . . . [and] no one has rejoiced more loudly for escaping him."

I am as much as Wagner the Child of the century, that is to say a décadent: with this difference, that I perceived this in myself and assumed a state of defense. . . . [I]t was necessary for me to set out in war against all that had been diseased in me--understood as Wagner, as Schopenhauer, and as all modern 'Humanity'. . . . If I emphasize in this writing that Wagner is a dangerous man, I equally stress that he is indispensable to someone:--to the philosopher.<sup>76</sup>

Much like Nietzsche, then, these young writers would declare a war of sorts against the aesthetic of their elders: Le Cas Wagner and Le Banquet were both expressions of the growing disenchantment with decadence among French writers--early examples of the more general protest which would erupt around 1900.

The reaction of the avant-garde to Le Cas Wagner was predictable and significant. Bernard Lazare of Les Entretiens politiques et littéraires applauded the efforts of Halévy and Dreyfus, who he believed were in the worthwhile process of translating all of Nietzsche's works.<sup>77</sup> Hugues Rebell of L'Ermitage likewise responded with great enthusiasm: "Today in a translation which honors them, first by having attempted it, and then by not betraying the genius of the writer they are presenting, MM. Halévy and Dreyfus give us the 'Case of Wagner.'"<sup>78</sup> While the music critic Alfred Ernst of La Revue blanche registered a critical appraisal of this book, he nevertheless depicted Nietzsche in terms that would be appealing to the avant-garde, identifying the philosopher with Ernest Renan as an example of "artistic, philosophical, and literary egoism, which manifests itself among so many

contemporary minds."<sup>79</sup> Camille Mauclair remembered "the rage which seized us when after the first translations of Nietzsche, which had interested and even impassioned us." Yet, Le Cas Wagner was something different:

This was not the rebellion of the spirit against a doctrine: it was the sting of the offense to an adored creature. Wagner had been for us rather more than a passion, a religion.<sup>80</sup>

After the initial shock of this attack on Wagner, Mauclair went on to espouse wholeheartedly Nietzsche's call for regeneration, if only to apply it to aesthetic individualism.<sup>81</sup> Léon Daudet, a later spokesman for the Action Française, called Le Cas Wagner a masterpiece, and even Charles Maurras, who maintained a critical distance from the ideas of the German, praised this "admirable little book" which, however, he wished had been written by a Frenchman.<sup>82</sup> Adolphe Retté, an early critic of symbolism who had taken the idea of social regeneration far more seriously than Mauclair, explained the conflict in less passionate terms:

The Wagnerians took badly Nietzsche's recantation which, after having defended the musical drama, set himself all at once to attack it with a vivaciousness that was not devoid of logic. Some affirm that he wanted to singularize himself, to draw attention to himself at the expense of the Buddha of Bayreuth. Others declare him prematurely insane.<sup>83</sup>

Despite the misunderstandings and even anger provoked by this little book, the French translation of Der Fall Wagner was indicative of, and contributed to a critique of the tranquil aesthetic of escape which the Wagnerians and many symbolists exercised--and it appeared at a time when many writers were reconsidering the political role of the intellectual. This attraction to the ideas of Nietzsche manifested itself primarily among symbolist writers swept up in the

anarchist wave of the early 1890s, and who as a result were able to apply the ideas of Nietzsche to their new political engagement. Nietzsche was seen by many as a powerful antidote to the vogues of Tolstoy, Ibsen, Schopenhauer and Wagner, all of which were popular during the heyday of symbolism in the 1880s.<sup>84</sup> Even Léon Daudet recalled that Nietzsche had "exhausted a certain number of neo-Buddhists, I mean Tolstoyans and Ibsenians; he has distracted them for several years from [their] non-resistance and from their navels."<sup>85</sup>

The efforts of the writers of Le Banquet and others contributed in mid-1892 to a noticeable Nietzsche vogue in Paris, which accompanied the "culte du moi" call to energy of Maurice Barrès and the growing politicization of the literary field; in fact, for the next decade Barrès and Nietzsche would be closely identified by both the literary establishment and academic critics as part and parcel of the same rebellious literary trend. As Barrès himself observed with some approval, "In three months, Nietzsche [sic], a German philosopher who has not yet been translated, can count on the perfect sympathies of the youth who have acquired him ever since his name was pronounced."<sup>86</sup> Not all commentators were pleased with emergence of Nietzsche in French letters, however. In April 1892, for example, a journalist for Le Figaro, appealing to a general readership, stated that "I consider criminal the philosophers such as Nietzsche [sic], who declare: there is nothing."<sup>87</sup> In May of that year La Jeune Belgique--described as "[a]lways the bastinado of the influential critics of the Boulevard Anspach. Bold are the fat! [Hardi les gras!]"--noted with disgust that "Nietzsche continues to make pens scratch. . . . Sad,



sad!"<sup>88</sup> By June, Octave Tauxier of La Revue jeune noted the existence of "Nietzschisme" in France, to which a surprised reviewer from La Revue blanche responded: "already!"<sup>89</sup> An anonymous editor of La Jeune Belgique, reviewing the first publication of Le Cas Wagner in La Société nouvelle, noted simply the "frantic incoherence" of this "ridiculous pamphlet" to which one could only respond with "the shrugging of shoulders."<sup>90</sup> "Lately, a German author, F. Nietzsche [sic], has fought the fascination of his compatriots," reported one Catholic writer who added erroneously: "no doubt afraid of preaching in the desert, he quickly translated his brochure into French."

Will it have more success among us? We doubt it. He is obscure like all German philosophers, and badly translated, despite his pretensions to speak the language of the boulevards of Paris.<sup>91</sup>

All of these testimonies illustrate the quite rapid circulation of Nietzsche's name in Paris during the early-1890s, which had largely been due to the youthful efforts of the team at Le Banquet.

### **Modes of Social Engagement: Anarchistic Freedom or Authoritarian Constraint**

For many young French writers, as demonstrated above, the thought of Nietzsche proved a useful weapon with which to undermine the symbolists, with their Wagnerian attachments to decadence, as well as the conservative pole of the literary field itself. It will also be shown that many writers adopted the ideas and inflammatory language of Nietzsche in a positive way: to articulate their desire for vital and life-affirming action, exemplified especially in literary anarchist circles and among certain radical conservative elements. The common denominator for these

various groups was the stress on cultural regeneration, for which Nietzsche's thought became an important and perhaps dangerous catalyst. This regeneration must also be viewed reflexively: as the regeneration and self-assertion of the corps of the literati itself along the two strands that would form the bases of Dreyfusism and anti-Dreyfusism.

French writers who immediately espoused certain aspects of Nietzsche's thought tended towards literary anarchism--that is, they advocated the propaganda of the idea of untrammelled individual liberty rather than the actual deed of anti-bourgeois violence. Many symbolists enlisted in the anarchist program, suggesting their turn from pessimistic flights of fantasy to political involvement. One should also not omit the formative role of social origins in the choice of literary anarchism, for very few hailed from the solid middle classes which bore the brunt of their attacks.<sup>82</sup> That the "liberty" these writers most often advocated was pure artistic freedom, typically expressed only on paper, does not necessarily undermine the cited intellectual shift toward rejuvenation: whatever their motivations were, the call for regeneration was still a clear attempt to escape decadence, even if these issues and final goals were themselves aestheticized. "We are not anarchists in the sense of Émile Henry," noted Louis Lormel in the review L'Art littéraire. "Our anarchism is entirely aristocratic. . . . In this sense, Napoleon is an admirable prototype: he submitted Europe to his ego."<sup>83</sup> Literary anarchism may be understood in the social terms of intellectual life: in addition to the advocacy of the subject of anarchism within the content of such writings, the very existence of such writings

effected a form of disorder on the literary field, disrupting the cultural hierarchy that conferred upon les grandes revues and the universitaires a significant degree of cultural legitimacy. That is, these young writers sought to subvert the principles of vision and division of the literary field that had relegated them to the subordinate fraction of the literary world, an attempted subversion that was tantamount to anarchy in French letters. The epithet "anarchie intellectuelle," which often functioned to classify both Nietzsche and his avant-garde supporters at the turn of the century, may be understood as the defensive posture of the dominant pole of cultural production when threatened with symbolic disruptions on the intellectual field as well as more concrete disturbances within bourgeois society.

Several literary anarchists during the 1890s imbibed the philosophy of Nietzsche. The anarchist writer Laurent Tailhade, infamous for his nonchalance about the victims of anarchist violence "as long as the gesture is beautiful," is said to have been a Nietzschean. Camille Mauclair considered himself to be both a Nietzschean and an anarchist, even though his political commitment to concrete social causes has been questioned.<sup>94</sup> The young socialist Léon Blum, associated with both Le Banquet and La Revue blanche, noted in his review of a recently translated book by Max Stirner that: "[this book] will attract, for another reason, more powerful still, the curiosity of the French public: that it exercised a palpable influence on the thought of Frédéric Nietzsche."<sup>95</sup>

Certainly Stirner never had the wonderful gifts of lyrical creation, the continued rejuvenation of images, the prodigious psychological penetration of Nietzsche. . . . But one will find there . . . some fundamental ideas, some common formulas of Nietzsche. Stirner,

who was his precursor, was also his maître. That's a lot.<sup>96</sup>

Blum correctly noted the inherent connection perceived between the ideas of Nietzsche and those of Stirner, an association which perhaps owed as much to the cultural union of both names in avant-garde discourse as to the actual similarities between the ideas of the thinkers. Even the literary anarchist Jean Grave, while certainly not a great admirer of the philosopher, early in the 1890s drew parallels between Nietzsche's ideas and those of anarchism. This comparison, however, he would grow to regret--in years to come so many anarchists associated themselves with Nietzschean individualism that Grave was obliged to issue this statement, which he reiterated in several later texts:

Without a doubt, well before the bourgeois littérateurs had discovered Nietzsche and Stirner, several anarchists had found that the 'Individual' had only to consider his own 'Ego', his own comfort, [and] his own development.<sup>97</sup>

Grave questioned the commitment of those writers who, because they could "recite by heart some passages of Nietzsche or Stirner,"<sup>98</sup> fashionably called themselves anarchists. The persistence and tenor of Grave's remarks suggest the extent of the penetration of the ideas of Nietzsche among literary anarchists; yet it also demonstrates the specifically literary struggle that the espousal of Nietzsche implied--hence the lack of enthusiasm expressed by more committed anarchists such as Grave and Retté.

Few writers in the 1890s, except in rare instances, wrote extensively on the role of Nietzsche in anarchism; yet the association of his ideas with the movement was made clear by both disapproving observers from the dominant fraction.

Central to the formation of a cultural reputation are the associations made with other figures who, when linked together in the intellectual imagination, form a cultural constellation through which one rarely appreciates one component in isolation of the others. An important characteristic of such constellations is their variability, and in throughout the turn of the century Nietzsche would appear in several of these configurations as his thought became pressed into the service of new intellectual agendas. During the 1890s the kinship cited between Nietzsche and such anarchists as Bakunin, and above all Max Stirner greatly contributed to the public image of the philosopher as an anarchist. This insertion of Nietzsche into such pre-existing intellectual constellations would no doubt improve his reputation among the avant-garde while nevertheless providing the literary establishment with a rationale for his exclusion--which was the same rationale for denouncing the rebellious young writers as well.

Jean de Néthy was one of those exceptional writers who early in 1892 declared the philosophy of Nietzsche to be an "aristocratic anarchism." Only after his recovery from Wagner and Schopenhauer, Néthy explained, did the philosopher's real work "through which he dreamed of reforming society" truly begin.<sup>89</sup> It is significant of the shift away from decadent detachment in French letters that Néthy and writers like him stressed the potential for social change within Nietzsche's work. While Wyzewa did well by introducing Nietzsche to a broader French public, Néthy wrote, he made the mistake of affiliating his work with "the current pessimistic and nihilistic philosophy, which Nietzsche held in

horror."<sup>100</sup> Present society is in a state of "general decadence," and the work of Nietzsche is "in cruel disharmony with these present tendencies."<sup>101</sup> Rather, he teaches "the supreme instinct of life, of action, and repressed power," and calls for a new aristocracy which will counter the levelling tendencies of socialism.<sup>102</sup> This return to regeneration, it must be noted, also implied a new patriotism, as is contained in the passage from Also sprach Zarathustra that Néthy chose to reproduce:

Oh my brothers, do not look behind you any more, but only forward!  
Love the country of your children: this love will be your noble future!  
and through your children you will pardon yourselves for having been  
the sons of your fathers!<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps indicative of Néthy's subtle nationalist agenda is the omission of this line from the quotation: "Exiles shall you be from all father- and fore-father lands!"<sup>104</sup>

The role of Nietzsche's ideas among literary anarchists was stressed by many writers--especially his opponents--even though few actual anarchists elaborated on this association. Representatives of the literary establishment tended to associate Nietzsche exclusively with anarchism, thus reproducing a literary perception that would not shift until well after the turn of the century. In 1893 Jean Thorel noted in La Revue bleue that Nietzsche was, along with Bakunin and Stirner, one of the "fathers of anarchism," an intellectual progenitor of the "explosions, searches, arrests, trials, [and] condemnations" of 1892.<sup>105</sup> According to Henry Bérenger, one could find "under the influence of Ibsen and Nietzsche the revolutionary claim of Anarchy."<sup>106</sup> Reflecting upon the anarchist period of the early 1890s a Belgian literature professor predicted that "history will later say that

at the moment when the books of Friedrich Nietzsche were distributed, an entire generation of fanatics took revenge on social inequalities through crime and attempted murders [les attentats] by dynamite."<sup>107</sup> This association of Nietzsche with anarchism provided an opportunity for disapproving members of the dominant literary pole to strike back at the disruptive young literature: the very fact that few committed anarchists drew explicitly upon the philosopher suggests the social considerations behind such attacks, which emerge as motivated less by a need to defend society as a whole than as the need to conserve the principles of hierarchy that assured the dominant writers of their dominance. In short, the rebellious writers of les petites revues simultaneously threatened to subvert the very values of the literary field while they applauded the more tangible acts of social disruption committed by propagandists of the deed, unleashing a type of symbolic warfare deemed unacceptable by representatives of order in the French government as well as in the field of cultural production.

Several young conservative writers also perceived in Nietzsche an inspiration for future action while preserving the general avant-garde emphasis on the right of the intelligentsia to comment on social and political affairs. Considering the most threatening "evils" of modern society to be pessimism and socialism, they found in the German an effective remedy for both.<sup>108</sup> Two notable examples are Henri Mazel and Hugues Rebell, both associated with the burgeoning neo-classical revival and the avant-garde journal L'Ermitage.<sup>109</sup> Mazel, the journal's editor until 1895, noted the decadence of French society, and the cure which he believed

Nietzsche could provide:

If philosophical as well as organic products contain an active principle, Nietzsche could be one of the most powerful agents of social therapy, at once terrible and beneficial. Our time needs it, and in energetic doses.<sup>110</sup>

Parliamentary socialism was attacked by many in France, mostly because its emphasis on equality and its rejection of revolutionary violence was seen as a celebration of mediocrity and laziness. "We are all cowards," Mazel remarked; on the contrary humanity should be "like nature, pitiless to the weak." Yet this "hideous socialism" is what provoked such humanitarian weakness, and what Nietzsche fought most passionately against.<sup>111</sup> "We are cowards, rascally and spiteful," Mazel asserted, "the fine meal for Nietzschean crocodiles!"<sup>112</sup> The society of which Nietzsche dreamed, Mazel claimed, "will be the most unstable of all, and destined, like a fire, to flame up and to disappear."<sup>113</sup> And yet for Mazel this instability and ephemerality was a most desirable condition, filled with the heroism and action which had been lost to modern people raised on the democratic ideal. It is necessary to establish, Mazel noted elsewhere, an aristocracy of artists and writers who, through a "overhumanity of the soul," would regenerate contemporary society: to "avenge the great aristocratic cause from the impure outrage of the dirty bourgeois of 1789 and the atrocious butchers of 1793", to become more than men, indeed "overmen."<sup>114</sup>

Hugues Rebell, a former symbolist who became a member of Jean Moréas' École romane, expressed a similar disgust with contemporary society, but posited a more radical solution. As a critic of symbolism and the anarchistic vogue Rebell



advocated a social philosophy of constraint which might facilitate an orderly society where the weak and common are subordinated to a strong aristocracy, composed primarily of artists and writers. In fact, one scholar has argued that the early enthusiasm of Rebell for Nietzsche played an important role in the intellectual formation of the royalist Charles Maurras, who had been friends with Rebell throughout the 1890s. "Frédéric Nietzsche," Rebell wrote in early 1893, "is truly the man necessary for our directionless and unprincipled society, which has lost its good sense. He has everything with which to conquer young spirits--the disarming jestery and the magnificent inspiration which seduces and transports."<sup>115</sup> Though a conservative, Rebell participated in the shift of the avant-garde towards social engagement. In one case he highlighted the subordinate status of the avant-garde within the larger society and the need for a cultural elite: "Rejected by the government, equally despised by the bourgeoisie and by the populace, les intellectuels have only to wait for the greeting of the aristocracy."<sup>116</sup> These young artists and writers, Rebell explained elsewhere, hitherto isolated in the ghettos of the unconsecrated avant-garde, had to assert their aesthetic boldly in order to reach a wider audience: "To the art which, in our epoch, is unrealizable, we are going to level out the paths, we want to create a public for ourselves."<sup>117</sup> In short, the ideas of Nietzsche would serve as an impetus for a transvaluation of the established hierarchy of the literary field. "We must become revolutionaries--revolutionaries, it is true, of a new genre," Rebell declared: young writers must become restorers rather than destroyers of true culture.

Rebell, who had been a symbolist in the 1880s, attacked the decadence of his contemporaries in 1893, and started to articulate the regenerative rhetoric which flourished in the 1890s. What Rebell also demonstrated was a marked enthusiasm for Nietzsche, whose work he translated for L'Ermitage and about whom he wrote several essays.<sup>118</sup> He even prefaced one translation with his belief in the usefulness of Nietzsche's ideas for "this époque of equality and base socialism."<sup>119</sup> Like many writers of his generation, Rebell moved towards nationalism during the 1890s, which only strengthened his resolve for the regeneration of France through means of constraint. In addition, while Rebell had been clearly enamored with Nietzsche during the 1890s, by 1905 he fully renounced his youthful enthusiasm as he moved even closer to the monarchism of Charles Maurras.<sup>120</sup>

By 1895 even the republican Revue de Paris had to admit the Nietzsche vogue among French youths. The philosopher appeals to a wide variety of people, André Hallays noted, all of whom are "a youth disheartened with democracy."<sup>121</sup> Even beyond the limited sphere of avant-garde literature, more people were becoming acquainted with the ideas of the German. As a Paris correspondent in 1895, for example, Theodor Herzl wrote of a conversation with the politician Leo Franckel, who responded to Herzl's critical remarks on democracy by asking, "So you are a disciple of Nietzsche?"<sup>122</sup> That same year a Mercure de France survey of intellectuals regarding the influence of German culture in French letters, notable writers such as Paul Adam, Maurice Barrès, Bernard Lazare, and Téodor de

Wyzewa cited the influence of Nietzsche. When Jacques Morland resurrected the enquête in 1902, the number of writers attesting to Nietzsche's influence increased dramatically, as it did in a subsequent survey in 1905.<sup>123</sup>

The writer Louis Reynaud remembered that "it is above all in the symbolist and decadent chapels that Nietzsche recruits his admirers."<sup>124</sup> Such a recruitment may also be considered a conversion. The scholar Guy Michaud notes that the language of Nietzsche, "prophetic and sibylline, had been a revelation for the symbolists", and had prompted many to enroll in a new school of thought: "A school of energy and power, a school of will, a school of creative joy: this had been the effect of what became the work of Nietzsche in France."<sup>125</sup> Despite the vitalistic rhetoric of the avant-garde during the 1890s, we see that this new turn towards energy was an expression of the audacity of a dominated fraction of the literary field striving to maintain its autonomy vis-à-vis the dominant pole.

## Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols in The Portable Nietzsche Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 529.

2. For a modest estimate of the population of those hommes de lettres, savants, and publicists who lived exclusively from their pens, cf. Christophe Charle, "Naissance des intellectuels contemporains (1860-1898)" in Jacques Le Goff and Béla Köpeczi, eds., Intellectuels français, intellectuels hongrois, XIIIe-XIXe siècles (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1985), 178. Some scholars, notably Madeleine Rebérioux, have suggested that as many as 30,000 intellectuals existed in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair, and even Charle admits that his original estimate could be tripled depending upon how one defines intellectual activity at the time. Cf. Jean-François Sirinelli, Intellectuels et passions françaises: manifestes et pétitions au XX siècle (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 27.

3. Christophe Charle, Naissance des "intellectuels," 1880-1900 (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 99-100.

4. Claude Digeon, La Crise allemande de la pensée française (1870-1914) (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), 384-386.

5. Eugen Weber, France, Fin de Siècle (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 11, 107, 110-114.

6. Symbolism as a literary movement was officially inaugurated with Jean Moréas' symbolist manifesto, which appeared in the September 18, 1886 issue of Le Figaro. Cf. Bonner Mitchell, Les Manifestes littéraires de la belle époque, 1886-1914 (Paris: Seghers, 1966), 23-32; Jean Pierrot, The Decadent Imagination, 1880-1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 239-240; Raymond Rudorff, Belle Époque: Paris in the Nineties (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), 119-121.

7. Pierre Bourdieu, "Champ de pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe" Scolies 1971 (1), 18, 21-22.

8. Cf. Jules Huret, Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire (Paris: Charpentier, 1891).

9. Maurice Barrès, contribution to Huret, 17.

10. Remy de Gourmont, contribution to Huret, 134-135.

11. Remy Ponton, "Le Champ littéraire en France, 1865-1905," École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1977, cited in Richard D. Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 193.

12. Adrien Remacle, contribution to Huret, 105.
13. Jean Moréas, contribution to Huret, 74.
14. Jean Moréas, "Manifeste roman" in Mitchell, 47.
15. Ibid.
16. René Ghil, contribution to Huret, 113.
17. Charle, Naissance, 100-103. Writers became quite conscious of this shift in the role of intellectuals, and in 1891 La Plume presented a study by André Veidaux entitled "De l'évolution de la philosophie et des lettres vers le socialisme" La Plume 1 mai 1891 (2), 140-143.
18. Guy Michaud, Message poétique du symbolisme (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1947), 365-367; Francis Viélé-Griffin, "La poétique nouvelle" Mercur de France octobre 1895 (15), 1.
19. Anna Boschetti, "Légitimité littéraire et stratégies éditoriales" in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds., Histoire de l'édition française: le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 485.
20. Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, 704.
21. Christophe Charle, "Champ littéraire français et importations étrangères: de la vogue du roman russe à l'émergence d'un nationalisme littéraire (1886-1902)" in Philologiques III M. Espagne and M. Werner, eds., (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, forthcoming); Paul Delsemme, Téodor de Wyzewa et le cosmopolitisme littéraire en France à l'époque du Symbolisme (Bruxelles: Presses universitaires de Bruxelles, 1967), I: 207.
22. Élisabeth Parinet asserts that this vogue for the Russian novel did not represent a real opening of the French public to foreign authors, but rather a fascination with mysticism and utopianism as an escape from naturalism. Cf. Parinet, "L'édition littéraire, 1890-1914" in Histoire de l'édition française, IV: 156.
23. Charle, "Champ littéraire français."
24. Delsemme, 204-205.
25. Maurice Barrès, "La Querelle des nationalistes et des cosmopolites" Le Figaro 4 juillet 1892, 1.
26. Adolphe Retté, "Sur Nietzsche" La Plume 1 septembre 1898 (9), 517; see also Frédéric Nietzsche [sic], "Le Cas Wagner," Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus,

trans. La Société nouvelle janvier-février 1892 (15), 136; and André Coeuroy, Wagner et l'esprit romantique (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), 251-252.

27. Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (Paris: Alcan, 1929), 2-3. Catulle Mendès, a Parnassian poet, received in early-1889 the "Dionysian Dithyrambs" from the then-mad Nietzsche.

28. Stéphane Mallarmé, "Richard Wagner: rêverie d'un poète français" La Revue wagnérienne 8 août 1885 (1), 195-200; Henri de Régnier, De mon temps. . . (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933), 108; Gerald D. Turbow, "Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France" in David C. Large and William Weber, eds., Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 160-161; Elga Liverman Duval, Téodor de Wyzewa: Critic Without A Country (Paris: Minard, 1961), 28-29; André Billy, L'Époque 1900 (Paris: Tallandier, 1951), 93; Eugenia W. Herbert, The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium, 1885-1898 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 78-79.

29. Édouard Dujardin, quoted in Billy, 92.

30. Stéphane Mallarmé, et al. "Hommage à Wagner" La Revue wagnérienne 8 janvier 1886 (1), 333-342.

31. Geoffrey C. Field, Evangelist of Race: The Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 67; Édouard Dujardin, "La Revue Wagnérienne" La Revue musicale 1 octobre 1923, 157.

32. Billy, 104.

33. William J. McGrath, Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 2, 54, 60, 69-70, and 89.

34. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, "Wagner and Wagnerian Ideas in Russia" in Large and Weber, eds., Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics, 198-199, 202, and 204; Rosenthal, Nietzsche in Russia (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 30-31; Richard D. Davies, "Nietzsche in Russia, 1892-1919: A Chronological Checklist" in Rosenthal, Nietzsche in Russia, 357.

35. Bianquis, 4; Nietzsche, Richard Wagner à Bayreuth Marie Baumgartner, trans. (Schloss-Chernitz: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1877). Actually, the very first mention of Nietzsche in the French periodical press was by an anonymous author who, in 1874, submitted a notice about one of Nietzsche's books to La Revue Critique. Cf. Anonymous, "Unzeltgemasse Betrachtungen von. D. Friedrich Nietzsche" Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature 26 septembre 1874 (26), 206.

36. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau cites a letter from Édouard Schuré to Wagner of 1881 where the former describes Nietzsche's new attitude as "heart-breaking nihilism." Fischer-Dieskau, Wagner and Nietzsche (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 175; Cf. Édouard Schuré, "L'Individualisme et l'anarchie en littérature: Frédéric Nietzsche et sa philosophie" Revue des deux mondes 15 août 1895 (130), 782-784; for a later attack on Nietzsche see Schuré, "Nietzsche en France et la psychologie de l'athée" La Revue bleue 8 septembre 1900 (14), 289-295; Eric Hollingsworth Deudon, Nietzsche en France: L'Antichristianisme et la critique (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 45-49.

37. There were, however, several French writers who were familiar with Nietzsche and his writings before 1891. For example, the writer Alfred Jarry claimed that his lycée professor at Rennes, Benjamin Bourdon, taught the ideas of Nietzsche as early as 1889. In addition, Hyppolite Taine and the writer Jean Bourdeau both corresponded with Nietzsche in 1888 concerning possible French translations of his works. Bourdeau, who had already translated selections from Schopenhauer's work, informed Nietzsche that his friend Gabriel Monod had read and recommended Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Finally, shortly before his collapse in Turin, Nietzsche wrote two apparently unsolicited letters to the Parnassian poet Catulle Mendès, neither of which were answered. Cf. Henri Béhar, Les cultures de Jarry (Paris: PUF, 1988), 82, 197; Nietzsche Briefwechsel (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), III(5): 511, 532-536, 556, 570-571; III(6): 386-387, 403, 418-419.

38. Nietzsche's reception in England is also worth mentioning, for here as in France the split with Wagner proved decisive for the philosopher's future notoriety. Cf. David S. Thatcher, Nietzsche in England, 1890-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 178-180.

39. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, 49.

40. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human, 180.

41. The small editorial office of Le Banquet was located in the entresol of the Librairie Rouquette, 71 passage Choiseul, Paris.

42. Alain Silvera, Daniel Halévy and His Times (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 41-43, 57. Neither Léon Blum nor Marcel Proust contributed essays on Nietzsche to Le Banquet, though Blum later commented on the philosopher in his critical essays for La Revue blanche. On Proust and Nietzsche, cf. Duncan Large, "Proust on Nietzsche: The Question of Friendship" The Modern Language Review July 1993 (88), 612-624.

43. Robert Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust (Paris: Grasset, 1926), 106-107.

44. Fernand Gregh, L'Age d'or: souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse (Paris: Grasset, 1947), 153. Gregh would continue his attack on symbolism throughout the 1890s, and would finally proclaim the end of that aesthetic in his "Manifeste de l'humanisme" (published in Le Figaro 12 décembre 1902) where he wrote:

Ce qui a manqué souvent aux parnassiens et aux symbolistes c'est l'humanité. Ils n'ont voulu être que des artistes, et ils furent tels. Ils n'ont pas songé que ce qui nous intéresse dans l'artiste, c'est l'homme, car c'est l'humanité qui est la commune mesure entre lui et nous. . . . Après l'école de la beauté pour la beauté, après l'école de la beauté pour la rêve, il est temps de constituer l'école de la beauté pour la vie.

Cf. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Littérature française: le XXe siècle, 1896-1920 (Paris: Arthaud, 1975), 179.

45. René Ghil, contribution to Huret, 111.

46. Jean-Michel Place and André Vasseur, "Le Banquet" in Bibliographie des revues et journaux littéraires des XIXe et XXe siècles (Paris: Chronique des lettres françaises, 1973), 196-197; Dreyfus, Souvenirs, 106-107.

47. Daniel Halévy and Fernand Gregh, "Frédéric Nietzsche" Le Banquet avril 1892, 33-35.

48. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Frédéric Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien" La Revue bleue 7 novembre 1891 (48), 586-592.

49. Ibid., 592.

50. Ibid., 587, 588.

51. Ibid., 586.

52. Duval, 86n.

53. As André Suarès wrote to Romain Rolland on November 10, 1891: "You have spoken to me about an article of Wyzewa on Fried[rich]. Nietzsche; it should be interesting, since Wyzewa has written it; in regard to Nietzsche, I have read nothing of him--but I have been familiar with him for a long time: one has spoken of him in la revue wagnérienne [sic]; one has cited him, and I know the titles of two or three of his books. . . ." Cf. Romain Rolland, Cahiers Romain Rolland: Cette âme ardente... (Paris: Albin Michel, 1954), 322.

54. Halévy and Gregh, "Frédéric Nietzsche", 33.



55. Camille Bellaigue, "Un problème musical" Revue des deux mondes 1 mars 1892 (62), 221-227.

56. Halévy and Gregh, "Frédéric Nietzsche", 34-35.

57. Ibid., 34.

58. Ibid.

59. La Société nouvelle first published Halévy and Dreyfus' translation of Der Fall Wagner, as well as other translations of and commentaries on Nietzsche's work. Cf. Nietzsche, "Le Cas Wagner" Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, trans. La Société nouvelle janvier-février 1892 (1), 117-147; "Ainsi Parla Zarathustra" W.P., trans. La Société nouvelle avril 1892 (1), 390-401; "Dithyrambes et Dionysos" Georges Mesnil, trans. La Société nouvelle juin 1892 (1): 744-750; "L'Antéchrist" Henri Albert, trans. La Société nouvelle janvier 1895 (7), 87-104; février 1895: 208-222; mars 1895: 390-399; mai 1895: 657-671; and juin 1895: 778-784; Georges Dwelshauvers, "Études sur Friedrich Nietzsche" La Société nouvelle octobre 1892 (2), 470-481.

60. Barrès, 1. See also the response to this statement: "All our thanks to M. Barrès for his précieuse approbation" in "Le Mois" La Société nouvelle 1892 (16), 130.

61. Dreyfus, Souvenirs, 79. This brief article in Le Banquet introduced two translated fragments of Beyond Good and Evil, which were the first of Nietzsche's writings to be published in Paris since 1877. Cf. Frédéric Nietzsche, "Au delà du bien et du mal" Daniel Halévy and Fernand Gregh, trans. Le Banquet avril 1892, 36-40.

62. Robert Dreyfus, "La philosophie du marteau" Le Banquet mai 1892, 65, 67-68, 69.

63. Jacques Le Rider, "France: les premières lecteurs" in "Les Vies de Nietzsche," a special issue of Magazine littéraire avril 1992 (no. 298), 64.

64. F[ernand]. G[regh]., "Varia" Le Banquet juin 1892, 125-128; "Varia" Le Banquet novembre 1892, 191-192.

65. Robert Dreyfus, "Frédéric Nietzsche et Peter Gast" Le Banquet novembre 1892, 163.

66. Cf. Reino Virtanen, "Nietzsche and the Action Française: Nietzsche's Significance for French Rightist Thought" Journal of the History of Ideas April 1950 (11), 191-214.

67. Gregh, L'Age d'or, 188; L.A.N., "Les revues" La Revue blanche avril 1892 (20), 249-250. Frédéric Nietzsche, "Fragments" Daniel Halévy, trans. La Revue blanche août-septembre 1892 (3), 95-100, novembre 1892 (3), 251-260; Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, "Frédéric Nietzsche: étude et fragments" La Revue blanche 1897 (12), 57-68.

68. Frédéric Nietzsche [sic], "Le Cas Wagner" Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, trans., La Société nouvelle janvier-février 1892 (15), 117-147; Le Cas Wagner Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, trans., (Paris: Schulz, 1892).

69. Wyzewa, "Frédéric Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien," 592n; Henri Lichtenberger, "Wagner et l'opinion contemporaine" La Revue musicale 1 octobre 1923, 80.

70. Frédéric Nietzsche [sic], "Le Cas Wagner" Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, trans. La Société nouvelle janvier-février 1892 (15), 118; translations appearing here are from Friedrich Nietzsche, The Case of Wagner in Walter Kaufmann, trans., Basic Writings of Nietzsche (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), 611.

71. "Le Cas Wagner", 126; The Case of Wagner, 620, 621.

72. "Le Cas Wagner", 125, 126; The Case of Wagner, 621.

73. "Le Cas Wagner", 135; The Case of Wagner, 632.

74. "Le Cas Wagner", 131; The Case of Wagner, 628.

75. "Le Cas Wagner", 126; The Case of Wagner, 621.

76. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Avant-propos," Le Cas Wagner (Paris: Schulz, [1892] 1893), 1-3. Many years later Halévy wrote to his friend Jules Romain regarding his conversion experience: "I discovered the abyss lying beneath a life which seemed so blissful . . . and I became aware of the necessity for a radical change. . . . I discovered that this wretched literary ambiance, Wagnerian and Tolstoïan, in which I had been raised was nothing but a snare, a stage-effect destined to be swept away." MS letter, dated October 7, 1947, quoted in Silvera, 72, n. 53.

77. Bernard Lazare, "Les livres" Entretiens politiques et littéraires 23 janvier 1893 (6), 89, 92-93.

78. Hugues Rebell, "Littérature d'actualité: Le Cas Wagner, par Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Ermitage janvier 1893 (6), 67.

79. Alfred Ernst, "Musique" La Revue blanche decembre 1892 (3), 335-336.

80. Camille Mauclair, Servitude et grandeur littéraires (Paris: Ollendorff, 1922), 225. The translations cited by Mauclair were presumably those which appeared in Le Banquet and La Société nouvelle in 1892.

81. Herbert, 142-143.

82. Léon Daudet, Souvenirs: des milieux littéraires, politiques, artistiques et médicaux (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1920), 425; Charles Maurras quoted in Victor Nguyen, Aux origines de l'Action française: intelligence et politique à l'aube du XXe siècle (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 702.

83. Adolphe Retté, "Sur Nietzsche" La Plume 1 septembre 1898 (9), 517.

84. Sonn, 219; Pierrot, The Decadent Imagination, 240, 253-253; see also Adolphe Retté, Le symbolisme: anecdotes et souvenirs (Paris: Slatkine Reprints, 1983 [1903]), 237.

85. Daudet, 426.

86. Barrès, 1.

87. Crayon d'Or, "Pour les femmes" Le Figaro 16 avril 1892, 2.

88. "Memento" La Jeune Belgique mai 1892 (11), 227. The statement describing this review comes from Bernard l'Ermite, "Varété: A travers les revues" L'Ermitage janvier 1892 (4), 64. In addition, an observer for La Société nouvelle noted incredulously that "La Gazette of Brussels declares that the German philosopher Nietzsche [sic] is absolutely unknown in Belgium!!!!" Cf. "Le mois" La Société nouvelle mars 1892 (1), 375.

89. Cf. N., "Les revues" La Revue Blanche juin 1892 (2), 383; Georges Valbert, "Le Docteur Friedrich Nietzsche et ses griefs contre la société moderne" Revue des deux mondes 1 octobre 1892 (113), 677-689; Jean Bourdeau, "Nouvelles modes en philosophie: Le néo-cynisme aristocratique--Frédéric Nietzsche" Journal des débats 20 avril 1893, 1-2; Louis Stein, "Frédéric Nietzsche: l'homme et l'écrivain" La Revue bleue 9 décembre 1893 (2), 748-751.

90. "Memento" La Jeune Belgique février 1892 (11), 163.

91. E. Soullier, "Richard Wagner et sa musique" Études religieuses mai 1893 (59), 114.

92. Sonn, 193.

93. Louis Lormel, "L'Art et l'anarchisme" L'Art littéraire mars-avril 1894, 34.

94. Shattuck, 20-21; Herbert, 142-143.
95. Léon Blum, "Les livres" La Revue blanche janvier 1900 (21), 74.
96. Ibid.
97. Jean Grave, Quarante ans de propagande anarchiste (Paris: Flammarion, 1973), 385-386.
98. Jean Grave, "Le Syndicalisme dans l'émancipation sociale" La Société nouvelle octobre-novembre 1907 (27), 170.
99. Jean de Néthy, "Nietzsche-Zarathustra" La Revue blanche avril 1892 (2), 207.
100. Ibid., 206.
101. Ibid., 211.
102. Ibid., 210, 211.
103. Nietzsche quoted in Ibid., 211.
104. Nietzsche, "Von alten und neuen Tafeln," Also sprach Zarathustra (München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, n.d.), 157.
105. Jean Thorel, "Les Pères de l'anarchisme: Bakounine, Stirner, Nietzsche" La Revue bleue 15 avril 1893 (51), 449.
106. Henry Bérenger, L'Aristocratie intellectuelle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1895), 55.
107. Hyppolite Fierens-Gevaert, La Tristesse contemporaine (Paris: Baillière, 1899), 178-179.
108. Théophile Droz, "La Revanche de l'individu: Frédéric Nietzsche" La Semaine littéraire 3 novembre 1894, 518.
109. The political sympathies of Henri Mazel and Hugues Rebell are illustrated by their contributions to an 1893 survey of artists and writers regarding the best form of social organization--liberty or constraint. In this survey, Mazel emerged as an advocate of moderate constraint and solidarity, whereas Rebell was characterized as a partisan of extreme constraint, of an "aristocratic tyranny." Cf. "Un référendum artistique et social" L'Ermitage juillet 1893 (7), 13, 17, 22-23.
110. Henri Mazel, "Nietzsche et le présent" L'Ermitage février 1893 (6), 81.

111. Ibid., 84.

112. Ibid., 85.

113. Ibid., 84.

114. Henri Mazel, quoted in Nguyen, 666, 667.

115. Hugues Rebell, "Le Cas Wagner, par Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Ermitage janvier 1893 (6), 67. For a later extremist version of the appropriation of Nietzsche for authoritarianism see: Georges Valois, L'Homme qui vient: philosophie de l'autorité (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1906).

116. Hugues Rebell, quoted in Nguyen, 691-692.

117. Huges Rebell, quoted in Nguyen, 689.

118. Cf. Pierrot, 240; Frédéric Nietzsche, "De l'homme supérieur" Ph. Otten and Hugues Rebell, trans., L'Ermitage avril 1893 (6), 263-271; "De la vertu qui rapetisse" S. Brandeis and Hugues Rebell, trans., L'Ermitage février 1894 (8), 65-70; Hugues Rebell, "Le Cas Wagner, par Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Ermitage janvier 1893 (6), 66-72; "Sur une traduction collective des oeuvres de Nietzsche" Mercure de France janvier 1895 (13), 98-102.

119. Rebell et Otten, "De l'homme supérieure", 263.

120. Georges Le Cardonnell et Charles Vellay, La littérature contemporaine (1905) (Paris: Mercure de France, 1905), 109; Cf. also Charles Maurras, Enquête sur la monarchie (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1900), 145-146; Virtanen, 195-196.

121. André Hallays, "De l'influence des littératures étrangères" Revue de Paris 15 février 1895 (2), 883.

122. Herzl responded: "Not at all. Nietzsche is a madman." Cf. Theodor Herzl, "June 28 [1895]", The Complete Diaries Harry Zohn, trans. (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), I: 191.

123. Cf. Alfred Vallette, "Une enquête Franco-Allemande" Mercure de France avril 1895 (14), 3, 8, 16, 30; Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France novembre 1902 (44), 289-647, 647-695; Le Cardonnell and Vellay, 60, 65, 80, 82, 85-86, 109, 248; Amélie Gayraud, Les jeunes filles d'aujourd'hui (Paris: G. Oudin, 1914), 33, 271.

124. Louis Reynaud, L'Influence allemande en France au XVIIIe et au XIXe siècle (Paris: Hachette, 1922), 281.

125. Guy Michaud, Message poétique du symbolisme (Paris: Nizet, 1947), III: 522.

**CHAPTER TWO:  
THE AVANT-GARDE NIETZSCHE PROJECT:  
SYMBOLIC PROFITS AND LITERARY STRATEGIES**

All the nobler spirits and tastes select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against "the others."

--Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

The striving for distinction is the striving for domination over the next man, though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed.

--Nietzsche<sup>2</sup>

Young French writers in the 1890s, through their own literary reviews, competed to bring the life and philosophy of Nietzsche to the public and for the right to name the legitimate interpretation of his work. This largely avant-garde project was responsible for generating representations of the philosopher which served to enhance the public image of the avant-garde itself, and which would be roundly condemned by the writers of the dominant literary sector. Through their own culturally-consecrated reviews, established literary critics presented their own appraisal of Nietzsche's philosophy, which typically indicated its negative effects on both society and the literary field. The manner in which Nietzsche became appropriated by both groups was therefore dependent upon the social relationships conducted between them.

**The Topography of the Literary Avant-Garde**

The previous chapter described how Nietzsche was championed in 1892 by several young writers associated with the avant-garde review Le Banquet as a means of entering the literary field--a bold debut effected by attacking the

prevailing aesthetic of decadent symbolism and l'art pour l'art thinly disguised as a rejection of Wagner.<sup>3</sup> With the fall of Le Banquet and the absorption of its editorial board by La Revue blanche later that year, the avant-garde assimilation of Nietzsche began full force. A network of agents representing various subordinate positions on the literary field shared in the common project of refuting the dominant interpretation posited by the consecrated journals while they simultaneously competed among themselves for the monopoly of the legitimate avant-garde nomination of the philosopher. In order to present a morphological analysis, I have isolated roughly thirty-five relevant avant-garde writers who, between 1892 and 1902, were involved in some way with the production of a avant-garde representation of Nietzsche.

The symbolic poverty of these largely unrecognized writers is illustrated by the fact that, with few exceptions, most had not published more than one book by 1891, suggesting on one level a correspondence between the amount of literary capital possessed and one's propensity toward Nietzsche. Indeed, while most contributed to Les petites revues these writers were "young" in an artistic rather than in a necessarily biological sense, though at times the two meanings converged. That is, as newcomers to the field of cultural reduction they were less integrated into it than others while they nevertheless sought the same potential profits from the field as their elders.<sup>4</sup> One should notice a marked homogeneity among these writers in both social condition and trajectory. With the notable exception of Remy de Gourmont, most of these writers were almost totally



unknown at the beginning of the decade, and many would remain so shrouded in obscurity that little may be known about them at all.

It would be simplistic to divorce the obvious symbolic poverty of these writers from the very real economic decline in the literary market during the early-1890s. Despite a boom in publishing during the 1880s, the beginning of the following decade featured a 20.2% overall decline in literary production, which forced many writers who could not live by their art alone into the "base" practice of journalism. Yet, the very inaccessibility of the mainstream press to young and unestablished writers helped spawn the numerous petites revues which appeared at a rate of over sixteen per year in France and Belgium, and which defined themselves as "pure" art against the commercial art of their more well-to-do counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Within the literary establishment where cultural and economic capital was high--that is, where writers and critics had founded their reputations by publishing numerous texts or had become consecrated by honorary societies as the Académie Française or institutions like the University--the tendency to reject Nietzsche increased dramatically. As Christophe Charle has demonstrated, this bifurcation of the literary field between the dominant and dominated poles prefigured the more marked division of the field during the Dreyfus Affair when, with some deviations, the former rallied around the army and the Church while the latter clamored for the revision. The morphology of the literary avant-garde reveals very similar features, with most defenders of Nietzsche becoming Dreyfusards while their more established counterparts tended towards anti-Dreyfusism.

This pattern is evident when considering the various subscription lists supporting Émile Zola during the Affair, which featured the names of almost all of Nietzsche's first French admirers: from the Mercure de France, Henri Albert and Alfred Vallette; from Le Banquet and La Revue blanche, Daniel Halévy, Fernand Gregh, Léon Blum, and Henri Lasvignes; from the circle of friends that would form La Nouvelle revue Française, André Gide, Marcel Drouin, Henri Ghéon, Jean Schlumberger, and André Ruyters; and several other writers who had also become enthusiastic about the philosopher, including Laurent Tailhade, Camille Mauclair, and Charles-Louis Philippe.<sup>6</sup> In addition, many of those members of the avant-garde who responded with hostility to Nietzsche, such as Téodor de Wyzewa and Paul Valéry, became anti-Dreyfusards--that is, these do not merely represent deviations of interpretation of Nietzsche, but the rejection of an entire social position that was the condition for such interpretations as well as a host of consequent political positions. This is certainly not to assert that all members of the literary avant-garde were necessarily favorably disposed towards Nietzsche, but that at the time this common subordinate position in the intellectual field was an important condition for just such an enthusiasm--one factor in the production of cultural fashions. Therefore, we see that, at least until around 1900, leftist and centrist devotees of Nietzsche were the rule rather than the exception, a relative uniformity resulting more from the alignments and alliances of the literary field rather than the idiosyncrasies of individual writers. This interpretation would decline after 1902, signifying a shift in both the structure of socialism and in the

reception of Nietzsche by the radical right.<sup>7</sup>

As is apparent from this list of names, Jewish writers had little problem assimilating Nietzsche into their aesthetic or political programs, despite the fact that after 1899 the extreme right would wield the philosophy of Nietzsche as an instrument of anti-Semitism. Compared to the largely Catholic literary establishment, Jewish writers abounded in the avant-garde and, aside from providing a firm basis for Dreyfusism, also constituted an enthusiastic audience for the reception of Nietzsche. A notable exception to this Jewish openness to Nietzsche was the anarchist and staunch enemy of anti-Semitism, Bernard-Lazare. Though on one occasion praising Halévy and Dreyfus's translation of Der Fall Wagner, he observed elsewhere that "This high and pure notion of the value of sacrifice, of man immolating himself for his fellows, giving them his life, is a purely Semitic notion."

Frédéric Nietzsche saw very clearly into that, he supported la force aryenne, he praised it, and recognized that the law of love came from the East: from Semites.<sup>8</sup>

In general, the ideas of Nietzsche were quite favorably received by members of the leftist literary avant-garde, many of whom would become key figures in the Dreyfus Affair. Those writers who could be so classified generally united as Dreyfusards in 1898, which provides an important refutation of the common notion that Nietzsche was read by conservative individuals. The exceptions to this trend--Jules de Gaultier, Pierre Lasserre, Hugues Rebell--represented deviant positions vis-à-vis the field of avant-garde reviews generally, with all three becoming associated with

L'Action Française after 1898.<sup>9</sup>

### **Cosmopolitan Cultural Constellations**

In addition, many writers who proved instrumental to the propagation of Nietzsche's ideas had also been part of a literary trend towards the importation of foreign writers in general. Hence, the efforts of Jean de Néthy, Léonie Bernardini, Georges Art, and Alexandre M. Desrousseaux either to translate the works of Scandinavian, Hungarian, English, and Greek authors, or to present studies of these foreign literatures for the benefit of a French public.<sup>10</sup> Most of those who became enthusiastic with the ideas of Nietzsche were also involved in this receptiveness to foreign influences: as one writer noted, citing the importance of such cross-cultural connections in the formation of cultural fashions, "Dostoyevsky makes us admit Tolstoy, Strindberg convinces us of the genius of Ibsen, Nietzsche renders us indulgers of Maeterlinck."<sup>11</sup> Le Banquet itself, which was the first petite revue to embrace the ideas of the philosopher, had been praised by contemporaries for its commitment to the production of foreign literatures.<sup>12</sup> The writer Henri Lasvignes, who translated fragments of Nietzsche for La Revue blanche, would later translate works by Stirner and Wagner.<sup>13</sup> Léon Blum remembered that "I belonged to the literary generation which welcomed Ibsen in France, which submitted first to his influence immediately anterior to that of Nietzsche, which liked him perhaps without always understanding him exactly, and which finished by imposing itself on him."<sup>14</sup> A writer for the ephemeral journal La Revue jeune also indicated the interconnectedness of these foreign influences and

the energetic benefits they offered to French youths:

Life: it was the moral point of view that first became clear. One came to know Tolstoy and the masters of the Russian novel. The literatures of the North, with Ibsen, Nietzsche, and so many others, brought us a breath of action, of powerful, profound, even violent life, awoke in us a nostalgia for power which artificial stimuli had been unable to give us.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Nietzsche figured alongside Ibsen and Tolstoy as the most popular foreign cultural imports associated with the literary trend towards cosmopolitisme during the 1890s. In the literary imagination, Nietzsche was often viewed as the antipode of Tolstoy, thus permitting many writers to reject the former due to their attachment to the latter. One writer for L'Ermitage rejected Nietzsche in favor of the Russian novelist: "Against Nietzsche I maintain the Charity necessary for grandeur."

[H]is work, despite the reflections of the glorious Christ which enlighten the summits of grandeur, should be reversed and rejected: boastful and murderous grandeur is the mountain of Lucifer, the Jerusalem of the Antichrist. . . . With Tolstoy I agree about Christian pity and the infinity of simple and absolute love. . . .<sup>16</sup>

As the product of the literary establishment's attempt to curb the popularity of naturalism, the vogue for Tolstoy was easily found among conservative readers as well. Indeed, these people could find encouragement in the fact that even their idol detested Nietzsche: "I read Nietzsche to stimulate the bile," Tolstoy wrote in 1901. "It's worth reading him to be horrified by what people admire."<sup>17</sup>

Enthusiasts of Ibsen had a much easier time drawing parallels between Nietzsche and the Norwegian: both were staunch critics of democracy and praised the virtues of the superior and creative individual over the backward and conforming masses. Throughout the early-1890s readers of les petites revues were

reminded of Nietzsche's strong influence among contemporary Scandinavian writers: Ola Hansson, who was translated into French by Jean de Néthy, once asserted that "Nietzsche is the great intellectual hero."<sup>18</sup> Henri Albert explained how the Danish critic Georg Brandes was one of the first to spread the news about the philosopher, and even named Nietzsche the intellectual teacher of August Strindberg.<sup>19</sup> From these repeated associations alone the connection with Ibsen would be rendered understandable. "It is true that, in all contemporary Scandinavian literature, Nietzsche [has] conquered a great influence", noted one writer, who devoted several pages of an essay to comparing and contrasting Ibsen and Nietzsche.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Ibsen himself sympathized with the German, reportedly saying on one occasion that he was "a rare talent who, because of his philosophy, could not be popular in our democratic age."<sup>21</sup> In almost every case the ideas of the German were allied with others to be wielded against particular enemies, indicating the strategic aspects of cultural vogues: "In these times where the socialist danger is growing terribly," posited the writer Saint-Antoine, "one joyfully salutes the saviors from where they come; that is why we must rejoice to see known and loved the great foreign individualists. After Ibsen, Nietzsche: the fashion is towards him at this moment."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the literary avant-garde embarked, among other things, upon the project of making a market for the thought of Nietzsche within the broader market for foreign literature, which implied therefore a market for themselves against the successes of Zola and the naturalists and against the decadent aesthetic of l'art

pour l'art. In the early 1890s, one discerns small circles of writers more or less associated with a particular literary review pursuing competing yet related facets of the avant-garde Nietzsche project. The group formerly associated with Le Banquet, headed by Daniel Halévy, Fernand Gregh, and Robert Dreyfus, transported their project without difficulty to the politically-engaged Revue blanche, where they were joined by Henri Lasvignes, who translated fragments of Nietzsche's texts. The editors revealed the strategic nature of the first translated fragments, which were published as a response to the negative assessment of the establishment: "In our April number, we announced an article on Nietzsche. But since then, circumstances have changed":

[N]umerous articles have made the public aware of the general direction of Nietzsche's thought. This is also without a doubt the most effective response that can be made to those who persist in making of Nietzsche a nihilist and a pessimist.<sup>23</sup>

While the ideas of Nietzsche would never attain the priority at La Revue blanche that they would at the Mercure de France, its editors would nevertheless report on the "violent and naive attacks" on Nietzsche by German writers.<sup>24</sup> Several young contributors to a review called La Conque, especially André Gide, Marcel Drouin, and Henri Ghéon, gradually joined the ranks of L'Ermitage, a less-engaged but nevertheless politically-oriented journal where translations and essays on Nietzsche had been contributed by Henri Mazel, the editor of the review, as well as by Hugues Rebell, Philippe Otten, and S. Brandeis since 1893. Another group of writers--Henri Albert, Jean de Tinan, Remy de Gourmont, Jacques Morland--associated with the more eclectic and less political Mercure de France<sup>25</sup> while,

finally, the efforts of writers at the Belgian anarchist Société nouvelle paralleled these mostly Paris-based projects. The other key avant-garde journal, La Plume, carried the occasional essay on the philosopher, but did not contain a group of writers as committed to the propagation of a Nietzsche vogue as its competitors, while the anarchist Entretiens politiques et littéraires rarely mentioned the philosopher during its brief existence in the early-1890s.

Despite the tendency to identify with a particular review, a significant degree of interaction took place among these writers, resulting in the publication of essays in competing journals, or even the collaboration of various individuals in small side-projects, such as the ephemeral review Le Centaure, which united for a time André Gide, Henri Ghéon, Paul Valéry, and Jean de Tinan with Henri Albert, the editor-in-chief. What is more, through these various projects such writers also interacted socially, where alliances or hostilities in the competition for legitimacy might be reinforced. The shape of the disagreements would often be expressed in purely intellectual terms, which betrayed nevertheless the underlying struggle between literary agents. One circle, composed of Gide, Ghéon and Drouin (whose nom de plume was Michel Arnauld), seemed somewhat at odds with certain other competitors as they pursued their individual essays on Nietzsche.<sup>26</sup> An unfriendly competition was conducted especially with Jacques Morland, who preempted Gide in his desire to publish a memorial article on the philosopher in L'Ermitage in 1901. In addition, a degree of tension was apparent between Gide and Halévy on a number of issues, including that of the latter's handling of Nietzsche.



Despite the union of often contradictory political and aesthetic dispositions under the rubric of the literary avant-garde, certain uniformities of the perception of Nietzsche existed that may be explained by the social condition of these young writers. Avant-garde discourse on Nietzsche stressed the energy that the philosopher offered to contemporary youth, explicitly in the larger society, but tacitly within the literary fraction of les petites revues. Defending "the supreme importance of this virtue, l'énergie," Henri Mazel observed that "Young people are fascinated with certain foreign writers of rigid will, like Ibsen, or ferocious ones like Nietzsche."<sup>27</sup> Through the vigorous rhetoric of the philosopher, normally dominated young writers could feel, for a time, like masters of the field--hence the fascination with the notion of the Overman or of the aristocracy of creative masters. Marcel Drouin wrote that "Yes, I imagine a race of nietzschéens proud to serve. . . . it will test the young men."<sup>28</sup> "Nietzsche is not a food," noted the skeptical Paul Valéry in 1902, "--he is a stimulant."<sup>29</sup>

The rhetoric of the Nietzsche vogue counseled the acceptance of Nietzsche as their spiritual and artistic teacher. "What Schopenhauer was for Nietzsche, towards his twentieth year, Nietzsche can become for us: A marvelous educator."<sup>30</sup> "Nietzsche is the man we have been waiting for," Camille Mauclair declared, "the philosopher par excellence of this fin de siècle weary of methods of materialism and criticism."<sup>31</sup> Henri Albert's translated fragments in the French supplement of Pan also illustrate this tendency to make Nietzsche speak for young literature, especially a fragment he suggestively entitled "The Young Critic."<sup>32</sup> This

need to see in Nietzsche a mirror for their own situation reflecting as well their aspirations most clearly characterized avant-garde discourse on the philosopher before 1900. Moreover, in an effort to depict themselves as an artistic aristocracy at war with the vulgar literary market, these writers gladly embraced Nietzsche's notion of the Overman, as well as the idea of the superior caste of masters continually threatened by the rule of the uncultured and resentful slaves. "Nietzsche despises rhetorical speakers [*les rhéteurs*] and those who listen to them, little people, mediocre men, plebeians," Jacques Morland declared in 1898. "He is, for all, an aristocrat and artist."<sup>33</sup> The integration of Nietzschean language into the poetic enterprise, an exploration of which exceeds the scope of the present study, served specific strategic functions within avant-garde literature.<sup>34</sup>

**The Nietzsche Translation Project:  
A Symbolic and Material Enterprise**

The man engaged in commerce understands how to appraise everything without having made it, and to appraise it according to the needs of the consumer, not according to his own needs; 'who and how many will consume this?' is his question of questions.

--Nietzsche<sup>35</sup>

Whoever thought he had understood something of me, had made up something out of me after his own image--not uncommonly an antithesis to me.

--Nietzsche<sup>36</sup>

The economic crisis of the late-1880s effected a rupture between the classical publishing houses and avant-garde writers: reluctant to take risks with young and untried writers, established publishing houses typically refused the work of the avant-garde, thereby forcing the latter to explore alternative paths. In

addition to the haven offered by les petites revues, to which many young writers contributed essays and reviews, several of these periodicals embarked upon the risky enterprise of forming their own publishing house. In a sense forced by the power of commercial and academic publishers into the position of defending pure art, this forced choice may also be viewed as a strategy of literary distinction. While publishing houses were established at both La Revue blanche, L'Ermitage and La Plume, the most successful example of this refusal of the dominant commercial publisher was by far the Mercure de France. According to Anna Boschetti, the coherence and consistency of the Mercure's refusal to succumb entirely to the demands of the literary market, even at its apogee in 1905, and its jealous defense of aesthetic autonomy represented a profoundly new state of the literary field: it proved the possibility of almost total self-sufficiency and an aesthetic sovereignty of the avant-garde in its resistance to economic dependency on the market.<sup>37</sup>

A central feature of the Nietzsche project involved a debate regarding the requisite qualifications to speak legitimately of the author, an issue of personal and professional distinction about which many in the avant-garde could not agree. This competition notably manifested itself in 1894, when Henri Albert noted that the Mercure de France, which had established its own publishing house that year, was soliciting contributors for a collective translation of Nietzsche's works into French. Noting the "pious cares" of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who "consecrated her entire life to the ideas of her brother" by planning his collected works in German, Albert promised that "France will soon also have her Nietzsche--in translation."<sup>38</sup>

There is evidence suggesting that other more established publishing houses were also interested in translating the works of Nietzsche. In 1896, for example, Henri Albert noted in Le Centaure that Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil and The Genealogy of Morals were scheduled to be published the following year by Calmann-Lévy.<sup>39</sup> For unknown reasons this deal fell through, for although Calmann-Lévy would later publish the studies of Pierre Lasserre and Daniel Halévy on the philosopher, beginning in 1898 the complete works of Nietzsche's would be published exclusively by the Mercure de France.

The final publication of Nietzsche's works at an avant-garde publisher would have a profound effect on the image of the philosopher in the intellectual world. By rejecting the mercenary attitude of the more commercial publishers, especially giants like Fayard and Flammarion, the Société du Mercure de France placed itself in the symbolically lucrative position of becoming the "discoverer" of new talent among the avant-garde. Such had been its status with André Gide, whose early and largely overlooked works were published by the Mercure. It is likely that the final decision to publish the complete works of Nietzsche was one such strategic move. Preserving the thrust of Le Banquet, Albert described this translation project as an all-out war on decadence: "To write the psychology of these sick artists, to return to the genesis of their development, to decompose the morality of their epoch--the principle of decadence--to edify the ideal of force which will cure them, such will be the work of Nietzsche. Among us it will shock from the start our excessive wagnérisme."<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, as the most politically centrist and

cosmopolitan of all les petites revues, the Mercure experienced a crisis of identity during these early years: open to a number of European cultural currents, it vacillated between being an avant-garde laboratory of literature and an observatory of continental culture.<sup>41</sup>

The controlling influence of the avant-garde in the publication of Nietzsche was of central importance to the formation of the public image of the German: located on the fringes of the literary market, what was produced by the avant-garde required time to become acceptable in more conventional areas of the literary field. Indeed, attaining such conventional recognition necessarily diminished the aura of purity upon which avant-garde products depended. In the meantime, of course, Nietzsche would be perceived as part and parcel of this radical sector of French letters, an image that could either ennoble or stigmatize his ideas as well as their adherents according to the positions of various readers on the intellectual field.

Despite the relative similarities in intellectual position among these young writers, the space of avant-garde literature was still fraught with its own internal divisions. Such competition would ensure that the production of an avant-garde representation of Nietzsche would not be an uncontested phenomenon. Hugues Rebell, a fairly well-known symbolist poet who had translated some fragments of Nietzsche for L'Ermitage, vigorously protested this collective project:

A translation is a work of intuition which demands not only care and intelligence, but also a spiritual kinship with the author. . . . But how rare are those who work to penetrate the spirit of a work rather than merely follow the letter!<sup>42</sup>

"My meeting with this grand spirit," Rebell revealed, "marks an epoch of my existence," and in his own translations "I have given him my affection and promised to devote my spare time to a translation and to a study of his work which will be worthy of him."<sup>43</sup> In short, Rebell felt that such a project was too important to be entrusted to "unknowns" who possessed none of the personal qualities of the philosopher. This need to access the innermost qualities of Nietzsche was common for literary discourse on the philosopher, and formed a distinctive strategy among competing agents.

Despite the aristocratic overtones of these remarks Rebell was correctly indicating Henri Albert's own position on the literary field as well as the social composition of the avant-garde as a whole. Albert, who was born Henri-Albert Haug in Alsace in 1869, was certainly a virtual unknown in the general literary field. He published no books during the early 1890s, which might be seen as either the result of, or the reason for his regular collaboration with les petites revues. By devoting himself to criticism rather than literary creation, Albert served most notably as editor of the French supplement to the German magazine Pan as well as German specialist at the Mercure de France. No doubt this latter position--as well as his ties to Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche--helped get him appointed to direct the Nietzsche translation project.

In this capacity as director and official Parisian representative of the Nietzsche-Archiv, Albert had a number of experienced translators of Nietzsche's texts to draw upon from within the avant-garde, including Rebell, Halévy, Dreyfus,

Lasvignes, and Gregh. In addition, it seems that other writers, including Paul Morisse, had produced translations that remained unpublished for some reason or another.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, interest in translating Nietzsche had been widespread among the avant-garde. One scholar has even asserted that Marcel Schwob, whose novel Le Livre de Monelle was considered to be of Nietzschean inspiration, had also produced translations of the philosopher.<sup>45</sup> André Lebey remembered how he and a friend, the writer Jean de Tinan, "considered translating him together." This plan, however, would never come to fruition: "Happily we made the acquaintance of Henri Albert, [who was] much more qualified, and our first essays were ripped to pieces; besides, we both had a poor knowledge of German."<sup>46</sup>

Despite or perhaps because of the presence of some clearly experienced and probably willing writers, Albert would choose to enlist the efforts of three relative strangers to the literary field: one, Georges Art, had previously translated several English texts, but had no apparent predilection for Nietzsche; while the second, Louis Weiscopef, had published no books during this period at all. Thus despite the previous efforts of Art, which might be dismissed by some as merely academic translations, neither of these writers possessed any significant symbolic capital on the literary field; if anything, Art might even be seen as an opportunist operating for a commission rather than from any apparent affinity with Nietzsche. Albert also recruited the socialist deputy and director of the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Alexandre M. Bracke-Desrousseaux, a Hellenist scholar whose previous translations were exclusively from classical antiquity and aimed at a strictly

academic public. Hence, having recruited such a varied staff with little at stake in the struggles of the avant-garde, there would be little question in the end concerning who would really be credited with presenting Nietzsche in French.

This strategy would yield significant benefits, for throughout the pre-War years most commentators on Nietzsche would pay an almost obligatory homage to Henri Albert for his commendable translations. What is more, these translations would by 1905 constitute eight of the ten books published under his name, indicating that whatever reputation Albert had gained for himself was almost entirely due to his translations of Nietzsche.<sup>47</sup> In the realm of literary opinion, then, Albert would exercise for a time a considerable degree of interpretive control over the "official" literary version of Nietzsche that would appear, a veritable monopoly over the legitimate nomination of the philosopher which became recognized by many, prompting the well-known university critic Émile Faguet to call him the "consummate Nietzschean, Nietzschean par excellence, cardinal of the Nietzschean church."<sup>48</sup> This commitment explains Albert's zeal in playing the role of the guardian of Nietzschean orthodoxy, for he clearly had invested a great deal--professionally and affectively--in the future success of the Nietzsche project with hopes of reaping the material and symbolic profits that it promised.

As a young member of the avant-garde, Henri Albert shared with this group the disdain for economic success often associated with the "mercenary" art of the bourgeois literary market; yet his participation in the Nietzsche translation project highlights an inherent contradiction: as a rule a publishing house is always closer



to the commercial pole of literary production than the products it offers.<sup>49</sup> The Société du Mercure de France, therefore, as a new avant-garde publisher necessarily rejected the "anti-economic" economy of the dominated fraction in order to invest its cultural capital in a long-term enterprise that included the translation of the complete works of Nietzsche. Hence the prospect of significant economic and symbolic returns on this initial investment must be counted as a factor in the decision of the Mercure to undertake this ambitious project at such an early date, a commercial project that coexisted with the desire to wield Nietzsche as a champion of social art against both bourgeois art and l'art pour l'art. Evidently this risk paid off, for many of these translations, appearing between 1898 and 1914, went through several editions before the war, helping to produce Nietzsche as both a symbolic and commercial commodity. On the whole, the Mercure emerged from this period of economic uncertainty in a very good financial position, counting 150 titles in its catalogue by 1900 and even rivalling the success of the much larger publishers like Fayard and Flammarion.<sup>50</sup> Yet the economic success of Nietzsche and its other products would always appear at odds with the more ascetic aesthetic of the many writers who consumed such cultural commodities.

Despite a common orientation as dominated members of the literary field, distinctive strategies of competition determined many of the avant-garde interpretations of Nietzsche. After the first few translations appeared after 1898--and, significantly, after the Dreyfus Affair had solidified the intellectual polarities

established for nearly a decade and had coincided with the generation of a more markedly conservative version of Nietzsche--Rebell resumed his attack on Albert and Co., charging them with propagating a "nietzschisme" which only distorted the true message of the philosopher. Because they possessed none of the distinctive personal qualities of the philosopher, and lacked significant prestige in the literary world, they were deemed inherently unfit to pass judgment on his texts. "Most of the translators make their translations as if they were merely typing" without actually conveying the spirit of the words: "It is the character of a writer, his nature, that it is necessary to consider and not his thought."<sup>51</sup> The true men of Nietzsche's race, with whom Rebell obviously identified, "are above all the artists. It is through them that he can influence in an efficacious and noble fashion." With an established avant-garde reputation for creative production, Rebell could draw such divisions between himself and those who falsely presented themselves as creators:

It is certain on the contrary that the influence of Nietzsche will be disastrous in the crowd, [and] it has already begun. By crowd I do not mean the working [class] . . . but this crowd of false men of letters, of professors of chance and denying upstarts who do not belong to this class of honnêtes gens to whom they address such books.<sup>52</sup>

Since Rebell had shifted in 1898 to the anti-Dreyfusard pole, and had moreover associated himself with the neo-classical movement, his remarks take on a new significance: Maurice Barrès, who had also forsaken his avant-garde origins by 1898, blasted the pretensions of the youngest Dreyfusards--the "demi-intellectuels"--who described themselves as "hommes de lettres" without having ever published

a book, thus confirming the thesis of the "intellectual proletariat" and "les déracinés" that had gained currency toward the end of the century.<sup>53</sup> In short, one's attachment to Nietzsche was largely structured by one's position and strategic choices made on the literary field.

Like many avant-garde writers, Rebell stressed that a society governed by a noble class of true artists and writers would be the most ideal social formation-- thus establishing a cultural hierarchy which also served as a social division between the Dreyfusard crowd of "faux hommes de lettres" and the worthy minority who should be the legitimate executors of Nietzschean thought in France as well as the future rulers of society. In addition, Rebell's political conservatism may have prompted him to reject the politics of these translators: Desrousseaux, for one, was a socialist deputy while Albert had made his socialism clear throughout his essays. Moreover, most of Nietzsche's admirers during the 1890s at the very least became Dreyfusards, thus implicating Nietzsche with a faction of intellectuals which had become anathema to Rebell. By applying a rigorous social and political taxonomy to the various qualities of his opponents, Rebell was articulating a tactic typical of aesthetic politics often used to classify undesirables as well as to implicitly and distinctively classify oneself. Indeed an avant-garde writer was not to transgress the boundary between hommes de lettres and the honnêtes gens of the bourgeoisie, a fundamental constraint that constituted a primary structuring principle of the literary field.<sup>54</sup>

Rebell was not the only writer to indicate hierarchies of legitimate

understanding within Nietzsche interpretation. A philosophy critic for La Revue blanche, Léon Bélugou, explained how "[t]he exclusive and excessive preoccupation with the ego leads to delight in it, and we have seen surge some new generations of extremely trifling nietzschéens, jolly contemptors of slave morality. . . . Need one add that Nietzsche has nothing in common with his minuscule disciples?"<sup>55</sup> As the guardian of Nietzsche's literary legacy in France, at times Albert himself had to question the commitment of his readers: "The disciples have come, but have they truly understood Zarathustra the liberator?"<sup>56</sup>

As the recognized literary authority to date on the works of Nietzsche, Henri Albert wrote numerous articles and reviews concerning the philosopher. In addition he served as the guardian of legitimate translation and interpretation, thus establishing himself and the Mercure as the dominant pole of Nietzschean thought within the avant-garde--the inverse of the Revue des deux mondes in the larger literary field, which waged an equally committed counter-attack on the philosopher. Indeed, when Gide thanked Albert in 1898 for finally giving "us our Nietzsche,"<sup>57</sup> it is unclear whether he meant the "Nietzsche" of all the French or of the literary avant-garde in particular. This central position was not entirely uncontested, however, especially since other avant-garde groups--especially the one organized around Gide--competed in the general defense of the philosopher. Nevertheless, Albert executed his role zealously through his numerous reviews at the Mercure, where he often alerted his readers to recent developments in Nietzsche scholarship. Of Dreyfus and Halévy's translation of Le Cas Wagner, Albert noted

simply that "I think I can affirm that the publication of this pamphlet, thus detached from his other works, accorded in no way with the intentions of the author."<sup>58</sup> It was in this authoritative capacity that he also rendered judgment on A Travers l'Oeuvre de Frédéric Nietzsche in 1893, a collection of aphorisms translated by Paul Lauterbach and Ad. Wagnon, two virtual unknowns in France who presented themselves as competitors in the Nietzsche project. As "the most clumsy" attempt to present a translation of his work, Albert declared that the "admirers of Nietzsche will only be able to deplore the massacre that MM. Lauterbach and Wagnon have committed. In a word, the French anthology of the works of Nietzsche remains to be done."<sup>59</sup> By invoking the large number of writers who embraced Nietzsche Albert spoke both to and for the group, acting as a sort of quality control expert in the project itself and effecting a social division not unlike that attempted by Rebell two years later. The only acceptable anthology, he implied, would be facilitated through his own intervention.

As the "cardinal of the Nietzschean church," Albert was obliged to decree the intellectual frontiers of Nietzsche's future fame, which were designed to coincide with the boundaries of the literary avant-garde itself. In this way could Albert demonstrate how much the avant-garde had in common with this German, and why they should indulge in the new cultural product. To the suffering artist locked away in the ghettos of the avant-garde, Nietzsche provided inspiration: "And we have tried to like it, this modern life, more still in its sorrows than in its joys. 'Profound sorrow renders one noble, it separates' (Nietzsche)."<sup>60</sup> In a review of

Ludwig Stein's cautionary articles on the philosopher in Deutsche Rundschau--which Albert scornfully described as "the German Revue des deux mondes"<sup>61</sup>--the critic drew a line between the literary field and the university, blasting the constituents of the latter while celebrating those of the former: Stein's text, he claimed, was "only a spiteful lucubration of a universitaire (oh, very intelligent nevertheless!) against independent artists and seekers, on the point of succeeding, whose only crime is liking too much that which showed them the way."<sup>62</sup> As the avant-garde tended to perceive university professors as mere functionaries of the same state which had tried on several occasions to silence men of letters (i.e. les lois scélérates of 1893 that banned all anarchist literature), a structured perception which would be projected upon even a German academic such as Stein, no intervention by the academy in the discussion was tolerated. "That envious and shabby universitaires come from Switzerland to preach the 'dangers' of Nietzsche, what does it matter to us!"<sup>63</sup> Besides, academic philosophers would have no use for Nietzsche: "His philosophy cannot be condensed into a few lines, for the 'manuels à l'usage des écoles' where future bacheliers will labor."<sup>64</sup> Albert thus spoke for the entire dominated sector of the literary field on this issue, reproducing the esprit de corps of an avant-garde struggling to maintain its own autonomous space in relation to the academy: "despite the silence that some university philosophers have made around Nietzsche, he will keep the important place that he has already conquered on this domain."<sup>65</sup>

Albert also functioned as a rallying point for those writers who consumed

the cultural goods that he was providing. To accomplish this mobilization effectively, Albert had to demonstrate how Nietzsche's thought had proven an affront to both the dominant literary aesthetic as well as the bourgeoisie--two oppositional poles of avant-garde literature. "Everyday, the army of disciples and imitators augments itself," Albert declared in January 1893, "these satellites which gather around the master and nourish themselves with his thought."

Professors and 'philistines' see with terror the intellectual youth flock in crowds to the sources of his teachings, and I know of a certain university town, one of the more 'enlightened ones', whereas of yet his name has penetrated only to excite the horror and dread of the 'honnêtes gens'.<sup>66</sup>

This strategy allowed avant-garde writers, who did not typically write for the general literary market, to identify with the German and his literary fortunes: "the author of Zarathustra remains ignored by the crowd. He has made too many profound wounds on the idols of the middle classes, what he writes revolts too violently against what has for centuries been sanctioned by use, to ever become a popular author."<sup>67</sup> Rather than the pure aesthetic revery of the decadents or the conservative complacency of the dominant journals, Albert depicted the German as an exemplar of l'art social, an "intuitive visionary of the future, Nietzsche the liberator!"<sup>68</sup> The "common people," the "populace," and the "rabble" whom Nietzsche so adamantly detested, Albert explained, are actually the "desperate middle class, the platitudinous bourgeois, well-fed and satisfied."

If he had approached the poor, the weak, the outcasts, the martyrs of labor, the true people, perhaps he would have predicted what abundant force for the future still slept in them.<sup>69</sup>

In short, then, besides serving as guardian of Nietzschean orthodoxy within avant-garde literature, Albert articulated the position of Nietzsche within the corps of the avant-garde by demonstrating how they shared common enemies--the university, the decadent proponents of l'art pour l'art, the dominant literary pole, and the bourgeoisie, all of whom had registered negative appraisals of the philosopher that many symbolists had come to see as one of their own: indeed, the formation of a cultural fashion demanded that one recognize oneself in the beloved object and use it as a distinctive weapon against one's enemies. It was through such tactics that a Nietzsche cult of sorts would begin to form within the literary avant-garde. Indeed, by 1903 Albert could declare with some accuracy that the "influence of Nietzsche on young French literature has already been considerable. It continues to grow every day."<sup>70</sup>

**The Literary Establishment:  
A Divided Cultural Elite**

The pathos of nobility and distance, as aforesaid, the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a "below"--that is the origin of the antithesis "good" and "bad."

--Nietzsche<sup>71</sup>

The attitude of the dominant literary pole toward the ideas of Nietzsche deserves some explanation. On the whole, being the first to cast judgment upon the ideas of Nietzsche, these writers from the university, the Académie Française, and les grandes revues had discouraged the reading of his texts, which its constituents equated with the unruly defiance of the avant-garde. In fact,



throughout this essay it will be made clear that, for many of these culturally dominant writers, Nietzsche became merely the symbol of the avant-garde itself, which explains why so many diatribes against him were conducted in the social and cultural terms of the polarized literary field.

By framing this chapter in terms of the dominant and the dominated in literary life is not to suggest a purely binary reading of the field of cultural production. Indeed, the tension between the avant-garde and the establishment featured a clear middle-ground for writers occupying clearly intermediate positions between the two extremes whose opinions could sway in either direction depending upon circumstances. For example, a number of writers like Édouard Schuré and Téodor de Wyzewa found themselves, during the middle period of their careers, moving from the audacious positions of their youth towards the more lucrative literary establishment. Moreover, if we consider the literary field in terms of the tension between pure and commercial art it becomes clear that at this stage our analysis does not treat an entire sector of literary production. Because Nietzsche was primarily an avant-garde preoccupation during the 1890s, writers whose activities were divided between catering to the exigencies of pure art and the demands of the market (naturalists and psychologists) generally did not write about this latest fashion of young literature. Only after the Nietzsche vogue expanded the general literary market would these writers respond to this apparent encroachment on their terrain.

Despite the antagonism between the dominant and dominated writers in the

sector of pure art, there existed some tension within the literary establishment itself which might be seen as the recurrent tension between the ancients and the moderns. On the one hand, many of the culturally consecrated littérateurs, such as Ferdinand Brunetière, Émile Faguet, Jules Lemaître, René Doumic, Victor Cherbuliez and others who had attained some degree of fame for their work in either literature or the university and who had simultaneously become recognized by the Académie Française, tended to lash out at those avant-garde writers who espoused the thought of Nietzsche. While these names dominated the literary field in cultural prestige, many younger professors of literature emerged who accepted the changes in the university curriculum effected during the 1890s, blows against the classical academic program that most dominant critics rejected.

The existence of these young professors who lacked significant cultural power, and who in many cases constituted the Dreyfusards of the university, may explain their deviant attitude towards Nietzsche. Victor Basch, for example, rejected Nietzsche because his "individualisme" did not conform to the republican social mission of the then emerging "Nouvelle Sorbonne"; and Henri Lichtenberger, a relative unknown during the 1890s, partly earned his reputation due to his extended studies of Nietzsche, and would later be offered an appointment at the Sorbonne. Hence, as dominated constituents of the dominant fraction, one notices deviations that must be explained in light of the power of the literary establishment itself. These deviants need not have necessarily embraced Nietzsche; yet such deviancy did structure the ends for which their particular rejection of him would

lead, and lent a wholly different tone to their discussion that was uncharacteristic of the dominant pole generally. Since they were not necessarily the avowed enemies of the avant-garde (in 1892, indeed, Andler had even written for the radical review Entretiens politiques et littéraires under a pseudonym), their critiques were very different in content and style. Yet while this unspoken non-aggression pact with the literary avant-garde would become transformed into open complicity during the Dreyfus Affair--both groups shared homologously dominated positions on the literary field and rallied together for the revision--this alliance was rarely transported into the realm of Nietzsche interpretation: the more fundamental structural division between science and letters, which formed the basis for the autodefinition of the universitaires and littérateurs respectively, prevented such an outright convergence from occurring but did not preclude occasional and limited agreements.<sup>72</sup>

The attempt by the establishment to check the proliferation of the ideas of Nietzsche was sustained by the continued rejection of the aesthetic of the avant-garde through its network of periodicals. This need to conserve the hierarchy of the field required the consistent and effective utilization of the principal organs of literary orthodoxy, which appeared in two forms: les grandes revues and the conservative newspaper press. The venerable Revue des deux mondes, which functioned as the mouthpiece for the Académie Française, and the academic Revue bleue articulated most clearly this dominant perception. Coupled with these reviews, dominant literary opinion was also conveyed through such influential

newspapers as the Journal des débats, long recognized as a stepping-stone for authors bound for the Académie Française, and Le Temps, whose literary critic Gaston Deschamps proved a consistently staunch enemy of both young literature and Nietzsche. This constellation of conservative literary organs produced a negative discourse on Nietzsche that cannot be dissociated from the correspondingly negative commentary it promulgated on the avant-garde.

The threat posed to the literary establishment by the circulation of Nietzsche's philosophy is aptly illustrated by the large number of essays devoted to the philosopher in the Revue des deux mondes, the flagship of les grandes revues. In fact, this dominant literary review produced nearly as many essays on the philosopher as its avant-garde counterparts, lavishing upon Nietzsche the sort of scorn that both betrayed his growing impact and strengthened the resolve of les petites revues.

Several members of the Académie Française, and those who would soon become members, participated in this counter-discourse on the philosopher; yet for most of these highly consecrated writers Nietzsche represented simply one more ephemeral yet potentially dangerous fascination of the avant-garde, and was typically rejected only in passing.<sup>73</sup> Despising the penchant for literary fashion among that fraction, Revue des deux mondes editor Ferdinand Brunetière mentioned in an 1893 lecture at the Sorbonne that "le philosophe à la mode, it is Frédéric Nietzsche,--the neuropath himself."<sup>74</sup> That Brunetière posited such an opinion was no great surprise for the avant-garde--indeed upon the critic's death,

Remy de Gourmont noted "the aversion he almost always manifested for modern literature."<sup>75</sup> Until his death, Brunetière, "a mind absolutely inept at contemporary art,"<sup>76</sup> consistently drew the fire of the avant-garde as the most visible and outspoken representative of the detested literary establishment.<sup>77</sup> Jules Lemaître noted simply that "Nietzsche reproduced the unhealthy reveries of Renan's Dialogues philosophiques."<sup>78</sup> Victor Cherbuliez wrote that "M. Nietzsche has written for twenty years; some of our young people who know German are beginning to busy themselves with him; I believe they are proposing to translate the most important of his works." This project, nevertheless, was questionable, for "age and maturity have the natural effect of tempering us, of calming us. Youth only believes in its sword."<sup>79</sup>

In many ways, the task of a sustained attack on Nietzsche was left to the lesser guard dogs of the literary establishment, those writers who were striving to attain prominence but had not yet attained the stature of critics like Brunetière. Also writing in La Revue des deux mondes, the former-symbolist and spiritualist writer Édouard Schuré stressed how the "case of Nietzsche is the dominant sickness of the young generations."<sup>80</sup> Five years later in 1900 he clearly stressed the social nature of the Nietzsche vogue, a phenomenon spurred on by rebellious petites revues whose intellectual individualism threatened to upset the established order of the intellectual field. "When, six or seven years ago," Schuré wrote, "Nietzsche began to be known in France through some detached fragments, the young revues wove for him some laurels."

Deliquescents and symbolists, anarchists and libertarians, he conquered with one blow all the malcontents of literature, all the rebels of thought.<sup>81</sup>

As a practitioner of spiritualist symbolism, Schuré had been quite involved with the avant-garde during the past two decades, and had been with Wyzewa a major force behind La Revue wagnérienne. By the turn of the century, however, he had distanced himself from the movement and was clearly moving closer towards the dominant literary pole, thereby adopting its perception of the space of literary production as well as its prejudices--though, surprisingly, not its political position in the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>82</sup> Like his more consecrated contemporaries, Schuré noted that the work of Maurice Barrès had no more of a pacifying effect on contemporary youth than that of Nietzsche: "this other model of our youth who, despite all his talent, has never believed in anything or anyone, not even himself."<sup>83</sup> As the "great intellectual evil of our time," according to Schuré, it was necessary to arrest the flow of Nietzschean thought in France. Since the cultural prestige of les grandes revues depended upon the subordination of literary heretics, to allow this vogue to continue was tantamount to anarchy, which upset the cultural hierarchies that divided the literary world and therefore jeopardized their long-held dominance: "the dominant ideas of Nietzsche lead to complete anarchy in the intellectual domain."<sup>84</sup>

The theme of the malcontent of letters and the individualist pervaded dominant literary discourse on both Nietzsche and the avant-garde, thus underscoring the fundamentally social nature of the debate. Émile Faguet noted

with surprise in 1901 that "without making a fortune, [the young reviews] have a clientele which permits them to subsist."<sup>85</sup> Despite the forum that these reviews offered young writers, such "débutants" posed a threat to the established literary order: "It is at the same time difficult for the half-talent and . . . the mediocrity to remain shrouded in the shadows."<sup>86</sup> Hence, the avant-garde was more likely to engage the dominant pole in the struggle for legitimacy rather than remain in the ghettos of the petites revues, and would employ whatever means necessary to subvert the dominant classification of the field.

In Ecce Homo Nietzsche revealed that "I myself read, if I may say so, only the Journal des Débats."<sup>87</sup> However, this conservative newspaper's literary critic, Jean Bourdeau--with whom Nietzsche had himself corresponded regarding the possibility of a French translation--had few positive words about the former subscriber-turned-corrupter-of-youth. "We have said of this philosophy that it preached revolt and anarchy," declared Jean Bourdeau, "we have compared it to a literary dynamite, to an arsenal of intellectual bombs."<sup>88</sup> Moreover, a fundamental moral danger existed for those who embraced his thought: "Good souls could be worried about this. The philosophy of Nietzsche enjoys a pernicious reputation."

A Privatdozent at the University of Berlin cited to us the example of one of his students, a bashful and blushing young man, full of respect for his teachers, who, after a reading of Nietzsche, changed entirely. Insolent, contemptuous, provocative, one day, during a visit, he undertook to rape a Frau Professorin. He had taken literally the fundamental precept of the master:  
--Nothing is true, all is permitted.<sup>89</sup>

Through this graphic example of the corrupting influence of the philosopher, Bourdeau indicted youth in general, and in particular the young literature of the avant-garde. He did not suggest, however, that contemporary youths had been previously docile only to be led astray by Nietzsche; instead, the struggle between literary generations had preceded the advent of Nietzsche in France. "Contemporary youth, which wishes to 'succeed', at the risk of breaking backs, finds in Nietzsche the perfect expression of its aspirations and dreams."<sup>90</sup> Bourdeau recognized that young writers had employed Nietzsche--both as an explosive doctrine and as a distinctive sign--in an effort to overcome their subordinate position on the field. In short, the emergence of Nietzsche on the French intellectual scene coincided with the structural transformation of the literary field itself, a polarization for which the thought of the German had been effectively appropriated by the avant-garde as a means of self-assertion. By 1902 Bourdeau would be obliged to admit the spreading influence of the philosopher beyond the avant-garde of the 1890s: "There is hardly, at the present hour, a more talked-about [commenté] writer than Frédéric Nietzsche. It is not a question here of a fascination, of an ephemeral fashion. We can speak of a Nietzschean influence, of a Nietzschean movement, and take them seriously."<sup>91</sup>

For Téodor de Wyzewa, the first critic to introduce Nietzsche to the French in 1891, the battle was less an intellectual conflict with the German than a social one against les nietzschéens of the avant-garde, whom he constantly invoked and provoked in his numerous articles. Like Schuré, Wyzewa had been an integral part



of the symbolist avant-garde during the 1880s as well as a major proponent of wagnerism. As the critic René Doumic remembered, after completing his studies in philosophy Wyzewa "threw himself into full literary battle."

He was one of those who pass long, tired [affalés] hours at benches, in the cafés of the Latin Quarter, discuss art and literature, amidst the smoke of pipes and the haze of theories.<sup>92</sup>

Yet towards 1890 he earned the favor of the critic Ferdinand Brunetière, that great "discoverer of men," who opened for Wyzewa the doors of the prestigious Revue des deux mondes and recommended him to Henry Ferrari, who thereafter featured Wyzewa's essays in his journal La Revue bleue. A golden opportunity for a writer who had for years languished in the ghettos of avant-garde journalism, Wyzewa renounced the attachments and attitudes of his literary past to adjust himself to this new position on the field. According to Doumic, this strategic move "decided his career."<sup>93</sup> This access to the established reviews also provided Wyzewa with admittance into the influential republican newspaper Le Temps, where under the guidance of the noted literary critic Gaston Deschamps he contributed several essays over the next quarter century. Indeed, the fundamental shift in Wyzewa's literary outlook coincided with his migration to the dominant pole. Moreover, gaining partial admittance to literary power--that is, achieving a partial consecration--he would naturally look with scorn upon his former subordinate existence, now represented by the rebellious writers of the avant-garde seeking to subvert the hierarchy of the field established by the very pole with which he was now associated and loyally defended. The contempt that the avant-garde heaped

upon Wyzewa may also explain this pugnacious attitude: for many writers it virtually became a convention to malign Wyzewa's presentation of Nietzsche, a formality linked to the collective outrage directed against an aesthetic heretic. Gide, for example, had responded to Wyzewa's initial essay casually: "At least Nietzsche is not a philosopher. Aside from that he can be rather curious seen from a distance."<sup>94</sup> By 1898, however, Gide had become an avid reader of the German, declaring finally that "few studies on Nietzsche betray Nietzsche as much as his."<sup>95</sup> Given the defection of Wyzewa from the avant-garde, one might also understand these words in a different sense: that few writers had betrayed the avant-garde as much as Wyzewa.

Wyzewa's conservative political attitude was also anathema to many writers of the avant-garde. A young Charles Andler, writing under the pseudonym Théodore Randal in Les Entretiens politiques et littéraires, reviewed Wyzewa's study Le Mouvement socialiste en Europe critically: "M. de Wyzewa, art critic and literary critic, believed he had . . . a social function: that of reassuring the bourgeois conscience against the growing anxiety when it sees the progress of socialism."<sup>96</sup> "Of all these writers," Paul Adam mentioned, "M. Th. de Wyzewa, best shows the soul of an erudite old woman."<sup>97</sup> In a protracted war that had been sparked by a number of issues, Wyzewa identified his enemies by name: "In France," he informed his readers, "a young enthusiast, M. Henri Albert, has constituted himself as the interpreter, the faithful apostle of nietzschéisme."<sup>98</sup>

The well-known literary figure Henri Gauthier-Villars--who under the nom de

plume "Willy" published the works of other writers, notably those of his one-time wife Collette--informed the Belgian readership of La Revue générale that in France one had only been able to learn of Nietzsche through the "hasty essays of les revues, from often sympathetic extracts, from nearly always mediocre compilations."<sup>99</sup>

The imaginative Nietzscheans . . . praise willingly an idea before having examined it under all its aspects, before having weighed all the consequences. . . . Mediocre philosophers, those for whom enthusiasm works much quicker than comprehension!<sup>100</sup>

In a move that was typical of dominant literary discourse on Nietzsche, Gauthier-Villars indicated Maurice Barrès as a partisan--albeit an unconscious one--of Nietzsche's theories, and went even further by citing a statement by Henri Mazel, who prized Nietzschean individualism so that it would "gnaw away at the impure sediment of our old souls."<sup>101</sup> Barrès' own shift toward the dominant pole by rejecting Dreyfusism is an interesting phenomenon, especially given how much he had come to represent the avant-garde, a significant number of which were in favor of the revision. Years later the dominant pole would reward Barrès for his conversion by consecrating him at the Académie Française; yet through the Dreyfus crisis, despite the fact that he shared their cause, Barrès was still generally unfavorably associated with Nietzsche and the avant-garde.

### **Literary Scholarship and the New Sorbonne**

The presence of a new generation of university professors generated a shift in the literary field proper, for while the conservative Revue de Paris did not publish commentaries by the rank and file of the literary avant-garde, it did take an interest

in Nietzsche that cannot be described as hostile. In fact, this dominant review, revived in 1894 by the historian Ernest Lavisse and the novelist Marcel Prevost after a long dormancy, published the biographical sketches of Nietzsche written by Daniel Halévy and Henri Lichtenberger, thus betraying an eclectic bent that neighboring reviews did not possess. Indeed, Émile Faguet had explained the unique position of the Revue de Paris in 1899 by classifying it as a grande revue "with a bit more of an inclination toward novelties" as opposed to the Revue des deux mondes, which "remains in general attached to tradition," and the Revue bleue, which "represents well enough the literary opinions of the majority of the University of France."<sup>102</sup> "This review will not be an imitation of the periodicals already existant," quoted Léon Blum with sarcasm. "There is the affirmation we would like to see verified."<sup>103</sup> In addition, Lichtenberger was able, through his own academic position and the prominence of the review itself, to lend a degree of respectability to the study of Nietzsche that would carry weight throughout the literary field, though it did little to change the dominant opinion.

The reception of Nietzsche by younger professors of literature, many of whom were trying to establish the autonomy of their own disciplines, featured a greater degree of diversity than what is found among the old literary guard. The field of literary studies underwent during the 1890s the same transformation of the French university itself, which featured a new emphasis on the social and moral role of professors in producing and reproducing the republican values of science, objectivity, democracy and equality, the very values that the dominant pole tended

to reject because they detracted from the classical French tradition. It even became commonplace to assert, as Fritz Ringer notes, that the study of literature itself must be approached like an objective science. Unlike disciplines like philosophy and sociology, for which the ideas of Nietzsche were anathema, professional literary studies could focus on Nietzsche as a legitimate object without fear of academic reprisal: for those associated with the new French university, relegating Nietzsche to the literary sphere was a mechanism designed to defuse his thought, to emphasize his literary features as the essence of his work, and thus to discourage readers from taking too seriously the "philosophy" of this mere écrivain. An example of a "real" philosopher was to be found in a Kant or a Comte, not in Nietzsche.

As partisans of a scientific study of literature, republican professors defined themselves in opposition to the amateurism of both the avant-garde and the conservative literary establishment. The Germanist Charles Andler, who began his long-term study of Nietzsche during the late-1890s, later compared Henri Albert's translations to those of a first-year German student, a stiff blow to be dealt upon all such amateurs who dared encroach upon the rightful territory of academic professionals. This reproach would be reproduced by Andler's student Geneviève Bianquis in her influential work on Nietzsche en France, where she lamented the fact that a more qualified translator had not rendered the philosopher's writings into French.<sup>104</sup> Such was the tack pursued by Victor Basch, a socialist, Dreyfusard, and staunch defender of the new curriculum, as he described

Nietzsche for the readers of the conservative Grande revue. What constitutes "the savant, the thinker, the philosopher," he wrote, "is objectivity."<sup>105</sup> By employing a specifically scholarly classification and invoking scientific requirements to the case of Nietzsche, Basch denied him access to the modes of intellectual activity consecrated by the university:

For me, Nietzsche has never been a philosopher, a true penseur: Nietzsche has been only a poet, the most powerful, no doubt, the most profound, the most musical of this second half of the century.<sup>106</sup>

Classifying Nietzsche as a poet was designed to discourage readers from taking him seriously, and to distinguish his writings from the more serious and valid research of the universitaires. It is also likely that Basch was responding to the production of an anti-Dreyfusard Nietzsche beginning in 1898, which had been wielded by such writers as Jules de Gaultier and Pierre Lasserre against the republican University. As Charle has demonstrated, the social representation of the savant invoked such exemplars as Renan, Taine, and Pasteur, whose disinterested devotion to science conferred a moral and even political authority during the 1880s that many in the republican Sorbonne around 1900 hoped to approximate.<sup>107</sup> Basch's primary concern in this essay, which was one of a series, was to investigate and hopefully to undermine the current of individualism that many perceived at the turn of the century and diagnosed as a social menace. He therefore devoted this essay to the one "of all modern individualists whose name is the most present to [the readers'] memories . . . Friedrich Nietzsche."<sup>108</sup> To this end he indicated how contemporary psychology, science, history, and sociology

agreed that the isolated individual could play no effective role in producing change. Instead, Nietzsche represented one of many who rejected such conclusions and chose to assert the primacy of the ego--implied here was Barrès once again. Basch's criticism, which contained none of the contempt of a Wyzewa or a Schuré and was less designed to engage literary infidels, promoted the virtues of the Third Republic by representing Nietzsche as fundamentally opposed to its primary institutions: the modern democratic state, socialism, reason and science--and, by implication, Dreyfusism and the modern university.<sup>109</sup> This strategy corresponded, finally, to the social trajectory of Basch, who would later be promoted to the Faculty of letters at the Sorbonne.

Another noted Germanist, Henri Lichtenberger was most responsible for bringing to literary studies of Nietzsche a degree of legitimacy that the numerous essays within les petites revues could never attain, and which the defenders of the dominant order would never accept. It would not be unreasonable to indicate Lichtenberger's close ties with Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and the Nietzsche-Archiv as important elements contributing to his particular interpretation of the philosopher: committed to the project of rendering Nietzsche acceptable in European cultural circles, Lichtenberger executed in more academic terms the specifically literary project of Henri Albert.<sup>110</sup> By so doing he was the first to rescue the writings of the philosopher from the ghettos of les petites revues by translating selected fragments to be published by the prestigious academic press of Félix Alcan in 1899, thus affording the philosopher a much broader--though

perhaps more skeptical--readership than ever before."<sup>11</sup> Though himself a member of the literary establishment, he was like Basch subordinate to the culturally consecrated giants of the Académie and the defenders of the traditional curriculum, bastions of heteronomy from which many young professors desired to attain autonomy. Yet throughout his numerous articles and well-known study La Philosophie de Nietzsche, the first scholarly work on the German to be published in France, Lichtenberger presented a fairly balanced appraisal which never rejected the German in the name of republican principles or traditional literary morality. As Bianquis has indicated, Lichtenberger's study resulted from the public course on Nietzsche that he offered at the Université de Nancy during the mid-1890s.<sup>112</sup> Once again, within the academy one could legitimately study and even admire the works of Nietzsche provided they were viewed as literature rather than philosophy, a perception that was at least partly-structured by the career requirements of those attempting to ascend within the university system. In accordance with this tacit assumption, Lichtenberger published biographical and critical studies on Nietzsche as well as some translated letters, all of which served to temper both the unbridled enthusiasm of the avant-garde and the ad hominem scorn of the dominant pole. For faithfully adhering to the rules of the academic game in his presentation of Nietzsche's thought, and especially in his other scholarship, Lichtenberger was rewarded by being promoted to the Sorbonne in 1909. This apparent detachment, however, did manage to evoke the irritation of Wyzewa, who chastised Lichtenberger for presenting "l'image un peu trop nietzschéenne" of the



philosopher.<sup>113</sup> Notwithstanding, one can therefore hardly dissociate his presentation of Nietzsche from this social trajectory.

As an academic operating within republican institutions, it was imperative that Lichtenberger proceed cautiously in his exposition of Nietzsche. In a 1904 lecture before a group of noted scholars discussing moral philosophy of the nineteenth century, Lichtenberger conceded that the ideas of the philosopher seemed linked to some of the most dangerous intellectual currents of the day:

The brutal arrivisme which pursues success at any price and by all means, the aesthetic dilettantism ready, according to a familiar formula, to sacrifice vague humanities to un beau geste, the aristocratic caste-pride which haughtily denies the mass the right to culture and happiness, literary anarchism and modern "decadence" have been able, in diverse titles, to make use of Nietzsche.<sup>114</sup>

Though certainly no militant Dreyfusard or party socialist like Basch, Lichtenberger was nevertheless a defender of republican educational values and likewise deplored the misuses of the philosopher by aesthetes. "I do not deny the possible legitimacy of many of the attacks directed against Nietzsche," Lichtenberger conceded, "be it from those who think they can bring to humanity a new god, be it from those who make themselves champions of ancient beliefs against his negations."<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, having registered these necessary academic disclaimers--which were designed to secure the acceptance of his audience--Lichtenberger revealed his own perspective on the philosopher:

I do not dispute that it can be in certain respects necessary to combat the ideas of Nietzsche. But I also consider that we can, through an understanding of his philosophy, find the expression of a truly elevated personality, which embodies and summarizes with a rare power some of the most significant traits of the contemporary

soul.<sup>116</sup>

To present an objective account of Nietzsche's philosophy and to eradicate many of the legends which surrounded his name, Lichtenberger chose to address the broadest public possible while simultaneously accumulating academic capital and plotting a middle way between the two extremes of Nietzsche interpretation. Hence, many of his essays appeared in the Revue de Paris, others in the Revue germanique, the Revue hebdomadaire, and Cosmopolis. To be avoided were the avant-garde reviews, where it was unseemly for an academic to publish, and les grandes revues, a gesture which would have associated Lichtenberger too closely with the dominant fraction that despised both Nietzsche and republican approaches to national education. Lichtenberger's moderation in both his opinion of Nietzsche and his choice of publications was not effected without a certain feel for the professional game in which he was engrossed.

Despite the tactful distance Lichtenberger maintained, La Philosophie de Nietzsche elicited the enthusiastic response of the avant-garde. "Here is an excellent little book," Léon Bélugou reported, "well done, well conceived, well written. . . . M. Lichtenberger speaks of Nietzsche with a visible sympathy."<sup>117</sup> At the beginning of 1900, Lichtenberger noted in La Revue encyclopédique Larousse that the "legend" of Nietzsche had indeed shifted during the preceding decade from the strange to the familiar. The reception of the philosopher, he admitted, had been mixed:

Some applauded, not without some obstinate opinion, the most extravagant paradoxes, the most horrific for the honnête bourgeois.

Others--the more numerous--raged against a loud-mouthed ranter who blasphemed against our most sacred beliefs, or shrugged their shoulders and refused pure and simple to take seriously a thinker whom Taine could have appraised very highly and considered as the equal of Carlyle.<sup>118</sup>

The extremes that Lichtenberger cited here reflected the more central position of this particular review on the literary field, situated between les petites revues--those obstinate lovers of extravagant paradox designed to enrage the middle class--and les grandes revues where the guardians of "our most sacred beliefs" waged their bitter counter-offensive against perceived blasphemy. As a republican professor, Lichtenberger had to address this general literary market in order to have the greatest impact in his project of domesticating Nietzsche. What is more, by invoking Taine's praise of Nietzsche Lichtenberger took advantage of the renewed public interest in the positivist savant in order to create a positive press for the German.<sup>119</sup> Hence, Lichtenberger would conduct an ambiguous relationship with the avant-garde, many of which would praise his studies, while others like Jacques Morland criticized them as being excessively superficial.<sup>120</sup>

In conclusion, the struggle for the legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche was waged on the literary field between the dominated avant-garde and the dominant literary establishment, itself split between the dominant critics and the young literature professors, many of whom were bound for the Sorbonne but nevertheless lacked significant cultural power. This tripartite division would determine the levels on which the debate was conducted and the various forms that the arguments would assume. In addition, these lines of fracture explain the distribution of articles

across the field of periodical literature, ranging from the dominated pole of les petites revues to the most consecrated of les grandes revues. The literary establishment also expanded their readership by appealing to periodicals in the intermediate space of the literary field, a maneuver that many avant-garde writers, with their lack of influence, could not effect. Such strategies and social trajectories were therefore central to the struggle over the legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche in French letters.

## Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Vintage, 1974), 381.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, Daybreak R.J. Hollingdale, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 113.
3. Christopher E. Forth, "Nietzsche, Decadence, and Regeneration in France, 1891-1895" Journal of the History of Ideas 1993.
4. Christophe Charle, Naissance des "intellectuels," 1880-1900 (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 207.
5. Richard D. Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1989), 193-194. Sonn draws upon the work of Christophe Charle, "Histoire sociale des groupes littéraires de 1865 à 1902 environ," École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1975.
6. Cf. Livre d'hommage des lettres françaises à Émile Zola (Paris: Société libre d'Édition des Gens de Lettres, 1898).
7. This liberal and cosmopolitan reading of Nietzsche was not an exclusively French phenomenon. In 1900, for example, the Mercure de France approvingly reported the results of a survey conducted by an English review which asked its readers: "Is the British intervention in South Africa in accordance with the principles of the philosophy of Nietzsche?" Such international Nietzsche enthusiasts as Peter Gast, Henri Lichtenberger, Thomas Common, W.-A. Haussmann, and Havelock Ellis agreed that the philosopher would not have approved of the activities of the British. Cf. "Nietzsche et les Boers," Mercure de France août 1900 (35), 570.
8. Bernard Lazare, "Les livres" Entretiens politiques et littéraires juin 1892 (4), 264.
9. The royalist and socialist appropriations of Nietzsche are discussed in Part Three.
10. Cf. Jean de Néthy, trans. Ballades et chansons populaires de la Hongrie (Paris: Lemerre, 1891), Nouvelles scandinaves (Paris: Langen, 1894); Léonie Bernardini, La Littérature scandinave (Paris: Plon, 1894), Pages Suédoises. Essai de la psychologie d'un peuple et d'une terre (Paris: Plon, 1908); Georges Art, trans. Le Dynamiteur by Robert Louis Stevenson (Paris: Plon, 1894), Les Bases de la croyance by A.J. Balfour (Paris: Montgrédien, 1896), La Rançon d'Eve by Georges Gissing (Macon: Lambert, 1898); Alexandre M. Desrousseaux, trans. Fables de Babrius (Paris: Hachette, 1890), Les Poèmes de Bacchylide de Céos

(Paris: Hachette, 1898), Morceaux choisies de Lucien (Paris: Hachette, 1899). See also A.M. Desrousseaux and Max Egger, trans. Jugement sur Lysias by Denys d'Halicarnasse (Paris: Hachette, 1890).

11. Saint-Antoine, "Variétés: Sixième affirmation d'art" L'Ermitage juillet 1893 (7), 62-63.

12. Cf. L.-A. N., "Calendrier: Les revues" La Revue blanche mars 1892 (2), 189-190; L.A.N., "Les revues" La Revue blanche avril 1892 (2), 249-250.

13. Translations by Henri Lasvignes include: Max Stirner, L'Unique et sa propriété (Paris: Revue blanche, 1899), and Richard Wagner, Beethoven (Paris: Revue blanche, 1901).

14. Léon Blum, "Conférences à l'Odéon: Ibsen" in Critique dramatique in Oeuvre (Paris: Albin Michel, 1962), II: 375.

15. Quote from La Revue jeune 1893 (2), 2, cited in John Henderson, The First Avant-Garde, 1887-1894: Sources of the Modern French Theatre (London: Harrap and Co., LTD, 1971), 108, 113n.

16. Alber Jhouney, "Harmonie messianique: Rédemption sociale" L'Ermitage juillet 1895 (11), 2-4.

17. L. Tolstoy to S.N. Tolstoy, 24 February 1901, Tolstoy's Letters, 1880-1910 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), II: 590.

18. Cf. Ola Hansson, "L'Oeuvre d'Arnold Böcklin," Jean de Néthy, trans. L'Ermitage novembre 1893 (7), 303-304; "L'Évangile de l'Ouragan" Jean de Néthy, trans. La Revue blanche avril 1892 (2), 213-216. According to Néthy, "Ola Hansson has paraphrased the aristocratic tendencies of Frédéric Nietzsche in some of his prose-poems."

19. Henri Albert, "Nietzsche et Georges Brandès" Mercure de France janvier 1894 (10), 70-76; "August Strindberg," La Revue blanche décembre 1894 (7), 482, 488-490.

20. Peer Eketrae, "Le génie et le bonheur dans l'Oeuvre d'Ibsen" Mercure de France février 1900 (33), 392-393, 400.

21. Cited in Michael Meyer, Henrik Ibsen: The Top of a Cold Mountain, 1883-1906 (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971), 319.

22. Saint-Antoine, "Variétés: A travers les revues" L'Ermitage mai 1892 (4), 335.

23. [Daniel Halévy?], "Fragments" La Revue blanche août-septembre 1892 (3), 95.
24. "Bibliographie," La Revue blanche janvier 1894 (6), 86.
25. Jean-Paul Goujon, "Pierre Louys, Jean de Tinan et Henri Albert: une trinité d'amis au 'Mercure'" Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France janvier-février 1992 (92), 29-39.
26. The reception of Nietzsche by this group of young writers, which would form La Nouvelle revue Française in 1909, is discussed in Chapter 8.
27. Henri Mazel, "Le danger" L'Ermitage novembre 1894 (9), 276.
28. Michel Arnauld [Marcel Drouin], "Frédéric Nietzsche" Revue blanche 1900, 121.
29. Paul Valéry, Cahiers (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), I: 486.
30. Henri Albert, Les Célébrités d'aujourd'hui: Frédéric Nietzsche (Paris: Bibliothèque internationale d'Édition, 1903), 6.
31. Camille Mauclair, quoted in Bianquis, 13.
32. Frédéric Nietzsche, "La Jeune critique" Pan (supplément Française) octobre 1895 (1), 21. See also Nietzsche, "Le Géant" Pan (supplément français) juin-juillet 1895 (1), 9.
33. Jacques Morland, "Études sur F. Nietzsche" L'Ermitage décembre 1898 (17), 399.
34. Cf. Paul Masson, "Also Sprach Yoghi" L'Ermitage juin 1895 (10), 348-350.
35. Nietzsche, Daybreak, 175.
36. Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, 717.
37. Anna Boschetti, "Légitimité littéraire et stratégies éditoriales" in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds. Histoire de l'édition Française: le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 483-486.
38. André Billy notes that Albert had obtained the permission of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche to proceed with his translations. Cf. Billy, 112; Henri Albert, "Les oeuvres complètes de Nietzsche" Revue blanche novembre 1894 (7), 449, 450.

39. Henri Albert, "Les Dangers du moralisme" Le Centaure 1896 (2), 103n. The footnote reads: "On pourra lire à ce sujet les deux volumes de Fr. Nietzsche, Par delà le Bien et le Mal et La Généalogie de la Morale qui paraîtront en traductions françaises en janvier et en mars prochain, chez Calmann Lévy, éditeurs." This arrangement with Calmann Lévy had been made public the following year in an advertisement in Pan, which read: "Fin mars chez MM. Calmann Lévy, éditeurs[,] les premiers oeuvres de Frédéric Nietzsche traduites en français sous la direction de M. Henri Albert." Cf. Pan (supplément français) novembre-décembre 1895 (1), back cover.

40. Ibid.

41. Robert Jouanny, "Les orientations étrangères au 'Mercure de France'" Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France janvier-février 1992 (92), 65.

42. Hugues Rebell, "Sur une traduction collective des oeuvres de Nietzsche" Mercure de France janvier 1895 (13), 100.

43. Ibid., 101. The writer René Boylesve even remarked, had Rebell proceeded with his translations, that they would have most likely surpassed those of Henri Albert. Cf. Reino Virtanen, "Nietzsche and the Action Française: Nietzsche's Significance for French Rightist Thought" Journal of the History of Ideas April 1950 (11), 196.

44. Cf. the August 1894 letter from Albert Samain to Paul Morisse in Albert Samain, Des lettres, 1887-1900 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933), 64-65. Morisse had sent a translation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra to Samain who, after a favorable response, promised to pass the manuscript along to Bonheur.

45. Jean Delay, La Jeunesse d'André Gide (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), II: 256. Despite Schwob's apparent predilection for Nietzsche, I have found no evidence to substantiate the claim that he ever went so far as to translate any of his writings.

46. André Lebey, Jean de Tinan: souvenirs et correspondance (Paris: H. Floury, 1922), 11.

47. By 1905 Albert had published two other texts besides his translations: Les Célébrités d'aujourd'hui: Frédéric Nietzsche (Paris: Bibliothèque internationale d'Édition, 1903), and Willy. Biographie illustrée (Paris: Sansot, 1904).

48. Émile Faguet, "Autour de Nietzsche" Annales politiques et littéraires 1903 (2), 60.

49. Pierre Bourdieu, Les Règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 202-203.



50. Élisabeth Parinet, "L'édition littéraire, 1890-1914" in Histoire de l'édition Française, IV: 153.

51. Hugues Rebell, "Le Nietzsche (1898-?)" La Plume 1902 (14), 915, 916.

52. Ibid., 916.

53. Charle, Naissance, 202-203, 206-207.

54. As Christophe Charle has demonstrated, the "false" homme de lettres played a significant role in many of the petitions of the Dreyfus Affair. Many of those who described themselves as such had never published a single book before the crisis, occupying themselves with literary reviews which reinforced their subordinate status. A strategy of pretention chosen to avoid adopting the less flattering title of "critique" or "publiciste," these writers nonetheless aspired to fulfill the functions of the title they selected for themselves. Many "homme de lettres" indeed hoped to become what they appeared to be--that is, they anticipated being by seeming--through investing in and abetting the growing popularity of Nietzsche. As mentioned above, there existed a homology between the social composition and trajectories of the avant-garde devotees of Nietzsche and many of the petitioners during the Dreyfus Affair. Cf. Charle, Naissance, 203-204, and Bourdieu, Distinction, 252-254.

55. Léon Bélugou, review of Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, La Revue blanche juillet 1898 (16), 389.

56. Henri Albert, "Lou Andréas-Salomé sur Nietzsche" Mercure de France septembre 1894 (12), 68.

57. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage. Geneviève Bianquis notes that the translations by Henri Albert were extremely literary, thus obscuring the rigorously philosophical quality of his writing. This observation is important, for most academic philosophers rejected Nietzsche for being a mere écrivain rather than a "pure" philosophe de profession. Cf. Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (Paris: Alcan, 1929),

58. Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche (1)", 55n.

59. Henri Albert, "Les livres" Mercure de France octobre 1893 (9), 181. Georges Dwelshauvers described Paul Lauterbach as "a disciple and friend of Nietzsche" who is "always devoted to the cause of new thought of which Nietzsche is one of the principal initiators." Cf. Dwelshauvers, "Études sur Friedrich Nietzsche" La Société nouvelle octobre 1892 (16), 470.

60. Henri Albert, "Chronique" Le Centaure 1896 (1), 128.

61. Henri Albert, "Journaux et revues" Mercure de France mai 1893 (8), 89.
62. Henri Albert, "Journaux et revues" Mercure de France août 1893 (8), 373.
63. Henri Albert, "Nietzsche et Georg Brandès" Mercure de France janvier 1894 (10), 75.
64. Henri Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche (1)" Mercure de France janvier 1893 (7), 49.
65. Henri Albert, "Journaux et revues" Mercure de France mai 1893 (8), 91.
66. Henri Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche (1)," 48.
67. Ibid.
68. Henri Albert, "Un Manifeste littéraire Allemand" Mercure de France mai 1893 (8), 65.
69. Henri Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche (suite)" Mercure de France février 1893 (7), 172.
70. Henri Albert, Les Célébrités d'aujourd'hui, 17.
71. Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals, first essay, section 2.
72. For example, Charles Andler's socialist vision of Nietzsche was shared by Daniel Halévy and others on the literary field.
73. Nietzsche's personal library included the works of literary criticism by Paul Bourget (Nouveaux essais de psychologie contemporaine, Études et portraits), Ferdinand Brunetière (Le Roman naturaliste, Études critiques sur l'histoire de la Littérature Française), and Jules Lemaître (Les Contemporains). Cf. Nietzsches bibliothek (Weimar: Vierzehnte Jahrgabe des Gesellschaft Der Freunde des Nietzsche-Archivs, 1942), 33, 34.
74. Ferdinand Brunetière, L'Évolution de la poésie lyrique en France aux XIX siècle (Paris: Hachette, 1906), II: 241. Ever vigilant of the statements made by the dominant critics, Henri Albert later declared with an obvious reference to Brunetière that "More and more Germany and Europe is impregnated with the ideas of the 'philosophe à la mode.'" Cf. Albert, "Lou Andreas-Salomé sur Nietzsche" Mercure de France septembre 1894 (12), 68.
75. Remy de Gourmont, "M. Brunetière" Antée 1 janvier 1907 (3), 793.
76. Bernard l'Ermite, "Chronique: Les revues" L'Ermitage mai 1891 (2), 320.

77. In 1894 Léon Blum discussed the recent changes made at the Revue des deux mondes, perhaps with some irony: "M. Brunetière would be wise to change nothing. He has adopted some young men: M. de Wyzewa qui est Bien commode, since he knows all languages, M. [Jean] Thorel who knows enough German to éreinter M. Brandès, rival gênant du Maître, and the delicate writer that is M. Camille Melinand. That is enough. No one touch the rest. This Revue is made with a too perfect art. No snobbism escapes it. All subjects are reduced there to the tone of its admirable public. Purely literary reviews only attract people of taste and some pedants. The Revue n'est étrangère à aucune nuance de pédantisme: elle les capte tous. Cf. Léon Blum, "Les revues" La Revue blanche mars 1894 (6), 288.

78. Jules Lemaître, "De l'influence récente des littératures du nord" Revue des deux mondes 15 décembre 1894 (126), 869.

79. Georges Valbert [Victor Cherbuliez], "Le Docteur Friedrich Nietzsche et ses griefs contre la Société moderne" Revue des deux mondes 1 octobre 1892 (113), 678-679.

80. Édouard Schuré, "L'Individualisme et l'anarchie en Littérature: Frédéric Nietzsche et sa philosophie" Revue des deux mondes 15 août 1895 (130), 776.

81. Édouard Schuré, "Nietzsche en France et la psychologie de l'athée" Revue bleue 8 septembre 1900, 289.

82. The naturalist writer J.-H. Rosny (aîné), considered the heir-apparent to Zola, remembered Schuré in attendance at the right-bank literary salon of M. and Mme Bory d'Arnex. Cf. J.-H. Rosny, Mémoires de la vie littéraire: l'Académie Goncourt, les salons, quelques éditeurs (Paris: G. Crès, 1927), 153-154.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., 293.

85. Émile Faguet, "Les lettres en France," in Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Rambaud, eds. Histoire générale du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours (Paris: Colin, 1901), XII: 648.

86. Ibid., 649.

87. Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, 718.

88. Jean Bourdeau, "La Philosophie perverse" Journal des débats 4 mars 1899, 1.

89. Ibid. This tale of rape was recounted a year later in Bourdeau, "La Philosophie de Nietzsche" Annales politiques et littéraires 9 septembre 1900, 163.

90. Bourdeau, "La Philosophie de Nietzsche," 163.
91. Jean Bourdeau, "Nietzsche socialiste malgré lui" Journal des débats 2 septembre 1902, 1.
92. René Doumic, "Téodor de Wyzewa" Revue des deux mondes 15 septembre 1917, 346-347.
93. Ibid., 352; Delsemme, Téodor de Wyzewa et le cosmopolitisme littéraire, I: 178-179. Doumic said this of Wyzewa's avant-garde past: "Wyzewa était trop largement instruit, et il y avait en lui Un trop solide fond de bon sens, pour qu'il ne revînt pas promptement de ces exagérations."
94. Unpublished letter from André Gide to Jeanne Rondeaux, November 1891, quoted in Jean Delay, The Youth of André Gide (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 267n.
95. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage janvier-juillet 1898 (18), 57. Upon the publication of L'Immoraliste, Wyzewa likewise called Gide a "fool for Nietzsche."
96. Théodore Randal [Charles Andler], "Figarisme et socialisme" Entretiens politiques et littéraires février 1892 (4), 74.
97. Paul Adam, "L'Homme sensible" Entretiens politiques et littéraires août 1892 (4), 57.
98. Téodor de Wyzewa, "La Jeunesse de Frédéric Nietzsche" Revue des deux mondes 1 février 1896 (133), 689.
99. Henri Gauthier-Villars, "Le Cas Nietzsche" Revue générale (Brussels) décembre 1898, 823.
100. Ibid., 831.
101. Mazel, quoted in *ibid.*, 835.
102. Émile Faguet, "La Critique" in L. Petit de Julleville, ed. Histoire de la langue et de la Littérature Française: Dix-neuvième siècle, période contemporaine (1850-1900) (Paris: Colin, 1899), 422.
103. Léon Blum, "Les revues" La Revue blanche mai 1894 (6), 477.
104. Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (Paris: Alcan, 1929), 5. Presumably to remedy this fact, Bianquis retranslated several of Nietzsche's texts during the 1930s.

105. Victor Basch, "Individualistes modernes: Friedrich Nietzsche" La Grande revue 1901 (16), 362.

106. Ibid., 361.

107. Charle, Naissance, 28-32.

108. Ibid., 360.

109. Ibid., 367, 372-373.

110. Cf. the preface that Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche contributed to Henri Lichtenberger, Die Philosophie Friedrich Nietzsches (Dresden and Leipzig: Verlag von Carl Reissner, 1899), V-LXIX.

111. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche: Aphorismes et fragments Henri Lichtenberger, trans. (Paris: Alcan, 1899).

112. Bianquis, 14.

113. Téodor de Wyzewa, "A propos de la mort de Nietzsche" Revue des deux mondes 1 octobre 1900.

114. Henri Lichtenberger, "Frédéric Nietzsche" in Alphonse Darlu, ed. La Philosophie morale du XIXe siècle (Paris: Alcan, 1904), 243.

115. Ibid., 244.

116. Ibid.

117. Léon Bélugou, review of Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, La Revue blanche juillet 1898 (16), 387.

118. Henri Lichtenberger, "La littérature nietzschéenne" Revue encyclopédique 6 janvier 1900, 1.

119. Cf. the discussion of the changes in the posthumous reputation of Hyppolite Taine between the late-1880s and 1898, in Ringer, Fields of Knowledge.

120. Jacques Morland, "Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Ermitage juillet-décembre 1898 (17), 394.

### **CHAPTER THREE: OF BIOGRAPHY, PHYSIOGNOMY, AND NATIONALITY: LITERARY APPROPRIATIONS OF NIETZSCHE**

The representation of Nietzsche as a cultural fashion or a cultural menace was highly structured by the need of various sectors of the literary field to see in the philosopher either a positive reflection of themselves or the garish visage of their opponents. This struggle for recognition, for which the figure of Nietzsche emerged as another cultural game piece, was conducted on a variety of different levels with varying degrees of complexity. While all of these should be confronted if an adequate conclusion is to be reached about the phenomenon of cultural reception and the formation of cultural fashions, three in particular stand out. First, in accordance with the collective belief in the creative project of the author, many writers utilized the strategy of constituting Nietzsche as a specifically literary subject, whose philosophy might be perceived as merely the expression of his own life experiences and personal crises; hence, the need to present accurate, up-to-date, and often very selective biographical information about the author. Second, in conjunction with the need to access the innermost soul of the philosopher as the explanation of his work, many writers became fascinated with the face, eyes, voice, dress, and entire manner of being of Nietzsche, therefore activating a moral physiognomy to be invoked repeatedly by both defenders and opponents of the German. Finally, as the literary field itself experienced a shift from cosmopolitanism towards an emphasis on national literature, many writers became preoccupied with the ambiguous relationship that Nietzsche conducted with French culture, the perception of which might serve either to celebrate or condemn his writings from

the perspective of the quest for national distinction.

**Life as Literature and Literary Strategy:  
Constructing Nietzsche as a Subject**

Tyranny of the Portrait. Artists and statesmen, who quickly put together the whole picture of a person or event from individual characteristics, are usually unjust, in that they demand afterwards that the event or person must be the way they painted it; they virtually demand that a person be as gifted, cunning, or unjust as he is in their imagination.

--Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

An important locus for the struggle between literary fractions concerned the life experiences of Nietzsche, an account of which often prefixed discussions of the philosopher throughout the 1890s. The biographical realm emerged as one of the most contested terrains in the battle over the legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche. The professional ideology of the literary field prized the notion of the autonomous author, the uncreated creator of literary products who drew only upon his or her own soul as the final justification of the texts produced. It is understandable that Nietzsche, therefore, had to be constituted as a specifically literary subject, whose personal travails and life experiences would help explain his paradoxical and controversial texts. All participants in literary discourse on Nietzsche agreed that, as an *écrivain*, his texts were forged from some personal struggle. This romantic cult of the author would be exploited by the various players to support their own general views of Nietzsche by invoking his own biography. Indeed, Henri Lichtenberger expressed this need succinctly in his 1898 study, but inscribed it within the sphere of academia:

But before studying the doctrine of Nietzsche, it is important as well to see clearly that it is, by the confession of the author, less a totality of abstract truths and of universal significance than the living reflection of an individual character, of a very particular natural temperament, the sincere and passionate confession of a soul of rare essence.<sup>2</sup>

This statement, located on the first page of his study, served as a disclaimer: by demonstrating the personal origin of Nietzsche's thought, Lichtenberger stressed the fundamentally literary nature of his writings, thus distancing them from more legitimate works of professional philosophy being produced by his academic peers. Similarly, for Victor Basch the fact that the personality of Nietzsche was so bound to his writings was proof that he was not a true philosopher, but rather a lyric poet:

[I]t is necessary that [the philosopher] be detached from his Ego and that he be accustomed to considering it as something strange. This objectivity has always been lacking in Nietzsche, as in all lyric poets. The characteristic of the lyric poet is precisely to translate into personal events all that crowds around him, it is to identify with the beings and things most heterogeneous to his nature, it is to press them to his soul, it is to dissolve and lose oneself in them and to dissolve and lose them in oneself. That is certainly what Nietzsche does.<sup>3</sup>

Much like the professional philosopher, it was believed, the literary scholar possessed the capacity for such self-effacing objectivity: Basch claimed for himself and all modern academics the superiority of a "pure" scientific gaze purporting to be detached from the social relationships that, in fact, allow such an ideology to exist. Represented as a lyric poet, then, Nietzsche could be legitimately admired by academics as "an exceptional individual, one of the rare successes of nature of which he so loved to speak, a true hero of thought and art."<sup>4</sup> Only when



constituted as the literary object of a true scholar could one speak of Nietzsche's writings as poetry, and then proceed to discuss this poetry with admiration.

The literary avant-garde, whose writers defined themselves in opposition to both the academy and the established literary critics, held a very different image of what counted as legitimate philosophy. Due to this tension they understandably resisted the typical reduction of the philosopher to the circumstances of his life. The avant-garde, we have seen, steadfastly refused the seal of approval of the university when propagating the Nietzsche industry. Its actual dependence upon academic taxonomies revolved around the need to differ, thus placing the avant-garde in a negative relationship with the university--in fact, the philosophical preferences of these writers were formed through their perception of and conflict with the university field and its system of scholarly classifications. Yet, because philosophy was seen in less scientific terms by these young writers, the link between Nietzsche's works and his life did not necessarily undermine the import of his ideas. In fact, within the avant-garde the biography of the philosopher contributed in no small part to his prestige.

The first essays on Nietzsche in France often raised the question of the life of the philosopher, especially the circumstances of his youth. So powerful was this biographical need among young writers that Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus included, with their own brief resume of Nietzsche's life, selected fragments recently published by the Nietzsche-Archiv that the philosopher had written when he was fourteen and fifteen years old!<sup>5</sup> Many writers commented on the youthful

experiences of Nietzsche, his temperament, his physical and mental health, etc. Jacques Morland noted how, according to a recent missive from the Nietzsche-Archiv, "as a child, Nietzsche used to be robust; he had a rosy tint and blond hair which fell over his shoulders."<sup>6</sup> Even as a young student in Bonn, recalled the Belgian journalist Théophile Droz, Nietzsche was able to win the admiration of his peers: "I had known him a bit, twenty-eight years ago, in Bonn. Together we frequented the courses of Ritschl and Otto Jahn, two of the most illustrious philologists in Germany."

He already had around him a small escort of young people, attracted by his paradoxical ideas, and by his marvelous talent for reducing into brilliant aphorisms the lengthy and sometimes boring dissertations of our teachers.

Such information no doubt contributed to the Nietzsche mystique among avant-garde writers: perhaps Nietzsche the man was as captivating as the author and, if so, all the better for the propagation of his philosophy.

Henri Albert, who like Halévy accepted for years virtually any information released by the Nietzsche-Archiv, kept his readers abreast of most developments in Nietzsche scholarship abroad, especially when they concerned the life of the philosopher. Indeed, at times Albert functioned as little more than the Parisian mouthpiece of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche who, in her project of forming an international Nietzsche cult, effectively and repeatedly utilized her brother's biography to elicit the support of the faithful. Reporting on Elisabeth's criticisms of previous attempts to present an acceptable biography, Albert quoted select passages, such as "My brother never had, at heart, a personal enemy. He had in

his entire being such charm, he knew to search in each man, often in the most hidden depths, for the thoughts and the most exquisite qualities."<sup>7</sup> "The Mercur," Albert added at the end, "will keep its readers up to date on the revelations of Mme Förster-Nietzsche."<sup>8</sup>

Dominant literary critics utilized the various versions of Nietzsche's life in their struggle to control discourse on the philosopher and over the literary field in general. Téodor de Wyzewa, who had become virtually obsessed with denouncing the philosopher, repeatedly invoked Nietzsche's soul in his critical essays: "I cannot read the letters of Bakunin without being struck by the profound resemblance of the soul of this destroyer with the soul of Frédéric Nietzsche."<sup>9</sup> One common strategy of many established critics was to invoke his life implicitly by characteristically and consistently referring to Nietzsche as le malheureux, which can mean "the unhappy one" or "the unlucky one" as well as "wretched" and "trivial." "[T]he work of Nietzsche," wrote the Jesuit Léonce de Grandmaison, "I mean that which counts, that which one reads and which acts on men of this generation, is so commanded by his life, so suggested by the violent or morbid states of his sensibility, that one cannot separate them."<sup>10</sup>

In their continuing effort to discredit the philosopher's reputation among the literate public, conservative critics were quite willing to exclude Nietzsche along gender lines by illustrating the essentially feminine nature of his personality-- and therefore of his thought as a whole. In an essay from 1892 the critic Victor Cherbuliez claimed to have discovered, beneath the apparent pride of this "homme

terrible. . . . dare I say it? a foundation of nervous délicatesse, of caprice, of fantasy, of feminine fragility, which constitutes at once his weakness and his charm."<sup>11</sup>

According to him, the true philosophers do not say "This is;"-- imperious legislators, they say: "This should be." If this is so, one must admit that true philosophers greatly resemble women. M. Nietzsche has discredited them in vain, [for] there is something of the woman in him.<sup>12</sup>

Many established critics employed such arguments in order to undermine the popularity of the philosopher. Whereas the avant-garde found in the experiences of Nietzsche's childhood the genius which would inform his mature works, Édouard Schuré discerned instead the seeds of his imminent mental disintegration. "He showed from an early age the varied dispositions of a rich but contradictory nature":

[A] finesse of perception and an excessive sensibility, accompanied with a stubborn energy of the will; . . . some fanatic infatuations with the jolts of a taciturn soul and always in secret [sourde] revolt.<sup>13</sup>

Halévy and Dreyfus responded to this statement directly in La Revue blanche: "A Wagnerian legend exists, which makes of Nietzsche a very naughty child, vain and disobedient, rightfully punished by imbecility and madness."<sup>14</sup>

Wyzewa presented a differing but no less calculated view of Nietzsche's childhood, claiming on one occasion that "His egoism, his universal contempt, his cosmopolitanism, and his 'super-humanity' had only been theater costumes, under which would be found a model son, an excellent friend, indeed a zealous patriot."<sup>15</sup> And Jean Bourdeau reminded his conservative readers, referring to the

translated fragment written by the adolescent Nietzsche, that since "the age of thirteen, [he] considered God the incarnation of evil."<sup>18</sup> By locating the childhood of Nietzsche as the site of literary struggle, all of these writers affirmed, beneath the antagonistic literary positions which were the source of their own conflict, the importance of the creative project as a primary structuring principle of the literary field, serving both to structure literary practice and modes of appreciation. An important issue in these biographical disputes concerned the topic of Nietzsche's madness, its causes, its earliest manifestations, and its role in shaping his philosophy. For the literary establishment, if it could be shown that the philosopher had gone mad years before 1889, or at least that he showed signs of the impending collapse, progress might be made in discrediting Nietzsche's thought as the ravings of a lunatic, and the literary avant-garde itself as a rebellious corps willing to extol even the virtues of a madman as part of its decadent and anarchistic project. It was just this tactic for which members of the avant-garde were preparing as some raced to obtain information about the philosopher's sickness. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, in her multi-volume biography, emphasized the abuse of chloral and exhaustion in contributing to her brother's insanity, and steadfastly denied any suggestion that his paralysis had been brought on by a syphilitic infection from his youth. To affirm this last point could encourage the speculation that the insanity of the philosopher had existed long before its manifestation in 1889, an interpretation eagerly adopted by many established critics. For "les orthodoxes," André Gide pointed out, "his final madness condemns

his system."<sup>17</sup>

Daniel Halévy, who had most likely been in contact with Elisabeth since 1892, had apparently also fallen under the spell of Nietzsche's sister and for a time accepted much of what she disseminated about her brother. His biographical essays on Nietzsche and Wagner which appeared in the Revue de Paris in 1897, for example, were drawn from the philosopher's works and notes as well as the "fine biography of Nietzsche written by Madame Förster-Nietzsche, his sister. . . [and] the excellent notices of M. Fritz Koegel."<sup>18</sup> Such confidence in the good will of the Nietzsche-Archiv was not uncommon during this period, nor was there reason to suspect that his sister had anything but the best intentions in mind. In 1892, the editors of Le Banquet published a message from an anonymous but "authorized" source, most likely from Elisabeth, that detailed the circumstances of Nietzsche's insanity:

[From] the first days of January 1889 he was struck by a cruel malady caused by the immoderate use of chloral which had served to calm his insomnia... All his paternal and maternal ancestors were cheerful and robust people, of whom the majority reached the age of seventy years.<sup>19</sup>

Those familiar with the history of the Nietzsche-Archiv know of the supreme control that Elisabeth exercised over most biographical material on her brother; this early message, which Halévy, Gregh, and Dreyfus eagerly published in good faith, was merely a first step in her own attempt to create a Nietzsche cult, which required that she downplay the insanity of the philosopher and emphasize the physical health of the family. That this vision was also propitious for the interests of the

avant-garde may also explain the enthusiastic manner in which it was rather uncritically received. The Belgian review La Société nouvelle also conveyed to its readers what the German press mentioned about the philosopher's insanity: "All hope of a cure is lost; his intellectual activity is completely destroyed, nothing inspires interest for him anymore, he lives mechanically, ramolli. . . . The intellectual activity of his last months of lucidity provoked insomnia; the doctors prescribed chloral, he abused it."<sup>20</sup>

Jean Bourdeau of the Journal des débats, who had corresponded with Nietzsche just before his collapse, wondered in 1893 "was his madness purely accidental, a result of overwork and the abuse of narcotics. . . . Or is there some sort of kinship between certain forms of talent and madness?"<sup>21</sup> This connection between genius and madness was certainly not new at the turn of the century, but had been suggested by many writers, notably Cesar Lombroso. Curiously, Bourdeau waited seven years to publicize his own, bizarre encounter with the philosopher, perhaps because by that time he perceived the negative influence that his ideas had by then had upon contemporary youth:

We found ourselves in correspondence with Nietzsche, at the same moment when the sickness came to melt over him. We were very surprised to receive, one morning, a proclamation to the Hohenzollerns, which he asked us to insert into the Journal des Débats. The next day, a second letter, where he confided to us that he had been the Christ in person, the crucified Christ. We recall this personal souvenir because it is interesting to establish what singular form the delirium of persecutions and of greatness took within Nietzsche. Le malheureux incarnated himself not in his Zoroaster, but in this Christ on Golgotha, in this God of the slaves, against whom he used to hurl curses. Perhaps that was only the return of first beliefs: Nietzsche, the immoralist, had been the son of a minister.<sup>22</sup>

While Bourdeau was attempting to discredit the German with this information, Lichtenberger used the same episode as a means of humanizing Nietzsche for more general readers. He suggested instead the philosopher's ultimate proximity to Christianity and the ultimate fusion of Dionysus with Christ: "at the hour of turmoil where, at the moment of sinking into the night of madness, he had the intuition of his ideal kinship with Christ and wrote to M. Bourdeau: 'I am the Christ, the Christ himself, the crucified Christ.'"<sup>23</sup> Henri Albert, of course, invoked Nietzsche's letter to the editor of the Journal in order to belittle the influential Bourdeau: "Nietzsche desired the French translation. [Hyppolite] Taine recommended M. Bourdeau... But M. Bourdeau did not understand."<sup>24</sup>

For devoted disciples of Nietzsche such as Henri Albert, the duration of the philosopher's insanity through his death was transformed into material for the cult. In this case, unlike other conflicting accounts of his life, one could directly participate in Nietzsche's infirmity by making the pilgrimage to Germany. On Nietzsche's fiftieth birthday, which was also the occasion for the first German publication of the collected works, Albert visited the Nietzsche-Archiv, then still in Naumburg. Later in the Mercure he described his experience in characteristically mystical terms: "He turned fifty a few days ago. No newspaper has spoken of this birthday. The world has ignored him, but the pious cares of his mother should have tried to make this day sweeter still than others. Because all is done with piety in the Nietzsche family."

[Near Nietzsche's house was] the Nietzsche-Archiv, where two archivists labor ceaselessly, under the direction of the philosopher's



sister, on the publication of his complete works. My heart throbbed in mounting the steps. But when, seated in the little salon of Mme Foerster, or circulating in the rooms of the Nietzsche-Archiv. . . we spoke of the absent one, a quietude returned to me, a nearly religious quietude and a sentiment of profound respect before the resignation of this woman who had placed all her energy in the service of so bitter a cause.<sup>25</sup>

By virtually deifying Nietzsche and therefore transforming his sister into his veritable priestess--a role which she nevertheless encouraged and even helped to write--Albert made it difficult to question any material that was released by the Archiv.

The first French writer to challenge the official account of the circumstances of Nietzsche's life disseminated by the Nietzsche-Archiv was Daniel Halévy, whose very popular biography would greatly increase the prestige of the philosopher. The publication of "Le Travail de Zarathustra" in a 1909 issue of the Cahiers de la Quinzaine, put an end to whatever peaceful relationship Halévy may have had with Elisabeth, and prompted many to rethink the political agenda of the Nietzsche-Archiv. In this essay and his full-length biography which soon followed, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Halévy did an about-face to argue forcefully against many of the biographical accounts posited by the philosopher's sister. One such incident concerned Lou Andreas-Salome, with whom both Nietzsche and his friend Paul Rée had fallen in love. On one occasion, the philosopher composed some music for the verses of Lou, which she had dedicated to him. While Elisabeth, who had strongly disapproved of this affair, maligned Lou in her biography, Halévy charged that "Fräulein Nietzsche was jealous of this initiation which she had not received, jealous, too, of this young Slav, whose charm was tinged with mystery, and . . .

we must take what she has to say with caution."<sup>26</sup> After Lou chose to initiate a relationship with Rée instead of Nietzsche, the philosopher's sister "who detested Miss Salome, encouraged his suspicions and his rancors. She intervened in a brutal manner, and, it seems, without authorization, wrote the young girl a letter which determined the rupture."<sup>27</sup> That Elisabeth had "acted grossly" was a charge that would surely provoke the ire of the high priestess of the Nietzsche cult in Weimar.

Halévy did not end his attack with this incident. After consulting various letters at the Nietzsche-Archiv, Halévy attempted to eradicate the myth that subtly linked Nietzsche to the anti-Semitism of his sister. Indeed, as a Jewish intellectual Halévy had a great deal to gain by detaching the philosopher from anti-Semites in France and abroad, a project he had initiated years earlier with his defense of Nietzsche against Wagner.<sup>28</sup> Whereas Elisabeth claimed that her brother received the news of her imminent marriage to the anti-Semitic German nationalist Bernhard Förster with great pleasure, Halévy asserted on the contrary that Nietzsche "was overwhelmed; he knew the person and his ideas, he despised the low and dull passions which the propaganda excited, and suspected him of having spoken maliciously of his work. That Elisabeth, the companion of his childhood, should follow this man was more than he could allow."<sup>29</sup> After Elisabeth's secret wedding to Förster, Halévy continued, "Nietzsche did not discuss it, and did his best to be pleasant once again to the sister who was lost to him."<sup>30</sup>

While on the one hand Halévy lifted the veil that Elisabeth had cast over

certain circumstances of her brother's life, he nevertheless conferred upon the philosopher's public image a quasi-mystical quality that would surely fuel the cultic aspects of his reputation in France. In his unflinchingly human portrait of Nietzsche the man, Halévy capitalized on the image of the solitary creative genius who, misunderstood and unappreciated by the world--not unlike the writers of the avant-garde--heroically persisted in his poetic mission. Commenting upon Nietzsche's rather cryptic remarks in Ecce Homo, Halévy asked "What does he mean? Is he Antichrist or another Christ?" The answer that Halévy provided to this question only reinforced the mystique of Nietzsche: "He is both together. . . . Nietzsche was a saint, not a satyr, and a wounded saint who aspired to die."<sup>31</sup>

Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche was understandably outraged by Halévy's depiction of her involvement in her brother's affairs, and took steps to recoup her flagging reputation among the French intelligentsia. While her close contact with Albert and Lichtenberger would no doubt help regain her credibility, she even called upon André Gide, who had visited her in 1903 and to whom she forwarded documents in support of her case.<sup>32</sup> Halévy was not, however, the sole instigator of the changing perception of Elisabeth, and it is unclear whose side Gide ultimately defended. In early 1908 Gide confided to his journal that "[Charles] Andler tells Marcel Drouin that he had the opportunity of reading some letters of Nietzsche, not yet published for several reasons. . . . One can also see in them the lack of consideration he had for his sister: 'Eine dumme Gans [a silly goose],' he calls her."<sup>33</sup>

Henri Albert, who had responded rather blandly to Halévy's translation of Le Cas Wagner, registered guarded praise for his widely-read biography, admitting that "the life of the philosopher is still very imperfectly known. The little volume of M. Daniel Halévy responds therefore to a veritable need." Nevertheless, Albert retained certain reservations regarding Halévy's presentation of Nietzsche's sister, with whom he had been on excellent terms:

We could reproach M. Halévy for having left the personality of the sister of Nietzsche too much in the shadows. Evidently, the role played by Mme Foerster has been considerably exaggerated, even by French critics. But, beyond that, to ignore almost completely the one who was during those long years the companion of every instant, there is still a considerable and decisive step to be taken.<sup>34</sup>

Contrary to typical accounts of Nietzsche's reception, it therefore becomes clear that, for the French at least, the question of the life of the philosopher was almost as important as his philosophy. Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Four, academic philosophers stressed that Nietzsche's life experiences were directly linked to his philosophical thought, thus undermining it as literature.

### **A Moral Physiognomy: Pathways to Nietzsche's Soul**

Perhaps the most curious strategy of French literary discourse on Nietzsche was the preoccupation with the physical presentation of the philosopher, which represented for many the external clues to the secret of his soul and of his writings. It is widely known that as Nietzsche became a cult figure throughout Europe many artists had presented different interpretations of his face. Perhaps the best known--because most often reproduced--is Hans Olde's 1899 sketch of the

mad Nietzsche watching the setting sun, while other famous representations include the busts of Max Klinger and the paintings of Edvard Munch. In addition, a recent study has investigated the variety of graphic depictions of the philosopher as he became appropriated for the Nietzsche cult in Germany;<sup>35</sup> yet to date there has been no serious inquiry into the role of Nietzsche's physical appearance in France, where it became one of the central elements in the struggle over the legitimate perspective of the philosopher. Unfortunately, one finds references to only a few French artists who used Nietzsche as a subject, the most notable of which was Félix Vallotton, whose masques embellished several articles on the philosopher in La Revue blanche.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Gide cited throughout his correspondence and journals his friend José de Charmoy, a little-known sculptor best remembered for his memorial to Baudelaire which stands in the Montparnasse cemetery. Interestingly, Charmoy had also tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to have his bust of Nietzsche likewise erected in Paris as a monument.<sup>37</sup> We also have Apollinaire's report that a painter named Jean Deville had been displaying his paintings of Nietzsche in his Montparnasse studio in 1910.<sup>38</sup> Finally, a woodcut of Nietzsche by Julien Tinayre was featured in the Pages choisies of Nietzsche, selected and translated by Henri Albert in 1899.<sup>39</sup> Despite their profusion, which attests to the fascination that many French artists had for the philosopher's face, none of these graphic representations have been considered from the perspective of the politics of literary production.

Interestingly, it was primarily within specifically literary circles that the

physical appearance of Nietzsche became a significant topic of debate. Here commentators repeatedly invoked the face, hair, voice, dress, gestures, and indeed the ensemble of his person in order to celebrate or condemn him. Operating behind these various presentations were the social dynamics of the literary field, which motivated its agents to perceive Nietzsche's body in ways that were inextricably conditioned by their own positions on the field and which clearly favored those positions vis-à-vis conflicting positions. "The body, a social product which is the only tangible manifestation of the 'person'," Bourdieu writes, "is commonly perceived as the most natural expression of innermost nature." The socially constructed physical signs of a person would be "immediately read as indices of a 'moral' physiognomy, socially characterized, i.e. of a 'vulgar' or 'distinguished' mind, naturally 'natural' or naturally 'cultivated.'"<sup>40</sup> In this particular case a host of other oppositional classifications became operative as French writers appropriated the physiognomy of Nietzsche, most commonly in terms of "sanity" and "insanity", as well as "masculine" and "feminine",

Literary perception of Nietzsche was tacitly and necessarily reflexive, for writers' own autoperception was continually introduced in the search for either similarities or differences: they were less concerned with Nietzsche's features as they existed in themselves than with what such features symbolized in relation to the meaning of their own group as it stood in differential relations to others. Thus, using the various depictions of Nietzsche as veritable mirrors, the literary avant-garde was able to find the public image it most desired to convey to the world. On

the other hand, those hailing from the literary establishment invariably saw in the physiognomy of Nietzsche the features they most detested in the avant-garde, which were implicitly contrasted with the admirable features they prized in themselves. These different readings of the text of Nietzsche's body were therefore points of intersection of a host of social strategies which were the very product of such conflicts.

The question of Nietzsche's physical appearance fascinated French writers from the start. In his very first essay on Nietzsche in 1891, Téodor de Wyzewa invoked the physiognomy of the philosopher as a means of diminishing him in contemporary opinion, a tactic he would employ repeatedly over the years. Indeed, the first physical impression available on Nietzsche in France was Wyzewa's description of the philosopher in his sick bed:

It is in an insane asylum where I would have to go see him, howling under the shower, stretching his long arms, opening wide his enormous round eyes, and seeming more like a gutter cat than when I had met him three years ago, the surprising Frédéric Nietzsche [sic].

. . .<sup>41</sup>

A number of other agents in the literary field immediately seized upon the physiognomy of Nietzsche. A poem by Henri Mazel entitled "Les deux philosophes", for example, described two unnamed thinkers, one of whom, with his "ferocious eyes and enormous mustache, who twists like a caged bear," is very likely to have been Nietzsche.<sup>42</sup> The writer Léonie Benardini described in great detail a portrait of the philosopher, probably the one sketched by Hans Olde, to her readers in the Revue de Paris:

We have before our eyes a portrait of Nietzsche. His forehead is wide, lofty, receding; his eyebrows are vigorously split [*barrés*] over his imperious eye. His mustache, enormous, projects a shadow over his energetic and obstinate chin. A type of man of complete appearance and action, of a strong race, with a trait of physical courage and very accentuated pugnacious humor. Only his look, of visionary fixity, lends a disruption over the ultimate equilibrium of this rich nature. Even some signs, indicated with difficulty over this regular physiognomy, noble and hard, betray nevertheless an intense artistic sensibility, a too sharp impressionability, under which all can collapse.<sup>43</sup>

Evident in this reading is the self-image of the literary elite, which prided itself with being the literary incarnation of such admirable physical qualities as energy, strength, action, and courage. What is more, the social aspect of this reading reveals the rather aristocratic self-image that many subordinate writers were obliged to sustain and radiate to the world: unjustly dominated, their own noble criteria were used to subvert the dominant taxonomies of the culturally consecrated, an interpretation that is supported by Bernardini's consistent use of military metaphors throughout her essay. Without a doubt, this article was meant to mobilize.

The death of the philosopher provoked anew the need to appropriate his visage. "Someone should have taken pictures of the dead Nietzsche--or of his [death] masque," wrote Gide to Henri Ghéon. "I would like to have one."<sup>44</sup> Years later, evidently still without such a photograph, Gide wrote directly to the philosopher's sister for one.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, Henri Albert meditated on the watercolor by Olde, and his colorful observations merit citation in full:

Under a white blanket, drawn to the neck and covering his shoulders, his head appears, enormous, domineering. The black



spot of his drooping moustache conceals his mouth, and the violent curve of his jaw is eclipsed under the tufts of this dense forest. His ear is acute, his nose small. Over the thinning temple the wrinkles furrow, profound, but the hair is still abundant and rough. It is the receding and headstrong forehead of the Slav. The arch of his brow repeats on a smaller scale the rich comma of his moustache.

But his eyes appear, transfiguring the harshness of his face, these visionary eyes gazing into the distance, profound, anxious and inquisitive. And behind this gaze will be nothingness? This glow will be that of dementia? That is to believe that the radiance which formerly left this mind had been so intense that the sudden burst maintained some of it in his eyes, a long time after being extinguished.

Is this sad head, set upright again by cushions, truly that of a mad Nietzsche?...<sup>46</sup>

Here as in Bernardini's description, the writer significantly failed to mention anything distinctly Germanic in the facial features of the philosopher. Instead, Bernardini cited the physical evidence of his "strong race" while Albert found "the headstrong forehead of the Slav," perceptions which are important as both these writers despised Germany yet adored Nietzsche as a francophile critic of German culture. In the latter portrait Albert employed many of the same metaphors that had become common among the avant-garde, stressing the strength, radiance, intensity, and above all the "visionary" eyes. All of these metaphors supported Albert's final incredulity that so rich a physiognomy could truly conceal the philosopher's madness. This appears to be the language of a veritable cult.

Establishment literary perception would no doubt result in a very different evaluation, which typically found in the philosopher's face the detested traits of the avant-garde. Wyzewa presented in 1896 a description of Kurt Stoeving's portrait of the philosopher: "the eyes gaze fixement into the void, two beastly eyes, motionless and thoughtless, eyes which do not see and do not understand."

This sinister image. . . this image shows us as he is now, waiting for death finally to consent to deliver him, certainly one of the most intelligent men of our century, the theoretician and poet of the super-man, the great philosopher Frédéric Nietzsche. . . . Nothing remains anymore of [him] but an inert mass, the miserable thing represented in M. Stoeving's portrait.<sup>47</sup>

Édouard Schuré, in his seemingly tireless effort to discredit Nietzsche, recalled his first meeting with the philosopher at Bayreuth where he too was struck by the physiognomy of the German:

In speaking with him, I was struck by the superiority of his spirit and the strangeness of his physiognomy. Wide forehead, short hair forced back by a brush, prominent cheekbones of the Slav. The hardy moustache, the fearless profile of the face which gave him the air of a cavalry officer, without that special something at once timid and proud at first sight. The musical voice, the slow speech, denoted his artistic constitution; the prudent and meditative bearing was of a philosopher. Nothing was more deceiving than the apparent calm of his expression. His steady eye betrayed the grievous labor of thought. It was at once the eye of a keen observer and a fanatical visionary. . . . Nietzsche's entire manner of being had this distant air, this discreet and veiled disdain which often characterized aristocrats of thought.<sup>48</sup>

Here Nietzsche's physiognomy was depicted as strange, his eyes betray a "fanatical visionary," his "entire manner of being" was filled with an aristocratic disdain.<sup>49</sup> Typical of such evaluations, the qualities that valorized the philosopher within avant-garde circles effectively functioned to anathemize him in the realm of conservative literary opinion.

In 1893, La Revue bleue published an essay by Ludwig Stein, the Swiss philosophy professor who had provoked the ire of Henri Albert with his criticisms of Nietzsche's work. The anonymous translator revealed, in a footnote, the strategy behind the publication of this text in the dominant review:

The author of Zarathustra is in a fair way becoming as famous in Paris as he is in Berlin and in Christiania. Also we are pleased to offer our readers the translation of a study where they will find, on the life and works of the malheureux philosophe, some precious information. . . . today we can only characterize [Stein's work] as the most serious attempt that has been made in Germany to check the growing progress of l'esprit nietzschéen.<sup>50</sup>

In this text, Stein posited one of the first complete descriptions of Nietzsche's appearance--including his dress, gait, demeanor--all drawn from the testimonies of former colleagues and students at Basel. Significantly, Stein noted from the outset that the "literary physiognomy of Nietzsche had been the exact opposite of his personal appearance and his private manners. . . . he was no sooner seated at his desk that he became the most terrible, the most pitiless of dragon slayers."<sup>51</sup>

His manners, in conversation, contained nothing aggressive or eccentric. . . . One of his students at Basel told me that he arrived at class dressed with extreme elegance; during the summer, he normally wore a fine gray hat and fashionably-cut light clothes.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, while in the world Nietzsche the man was "full of reserve and the most timorous," but only so long "as he did not have pen in hand," after which, Stein implied, he became somewhat of monster. That is, the "literary physiognomy" that was often invoked bore little resemblance to his actual physiognomy. This Jekyll-Hyde theme was to be reproduced in dominant literary discourse in a variety of forms that themselves veered towards the grotesque as they portrayed Nietzsche the man as milder, even effeminate, as Nietzsche the writer was rendered ever more monstrous.

A similar description, recounted verbatim in places, was featured in one of

Wyzewa's numerous critical commentaries; yet the subtle alterations effected here--deliberate or unconscious examples of (mis)recognition inseparable from literary strategies for recognition--betray once again the implicit agenda of the literary establishment. In an essay on the recently-published correspondence between Nietzsche and the historian Jacob Burckhardt, Wyzewa described how he imagined the philosopher to have appeared on the streets of Basel with the historian:

Always dressed with an affected [*recherchée*] elegance, his hands carefully gloved, donning since the morning a nobly-cut hat, he was, if not a dandy, at least a perfect man of the world.<sup>53</sup>

By twisting Stein's portrait in just the right places Wyzewa was able to convey to his conservative readers an image of the philosopher that coincided, for the most part, with their perception of the literary dandy, of which Maurice Barrès was the often-cited exemplar.<sup>54</sup> Yet Wyzewa's depiction penetrated deeper than mere outward fashion in an attempt to access the inner person, for which he activated a masculine/feminine oppositional strategy, the latter of which was meant to designate the avant-garde:

There was nothing, any longer, of the good giant, in all his person, but something more feminine, despite his thick drooping mustache and his brushed hair. His eyes, above all, radiated an infinite charm: one felt there much kindness, a profound goodness, and also a sort of meditation or dreaminess, as if the soul that resided behind these great myopic eyes had been absolutely foreign to the objects they saw. His voice, sweeter still than his gaze, was fine, melodious, at once full of reserve and precision. And one found in his step, in his gestures, in his entire manner of being [*toute la manière d'être*] a young scholar the same character of feminine elegance and timidity.<sup>55</sup>

Behind the provocative and at times violent character of Nietzsche's writings Wyzewa had to find another character, that of the author, whose personal manners he cited as the living and breathing contradiction of his philosophy. By relegating the philosopher to the rebellious and pretentious sector of the literary field, Wyzewa effected a division based on gender as well as literary class: the dominant fraction as the masculine rulers of the literary universe possessed inherently more right to be dominant than the effeminate avant-garde.

**Of National Literary Distinction:  
French Culture and the Latin Renaissance**

It is a small number of old Frenchmen to whom I return again and again: I believe only in French culture and consider everything else in Europe that calls itself "culture" a misunderstanding--not to speak of German culture.

--Nietzsche<sup>56</sup>

As the literary field became restructured during the 1890s, it was inevitable that its relationship to Nietzsche would also change. Part of this shift was directly related to a growing dissatisfaction with the influx of foreign literatures that had been initiated during the mid-1880s. After a prolonged fascination with foreign cultural goods during the 1880s and 1890s, expressed through the vogues for Wagner, Ibsen, and Tolstoy among others, representatives from across the literary field began to reassert the primacy of French literature throughout the world and to discontinue many of these attachments to foreign models as they asserted their own national distinction. Ironically, throughout this chauvinistic turn, in certain sectors the thought of Nietzsche would gain even more currency, and by 1902 he

would emerge as virtually the only notable foreign writer to be celebrated by French littérateurs, a curious phenomenon that must be explained by reference to the changing literary field.

Some historians have concluded that French intellectuals shifted towards nationalism because of the Dreyfus Affair, and that this attitude would become even more manifest during the Moroccan crisis of 1905. As such, these events have often been seen as effecting the very ruptures that prompted many to reject foreign cultural models, especially German ones, in favor of strictly French or, at best, "Latin" models. Indeed, the vigorous anti-Dreyfusard François Coppée, a member of the Académie Française, lent some credence to this view when he declared in 1898 that "Alas! we Germanize ourselves a great deal, and for quite a few years! What an error!"<sup>57</sup> Contrary to this traditional interpretation, which privileges the formative power of pivotal events over intellectual life, Christophe Charle has demonstrated how the foreign importations into the literary field during the 1880s and 1890s functioned in a drive towards defining a literary nationalism, a process developed gradually throughout the 1890s to emerge fully only after the Dreyfus Affair. Indeed, after the decade-long process of importing foreign writers into the French literary marketplace, the economic difficulties of French bookstores and of the theater towards the end of the century resulted in the dramatic trend away from these foreign models. That is, faced with the very real economic threat caused by competition with foreign literature, many French writers opted for a literary "protectionism" that became manifested as a sort of shrill cultural

xenophobia towards 1900.<sup>58</sup>

Although the literary establishment had initiated literary cosmopolitanism by its praise for the Russian novel, it was also chiefly responsible for condemning the excesses provoked by cosmopolitanism within the avant-garde. The establishment critic René Doumic, who had been no friend of either cosmopolitanism or the avant-garde, declared in 1900 that the "invasion of foreign literatures, their tumultuous and violent pushing is one of the characteristic facts of the period we are studying."

The mania of exoticism is unchained, intransigent, intolerant and sectarian, a mania which had its visionaries, its fanatics and its convulsionists. Observe, when they are in the paroxysm of their delirium, les tolstoïans, les ibséliens, les nietzschéens: but above all do not try to calm them! . . . They espouse with eagerness the theories of each new maître without renouncing those of the preceding maître. They learn dilettantism with Amiel, nihilism with Turgenev, evangelism with Tolstoy, individualism with Ibsen, and the philosophy of the over-man with Nietzsche.<sup>59</sup>

Since many of the literary establishment's most illustrious representatives had never looked favorably upon Nietzsche, situating the philosopher within the standard cosmopolitan cultural constellation promulgated by the avant-garde provided an ideal means of undermining a number of foreign influences at once. Yet, as we shall see, the representation of Nietzsche in French intellectual life would persist despite the apparent shift from literary cosmopolitanism to nationalism.

As Giovanni Gullace has observed, nationalism in France was aesthetic before it became political, and it is difficult to dissociate the trend away from

foreign literatures from what came to be known as the Latin Renaissance in French literature. Central to this new trend was the growing popularity of the Italian writer Gabriele d'Annunzio, whose work captured the attention not only of the avant-garde, but also the most distinguished critics of the Parisian literary establishment. Melchior de Vogüé, for example, who had been largely responsible for propagating the vogue for the Russian novel, now helped create an appetite for this young novelist by heralding a "Renaissance latine" in 1894. With naturalism still the primary literary enemy, it apparently mattered little which tools one selected to conduct battle against this "vulgar" and anticlerical aesthetic. Moreover, very influential critics like Ferdinand Brunetière and René Doumic praised d'Annunzio's work as contributing to this renaissance, which they believed would revitalize the classical spirit and rebuff the invasion of northern literature into France. "This Latin," explained Doumic, "comes to us at the moment when we are beginning to tire of what is called, in a word and en bloc: the literatures of the North." Even the avant-garde Henri Albert, who denied the extensive influence of Scandinavian literature in France, agreed that d'Annunzio was "one of our own, by his Latin temperament."<sup>90</sup> Ironically, many of those established critics who rejected Nietzsche did not recognize the explicitly Nietzschean quality of d'Annunzio's ideas, nor did they realize the kinship that the Italian often openly admitted with the German philosopher. Indeed, the Italian was an avid reader of the philosopher and incorporated his ideas directly into his works.

Some critics were very aware that certain Nietzschean qualities pervaded



many of d'Annunzio's writings and did not fail to associate the two foreigners. Indeed, d'Annunzio's own insatiable (and at times scandalous) lust for life and love, which made him quite a celebrity during his years in Paris, certainly seemed to illustrate his Nietzschean persona. Doumic, for example, was a notable exception among established critics by failing to be discouraged by the fact that in "philosophy d'Annunzio goes as far as the theories of Nietzsche."<sup>61</sup> Another critic, who clearly understood the connection with Nietzsche, in 1898 defended the Italian's decision to enter politics as having provided a new series of experiences with which to nourish his literary work: "Shouldn't the overman which is within him sample all emotions, become initiated in all struggles, aspire to all grandeurs?"<sup>62</sup>

Within avant-garde circles, the writings of d'Annunzio were often perceived as appropriate remedies for the invasion of foreign literature. The young writers of the *École romane*, who had been marginalized by the symbolism which dominated les petites revues, eagerly embraced the classical revival which was implied in the Latin Renaissance. Hugues Rebell, in his drift away from both Nietzsche and symbolism towards neo-classicism and royalism, praised most forms of literature which drew upon Mediterranean sources for inspiration. "The foreign influence which has been least deadly is that of Nietzsche," Rebell conceded on one occasion:

[B]ut would the German philosopher have approved of M. d'Annunzio imitating him, he who wanted to Mediterraneanize art and who, in advance, scattered all disciples, [and] prohibited all teaching? Besides, all that is fecund in the work of Nietzsche a writer like M. d'Annunzio will easily find in The Prince.<sup>63</sup>

One is offered merely a limited insight into the phenomenon of cultural nationalism by examining only the activities of cultural conservatives. This literary protectionism, which had been underway during the mid-1890s, was not an exclusively conservative literary strategy, but was an important function of leftist literature as well. The literary school known as "naturism" provides an excellent illustration of this leftist literary nationalism and classicism. Though the founders of naturism had existed marginally within the avant-garde throughout the 1890s, the official naturist manifesto drafted by Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier and Maurice Le Blond would not appear in Le Figaro until 1897. Against the idealism and esoterism of the dominant avant-garde aesthetic of symbolism, naturism advocated a return to Nature and a rediscovery of national traditions in literature. The arguments of Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier, a committed Dreyfusard, illustrate the extent to which literary nationalism was espoused by French writers regardless of their personal political positions. "The triumph of these foreigners [including Wagner, Nietzsche, and Ibsen] on the ethnic literature of our countries," he wrote, "appears to us more terrible and mauvaise than the invasion of conquering German armies."<sup>64</sup> In the face of the influx of foreign culture heroes, the naturists championed specifically French models, such as "Zola, Rodin, Claude Monet, there are the great artists frequented by the new men. This is an intellectual family. There survives the national spirit."<sup>65</sup>

As a means of distinction, the naturists would attempt to effect the same type of rupture with the past as the symbolists had--this time by declaring that

symbolism itself was dead! In a sense, naturism might be seen as naturalism's long-awaited revenge on symbolism. Le Blond, who would end up marrying the daughter of Zola, declared triumphantly: "Symbolism, whose only reason to exist was to oppose itself to the aesthetic of M. Zola . . . has ended its career."<sup>66</sup> The naturists' defense of Zola's aesthetic would naturally have its political complement in an overwhelming commitment to Dreyfusism and even socialism, thus producing a classical revival that did not emanate from the conservative pole. However, even these committed and anti-clerical Dreyfusards were not immune to the allure of a subtle anti-Semitism. As Maurice Le Blond wrote in late-1897, just before the Dreyfus Affair exploded with Zola's famous intervention:

This boring and foolish [Dreyfus] affair has just given the anti-Semitic movement a new impulsion and a renewal of partisans. . . . But I would like to see [the affair] raise itself, to assume the significance of a moral and intellectual conflict, to enter into a struggle with this barbarous, foreign, and Semitic religion, Christianity, which, for so many centuries, weighs so heavily on the Latin spirit.<sup>67</sup>

Deploring the "archaïsme" effected by the largely conservative École romane, Le Blond warned that "We are in a full literary crisis."<sup>68</sup> While the naturists would enjoy a brief popularity at the turn of the century, the literary war they waged on the symbolists--and on Nietzsche--would reverberate in the literary world well into the twentieth century.

Despite some attempts to discard Nietzsche with the bathwater of literary cosmopolitanism, many writers chose to employ the German as a weapon against the very cosmopolitanism for which others would reject him. This defensive strategy had been incorporated into the first discussions of the philosopher early

in the decade, thus providing the basis for the persistence of Nietzsche's relevance beyond the demise of the cosmopolitanism with which he had first been identified. What was it about Nietzsche that caused him to be preserved while others were readily discarded? There was certainly something deliciously subversive about a German who rejected German culture which might be retained by an avant-garde which had grown quite intolerant of foreign sources. The seemingly infinite malleability of the philosopher's writings and the elasticity of his image permitted his insertion into a number of new and sometimes mutually-exclusive cultural constellations; yet the particular configurations that were the result must be explained by the different logics at play during different states of the field. Perhaps more so than Ibsen, Strindberg, or Tolstoy, Nietzsche seemed to speak directly to the embattled avant-garde, the "untimely ones" who were yet to receive the recognition they thought they deserved. Preserving out of spite what the literary establishment had explicitly condemned might be seen as yet another subversive strategy to which the German was readily pressed.

The initial reading of Nietzsche suggests a partially-latent literary nationalism which had been present within the avant-garde at the same time that it celebrated foreign writers, lending some credence to Charle's notion of a strategic importation of foreign writers during the 1890s. As early as 1895 Léonie Bernardini expressed the same concern for the Germanization of national culture as François Coppée; yet her solution to the problem was quite different. Noting the penchant for French culture for which Nietzsche was becoming known, she wrote that "In these times

of intellectual 'Germanization,' perhaps we will be confused to see a German recall us to our national genius, to our former superiority over Europe."<sup>69</sup> Many specifically avant-garde writers found in the German an excellent expression of the classical French tradition that would once again become fashionable in Paris. "As a Frenchman of an old ancestry," Camille Mauclair explained, "I am much closer to Verhaeren than Mistral, to Nietzsche than Renouvier, and pay no attention to their [place of] birth."<sup>70</sup>

Within this process of national self-definition, Henri Albert had always made it a point to coopt Nietzsche not only into the avant-garde, but also into the French cultural tradition by continually indicating the contrasts between his philosophy and German culture. A native of Alsace, Albert never concealed his own contempt for Germany, which became translated easily into the cultural terms of the literary field. On one occasion, for example, Albert even refused to recognize the influence of Scandinavian writers on French letters: "Certainly the northern countries have some great writers, but they can only interest us from a purely literary point of view. . . . The moral preoccupations of Ibsen are not ours and the essential problems of his Germanic conscience hardly trouble the Mediterranean souls which we are about to create."<sup>71</sup> "In all the vicissitudes of his thought," Albert noted as early as 1893, it was Nietzsche who was "compelled to remain faithful to the cult of the French spirit."<sup>72</sup>

To the German "Bildung", this bizarre upbringing, made of byzantinism and half-barbarism, Nietzsche opposes ceaselessly the French thought which seems to have a future in Europe.<sup>73</sup>

In late-1900 Albert responded at length to a critic from La Revue franco-allemande ("who is I believe a Frenchman who learned German in Munich") who took exception to Albert's recent obituary of Nietzsche. "He wants to prove to me that the author of Zarathustra was a German (it is he who underlines) and that I am 'inconsiderately carried away.'"

Certainly Nietzsche was German, but he was one of those good Germans who would have preferred Bonaparte in Berlin, as in 1806, rather than Wertheimer and Wilhelm II in 1900. . . . I look at Germany, I look at Nietzsche, and the more I look the more I understand that they were not made for each other.<sup>74</sup>

The Mercure de France, where Albert published most of his essays, went to great lengths to reinforce the image that, in the cultural struggle between France and Germany, Nietzsche emerged as a staunch defender of the former. Indeed, on the occasion of the publication of the widely-read Pages choisies de Nietzsche, the Mercure featured a letter from the philosopher where he detailed his love of French literature and explicitly named such classical luminaries as Pascal, Montaigne, Molière, Corneille, and Racine, as well as such contemporaries as Bourget, Loti, Gyp, France, Lemaître, and Maupassant.<sup>75</sup>

For some writers, noting that Nietzsche had participated in the Franco-Prussian War, it became necessary to explain fully the circumstances of this involvement as they perceived them. The socialist journalist Henri Fouquier noted that after the defeat, the philosopher dared to "raise his voice in our favor in the triumphant Germany."

Whereas the Pomeranian pietists celebrated the fall of 'the modern Babylon'. . . Nietzsche saluted the vanquished France, placing its

spirit and its civilization well above those of the conquerors.<sup>76</sup>

Téodor de Wyzewa, who had converted to Christianity and French nationalism, would certainly not allow such an opportunity to expose Nietzsche as an enemy of France to pass. In one of his many essays for Le Temps, "Frédéric Nietzsche et le culte de Bismarck," Wyzewa stated how "I imagine that, in the secret of his soul, he had all his life admired and loved Bismarck as a good patriot, before discovering in him his ideal hero."

When in 1870 Germany made war on France, Professor Nietzsche, forgetting that he had come to Switzerland in coming to teach at Basel, eagerly took to arms.<sup>77</sup>

Another very common feature of the drive toward national distinction was to demonstrate how Nietzsche fit into and helped illuminate the French cultural tradition. Fouquier, for example, told readers of L'Echo de Paris that "Nietzsche can be called the Renan of Germany."<sup>78</sup> Another commentator, in concluding a brief discussion of the philosopher, wrote "let us leave this Germanic, coarse and lusty Renan. His work is German only by language; his thought is a sort of Franco-Slavic alloy."<sup>79</sup> According to Jacques Morland, "He liked the French spirit, Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Vauvenargues."<sup>80</sup> And for the young writer Henri Ghéon, Nietzsche was quite simply the "most French of German thinkers."<sup>81</sup>

By late-1900, the Vicomte de Colleville asked readers of La Plume: "Why has the French press hardly noted the disappearance of Frédéric Nietzsche?" Unlike Henri Fouquier, however, this author provided an answer: "After a mad infatuation

with all foreign works, fashion has come to ignore all which is not a national product."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, after most other foreign literary products fell into disfavor as an expression of their shift towards French literary distinction, Nietzsche was praised for his rejection of German culture and his embrace of French civilization. "Most recently." Émmanuel Signoret told readers of Le Saint-Graal, "the great Frédéric Nietzsche demonstrated that there was in each of [the French moralists] more real thought, more wisdom, and more profundity than all the German metaphysicians put together [rassemblés]."<sup>83</sup>

No other document of fin-de-siècle French intellectual life encapsulates more succinctly the shift in French cultural perception from cosmopolitanism towards literary protectionism than Jacques Morland's well-known "Enquête sur l'influence allemande", which appeared from late-1902 through early-1903 in the Mercure de France. In this survey Morland united a number of academic and independent writers from across the intellectual field in order to determine the degree and quality of influence that German culture enjoyed in France. Prospective respondents received the following broad questions: "What do you think of the German influence from the general intellectual point of view? Does this influence still exist and justify itself by its results?"<sup>84</sup>

This survey revealed that, while many French intellectuals overwhelmingly declared the death of the German influence in their country, an important exception was to be made in the case of Nietzsche. Significantly, many of the writers polled were collaborators on les petites revues of the avant-garde, and therefore perhaps



in a more likely position to affirm the presence and value of Nietzschean thought. From this perspective, the population of those polled appears to have been strategically selected to produce the image of an avant-garde dominance in intellectual life. Indeed, writers from the general literary market and the University were generally under-represented, permitting the plebiscite in favor of Nietzsche to emerge from this survey. Since the Société du Mercure de France had begun the publication of the complete works of Nietzsche four years earlier--one volume of which, The Genealogy of Morals, would be translated by Morland and his brother Jean Marnold--it is difficult to dissociate entirely this literary poll from the more commercial desire to maximize the sale of these volumes. That is, one might contend that Morland selected writers who would most likely reject the German influence but at times still speak favorably of Nietzsche.

"Apart from Nietzsche (who, all the same, is not completely a Frenchman)," the writer Marcel Drouin noted, "the new Empire has produced neither a great creator nor a great initiator."<sup>85</sup> As was so often the case in this survey, some writers admitted the previous foreign influence in French letters; yet they asserted the superior power of French culture to transform such external influences. The Belgian poet Émile Verhaeren, for example, noted that "the doctrines of Nietzsche are sliding bit by bit across all the new literature. Well then, why deplore these diverse influences--Scandinavian, Russian, or German--since French thought modifies them, nuances them, and often enriches them, since they adopt and consecrate them."<sup>86</sup>

For the non-academic philosopher and sociologist Jules de Gaultier, "Nietzsche named the French form 'the unique form of modern art' (Human, All Too Human). He saw no other to which to compare it except the Greek. One must remember that he gave to us in Beyond Good and Evil this testimony: 'the European nobility, that of sentiment, of taste, of manners, the nobility finally in the most elevated acceptance of the word is the work and invention of France.'<sup>87</sup> In short, Gaultier declared that, "against the German influence of Kant, we must accept the German influence of Nietzsche as sovereignly efficacious and beneficial."<sup>88</sup> Gaultier's friend, the sociologist Georges Palante, wrote that "[t]he Frenchman, with his superior qualities of nobility and of distinction that Nietzsche rightfully attributes to him . . . perhaps has too much fragility, almost politeness, to subvert [bouleverser] violently the delicate moral values."<sup>89</sup> "And among the great thinkers of these last years," Henri Mazel added, "I don't know if there is one of them whose influence has been more profound, more intense, more subversive [bouleversante], and perhaps, on the whole, more beneficial than Nietzsche."<sup>90</sup>

As we shall see in the following chapter, most academic respondents cited the influence of Nietzsche in fairly negative terms; yet, once again, Henri Lichtenberger proved an exception to this rule. Always willing to render the German philosopher familiar to the French public, Lichtenberger explained that "A Nietzsche was not afraid, following our disasters, to proclaim proudly that French culture is, like Greek culture, a marvelous 'success' in the annals of humanity. . . ."<sup>91</sup> No doubt, from a commercial standpoint, asserting the value of Nietzsche could easily

serve to boost the sales of his recent book on the philosopher.

This survey also illustrates the growing conservative audience for the writings of Nietzsche that coincided with the Dreyfus Affair, and which is examined in more detail in Chapter Six. According to Maurice Barrès, "[t]he great Germans, Goethe, Heine and (if you like) Nietzsche, needed to submit to the French influence."<sup>82</sup> Maurice Muret stressed that "I do not believe that contemporary French thought proceeds from German thought."

If I seek to determine which foreign writers had influenced contemporary French thought, [I come up with] the following names: Ruskin, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Nietzsche. Of these four writers only one is German: Nietzsche. Has he moreover exercised a very great influence on our thinkers? That is a point which merits clarification. I had thought for a long time that Maurice Barrès proceeded directly from the author of Thus Spoke Zarathustra.<sup>83</sup>

"I like in Nietzsche the theoretician of order and the defender of legitimate authority," Muret continued, "the apostle of hierarchy and discipline."<sup>84</sup>

From the relative center of the literary field writers warily attested to the influence of Nietzsche in French letters. The naturalist writer J.-H. Rosny, often cited as the heir-apparent of Zola, claimed that the German influence, "once upon a time considerable from the philosophical point of view, has always been weak and intermittent from the literary perspective. . . . German philosophy has yielded the pace to positivism and evolutionism. German literature has been impoverished for a long time. That leaves Nietzsche. He acts upon an elite, but without penetrating very profoundly, and in a rather retrograde sense."<sup>85</sup> The naturalist Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, who had condemned the unhealthy influence of

foreign writers such as Nietzsche several years earlier, stated that "[r]egarding Nietzsche, he has not to the present made his influence felt among us. He is, in other respects, a great mind, the greatest that Germany has known since Wagner."<sup>96</sup>

It was a German writer, Franz Blei, who commented on the French fascination with Nietzsche that was expressed in the 1902 Enquête. "One could almost say that the French are more ripe, for Nietzsche, than the Germans."<sup>97</sup> While it would be difficult to maintain that the French had a greater interest than the Germans in appropriating Nietzsche for their own programs, Blei's statement does convey the accurate assessment that, by 1902, the reception of the philosopher had spread beyond the confines of the Dreyfusard avant-garde to the whole literary world. As cosmopolitanism had itself disintegrated by the turn of the century, the representations of Nietzsche that were produced during the 1890s permitted the reputation of the philosopher to retain its attractiveness in a variety of different and often mutually-exclusive intellectual milieux. With the rise of neo-classicism and royalism after 1898--and the attendant appropriation of Nietzsche by many of these groups--it would be difficult to decide by 1902 which groups possessed the right to name the legitimate interpretation of the philosopher. With the leftist and rightist avant-gardes struggling over the correct representation of Nietzsche, the academic world would look on with disdain at the apparent dilettantism and flamboyancy of its rebellious literary counterpart.

### Notes

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3. Victor Basch, "Individualistes modernes: Friedrich Nietzsche," La Grande revue 1901 (16), 362.
4. Ibid., 381.
5. Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, "Frédéric Nietzsche: étude et fragments" Revue blanche 1897 (12), 62-65.
6. Jacques Morland, "Outre-Rhin: impressions et croquis" La Vogue 15 janvier 1900 (5), 207.
7. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche quoted in Henri Albert, "Journaux et revues" Mercure de France février 1894 (10), 188.
8. Ibid.
9. Téodor de Wyzewa, "La dernière oeuvre de Frédéric Nietzsche" Le Temps 5 décembre 1894, 3.
10. Léonce de Grandmaison, "La Religion de l'égoïsme: étude sur Frédéric Nietzsche" Études religieuses 1899 (81), 799.
11. Georges Valbert [Victor Cherbuliez], "Le Docteur Friedrich Nietzsche et ses griefs contre la société moderne" Revue des deux mondes 1 octobre 1892 (113), 679.
12. Ibid., 680.
13. Édouard Schuré, "L'Individualisme et l'anarchie en littérature: Frédéric Nietzsche et sa Philosophie" Revue des deux mondes 15 août 1895 (130), 777.
14. Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, "Frédéric Nietzsche: étude et fragments" Revue blanche 1897 (12), 59.
15. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Frédéric Nietzsche et le culte de Bismarck" Le Temps 21 décembre 1898, 2.
16. Jean Bourdeau, "Le Néo-cynisme aristocratique.--Frédéric Nietzsche" Journal des débats 20 avril 1893, 1.

17. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage janvier-juillet 1899 (17), 65.
18. Daniel Halévy, "Nietzsche et Wagner" Revue de Paris 15 novembre 1897, 302n. Cf. also Halévy, "Nietzsche et Wagner" Revue de Paris 1 décembre 1897, 649-674.
19. "Varia," Le Banquet juin 1892, 127.
20. "Le Mois" La Société nouvelle mai 1893 (17), 739.
21. Jean Bourdeau, "Le Néo-cynisme aristocratique," 1.
22. Jean Bourdeau, "La Philosophie de Nietzsche" Annales politiques et littéraires 9 septembre 1900, 164.
23. Henri Lichtenberger, "La littérature nietzschéenne," 3.
24. Henri Albert, "Le Livre suprême du créateur de valeurs nouvelles" Mercure de France janvier 1902 (41), 11.
25. Henri Albert, "Les oeuvres complètes de Nietzsche" Mercure de France novembre 1894 (7), 452.
26. Daniel Halévy, The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche J.M. Hone, trans. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), 249.
27. Ibid., 252.
28. Michel Espagne, "Lecteurs juifs de Nietzsche en France autour de 1900" in Dominique Bourel and Jacques Le Rider, eds., De Sils-Maria à Jérusalem: Les intellectuels juifs et Nietzsche (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 230-234.
29. Ibid., 270.
30. Ibid., 287.
31. Ibid., 357.
32. André Gide, Journal, 1889-1939 (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 136-137; Gide to Henri Ghéon, 26 octobre 1910, Correspondance, 1904-1944 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 765-766.
33. André Gide, "14 February, [1908]," The Journals of André Gide (New York: Knopf, 1949), I: 229.
34. Henri Albert, review of Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Mercure de France 1 novembre 1909, 170-171.

35. Jürgen Krause, "Martyrer" und "Prophet": Studien zum Nietzsche-Kult in der bildenden Kunst der Jahrhundertwende (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984).

36. Cf. Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, "Frédéric Nietzsche: étude et fragments" Revue blanche 1897, 57, 63, 68. These sketches are normally not included in collections of Vallotton's work.

37. As Gide wrote in a January 1907 entry of his journal, "A card invites me to come see at [Charmoy's] studio the busts of Nietzsche, Beethoven, and Zola." Cf. Gide, Journal, 1889-1939 (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 232; E. Bénézit, Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1976), II: 678.

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40. Bourdieu. Distinction, 192, 193.

41. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Frédéric Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien" La Revue bleue 7 novembre 1891 (48), 586.

42. Henri Mazel, "Les deux philosophes" L'Ermitage juin 1894 (8), 352.

43. Mme. L[éonie]. Bernardini, "Les idées de Frédéric Nietzsche" Revue de Paris 1 janvier 1895 (2), 199n.

44. André Gide to Henri Ghéon, 4 septembre 1900, Correspondance, 1897-1903 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 295.

45. "Gide (André). Brouillon autographe de deux pages d'une Lettre à Madame Förster-Nietzsche. S.l.n.d. [1907]." in Bibliothèque de Madame Louis Solvay (Bruxelles: Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 1965), III: 136.

46. Henri Albert, "Frédéric Nietzsche" Mercure de France octobre 1900 (36), 44.

47. Téodor de Wyzewa, "La jeunesse de Frédéric Nietzsche" Revue des deux mondes 1 février 1896 (133), 688-689.

48. Édouard Schuré, "L'Individualisme et l'anarchie en littérature: Frédéric Nietzsche et sa Philosophie" Revue des deux mondes 15 août 1895 (130), 782.

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50. See the translator's note for "Frédéric Nietzsche: l'homme et l'écrivain" by Louis [Ludwig] Stein, Revue bleue 9 décembre 1893, 748n.

51. Louis [Ludwig] Stein, "Frédéric Nietzsche: l'homme et l'écrivain" Revue bleue 9 décembre 1893, 749.

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53. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Documens nouveaux sur Frédéric Nietzsche" Revue des deux mondes 15 juillet 1899 (154), 454.

54. On the dandyism of Maurice Barrès, Cf. Jerrold Seigel, Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930 (New York: Viking Press, 1986), 280-285.

55. Ibid.

56. Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, 699.

57. François Coppée, contribution to Jean Finot, "Enquête sur l'esprit français" Revue des revues juillet 1898 (26), 7.

58. Christophe Charle, "Champ littéraire français et importations étrangères: de la vogue du roman russe à l'émergence d'un nationalisme littéraire (1886-1902)" in Philologiques III M. Espagne and M. Werner, eds., (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'homme, forthcoming).

59. René Doumic, "Le bilan d'une génération" Revue des deux mondes 15 janvier 1900 (157), 440-441.

60. Henri Albert, "Chronique" Le Centaure 1896 (1), 129.

61. René Doumic, Les Jeunes: Études et portraits (Paris: Perrin et cie., 1896), 249.

62. François Carry, quoted in Gullace, 140. This statement originally appeared in Le Correspondant 25 janvier 1898, 269.

63. Hugues Rebell, "Défense de l'Italie" L'Ermitage novembre 1897 (15), 313.

64. Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér, "Manifeste" La Revue naturaliste mars 1897 (1), 3.



65. Ibid., 5. One might argue that Maurice Le Blond's series on "Zola devant les jeunes" was, among other things, a literary strategy designed to optimize the prestige of the naturist school through bold associations with Zola, who became even more of a celebrity after his "J'Accuse" letter in Aurore. Cf. Le Blond, "Zola devant les jeunes" La Plume 15 février 1898 (9), 106-109; 1 mars 1898, 141-144; 15 mars 1898, 168-172; 1 avril 1898, 203-207; 15 avril 1898, 237-242; 1 mai 1898, 274-278. See also the protest against Le Blond's series by Emmanuel Delbousquet, "A propos de M. Émile Zola et des naturistes" La Plume 1 avril 1898 (9), 201-203.

66. Maurice Le Blond, "Zola devant les Jeunes" La Plume 15 février 1898 (9), 108.

67. Maurice Le Blond, "Les idées de ce Mois: l'affaire Dreyfus" La Revue naturiste décembre 1897 (2), 174-175.

68. Maurice Le Blond, "La crise littéraire et le naturisme" La Plume 1 avril 1897 (8), 206-210.

69. Mme. L. Bernardini, "Les idées de Frédéric Nietzsche", 223.

70. Camille Mauclair, contribution to Jean Finot, "Enquête sur l'esprit Française" La Revue des revues juillet 1898 (26), 17.

71. Henri Albert, "Chronique" Le Centaure 1896 (1), 129.

72. Henri Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche (1)," 56-57.

73. Henri Albert, "Frédéric Nietzsche" Mercure de France octobre 1900 (36), 46-47.

74. Henri Albert, "Lettres allemandes" Mercure de France décembre 1900 (36), 843-844.

75. Cf. "Une Lettre de Nietzsche sur la littérature française" Mercure de France juin 1899 (30), 854-855.

76. Nestor [Henri Fouquier], "Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Echo de Paris 30 août 1900, 1.

77. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Frédéric Nietzsche et le culte de Bismarck" Le Temps 21 décembre 1898, 2.

78. Nestor, 1.

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80. Jacques Morland, "Frédéric Nietzsche," 396.

81. Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du Mois: Les lectures du Mois" L'Ermitage décembre 1902 (25), 464.

82. Vicomte de Colleville, "Frédéric Nietzsche et nos professeurs d'énergie" La Plume 1 octobre 1900 (11), 618.

83. Émmanuel Signoret, "André Gide et Francis Viéllé-Griffin" Le Saint-Graal 1898, (no. 2), 434.

84. Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France novembre 1902 (44), 294.

85. Michel Arnaud, contribution to Morland, 298.

86. Émile Verhaeren, contribution to Morland, 379.

87. Jules de Gaultier, contribution to Morland, 330.

88. Ibid., 332.

89. Georges Palante, contribution to Morland, 364.

90. Henri Mazel, contribution to Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France décembre 1902 (44), 654.

91. Henri Lichtenberger, contribution to Morland, 344.

92. Maurice Barrès, contribution to Morland, 301.

93. Maurice Muret, contribution to Morland, 358.

94. Ibid., 359.

95. J.-H. Rosny, contribution to Morland, 376.

96. Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, contribution to Morland, 377.

97. Franz Blei, "La France jugée à l'étranger" translated by Lucile Dubois Mercure de France septembre 1903 (47), 814.

**PART TWO:**  
**ON THE LAND OF EDUCATION**

As I lay asleep, a sheep ate of the ivy wreath on my brow--ate and said, "Zarathustra is no longer a scholar." Said it and strutted away proudly. A child told it to me.

I like to lie here where the children play, beside the broken wall, among the thistles and red poppies. I am still a scholar to the children, and also to the thistles and red poppies. They are innocent even in their malice. But to the sheep I am no longer a scholar; thus my lot decrees it--bless it!

--Friedrich Nietzsche  
Thus Spoke Zarathustra

**CHAPTER FOUR:  
ON THE PREJUDICES OF PHILOSOPHERS:  
PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE ON NIETZSCHE, 1898-1908**

Having sacred tasks, such as improving, saving, or redeeming mankind--carrying the deity in his bosom and being the mouthpiece of imperatives from the beyond--with such a mission a man naturally stands outside all merely intellectual valuations: he himself is sanctified by such a task, he himself is a type of a higher order!

--Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

Scholars have typically found it necessary to examine the reception of Nietzsche by writers involved in self-consciously creative projects on the intellectual field, those agents who by inclination or by necessity operated within that sphere of cultural production identified with the free inquiry and expression of the artist. Hence the proliferation of excellent scholarship devoted to the appropriation of Nietzsche by Georges Bataille, André Gide, André Malraux, and other notable French writers. However, to restrict one's analysis to this literary sector of intellectual life ignores the important role played by academics in cultural production, for the "freedom" of the artist can only exist in relation to its opposite--that is, against the background of rules, conventions, and institutions which define the sphere of the university. In France this tension between the literary world and the university sphere became exacerbated during the 1890s as representatives of both experienced crises of identity and purpose, leading to significant transformations which would inevitably structure the manner in which each would perceive the other. Just as avant-garde writers shifted from the detached and

"decadent" position of l'art pour l'art during the 1880s to the more committed stance of l'art social by the early-1890s, the academic community came to redefine the meaning of the profession, as well as the requirements for its own reproduction, according to the liberal social perspective of the Third Republic. Rather than paralleling the movements of the literary avant-garde, the universitaires effected a polarization of the intellectual field between themselves, the dominant and culturally consecrated academics, and the culturally dominated literati of the artistic sphere.<sup>2</sup> This struggle manifested itself as a conflict of classifications and of the right to speak legitimately in the intellectual world.

The field of French academic philosophy at the turn of the century was structured to anticipate and deter the intrusion of its other--that is, the literary--within its borders and among its constituents. This pre-existing opposition between literary and academic classifications of legitimate philosophy most succinctly explains the problematics of Nietzsche's reception by academic philosophers: while the literary avant-garde in France had championed the ideas of Nietzsche throughout the turn of the century, academic philosophers would resist and finally condemn what they perceived as yet another dangerous "seduction" of the literary world. The latter constructed Nietzsche as an object of knowledge to legitimate and facilitate the projects in which they held the greatest interest, not least of which concerned the reproduction of the corps of those accorded the right to profess legitimate philosophy. Hence, despite the rhetoric of scientific detachment and rigor so predominant on the university field, the various readings of Nietzsche by

academic philosophers were more apt to reveal the objective social relations and stakes in a complicated intellectual contest than a disinterested consideration of the texts themselves.

### **The Structural Transformation of the Philosophical Field**

The experience of Nietzschean thought among academic philosophers can be understood by reference to the highly structured space of power relations constituting the philosophical field, which itself must be explained by a brief history of French philosophy in general. The teaching of official philosophy in France owes its shape to the efforts of Victor Cousin (1792-1867), whose disciples controlled philosophical discourse through the end of the nineteenth century. Excluded from the university curriculum under Napoleon I, philosophy was re-instituted in 1809 in its medieval categories of logic, metaphysics, and morality. To these divisions Cousin added in 1830 the subfields of psychology and the history of philosophy, innovations which would remain intact until the suppression of philosophy under the Second Empire. Re-established once again by Victor Duruy in 1863, academic philosophy would retain the fundamental structure conferred by Cousin, and would remain largely unchanged until the sweeping pedagogical reforms of 1902.<sup>3</sup>

The ascendancy of the Third Republic prompted a reformulation of the purpose of education. With the struggle between the monarchy and the republic a moot issue by the early 1870s, the related conflict between Catholic and revolutionary France was still very much alive and for the next thirty years threatened to undermine the stability of the liberal republic. The primary intellectual

weapon of the liberals against the Catholics was rationalism, which had appealed to many in the intelligentsia. This elite proved too small a minority upon which to found a lasting political regime, however, and, as the liberals gradually admitted, the social basis of liberalism had to be expanded if they were to persevere, an objective most fully realized through the wholesale restructuring and expansion of public education.<sup>4</sup>

As the central discipline of the educational system, academic philosophy cast itself not merely as the conscience of all scientific and university activity, but as the decisive agency for the promotion of public morality. Shaped by the long-standing conflict in France between the Catholic Church and the secular thrust of the Enlightenment, this drive toward a morale laïque was demonstrated time and again by the most pivotal figures in the history of French academic philosophy. The legacy left by Victor Cousin, for example, was not merely the structure of nineteenth-century philosophical pedagogy but its ethical content as well. While drawing upon a variety of intellectual traditions (hence, the name 'eclecticism'), Cousin was most intrigued by the work of Immanuel Kant, which provided the foundation for French moral philosophy through the end of the century. Cousin adopted the predicates of Kant's moral theory and fashioned them into a philosophy which, because it depended upon ideal moral goals, was called "spiritualism."<sup>5</sup> This neo-Kantian philosophy was meant to bypass religion by grounding morality on a purely human basis, contributing in no small manner to the Church's censure of Cousin's efforts and the elimination of philosophy from

public education during the Second Empire.

Spiritualism and the specter of Kant would dominate much of French academic philosophy through the First World War, and was abetted significantly by the efforts of Charles Renouvier (1815-1903). While reformulating certain aspects of the Cousinian heritage, after 1871 Renouvier pressed to make moral philosophy the foundation of a broad-based and republican educational system. To this end Renouvier founded with his associate François Pilon the journal Critique philosophique in 1872 (which would later become L'Année philosophique).<sup>6</sup> By the turn of the century, however, the influence of Renouvier and his revue d'école waned as academics searched for broader modes of expression.<sup>7</sup>

Academics in general during the Third Republic accepted as an article of faith that the progress of "science" was closely linked with the advance of "democracy." As Ringer notes, the "reforms that ultimately brought French academics significant increases of income and status were the work, after all, of a left liberal regime that came closer to a democracy than its predecessors."<sup>8</sup> Democracy and all specifically republican values had to be founded upon rational choice, and therefore upon science; hence the need to expunge from serious philosophical discourse all taint of subjective and literary distortion. While it is true that spiritualism retained its influence on the philosophical field, a noticeable trend towards positivism, abetted by the efforts of Émile Littré, occurred among academic philosophers during the 1890s which, rather than necessarily



undermining neo-Kantianism, proved to be its moral and political complement: both strands maintained that humankind has and will continue to progress towards the agreement of all people upon certain rational principles--primarily, those upon which Republican institutions had been based. The competition between these two groups circumscribed, according to the logic of the philosophical field, the legitimate space of philosophical discourse within the confines of the academy.<sup>9</sup>

Coexistent with the project of securing a moral, cohesive and well-ordered public sphere was the reduction of what the French call individualisme. A legacy of the Enlightenment emphasis on the use of individual reason, the exaltation of the individual ego over and above the superior interests of society was even thought to have caused the Revolution itself, and therefore threatened to disrupt all future social formations. As a result, individualisme to this day carries the primarily negative connotations of the uncivil, the antisocial, and the egoistic.<sup>10</sup> In addition, individualisme was perceived as the cause of such social disturbances as anarchism, which manifested itself during the early 1890s and culminated with the assassination of the president of the Republic. Hence the popular epithet of the turn of the century, anarchie intellectuelle, a conceptual disorder often invoked to discredit marginal writers attempting to break into the legitimate circles of academe. As such, liberals and conservatives alike perceived a one-to-one correlation between intellectual individualisme and social dissolution, and would use this correspondence as an object of critique and a rationale for exclusion.

French academic philosophers at the turn of the century described their

past in negative terms, stressing the intellectual renaissance which was linked to the development of a republican educational system. Alphonse Darlu noted how before the Third Republic "the philosophy of the lycées and even of the faculties tended to be literary":

[After 1870] little by little, in the classes, in the academic chairs, a new philosophy penetrated, which went to the heart of the problems of the present, and touched all things to the core [*fond*].<sup>11</sup>

Frédéric Paulhan likewise contrasted the contemporary scene with the previous two decades, citing "the disappearance of the former schools, the calmer spirit of discussion, the diminution of polemic, and the decrease of general discussions without criticism losing any of its real efficiency."<sup>12</sup> The turn of the century thus proved a "golden age" for academic philosophy, for under the Republic's educational reforms philosophy professors enjoyed increases in prestige and income. Significantly the very profile of the philosopher had changed dramatically towards the end of the century, with the enterprise itself becoming the business of specialized professors. Before 1850 many philosophers, such as Comte, Maine de Biran, and Renouvier, were "amateurs" who operated outside of the university; yet the development of a liberal republican pedagogy and the establishment of the philosophy class as a requirement during the final year at the lycée conferred a new social function upon the professors. No longer a group of detached intellectuals circulating among the literati, professors of philosophy became the executors of a distinct social mission: to educate French youth in the republican virtues of reason, morality, and social responsibility.<sup>13</sup> This autodefinition

contributed greatly to, and in fact depended upon the polarization of the intellectual field between academics and hommes de lettres, for much that was posited as a virtue of academia implied the rejection of its literary opposite.

The acceptance of this rather heady social duty had a significant effect upon the dynamics of the philosophical field both within and without the classroom. Jean-Louis Fabiani notes the predominance of the metaphor of "couronnement" which abounded in the self-justifying discourse of academic philosophy: Alfred Fouillée, for example, spoke of "the necessity of crowning education, for students of all sections, with a year of serious philosophy," and Alphonse Darlu defined the philosophy class as the "class which crowns, which perfects secondary education."<sup>14</sup> The crowning position of philosophy in the lycée was at once a prize to be jealously guarded, a symbol of academic struggles past and a prefiguration of conflicts to come, as well as a bold statement of the superiority of philosophy in the hierarchy of public education. Regardless of the truth of this vision, as Fabiani observes, the essential fact is that the philosophers firmly believed in this hierarchy, the conviction of which served as a defense mechanism for the reproduction of the corps of university philosophers.

The Third Republic was also the occasion for the emergence of the academic philosophical author, an intellectual category which was greatly facilitated by supportive publishing firms and the founding of specifically academic philosophical journals. While the maison d'édition of Jean-Baptiste Baillière provided a forum for many academic philosophers and other professional

intellectuals, the efforts of the publisher Félix Alcan helped form the formal public image of the university philosopher. A normalien agrégé and close friend of the psychologist Théodule Ribot and the historian Gabriel Monod, Alcan possessed the same type of cultural capital as any philosopher of the epoch, and as publisher permitted the universitaires to have a degree of influence over the diffusion of their ideas throughout the intellectual field. At Alcan academic philosophers could contribute to the collection "Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine," where a successful book became an important element in the career of the university philosopher. Above all, writers sought the "Alcan-effect" which conferred legitimacy upon their scholarship within the philosophical field, thereby situating them firmly on the dominant pole of the intellectual field and securing the legitimacy of academic philosophy on the broader social field.<sup>15</sup> The accumulation of these distinctive signs were requisite for those venturing to speak of philosophy within the sphere of academe.

Before 1876 there were no journals devoted exclusively to university philosophy; instead philosophers wrote either for revues d'école such as Renouvier's L'Année philosophique, or for politico-literary reviews such as the Revue des deux mondes. Ribot sharply criticized the extra-university traditions of spiritualism and positivism as represented by Renouvier and Littré, and planned a journal which would be non-sectarian and open to a variety of philosophical currents. Thus the foundation of La Revue philosophique in 1876, devoted to presenting "a complete and exact account of the current philosophical movement,"

which included, however, an important provision:

The Revue will only exclude articles from outside the philosophical movement, that is to say which, being devoted to doctrines already known, rejuvenated only by a talent for literary exposition, will have nothing to teach the readers.<sup>16</sup>

As Fabiani observes, this restriction was important for the delimitation of the field of legitimate philosophical discourse: the Revue philosophique would only publish the works of authors situated within the philosophical field (thus demanding the themes of research and rigor as philosophical novelties), and would exclude those of purely literary writers. As an instrument of the professionalization of philosophy, then, the Revue would use its own discretion when deciding the limits of the "philosophical movement," even though this appellation could easily refer to a collection of writings exceeding that produced by philosophes de profession.<sup>17</sup>

By the early 1890s a group of young academic philosophers, Élie Halévy, Xavier Léon, and Léon Brunschvicg, founded the Revue de métaphysique et de morale as a vehicle for the neo-spiritualism and academic rationalism then emerging on the university field. The founders paid an ironic homage to the two existing philosophical reviews: the Renouvierist Critique philosophique, they claimed, had played an important role but "is today secondary," while the Revue philosophique faithfully reflected "in its hospitable eclecticism the movement of philosophical ideas." This latter praise was only ironic, however, for the new journal had something very different in mind, something which would be more purely "philosophical":

Here, we would like to do something else. In a more circumscribed

framework, we would like to give more relief to the properly called philosophical doctrines; we would like to leave the side of the special sciences, [which are] more or less neighbors of philosophy, to restore to public attention the general theories of thought and action from which it has turned away for a period and which has nevertheless always been, under the currently discredited name of metaphysics, the only source of rational beliefs.<sup>18</sup>

The eclectic Revue philosophique thus became marginalized by the young professors of La Revue de métaphysique, thereby establishing Kantian epistemology as the dominant pole of the field of legitimate philosophy. In an article on German philosophy, J. Benrubi noted--perhaps with some reference to his own position--that "metaphysics is a problem for man, a science for the overman."<sup>19</sup> By the 1890s, then, the philosophical field had been constituted to structure the legitimacy of its content and constituents along strictly professional and scientific lines, and featured mechanisms to ensure the exclusion of those who were not fit to participate in legitimate philosophical discourse. This process of professionalization served as well to impose a uniformity of academic perception which, while informed by the social dynamics of the philosophical corps, would greatly structure their perception of Nietzsche and those who championed his thought.

### **Philosophy and/on the Literary Field: A Struggle of Classifications**

The "journalist," the paper slave of the day, triumphs  
over the professor in all matters pertaining to culture.  
--Nietzsche<sup>20</sup>

Of the highest priority for these vessels of republican ideals was the need

to combat the irrationalist, anti-intellectualist, and individualist currents flowing from the literary avant-garde--thus forming one of the crucial oppositional axes between the professeur and the homme de lettres, between science and literature.<sup>21</sup> In fact, a major source of the continuing autodefinition of these academics depended upon the strict description of what they were not. While the structure of the intellectual field itself became polarized along such rigid lines, the central opposition of concern here is the disagreement between universitaires and écrivains over the legitimate definition of philosophy. Despite attempts to ensure the professionalization of the discipline, many agents on the literary field were interested in philosophy, and literary journals typically included a section of reviews of philosophical texts, often contributed by intellectuals pursuing double existences within the literary realm and the academic field.

University philosophy found an appreciative audience among the culturally dominant politico-literary journals, such as La Revue des deux mondes and La Revue bleue, which experienced a shift in emphasis from neo-Kantian spiritualism during the 1880s to psychology and sociology during the 1890s. This apparent proximity and unofficial affiliation did not represent, however, a space of peaceful reprieve from the struggle for recognition: university philosophers tended to delimit the boundaries of acceptable discourse, especially when it came to issues somewhat external to the field itself but about which, nevertheless, they felt most qualified to speak. Alphonse Darlu, for example, framed his complaint regarding the literary critic Ferdinand Brunetière in the spatial metaphors of the field: "the

literary critic of the Revue des deux mondes," he wrote, "progressively enjoys making excursions, one could say incursions into the domain of social questions."<sup>22</sup> Perhaps in response, the noted critic Émile Faguet argued that the concern with great philosophical issues is "not only particular to philosophers, but to all distinguished minds at this moment," after which, as an obvious affront to the autodeinition of the mostly Dreyfusard philosophical corps, he proceeded to laud the philosophical contributions of such anti-Dreyfusard critics as Brunetière, Jules Lemaître, and E. Melchior de Vogüé.<sup>23</sup> Even among the dominant literary reviews, therefore, the conflict between acceptable philosophy and literature remained a source of tension, and often became a battle over intellectual positions.

The structurally dominated journals of the literary avant-garde clarify the disjunction between academic philosophy and its literary counterpart. While the Mercure de France and La Revue blanche indeed featured philosophy sections, the number of books reviewed remained small and these were usually contributed by non-academic commentators contesting the legitimacy of university philosophy. In the case of the Mercure, for example, from the 1890s through the First World War philosophical texts were reviewed primarily by Louis Weber (anti-positivist), Georges Palante (anti-solidarist), and Jules de Gaultier (anti-positivist and anti-Kantian), while La Revue blanche, closely associated with the anarchism of the early-1890s, featured reviews by such opponents of university philosophy as Maurice Barrès and Charles Péguy.<sup>24</sup>

As Fabiani and Ringer note, certain representatives of the literary avant-



garde had been bitter opponents of university philosophy. The protagonist of Paul Bourget's psychological novel Le disciple (1889), for example, attributed his moral deviance to the influence of his lycée philosophy professor. After being employed as a tutor by an aristocratic family, Robert Greslou seduces the already-engaged daughter of the house and, having agreed to jointly commit suicide, allows his lover to die alone. While awaiting trial for her death, Greslou notifies his lycée professor Adrian Sixte that his teachings indirectly led to the moral aberrations of his "disciple." Sixte, whose philosophy is associated with those of Kant, Herbert Spencer, Hippolyte Taine, Ernest Renan, Émile Littré, and the psychologist Théodule Ribot, asserted that concepts such as God and Good and Evil are mere conventions, for human volition itself is determined by natural laws. Hence against the "nihilistic" dangers of science and "positivism," Bourget argued for free will and religious faith.<sup>25</sup>

This conservative literary attack on the teaching of philosophy was rearticulated in 1897 in Maurice Barrès' novel Les déracinés; yet here the author widened his scope to cite the links between academic philosophy and the Third Republic. Seven youths from Nancy, Barrès's tale begins, were profoundly affected by the philosophy class during their last year at the lycée; yet only three of these young men would emerge with their moral health intact. Their philosophy professor, Paul Bouteiller, was an enthusiast of Kantian philosophy as well as the Radical Republic, and corrupted his pupils by instilling in them a desire for cosmopolitan intellectual distinction rather than pursuing useful careers in their own

province of Lorraine. Thus "uprooted" from their "soil" and "milieu" they moved to Paris, where four succumb to vice, dishonesty, theft, and even murder as a result of their faulty moral education. In an important essay on this novel, the conservative and independent philosopher Jules de Gaultier stressed how "Le Kantisme under the form of morality is nothing other than a religion . . . an attitude of utility for a social group which is not ours."<sup>26</sup>

It is apparent, then, that many on the literary field resented the monopoly of academics over the legitimate definition of philosophy, and sought to subvert this dominant classification when possible: this is aptly illustrated by the surveys conducted by the Mercure de France on the German influence in France. The first enquête, conducted by Alfred Vallette in 1895, featured responses by twenty-four notable French writers from across the intellectual field, though clearly the majority hailed from the literary sphere.<sup>27</sup> When reproducing this survey in 1902 Jacques Morland (who, incidentally, was an admirer of Nietzsche) greatly expanded the base of contributors beyond the literary field, and even divided them roughly along disciplinary lines as he perceived them. Significantly, Morland made no distinction between professional and amateur philosophers, grouping both under the rubric "Philosophie, Littérature," thus reinforcing the proximity and inherent relationship, as perceived by agents on the literary field, of the two fields. Here one finds the opinions of committed littérateurs and opponents of the University such as Barrès, Léon Daudet, and Pierre Lasserre appearing next to such consecrated academics as Alfred Binet, Alfred Espinas, and Alfred Fouillée. In addition to the inclusion of

such polar opposites in the enquête one finds several intellectuals who straddled the fields of literature and the academy, those writers such as Jules de Gaultier, Georges Palante, and Louis Weber who functioned on the nebulous and often arbitrarily-invoked perimeter between the two warring camps.<sup>28</sup> Much to the chagrin of the philosophy professors, then, Morland blurred the boundary between literature and philosophy altogether, a gesture which partly illustrates the ways in which the ideas of Nietzsche were accepted on the literary field as "philosophy" and rejected by the academics as mere literature.

Several representatives of the literary avant-garde used this survey as an opportunity to blast the dominant Kantian paradigm in French academic philosophy, and to laud the growing influence of Nietzsche on the intellectual field. According to Jules de Gaultier, "against the German influence of Kant, we must accept the German influence of Nietzsche as sovereignly efficacious and beneficial."<sup>29</sup> Remy de Gourmont declared with obvious pleasure that "[f]or philosophy, the influence of Kant is decreasing; that of Nietzsche augments. . . . Thus our philosophy, German since Kant, will no doubt remain German thanks to Nietzsche."

But les nietzschéens do not seem to have the servile spirit of the Kantians; Beyond Good and Evil is for them less a gospel than an introduction to future gospels, multifarious and bold in its contradictions. Nietzsche well understood is a principle of liberty and of intellectual royalty. The categorical imperative of Kant has made of philosophy for one hundred years the servant of Christianity; one teaches elsewhere the same identical moral truths in the lycées and seminars.<sup>30</sup>

Against this attack from the literary field, two academic philosophers also raised

the subject of Nietzsche. For Frédéric Paulhan, "Nietzsche is today in the process of becoming influential, and this will not be an evil if we know how to serve ourselves his ideas."<sup>31</sup> Théodule Ribot, the editor of La Revue philosophique was less charitable: "Nietzsche, whose influence on contemporaries is very great, can with difficulty count as a German genius: moreover he is rather a penseur than a systématique."<sup>32</sup>

When considering the power relationships of the intellectual field, however, it is apparent this enquête operated on a second and more fundamental level, for the actual results are less illuminating than the classification of those called upon to judge. While it is perhaps tempting to accept this taxonomy at face-value and conclude that the literary field was generally a more open-minded and inclusive community of free intellectuals, such an assessment is only possible if one accepts the illusion of the literary field itself. Ever aware of the dominance of academics on the field, this literary classification of intellectuals was designed to take advantage of the prestige and cultural capital of the universitaires by levelling the science/literature distinction--thus elevating the status of literary opinion to that of the academic, and even reducing the status of the academics to the literary--maintaining throughout the illusion of inclusiveness and freedom of the literary field. If the space of cultural production is to be conceived as the field of positions of power relations among intellectuals competing for cultural legitimacy, the 1902 enquête may be seen as a subversion or effacement (for a time, at least) of the hitherto accepted structure of the intellectual field. Individuals possessing vastly

different positions on the actual field of culture appear next to each other only by virtue of the apparently objective and scientific gesture of alphabetical order. The academic philosopher Frédéric Paulhan thus appeared between the rather literary philosopher/sociologist Georges Palante and the spiritualist writer Joséphin Péladan, while under the heading of "Sciences" the free-lance crowd psychologist Gustave Le Bon appeared between C.A. Laisant, examinateur à l'École Polytechnique, and Edmond Perrier, directeur du Muséum d'histoire naturelle. This strategy is even more obvious given the inclusion of the poet and essayist Henri Mazel, who had recently published a work entitled La Synergie sociale, alongside Émile Durkheim and Charles Gide under the category of "Sociologie et économie politique." This enquête, then, directed and published by members of the literary field, was a bold assertion (in the face of the culturally dominant and legitimate academics) of the right of the dominated class of écrivains to posit legitimate judgments of the intellectual field. It is at once a recognition of the legitimacy of the game of cultural production and a reminder of the literati's right to participate in it.

It is not surprising that academic philosophers generally did not solicit the opinions of those intellectuals occupying positions within the literary realm when conducting specifically philosophical (and therefore internal) enquêtes; nor did writers and poets typically call upon academics when conducting opinion polls of a specifically literary nature. As Fabiani demonstrates, legitimate philosophers tended to transform all disciplinary debates into a simple choice: one was either for or against "philosophy" as they defined it.<sup>33</sup> Aside from this apparently simple

provision, most academics saw themselves as participating in a field of free inquiry: "there are no longer compact schools," Paulhan remarked in 1900, "but sympathetic groups."<sup>34</sup> The psychologist Alfred Binet conducted a survey of the academic philosophical community in 1908 which illustrated the persistence of the above cited oppositions between literature and the university. According to Binet's findings many professors noted a sharp decline of metaphysics in favor of the ascendent positivist method. Generally, they observed that the teaching of philosophy had become "less literary" and "more scientific" as it became for students "a preparation for life."<sup>35</sup> And yet one may discern the presence of an illusion which had hitherto operated on the literary field, namely, that of the intellectual freedom of the professors. "What strikes me," noted one respondent, "is that at this moment there is no academic orthodoxy. . . . the most diverse systems are represented."<sup>36</sup> Another echoed this sentiment:

The exposition of ideas is less dogmatic, the professor has more liberty, there is no State philosophy anymore, and the educative function of philosophy interests more.<sup>37</sup>

This theme of intellectual freedom was a founding myth of republican philosophy, the result of the autonomization of the philosophical field as it became, according to Fabiani, the site of "competition for the monopoly of the legitimate definition of philosophical activity."<sup>38</sup> Into the midst of this long-standing struggle entered the ideas of Nietzsche, which posed a significant challenge to established modes of philosophical thinking.

### Classifications and Constructions

Nietzschéism has been subjected to the same test as Hegelianism. And no doubt here and there philosophical themes have served especially as pretexts to cover up a new offensive on the part of barbarism.

--Léon Brunschvicg<sup>39</sup>

The madness of Nietzsche is an argument neither against his literary genius, nor against his philosophical genius. The philosophers, the eternal professors of philosophy, scoffed at by Schopenhauer and Taine, concede the first point, but not the second.

--Remy de Gourmont<sup>40</sup>

The tacit classificatory system of French academic philosophy, motivated as much by the differential relationships conducted with the literary field as by the need to preserve and reproduce the corps of professional philosophers, highly prefigured the manner in which the ideas of Nietzsche would be received and appropriated. It will be shown that, given the power conditions and specific logic of the philosophical field, Nietzsche was never an epistemological object given in any definite sense to academic philosophers; instead it was necessary to construct Nietzsche as an object of inquiry in order to make him function strategically on the field of discourse. This is not to assert that Nietzsche was for these professors a purely imaginary figure; rather, given the social tension between writers and scholars, Nietzsche came to academic philosophers already bearing the taint of the literary avant-garde. Nietzsche's own iconoclastic poetic language only heightened the general association of the philosopher with the avant-garde. An academic appraisal of Nietzsche therefore usually carried the implicit and

supplementary social commentary on the state of the intellectual world.

In the previous pages I have sketched the parameters of French philosophical discourse as it was structured before the introduction of Nietzsche, a schema which illustrates the various levels of the game of cultural production and the numerous intellectual, professional, social, and political stakes involved. In this section, then, I will map the field of philosophical discourse on Nietzsche as it was articulated by its most celebrated representatives and the lesser-known academics of the time.<sup>41</sup> At times silence and the curious omissions in discourse explain much more than speech, and the relative silence of academic philosophers concerning Nietzsche during the 1890s certainly affords insight into the implicit classifications at work. From 1891 through 1898 Nietzsche, having earned the laurels of many prominent essayists and poets, seemed to be the expressed property of the avant-garde fraction of the literary world. Even Henri Lichtenberger's La Philosophie de Nietzsche, which appeared in 1898 and was the first serious study of the philosopher to be conducted in France, was written by a professor of German literature, not by a philosopher.<sup>42</sup> The reviews of this study in academic philosophical journals highlight this conflict of classification. For example, the Revue philosophique had been reviewing German studies of Nietzsche since 1892, all of which were written by the academic Lucien Arréat; yet Lichtenberger's text apparently required special treatment, for the review was contributed instead by Louis Weber, cited above as an independent writer working for both academic and literary journals. In short, the writings of (and even writings



about) Nietzsche could not be considered "philosophy" in the accepted academic sense of the term; hence between 1891 and 1918 neither of the two primary philosophical journals of the day, La Revue de métaphysique et de morale and La Revue philosophique, featured reviews of Nietzsche's texts, even though they had been translated into French since 1898 and had been distributed for review to both journals.<sup>43</sup> There existed however a curious ambiguity on the part of these periodicals regarding the case of Nietzsche: demonstrating their unwillingness to accept his texts as legitimate philosophy by refusing to review them, both journals did feature reviews of other scholars' studies of Nietzsche, thus according him partial admittance to the field. Yet even the accordance of marginal status functioned as an instrument of the field itself.<sup>44</sup>

The logic of classificatory thought, Bourdieu suggests, allows individual agents to perceive themselves as collective persons speaking with the full authority of the group, while simultaneously attributing to each competitor total responsibility for the transgressions of the opposing camp.<sup>45</sup> Therefore both Nietzsche and his literary champions--competitors on the intellectual field--were subjected to the hierarchy of epithets of the philosophical field, becoming invested with all the sins of the literati, the infidels of the academic universe. As Bourdieu explains this phenomenon:

Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.<sup>46</sup>

The universitaires, possessing sufficient cultural capital to maintain their social

dominance, presented themselves as a class diametrically opposed to the dominated littérateurs, thus reproducing in the space of intellectual life and in cultural terms the class structure of the social world. The brief classificatory epithets prefacing many discussions of Nietzsche functioned within the highly structured sign-system of French academic life: invariably he was introduced/stigmatized as the "poète-philosophe" or the "écrivain et philosophe,"<sup>47</sup> thus immediately reinforcing the predominance of literary over the philosophical qualities in his work and thereby firmly situating him within the literary sector of the intellectual field. The non-academic Louis Weber observed that the works of Nietzsche did not belong within "the space [cadre] of the rubric 'philosophy' . . . . Nietzsche is too much the littérateur and poet to be studied as a pure philosopher."<sup>48</sup> With Nietzsche, another reviewer claimed, "the écrivain is so brilliant, the poet is so rich, that one does not perceive the inanity of the philosopher. That is the danger."<sup>49</sup> Above all, a definite hierarchy was established and perceived for those who dared speak of Nietzsche, as Alfred Lambert noted, between the opinions of the vulgaire and penseurs consacrés.<sup>50</sup>

According to Louis Weber, the early French curiosity for Nietzsche had "manifested itself with intensity in literary milieux more for the moralist and écrivain than for the philosopher."<sup>51</sup> For these reasons, then, "Nietzsche is in debt to his first vulgarisateurs for having rapidly acquired a celebrity which rarely overtakes . . . pure philosophers."<sup>52</sup> A critic for the Revue de métaphysique et de morale assured readers that Nietzschean thought would "not seduce philosophes de

profession" as it had swept away poets and novelists during the 1890s.<sup>53</sup>

For Alfred Fouillée, Nietzsche's success "was at first a true scandal for many a philosophe de profession";<sup>54</sup> yet the seduction of poetry always prevailed over that of more serious thought: "has not the poet often had more influence than the pure metaphysician over the movement of social and moral ideas?"<sup>55</sup>

Aphorisms [such as Nietzsche's] suit a public which has neither the time nor the means to fathom anything, and which entrusts itself willingly to sibylline sheets, above all if they are poetic to the point of appearing inspired. The same absence of reasoning and of exact proof bestows on the negating dogmatism an air of authority which forces upon the mob some half-informed, littérateurs, poets, musicians, amateurs of all types.<sup>56</sup>

To the thought of Nietzsche, Fouillée juxtaposed that of his nephew Jean-Marie Guyau, who "was more properly a philosopher and theoretician." Playing upon the common classification of Nietzsche as a "poète-philosophe," Fouillée deliberately portrayed Guyau as a "philosophe-poète,"<sup>57</sup> yet another distinctive strategy of the philosophical field. "I believe that he [Guyau] would have been right to raise himself against a fascination with Nietzschean perversity and ferocity which is only a caprice of la mode among some littérateurs and amateurs."<sup>58</sup>

In all of these descriptions academic philosophers distinguished themselves not only from Nietzsche, but from an entire sector of the intellectual field which consistently gained social success through an enlarged readership. As a very specifically-defined field of discourse with collectively-held ideals of science, morality, and career, it is no wonder that the figure of Nietzsche presented a threat to the philosophical community; hence the need to bring the table of values to bear

against whoever threatened to break it. In the first article on Nietzsche to appear in La Revue de métaphysique et de morale, Charles le Verrier enunciated the problem of classifying Nietzsche: "In no sense can one say that he professed philosophy: he occupied no chair and hardly cared to construct a system."<sup>59</sup> Failing these two apparent requirements for legitimate philosophy--the one institutional and the other doxic--there were several other factors serving to discourage further the naive acceptance of Nietzsche into the fold. "He despised many things and many people," Verrier explained, "but no one more than these 'philosophers of the writing table,' who press themselves to thought upon the invitation of their bureaucratic requirements [nécessaire de bureau]."<sup>60</sup> Not only, then, did Nietzsche possess none of the academic traits necessary for the formulation of true philosophy; in fact he scorned those very professionals who did so. Most academic accounts of Nietzsche therefore appear as defense mechanisms serving to protect and reproduce the corps by rearticulating the hierarchical structure of the intellectual field; hence the need to frame analyses of the thinker in the oppositional and hierarchical terms of consecration/vulgarity and purity/impurity, all mere restatements of the more fundamental division between literary and academic modes of thought.

The philosopher Lucien Arréat often employed physical metaphors when speaking of the ideas of Nietzsche, all of which imply definite preconceived notions of the normal and the grotesque in philosophical discourse. On several occasions, for example, Arréat referred to Nietzsche's Overman as a "monster," or as a

debased wretch in need of a nurse.<sup>61</sup> The procedure of "this renowned and unfortunate thinker," he noted elsewhere, "always consisted in pushing a precise idea to a degree of exaggeration which deforms it."<sup>62</sup> The presentation of Nietzschean thought as monstrosity and deformity aptly describes the relationship of Nietzsche to the self-image of French philosophers: as that entity incommensurable to the existing taxonomy, he transgressed the boundary between the thinkable and the unthinkable; both écrivain and philosophe, Nietzsche the thinker was a veritable mutant on the philosophical field, identified as such by the purportedly "pure" gaze of professional philosophy.

The totality of classificatory thought employed against Nietzsche served at once to classify/construct him as object as well as to implicitly classify the classifiers. The image that emerges of the corps of professional philosophers is of a social elite or, more properly, of a quasi-religious community. Above all, this body of professors saw themselves as immune to the fashions and "seductions" of the literary field, primarily, as Émile Durkheim claimed, because of "their professional habits":

Accustomed by the practice of scientific method to reserve their judgment to such a degree that they do not feel enlightened, it is natural that they succumb less easily to the raptures of the rabble or the prestige of authority.<sup>63</sup>

Such intellectuals were trained to maintain the purity of their gaze, or at least the collective illusion of the pure academic gaze, in the face of what they designated as the naive gaze of the literary sphere. By articulating the ideology of the pure gaze, academics therefore effected a social break with their literary other.<sup>64</sup> The

word "vulgaire," repeatedly employed to evaluate Nietzsche's literary commentators, pertained to the "common," to "classes with no distinction," to "that which is without distinction." Fouillée even spoke of the "mob" of Nietzsche's artistic sympathizers, thus augmenting the social qualities implicitly attached to philosophical activity. An example offered to clarify the definition of "vulgarisateurs" expressed the oppositional strategy of academic classification: "Les savants ne sont pas des vulgarisateurs."<sup>65</sup> There was even an explicit metaphysical definition for "pur," that is, "pure spirit, the spirit considered without regard to its union with matter."<sup>66</sup> These religious metaphors were not merely used in the case of Nietzsche commentaries, but characterized the general relationship of academic philosophers to the uninitiated: did not Darlu himself note on one occasion how inaccessible the writings of Kant tended to be for "les profanes"?<sup>67</sup> In short, the classifications of philosophes de profession effectively demonstrated the degree to which the autodefinition of the university field could enter into philosophical analyses: by condemning Nietzsche and others in social, cultural, and even religious terms, academic philosophers were able to consecrate themselves as possessing the monopoly of legitimate nomination of philosophical discourse. What is more, at the very time that these professors hoped to establish a morale laïque in France they established themselves as a secular philosophical clergy.

The logic of the philosophical field demanded that those ordained with the right to speak legitimately of philosophy be co-opted by the field itself. As Bourdieu writes:

What the co-optation technique must discover. . . is not knowledge, not a package of scientific knowledge, but skill or, more exactly, the art of applying knowledge, and applying it aptly in practice, which is inseparable from an overall manner of acting, or living, inseparable from a habitus.<sup>68</sup>

In short, being an academic philosopher entailed the investment of the entire person in a relationship of trust with the entire professional corps, which is why the attainment of cultural consecration is often experienced as a sort of ontological promotion after which one reflects only with scorn upon his or her former self.<sup>69</sup> A central strategy of academic commentary on Nietzsche was to (re)construct his life in a certain fashion, to examine his dispositions in order to constitute/expose him as a specifically literary subject and to illustrate his marginal position vis-à-vis legitimate philosophy. Whereas the ideas of thinkers such as Kant or Comte might be considered without references to the biographical factors of their philosophy, the "Nietzsche" produced by philosophical discourse was first and foremost an écrivain whose lived experiences were inseparable from his writings--hence the rhetorical convention of appending biographical signs to many commentaries on his thought. This strategy is evident in one of the few published remarks made by the psychologist Alfred Binet on Nietzsche:

Since our Année [psychologique] has until now never had the occasion to speak of Nietzsche, we think it interesting to reproduce for our readers, after Fouillée, some citations from this singular author. . . . These citations can give an idea of the manner of Nietzsche, his conduct of affirmation, his immense pride, his incoherence and the beauty of his lyricism [emphasis in original].<sup>70</sup>

Bourdieu notes how the manner of using symbolic goods constitutes a definite marker of class, and is a key weapon in strategies of distinction.<sup>71</sup> Binet thought

that these aphorisms, which had served Fouillée well in discrediting the German, would offer his readers insight into the space of Nietzsche's lifestyle and personality. Not only was the reader to be apprised of the soul of Nietzsche, against which his writings would emerge as its troubled and poetic expression; Binet even invoked the entire comportment of Nietzsche, which was less the demeanor of an isolated individual than that of the entire class of literary producers with which Nietzsche was identified.

While this biographical strategy had been often used among literary avant-garde to elicit sympathy for and complicity with the German, it functioned among academics in the opposite manner: to underscore once again (through the mechanism of academic distinction) Nietzsche's inherent otherness and to render his work suspect in the eyes of legitimate philosophers. This perhaps explains the positive reception of Daniel Halévy's La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche (1909), which only bolstered what many academic philosophers were saying all along. As one reviewer wrote of Halévy's biography:

Nietzschean thought has nothing systematic about it; it is made of presentiments, intuitions and enthusiasms, and the truths that he puts to the day are not the laborious result of methodical meditations nor any work of excavation and undermining around clearly defined concepts.<sup>72</sup>

Understanding Nietzsche's thought therefore required one "to replace the thought into the man who created it" in order to learn of the "interior drama which was his life."<sup>73</sup> Halévy's biography was therefore acceptable because it treated Nietzsche as a literary subject whose personal and psychological trials found concrete



expression in his written work. This biographical strategy in Nietzsche scholarship had found a precedent in Lichtenberger's study:

But before studying the doctrine of Nietzsche, it is important as well to see clearly that it is, by the confession of the author, less a totality of abstract truths and of universal significance than the living reflection of an individual character, of a very particular natural temperament, the sincere and passionate confession of a soul of rare essence.<sup>74</sup>

As a professor of German literature at the Université de Nancy (and later at the Sorbonne), Lichtenberger's invocation of Nietzsche's biography was consistent with his view of the author as primarily a littérateur. Even Louis Weber noted that Nietzsche has "a complex personality. Philosophical aptitudes and moral tendencies combine in him with a poet's and artist's temperament."<sup>75</sup> And, according to another commentator "all his life is one long combat against external nature, against other men, and against himself."<sup>76</sup>

As is the case with most historical accounts, the history of a thinker's life is available only in fragments, which are selected, organized, and linked together by a rhetorical (and seam-concealing) strategy fulfilling special functions on the discursive field.<sup>77</sup> Such was the case with all the versions of Nietzsche's life circulating at the turn of the century--virtually every recounted detail was apprehended within a specific conceptual field, be it of the avant-garde or the academy. Yet given the cultural consecration of the university, the accounts posited by academics carried a greater degree of legitimacy than those written by representatives of the literary world. A member of the general public searching for a brief, authoritative and objective account of Nietzsche and his work would

undoubtedly forego the biases of literary accounts in favor of the more legitimate and "pure" encyclopedia. That is why the first French encyclopedia entry on Nietzsche deserves special attention: contributed by René Berthelot, a young philosophy professor at the University of Brussels,<sup>78</sup> this essay in La Grande encyclopédie was less an objective account of Nietzsche's thought than a demonstration of the objective power relations of fin-de-siècle intellectual life, which would nevertheless be perceived as a legitimate and persuasive account of the philosopher. "The history of his life and that of his ideas are inseparable," Berthelot posited at the outset; the moral ideal he proclaimed was "nothing other than the exaggerated image of his own character."<sup>79</sup> Note the dramatic difference between this introduction and the one that Émile Boutroux wrote for Kant: "The philosophy of Kant is one of the most considerable acts in the history of the human spirit."<sup>80</sup> A similar sentiment appears in the entry on Comte, "one of the most profound thinkers and the most original philosopher of the century."<sup>81</sup> The philosophical portraits which appeared in La Grande encyclopédie thus expressed the structure of the field itself, which was dominated by both idealism and positivism, and tacitly indicated the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate philosophical activity.<sup>82</sup>

For Berthelot the mature works of Nietzsche were foreshadowed in the circumstances of his childhood: "The admirations and works of his youth foretell and already explain his future theories. At fifteen years his favorite poet was Hölderlin, the friend of Goethe and of Herder, the intimate of Schelling and Hegel."<sup>83</sup> The implication here was of the groundedness of Nietzsche in the literary

realm--especially romanticism--from an early age, a condition from which he never fully emerged. Marcel Drouin, a normalien agrégé de philosophie and future co-founder of the Nouvelle revue française, correctly identified this philosophical strategy in 1900: "A more delicate means of belittling Nietzsche and of arresting his influence," Drouin observed, "is to declare him a poet. . . . I fear that M. René Berthelot favors this thesis a bit by insisting on the real affinities of Nietzsche with the romantics."<sup>84</sup> Alfred Fouillée also invoked Nietzsche's biography, and emphasized the vanity which he displayed at an early age: "He believed he was of a superior race, of a Slavic race, as if the Slavs had been superior and as if he had been a Slav himself! And all his life this pure-blooded German prided himself on not being German."<sup>85</sup>

The son of a pastor from the Prussian countryside, he imagined that he descended from an old noble Polish family of the name of Nietzky whereas (his sister has herself remarked) he had not one drop of Polish blood in his veins; since then, his imaginary Slavism became a fixed idea and an idée-force: he ended by thinking and acting under the empire of this idea.<sup>86</sup>

The neo-Kantian François Pilon even appealed to Nietzsche's fragmented soul, which made it virtually impossible for him to produce disciples: "how can one faire école when one has passed his life wanting to satisfy two of the most antagonistic passions which have ever divided a thinker's soul: that of truth, and . . . eccentricity?"<sup>87</sup>

Telling the tale of Nietzsche's life necessarily invoked the space of academic lifestyles, which only reinforced the negative view of the German. That Nietzsche was a professor of philology at Basel drew him into the habitus of academic

philosophers--here was not merely an independent writer but a fellow member of the academy, another one of the faithful leading a respectable lifestyle. As Lionel Dauriac noted in his review of Halévy's biography, however, Nietzsche suffered constantly from professional isolation: "his philologist colleagues made him feel a bit too often and perhaps also too cruelly that he was not of their species [espèce]."<sup>88</sup> Berthelot noted that from 1869 to 1876 Nietzsche lived "the tranquil life of a university professor."<sup>89</sup> Yet, despite his professional exclusion, his resignation from his post at Basel rendered the German even more suspect. While Berthelot stressed Nietzsche's declining health as the chief factor in his resignation, an anonymous reviewer at the Revue de métaphysique et de morale suggested other considerations:

Despite the brilliant successes of his debut and peaceful future that his chair at Basel seemed to offer the young professor, his restless ardor, his vast curiosity and perhaps also the first blows of the malady did not permit him to content himself with the honorable satisfactions of a university career [emphasis added].<sup>90</sup>

The logic of the academic field provided for its own reproduction, and therefore preserved the image of the professor's lifestyle as a space of tranquility, prestige, honor, and even holiness, all of which reinforce the quasi-religious metaphors discussed above. One could therefore find within the circumstances of Nietzsche's life a variety of reasons for exclusion. As Bourdieu has pointed out, competition for cultural legitimacy is most intense between agents occupying positions of proximity on the intellectual field. That Nietzsche had once been an academic perhaps rendered him, according to the logic of the philosophical field, a much greater

threat than a writer more firmly and consistently entrenched in the field of literature. His subsequent departure from the academy; an unpardonable transgression, therefore finalized the breach.

**An Enemy of the People:  
The Immoralist and the Crisis of French Philosophy**

Whether we immoralists are harming virtue? Just as little as anarchists harm princes. Only since the latter are shot at do they again sit securely on their thrones.      Moral: Morality must be shot at.

--Nietzsche<sup>91</sup>

Despite the exuberance and purported intellectual freedom accompanying the renaissance of philosophy during the Third Republic, many academics expressed a deep concern for the crisis of their discipline at the turn of the century. Fabiani cites three principle sources of this notion of crisis. First, while under the classical curriculum the philosophy class remained the pinnacle of secondary education, after the Ribot reforms of 1902 this place was lost to the sciences, especially mathematics. Therefore, after 1902 philosophy had slipped from the summit to the margins of national education. Second, many philosophers perceived ambiguity in the public image of their discipline: while some members of the larger society renewed their interest in the Catholic heritage of spiritualism, many others expressed a conservative reaction against the critical edges of university philosophy. Finally, the rise of the positive sciences and the stress on empirical research posed problems, especially when it crossed into territory traditionally controlled by philosophy.

Given these institutional and intellectual blows, then, one discerns a reaction in fin-de-siècle philosophical discourse, a sustained attempt to reassert the value, integrity, and prestige of the discipline on the intellectual field by citing the existence of a contemporary moral crisis, a malaise linked to the Dreyfus Affair which could only be countered by a return to more academic modes of philosophical thinking. The French government itself was also deeply concerned with protecting public morality: throughout the history of the Third Republic, 62% of all cases of censorship were the result of apparent challenges to the moral order.<sup>92</sup> This moral crisis also coincided with the transformation of the role of the university intellectual during the 1890s to a position of active political engagement--what Durkheim called "the strict duty [of écrivains et savants] to participate in public life."<sup>93</sup> Hence the proliferation of lectures, articles, and books promoting republican philosophy and morality. During a lecture series on "Morale sociale" at the Collège Libre des Sciences Sociales, for example, Émile Boutroux noted that ensuring social solidarity depended upon "education of judgment and will, diminution of egoism and false personality, progress of justice and of fraternity in human societies."<sup>94</sup>

No one raises, no one has the right to raise children for themselves; not even the father. We raise them for the preservation and the progress of humanity, for society and country, for the accomplishment of the duties which await them in life.<sup>95</sup>

To Marcel Bernès, professor of philosophy at Lycée Louis Le Grand, observation of the present showed only "moral indifference, moral anarchy," vices which were to be eradicated at any cost.<sup>96</sup> Having established the symptoms of the moral

crisis, then, a logical course of action would be to isolate and expunge the germ itself.

A central strategy in the philosophers' mission to regain their waning image was to effect a shift in philosophical discourse on Nietzsche: whereas during the 1890s it was permissible either to ignore him or dismiss him as a mere littérateur, increasingly after 1898 Nietzsche was specified as a major cause of contemporary individualism, immoralism, and intellectual anarchy. This rhetorical shift gradually unfolded during the 1890s, and is well illustrated by Lucien Arréat's series of book reviews for La Revue philosophique. Arréat's first review in 1892 did little to inspire the interest of his colleagues in the little-known German: for Nietzsche "nothing is true, all is permitted. . . . The place of the 'blonde beast', terrible and brave! Altruism is a word devoid of meaning. An end to pity: harden yourself!"<sup>97</sup> The existence of such ideas is not surprising, Arréat concluded:

[They indicate] a necessary reaction against the debasement of man and the triumph of mediocrity, that one would sometimes say is the secret and unspoken passion of socialism and democracy.<sup>98</sup>

By 1893 Arréat's vocabulary had changed considerably: as Nietzsche was becoming more popular among the literary avant-garde it was necessary to activate the logic of difference so characteristic of intellectual struggles. Of Wilhelm Weigand, author of Friedrich Nietzsche. Ein psychologischer Versuch, Arréat noted significantly "[t]his critic is a poet," a shrill warning to his readers of Weigand's position vis-à-vis academe. Nietzsche himself was now described as "a genuine écrivain" rather than a philosopher:

It is not necessary, and it does not suffice, to be a philosopher and to refute with serious reasons the glittering tirades and dogmatic opinions of this paradoxical écrivain; it is necessary to be a psychologist and an artist to speak expediently of him.<sup>99</sup>

Arréat's terms clearly excluded the works of Nietzsche at an early date from ever being considered seriously as legitimate philosophy; yet at this point his remarks betray little concern for the moral and social implications of Nietzsche's thought.

By 1894 Arréat noted with dismay the steady increase of foreign scholarship devoted to Nietzsche: "This literature becomes a bit cumbersome, and it does not seem to me that the importance of the hero justifies it."<sup>100</sup> When Rudolf Steiner, an associate of the Nietzsche-Archiv, presented a serious study of Nietzsche, Arréat's response expressed the alignments of the field and the primacy of academic classification: "The literary qualities of the écrivain have hidden from him the flaws in [Nietzsche's] logic and the incoherence of his thought. . . . His superior man, his Ueberschensch, remains an incomprehensible monster."<sup>101</sup> By the end of the century Arréat, who had previously been content to dismiss Nietzsche as a mere dilettante, began to portray him as a public menace. Among the ranks of the Dreyfusards Arréat noted a significant number of Nietzscheans: "Nietzsche appeared, in effect, to supply new and living formulas to the elegant anarchism of the 'intellectuels'."<sup>102</sup> As intellectuals divided themselves along lines of fracture established for nearly a decade, Arréat declared the malignant influence of the German on French morality: "Nietzsche has awakened some disciples, he has jumbled up some minds."

His conception of the strong individual, his theory of a 'master



morality' opposed to that of the 'slaves,' are striking enough, and in part precise [juste] enough, to captivate attention and summon controversy. How frivolous they always appear, when one presses and pushes them to the final consequences! How they are above all a ridiculous weapon in feeble hands! The overman, alas! is still a wretched man in need of a sicknurse.<sup>103</sup>

In short, the triple threat of anarchism, individualism, and immoralism became attributed to Nietzsche only at the end of the century, thus coinciding with crises on the philosophical, social, and political fields.

By 1899 Arréat's voice mingled with others in the collective condemnation of Nietzsche as the architect of contemporary despair. The Société Française de Philosophie, in its collectively-compiled "Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie," explicitly and officially identified "immoralism" as the doctrine of Nietzsche.<sup>104</sup> After the death of the German in 1900 La Revue de métaphysique et de morale even published a substantial obituary for the philosopher whose works they refused to review. Functioning primarily as a warning, the only sorrow conveyed in this elegy from legitimate philosophers was for the future:

He has just died; and, deprived of reason for eleven years, he has already, in the eleven years since he disappeared from life, a posterity. . . . In all Europe, he has found philosophers to appreciate him, literary people [des lettrés] to relish him, fanatics to exalt him. . . . He developed, with the most absolute logical rigor, this philosophy of the illogical, this irrationalism. . . .<sup>105</sup>

Clearly pursuing a different but related strategy, La Revue philosophique barely mentioned Nietzsche's passing, affording him only three matter-of-fact lines.<sup>106</sup>

The Renouvierist Année philosophique had remained silent on the subject of Nietzsche throughout the 1890s; yet in 1899 François Pillon also articulated the

new discourse on the philosopher:

[Nietzsche is] the philosopher who boldly systematized anarchism and immoralism deducted from radical individualism and absolute determinism; the poet who enlivens from his vigorous and passionate imagination the thought of the philosopher [emphasis in original].<sup>107</sup>

Charles Renouvier himself, two days before his death in 1903, told his disciple and friend Louis Prat that the vogue for Nietzsche was "the delusion of grandeurs erected into a system by a madman. This fashion will pass in its turn."<sup>108</sup> Another reviewer noted how Nietzschean thought undermined all forms of conventional morality, "Christian, Protestant, and Kantian."<sup>109</sup> The rejection of Kant was decisive for Alphonse Darlu: in Nietzsche "[t]here is neither truth nor good in itself. It is upon intellectual and moral nihilism that he raised his flamboyant doctrine."<sup>110</sup> "Kantian morality, meaning the morality of Duty," wrote Lionel Dauriac in 1906, "has never been less in favor. Its decline is even one of the dominant traits of the contemporary moral crisis."<sup>111</sup> Those who had given birth to this crisis, Dauriac pointed out, were not only young philosophers but "écrivains, artists, and also, because it is necessary to use fashionable words, some aesthetes" who have consistently turned to alternative sources of action and contemplation.

[I]n the contemporary crisis, one seems disposed to practice radical methods, those that one could call methods of la table rase. One would void the moral consciousness of the present time. . . . A crusade against the doctrine of sin, a crusade against belief in the categorical imperative; a crusade against all which in the matter of our moral consciousness descends or seems to descend, in a straight or oblique line, from a Jewish or Christian source[:] such is the triple character of the contemporary movement. Who are the commanders of the crusade? The army which follows them knows barely any but one: Nietzsche.<sup>112</sup>

No philosopher ever elaborated on the constituents of this "army" of Nietzscheans except to say that they were primarily from the artistic sphere, a long-time target of academic ire throughout the Third Republic. It is likely that "Nietzsche" in this case served as a convenient symbol of a crisis whose real implications were either too immense for comprehension or too professional to be cited without embarrassment.<sup>113</sup>

While the shift in philosophical and literary discourse on Nietzsche coincided with the Dreyfus Affair, the event itself was translated into the logic of the philosophical field. Indeed, the literary critic Ferdinand Brunetière was among the first to initiate this discourse by blasting the intellectuels for their pretensions of being a noble class, "the pretension of raising writers, scientists, professors, and philosophers to the rank of supermen."<sup>114</sup> Some months later he repeated his attack in similar terms, claiming that the "Manifeste des intellectuels" was nothing other than individualisme and egoism. They see themselves as "the 'overman' of Nietzsche, or again as 'the enemy of laws' [of Maurice Barrès]":

I am only saying that it will be necessary to see, when intellectualism and individualism occur to this degree of self-infatuation, they are or will become quite simply anarchy.<sup>115</sup>

The association of Nietzsche with Barrès was quite common during this critical period, and suggests the recourse that many academics had to comfortable classifications which had by the end of the century become fairly obsolete. While Barrès had indeed written his Culte du moi trilogy during the early 1890s at the height of the ère des attentats and remained an outspoken critic of university

philosophy throughout the fin de siècle, by 1898 Barrès was writing about collective rather than individual regeneration in his novel of national energy. Nevertheless, as the two most visible symbols of the literary attack upon professional philosophy--and, from Brunetière's perspective, the two figures most clearly associated with the rebellious literary avant garde--both became associated as exemplars of contemporary egoism, immoralism, and anarchism.<sup>116</sup>

The most outspoken critic of Nietzschean philosophy at the turn of the century was Alfred Fouillée, a highly prolific social philosopher who, with declining health, had taken an early retirement from teaching during the 1870s.<sup>117</sup> His poor health notwithstanding, Fouillée emerged as one of the most famous and the most consecrated of academicians, and his opinions carried a degree of weight in the broader intellectual field if not within the sphere of academe. Nietzsche himself had been a critical reader of Fouillée's work, and wrote in The Will to Power:

The "growing autonomy of the individual": these Parisian philosophers such as Fouillée speak of this; they ought to take a look at the sheep-like race [race moutonnaire] to which they belong! . . . A complete lack of psychological integrity!<sup>118</sup>

A staunch defender of the liberal republic and of the crowning position of philosophy in national education, Fouillée devoted several articles and one full-length study to the philosophy of Nietzsche while campaigning for a revitalized course in philosophy which promised to restore moral standards to French education.<sup>119</sup> In no other philosopher does the virulent rejection of Nietzsche emerge more clearly as a manifestation of the crisis of French philosophy. The argument in favor of philosophical education and the crusade against Nietzsche

were part and parcel of the same discourse of public morality which marked philosophical rhetoric after 1899.

Fouillée utilized two cultural weapons in his campaign against Nietzsche, both of which might suggest the legitimacy of his appraisal. First, Fouillée published several articles in the dominant Revue des deux mondes, which had throughout the 1890s proven an enemy of Nietzsche by carrying the critical commentaries of Téodor de Wyzewa, Victor Cherbuliez, and Édouard Schuré. Positioned on the literary field and yet recognized as an ally of academic philosophy, this choice of publication served overtly strategic functions on the intellectual field. Second, Fouillée had his Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, and indeed most of his texts, published at Alcan, thus ensuring the image of legitimacy that the maison d'édition conferred. Thus making full use of the symbolic capital available to him, Fouillée initiated his protracted and bitter offensive against l'immoraliste.

Fouillée saw Nietzsche's aristocratic ethic as a "sign of the times. . . . The faithful of the order of Nietzsche promise us nothing less than a new culture founded on anti-Christian culture."<sup>120</sup> Throughout this text Fouillée selected the most graphic examples of Nietzsche's elitism, cruelty, nihilism, and hatred for all forms of socialism, equality, justice, democracy, and science, those values upon which the liberal republic--and academic philosophy--stood. Far from being "values of annihilation," Fouillée protested, these republican ideals of "justice and equality of rights are the true conditions of power and progress."<sup>121</sup> Nietzsche's superior individual, according to many French critics, appeared as a cultural nomad with

virtually no ties to civilization. Nietzsche's ideal individu, Arréat had mentioned elsewhere, can only be supposed "without heredity, without education, without family, and without country."<sup>122</sup> Fouillée articulated a similar sentiment when criticizing those "anarchists and libertarians" who rejected the idea of the nation:

"We others without country!" cries Nietzsche. In other words: We other bees without hive, ants without anthill, individuals without speech, without science, without arts, without manners, men without humanity.<sup>123</sup>

All in all, Fouillée's study of Nietzsche expressed the needs of many academic philosophers during this critical period of their profession by demonstrating how desperately the public needed their intervention to restore republican morality. These philosophers bolstered themselves against the crisis they perceived in their discipline by maligning Nietzsche, a convenient symbol of the literary distortion of legitimate and pure philosophical activity.

### **Conclusion: Voices from the Margins**

Despite the apparent academic rejection of Nietzsche, after 1905 it became much more acceptable to accord the German marginal status within legitimate academic discourse. Yet in most cases this was only demonstrated by professors who were themselves somewhat marginal to the philosophical field. For example, the academics who criticized Fouillée's decisive condemnation of Nietzsche, notably Georges Palante, Jules de Gaultier, and Charles Andler, did so from positions that were either marginal or external to the field. Palante, a philosophy professor at a provincial lycée who actively integrated Nietzschean themes into his

social philosophy was only an agrégé de philosophie who often wrote for avant-garde literary reviews in addition to La Revue philosophique. His colleague Jules de Gaultier, who neither held nor sought an academic post, also contributed essays on Nietzsche to La Revue philosophique and published several important studies on the philosopher after 1900.<sup>124</sup> Charles Andler, while an expert on German philosophy and regular contributor to the Revue de métaphysique et de morale, was technically a professor of literature at the Sorbonne.<sup>125</sup> While one of the most notable socialist intellectuals of the period who would later write a six-volume study of Nietzsche, at the turn of the century Andler could effect no significant change in dominant discourse on the philosopher. Finally two other agrégés de philosophie rejected the hegemony of Kantian philosophy in favor of Nietzsche, but were forced to do so from positions within the literary avant-garde: Pierre Lasserre, a key collaborator on the royalist Action française, and Marcel Drouin, a normalien student of Andler who helped form the Nouvelle revue française.

Some professors were willing to direct theses and even deliver lectures on the philosopher. Between 1904 and 1913, for example, four doctoral dissertations (three at Paris and one at Montpellier) were completed and at least six public lectures were offered by academic philosophers on Nietzsche's thought.<sup>126</sup> While conferences on Nietzsche had been conducted around 1900 by such littérateurs as Henri Albert and Téodor de Wyzewa, public lectures by academics were certainly much less common. Held at the universities of Caen, Dijon, Poitiers,

Lausanne, Paris, and Aix-Marseille, the open nature of these lectures surely underscored the popular and literary nature of Nietzsche's primary readership. In addition, the fact that several of these speakers were chargés de cours rather than professors suggests once again the marginality and junior status of such academics. It is also unclear how many of these lectures were, like Georges Dwelshauvers' 1908 series at the École des Hautes Études Sociales, further opportunities to discourage interest in the German.<sup>127</sup> One respondent to Binet's 1908 enquête noted the influence of contemporary moral concerns on the teaching of philosophy: "I cannot imagine . . . a course on morality where one does not discuss the communism of Plato, where one ignores the contemporary workers movement, where one struggles [s'escrime] against Protagoras, and where one does not even cite Nietzsche."<sup>128</sup>

In conclusion, the efforts of most mainstream French philosophers ensured the marginality of Nietzsche and, when possible, of those who dared to speak of him as a legitimate philosopher. The classification system of academic philosophers functioned as an exclusionary mechanism in the continuing mission to reproduce the corps of the profession, a standard device which necessitated the construction of Nietzsche as an object of inquiry and of derision. The object thus produced would in turn serve as a rationale for its own marginalization as well as for the exclusion of its admirers. Throughout this critical period of the discipline, few would recognize the power relations embedded in their knowledge nor, above all, the representation of the object they were obliged to destroy in order to present



an "objective" philosophical discourse on Nietzsche.

## Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist in The Portable Nietzsche Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 579.

2. Christophe Charle, Naissance des 'intellectuels' (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 82-84, 105-116.

3. Jean-Louis Fabiani, "Les programmes, les hommes, et les oeuvres: professeurs de philosophie en classe et en ville au tournant du siècle" Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 1983 (47-48), 4. On the influence of Victor Cousin, see Alan B. Spitzer, The French Generation of 1820 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 71-96.

4. William Logue, From Philosophy to Sociology: The Evolution of French Liberalism, 1870-1914 (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983), 74-75, 77.

5. Phyllis Stock-Morton, Moral Education for a Secular Society: The Development of Morale Laïque in Nineteenth Century France (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 33, 34.

6. François Pilon had initially published L'Année philosophique in 1868 and 1869 which, after being replaced by Renouvier's Critique philosophique in 1872, was resurrected in 1891. In addition, Pilon was cited as the primary philosophical reviewer for the second supplement to Pierre Larousse's Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle, suggesting his authority to shape and define academic philosophy in the early 1890s. Cf. Philippe Besnard, "The 'Année sociologique' team" in Besnard, ed., The Sociological Domain: The Durkheimians and the Founding of French Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 14; Stock-Morton, 59, 85-86; "Au lecteur," Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle: deuxième supplément (Paris: Administration du Grand dictionnaire universel, n.d. [1890?]), 17: 2022; William Logue, Charles Renouvier (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

7. "Perhaps to-day [sic]," Paulhan claimed, "M. Renouvier is even more respected and admired than followed." Cf. Paulhan, "Contemporary Philosophy in France," The Philosophical Review January 1900 (9), 60.

8. Ringer, 217.

9. Vincent Descombes, Modern French Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6; Jean-Louis Fabiani, Les philosophes de la république (Paris: Minuit, 1988), 130; Ringer, 208-209.

10. Stephen Lukes, Individualism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 3-9.
11. Alphonse Darlu, "Après Une visite au Vatican, de M. Brunetière" Revue de métaphysique et de morale 1895 (3), 249.
12. Paulhan, 64.
13. Jean-Louis Fabiani, "Enjeux et usages de la 'crise' dans la philosophie universitaire en France au tournant du siècle" Annales, E.S.C. mars-avril 1985, 383-384.
14. Fouillée and Darlu quoted in Fabiani, "Les programmes et les hommes," 5.
15. It was at Alcan that the great philosophical and social science periodicals of the era were published, such as La Revue philosophique, L'Année psychologique, L'Année sociologique, and Le Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique. One might also cite the role of Flammarion in the production of the academic philosophical author. Cf. Fabiani, Les philosophes, 103-109.
16. Quoted in Fabiani, Les philosophes, 35.
17. Ibid., 34-36.
18. Revue de métaphysique et de morale juillet 1893, (1), 2; Fabiani, Les philosophes, 36-37.
19. J. Benrubi, "Le Mouvement philosophique contemporain en Allemagne" Revue de métaphysique et de morale septembre 1908 (16), 567.
20. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, 20.
21. Fabiani, "Enjeux" 384.
22. Alphonse Darlu, "De M. Brunetière et de l'individualisme" Revue de métaphysique et de morale 1898, 381.
23. Émile Faguet, "Les lettres en France" in Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Rambaud, eds. Histoire générale du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours: Le monde contemporaine, 1870-1900 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901), 628-629. It is important to indicate the sharp division between such dominant conservative critics as Faguet, Brunetière, and Cherbuliez, and younger republican professors of literature, such as Victor Basch and Charles Andler, who generally defended the academic definition of legitimate philosophy, thus placing them at odds with their more consecrated elders. Cf. Victor Basch, "Individualistes modernes: Friedrich Nietzsche" La Grande revue 1901 (16), 362.

24. Fabiani, "Les programmes," 17-18.

25. Bourget, Le disciple, as summarized in Ringer, 128-129, and Fabiani, Les philosophes, 112-113.

26. Barrès, Les déracinés, as summarized in Ringer, 130-133, and Fabiani, Les philosophes, 113; Jules de Gaultier, "Le bovarysme des Déracinés" Mercure de France juillet 1900 (35), 19. See also Barrès, "Nos professeurs de philosophie," Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme in Oeuvre (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1966), V: 65-67.

27. Alfred Vallette, "Une enquête franco-allemande" Mercure de France avril 1895 (14), 1-65.

28. Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France novembre 1902 (44), 289-384; décembre 1902 (44), 647-695.

29. Jules de Gaultier, contribution to Morland, 332.

30. Remy de Gourmont, contribution to Morland, 336-337.

31. Frédéric Paulhan, contribution to Morland, 365.

32. Théodule Ribot, contribution to Morland, 375.

33. Fabiani, "Enjeux", 379.

34. Paulhan, 65.

35. Alfred Binet, "Une enquête sur l'évolution de l'enseignement de la philosophie" L'Année psychologique 1908 (14), 159, 161-162, 163.

36. Ibid., 160.

37. Ibid., 167.

38. Fabiani, Les philosophes, 73-74.

39. Léon Brunschvicg, quoted in Julien Benda, The Betrayal of the Intellectuals (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 179n. This statement appeared originally in Le Progrès de la Conscience dans la philosophie occidentale.

40. Remy de Gourmont, "La mort de Nietzsche" Epilogues, 1899-1901 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1915), 186-187.

41. The group of philosophers cited in this study include all those who, between 1892 and 1908, commented on Nietzsche in academic philosophical book reviews, articles, and studies. Ironically, the one French philosopher of the period whose work has been most compared to that of Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, never commented extensively on the German. In addition, it is interesting to note how Nietzsche followed new developments in French philosophy, psychology, and sociology during his lifetime. His personal library included the following texts: Guyau's Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction (Paris, 1885) and L'irreligion de l'avenir (Paris, 1887), Henry Houssaye's Les hommes et les idées (Paris, 1886), Emile Littré's La science au point de vue philosophique (Paris, 1876), Frédéric Paulhan's Les phénomènes affectifs et les lois de leur apparition (Paris, 1887), Charles Richet's L'homme et l'intelligence (Paris, 1884) and Essai de psychologie générale (Paris, 1887), Eugène de Roberty's L'ancienne et la nouvelle philosophie (Paris, 1887). Cf. Nietzsches bibliothek (Weimar: Vierzehnte Jahrgabe der Gesellschaft der Freunde des Nietzsche-Archivs, 1942), 17-22.

42. The first several years of the twentieth century saw the rising popularity of Nietzsche in many sectors of French intellectual life. Lichtenberger's study had, it seems, inspired somewhat of a trend, for between 1898 and 1918 more studies were published on Nietzsche than on either Kant or Comte, which is surprising given the predominance of Kantian and positivist currents on the philosophical field. On the other hand, the growing appeal of Nietzsche among non-academics certainly contributed to this trend. From 1898 to 1918, 33 studies were devoted to Nietzsche, 30 to Kant, and 29 to Comte. Cf. Otto Lorenz, Catalogue général de la librairie française (Paris: Nilsson, 1905-24), volumes 16, 17, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28.

43. Cf. "Livres déposés au bureau de la Revue" Revue philosophique décembre 1898 (46), 689; juin 1899 (47), 685; septembre 1899 (48), 336; février 1900 (49), 224; juillet 1900 (50), 112; mars 1901 (51), 336; décembre 1901 (52), 705; décembre 1902 (54), 656; juin 1904 (57), 335; octobre 1909 (68), 440.

44. While neither of the two dominant philosophical journals reviewed Nietzsche's texts, Renouvier's now marginal Année philosophique did so on several occasions. Cf. François Pillon, review of Nietzsche, La Généalogie de la morale, L'Année philosophique 1900 (10), 210-212; review of Nietzsche, Aurore and L'Origine de la tragédie, L'Année philosophique 1901 (11), 301-302; Lionel Dauriac, review of Nietzsche, La Volonté de puissance, L'Année philosophique 1903 (13), 233.

45. Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 188.

46. Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 6.

47. Cf. Anonymous, review of Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1910 (18), 15; Lionel Dauriac, review of Camille Spiess, La vérité sur Frédéric Nietzsche, L'Année philosophique 1910 (19), 280; René Berthelot, "Nietzsche (Friedrich-Wilhelm)" La Grande encyclopédie (Paris: Société anonyme de la Grande encyclopédie, 1900), 24: 1081.

48. Louis Weber, "Philosophie," Mercure de France décembre 1898 (28), 769.

49. Anonymous, review of Ludwig Stein, Friederich Nietzsche's [sic] Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren, Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1894 (2), supplément 3.

50. Alfred Lambert, review of Eugène de Roberty, Frédéric Nietzsche, Revue internationale de Sociologie décembre 1902 (10), 924.

51. Louis Weber, review of Lichtenberger, Revue philosophique 1898 (45), 662-663.

52. Ibid., 663.

53. Anonymous, review of Ludwig Stein, Friederich Nietzsche's [sic] Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren, Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1894 (2), supplément 2.

54. Alfred Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme (Paris: Alcan, 1902), iv.

55. Ibid., iii.

56. Ibid., iv.

57. Ibid., iii, 2.

58. Alfred Fouillée, "La Morale de la vie selon Guyau et selon Nietzsche" La Revue bleue 1 avril 1899, 386.

59. Charles le Verrier, "Études critiques: Friedrich Nietzsche" Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1901 (9), 70.

60. Ibid.

61. Lucien Arréat, Dix années de philosophie (Paris: Alcan, 1901), 134, 135.

62. Lucien Arréat, review of Ernst Horneffer, Nietzsches Lehre von der ewigen Wiederkunft und deren bisherige Veröffentlichung, Revue philosophique 1900 (50), 314.

63. Émile Durkheim, "L'Individualisme et les intellectuels" Revue bleue 2 juillet 1898 (10), 10.

64. Bourdieu, Distinction, 30-31.

65. Littré et Beaujean, Dictionnaire, 1291.

66. Ibid., 946.

67. Alphonse Darlu, "De M. Brunetière et de l'individualisme" Revue de métaphysique et de morale 1898, 384; Littré et Beaujean, Dictionnaire, 932.

68. Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 57.

69. Bourdieu, Distinction, 251.

70. Alfred Binet, review of Alfred Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, L'Année psychologique 1903 (9), 402, 405.

71. Bourdieu, Distinction, 66.

72. Anonymous, review of Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1910 (18), supplément 15.

73. Ibid., 16. Cf. also Lionel Dauriac, review of Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, L'Année philosophique 1909, 269-270.

74. Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche (Paris: Alcan, 1898), 1.

75. Louis Weber, review of Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, Revue philosophique 1898 (45), 663.

76. Anonymous, review of Alfred Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1903 (11), supplément 2. Cf. also the biographical strategy in Georges Dwelshauvers, La Philosophie de Nietzsche (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de Librairie, 1909).

77. Cf. Hans Kellner, Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 10-11.

78. By 1909, René Berthelot would be a member of the Académie de Belgique and an honorary professor at the Université de Bruxelles.

79. Berthelot, La Grande encyclopédie, 1081.

80. Émile Boutroux, "Kant (Immanuel)" La Grande encyclopédie, 21: 403.

81. G. Wyruboff, "Comte (Auguste)" La Grande encyclopédie, 12: 284.
82. The list of contributors of La Grande encyclopédie cited efforts of the following academic philosophers, without failing to mention the specific academic capital of each: René Berthelot, Université de Bruxelles; Émile Boutroux, Sorbonne; Lionel Dauriac, Faculté de Lettres à Montpellier; Alfred Espinas, chargé de cours, Faculté de Lettres à Paris; Xavier Léon, agrégé de philosophie; Théodule Ribot, professeur au Collège de France, directeur de la Revue philosophique.
83. Ibid.
84. Michel Arnauld [Marcel Drouin], "Frédéric Nietzsche" La Revue blanche 1900, 113; Anna Boschetti, "Légitimité littéraire et stratégies éditoriales" in Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier, eds., Histoire de l'édition française: Le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 499.
85. Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, vi.
86. Ibid.
87. François Pillon, review of Nietzsche, Le Crépuscule des idoles, L'Année philosophique 1899, 306.
88. Lionel Dauriac, review of Halévy, La Vie de Nietzsche, L'Année philosophique 1909, 270.
89. Berthelot, La Grande encyclopédie, 1083.
90. Anonymous, review of Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1910 (18), 15.
91. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols in The Portable Nietzsche Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 471-472.
92. This percentage is significant, for in earlier periods the majority of censorship cases were instituted in response to perceived challenges to political and social authority. See the figures presented in James Allen Smith, In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800-1940 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 94, 102-103.
93. Émile Durkheim, "L'Élite intellectuel et la démocratie" La Revue bleue 4 juin 1904, 705.
94. Émile Boutroux, "Avant-propos" in Morale sociale: leçons professées au Collège libre des sciences sociales (Paris: Alcan, 1899), iii.



95. Ibid., iv.
96. Marcel Bernès, "L'Unité morale" in Boutroux, et al., Morale sociale, 38.
97. Lucien Arréat, review of Robert Schellwein, Max Stirner und Friedrich Nietzsche, Revue philosophique septembre 1892 (34), 334.
98. Ibid., 335.
99. Lucien Arréat, review of Wilhelm Weigand, Friedrich Nietzsche. Ein psychologischer Versuch, Revue philosophique 1893 (36), 104-105.
100. Lucien Arréat, review of Ludwig Stein, Friedrich Nietzsche's [sic] Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren, Revue philosophique 1894 (37), 682. Contrasting academic philosophy in France and Germany, J. Benrubi noted that in the latter Nietzsche, "if he does not have students among professors of philosophy, on s'efforce at least to interpret him in an impartial manner and to see in him something more than an 'immoralist' and a madman." Benrubi, "Le Mouvement philosophique contemporain en Allemagne", 578.
101. Lucien Arréat, review of Rudolf Steiner, Friedrich Nietzsche. Ein Kampf gegen seine Zeit, Revue philosophique 1896 (41), 463.
102. Lucien Arréat, review of Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, La Revue philosophique 1898 (45), 663.
103. Lucien Arréat, review of G. Zocchi, Federico Nietzsche, Revue philosophique 1899 (48), 224.
104. André Lalande, "Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie," Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie 2 juillet 1908 (8), 334. The term "immoralist" formed one part of The Will to Power, which was touted as the systematic expression of Nietzsche's philosophy; it would become popularized among the literary avant-garde, especially after the 1902 publication of André Gide's novel L'Immoraliste.
105. "Nécrologie: Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)," Revue de métaphysique et de morale septembre 1900 (8), supplément 1.
106. "Nécrologie," Revue philosophique 1900 (50), 328.
107. François Pillon, review of Henri Lichtenberger, Friedrich Nietzsche: Aphorismes et fragments choisis, L'Année philosophique 1899, 302.
108. Charles Renouvier, Les Derniers entretiens Louis Prat, ed. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1930), 85-86.

109. Anonymous, review of Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1898 (6), supplément 2.

110. Alphonse Darlu, "Classification des idées morales du temps présent" La Revue bleue 11 mars 1899, 292-293.

111. Lionel Dauriac, "Le Crépuscule de la morale kantienne: impressions et réflexions sur la crise actuelle" L'Année philosophique 1906, 125.

112. Ibid., 143.

113. It is necessary to raise at this point a key question: in this critical period during the Dreyfus Affair which coincided with a dramatic shift in the literary perception of Nietzsche, exactly who were such philosophers as Dauriac, Pillon, and Arréat implicating in their rejection of the disciples of the German? A simple answer is not forthcoming. While there was a clear concurrence between young universitaires and the literary avant-garde under the banner of the revision in 1898, many representatives from the latter faction, notably André Gide and Daniel Halévy, championed a vision of Nietzsche that coincided with their own social positions and trajectories as well as their rapport with the field of power. Thus despite their political alliance, most philosophy professors would differ markedly in their interpretation of the German. At the same time, roughly between 1898 and 1902, a new interpretation of Nietzsche became generated by writers associated with anti-Dreyfusism, such as Pierre Lasserre and Jules de Gaultier, which was therefore reflective of concerns standing in stark opposition to those of Gide and Halévy. It is therefore difficult to decide whether these philosophes de profession were rejecting both interpretations of Nietzsche, or only that which conflicted most with their political/professional agenda.

114. Ferdinand Brunetière, quoted in Jean-Denis Bredin, The Affair Jeffrey Mehlman, trans. (New York: Braziller, 1986), 277.

115. Ferdinand Brunetière, "Après le procès" Revue des deux mondes 15 mars 1898 (146), 445.

116. This discourse on Nietzsche persisted through the First World War, and may be found in the casual yet dismissive remarks made by academic philosophers. Alfred Croiset, dean of the Faculty of Letters at the Sorbonne, recommended a form of individualism that was at odds with that of any "cult of the self" or of the "Superman. During a 1904 lecture series Gustave Belot of Lycée Louis Le Grand noted that Nietzsche was "the immoralist à la mode" whose individualism, along with that of Stirner, would "end in individual anomie and social anarchy." In a 1909 article for La Revue de métaphysique et de morale Louis Weber, stressing the need for social morality, noted sadly that "the grandsons of our egalitarians of 1848 infatuate themselves with the hyper-aristocratic ideal of

Nietzsche. The Uebermensch is à la mode." And Abel Rey, agrégé de philosophie, articulated virtually the same discourse: for him both Nietzsche and Stirner were "anarchistes intellectuelles." Cf. Ringer, 230; Gustave Belot, "Les principes de la morale positiviste et la conscience contemporaine" in Alphonse Darlu, et al., Études sur la philosophie morale au XIXe siècle: leçons professées à l'École des hautes études sociales (Paris: Alcan, 1904), 8, 9-10; Louis Weber, "La Morale d'Épictète et les besoins présents de l'enseignement moral" Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1909 (17), 216; Abel Rey, La philosophie moderne (Paris: Flammarion, 1911), 302.

117. Logue, 130.

118. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 782.

119. Fouillée was an opponent of the 1902 Ribot reforms which displaced philosophy from the summit of secondary education. Cf. Ringer, 249, 251.

120. Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, 52.

121. Alfred Fouillée, "Les idées sociales de Nietzsche" Revue des deux mondes 1902, 430.

122. Arréat, Dix années, 134.

123. Fouillée, "L'Idée de patrie" Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1904 (12), 120.

124. Cf. Christopher E. Forth, "Jules de Gaultier and Georges Palante: The Function and Fate of Nietzschean Philosophy at the Boundaries of French Sociology, 1898-1911" Annals of Scholarship 1994, forthcoming.

125. Cf. the exchanges between Alfred Fouillée, Georges Palante, and Charles Andler: Georges Palante, review of Alfred Fouillée, Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, Revue philosophique juillet 1903 (56), 93-103; Alfred Fouillée, "L'Idée de patrie" Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1904 (12), 121-122, n. 1; Charles Andler, Notes critiques mars 1903 (no. 23); Fouillée, "Lettre de M. Fouillée", Notes critiques avril 1903 (no. 24), 97-100; Andler, "Réponse à M. Fouillée" Notes critiques avril 1903 (no. 24), 100-102.

126. These dissertations were: Albert Lévy, "Stirner et Nietzsche."--Paris, 1904; J.-B. Séverac, "Les opinions de Nietzsche sur Socrate."--Montpellier, 1906; Pierre Lasserre, "Les idées de Nietzsche sur la musique: la période wagnérienne, 1871-1876."--Paris, 1907; Mlle Claire Richter, "Nietzsche et les théories biologiques contemporaines."--Paris, 1911. Lectures delivered on Nietzsche included those of: H. Delacroix, (Caen)--Cours public: "Schopenhauer, Wagner, et Nietzsche"; Th.

Ruyssen, (Dijon),--Conference ouverte: "La philosophie de la volonté: Schopenhauer et Nietzsche"; Georges Dwelshauvers (Bruxelles), --"La Philosophie de Nietzsche," École des hautes études sociales; A. Rivaud, (Poitiers),--Cours public: "La vie et les doctrines de Frédéric Nietzsche"; M. Milloud, (Lausanne),--"Lecture critique de l'ouvrage de Nietzsche: La Volonté de puissance"; Charles Andler, (Paris),--Littérature allemande: "Nietzsche. Sa vie, sa pensée"; M. Segond, (Aix-Marseille),--"La Volonté de puissance, 3e partie de Nietzsche". Cf. Ministère de l'instruction publique, Catalogue des thèses tome IV: 837; tome V: 228, 462; tome VI: 345; Revue de métaphysique et de morale septembre 1906 (14), supp. 2; septembre 1907 (15), supp. 2; septembre 1908 (16), supp. 2; septembre 1908 (16), supp. 5; novembre 1909 (17), supp. 34; novembre 1913 (21), supp. 33; "Bibliographie de la philosophie française," Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie 21 juillet 1910 (10), 299; Anonymous, review of Georges Dwelshauvers, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale septembre 1909 (17), supp. 19.

127. Georges Dwelshauvers, "La Philosophie de Nietzsche" La Revue hebdomadaire des cours et conférences 4 mars 1909 (17), 769-780. Ironically, in his youth Dwelshauvers had been an early advocate of Nietzsche in the Belgian literary review La Société nouvelle, where he admiringly cited "the diversity and genius of Nietzsche," an endorsement he would evidently grow to regret as he embarked upon a more academic philosophical career. In this article, which consisted primarily of translated passages of Nietzsche, Dwelshauvers promised a forthcoming study of the philosopher that would never appear. Cf. Georges Dwelshauvers, "Études sur Friedrich Nietzsche" La Société nouvelle octobre 1892 (15), 470-481.

128. Anonymous respondent to Binet, "Une enquête sur l'évolution de l'enseignement de la philosophie" L'Année psychologique 1908 (14), 175.

**CHAPTER FIVE:  
THE PATHOS OF DISTANCE:  
INTRUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS IN ACADEMIC SOCIOLOGY<sup>1</sup>**

Despite the large number of works devoted to the reception of Nietzsche's philosophy by various French intellectuals during the Third Republic, few have examined the ways in which his thought was received by representatives of academic philosophy and sociology. According to Jean-Louis Fabiani, Nietzsche's writings were generally ignored or vilified by neo-Kantian academic philosophers, but were eagerly appropriated by representatives of the literary avant-garde in their continuing attack upon the republican university.<sup>2</sup> Yet in another sector of the philosophical world--that of positivism and the nascent discipline of sociology--a different situation existed: as a fairly new field struggling to assert its autonomy from the broader and firmly-ensconced field of philosophy, academic sociology was fraught by divisions, tensions, and tendencies effected by those struggling for the right to define legitimate sociological discourse. As the sociology of Émile Durkheim and his disciples would become consecrated and established after 1902 as the legitimate mode of sociological practice, many of those erstwhile competing visions of sociology would be officially deemed deviant and illegitimate according to the self-definition of those whose ascendancy had transformed them from mere contenders into veritable defenders of a new orthodoxy.

The proliferation of competing sociological visions at the turn of the century and the temporary lack of institutional orthodoxy produced a period of relative intellectual exuberance where philosophies declared illegitimate by French Kantians were generated by young thinkers wishing to enter and perhaps to name the

emerging field of legitimate sociology. This essay will demonstrate how the ideas of Nietzsche found expression in the work of two unconventional scholars contesting the rise of Durkheimian sociology from problematic positions in the intellectual world, one being more insulated than the other from reprisals against heterodox sociological visions: Jules de Gaultier, an independent philosopher/sociologist operating on both the literary and academic fields whose use of Nietzsche for his philosophy of "Bovarysme" was ignored by the academy but whose lack of specifically academic aspirations shielded him from more serious repercussions; and Georges Palante, a young agrégé de philosophie aiming at a university position, whose explicit application of Nietzsche to sociology and active participation in the literary avant-garde prompted his professional exclusion by the Durkheimians at the Sorbonne. It will be shown that Nietzsche functioned as an important strategic element in the project of these thinkers to distinguish themselves from sociological competitors; yet this very use of Nietzsche would constitute a primary basis upon which academic sociologists could exclude them from acceptable scholarly discourse.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Sciences/Lettres Dichotomy in French Sociology**

A fundamental problem of the history of ideas has been how to treat the texts encountered: should intellectual products be related directly to individual biography, social class, and/or broad cultural unities, or should they be analyzed internally, as if they are autonomous of the author and context which produced them? To avoid these unsatisfactory alternatives, it is useful to conceive these texts

according to the positions occupied by their authors in an intermediate system of intellectual relations, hierarchies, and constraints, which the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls the "intellectual field." In such an analytical framework, cultural products are considered in regard to the differential relationships entertained with others that constitute a relatively autonomous conceptual field, a veritable "market of symbolic goods" within which authors enter into objective relations of competition for intellectual legitimacy. To read a text adequately in its textuality, therefore, it must be understood in its social and cultural intertextuality, a project requiring the reconstruction of the field within which a work is produced and acquires meaning.

The emerging field of French academic sociology was clearly marked by the struggle for recognition, and those achieving a degree of institutional consecration exercised the power to define provisionally the boundaries of the field itself, that is, to name the requirements for legitimate sociological activity. By doing so these guardians of orthodoxy indicated the limits beyond which one wishing to be classified "sociologist" must not cross. This struggle for the right of legitimate nomination of the field was often called into question by newcomers who, in seeking to be producers rather than reproducers, attempted to invert the hierarchical principles that had hitherto ensured their subordination and/or exclusion. From this perspective scholarly vision of the intellectual world became largely informed by principles of social division, suggesting how apparently intellectual differences are deeply implicated in an extensive system of social

differences.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1890s, when sociology was emerging as a subset of academic philosophy, two groups of thinkers with conflicting notions of the social field competed for cultural legitimacy. With Émile Durkheim's move from Bordeaux to the Sorbonne in 1902, the Durkheimian school of sociology achieved the highest form of legitimacy, becoming consecrated as the new social orthodoxy over the following years. Those with heterodox conceptions of society assumed staunch positions of opposition, thereby polarizing the field of social thought along lines of fracture established for nearly a decade. By winning the institutional support of the Sorbonne the Durkheimians gained the upper hand as the debate was elevated to a new plane. What was merely an intellectual disagreement among relative equals on the university field was transformed into a battle of science vs. literature, social responsibility vs. individualist egoism, and legitimate vs. heretical visions of the social world, all of which were employed by those seeking to conserve the principles of division that maintained their dominance over the field. In fact, the intended audience of the Durkheimians consisted of those favoring the status quo of the Third Republic, in particular those embracing Léon Bourgeois' social philosophy of "solidarism" (to which Durkheim offered scientific confirmation with De la division du travail social in 1893). Durkheimian sociology defined itself partially according to the image conferred upon it by its republican champions as well as in opposition to the heterodox positions of rivals in the sociological field. Like many other disciplines in France around 1900, such as history, philosophy,



and literary studies, Durkheimian sociology claimed for itself the legitimacy of a science, therefore implicitly and often explicitly rejecting its opposite, i.e. those visions of the social world derived from subjective and apparently "literary" positions on the intellectual field. This opposition between sciences and lettres constituted a primary conceptual division of French intellectual life between the university field and the literary field, and affords insight into the suppositions implied in the classificatory schemes of both contending groups.<sup>5</sup> In these preexisting taxonomies the ideas of Nietzsche would become enmeshed, divided, and wielded as intellectual weapons.

Opponents of Durkheimian social theory hailed from a variety of intellectual backgrounds. Sociologists like René Worms and Gabriel Tarde contributed to the more scholarly Revue internationale de sociologie, enabling them to secure academic posts from which they could wage their battle. It may be argued that as the field of professional academic philosophy was formed through the competition of idealists and positivists, the emerging field of sociology was likewise circumscribed along professional lines by the competition of Durkheimians and academic anti-Durkheimians, assuring nevertheless the reproduction of the figure of the sociologist as professor. Yet certain anti-Durkheimians like Gaultier and Palante occupied the blurred boundary between what was recognized as the academic and the literary, therefore placing them in more vulnerable positions. The public image of these latter writers was therefore formed by both academic and literary concerns, producing a hybrid sociology which resisted the perceived aridity

of orthodox academe as well as the pure imagination of the literary field. Accordingly, the intellectual field in general was polarized between two very different conceptions of sociology and of the ideal society. While the Durkheimians wanted to maintain the republican status quo and represented a fairly cohesive group, anti-Durkheimian social thought was less socially cohesive in that its representatives could be found not only among academics, but among journalists and writers peripheral to both groups, such as Palante and Gaultier. Both rejected Durkheim's elimination of the individual from an effective role in social change, which they perceived as the glorification of mediocrity and the tyranny of the masses. They generally did not, however, champion "individualisme," a concept which in France traditionally functioned pejoratively to denote egoism and which at the turn of the century was used by both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards to discredit their enemies. Rather they advocated the ideal of an educated elite class of superior individuals who would direct the pliable masses.<sup>6</sup>

This rigid polarization of social thought was reinforced by the division of intellectuals during the Dreyfus Affair in 1898, with the Dreyfusards achieving political and academic legitimacy after 1899 with the entry of the socialist deputy Alexandre Millerand into René Waldeck-Rousseau's government, and in 1902 with the wholesale reform of the university (constituting what some labelled scornfully "La Nouvelle Sorbonne").<sup>7</sup> Significantly, the year 1898 also marked the turning point in the reception of Nietzsche's work with the publication of Henri Lichtenberger's La Philosophie de Nietzsche, the first full-length study in French

to describe the German's rejection of decadence and embrace of vitalism. The uses of Nietzsche after this period were often oriented towards radical political ends by the left and the right, and the studies which followed were conducted by key figures in the political and intellectual debates of the turn of the century, including Émile Faguet, Alfred Fouillée, Daniel Halévy, and Charles Andler, indicating the need of these people to come to terms with the ideas of this thinker whose texts seemed so relevant for contemporary French concerns.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Autonomization of the Sociological Field: The Durkheim-Tarde Debates of the 1890s**

As stated above, the use of Nietzsche's thought against orthodox sociology had roots in the intellectual and institutional battles of the 1890s, when proponents of the incipient discipline of sociology were struggling to distinguish their field from philosophy. An important force behind this endeavor was René Worms (1869-1926) who, after pursuing the standard academic order of succession--École Normale Supérieure, agrégation in philosophy, and Doctorat-ès-lettres--also acquired an degree in economics and twin Doctorates of Law and Science later in his life. By 1893, wielding the requisite academic capital he formed the Institut International de Sociologie (IIS) and its primary organ the Revue internationale de sociologie, attracting dozens of prominent social scientists from France and abroad, such as Alfred Espinas, Alfred Fouillée, Gabriel Monod, Charles Gide, Théodule Ribot, Gabriel Tarde, Georg Simmel, and Thorstein Veblen. (Durkheim, though undoubtedly invited, apparently declined association with this group.) The further efforts of Worms and his colleagues to establish institutional support for

sociology included his foundation of the Bibliothèque des Sciences Sociales (1893) and the Société de Sociologie de Paris (1895).<sup>9</sup> While such efforts attracted the attention of the academic community, they failed to secure the place of sociology as a university field distinct from philosophy and psychology. Instead, they forged valuable inroads via the more marginal educational institutions of the Third Republic, such as the École de Hautes Études and the École Libre des Sciences Politiques.

Concurrent with this institutional context was the sociologist Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904), whose polemics with Durkheim illustrated the birth pangs of modern French sociology as an autonomous discipline. While the most prominent social thinker to join the Institut International de Sociologie, Tarde's philosophy, academic background, and literary affiliations would have deleterious effects on the future of his social vision, leaving, however, his personal intellectual prestige intact. Though predominantly an independent scholar of an unconventional educational background--i.e. he held a degree in law and worked in regional courts near his home at Sarlat--by the early 1890s his social research had captured the attention of the Parisian intelligentsia. In 1893 he was elected the first president of the IIS, and thereafter would offer courses at several marginal institutions in Paris, including the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, the École Russe des Hautes Études, and the Collège Libre des Sciences Sociales.<sup>10</sup> In fact, he was even able to convert René Worms to his conception of sociology, consequently ensuring that the Revue internationale would function as the mouthpiece of a Tardean conception of non-

Durkheimian sociology.<sup>11</sup> (Durkheim formed his own journal L'Année sociologique in 1896, perhaps in response to the efforts of Worms.) In late-1900 Tarde was honored by being elected to the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, which placed him among the ranks of such prominent French thinkers as Alfred Fouillée, Henri Bergson, Charles Renouvier, Émile Boutroux, and several others associated with the IIS. Throughout his career, Tarde tried to clear a space within the French educational system for sociology as a distinct discipline. His commitment to this goal was demonstrated in 1899 when he declined the chair in Modern Philosophy at the Collège de France, largely because the administration refused to change the title to the chair in sociology. (He accepted the originally offered chair the following year.)<sup>12</sup> The significance of this appointment lies in the fact that the Collège de France and the Sorbonne represented opposing intellectual camps, with the former much more willing at the time to support those thinkers opposed to Durkheimian sociology. Terry Clark explains this conflict as the long-standing tension in French intellectual life between the spirit of order, authority, hierarchy, and bureaucratic institutions (the tradition of Cartesianism), and the somewhat reactionary glorification of personal invention and romantic subjectivism (the spirit of spontaneity). These two positions tended to complement and reinforce one another, Clark continues, and at any given time the emphasis of one pole tended to generate reaction toward the other.<sup>13</sup> This was demonstrated during the Dreyfus Affair, when most of the Sorbonne rallied behind Zola for the revision while much of the Collège de France (Tarde being a notable

exception) tended towards anti-Dreyfusism.<sup>14</sup> The aforementioned shift toward spontaneity occurred in the early 1900s with Durkheim's rise to prominence at the Sorbonne. Jean Izoulet, for example, who held the chair in Social Philosophy at the Collège de France, lashed out at Durkheim in a famous attack:

The requirement that M. Durkheim's sociology be taught in 200 Normal Schools in France is the gravest national peril which our country has known for some time.<sup>15</sup>

The tension between these institutions was exacerbated when the Collège de France promoted Henri Bergson, after the death of Tarde in 1904, to fill the vacant chair in Modern Philosophy. Bergson's metaphysical emphasis on intuition, sentiment and creativity appealed to many on the Catholic right, and represented the most clear philosophical contradiction to Durkheim's scientistic sociology as well as the apotheosis of the spirit of spontaneity. Thus Bergsonian philosophy proved an effective weapon against Durkheim, and was championed most vociferously by Gabriel Tarde's royalist son Alfred, who with Henri Massis wrote under the pseudonym "Agathon" in a well-publicized attack on Durkheim and the "Nouvelle Sorbonne."<sup>16</sup>

Despite such academic laurels, Tarde did not fit the conventional or, as it would become true after 1902, the implicitly required mold of the academic sociologist. Whereas most Durkheimians demonstrated impeccable academic pedigrees--many, for instance, were normaliens--Tarde did not follow the classical order of succession required for university teaching.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Durkheim stressed a strict methodology and scientific detachment, making it quite easy to

criticize Tarde for his subjective, literary, and even metaphysical approach to social research. Although he recognized the benefits of statistical data, Tarde did not take advantage of his post at the Ministry of Justice in Paris (to which he was appointed in 1894) to bolster his work with quantitative data. Ironically Durkheim would consult these sources himself when composing Le Suicide, a work which contains an extended critique of Tarde's sociology.<sup>18</sup> In addition Tarde had the reputation for dilettantism, frequenting literary salons and even composing a science fiction novel predicting a future time when his sociology would reign supreme over the intellectual field.<sup>19</sup> His prose style was such that it appealed to an intellectual audience ill-informed about scientific issues, but well-disposed to literature and metaphysics. Tarde's two main constituencies therefore were certain members of the academic community<sup>20</sup> and the literary elite, many of whom enthusiastically embraced his call for an aristocratic cultural leadership. This dual appeal would mark anti-Durkheimian sociology long after the death of Tarde in 1904, and would provide a fertile ground for the ideas of Nietzsche around 1900. Simultaneously, the mixture of literary and academic styles permitted Tarde to be stigmatized as "unscientific" by the Durkheimians, a mark which greatly contributed to the institutional marginalization of his followers.<sup>21</sup> It was primarily through this identification and subsequent elimination of the literary within sociology that the Durkheimians could positively define their own activity as scientific and therefore legitimate.

Finally, despite his popularity in intellectual circles Tarde invested little in the

future academic capital of his social vision. Unlike Durkheim, a "patron" who attracted a cohesive "cluster" of devoted followers--many from the prestigious École Normale Supérieure--serving to administer the faithful and propagate the creed, Tarde was an academic isolate who founded no cohesive school and had relatively few disciples with enough academic capital to effectively counter the advance of the Durkheimians. While common in provincial universities and marginal Parisian institutions, the figure of the isolate was also typical at the Collège de France.<sup>22</sup> Hence, as the structure of the educational system reproduced itself over time, academic French sociology would reproduce Tarde's role as an isolate by likewise excluding those who propagated his thought--thus holding the more vulnerable sons accountable for the sins of the father. All of these factors would structure the reception of alternative social theory in the early 1900s, and offer insight into the fate of Nietzschean thought among self-proclaimed legitimate sociologists.

Tarde's Lois de l'imitation (1890), which advocated an aristocratic individualism rather than the rule of the masses, became somewhat of a handbook for many opponents of Durkheim. His sociology was self-consciously a "social psychology," and in it Tarde declared that all human actions may be traced to processes of either imitation or invention. By "imitation" Tarde meant that irrational and near-hypnotic state of conformity demonstrated by social inferiors unable and unwilling to create their own modes of being. To this phenomenon Tarde contrasted "invention," that creative initiative exercised by social superiors who



reject mass conformity for their own independent and free ideas. Invention, then, is rational, progressive, and future-oriented, while imitation is irrational, static, and conservative. Social change is only effected by those inventive individual elites who, through the leisure time which allows them to become creative, impose their models upon the conforming masses, who in turn propagate these changes throughout society via imitation.<sup>23</sup> This social vision had a definite analogue in the literary field, where young avant-garde writers, in an attempt to assert the role of the intellectual in social affairs, also stressed the innovative capacities of the author as uncreated creator as opposed to the imitative masses. As such, for Tarde all social phenomena must be understood in terms of individual human beings, a small creative number of which are able to effectively change the social whole. Despite what Tarde considered to be the preponderance of the imitation-mode in Western democracies, he stressed that both processes are necessary for social progress.<sup>24</sup>

In opposition to this conception of the social field, Durkheim rejected psychologism entirely, claiming that social facts occur independently of human subjects, and actually operate upon them autonomously from outside. Those "zealous partisans of an absolute individualism," Durkheim wrote, "profess that the individual is perfectly autonomous." In fact quite the opposite is true:

[T]oday it is incontestable that the most part of our ideas and our inclinations are not elaborated by us, but come to us from outside. . . . We are then dupes of an illusion which makes us believe that we have elaborated ourselves that which is imposed on us from outside.<sup>25</sup>

Individuals are powerless against the social currents flowing within the collective consciousness, and while they may imitate these social forms they cannot "invent" anything. In this way Durkheim erases the possibility of radical social change, prescribing instead a resignation to the status quo:

Without a doubt, it pleases us to believe that an eloquent voice can suffice to transform, as if by magic, the material of society; but here, as elsewhere, nothing comes from nothing. The strongest wills cannot elicit non-existent forces from nothingness and the shocks of experience constantly dissipate these facile illusions.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of futile political radicalism, Durkheim stressed republican solidarity and moral consensus around the division of labor,<sup>27</sup> a prescription which also scientifically legitimated and complemented the philosophy of "solidarism" advocated by the politician Léon Bourgeois. Born as a reaction to the Boulanger Affair of 1889, solidarism stressed the primacy of the social over individuals, and advocated an awareness of the "social debt" which people owed to the collective.<sup>28</sup> In terms of intellectual politics, this social vision rejected the romantic ideal of the subject as pure creator, and proved an affront to social visions informed by literary and artistic ideals. Moderate parliamentary socialists such as Jean Jaurès favorably received Durkheim's sociology, while more radical critics of the Third Republic such as Sorel, Maurras, Lasserre, and Péguy did not. The debate between Tarde and Durkheim formed the foundation for more vitriolic battles over social theory to be waged on intellectual, institutional, and political levels, all of which were highly informed by the sciences/lettres dualism generated during the late-nineteenth century.

**Jules de Gaultier and Georges Palante:  
The Sociology of the Avant-Garde**

M. DESMAISONS:--All I want to understand is that art should be for me a source of pleasure, and not a course in morality.

M. DELARUE:--Don't you want us to annex aesthetics into sociology?

M. DESMAISONS:--What if, on the contrary, we were to insert sociology into aesthetics?

M. DELARUE:--Ah! You too! Do you reverse all values?

M. DESMAISONS:--Yes, I have read Nietzsche, like Merelli, in Gaultier's book.

--Remy de Gourmont<sup>29</sup>

While neither Worms nor Tarde mentioned Nietzsche in their writings, and the former even claimed in 1911 that the German philosopher exercised absolutely no influence on his thought,<sup>30</sup> two notable writers of the time did use Nietzsche's thought in their battle against Durkheimian sociology--Jules de Gaultier and Georges Palante. While close friends, these two intellectuals represented two possible expressions of the struggle against Durkheim--Gaultier the political conservative advocating a renaissance of the classical French tradition, and Palante, the individualist socialist vacillating between literature and academe.<sup>31</sup> In the tradition of Tarde, these writers appealed less to academics than to the "hommes de lettres" of the Third Republic. Unlike members of the Durkheimian school, neither held university posts--Gaultier served as a minor functionary and receiver of provincial finances, while Palante was an agrégé de philosophie teaching at his hometown lycée in Saint-Brieuc. Despite their common criticism of Durkheim and the Kantian philosophy of the universitaires, neither was involved with the Revue internationale de sociologie, whose editors probably saw their work

as insufficiently academic.

The dual experience of these writers within the fields of academic philosophy and avant-garde literature formed the conditions for their specific emergence and reception in the sphere of sociology. Both contributed articles and reviews to La Revue philosophique which, being the most eclectic (and marginal) of the academic philosophical journals and more willing to publish works in sociology, probably perceived their work as legitimate examples of the latter. The editors of La Revue de métaphysique et de morale, however, who had consecrated their review to those metaphysical and "properly called philosophical doctrines,"<sup>32</sup> did not publish the work of Gaultier or Palante just as they refused to review the recently-translated writings of Nietzsche. Lacking the support of university philosophy, both writers relied heavily upon the avant-garde literary review Mercur de France whose editors were as enthusiastic in favoring alternative and heretical modes of philosophical activity as in propagating the works of Nietzsche--indeed both were part and parcel of the same literary project, and thus willingly employed Gaultier and Palante as philosophy critics. For most republican professors and conservative literary critics, the philosophy of Nietzsche was perceived as merely another intellectual fashion of the literary avant-garde, a negative association which would implicate the philosopher's first French enthusiasts in the historically strained relationship between the academic establishment and the culturally-dominated avant-garde.<sup>33</sup>

The avant-garde production of non-consecrated philosophies was illustrated

by the launching of La Revue des idées in 1904: edited by Remy de Gourmont and Édouard Dujardin, this off-shoot of the Mercur provided a forum for both legitimate and illegitimate modes of philosophy and sociology, and thus presented itself as the literary rival of the more consecrated academic journals. Unlike both La Revue de métaphysique and, despite its eclectic bent, La Revue philosophique, the Revue des idées featured essays on Nietzsche's writings contributed, not surprisingly, by Gaultier and Palante.<sup>34</sup> The literary affiliations of both this review and its contributors, while acceptable and even admirable on the literary field, were received as stigmata by their more scientific counterparts in the fields of academic philosophy and sociology. The participation of Gaultier and Palante in such literary enterprises contributed in no small part to their pugnacious attitude vis-à-vis academic sociology as well as the negative response elicited by the Durkheimians.

Jules de Gaultier (1858-1942) represented one strand of anti-Durkheimian social theory, and with Palante is remembered as one of the first in France to expound the ideas of Nietzsche in a sociological and philosophical context. A descendant of an old family, Gaultier eschewed philosophical professionalism and, with his job as receiver of provincial finances, could literally afford to challenge with impunity the Kantian and Durkheimian orthodoxy of the philosophical field. On one occasion, for example, Gaultier described the "neo-Kantianism of a Renouvier and the spiritualism, equally Kantian in origin, of the university philosophers," as the most "recent, protestant, [and] rationalist forms of the social lie."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, by making few pretensions to academic writing style he found an avid readership

among the educated and conservative elite of the Third Republic. In fact, the leader of the royalist Action Française, Charles Maurras, once counted Gaultier among his "best friends of the spirit," despite the limited extent of the latter's commitment to the movement.<sup>36</sup> A colleague of Georges Palante, he neither held nor apparently sought an academic post and was therefore freed from the need to conform to the demands of academe--in this sense he managed to avoid many of the complications of the university field by remaining defiantly external to it. As Palante noted of Gaultier, perhaps with some envy:

The spontaneity of [Gaultier's] thought is entire. No scholarly or professional imperative has intervened in its initial orientation or in its development. M. Jules de Gaultier is a philosopher from breeding; not a philosopher from career.<sup>37</sup>

In Tardean terms, Palante saw Gaultier as a philosophical inventer--suggesting the artistic and productive freedom of the homme de lettres so valued by those in the literary field--rather than an imitative universitaire forced to conform to the dictates of academic politics by reproducing dominant scholarly taxonomies. Hence, while the relative independence enjoyed by Gaultier within the neo-classical avant-garde insulated him from many of the professional tensions endured by Palante, this apparent freedom was only possible within the rather structured space of the literary field, itself defined in stark contrast to the university.

The occasion for Gaultier's first significant emergence on the intellectual scene was a long review of the first volumes of the complete translated works of Nietzsche published by the Société du Mercure de France in 1898. As an independent non-academic writer with specifically philosophical interests, Gaultier

could criticize contemporary academic philosophy with relative security in both literary and academic journals. Gaultier praised the forcefulness and creativity of Nietzsche, which was at odds with the current Kantian and positivist orthodoxy of the University:

*On the contrary . . . the official philosophy, la philosophie d'école, by reason of state, by routine, by being powerless to break with tradition, has continued to teach, with a thousand quirks, an opposed doctrine.<sup>38</sup>*

Given the struggle for the right to name legitimate sociological activity, and the academic monopoly over this right obtained by the Durkheimians after 1902, it is easy to view Gaultier's frequent and bold references to Nietzsche the "sociologue" as evidence that the struggle to name the field was still being waged on the sociological field, albeit from largely external positions whose occupants had little chance for success. As he would note, "[Nietzsche's] ideas are very vivid and contrast violently with the tendencies of modern sociology."<sup>39</sup>

In Gaultier's most important book Le Bovarysme (1902), also published by the Mercure de France, the author outlined a politically-conservative Nietzsche/Tarde-based philosophy suggesting xenophobia and racism, hence perhaps Gaultier's appeal among the French right. Drawing upon Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary, Gaultier extrapolated from the character of Emma Bovary a universal human trait: Bovarysm, that is, "the power given to man to see himself other than what he is."<sup>40</sup> All people, he claimed, have definite and fixed aptitudes, and "certain ways of feeling, thinking and willing."

[In Bovarysm] we find them neglecting all the acts in which their

energy might have been successful and exerting themselves in modes of action, feeling and thought which they have, to be sure, been able to conceive and admire, but which they are unable to reproduce, so that all their energy, deflected from accessible aims and stimulated toward the impossible, is dissipated in vain efforts, proves abortive and fails.<sup>41</sup>

This fundamental disproportion between the imaginary and the real is inherent in all forms of life--it is not difficult to discern here the influence of Tarde. Attempts to approximate (or imitate) models presented from the outside was Bovaryism par excellence, and was manifested most often among mediocre individuals. As opposed to these people of "second rank," Gaultier posited "the great man, who does not imitate, [and] remains enthralled to the imperious law of his genius." Such superior individuals are the result of heredity, and are able to direct the social world toward a creative future. "From this point of view," Gaultier claimed, "one may say that the man of genius, when he invents, is only manifesting the law of becoming and that he escapes all Bovaryism. . . . We adopt the viewpoint set forth by M. Tarde in his fine book Lois de l'imitation."<sup>42</sup>

Gaultier's combination of Nietzsche and Tarde had important implications for conceiving nationalism, for he asserted with others on the literary field that the French must resist imitating foreign models in order to invent their own modes of being. "France," he wrote, "among all the nations very long endowed with a social personality, is the one that is the most widely open to foreign immigration." An influx of "newcomers" with their own ways of thinking and acting, if it occurs in areas of great social influence, threatens to encourage the imitation of a foreign model:



The vitality of a people seems compromised by two extreme measures: the servile imitation of the ancestor and the imitation of a foreign model in too strong dimensions, no longer permitting the subjection of the modes of the imitated reality to those of the reality of the old.<sup>43</sup>

Immigration appears as a threat, for these newcomers tend toward humanitarian and cosmopolitan ideas, and perhaps the greatest threat for Gaultier is the Jew, who is "a newcomer in all the countries of the world." In an interesting direct reference to Nietzsche, Gaultier harnessed the philosopher for Bovaryism: "Nietzsche, in his Antichrist, signalized Christianity as the supreme maneuver of the Jewish people, vanquished as a political state and henceforth dispersed, to guarantee its security among the different countries with whose life it was to merge."

Now this view of the philosopher seems very profound if one considers that the Jews, whose national bond is purely ethnic and religious and is not fixed around any locality in space, has everything to gain and nothing to lose with a doctrine which makes of all men citizens of the universe equal among one another and, of the diverse nationalities, facts of secondary or obsolete importance.<sup>44</sup>

Does this mean that intolerance and exclusivism should become national policies?

"Not at all," Gaultier explained, "but that the measure destined to regulate these vital questions should be debated . . . in the interests of the group itself. . . . What is essential, in such a matter, is not to be a dupe."<sup>45</sup> This brief evasion of outright anti-Semitism is not convincing, nor apparently was it taken seriously by Gaultier's royalist admirers: Maurras found that in Gaultier's text the "legitimacy of our indignations against the newcomer, against the Métèque [outsider], is established with the appropriate moderation and vigor of a true philosopher."<sup>46</sup>

One of the charges levelled against Durkheim by Gaultier's readers on the right was that the sociologist was attempting to impose upon French students a scientific methodology derived from Germany. In fact, in Durkheim's Année sociologique forty percent of the books reviewed were German, twenty-one percent English, and only twenty-six percent French.<sup>47</sup> Given the cultural xenophobia of many intellectuals, it is ironic that Nietzsche was used by some to encourage, against the threat of German impurities, pride in French culture. At a time when many German thinkers were becoming taboo, the works of Nietzsche increased in popularity. In fact, since the introduction of the writings of the philosopher in the early 1890s, French intellectuals had been stressing Nietzsche's love for classical French culture and his disdain for the German tradition.<sup>48</sup> Gaultier was a most eloquent spokesman for the need of the French to accept Nietzsche as one of their own. In 1902 he asserted that "against the German influence of Kant, it is necessary for us to accept the German influence of Nietzsche as sovereignly effectual and beneficent."<sup>49</sup> "[T]he vogue for the philosophy of Nietzsche in France," he noted elsewhere, "is precisely . . . a reaction against the preceding infatuation [engouement] in favor of German philosophy." Very much in the tradition of Tarde, Gaultier called this fascination with Kantian moralism an "intellectual imitation," which might be countered with a strong dose of Nietzschean philosophy.

Georges Palante (1862-1925) has been characterized as a "Nietzschean of the Left," a curious epithet which emerges as appropriate after a consideration of

his work. Committed to championing the individual against the authoritarian and anti-individualistic currents of his day (e.g. solidarism), Palante avoided both Marxism and anarchism to stress a non-revolutionary "socialism" created and implemented by creative individuals.<sup>50</sup> Unlike Gaultier, Palante was deeply engaged in the academic game and, though a lycée professor and an agrégé de philosophie, aimed at ultimately securing a university position. This trajectory therefore partly committed him to the accumulation of academic signs which might be recognized as distinctive in the academic field--thus the appearance of his essays in La Revue philosophique and the publication of his first texts at the publishing house of Félix Alcan, both of which conferred upon the author a degree of scholarly legitimacy.<sup>51</sup> In his first and most important text, Précis de sociologie (published by Alcan in 1901), Palante aligned himself in the tradition of Tarde by describing his own work as "social psychology," that is, a science which "investigates how the insertions of individual consciousnesses intervene in the formation and evolution of the social consciousness" and "inversely how this social consciousness acts upon individual consciousnesses."

To our eyes, Sociology is nothing other than Social Psychology. And we understand by Social Psychology the science which studies the mentalité of the unities reconciled by social life.<sup>52</sup>

Like Gaultier, Palante found a powerful sociological exemplar in Nietzsche, who "presents more profoundly, more absolutely than M. Tarde, the distinction between initiators and imitators."<sup>53</sup> This embrace of social psychology and emphasis on the individual allowed Palante to be represented as an intellectual relative of Tarde and

Nietzsche, a professionally dangerous heritage for an aspiring academic sociologist.

One of the most interesting strategic aspects of Palante's initial rejection of "la solidarité" was his tactful refusal to attack Durkheim directly. In fact, throughout the Précis such solidarists as Jean Izoulet and Léon Bourgeois bore the brunt of Palante's attack while Durkheim escaped relatively unscathed. This philosophy, Palante wrote, "is nothing other than an egoism of the many, an intensification and exacerbation of individual egoisms."

The spirit of solidarity is essentially anti-individualist. . . . A man need only be superior to be hated. He will not be pardoned for being different, [or] original.<sup>54</sup>

By setting up the interests of the many over the creative individual, solidarism "favors the sheep-like spirit" over the truly human; it "conserves the lies of the group and perpetuates false elites." In these lines Palante's invocation of Nietzsche's conforming and oppressive "herd" was clear: "the true foundation of the spirit of solidarity is the gregarious spirit."<sup>55</sup> The collective applies pressure upon its individual members, calling them either to conform to the group spirit or be expelled:

This law of conformism carries consequently a law for the elimination of individual rebels. . . . The group exercises an irresistible and partly unconscious push to eliminate the being who refuses to submit to the moral discipline and social environment.<sup>56</sup>

In this critique of solidarism, a veiled attack on Durkheimian sociology, Palante necessarily implied the problem of the sociology of academic sociology, that is, the power of the group of professors to delimit the field of legitimate scholarly practice

and to eliminate those who refused to operate within such approved parameters. In a sense, Palante's sociology was always reflective of the problematics of his own intellectual position.

The foundation of Palante's thought was his assertion of the "antinomy between the individual and society."<sup>57</sup> Contrary to the Durkheimians and in accordance with the ideology of the literary field, Palante saw the individual "as an original force and relatively independent of the social mechanism," a source of energy who at times may actually direct the movement of the social whole. Yet such moments of individual potency are rare, for the "social consciousness often oppresses the individual consciousness. Individual egoisms are very often slaves and dupes of the collective egoism."<sup>58</sup> Palante adopted Nietzsche's discussion of "master" and "slave" morality for his analysis of the individual's struggle against society: "Nietzsche [sic] identifies societies founded on Slave Morality with democratic societies and those founded on Master Morality with aristocratic societies."<sup>59</sup> The former society is marked by the gregarious tendency to sheepishly congregate into weak, small, and mediocre herds; it is the dupe of the "illusion of progress." The latter is characterized by "independence of spirit and of heart;" it possesses the "cult of the Past, of Age and of Tradition."<sup>60</sup>

Palante used the ideas of Nietzsche with a great deal of discretion, for he was aware of the potential for the irresponsible application of such ideas in politics. "I know that a number of German students see and glorify in Nietzsche the apologist of brutal force and of German imperialism," Palante noted in 1902; "That

proves nothing; there are philistines everywhere."<sup>61</sup> Palante rejected the image of Nietzsche as an optimistic prophet of energy, a theme which was becoming increasingly popular among some royalists after 1900; instead, he focused on Nietzsche as an individualistic pessimist who had little hope for a future reconciliation of the individual with society.<sup>62</sup>

Palante's commitment to a form of socialism fueled by the ideas of Nietzsche did not represent an anomaly, but a fairly common phenomenon at the turn of the century. It is important to recognize the significant impact that Nietzsche's ideas had on French socialists in order to appreciate Palante's endeavor. Since many intellectuals perceived their era as marked by crisis or even decline, the solutions posed to this problem ran the gamut of alternative social visions. As Steven Aschheim correctly notes, "socialism" at the fin de siècle was a very unstable concept which, despite clearly left-wing implications, could be appropriated for both rightist and leftist political platforms. Intellectuals in search of a vitalistic alternative to traditional bourgeois class distinctions could find solace in forms of socialism tailored to their particular needs.<sup>63</sup> In the Précis Palante stressed the role of the individual in social movements that characterized the "most exact and most modern" definitions of socialism, as opposed to those of Marxist orthodoxy.<sup>64</sup> Palante envisioned "in a dynamic socialism eternally becoming and carried by individual wills, a socialism which would be an individualism."<sup>65</sup> Familiar with Ernst Gystrow's work on Nietzschean socialism in Germany, Palante upheld his foreign counterpart's "conciliation of nietzchéisme [sic] and socialism",

declaring that "Nietzsche [sic] proclaimed the true principle of all true socialism and democracy: the infinite value and price of the person." "Today," Palante concluded, "many socialists, following the remark of Mr. Gystrow, draw together around this point of view." However, due to his cynicism regarding the future reconciliation of the individual and society, Palante's socialism was thoroughly pessimistic--"the struggle is eternal."<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, his assimilation of the work of Nietzsche into socialism was not an uncommon phenomenon for leftists searching for new modes of political expression.

#### **Academic Reproduction and the Boundaries of Sociology**

No, my scholarly friends, I bless you even for your hunched backs. And for despising as I do, the "men of letters" and culture parasites. And for not knowing how to make a business of the spirit. And for having opinions that cannot be translated into financial values. And for not representing anything that you are not.  
--Nietzsche<sup>67</sup>

Because Jules de Gaultier did not hold a university position and did not affect scienticity in his works, his career was not threatened by the rise of Durkheimian orthodoxy. In fact, since Gaultier's texts were so firmly ensconced on the boundary between the literary field and the university field, they were not taken seriously by academic sociologists--and were therefore never reviewed in L'Année sociologique.<sup>68</sup> A more dire situation existed for Georges Palante, however, who hoped one day to leave his unhappy lycée post for a more prestigious university position. Being only an agrégé Palante would have to pursue his Doctorat d'état and, above all, satisfy the Durkheimians at the Sorbonne and at L'Année. Given

Palante's literary affiliations and championship of the individual over the social, however, this would be no mean feat.

The situation appeared very bleak early on. In 1900, for example, Durkheim himself assessed one of Palante's articles very critically: the author, he wrote, "continues to place on trial groups in general. . . . [He] does not see that these collective prejudices have, before all, the object of regulating action, and are not simple speculative expressions of reality."<sup>69</sup> In a more revealing review essay, Durkheim declared that the enterprise of a "Précis" of sociology, while certainly useful, should have been a collective rather than individual project, thus implicitly invoking the authority of the group against the limited perspective of "a single savant." In addition he observed "numerous and grave" omissions, and expressed surprise at the "enormous importance attributed by the author to writers like [Max] Nordau or Nietzsche, of whose value we do not dream of discussing," but who certainly possessed the least sociological authority.<sup>70</sup> This disagreement over the legitimacy of these citations further reveals the social differences between Durkheim and Palante: "citology," a device used by authors seeking to raise the status of their perceptions by association with those of already "established" authors, is an acceptable scholarly strategy only when read by those participating in a common discourse. Palante's references to Nietzsche, while carrying symbolic weight within the avant-garde, situated him within the enemy territory of a different conceptual universe.

This unfavorable reception by the Année sociologique team did not improve



in the years to come. One reviewer of the Précis noted significantly that "the method that [Palante] prefers is the 'ideological' method of M. Tarde, from whom he borrows much, and that of Nietzsche, whom he cites often." In general, "his exposition and critique of the principal conceptions of sociology and its method . . . is rapid and superficial, often confused."<sup>71</sup> This citation of Palante's debt to Tarde and Nietzsche served a particular function in academic discourse--to convince the readers of L'Année not to take Palante's work seriously by situating it beyond the sphere of legitimate sociology. Robert Hourticq, who reviewed Palante's collection of essays, Combat pour l'individu (1904) was less charitable:

Palante's book is a choleric cry against what he calls the gregarious spirit, that is to say the tendency of the social whole to place itself above the individual, and to impose its beliefs and rules of action upon him. . . . To the gregarious spirit, to social dogmatism, Palante opposes the immoralist theories of Nietzsche, the egoist exigencies of the rebel, of the social dilettante.<sup>72</sup>

By pointing out the Nietzschean echoes in Combat, this reviewer discredited the work by highlighting its rootedness in the literary avant-garde: "The articles from which this is composed have appeared in the *Mercure de France*, the *Plume*, the *Revue socialiste*, the most abstract in the *Revue philosophique* [sic]; it is, as one sees, an essentially polemical and journalistic work."<sup>73</sup> Finally, Hourticq conferred upon Palante the ultimate form of academic disgrace:

We describe this book as the sufficiently faithful expression of intellectual anarchism. . . . It would be useless to attempt here a refutation of these theories. It is best to consider them from the outside, as the symptom of a malaise, of an abnormal working of social solidarity.<sup>74</sup>

As in many areas of French intellectual life at the turn of the century, "anarchisme

intellectuelle" was most often invoked by those in positions of dominance as a means of branding non-conformist newcomers as threats to the academic or literary hierarchy which assured that very domination. The avowed concern for anarchy revealed a collective need to reproduce the orderly status quo of legitimate sociology against those who challenged it from outside.<sup>75</sup> In almost every case, Palante's use of Tarde and Nietzsche was seized upon by the Durkheimians as a literary transgression, and even described as the manifestation of a vast cultural and intellectual disease. These ostensibly intellectual differences illustrate what Bourdieu calls "the reductionist tendency: it resorts to classificatory epithets which designate or identify groups, or groups of properties, in an eclectic perspective, and do not admit an awareness of the principles on which they are based."<sup>76</sup> The rhetorical strategies of Palante's critics are clear: unable to present a strictly intellectual critique, they portrayed his texts as illegitimate and worthy of exclusion on both the academic level (by stressing their literary taint) and political level (by invoking the specters of anarchism and individualism)--both ruses for the underlying social need for academic reproduction. While Nietzschean thought might function for some as an effective weapon against the dominant sociological paradigm, this could only be accomplished within the relative security of the literary field. In academia Nietzsche was used by the dominant as a stigma and rationale for excommunicating undesirables.<sup>77</sup>

After a relatively restrained entry into the sociological field in 1902 and the negative reception of his work among academics, Palante openly engaged the

sociologists of the Sorbonne in essays which became published more regularly in literary reviews. This counter-attack only exacerbated an already strained relationship, and demonstrated the extent to which Palante tenaciously clung to his individualistic principles. Indeed one may interpret this defiance as the manifestation of the discordance of a literary habitus trying to survive on the academic field: valuing the literary ideal of the freely-creative thinker--and formulating a sociology founded upon such creative individualism--Palante had acquired a life-style corresponding to a literary representation of the thinker that had no equivalent and was even anathema on the academic sociological field. Given the dominant vision of legitimate sociological activity, one may understand how Palante was able to speak highly of the sociologist Eugène de Roberty, who "is not of that school which refuses the title of sociologist to all those who do not follow such a determined methodological formula."<sup>78</sup> In 1909 Palante described all "our official and moralizing sociologists" as propagators of the "lay priest spirit":

All are little [Ferdinand] Brunetières for whom individualism is the enemy. For them also, religion and sociology are synonymous. The offering of sociology is, like that of religion, to uniting souls (religare) to make one great spiritual whole.<sup>79</sup>

Unwilling and perhaps unable to conceive the role of the intellectual in any other way, Palante's direct counter-attack upon Durkheimian orthodoxy accorded directly with the life-style of the literary writer, constituting therefore an outright act of heresy from an academic perspective.

It is not an overstatement to use the word "excommunication" in regard to the marginalization of Palante, for the Durkheimian school's achievement of cultural

legitimacy may be likened to cultural consecration. As the dominant school of sociology the Durkheimians determined the boundaries of orthodoxy and therefore the limits of acceptable social commentary. By reproducing the science/letters dichotomy Durkheim and his followers placed the outer limit of legitimate sociology at the border of the literary field, a blurred line of demarcation at times arbitrarily invoked to exclude undesirable candidates. Above all, this maneuver reinforced and reproduced the Durkheimians' belief in the qualifications for legitimate hierarchy and membership in the academy. This helped reinforce the mystical aura that Durkheim himself seemed to exude: "all his physical being attested to it," remembered Hubert Bourgin, "he was a priest more still than a savant. He was a hieratic figure. His mission was religious."<sup>80</sup> As Palante noted, referring partly to his own precarious situation, the "lay priest spirit, like the Catholic priest spirit, holds in horror doubters, skeptics, dilettantes."<sup>81</sup>

In November 1911 Palante's thèse de doctorat, "Les Antinomies entre l'Individu et la Société", was rejected by the Durkheimians at the Sorbonne without a public defense--presumably for reasons already expressed in reviews of his earlier texts--and thus effectively dashed his hopes for a university position.<sup>82</sup> Whereas Tarde had found an institutional haven at the Collège de France, the Durkheimians retroactively and symbolically destroyed him in the figure of his hapless follower, rendered all the more vulnerable for his insufficient academic capital and literary trappings. Above all this final cut demonstrated the power exercised by the Durkheimians over the field of academic sociology, a power which

functioned to reproduce the professorial corps and, simultaneously, the "structural opposition between writers and professors, between the freedom and the audacity of the artist's life and the strict and somewhat circumscribed rigour of Homo academicus."<sup>83</sup> Palante's own statements about the hegemonic nature of groups were borne out through the actions of his enemies at the Sorbonne: "The group exercises an irresistible and partly unconscious push to eliminate the being who refuses to submit to the moral discipline and social environment."<sup>84</sup>

This academic disgrace, however, marked the beginning of the end for Palante. Eleven years after his thèse was rejected Palante, now an academic isolate and philosophy reviewer for the Mercure de France, launched a bitter attack on Jules de Gaultier's latest effort, La Philosophie officielle et la philosophie (1922), which prompted the author's quick reply in the Mercure. In Palante's eyes Gaultier had committed the two most unpardonable sins of social dogmatism and statism:

To resume my judgment, the structure of the bovaryque philosophy of knowledge does not seem irreproachable to me, and what M. J. de Gaultier says of its historical significance appears exaggerated. As for his ambition to become an object of education and of supplanting the reigning doctrines in the University, it disconcerts me a bit. . . . A spectacular philosophy, an aesthetic philosophy[,] I had been accustomed to see in Bovaryism a philosophy of the happy few, a philosophy of the artist or the dilettante; not an institutionalizable philosophy [une philosophie scolarisable], a State philosophy.<sup>85</sup>

That is, ironically, Palante accused Gaultier of transgressing the boundary between literary and academic philosophy--of compromising creative literary values in his quest for academic consecration--which prompted him to rethink critically the entire doctrine. Thereafter followed a series of published letters by Palante and Gaultier

in which each attacked the other, until the editor of the Mercure put a stop to it.<sup>86</sup> Palante, however, refused to drop the issue and succeeded in provoking Gaultier's challenge to a duel. While this dispute was settled without gunfire, Palante felt dishonored and isolated himself from all contact with people. In 1925, with his academic career in ruins, his friendship ended, and his reputation in the literary field tarnished, Palante shot himself on the beach by his home at Hillion.<sup>87</sup>

In conclusion, this essay has demonstrated the manner in which Nietzsche was received among academic sociologists by inquiring not into the direct references to the philosopher, but into the professorial politics and intellectual representations which decided the fate of those employing the ideas of Nietzsche in various sectors of the sociological field. For writers like Palante who were deeply enmeshed in the intellectual game, adopting and stubbornly maintaining a Tardean and Nietzschean individualist stance--not merely as an intellectual belief but as a professional strategy--resulted in marginalization and finally exclusion at the hands of the dominant Durkheimians. For those with few academic aspirations such as Gaultier the situation was less urgent, for one in such a position could afford to alienate those in academe with little fear of professional repercussions. Therefore, Nietzschean thought--a recognized product of the literary avant-garde--became involved in a struggle for the legitimate nomination of the sociological field, a battle involving conflicting definitions of legitimate social science and therefore different schemes of intellectual perception and classification.

## Notes

1. Cf. Christopher E. Forth, "Jules de Gaultier and Georges Palante: Nietzschean Philosophy at the Boundaries of French Sociology, 1898-1911" Annals of Scholarship 1994 (10), forthcoming.

2. Jean-Louis Fabiani, Les philosophes de la république (Paris: Minuit, 1988), 114-118. This phenomenon is explored in greater detail in Christopher E. Forth, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers: French Philosophical Discourse on Nietzsche, 1898-1908" Theory and Society, forthcoming.

3. It is useful to contrast the situation in France with that in Germany, where established sociologists such as Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel eagerly embraced the philosophy of Nietzsche. Cf. Steven E. Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 39-43.

4. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, "Champ de pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe" Scolies 1971 (1), 7-26; Homo Academicus (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Les Règles de l'art (Paris: Seuil, 1992). Several scholars have applied this analytical method to the intellectual life of turn-of-the-century France. Cf. Jean-Louis Fabiani, Les philosophes de la république (Paris: Minuit, 1988); Christophe Charle, Naissance des 'intellectuels'. 1880-1900 (Paris: Minuit, 1990); Fritz Ringer, Fields of Knowledge: French Academic Culture in Comparative Perspective, 1890-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

5. Ringer, Fields of Knowledge, 215-216.

6. Steven Lukes, Individualism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 3-16.

7. Agathon [Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde] L'Esprit de la Nouvelle Sorbonne (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911); Eugen Weber, France, Fin de Siècle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 125.

8. Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche (Paris: Alcan, 1898); Émile Faguet, En lisant Nietzsche (Paris, Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1904); Alfred Fouillée, La Morale de Nietzsche (Paris: Alcan, 1902); Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Nietzsche (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1909).

9. Terry N. Clark, Prophets and Patrons: The French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 147-154.

10. Terry Clark, ed., On Communication and Social Influence: Selected Papers, by Gabriel Tarde (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 4; Clark, Prophets

and Patrons, 157.

11. Steven Lukes, Émile Durkheim, His Life and Work: A Historical and Critical Study (New York, 1972), 302, 393-394. Worms and Tarde attracted to the Revue internationale several notable sociologists searching for alternatives to the Durkheimian model, such as Jacques Novicow, Maxim Kolalevsky, and Eugène de Roberty.

12. William Logue, From Philosophy to Sociology: The Evolution of French Liberalism, 1870-1914 (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois Press, 1983), 119; W. Paul Vogt, "The Politics of Academic Sociological Theory in France, 1890-1914" Ph.D Dissertation, Indiana University, 1976, 97-98.

13. Clark, Prophets and Patrons, 16-18, 53.

14. Tarde and a number of prominent academics (e.g. Émile Boutroux, Paul Desjardins, Gabriel Séailles, Alfred Espinas, Gabriel Monod, Henri Berr, Ernest Lavissee, Félix Alcan, and Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu) subscribed to the moderately revisionist "Appel à l'Union" during the Affair. Cf. "Appel à l'Union" Le Temps 25 janvier-7 février 1898; Charle, 191-192, 251.

15. Jean Izoulet, quoted in R.C. Grogan, The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900-1914 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1988), 115-116. In his later years Izoulet drew heavily upon the ideas of Nietzsche in his own attack on Durkheim. Cf. Izoulet, Le panthéisme d'occident, ou le Super-Laïcisme (Paris: Albin Michel, 1928), 83-145.

16. Cf. Agathon L'Esprit de la Nouvelle Sorbonne, and Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Plon, 1914).

17. Clark, Prophets and Patrons, 166.

18. Roger Lewis Geiger, "The Development of French Sociology, 1871-1905" Ph.D Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1972, 122-123.

19. Gabriel Tarde, "Fragment d'histoire future" Revue internationale de sociologie août-septembre 1896 (4), 603-654; Lukes, Durkheim, 304; Geiger, 124-126.

20. Geiger, 123, 127.

21. Bourdieu writes that "positions adopted in the space of styles correspond closely to positions in the university field. Thus it is that, faced with the alternative of writing well, which can procure literary benefit but undermines the impression of scientificity, or of writing badly, which can produce an impression of rigour or profundity (as in philosophy) but to the detriment of social success, geographers,



historians and sociologists adopt strategies which, transcending individual differences, are related to their respective positions." Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 29-30.

22. Clark, Prophets and Patrons, 68, 74.

23. Gabriel Tarde, Les Lois de l'imitation: étude sociologique (Paris: Alcan, 1907 [1890]); Geiger, 97-101.

24. Logue, 124. The obvious parallel between Tarde's notions of invention and imitation and Nietzsche's "master" and "slave" morality," (or even of the "overman" and the "herd") seems to have been a coincidence. There is no evidence to suggest that Tarde had ever seriously considered the ideas of Nietzsche, for he does not cite the philosopher in his texts and, more importantly, by the time Tarde had published his Lois de l'imitation (1890) the works of Nietzsche were still largely unknown in France.

25. Émile Durkheim, Les Règles de la méthode sociologique (Paris: Quadrige, 1987 [1895]), 6, 7.

26. Émile Durkheim, Le Suicide: étude de sociologie (Paris: Alcan, 1930 [1897]), 427-428.

27. Émile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society W. D. Halls, trans. (New York: The Free Press, 1984 [1893]).

28. Paul Rabinow, French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 184-188; Theodore Zeldin, France, 1848-1945: Politics and Anger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 291-292; Logue, 185-186; Weber, France, Fin de Siècle, 20.

29. Remy de Gourmont, "La Réclame" Dialogues des amateurs: Épilques, 1905-1907 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1907), 139.

30. René Worms, contribution to Jean Viollis, "Nietzsche et la jeunesse d'aujourd'hui" La Grande revue 10 janvier 1911 (65), 122. One notable academic sociologist who admired Nietzsche was Eugène de Roberty, a professor of philosophy at the Université de Bruxelles and a pioneer in French sociology. In his Frédéric Nietzsche (Paris: Alcan, 1902), de Roberty wrote that Nietzsche advocates "a great new social reality which should be born, beyond the present decomposition, of a common desire and collective effort that prepares henceforth all individual efforts." Whereas de Roberty boldly presented a solidarist interpretation of the philosopher, he did so from the security of his accumulated scholarly prestige and his firmly-held university position. Predictably, L'Année sociologique did not review this text.

31. Interestingly, Palante and Gaultier, both marginal to legitimate academic discourse, are featured in W. Paul Vogt's list of the 137 dominant members of the French philosophical community. This list was compiled from frequent contributors to the Revue philosophique and the Revue de métaphysique et de morale, the two most prestigious philosophical journals of the Third Republic. Vogt correctly observes that the preponderance of sociologists (such as Durkheim, Bouglé, Georges Davy, Alfred Fouillée, and Eugène de Roberty) on this list attests to the extent that sociology as a discipline was still closely tied to philosophy. Cf. W. Paul Vogt, "Identifying Scholarly and Intellectual Communities: A Note on French Philosophy, 1900-1939" History and Theory 1982 (21), 267-278.

32. Revue de métaphysique et de morale juillet 1893, (1), 2; Fabiani, 36-37.

33. While the non-academic philosopher Louis Weber served for years as the philosophy critic for the Mercure de France, Gaultier would hold this post from 1903 to 1937, and would share it with Palante from 1911 until the latter's death in 1923. Cf. Christopher E. Forth, "Nietzsche, Decadence, and Regeneration in France, 1891-1895" Journal of the History of Ideas 1993 (54), 97-117; Michel Onfray, Georges Palante: essai sur un nietzschéen de gauche (Romillé: Éditions Folle Avoine, 1990), 42, 46; Yannick Pelletier, ed., L'Individu en détresse [by Georges Palante] (Romillé: Éditions Folle Avoine, 1987), 19, 22; Mary Jean Matthews Green, Louis Guilloux: An Artisan of Language (York, SC: French Literature Publications Co., 1980), 71-72.

34. Cf. Jules de Gaultier, reviews of Frédéric Nietzsche, Par delà le Bien et le Mal and La Volonté de puissance, La Revue des idées 15 mai 1904, 384-387.

35. Jules de Gaultier, "Nietzsche et la pensée française" Mercure de France septembre 1904, 593.

36. Included with Gaultier among Maurras' "best friends of the spirit" were Maurice Barrès, Jean Moréas, Jacques Bainville, Pierre Lasserre, Louis Dimier, and Léon Daudet. Cf. Reino Virtanen, "Nietzsche and the Action Française: Nietzsche's Significance for French Rightist Thought" Journal of the History of Ideas April 1950 (11), 198, n. 31; Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (Paris: Alcan, 1929), 19-22, 82-83, 96-99.

37. Georges Palante, "Jules de Gaultier" Revue des idées juillet 1910 (79), 5.

38. Jules de Gaultier, "Frédéric Nietzsche" La Revue blanche 1898 (17), 515. Before his preoccupation with Nietzsche, Gaultier wrote essays on Ibsen and Tolstoy, the two other culture heroes of the literary avant-garde. Cf. Gaultier, "Ibsen," La Revue blanche 1898 (15), 415-439, 509-525; "Tolstoy," La Revue blanche 1898 (17), 92-123.

39. Gaultier, "Nietzsche et la pensée française" Mercury de France août 1904, 579; Gaultier, Nietzsche et la réforme philosophique (Paris: Mercury de France, 1904), 136.

40. Jules de Gaultier, Bovaryism Gerald M. Spring, trans. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970), 4.

41. Ibid., 5.

42. Ibid., 3, 28, 125. Cf. also Gaultier, "M. Gabriel Tarde" Revue des idées 1904 (1), 454-459.

43. Ibid., 70, 71, 136.

44. Ibid., 73.

45. Ibid., 73-74.

46. Charles Maurras, "D'Emma Bovary au grand tout" in Barbarie et poésie (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1925), 360.

47. Theodore Zeldin, France, 1848-1945: Intellect, Taste, and Anxiety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 418; Wolf Lepenies, Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 72-80.

48. For instance, the writer/lawyer Robert Dreyfus remembered that as early as 1892 he and his friends at the journal Le Banquet--including Daniel Halévy, Fernand Gregh, Léon Blum and Marcel Proust--advocated a "return to France" which, interestingly enough, was encouraged by the works of Nietzsche. Cf. Robert Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust (Paris: Grasset, 1926), 106-107; Dreyfus, "La philosophie du marteau" Le Banquet mai 1892, 65-74.

49. Jules de Gaultier, contribution to Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercury de France novembre 1902 (44), 332.

50. Onfray, 64-65, 72; Bianquis, 92-93.

51. Fabiani, 104-106. Several other agrégés de philosophie eschewed the dictates of official Kantian philosophy for the more radical thought of Nietzsche, including Pierre Lasserre of L'Action Française and Marcel Drouin of La Nouvelle revue française. Such an espousal invariably consigned such writers to participation in the literary field.

52. Palante points out that Tarde's individualism is democratic rather than aristocratic like the individualism of Nietzsche. In another place in the text, however, Palante notes the similarities between the two thinkers. Georges Palante, Précis de sociologie (Paris: Alcan, 1901), 3, 4, 60, 111.

53. Ibid., 111. This is not to assert that Nietzsche was the only inspiration for the work of Palante. Jean-Louis Dumas, for example, has justly observed that Palante also owed a great deal to the sociology of Georg Simmel. In this essay, however, I am less concerned with determining the diverse influences on Palante than in examining the social and intellectual conditions for his academic marginalization. Cf. Jean-Louis Dumas, "Un terrain d'entente entre Palante et Bouglé?" in Michel Onfray, ed., La Révolte individuelle: Actes du Colloque Georges Palante (Bédé: Éditions Folle Avoine, 1991), 114-127.

54. Ibid., 80, 81.

55. Ibid., 82.

56. Ibid., 85.

57. Onfray, 49; Palante, Précis, 63.

58. Palante, 7, 63.

59. Ibid., 36. This misspelling of Nietzsche's name appears throughout the text. It is unlikely that Palante, an avid reader of the philosopher, had himself made this mistake.

60. Ibid., 36.

61. Palante, contribution to Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France novembre 1902 (44), 364.

62. Onfray, 51-52. Two examples of the appropriation of Nietzsche by the extreme right are Pierre Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1902), and Georges Valois, L'Homme qui vient (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1906).

63. Steven E. Aschheim, "Nietzschean Socialism--Left and Right, 1890-1933" Journal of Contemporary History April 1988 (23), 147, 149; Onfray, 64-65, 72; Palante, Précis, 175-176.

64. Palante, Précis, 174; Jean Grenier, "Georges Palante" in L'Individu en détresse, 103-104.

65. Palante quoted in Bianquis, 93.

66. Palante, Précis, 64, 182; R. Hinton Thomas, Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918 (New York: Open Court, 1988), 27-28; Aschheim, 154. Between 1898 and 1903, certain representatives of the French socialist party, notably Charles Andler and Jean Jaurès, invoked the ideas of Nietzsche for their cause. Cf. Robert Haas, "Jaurès à Genève" La petite république 21, 23, and 26 février 1902.

67. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 366.

68. Despite the silence of academic sociologists, Gaultier's texts were generally favorably reviewed by academic philosophical reviews; yet one negative response, which underscored Gaultier's status as a newcomer to the field, merits quotation in full: "One is very embarrassed, when one is of a generation as advanced in life as ours to speak of the book of a 'youth', above all when this book, written by a 'youth', was [meant] to please the young. I am persuaded that admirers are not lacking, among youths, neither for M. Gaultier, nor for his Bovarysme. . . . For we, let's be frank, we admired nothing in this book if it is not the... courage [sic] with which the author collects and coordinates commonplaces, without perceiving their ancientness, even their antiquity." Cf. François Pillon, review of Gaultier, Le Bovarysme, L'Année philosophique 1902, 271.

69. É[mile]. D[urkheim]., review of Palante, "Le Mensonge de groupe: étude sociologique" L'Année sociologique 1900-1901, 167.

70. Émile Durkheim, review of G. Palante, Précis de sociologie, Revue de synthèse historique février 1902 (4), 114; Jean-Claude Pompougnac, "Georges Palante, un critique de la raison sociologique" in La Révolte individuelle, 106-107. For a brief lecture on Nietzsche and pragmatism, delivered at the Sorbonne during the 1913-1914 academic year, cf. Durkheim, Pragmatisme et sociologie: cours inédit (Paris: Vrin, 1955), 29-32.

71. A. A[ubin]., review of G. Palante, Précis de sociologie, L'Année sociologique 1900-1901, 154.

72. R[obert]. H[ourticq]., review of G. Palante, Combat pour l'individu, L'Année sociologique 1903-1904, 188, 189. Otto Lorenz has identified Hourticq 1909 as an agrégé de philosophie and professor at the lycée d'Angoulême, and Yash Nandan has affirmed that he was a peripheral member of the Année sociologique team who contributed numerous reviews to the journal between 1902 and 1913. Cf. Otto Lorenz, Catalogue générale de la librairie française (Paris: Jordell, 1911), 21: 606; Yash Nandan, The Durkheimian School: A Systematic and Comprehensive Bibliography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 315-316.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., 189.

75. The menace of intellectual anarchy was often invoked by the culturally-dominant to counter the enthusiastic application of Nietzschean thought by the literary avant-garde. Writing in La Revue des deux mondes, Édouard Schuré railed against "all the malcontents of literature, all the rebels of thought" who embraced Nietzsche, and declared that the philosopher's ideas "lead to complete anarchy in the intellectual domain." In addition, noting the disorder produced by the warring intellectual factions during the Dreyfus Affair, the academic philosopher Lucien Arréat noted that "Nietzsche appeared, in effect, to supply new and living formulas to the elegant anarchism of the 'intellectuels'". Finally the prominent critic Ferdinand Brunetière blasted the pretensions and egoism of the Dreyfusards, who risked anarchy by pretending to be intellectual overmen. Cf. Édouard Schuré, "Nietzsche en France et la psychologie de l'athée" Revue bleue 8 septembre 1900, 293; Lucien Arréat, review of Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche, La Revue philosophique 1898 (45), 663; Ferdinand Brunetière, "Après le procès" Revue des deux mondes 15 mars 1898 (146), 445.

76. Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 14.

77. The reception of Palante's texts was marginally more positive among academic philosophical reviews, though on one occasion the Renouvierist François Pillon noted significantly that "M. Palante is at the age of the audacious." Cf. François Pillon, review of Palante, Précis de sociologie, L'Année philosophique 1901, 256; Lionel Dauriac, review of Palante, Pessimisme et individualisme, L'Année philosophique 1913, 213.

78. Palante, review of Eugène de Roberty, Frédéric Nietzsche, Revue philosophique janvier 1903 (55), 108; cf also Palante's critique of Roberty in Précis, 48.

79. Palante, "L'Esprit prêtre laïque" in Combat, 271.

80. Hubert Bourgin, De Jaurès à Léon Blum (Paris: Fayard, 1938), 218.

81. Ibid., 270.

82. Cf. André Billy, "Georges Palante et Louis Guilloux" in L'Individu en détresse, 99. Palante's thesis was directed by two prominent normaliens--the sociologist Célestin Bouglé and the philosopher Gabriel Séailles. Despite its academic rejection, Palante's thesis was published in 1912 by Alcan in the prestigious collection "Bibliothèque de Philosophie contemporaine." Cf. Palante, Les Antinomies entre l'individu et la société (Paris: Alcan, 1912). Palante's second thesis was published by Alcan in 1913 as Pessimisme et individualisme.

83. Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, 109.

84. Ibid., 85. Palante explained his situation in the Mercure de France, whose readers had become quite accustomed to reading about the failings of the republican University: "Having been refused the defense, I am correct in saying that M. Bouglé and, to the extent that there is une solidarité sorbonnique, M. Durkheim have fled the public discussion of their ideas. Now what is it that merited such cavalier treatment? Is it the audacity of my antisociocratic heterodoxy? Is it excessiveness of my social pessimism? Is it the crime of attacking, in the very Sorbonne the doctrines of my judges? . . . Whatever it should be, it is permitted for me to say, cum grano salis, that my judges, by eliminating my thesis, have, all the same, confirmed it despite themselves and have given to my essential idea the Sorbonnic stamp." Palante, "Autour d'une thèse refusée en Sorbonne" Mercure de France 16 décembre 1912 (100), 754-770.

85. Palante, "Revue de la quinzaine: philosophie" Mercure de France 1 octobre 1922 (159), 203. There may have been something to Palante's claim that Gaultier had indeed crossed the boundary between literature and academe, for André Lalonde would later consecrate "Bovarysme" by featuring it in his Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie (Paris: PUF, 1980 [1926]), 117, and Émile Bréhier would include Gaultier in Histoire de la philosophie: La philosophie moderne (Paris: PUF, 1968 [1932]), 925-926. Moreover, after his death in 1942 La Revue de métaphysique et de morale explained that "Jules de Gaultier came late enough to pure philosophy; a longtime collaborator on the Mercure de France, he brought about there a sort of alliance between it [pure philosophy] and literary criticism." "Nécrologie," La Revue de métaphysique et de morale 1944 (49), 95.

86. Palante, "Revue de la quinzaine: philosophie" Mercure de France 1 octobre 1922 (159), 190-203; Gaultier, "Une réponse à M. Palante" MF 1 novembre 1922 (159), 756-763; Palante, "Revue de la quinzaine: philosophie" MF 15 décembre 1922 (160), 736-740; Gaultier, "Revue de la quinzaine: philosophie" MF 1 janvier 1923 (161), 485-489; Philippe Thomas, "Le Bovarysme, ressort de la polémique Palante/Gaultier" in Onfray, La Révolte individuelle, 22-31; Pelletier, 29.

87. Several scholars note other possible reasons for Palante's suicide, such as his unhappy marriage to a virtually illiterate woman, his physical deformities (which often provoked the ridicule of his students at Saint-Brieuc), as well as his refusal to conform to the dictates of orthodox sociology. Interestingly, the novelist Louis Guilloux modeled one of his main characters, Cripure, after his unhappy friend Palante in Le Sang noir. In addition, despite the fact that the Durkheimians had illustrated Palante's statements regarding the hegemonic power of groups over individuals, Palante's suicide seemed to corroborate the Durkheimian theory of anomie: through participation in the sociological field, Palante tacitly sought the academic satisfactions that the field presented as legitimately desirable while simultaneously rejecting the legitimate means for their acquisition, i.e. by refusing

to conform to the Durkheimian definition of legitimate sociological activity. Cf. Pelletier, 19, 28, 30; Green, 71-74; Bourdieu, Les Règles, 317-318, 320; Durkheim, Le Suicide, 247.



**PART THREE:**  
**LITERARY POLITICS AND POLITICAL LITERATURE**

Man is beast and superbeast; the higher man is inhuman and superhuman: these belong together. With every increase of greatness and height in man, there is also an increase in depth and terribleness: one ought not to desire the one without the other--or rather: the more radically one desires the one, the more radically one achieves precisely the other.

--Friedrich Nietzsche  
The Will to Power

**CHAPTER SIX:  
FROM ANTI-DREYFUSISM TO ROYALISM:  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RIGHTIST NIETZSCHE**

As Christophe Charle has demonstrated in Naissance des "intellectuels", the Dreyfus Affair did not create the marked cleavage between intellectuals in 1898, but rather reinforced intellectual alliances and hostilities that had been slowly forming over the course of the previous decade. That is, the social division between revisionists and anti-Dreyfusards had largely been prefigured years before Émile Zola's provocative tract "J'Accuse," and the Affair itself only marked more clearly the boundary between competing factions. In terms of the population of intellectuals at the turn of the century, this crisis also provided an excellent opportunity for young conservative writers to align themselves with their more established elders as a means of literary distinction, which entailed the rejection of the Dreyfusards on social as well as intellectual terms. Within this hotly contested literary space the ideas of Nietzsche would become subject to a different mode of appropriation and construction which was at odds with the vision of the 1890s.

The literary avant-garde that had been so influential in disseminating the ideas of Nietzsche in France during the 1890s had concurrently offered an image of the philosopher which bore a resemblance to their own intellectual visage. Thus marked by the social qualities of the intellectual group which first embraced his thought, Nietzsche as a cultural symbol often became identified exclusively with that sector of the intellectual field. This chapter will demonstrate how the production of an image of Nietzsche palatable to conservative and radical rightist

political agendas was promulgated by young anti-Dreyfusard writers who, taking advantage of the Dreyfus Affair as a means of garnering intellectual recognition, discovered and celebrated in Nietzsche qualities that stood in contradistinction to those championed by their Dreyfusard counterparts. This development will be illustrated by reference to the experience of the renowned novelist Maurice Barrès, whose name was often associated with that of Nietzsche, and the birth of the Action Française, key representatives of which posited a royalist reading of the philosopher to be wielded against their enemies in literary, academic, and political life.

The struggle over the legitimate avant-garde definition of Nietzsche emerged, as it did in 1892, somewhat as an epiphenomenon of the struggle for the right to designate the dominant aesthetic of the literary field. This conflict raised once again the issue of the engagement of the intellectual in social and political issues which proponents of l'art social had raised in 1891. The activism and ultimate victory of the Dreyfusards provoked both a political and a literary reaction, which coincided with a new generation of non-established writers struggling for expression. By viewing the largely Dreyfusard petites revues as the dominant avant-garde aesthetic, proponents of the classical renaissance could more easily define themselves in terms that were diametrically opposed to their elder symbolist competitors. Thus, the aesthetic aspirations of the rightist avant-garde cannot be dissociated from its sometimes concrete attempts to impose a particular vision of political reality.

In their own strategies of distinction, this neo-classical avant-garde would assume a wholly different tack vis-à-vis the literary establishment, with which there was a great deal of agreement on many key issues; hence a convergence of sorts was effected between the conservative literary establishment and the rightist avant-garde in a united front against the republican Sorbonne, the Dreyfusard petites revues, and the radical Republic in general. Thus in many ways the neo-classical avant-garde defined itself against the same elements as the previous avant-garde: against its literary elders, whose aesthetic was to be rejected, against the Dreyfusard State, which had in 1902 succumbed to a socialist government, and against the University, which had become reformed according to the liberal scientific vision of the triumphant radical republic. All of these sectors, which had indeed joined forces as les intellectuels during the Dreyfus Affair, were perceived as having formed a lasting alliance which constituted the dominant mode of intellectual activity at the turn of the century: viewing themselves as dominated, proponents of the classical renaissance depended upon this subordination to effect a revolution in the literary field as a primary means of entry. That the ideas of Nietzsche could be appropriated to give expression to this literary debut demands further explanation. Indeed, by 1901 Jacques Morland could revel in the proliferation of such numerous and often mutually-exclusive interpretations: "The influence of Nietzsche is . . . a stimulant. The most diverse temperaments--individualists, evolutionists, positivists, imperialists or anarchists, experts of Bismarck, of [Houston Stewart] Chamberlain or of Ravachol--find there an

increment of energy."<sup>1</sup>

### **Nietzsche and the Social Dynamics of Anti-Dreyfusism**

As a social group these anti-"intellectuel" intellectuals shared the subordinate position of their Dreyfusard counterparts; yet during the Affair they sought to form an identity by default through opposition to their more well-to-do peers and thus claimed to speak in the name of the most dominated fractions of the avant-garde. As the royalist Charles Maurras had written of the neo-classical avant-garde in 1892, "If ever a youth was more cajoled, it was never more supervised, nor more abhorred."<sup>2</sup> Economically dependent upon "vulgar" journalism, such young writers used anti-Dreyfusism as a means of escaping this despised sector of commercial literature by inventing the myth of the persecuted Church, the ridiculed Army, or the decadent nation--all of which pointed to an alleged golden age before the reign of money or democracy.<sup>3</sup> That is, while coexisting for a time in the conciliation of opposites that constituted the literary avant-garde during the 1890s, many of these writers found in anti-Dreyfusism and Nietzschean philosophy two powerful means of escape from the ghettos of les petites revues to the forefront of radical politics and conservative literature.

The emergence of a neo-classical avant-garde that would engage the steadily disintegrating aesthetic of symbolism can be traced to the early 1890s, when the young Charles Maurras helped the poet Jean Moréas--who had only a few years earlier drafted the symbolist manifesto--to form l'École romane in opposition to what they rejected as decadent and romantic in the symbolist

movement.<sup>4</sup> Moréas had forecast this imminent positional shift in early 1891, asserting in Jules Huret's survey that "For the integrity of my ideal, I should break with my friends Verlaine and Mallarmé."<sup>5</sup> The official manifesto of l'École romane would appear, as did the Symbolist manifesto a few years earlier, in the newspaper

Figaro:

L'École romane française renews the Gallic chain, broken by Romanticism and its Parnassian and Symbolist progeny. . . . Symbolism, which had only been interesting as a transitional phenomenon, is dead. We must have a frank, vigorous and new poetry.<sup>6</sup>

Like their counterparts at les petites revues, these young writers defined themselves in opposition to the Parnassians as well as Naturalism and most other established aesthetics that detracted from French classicism. Placed on the defensive by the xenophobia and nationalism of such consecrated writers in Huret's enquête, Moréas (who was of Greek origin) and others reacted by affirming their own patriotism, which placed them at odds with their symbolist peers who responding by adopting a more social and cosmopolitan aesthetic.<sup>7</sup> Loosely linked to the strategic importation of foreign literature during the 1890s, l'École romane participated in the drive towards national literary distinction clearly manifested by 1902; these conservative neo-classicists advocated a return to strictly French literary models--preferably those who had written prior to 1789. Thus a range of unacceptable themes the unsavory qualities that the École romane perceived in its contemporaries, was forged out of the differential relations conducted with these literary competitors: anarchism and socialism, which

threatened to upset the social as well as the literary order, were anathema to the neoclassicists; romanticism, that counter-classical aesthetic associated with Rousseau and which was seen as the motor force behind such anarchic rebelliousness as the French Revolution, was also rejected; finally, Kantian idealism, that philosophy of moral duty which had been a mainstay of French academic philosophy and which had apparently corrupted contemporary youth, also drew the fire of Maurras and his colleagues.<sup>8</sup> Much like les petites revues of the 1890s, negative relationships were conducted between the State, the University, the bourgeoisie, and all competing literary groups as these writers asserted their right to participate in social affairs.

The prevailing issue of classicism in this series of refusals would compel these young writers to adopt diametrically opposed political agendas than those espoused by their proto-Dreyfusard counterparts. The anti-Semitism of many anti-Dreyfusards might be partly explained by the frustrations involved in competing with a population of writers which was heavily composed of Jews. Surely Maurras was not immune to such frustrations, and noted contemptuously in 1894 the preponderance of Jews within the literary avant-garde: "Le Banquet has just fused with La Revue blanche, yielding no doubt to the call of blood, because the majority of the rédacteurs were here and there of the israélite race. There will be much to say about the role of the Jews in les jeunes revues." [Il y aurait beaucoup à noter sur le rôle des israélites dans les jeunes revues]."<sup>9</sup> With such an ethnic division already established in the 1890s within the avant-garde itself, it is not difficult to

understand the split of that avant-garde in 1898 over the issue of anti-Semitism.

The various members of the *École romane*, with the possible exception of Hugues Rebell, had few positive words for Nietzsche during the 1890s. Indeed, the philosopher had been until 1898 generally associated with the socially-militant avant-garde of les petites revues. Yet, as we shall see, the final collapse of symbolism around 1900 resulted in, among other things, the appropriation of the philosopher by many young neo-classicists. As Christophe Charle has indicated, the various petitions of the Dreyfus Affair permitted a number of relatively unestablished writers striving to distinguish themselves from competitors immediate notoriety and entry into the forefront of the literary struggle through a political alliance with their better-known elders,<sup>10</sup> a coalition rendered even more curious given the tensions between these more and less consecrated writers throughout the 1890s. Maurras, for example, had been no friend of either Ferdinand Brunetière or Émile Faguet, a fact which nevertheless did not prevent him from rallying with these prominent critics around the Army and the Church in 1898.<sup>11</sup> The relative youth of many leading members and friends of the Action Française may be illustrated by comparing the number of books each had published by 1898 with that of the more consecrated anti-Dreyfusards.

As detailed in the above table, young royalists such as Maurras, Lasserre, Pujo, Bainville, Moreau, and Valois had all published fewer than five books by 1898, while their conservative elders--Brunetière, Cherbuliez, Coppée, Faguet, and Gauthier-Villars, had produced no fewer than fifteen. In addition, all of these



established writers either were at the time or would soon become members of the Académie Française. Above all, Nietzsche was praised most vocally by those young writers who had published less than two texts by 1898--Lasserre and Valois wrote books that drew explicitly upon Nietzschean thought, while Bainville and Moreau remained outspoken in their praise of the philosopher--suggesting once again a marked correspondence between entry to the field and opinion of Nietzsche. Moreover, hostile or ambivalent reactions were most commonly registered among the more consecrated conservatives, while young royalists tended to embrace Nietzsche with much more enthusiasm. During this critical period, then, one notices the production of an interpretation of Nietzsche designed to reflect the needs of this burgeoning avant-garde. Even the leading light of the neo-classical revival, Jean Moréas, praised the German on several occasions. "Nietzsche is substantifique with his surly air," wrote Moréas in 1910:

If I had an edition of the works of Nietzsche, in little portable volumes, I would put one or two in my pocket when I go for a walk in the Versailles valley, or on the cross-roads between Berny and Antony. I would leaf through them, tenderly, seated on a stone before a wall of pear trees, or better yet under the awning of the tavern, listening to the falling rain.<sup>12</sup>

Considered the most influential avant-garde literary critic after 1900, this endorsement by Moréas carried a great deal of weight among his conservative and royalist contemporaries. "Yes truly," said Moréas of the German, "let's grant him our confidence."<sup>13</sup>

These strategic choices of the younger anti-Dreyfusards, coupled with the shift toward national literary distinction of the 1890s, must be considered when

explaining the success of the classical renaissance at the turn of the century. In short, the nationalist trend in French letters and the upheaval of the Dreyfus Affair finally created a significant market for neo-classicism, thus abetting the growth of the royalist movement itself and the literary fortunes of many of its members.

**Professors of Energy:  
Maurice Barrès and Conservative Opinion on Nietzsche**

While among les petites revues the Nietzsche-Tolstoy opposition was invoked throughout this period, another widely-recognized and surprisingly durable cultural constellation of the fin-de-siècle intellectual universe was that of the psychological novelist Maurice Barrès and Nietzsche. In attempts by commentators to discuss either of the two figures, the other was often invoked within milieux where such proximity would no doubt either ennoble or stigmatize both. What makes this linkage especially interesting is that it survived even Barrès' own positional shift during the Dreyfus Affair, emerging afterward with a completely different meaning and therefore indicating, above all, the changing perception of Nietzsche after 1898. It would therefore be incorrect to dissociate entirely the success of Barrès from the growing popularity of the German during this period, and vice-versa: despite the numerous associations of these two "professors of energy", Barrès apparently took no significant steps either to initiate such a coupling nor to emphasize his difference from Nietzsche, a silence which may have in fact been strategically maintained and which no doubt yielded significant profits for the reputations of both.

The publication of Barrès' Culte du moi trilogy in the late-1880s established

the psychological novelist from Lorraine as the most visible representative of young contemporary literature--a distinction that served to ennoble as well as to stigmatize Barrès among various literary milieux. In the growing debate between cosmopolitanism and nationalism in literary circles Barrès at first firmly planted himself in the former camp, thus defending the importation of foreign writers into France.<sup>14</sup> For many, the novelist had made a decisive impact upon his literary generation. "Among the young people who entered into life since 1890," Léon Blum asked, "who therefore escapes his influence? . . . if M. Barrès had not lived, if he had not written, his time would be different and we would be different."<sup>15</sup>

Faced with this rising star of literary youth, it was incumbent upon the establishment to classify Barrès in some manner. Generally, until he passed over to the literary establishment in 1898, he was generally received as the most flamboyant example of an avant-garde much too preoccupied with the individual self and with creating a shocking effect. Writing in *La Revue bleue*, Marcel Fouquier described Barrès as "a singularly perverted renaniste. . . . Dandy and rhetorician, Stendhalian and Darwinist, M. Maurice Barrès can pass for a 'curious' exemplar of the youth of today."<sup>16</sup> The famous psychological novelist Anatole France, who had much more in common with the young writer, observed that "he has exercised over many youths a sort of fascination."<sup>17</sup> The literary critic René Doumic depicted Barrès as a partisan of energy who had drawn upon Stendhal and Taine for his thought: "He is the theoretician of individualism. . . . Also unsurprisingly we see figure among the partisans of energy some purs lettrés, artists, such as a Stendhal

or a [Prosper] Mérimée."<sup>18</sup> And for Henry Bordeaux, "His books are the glorification of energy."<sup>19</sup>

All of the words used to describe Barrès, we shall see, were often used to describe Nietzsche as well; yet in several instances Nietzsche and Barrès became directly linked in their own constellation as a means of discrediting literary youth. During the Dreyfus Affair, we have noted how Brunetière attempted to discredit les intellectuels as having egoistic pretensions to being a noble caste: "They see themselves as 'the 'overman' of Nietzsche, or again as 'the enemy of laws'."<sup>20</sup> Here the two writers became directly associated as symptomatic of the sort of dangerous "intellectual anarchy" that threatened to disrupt the intellectual order. Such negative associations were not uncommon during this period. In his criticism of the popularity of Nietzsche among the literary avant-garde, Édouard Schuré also implicated Barrès, "this other model of our youth who, despite all his talent, has never believed in anything or anyone, not even himself."<sup>21</sup>

The rather common literary notion of the "professor of energy," which gained some currency after 1898, was prompted by Barrès' own Roman de l'énergie nationale, which Blum described as "doubtlessly the most important work of French literature in the past twenty-five years."<sup>22</sup> In this trilogy Barrès had abandoned the individualism of le culte du moi for the notion of collective regeneration, and in one often-quoted chapter of Les Déracinés described Napoleon as a "professeur d'énergie".<sup>23</sup> Significantly, this phrase would form part of the cultural vocabulary of many French conservatives and royalists through

World War I, and could be used freely to describe a variety of powerful individuals.<sup>24</sup> This trilogy represented a pivotal stage in Barrès' professional development: a clear shift away from the cosmopolitanism and egoism of his youth, the trilogy prefigured a substantial shift in his position on the literary field. "I had been an individualist," Barrès formally recanted in 1899. "I preached the development of the personality by a certain discipline of inner meditation and of analysis. . . . I descended, descended into the sands without resistance."

The individual! His intelligence, his faculty of seizing the laws of the universe! . . . We are not the masters of the thoughts born in us. . . . According to the milieu in which we are plunged, we elaborate judgments and reasonings. . . . There are no personal ideas. . . . It is all a vertigo where the individual engulfs himself in order to retrieve himself in the family, in the race, in the nation.<sup>25</sup>x

It is fascinating to note that the convenient association of Barrès with Nietzsche was not to be discouraged by this representational shift, but would endure far beyond 1897 as both writers became more acceptable in mainstream conservative intellectual circles.

As difficult as it is to deny the effect of Barrès upon the public image of Nietzsche, it is difficult to believe that Barrès was unaware of the effect that such associations with the philosopher had on his own literary reputation. Throughout this transformation, Barrès had become familiar with the thought of Nietzsche since 1892, and even praised the efforts of the Belgian Nouvelle société for its instrumental role in spreading the ideas of the German. Indeed, Barrès had found a number of affinities with the philosopher, and noted on one occasion that "He foresaw me."<sup>26</sup> By the turn of the century, Barrès would approvingly cite the works

of Nietzsche much more frequently in his notebooks. Despite the fact that he did not cite the philosopher directly in his novels, some scholars have observed Nietzschean themes in his literature, especially in the Culte du moi trilogy.<sup>27</sup> As suggested in his notebooks, Barrès had clearly found a great deal in the works of Nietzsche that helped to illuminate his own intellectual and political positions. "All this modernity is what I struggle against, modernity such as Nietzsche defines it."<sup>28</sup> Like many others, however, Barrès was only willing to follow the path of Nietzsche to a certain point: "But the overman of Nietzsche is a brutal madman. . . . To affirm his personality, Nietzsche exits from humanity. He is bestial."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, when in 1914 many of his compatriots were blaming the philosopher for German aggression, Barrès was still able to recognize Nietzsche as a friend of the French: "When the Louvre was bombed (miné) [in 1870]," he reminded himself, "Nietzsche cried."<sup>30</sup>

For some youthful followers of the novelist, the cultural association between Nietzsche and Barrès threatened the image of creative independence which writers and artists must cultivate and which is, in effect, a fundamental basis upon which the field of cultural production stands. The publicist Jean Tharaud, who had been Barrès' private secretary for years, defended the memory of his employer against any distorting association with the German philosopher: "If one looks outside of himself for where Barrès took this will to power which is one of his most characteristic traits, it is not of Nietzsche that one must think. 'I have never read him, he said, I do not know the German, and when I began to write, Henri Albert

had not yet ventured to translate him."<sup>31</sup>

While perhaps the most recognized member of the literary avant-garde during the 1890s, Barrès had participated in the redefinition of the social function of the writer, even to the point of trying his hand at politics. His defection to the literary establishment was therefore received with great surprise by his erstwhile colleagues at les petites revues, who had expected him to become a Dreyfusard. In addition, his advocacy of committed literature took him farther from the realm of pure art into the "tainted" world of politics, a descent into material impurity which would be invoked by young writers emerging after 1900. Christophe Charle has discussed this shift as a strategic move by a writer striving to maintain his autonomy: that is, had he allied himself with the revisionists we would have been merely one signature among others, whereas as an anti-Dreyfusard he could emerge as a leader. Therefore, at the end of his youth Barrès opted for an alliance with the literary establishment, presenting himself as the anti-Zola: like Anatole France, who as an established novelist should have been an anti-Dreyfusard on social grounds, Barrès was likewise an exception to the rule.<sup>32</sup>

Barrès' shift to the establishment effected a confusion of representations that may have contributed to the generation of a new representation of Nietzsche. As it turned out, the literary establishment proved quite willing to pardon the sins of his youth and welcome him to maturity. This "former prince of youth," René Doumic declared in 1897, "wanted to profit by writing a book that he alone could write, and which would be nothing less than the 'Roman de l'énergie nationale.'"<sup>33</sup>

Predictably, this shift only aggravated those at les petites revues. The highly-influential socialist librarian of the École Normale, Lucien Herr, attacked Barrès in La Revue blanche: "I am anyhow one of those 'intellectuals' whose protest has so amused you. My sentiment on your political person and on your action is that of an anonymous person and an unknown."

You have against you all at once true people and men of reflected will, les déracinés, or, if you like, les déintéressés, the majority of men who know how to consider law and an ideal of justice before their own personalities, before their own natural instincts and group egoisms.<sup>34</sup>

Though he held diametrically opposed political views, Léon Blum nevertheless emphasized the similarities between Barrès and the German: "He speaks of Germany in the same spirit as the German Nietzsche. . . . And Nietzsche, in effect, speaks nearly the same language. Only Nietzsche was more rigorous with his own thought. He had expurgated his critique and theory of all nationalist residue."<sup>35</sup>

The intellectual conversion of Maurice Barrès was at first greeted with suspicion, especially by those writers and professors who had spent the greater part of the previous decade maligning him as the exemplar of the avant-garde dilettante. Republicans and conservatives alike often pointed to the connections between the novelist and the philosopher. In one lecture Alfred Croiset, dean of the Faculty of Letters at the Sorbonne, recommended a form of individualism that was at odds with that of any "cult of the self" or of the "Superman." Jean Bourdeau, a fan neither of Barrès nor Nietzsche, asked his readers about the philosopher in 1899: "Isn't he the professor of energy par excellence, he who gives this precept:



Wake each morning with more will than the night before?"<sup>36</sup> Ever willing to spread the latest gossip about the immorality of Nietzsche's followers, Bourdeau announced in 1902 that "Lately we read about the trial of a student from Leipzig who stabbed his fiancé, after having taken Nietzsche for a professor of energy."<sup>37</sup> The conservative Vicomte de Colleville expressed similar distrust in an essay for La Plume, which had become open to a number of almost mutually-exclusive political positions.<sup>38</sup> After having been popularized by Albert and Lichtenberger, Colleville observed, the ideas of Nietzsche proved to have had a negative effect on contemporary writers, resulting in a veritable cult of force best exemplified by Barrès in France and d'Annunzio in Italy. However, according to Colleville, of these two writers only d'Annunzio, as "a pagan son of the Renaissance" and an advocate of the cult of man rather than humanity, had the right to espouse such a philosophy. "But Maurice Barrès! That one is not a son of the Renaissance, but of the Revolution. He is a democrat, an active member of the party of national traditions."<sup>39</sup> While Barrès had presented himself as a nationalist and a Catholic, the roots of his thought, according to Colleville, were entirely foreign; in fact "his irony is English and his philosophical language and his thought are German!"

The admiration for force which bursts from each page of his latest books is very Germanic and thoroughly nietzschéenne! . . . The religion of Barrès and his disciples, is therefore this same force of which Nietzsche and Bismarck are prophets.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that Barrès never explicitly cited a connection with the German was clearly inconsequential to Colleville, who declared instead that "All our professors of energy are sons of this German."<sup>41</sup>

For many young writers the works of Barrès continued to speak for the avant-garde, but an avant-garde that had itself largely renounced both romanticism and cosmopolitanism. In his review Les Marges, the naturalist Eugène de Montfort cited Barrès as "one of the most wounded souls of today," in an article which nevertheless featured a quote from Nietzsche as an epigram.<sup>42</sup> Louis Dumont-Wilden also cited this connection, wondering in the Belgian review Antée: "After Nietzsche, as after the exaltation of Barrès' 'Moi', what is there to do with 'Moi-le-Magnifique', with this free and magnified soul beyond Good and Evil?"<sup>43</sup>

Conservative literary opinion on Barrès shifted after 1900 as his own strategic shift to the dominant pole had become established and generally recognized, thus coinciding with the construction of a right-wing Nietzsche by other anti-Dreyfusards. Moreover, by this time the image of the right-wing professor of energy had become fixed in the intellectual imagination, prompting the sociologist Célestin Bouglé to react publicly against this representation: "There are our true professors of energy: it is the people who will furnish them for us."<sup>44</sup> The efforts of Jules de Gaultier certainly contributed in no small part to this marked transformation of intellectual opinion: in his influential and often-cited essay "Le sens de la hiérarchie chez Nietzsche," which appeared in the widely-read Revue hebdomadaire, Gaultier revealed "the rapports which can exist between the authoritarian philosophy of Nietzsche and conservative doctrine."<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche's apparent anarchism and individualism, with which many had erroneously associated the philosopher, were only means leading toward the establishment of

a new aristocratic order: "And Zarathustra appeals to his wishes for 'a new nobility which will write anew the noble word on noble tables.'"<sup>46</sup> To emphasize the importance of Nietzsche for French conservatism, Gaultier indicated the "identity of conclusions between the French writer and the German philosopher"--that is, between Barrès and Nietzsche. Gaultier had explored this connection during the previous year where, observing how Barrès' Roman de l'énergie nationale illustrated an excellent case of social Bovaryism, he declared that "the scientific and positive thought of M. Barrès manifests itself in a remarkable parallelism with the thought of the philosopher who in Germany has ruined the base mysticism of metaphysical religiosity."<sup>47</sup>

By 1902, therefore, both Barrès and Nietzsche had become much more acceptable in the eyes of many anti-Dreyfusards. Even Maurice Muret of the conservative Journal de débats could mention both names without contempt: "In France . . . the influence of Nietzsche is perceptible among a number of writers, particularly in Maurice Barrès, who . . . has only known the German philosopher indirectly, at second-hand, one can say."<sup>48</sup> Like many conservatives, Muret cited with approval the shift of Barrès' literary emphasis from individualism to "the social conception which dominates his last works." Above all, Muret articulated an interpretation of Nietzsche that was a clear departure from Jean Bourdeau's categorical rejections in the Journal des débats of "la philosophie perverse":

We need not examine here the "degree of benevolence" of the doctrine of Nietzsche. But it will certainly be permitted to advance this opinion that the dangers of nietzschéisme have been singularly exaggerated. . . . If Zarathustra could galvanize contemporary

thought a bit, if his discourses could bring us the taste for order and the sense of legitimate authority, I believe there would be no place to deplore beyond measure his passage down here.<sup>49</sup>

As the antipode of Tolstoy, this "great utopian Slav" who has "denied the idea of country," this new conception of Nietzsche was vastly different from the version posited by the Dreyfusards. It could be wielded against the very writers who had produced that first interpretation, and could easily be invoked for the potential symbolic value that it might provide. By 1908 even the Abbé Léon Delfour of the conservative Catholic newspaper L'Univers positively indicated the similarities between Barrès and Nietzsche: both writers were proponents of la force and rejected both romanticism and the philosophy of Kant. "Certainly, one would have the right to say of Barrès that he is a French Nietzsche and of Nietzsche that he is a German Barrès."<sup>50</sup> Such associations between Nietzsche and Barrès would persist through the First World War.<sup>51</sup>

There are many examples of conservative French intellectuals who proceeded to adopt the ideas of Nietzsche after 1900. The novelist Paul Adam underwent a literary and political conversion not unlike that of his friend Barrès; yet in the case of Adam, the question of Nietzsche soon came directly to the fore. With little to say about the philosopher during the 1890s, by 1907 Adam had clearly adopted many of the philosopher's ideas in his personal campaign for national physical fitness and competitive sports. Alarmed by the extent to which France had become a nation more concerned with economics and finances than glory and conquest, Adam suggested that "Sports seem to furnish the propitious remedy for

the recovery from our public infirmity." "Certainly, the taste for sports is a daily stimulant of this will to power. . . . It seems that one should inscribe these words in capital letters on the walls of our modern arenas: 'Man is something which should be surpassed.'"<sup>52</sup> Other nations had already adopted this national program, Adam contended. "The will to power, otherwise called the ambition to dominate, is extreme among Yankee individuals and groups." In addition, there was the much more immediate and ominous threat from across the Rhine: "The Germans are lying in wait for the hour when they will manifest at leisure their will to power according to the maxims of Nietzsche."<sup>53</sup>

[I]t would be fitting that from our sportive faculties, very sufficient right now, we should deduce a direct philosophy for our elite, a moral idea of creative force for our bourgeoisie, and a need in our people to soar towards Power. . . . When Americanism and Nietzscheanism dominate the next era, there will not be enough ideas to prevail against these social phenomena. . . . Let's ask sport to arm our characters to take their place in the first ranks of those who will manifest their will to Power with glory.<sup>54</sup>

By 1915, Adam would try to prove that his earlier predictions about Germany had come true: in his perspective, the Germans had followed the dictates of Nietzsche to the letter in their violent campaign in the north of France. Yet, rather than salvaging a reading of the philosopher from which the French might find inspiration, Adam instead relegated Nietzsche to his rightful place within the entire German intellectual tradition, which had been complicit in the atrocities of the soldiers.

While Barrès and other Catholics profited from an association with the ideas of Nietzsche, conservative opinion on the philosopher varied in different contexts.

For neo-Thomist philosophers, who did not participate in the republican university, Nietzsche remained a constant reminder of contemporary immoralism. A writer for La Revue thomiste, for example, said little about Nietzsche except that how, after declaring that all the gods are dead, the author fell, "his overhumanity with him, into the abyss of madness."<sup>55</sup> "Interrupted by madness," wrote Lucien Roure, "his work spills at all moments into insanity. . . . Without the intense, dazzling poetry . . . no one would have anything but disgust for these orgies of drunken spirit."<sup>56</sup> Some conservatives lauded the fact that a German could so illuminate the French tradition in the cultural war with Germany. Others tried to exploit the growing prestige of the philosopher for their own purposes. The famous theorist of crowd psychology, Gustave Le Bon, for example, once demanded that Henri Lichtenberger give him credit in the second edition of La Philosophie de Nietzsche for having discovered the truth of the Eternal Recurrence at the same time as Nietzsche!<sup>57</sup> For many others, nevertheless, a viable conservative alliance with Nietzsche was out of the question, and remained a serious moral danger. A writer at Édouard Drumont's infamously anti-Semitic newspaper, La Libre parole, presented a rather novel reading of Nietzsche which perhaps reflects the previous association of the philosopher with the largely-Jewish avant-garde:

To uproot the Ideal from souls, that is to surrender the earth to all invasions and all calamities;--that is to erect la Force on a throne. The Jew,--whose Beyond is the "schéol", that is to say the nothingness, there is the true "Overman" announced, summoned, sung by Nietzsche.<sup>58</sup>

"Some ultra conservatives, some anarchists, and at present some assassins make

use of Nietzsche," noted Jean Bourdeau with characteristic disapproval. "Didn't this troubling mind, in one of his dangerous formulas, exalt the criminal as creator?"<sup>59</sup>

In 1910, V. de Pallarès condemned Nietzsche by invoking several common cultural associations of the day:

Nietzsche is linked to the extreme Hegelian left by the iconoclast Feuerbach and above all by Max Stirner, a radical and libertarian individualism, the first pontiff of this cult of the Ego (*l'unique*) since celebrated by M. Barrès, Oscar Wilde and some levites of the least importance.<sup>60</sup>

Téodor de Wyzewa would continue his attacks on the German after the turn of the century, and in the preface to a re-edition of Bourget's *Le Disciple*, remembered "the blind and stupid herd we used to be, when twenty years ago we applauded the facile 'nastinesses' [*rosseries*] of the Théâtre-Libre, when we diverted ourselves with the 'super-human' audacities of our teachers then."<sup>61</sup>

Whereas conservative intellectuals generally condemned the philosophy of Nietzsche during the 1890s, it is clear that the Dreyfus Affair had great significance for the generation of a conservative Nietzsche. Yet the persistent association of the philosopher with Maurice Barrès must be recognized as a long-term constellation without which the conservative appropriation of Nietzsche might not have been quite as successful as it was.

### **The Action Française and the Monarchist Nietzsche**

The time of kings is past: what calls itself a people today deserves no kings.

--Nietzsche<sup>62</sup>

The year 1898 is doubly significant for the study of changing interpretations

of Nietzsche in France: not only did Zola begin the year with "J'Accuse," thus solidifying an intellectual and political division that had been forming throughout the 1890s and which would permit the entry of young writers into the literary realm, but it also marked the publication of the first Nietzsche translations by the Société du Mercure de France. This constituted the symbolic high-point as well as the beginning of the very real dissolution-through-diffusion of the monopoly on Nietzsche interpretation and information practiced by les petites revues. That is, the "French" Nietzsche released in 1898 was immediately appropriated by a number of young right-wing writers who, in an effort to distinguish themselves on the literary field, would produce a representation of Nietzsche reflective of their own aesthetic and political positions and that would challenge the socialist and anarchist representations propagated by the avant-garde. Indeed, by 1901 Jules de Gaultier could correctly observe that, "To the degree that the importance of Nietzsche's philosophy grows in France, the difference is accentuated between two types of opposed spirits who would equally like to pull towards them this new thought and to fortify their point of view with it."<sup>63</sup>

The royalist project initiated by Charles Maurras, Léon Daudet, Maurice Pujo, Pierre Lasserre, Louis Dimier, Lucien Moreau and Jacques Bainville led to the creation of a new literary enterprise that would, over the course of the next decade, significantly expand its sphere of influence. This royalist enterprise entered into direct competition with the leftist avant-garde. As Maurras wrote to Barrès in 1899, "Yes L'Action française is tending to become the opposite of La Revue



blanche," a literary and political strategy which positioned the royalist review in polar opposition to its most radical Dreyfusard counterparts.<sup>64</sup> This politico-literary enterprise would soon extend its influence across the intellectual field: for example, in protest against the emergent republican university the royalists developed counter-institutions, such as the Institut de l'Action Française, which was founded in 1905 to promote the values of traditional literary culture.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the review entitled L'Action française, by 1908 a daily newspaper with the same name was launched as well as the Revue critique des idées et des livres, the latter emerging as the most influential intellectual organ of the three publications. Moreover, Jean Rivain's publishing house, the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, had soon become the official party publisher and book store of the Action française, and would be directed by Georges Valois in 1912, who had gotten a job in the firm with the assistance of Maurras years earlier. Finally, Louis Dimier's formation and coordination of the band of street thugs known as the Camelots du Roi (streetvenders of the king) constituted the sometimes painfully-physical arm of this royalist enterprise. All of these projects would make royalism a political and intellectual force to be reckoned with throughout the pre-War years, and constituted the radical-rightist political and literary avant-garde, a vast intellectual network matched in scale and influence only by the numerous cultural enterprises of André Gide and the team of La Nouvelle revue française.

Throughout the 1890s Charles Maurras had entertained an uneasy relationship with the philosophy of Nietzsche, which some scholars suggest he

might have embraced more openly had Nietzsche been French rather than German. As Reino Virtanen and Victor Nguyen have asserted, Maurras owed a great deal to the ideas of the philosopher despite the fact that, in order to maintain the image of his own creative originality, he generally distanced himself from the German.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, some readers of Maurras' first work, Le Chemin de paradis (1895), had mistakenly cited a Nietzschean inspiration whereas at that time Maurras had not yet read any of the philosopher's works.<sup>67</sup> When noting during in 1895 the intolerable reign of the foreigner [la mètèque] in Parisian intellectual life, he added significantly that "We have followed closely enough the development of Frédéric Nietzsche".<sup>68</sup> By the time of the Dreyfus Affair and the launching of the Action Française it became even more incumbent upon Maurras to downplay Nietzsche, whose infamous attacks on Christianity might easily discourage Catholics from supporting the royalist movement.<sup>69</sup>

Jules de Gaultier, who was extremely instrumental in forging an interpretation of Nietzsche that would be palatable to right-wing readers, undoubtedly exercised some influence over the thought of Maurras and his colleagues. While Maurras would include Gaultier among his "best friends of the spirit," he would nevertheless maintain his skepticism regarding the wisdom of using Nietzsche. This was not the case with Jacques Bainville, Lucien Moreau, and others who repeatedly praised and defended the works of both Gaultier and Nietzsche against their numerous detractors. "I have lived all that he has said," wrote Octave Tauxier of the works of Gaultier, "stated precisely, he is my

intellectual life."<sup>70</sup> Maurras was nevertheless able to convey his own distrust of Nietzsche to some of his royalist colleagues. "Above all," recalled Louis Dimier, "Nietzsche was to be dreaded."

We spoke a great deal about him then. The Revue des idées, which was defined by this name, took from him a metaphysics which came to me in the morning mail. We had with [the review] enough points of contact, and the director [Remy de Gourmont] was one of our friends. I feared [Je concus l'inquiétude] that the voice I heard was that of the Action Française.<sup>71</sup>

The unnamed article in question, which boldly declared that "There is no force against force," was yet another essay on Nietzsche written by Jules de Gaultier in 1904.<sup>72</sup> In Dimier's eyes this shameless celebration of la force flew in the face of the entire royalist program. "I ran to the [Café] Flore as if on fire," Dimier remembered, whereupon he found Maurras, to whom he conveyed his misgivings about Gaultier's essay. "He responded to me: --That has no common sense. I have said so to the review. Nietzsche is in the process of barbarizing them."<sup>73</sup> "Visibly," Dimier concluded, "he disliked this author."<sup>74</sup> And, as Maurras reflected years later, "I had always held the Nietzscheans, like their master, in horror."<sup>75</sup>

Despite his adamant suggestions to the contrary, Maurras could not have been totally unmoved by the interpretation of Nietzsche posited by Hugues Rebell who, according to a writer from L'Ermitage, "like his friend M. Maurras, is a Catholic enemy of Christ."<sup>76</sup> Rebell saw in the German philosopher a rationale for a cultural and social aristocracy of the artist and the writer--a vision which, while produced during the 1890s, prefigured the later appropriations of Nietzsche by the royalist movement. It is not surprising that Rebell, who mistrusted the presentation

of Nietzsche by the Mercur de France, would come to reject his earlier attachment to the philosopher after his own conversion to neo-classicism and royalism. A renegade from the symbolist avant-garde, for Rebell Nietzsche came to resemble much too closely the very cosmopolitan and romantic values from which he had fled. "[T]oday . . . we have Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Goncourt, Zola. These painters of the world, who write for the world, flee it with passion, if one can say that, and paint it without seeing it--like the blind."<sup>77</sup> Maurras himself stressed how Rebell's apparent cosmopolitanism actually contributed to the classical revival: "The profound studies which M. Hugues Rebell delivered on Nietzsche have moreover had the result of confirming . . . the traditional wisdom of our teachers from France."<sup>78</sup> Even the anti-clericalism of the Dreyfusards, Rebell claimed, was reflected in the translations of Nietzsche that they had produced:

Even the Voltairians of today do not doubt that really to love Voltaire one must begin by placing the Bible on the level of pathological books, among the treatises of human sickness. Nietzsche has been able to resume the Voltairian battle, [for] his translators depict him between Tolstoy and Sienkiewicz, doubtless to avenge Christ between the two thieves.<sup>79</sup>

In 1904, a year before his death, Rebell offered a full recantation of his former youthful enthusiasm: "I never took him for a teacher; I would have preferred his [teachers] . . . Montaigne, Voltaire, Renan. . . . Nietzsche has caused nearly as much damage as Tolstoy, although his action has been entirely different."<sup>80</sup>

The official constellation of influential precursors to the Action Française, those "Masters of the Counter-Revolution" whose writings were canonical for many on the radical right, did not include the name of Nietzsche. This rather glaring

omission was almost certainly due to Maurras's not-always-successful attempts to discourage the ideas of the philosopher within royalist circles. Despite the misgivings of Maurras regarding Nietzsche, many writers of the Action Française eagerly applied some ideas of the German to their monarchist project, which would also entail a certain favoring of those writers who interpreted such thought in a conservative fashion. "It is not to you, Monsieur, who has contributed to making him known, that it is necessary to reveal the influence of Nietzsche," responded Jacques Bainville to the 1902 enquête of Jacques Morland:

I remember the good blows he brought upon the detestable species of moralists, upon the humanitarian church and the democratic gnosis: [these blows] have made a certain number of Frenchmen reflect, because it is in France that they can be best applied.<sup>81</sup>

Writers like Bainville, Moreau, Lasserre, and Valois ignored Maurras's disparaging remarks and made it a point to praise the philosophy of Nietzsche both in L'Action française itself, and in the numerous other reviews which were within the sphere of royalist thought.

The historian Jacques Bainville had apparently succumbed to the spell of Nietzsche as early as 1898, when in an article he referred to the philosopher as his "maître".<sup>82</sup> "Thanks to M. Henri Albert and his friends, and the helpful fashion," Bainville observed in 1902, "the ideas of Nietzsche seem to be spreading. One must wait for the good of their diffusion."<sup>83</sup> The benefits of Nietzsche's influence would manifest themselves once his readers took seriously his critical statements on science and humanism contained in his Dawn "the most important part" of the book. Above all, Bainville predicted the subversive impact of Nietzsche's writings

among Dreyfusards:

Since our contemporaries, rotting from anarchism and romanticism, refuse to hear the lessons of the classical disciplines and French culture, it is not bad that they should be impressed by a brutal German.<sup>84</sup>

Presumably, those who ignored the benefits of classical culture would unwittingly imbibe them nevertheless through the works of this philosopher. In addition to his rather unmitigated praise for French culture, Nietzsche's anti-Germanism was often cited among royalists: for Bainville it was Nietzsche's critique of "the profound barbarism of Germany" which constituted "one of the rare parts [that is] truly useful and substantial" in his work.<sup>85</sup>

Despite Maurras' protests to the contrary, after 1900 Nietzsche became closely associated with the royalist movement, sometimes in ways that were not meant to be flattering. Lucien Moreau, a professor at the Institut de l'Action Française and a great admirer of Nietzsche, was nevertheless quite sensitive to the problem of being too closely associated with the German. "Certain liberals," he warned in 1905, "among those who hate above all else the political philosophy of the A[ction]. F[rana]ise, have thought to condemn it by connecting it entirely to the influence of Nietzsche." Inclusion in such a constellation, Moreau noted, could be dangerous for the reputation of the Action Française:

This grave sentence could awaken against our cause some fears within a badly-informed public; in reality it rests only on the most exaggerated errors, and it would be easy to demonstrate the profound inexactitude of it.<sup>86</sup>

Hence, while Moreau himself continued to sing the praises of Nietzsche in his

essays in L'Action française and La Revue encyclopédique, he was unwilling to attribute royalist philosophy entirely to the influence of Nietzsche. As will be shown in Chapter Nine, such claims to intellectual independence would fail to convince the enemies of the royalists of the circumstantial nature of Nietzsche's influence.

Faced with the cultural constellations of the previous avant-garde, which situated Nietzsche within the romantic, individualist, and anarchistic orbit of Ibsen and Stirner, the neo-classical avant-garde endeavored to construct new configurations more expressive of their own literary needs. Typically this included the search for French complements--or even replacements--for the German Nietzsche. The new wave of interest in the work of the novelist Stendhal, for example, was for many rightists a guilt-free way of both complementing and dispensing with Nietzsche as a German exemplar. The Mercure de France, which shifted to the center after 1900, was instrumental in indicating and qualifying the affinities between Nietzsche and Stendhal. In 1903 the writer Paul Léautaud contemplated the similarities of these two writers in his journal: "There are no longer any books like those of Stendhal and Nietzsche . . . [which] set the mind in motion."<sup>67</sup> Two years later the Mercure published the first volume of Casimir Stryjenski's Soirées du Stendhal Club which featured a lengthy preface by Léon Bélugou, an admirer of Nietzsche who loyally criticized those who desired to collapse the German completely into his French counterpart:

One could even show that all the essential ideas of Nietzsche are in Stendhal, that nietzschéisme is a simple German transcription of beylisme, what would one have proved? Does that prevent Nietzsche from being a European event, the most considerable to be produced

since Goethe?<sup>88</sup>

Stendhal's correspondence "was the preferred reading of Nietzsche," Bélugou continued, "and with the renewal of favor that Stendhal is going to take, the Stendhalian phalanx exaggerates entirely the clientele of Nietzsche, [and] there is no doubt that the new adepts do not have for the Correspondance the same esteem as their master."<sup>89</sup> The Stendhal-Nietzsche connection was by no means the exclusive gesture of the radical right during this period: years later Léon Blum himself would continue this association in his well-known book Stendhal et le beylisme by declaring that "le beylisme rests on a view analogous to that of Nietzsche."<sup>90</sup> Doubtlessly in response to this phenomenon, Daniel Halévy tried to minimize the connection in his biography when he admitted that Nietzsche "admired Stendhal, but did not intend to be a Stendhalian."<sup>91</sup>

It is interesting to note the dramatic turn towards the racial theories of Gobineau after the turn of the century and how this racist trend became integrated with the philosophy of Nietzsche. For the writers of the Action Française and others not associated with the royalist movement Nietzsche became allied with Stendhal and Gobineau in a conservative synthesis around 1906. The racial theories of Georges Vacher de Lapouge, which were often-cited in royalist circles, in places drew direct parallels between Nietzsche and Aryanism. Jacques Bainville emphasized this relationship in his review of L'Aryen, son rôle social: "H[omo]. Europoeus has an elongated cranium, blue eyes, blond hair (in general) elevated stature, pale complexion."



[H]e is the blond beast, the noble beast of prey, the conqueror presented by Nietzsche. It is he who is truly the highest representative of men; it is he who invents and who creates; it is to him that is promised and owed the conquest of the globe."<sup>92</sup>

Despite this direct and enthusiastic connection of Nietzsche to eugenics, Vacher de Lapouge's actual reference to the philosopher appears to undermine Bainville's enthusiastic connection: "Nietzsche's noble beast of prey is not much more sympathetic to anti-Semites than the Jew himself."<sup>93</sup>

Several non-royalist Nietzsche enthusiasts had already embraced the eugenics vogue by 1905, which often pointed to links between Nietzsche and Gobineau. Robert Dreyfus and Jacques Morland, for example, who were instrumental in the Nietzsche industry had also published either studies on or selections from Gobineau. The former had even presented a series of lectures at the École des Hautes Études Sociales, which were united under the title La Vie et les prophéties du comte de Gobineau.<sup>94</sup> A disapproving Émile Faguet commented on this trend in 1906: "There was a period of gobinisme in France. It lasted from May to around October 1905. It lasted for six months and now no one thinks about it anymore."<sup>95</sup> Regardless of the longevity of this particular literary trend, the association made between Gobineau and Nietzsche is significant of the continuing right-wing appropriation of the philosopher, and of the growing conservatism of the literary field. In his introduction to the Pages choisies of Gobineau, Jacques Morland underscored how the force of the Frenchman's writings "devaient attirer bientôt the attention of Nietzsche and exercised a great influence on him."<sup>96</sup>

Gobineau had been Catholic. This is a superiority that he keeps over

Nietzsche who, fettered by his protestantism, would only liberate himself by becoming violently anti-Christian. Gobineau felt what Nietzsche could never understand: that, for free spirits, the Catholic tradition is like a heritage from antique culture hardly corrupted by Semitic alluvial deposits [apports]. Between Stendhal the atheist and Nietzsche the destroyer of the divine idea, Gobineau, equally an apostle of energy and intense life, has the merit of saving from instinct a certain liberty in religious matter.<sup>97</sup>

For Morland the connection with Nietzsche even became somewhat of a selling point: repeatedly he stressed how Gobineau produced "sentiments that we now call nietzschéens," and that in the selected passages to follow one would find "often Nietzschean ideas,--nietzschéennes before Nietzsche."<sup>98</sup> By early 1906 the Genevan Semaine littéraire even featured a "literary chat" on the question of "Gobineau, Nietzsche, Chamberlain."<sup>99</sup> Daniel Halévy apparently tried to diminish the significance of this connection with Gobineau too, which could surely undermine his own socialist conception of the philosopher: "Perhaps he then read again some book by Gobineau (he admired the man and his works); one may hazard this conjecture."

But what mattered his readings? Nietzsche was forty-two years old. He had passed the age of learning, he had gathered in all his ideas. Reading helped, nourished his meditations, but never directed them.<sup>100</sup>

Despite Halévy's attempts to posit a more liberal representation of the philosopher, the cooptation of Nietzsche by the radical right and the association of his writings with those of Stendhal and Gobineau was a phenomenon that was beyond the scope of his individual effort.

### **Pierre Lasserre and the Morality of Nietzsche**

Despite the numerous references made by certain royalists pertaining to the beneficial influence of Nietzsche in French literary life, Pierre Lasserre surely deserves recognition for producing the largest body of royalist writings on the philosopher. In the spirit of Gaultier, who lashed out against the philosophical orthodoxy of the University in 1898, the hitherto unknown Lasserre advanced in late-1899 his own series of essays on "Nietzsche et l'anarchisme" where he blasted the rigidity of academic classifications that refused to take Nietzsche seriously as well as the dilettantism of those intellectuels who fashioned him into an anarchist.<sup>101</sup> An agrégé de philosophie, and initially a revisionist in 1898, Lasserre quickly shifted towards anti-Dreyfusism the following year and began writing for the Revue de l'Action française.<sup>102</sup> Lasserre had some fairly personal reasons for his vigorous condemnation of the French academic system: a student of René Doumic and Paul Desjardins at the Collège Stanislas during the late-1880s, Lasserre failed in the entrance competition for admission into the École Normale Supérieure (the khâgne).<sup>103</sup> After refusing to sit for the exam a second time, Lasserre began his studies at the Sorbonne, where he received his agrégation in 1891, and later his doctorat ès-lettres (Henri Lichtenberger was his thesis advisor). After his conversion to anti-Dreyfusism in 1899, Lasserre would occupy the Louis Le Grand chair at the Institut de l'Action Française.

Lasserre wrote his first essays on Nietzsche while on scholarship in Germany in 1897, an experience which reinforced his conviction that German arms and ideas posed a significant threat to France, and which partly accounts for his

gravitation towards the Action Française.<sup>104</sup> "Of Nietzsche," he remembered years later, "I could say that he awakened me, he helped me enter into my route, very different from his."<sup>105</sup> Invoking the phrase that was quickly gaining currency at the turn of the century, Lasserre described Nietzsche as a "'professeur d'énergie'", a symbolic gesture placing him firmly within the conservative strand of thought identified with Barrès and reproduced by many in the literary world.<sup>106</sup>

If Nietzsche had hitherto been ignored or deemed illegitimate and unworthy of serious study, Lasserre contended that the fault was with those authorities who were part of the current intellectual establishment, which was itself illegitimate from a right-wing perspective. "The Sorbonne has pronounced that it is not infantile," Lasserre declared, "that is therefore not 'anarchistic.'" Lasserre attributed this false image of Nietzsche as anarchist to the misrepresentations of Téodor de Wyzewa and Victor Cherbuliez, who brought "to the readers of our grandes revues the philosophical news from abroad." The young royalist proved remarkably perceptive of the avenues through which a thinker's ideas might be excluded:

The author of Zarathustra was presented to France as the most radical type of anarchist, nihilist, and universal destroyer to which the German ideology had ever given birth. An unfortunate reputation, very appropriate for excluding Nietzsche without a more serious examination by the number of superior minds. . . . This information sufficed to divert from Nietzsche the attention of serious persons and professors of the Sorbonne.<sup>107</sup>

While Lasserre was certainly aware of the avant-garde Nietzsche industry operating during the 1890s, these writers could not be counted among those "serious persons" who would benefit most from reading the philosopher.<sup>108</sup> While the

writers of les petites revues rejected the established and socially-consecrated elite for an autonomous artistic elite based on individual creative superiority, an extended campaign which prompted many to espouse literary anarchism as a subversive strategy against the literary order, Lasserre identified the legitimate elite with those already dominant in the existing cultural order--the Académie Française, the traditional Sorbonne, and les grandes revues. The new Nietzsche generated in the late-1890s would therefore not be merely the antipode of previous one but its veritable correction; hence Lasserre noted with regret how the "excellent book of M. Lichtenberger" had been responsible for "exciting the impassioned curiosity of some 'intellectuels'."<sup>109</sup> Written during a stay in Germany in 1898, Lasserre stressed that he had formulated his thoughts on Nietzsche before the French translations had begun to appear, thus distancing himself even further from the petites revues. Thus, by engaging the Nietzsche of the less serious and less superior, Lasserre implicitly confronted the entire group of writers that had produced and continued to reproduce such a representation of the philosopher. Indeed, this struggle for the right to name the legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche was firmly grounded in social antagonisms.

Whereas Lasserre may have admired the Sorbonne of the early 1890s, the academy of 1899--whose young professors had rallied as intellectuels alongside the literary avant-garde--had degenerated into the locus of republican, positivistic, anticlerical, and democratic currents. "All hope is not lost," Lasserre observed, "because one [Sorbonne professor] among them has declared to us recently that

'in my eyes Nietzsche is absolutely sincere.'" This unnamed professor--who may have been Émile Faguet--was independent of the orthodox field of "obscure and dangerous entities: pure Reason, Free will, Autonomy, Consciousness... in short, metaphysics."<sup>110</sup> Lasserre therefore qualified this optimism in a footnote:

This has not prevented the Revue de métaphysique et de morale from speaking recently of the 'romantic anarchy' of Nietzsche. Terms that Nietzsche, himself, understood as an accusation of imbecility. But the editor of the Revue de métaphysique did not insert this so much out of malice, doubtlessly being one of those pontiffs of pure Reason for whom there would be nothing known outside of the lamentable morality of Kant than "romanticism" and "anarchy."<sup>111</sup>

Thus, in addition to the interpretations of les petites revues Lasserre engaged those of the academy which, by stressing the anarchistic and romantic qualities of Nietzsche, disqualified him from the realm of serious and legitimate philosophy. Lasserre reiterated this theme a few months later: "None of our critics of great renown has yet spoken of Nietzsche. No more than those that M. Jules de Gaultier has so aptly called 'philosophes d'État.'<sup>112</sup>

The various essays published in L'Action française were collected to form the 1902 book La Morale de Nietzsche, which was quite instrumental in bringing both Lasserre's name and the new version of Nietzsche to a broader public. We have noted how the subject of Nietzsche provided many young writers with a means of entering intellectual life, and Lasserre himself, who had published only one book in the early 1890s, admitted that La Morale de Nietzsche marked "my real debut in letters."<sup>113</sup> Far from conforming to the anarchist role in which the avant-garde and the University had cast him--which Lasserre likened to making a

Jacobin of Joseph de Maistre or a Jesuit of Michelet--the goal of Nietzsche was to unmask "the anarchic vice" of the modern epoch and to serve as a "great moral doctor" for contemporary youths: his ideas "have above all activated and encouraged our intellectual liberation."<sup>114</sup> Drawing upon the ideas of master and slave morality as well as the will to power, Lasserre stressed that Nietzsche was foremost an archiste or antianarchiste for whom social disorder appeared as "evil in itself."<sup>115</sup> The will to power had put an end to the natural anarchy of human instincts, and therefore served as the standard of order by which one could distinguish superior from inferior races as well as the caste of masters from the slaves: "The multitude is incompetent even in regard to its own conservation. . . . The strong, the well-born, the well-centered are always in very small numbers."<sup>116</sup> It is on the level of manners, "the sign of all civilization," that the battle must be waged against anarchism, and the foundation of true morality must spring from the social elite to be imposed upon the "slaves."

The weakling is, by nature, a slave, a slave at first by his own sensibilities. Anarchic, he is a propagator born of anarchy, of letting-go [laisser-aller]. . . . A morality, like all culture, demands a rich terrain, in order to thrust upward from vigorous roots, from profound reserves of vitality. It would only know to make itself recognized and gain a foothold on a people through the service [Ministère] of an elite.<sup>117</sup>

It is to the "positive and creative" morality of the masters that one must look for the true and legitimate sources of the social order, and to the "negative and subversive" morality of the slaves in order to locate the "principal agent and the great symptom of decadences."<sup>118</sup>

Aside from such general statements regarding society as a whole, Lasserre also wielded Nietzsche against the particular enemies of the anti-Dreyfusards--namely, against the professors of the Sorbonne and the Dreyfusards of les petites revues--emphasizing that the "true revolution of the slaves is not the work of violence, but of the mind."<sup>119</sup> Perhaps noting the increasing prestige of scientific rigor in academic sociology, history, and literary criticism, Lasserre rightly indicated that "science--in the broadest meaning of the word--becomes an indispensable function of the social order." By succumbing to the lure of narrow academic specialization, the "masters fail therefore in their essential office by enclosing themselves in laboratories or libraries."<sup>120</sup> What Georges Sorel would call "la révolution dreyfusienne" was for Lasserre nothing less than a Nietzschean revolt of the slaves.

Finally, in addition to the clear political and institutional polemic one may also read La Morale de Nietzsche as an assertion of the legitimacy of the neo-classical aesthetic against all others, that is, as a manual of noble taste. According to Lasserre, Nietzsche himself, "a Frenchman by taste,"<sup>121</sup> provided the principles by which such an classical aesthetic revolution might be effected and legitimated. After Rousseau, Lasserre wrote, "the romantics plunged and swam innocently in the ocean of Nature, of Infinity, of the Universal, of the Originary."

Are they meanwhile so naive and so pure? . . . Nietzsche underlines this common trait of most of them: the affectation of grandiose sentiments, the shamelessness of attributing sublime emotions to oneself.<sup>122</sup>

It is not difficult to view this document as condemnation of those whom Lasserre



viewed as the true heirs to the romantic spirit: indeed, the literature of Musset, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud had important echoes in the symbolists and decadents of the 1880s and 1890s and who had by 1900 come to form the consecrated avant-garde. In a sense, then, one might see the generation of the new Nietzsche as a reenactment of the circumstances of the emergence of the first one: while proponents of l'art social in 1892 utilized Nietzsche's rejection of Wagner and decadence as a means of distinguishing themselves from symbolism, Lasserre and other neo-classicists after 1898 activated the same rejection of decadence as a distinctive device against the previous literary generation, which was represented as romantic, decadent, and anarchistic. Once again, the ideas of Nietzsche on decadence were invoked as a means of entry to the field by young and/or unconsecrated writers struggling for recognition.

While romanticism corresponded to the servile morality of the slave, "classical art is the art of the masters."<sup>123</sup> The ideal artistic revolution, predicated on the defeat of the romantic aesthetic, was for Lasserre to be linked inextricably to the progress of civilization, for "the artist peoples" are essentially "masters" who, as "masters of themselves," will come to incarnate the values of the nobility:

The generator of order, [morality] yields at present the nourishment of high intellectual pleasures. Having risen very high thanks to it, man claims to enjoy his ascension, to affirm the connection where he feels himself one with the universe. He had acquired, at the price of a secular discipline, the ease and freedom of movements, of noble leisure.<sup>124</sup>

These reflections on romanticism would be more fully elaborated in Lasserre's celebrated study of Le Romantisme française (1907), which was eagerly embraced

by neo-classicists and firmly established Lasserre's reputation in certain intellectual circles while effectively destroying it in others.<sup>125</sup> Even in this text, where he blasted the theories of his Dreyfusard literature professor Alphonse Aulard, Lasserre would repeatedly invoke Nietzsche as an authority on the dangers of romanticism. While his references to the philosopher in L'Action française would grow less frequent after 1902, Lasserre would publish in 1907 a second study on the philosopher, Les Idées de Nietzsche sur la musique.<sup>126</sup>

Lasserre's study had a profound effect on those who found in his representation of Nietzsche a philosophical rationale for their own literary and political positions. Noting the success of Nietzschean thought among many Dreyfusards, which prompted Brunetière to link Nietzsche with intellectual anarchism, the prospect of producing an interpretation of Nietzsche reflective of anti-Dreyfusard thought would no doubt be attractive. The Thomist Revue de philosophie stressed Lasserre's "protestation against the anarchist or 'misarchist' interpreters,-- to employ a term of M. G[eorges]. Palante--of the German psychologist."

At base, Nietzsche is not the anarchist and the decadent that certain people have imagined. He is a classicist; he has the sense of hierarchy . . . he has love for true order, which is the order desired and realized by "power."<sup>127</sup>

This revaluation of Nietzsche by the right was indeed hardly an isolated phenomenon. One of the most consecrated of anti-Dreyfusards, the academic literary critic Émile Faguet had originally considered the ideas of Nietzsche only to conclude in late-1898 that "I can say nothing of the system of Nietzsche, if only that

it appears to me a curious and interesting monstrosity."<sup>128</sup> However, after the publication of Lasserre's text even Faguet was prompted to rethink his previous position, after which he praised this study as perhaps the best available alternative to the prevailing Nietzsche interpretations on the literary field. Having been admitted into the Académie Française in 1900, Faguet's endorsement carried a great deal of symbolic weight, representing the first significant support for Nietzsche from a member of the consecrated literary establishment. From this lofty position Faguet could launch an attack on les petites revues for their production of an interpretation of Nietzsche that had to be challenged.

One knows that the Société du Mercure de France has valiantly buckled down to this translation, has entrusted the interpretation of the German thinker to several Germanist philosophers and Germanizing philosophers.<sup>129</sup>

When reviewing the recent French literature on Nietzsche, Faguet surprisingly recommended Lasserre's study over the more scholarly and "eminently diplomatic" contribution of Henri Lichtenberger. What is more, the reasons that Faguet offered for this endorsement suggest that Lasserre's politico-literary strategy of anti-Dreyfusism--that is, by investing in his literary future by an alliance with more consecrated elders as a means of entry into the field--had produced sizable returns: "[I]f I insist a bit on this little work, it is not that I place it on par with the laborious, attentive, and thorough work of M. Lichtenberger."

[B]ut it is that M. Lasserre is young, that he is unknown, that he is very intelligent, that he has been at the central point of Nietzsche. . . that the study of M. Lichtenberger has had a great success, which it merited, while the modest, but very lively and clearly perceived [work] of M. Pierre Lasserre has passed nearly... [sic]

unperceived.<sup>130</sup>

Ordained with the power to confer value upon cultural goods, and moreover sharing with Lasserre a definite intellectual and political position that for a time united the dominant critics with a number of their subordinates, Faguet bestowed upon Lasserre's text--and therefore upon similar readings of Nietzsche--a degree of consecration and cultural prestige which one should not separate from Faguet's own interests: being one of the few professors at the Sorbonne to rally behind the Army and the Church, the consecration of a radical anti-Dreyfusard Nietzsche would doubtlessly be received as a scandal by the corps of republican professors unwilling to even review his texts.

Moreover, Faguet's exhortation to read Nietzsche would have concrete expression in his own 1904 text, En lisant Nietzsche. While retaining a skeptical stance vis-à-vis the philosopher--even noting towards the end that he "is certainly not a very original philosopher"--Faguet continued an exposition of Nietzsche that challenged the interpretation posited by the Dreyfusards.<sup>131</sup> Noting how Nietzsche had been "considered an anarchist by some," Faguet stressed that he was exactly the opposite. "He considers the socialists . . . 'the most honest, the most narrow, and most malfaisant [race] of the Universe.'"<sup>132</sup> Moreover, clearly reflective of his own opinions, Faguet asserted that for Nietzsche "The Jews are a people of pillage and plunder."<sup>133</sup>

Even before the publication of La Morale de Nietzsche Lasserre pressed for an alliance of his vision of the philosopher with the royalist and neo-classical

theories of Charles Maurras, who had throughout remained skeptical regarding the ideas of the German. If in the crusade for a classical renaissance "Maurras is not in numerous company", Lasserre observed:

He is not alone. We have accentuated his opposition to modern currents. A counter-current is born and develops itself in favor of Greek antiquity and of the eternal disciplines, upon which the genius of Nietzsche has impressed, with a singular power, something adventurous and perhaps reckless. Maurras, who can only sympathize with this great ally, does not find him very reliable.<sup>134</sup>

Since it was clear that Nietzsche was "decomposing amidst the details and odors of the laboratory" the very danger that Maurras had been fighting all along "with the simple weapons of reason", Lasserre saw a strategic opportunity for an intellectual alliance. At the very least, Lasserre wanted to secure Maurras' recognition of the value of the philosopher's ideas for the royalist project: "But conceive of the utility of Nietzsche. I ask of you even a little piety for the wrinkling [crispation] of this beautiful visage."<sup>135</sup>

Maurras had always mistrusted the benevolence of Nietzsche's influence in France, noting on one occasion how "Nietzsche, gallophile, philhellène and classical, has ruined our doctrines by mixing them with the l'individualisme anarchiste characteristic of his Germany."<sup>136</sup> In fact, by the publication in 1900 of the Enquête sur la monarchie Maurras qualified any praise for certain aspects of Nietzsche with his hope that French youths would soon forget the German: "all informed minds know that this German cross-bred with a Slav was never anything but our condisciple":

[H]e was of the same school as us and, born . . . of barbarian

Protestants, swollen by the juice of the most abundant follies, Nietzsche has not always understood very well what our teachers taught us. Our young French have already transcended him, which is an improvement, and I hope they will quickly forget him.<sup>137</sup>

Such statements no doubt contributed to the division with the royalist movement regarding Nietzsche, and most likely prompted Lasserre's own appeal for the usefulness of the philosopher.

Maurras' direct reply to Lasserre came in early-1903, when he maintained his initial skepticism while nevertheless praising La Morale de Nietzsche as the product of the first writer possessing the requisite personal qualities and social background to determine the true value of Nietzsche appropriate for the political right.

[B]orn of French parents, of Catholic parents, animated in politics and religion from hereditary sentiment, cultivated according to his tradition, an adherent of the Action française, bringing in aesthetic pleasure and adventure the taste of the true France and the old France, he can thus make for us an exact measure of the value of Nietzsche and of his influence, to dissipate our biases, if we have any, to illuminate our prejudices and also temper our enthusiasms which would be insane.<sup>138</sup>

Everything that Lasserre had pointed out regarding Nietzsche's philosophy of order, however, had for Maurras been already found in advance and "expressed in infinitely better terms in the French, Latin, and Greek series." Even Taine, who had known Nietzsche towards the end of his life, had failed to be influenced by the German--hence, "Useless to our masters, so is he to us."<sup>139</sup> Yet for Maurras there had always been two Nietzsches, of which only one could ever be acceptable:

I am only speaking of the good Nietzsche. But there exists a detestable Nietzsche; this is the one in whom we detected as early

as 1894 "the dreadful disorder" of intellectual life, "conceited anarchism", whimsicality and finally madness. My dear Lasserre, it seems to me that here the Caliph Omar is right: we should burn one half of Nietzsche as useless and the other half as dangerous.<sup>140</sup>

And yet, as Maurras would point out, it was precisely this "detestable Nietzsche," the product of the literary avant-garde of the previous decade, that Lasserre had recognized and had rightfully challenged in his study. In fact Maurras would even concede that Lasserre had correctly indicated certain elements of the "good Nietzsche" that could be put to good use.

### Conclusion

Despite the misgivings of Maurras, many others associated with the Action Française found in the works of Nietzsche the reflection of their literary and political ambitions. In 1912 Jacques Bainville wrote in his journal:

I believe that one could establish as an almost unexceptional rule that France has never welcomed with real fervor foreign authors other than those who carry a reflection of itself. . . . Nietzsche? But Nietzsche was, like Schopenhauer, nourished on our moralists and our skeptics of the 17th and 18th century; Zarathustra, by depicting du cortège of his eagle and his lion had a relationship with some well-known names, spiritual and very civilized names.<sup>141</sup>

Despite what Maurras considered to be mere attempts to domesticate Nietzsche within a French context, the royalist leader maintained that in the final analysis, "let's continue to treat him as a barbarian. That's what he was. . . . A profoundly German nature."

It was curious for a Pierre Lasserre or a Jacques Bainville to note the deviations and, so to speak, the natural refractions of the classical spirit across a profoundly romantic disposition.<sup>142\*</sup>

In short, Maurras would never share the enthusiasm that some of his friends had for the philosopher, and discouraged its expression in the pages of L'Action française.

One can conclude that the appropriation of Nietzschean ideas within conservative and royalist politico-literary circles contributed to the gradual decline of the popular representation of the philosopher closely linking him to the Dreyfusard literary avant-garde. The transformation of the Barrès-Nietzsche constellation from left to right-wing politics no doubt rendered the latter even more respectable in conservative circles already favorably disposed to the novelist. One might also note the steady increase in a snobbism based on Nietzschean thought that was the necessary result of the popularization of the philosopher.

As the literary field had itself shifted towards a nationalistic literary protectionism by 1902, the production of a right-wing and even popularized representation of Nietzsche posed certain difficulties for those who tried to sustain a leftist or even purely avant-garde image of the philosopher. As we will see in the following chapter, the development and crisis of a version of Nietzsche sanctioned by the socialist party may be explained by this concurrent development on the intellectual right.



## Notes

1. Jacques Morland, "Les interpretations de l'oeuvre de Nietzsche" L'Ermitage 12 (février 1901), 140.
2. Charles Maurras, quoted in Victor Nguyen, Aux origines de l'Action française (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 531.
3. Christophe Charle, Naissance des "intellectuels." 1880-1900 (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 213.
4. Le Figaro 14 septembre 1891.
5. Jean Moréas, contribution to Jules Huret, Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire, 418.
6. Jean Moréas, Le Figaro 14 septembre 1891.
7. Charle, 102.
8. Robert Sabatier, La Poésie du XXe siècle: tradition et évolution (Paris: Albin Michel, 1982), 42.
9. Charles Maurras, "Les jeunes revues" Revue bleue Janvier 1894 (27), 118.
10. Charle, 204.
11. Nguyen, 696, 835.
12. Jean Moréas, "Sur Nietzsche" in Variations sur la vie et les livres (Paris: Mercure de France, 1910), 176.
13. Jean Moréas, "Nietzsche et la poésie" in Esquisses et souvenirs (Paris: Mercure de France, 1908), 111.
14. Maurice Barrès, "La Querelle des nationalistes et des cosmopolites" Le Figaro 4 juillet 1892, 1.
15. Léon Blum, "Les livres: les romans" Revue blanche novembre 1897 (14), 294.
16. Marcel Fouquier, "M. Maurice Barrès" La Revue bleue 11 juin 1892 (49), 749, 753.
17. Anatole France, "La littérature du 'Moi'.--Maurice Barrès" La Plume 1 avril 1891 (2), 122.

18. René Doumic, "La glorification de l'énergie" Revue des deux mondes 15 décembre 1894 (126), 923, 929.
19. Henry Bordeaux, "Les jeunes" L'Ermitage décembre 1895 (11), 261.
20. Ferdinand Brunetière, "Après le procès" Revue des deux mondes 15 mars 1898 (146), 445.
21. Édouard Schuré, "Nietzsche en France et la psychologie de l'athée" Revue bleue 8 septembre 1900, 289.
22. Blum, 292.
23. Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés in Oeuvre (Paris: Au club de l'Honnête Homme, 1965 [1897]), III: 168-169.
24. Cf. Émile Faguet's use of the term in regard to Bismarck in "Un professeur d'énergie" Propos littéraires (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, n.d.), IV: 259-270.
25. Maurice Barrès quoted in Raoul Girardet, Le nationalisme français: anthologie, 1871-1914 (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 185-187.
26. Maurice Barrès, quoted in Zeev Sternhell, Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), 46.
27. André Vanoncini, "Le Culte du Moi ou l'avenir d'une illusion" in Barrès. Une tradition dans la modernité (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1991), 259-270.
28. Ibid., 139.
29. Barrès, "Dix-septième cahier [29 juillet-26 août 1907]," Mes cahiers (Paris: Plon, 1933), 6: 10-11.
30. Barrès, "Trent-huitième cahier (commencé à Paris le 6 juillet 1914," Mes cahiers (Paris: Plon, 1938), 11: 117.
31. Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, Mes années chez Barrès (Paris: Plon, 1928), 90.
32. Charle, 216-217.
33. René Doumic, "Les 'Déracinés' de M. Maurice Barrès" Revue des deux mondes 15 novembre 1897 (144), 459.
34. Lucien Herr, "A M. Barrès" La Revue blanche avril 1898 (15), 241, 244.

35. Léon Blum, "M. Maurice Barrès" in En lisant: réflexions critiques (1903-1905) in Oeuvre (Paris: Paris: Albin Michel, 1954), I: 81, 82.

36. Jean Bourdeau, "La Philosophie perverse" Journal des débats 4 mars 1899, 1.

37. Jean Bourdeau, "Nietzsche socialiste malgré lui" Journal des débats 2 septembre 1902, 1.

38. The name of La Plume's editor, Léon Deschamps, appeared in "La Ligue Pour La Patrie Française" Le Temps 6 janvier 1899.

39. Vicomte de Colleville, "Frédéric Nietzsche et nos professeurs d'énergie" La Plume 1 octobre 1900 (11), 618. Vicomte de Colleville, a member of the Société de l'histoire de France, had previously translated (with Fritz Zepelin) Henrik Ibsen's La Comédie de l'amour (Paris: Savine, 1896).

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 618.

42. Eugène Montfort, "Un autre romantique que nous pouvons aimer: Maurice Barrès" Les Marges 1904 (1), 96. The quote by Nietzsche on page 81 reads: "De tout ce qui est écrit, je n'aime que ce qui est écrit avec son propre sang. Écris avec ton sang et tu apprendras que le sang est esprit."

43. Louis Dumont-Wilden, "Réflexions sur l'immoralisme" Antée 1 mars 1907 (3), 1035.

44. Célestin Bouglé, Pour la démocratie française (Paris: Cornély, 1900), 101, cited in Charle, Naissance, 223n.

45. Jules de Gaultier, "Le Sens de la hiérarchie chez Nietzsche" La Revue hebdomadaire 23 mars 1901, 536.

46. Ibid., 529.

47. Gaultier, "Le bovarysme des Déracinés" Mercure de France juillet 1900 (35), 13.

48. Maurice Muret, "Nietzsche et la littérature européenne" Journal des débats 29 mars 1902, 1. The only book that Muret had published by this time was L'Esprit juif (essai de psychologie ethnique) (Paris: Perrin, 1901).

49. Ibid.

50. As a student at the Université Catholique de Lille, Delfour had subscribed to the anti-Semitic list for the Monument Henry on 27 décembre 1898. Cf. Abbé [Léon] Delfour, "Nietzsche et Barrès" L'Univers 18 avril 1908, 2; Pierre Quillard, "Étudiants et anciens étudiants" in Le monument Henry (Paris: Galeries du théâtre française, 1898), 176-195.

51. Cf. Fernand Baldensperger, L'Avant-guerre dans la littérature française, 1900-1914 (Paris: Payot, 1919), 148.

52. Paul Adam, La Morale des sports (Paris: La Librairie mondiale, 1907), 12, 13.

53. Ibid., 13, 15.

54. Ibid., 16.

55. Cf. J.-D. F., review of Henri Lichtenberger, La Philosophie de Nietzsche and Aphorismes et fragments choisis de Friedrich Nietzsche, La Revue thomiste novembre 1899 (7), 617.

56. Lucien Roure, "La Crise de la morale: Nietzsche et son faux immoralisme" Études religieuses 1903 (95), 541.

57. Robert A. Nye, The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1975), 88, 114n.

58. Gallus, "Frédéric Nietzsche" La Libre parole 11 septembre 1900, 1.

59. Bourdeau, "Nietzsche socialiste malgré lui", 1.

60. V. de Pallarès, Le Crépuscule d'une idole: Nietzsche, Nietzscheïsme, Nietzscheïens (Paris: Grasset, 1910), 322-323.

61. Téodor de Wyzewa, "Introduction" to Paul Bourget, Le Disciple (Paris: Nelson, éditeurs, ?), 14.

62. Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 322.

63. Jules de Gaultier, "Le Sens de la hiérarchie chez Nietzsche" Revue hebdomadaire 23 mars 1901, 509.

64. Charles Maurras, quoted in Victor Nguyen, "Charles Maurras (1868-1952) et l'Affaire: une crise de l'identité française?" in Géraldi Leroy, ed. Les Écrivains et l'Affaire Dreyfus (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983), 139.

65. Wolf Lepenies, Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 61.

66. Reino Virtanen, ;Nguyen, Aux origines de l'Action française, 697.

67. Ivan P. Barko, L'Esthétique littéraire de Charles Maurras (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1961), 27.

68. Charles Maurras, quoted in Victor Nguyen, Aux origines de l'Action française (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 677. Citation originally appeared in La Cocarde 7 mars 1895.

69. Virtanen, 206; see Louis Dimier, Vingt ans d'Action française (Paris, 1926), 26-27.

70. O. Tauxier, Action française octobre 1903, p. 379, quoted in Pierre, 19.

71. Louis Dimier, Vingt ans d'Action Française et autres souvenirs (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1926), 26.

72. Cf. Jules de Gaultier, "Nietzsche et la croyance idéologique" Revue des idées 15 septembre 1904, 677-695.

73. Dimier, 27.

74. Ibid.

75. Charles Maurras, Dictionnaire politique et critique (Paris: Cahiers Charles Maurras, 1932), II: 123.

76. B., "Chroniques: Notices bibliographiques" L'Ermitage octobre 1896 (13), 244.

77. Hugues Rebell, "Judaïsme et révolution" L'Ermitage mai 1898 (16), 388.

78. Charles Maurras, Enquête sur la monarchie (Paris: Fayard, 1900), 145.

79. Hugues Rebell, "Préjugés modernes" L'Action française 1 décembre 1900 (3), 907.

80. Hugues Rebell, contribution to Le Cardonnell and Vellay, La Littérature contemporaine (1905).

81. Jacques Bainville, contribution to Jacques Morland, "Enquête sur l'influence allemande" Mercure de France novembre 1902 (44), 299-300.

82. Jacques Bainville, "Conversation avec les Déracinés" La Plume 1 septembre 1898 (9), 525.

83. Jacques Bainville, review of Nietzsche, Aurore, L'Action française 1 janvier 1902 (6), 91.

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85. Jacques Bainville, "Les Livres" L'Action française 15 octobre 1909 (24), 332.

86. Lucien Moreau, quoted in Jules Pierre, Avec Nietzsche à l'assaut du Christianisme: exposé des théories de "l'Action Française" (Limoges: Dumont, 1910), 4. This passage first appeared in L'Action française 1905 (13), 356.

87. Paul Léautaud, 11 juillet 1903, Journal littéraire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1956), I: 74.

88. Léon Bélugou, "Avant-propos" to Casimir Stryienski, Soirées du Stendhal Club (Paris: Mercure de France, 1905), I: x. Volume two was published by the Mercure in 1908.

89. "... la phalange stendhalienne se grossissant de toute la clientèle de Nietzsche, il n'y a pas à douter que les nouveaux adeptes n'aient pour la Correspondance l'estime qu'avait leur maître." Ibid., xix.

90. Léon Blum, Stendhal et le beylisme (Paris: Albin Michel, 1947 [1914]), 123-124.

91. Daniel Halévy, The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche, 323.

92. Jacques Bainville, review of Georges Vacher de Lapouge, L'Aryen, son rôle social, L'Action française 1 juin 1900 (2), 999.

93. Georges Vacher de Lapouge, L'Aryen, son rôle social (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1899), 22.

94. Cf. Jacques Morland, Pages choisies de Gobineau (Paris: Mercure de France, 1905); Robert Dreyfus, La Vie et les Prophéties du comte de Gobineau (Paris: Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 1905); Dreyfus, "Gobineau en exil" Le Figaro 29 janvier 1910. See also Jean Gaulmier, Gobineau et sa fortune littéraire (Paris: Ducros, 1971), and L. Deffoux, Trois aspects de Gobineau (Paris: Crès, 1929).

95. Émile Faguet, La Revue latine 25 octobre 1906, cited in Jean Gaulmier, "Introduction" to Gobineau, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), I: xxiii.

96. Jacques Morland, "Introduction" Pages choisies de Gobineau (Paris: Mercure de France, 1905), 24.

97. Ibid., 31.

98. Ibid., 30, 32.

99. Paul Seippel, "Gobineau, Nietzsche, Chamberlain" La Semaine littéraire 13 janvier 1906, 12-15.

100. Daniel Halévy, The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche, 301-302.

101. Pierre Lasserre, "Nietzsche et l'anarchisme" L'Action française 15 novembre 1899 (1), 1 décembre 1899, 595-619, 15 décembre 1899, 649-660.

102. While Eugen Weber cites "Nietzschean, nationalistic proclivities" as reasons for Lasserre's political shift to anti-Dreyfusism in 1899, this explanation ignores the strategic elements of such a literary conversion as well as the fact that, at the turn of the century, being a "Nietzschean" could have easily resulted an espousal of virtually any political position, from socialism to royalism. Cf. Weber, Action Française, 78-79.

103. Wilbur Merrill Frohock, Pierre Lasserre: The Evolution of His Critical Doctrines (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1937), 2-3.

104. Frohock, 6-9.

105. Pierre Lasserre, "Réflexions sur Frédéric Nietzsche" La Revue universelle 15 juin 1921, 659.

106. Pierre Lasserre, "Nietzsche et la littérature française" La Revue encyclopédique Larousse 6 janvier 1900, 6.

107. Lasserre, "Nietzsche et l'anarchisme," 480, 481. The original article cites the essays of Wyzewa and Barine while in the 1902 volume La Morale de Nietzsche replaces Barine with Cherbuliez. Cf. Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1917 [1902]), 47.

108. When Lasserre compiled these essays to form La Morale de Nietzsche in 1902, he changed "des personnes sérieuses" to "des personnes pondérées," that is, "level-headed" people. Cf. Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche, 47.

109. Lasserre, "Nietzsche et la littérature française", 4.

110. Ibid., 486.

111. Ibid., 481.
112. Lasserre, "Nietzsche et la littérature française", 7.
113. Lasserre, "Réflexions sur Frédéric Nietzsche," 658. Lasserre's first work was La Crise chrétienne, which was published in 1891.
114. Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche, 48, 50.
115. Ibid., 67.
116. Ibid., 75, 76.
117. Ibid., 77.
118. Ibid., 84.
119. Ibid., 97.
120. Ibid., 99.
121. Ibid., 43.
122. Ibid., 112-113.
123. Ibid., 111.
124. Ibid., 88.
125. Cf. René Doumic, "Pathologie du Romantisme" Revue des deux mondes 15 avril 1907, 924-935.
126. Cf. Pierre Lasserre, Les Idées de Nietzsche sur la musique (Paris: Mercure de France, 1907).
127. Em. D., review of Pierre Lasserre, La Morale de Nietzsche, La Revue de philosophie décembre 1902 (2), 89.
128. Émile Faguet, "Nietzsche" La Revue bleue 1 octobre 1898, 420.
129. Émile Faguet, "Autour de Nietzsche" Annales politiques et littéraires 1903, 60.
130. Ibid.
131. Émile Faguet, En lisant Nietzsche (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1904), 319.



132. Ibid., 51, 55.

133. Ibid., 67.

134. Pierre Lasserre, "Charles Maurras et la renaissance classique" Mercur  
de France juin 1902 (42), 610-611.

135. Ibid., 611, 612.

136. Charles Maurras, quoted in Nguyen, 832.

137. Charles Maurras, Enquête sur la monarchie (Paris: Nouvelle librairie  
nationale, 1925 [1900]), 227.

138. Charles Maurras, "Le Tien et le mien dans Nietzsche" in Quand les  
français ne s'aimaient pas (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1916), 131.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid., 131-132.

141. Jacques Bainville, "20 février 1912," Journal (1901-1918) (Paris: Plon,  
1948), 91.

142. Charles Maurras, Dictionnaire, III: 181.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:  
FROM LE PARTI SOCIALISTE TO REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM:  
NIETZSCHE AND THE SOCIALIST AVANT-GARDE, 1898-1914<sup>1</sup>**

The philosophy of Nietzsche is a prodigious doctrine of  
conformism to bourgeois anarchy.  
But what volcanic conformism!

--Jean-Richard Bloch<sup>2</sup>

The apparently unlikely combination of Nietzschean and socialist thought in France can be comprehended in light of the dynamics of the intellectual field as well as the changing subfield of socialist thought itself. The Dreyfusard alliance of the socially-oriented literary avant-garde and young republican academics from more autonomous institutions produced a climate within which the phenomenon of Nietzschean socialism may be partly explained. Yet the fact that these two groups of "intellectuels de gauche" could rally together under the revisionist banner did not entail a levelling of the more fundamental social and intellectual boundaries between them. It has been shown that academic philosophers and sociologists, despite their convergence with the literary avant-garde for political (external) reasons, could not maintain such an alliance in strictly philosophical (internal) affairs--the avant-garde vision of Nietzsche (illustrated by Halévy, Dreyfus, and Gide) as a legitimate and socially-useful philosopher could not be shared by those academics operating within the boundaries of legitimate philosophical and sociological practice. This latter concurrence regarding Nietzsche, however, could be effected by those philosophers (such as Palante, Gaultier, Lasserre, and Drouin) situated on the margins of university and literary life. One might go even further to suggest that the entire question of Nietzsche as a socialist was displaced almost entirely from the field of "disinterest" to that of pure "interest"--thus touching

upon political and literary postures of all orientations.

In this chapter it will be shown that the ideas of Nietzsche played an important but by no means uncontested role in the field of French socialist thought, the structure of which may be conceived along hierarchical lines functioning much like those which divided the literary field. Many members of the official socialist party, including party chief Jean Jaurès, had an interest in appropriating Nietzsche for their cause, primarily due to the symbolic value of the philosopher's image on the literary field. This courtship would not last long beyond the rise of a royalist version of Nietzsche that fully emerged after 1902, after which it would become difficult to praise the philosopher from an official socialist perspective without being drawn further into an unnecessary struggle for legitimate interpretation. In short, after the socialists had solidified their power in the elections of 1902, the image of Nietzsche as a socialist became a superfluous piece of propaganda as well as an unaffordable luxury. Thereafter, Nietzsche would become an intellectual ingredient in the ideological experiments of the socialist avant-garde, represented by Georges Sorel and the revolutionary syndicalists as well as the Cercle Proudhon, whose members steered closer and closer to the royalist camp in their ideological experiments.

### **Political Avant-Garde and Literary Avant-Garde**

The shifting representation of Nietzsche within socialist milieux may be explained by reference to the various socialist groups which, at one time or another, presented themselves as an avant-garde faction in relation to established

political authority. The intellectual experiments of the political theorist, for example, were often viewed with suspicion by the more practical professional politician. During the 1890s many members of the Parti socialiste were, like their specifically literary counterparts, sympathetic to anarchism as well as to the foreign importations invoked in support of this ideology. While rarely being key representatives of the avant-garde Nietzsche industry (their own enterprises being of a different nature), many socialists were consumers of the cultural products offered by les petites revues and willingly incorporated them into their political imagination. In short, as in the case of the literary avant-garde, the dominated status of socialist intellectuals during the 1890s rendered the ideas of Nietzsche much more acceptable as a radical means of political and social critique.

The literary avant-garde provided a forum for many young socialists during the 1890s. Several unconventional representatives of the socialist party, including Léon Blum, Albert Métin, Léon Bazalgette, Charles Andler, and Lucien Herr, collaborated on La Revue blanche during the period of Nietzsche's greatest notoriety in avant-garde circles. These writers, none of whom had at this time written anything significant on the philosopher, were nevertheless exposed to the work of several leftists who were deeply engaged in the Nietzsche industry, in particular Daniel Halévy, Robert Dreyfus, and Henry Lasvignes. Of the first group Andler would emerge as the most committed advocate of the philosopher, while the others would occasionally accord him modest praise. Moreover, as noted in previous chapters, Nietzsche's first French admirers tended towards Dreyfusism

and even, in the case of Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, outright socialism. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the participation of such writers in socialist projects helped to disseminate the ideas of the philosopher throughout various political networks. Indeed, for Halévy, Gregh, Dreyfus, and Blum socialism was no mere passing fancy, for after the turn of the century all would become very active in the various socialist reviews, including Pages libres, Coopération des idées, and Cahiers de la Quinzaine.

However, this apparent rapprochement between socialism and the literary avant-garde during the 1890s was in many ways a marriage of convenience through which cultural opposites united against common enemies. On aesthetic grounds such a union could not be sustained for long. We have seen how representatives of the avant-garde, in the name of aesthetic purity, defined themselves against the literary establishment as well as against more mainstream forms of literature, especially naturalism. However, as Madéleine Rebérioux has observed, socialist literary critics tended to favor the naturalist novel of Zola over the anarchist novel promulgated by such avant-garde writers as Paul Adam. That is, while novelists such as Adam privileged the cultural aristocracy of creative geniuses, truly social novelists like Zola evoked, in the words of Jean Jaurès, "the suffering and exploited mass."<sup>3</sup> As avant-garde experimentation tended to be at odds with the social mission of the naturalist novel, the socialist support for naturalism threatened to undermine its alliance with the avant-garde. That Nietzsche had been an ingredient in such experimentation could have easily

predisposed certain socialists against the German.

As we have seen in the cases of academic philosophy and sociology, the political alliance between republican and socialist professors and avant-garde writers rarely extended to the sphere of Nietzsche interpretation. That is, despite their mutually subordinate status in the intellectual world, the fundamental philosophical and social differences between these groups would effectively *undermine more substantial intellectual rapprochements, especially with the rise of republican professors to positions of power after 1902*. This division between science and letters did not, however, preclude periodic academic support for the philosopher, and in most cases those socialist academics who admired Nietzsche also shared a common orientation vis-à-vis avant-garde literature and the literary establishment. Unlike most academic philosophers and Durkheimian sociologists, Charles Andler, Léon Blum, and Alexandre Bracke-Desrousseaux were non-philosophers who collaborated with les petites revues before the Dreyfus Affair, thus demonstrating a receptiveness to Nietzsche that their more specifically academic peers, by virtue of their intellectual position, were not likely to share. It must be stressed that, while participation in the literary avant-garde did not necessarily entail an openness to Nietzsche, this social bond was perhaps the strongest common denominator of those who embraced the philosopher from a committed leftist perspective.

#### **Normalien Socialism and Nietzschean Socialism: The Role of Charles Andler**

Despite the apparent silence of many universitaires regarding the question

of Nietzsche, some young scholars associated with the École Normale Supérieure took the philosopher quite seriously and even attempted to apply his ideas to socialist theory. It would of course be a gross exaggeration to suggest that some sort of central core of academic Nietzscheans found an intellectual and institutional haven at the École Normale. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find very many faculty members in philosophy with any predilection for the thinker at the time. As one might expect, while academic philosophy and sociology at the rue d'Ulm had been instrumental in the introduction of German philosophy to France,<sup>4</sup> the faculty did little to encourage the reading of the works of Nietzsche, which were viewed as excessively literary and/or incompatible with republican values. When the philosophy of Nietzsche was presented in academic settings it was typically broached in order to undermine it. Indeed, as late as 1928 the eminent neo-Kantian philosopher Léon Brunschvicg still offered a seminar at the École provocatively entitled: "Nietzsche--was he a philosopher?"<sup>5</sup> Émile Durkheim, who obtained his agrégation de philosophie at the rue d'Ulm, nevertheless scorned those littérateurs in philosophy for which the École Normale had been known in the past, a rather doctrinaire stance which partly explains his denunciation of Bergson as well as Nietzsche.<sup>6</sup> It is also surprising that Bergson, who represented for Durkheim the very philosophical dilettantism which he despised at the École Normale, had surprisingly little to say about Nietzsche, though years later Julien Benda would lump the two together as treasonous "clerics" who should have never descended from their ivory towers. Thus, given the hegemony of official

philosophical activity at the École Normale, it is likely that whatever enthusiasm for Nietzsche existed at the school was cultivated on the margins of the institution itself. As we have seen, such was the typical social condition of most intellectuals who espoused the philosophy of Nietzsche.

Despite this reputation for literary dilettantism and its own relatively autonomous status within the French academy, the École Normale enjoyed at best a rather ambivalent reputation among les petites revues during the early 1890s. At the then fervently anti-socialist L'Ermitage, for example, there was little respect for normaliens: "Today I believe that the École has submitted to a regime of intensive culture and perfected gorging, it loses therefore all interest and in effect produces nothing anymore than mediocre columnists [chroniqueurs]." <sup>7</sup> Émile Zola himself maintained a characteristic literary disdain for this prestigious academy, and rather fatalistically declared that "Anyone who has ever been dipped in the waters of the École Normale is drenched with them for life."

They [normaliens] are not, they cannot be, original, because they have been cultivated in a very special fertilizer. If you sow professors, you will never reap creators. <sup>8</sup>

Yet, despite this literary disdain for such institutions, La Revue blanche, the most militant review of the avant-garde, included essays contributed by a number of socialist normaliens during the 1890s.

To understand the relationship between Nietzschean socialism and normalien socialism one must explore the sources of both intellectual strands within the institution. The famed librarian of the École Normale, Lucien Herr, who



had been most instrumental in propagating socialist ideas among a few students at the rue d'Ulm, was clearly not adverse to Nietzschean thought. In fact, as an agrégé de philosophie Herr had been attracted to a number of German thinkers, especially Marx. In his well-known biography--which featured several comparisons between the circumstances of the lives of Nietzsche and Herr--Charles Andler remembered occasions when the latter defended the philosopher against detractors, and in 1907 even invested in a German edition of his collected works.<sup>9</sup> Indeed in the correspondence between Herr and Andler the discussion often turned to the subject of Nietzsche. While one could only with difficulty cite direct references to Herr's application of Nietzschean ideas--especially since Herr himself published very little--there is evidence to suggest at least an affinity between the two figures that has gone largely unnoticed and which merits further consideration.

If Lucien Herr served as the catalyst for the reading of Marx at the rue d'Ulm during the 1890s, his close friend Charles Andler should be identified as the one who encouraged the reading of Nietzsche within a socialist and academic context. Andler, maître de conférences in German from 1893 to 1904, exercised a degree of influence over the political and intellectual orientation of certain young students as well as his personal friends. While an intimate of Bernard-Lazare and A.-Ferdinand Hérold, Andler became closely associated with the leftist literary avant-garde during the early-1890s as a regular contributor to the anarchist review Entretiens politiques et littéraires where, under the pseudonym Théodore Randal, he contributed several critical essays and translated fragments of Stirner.<sup>10</sup> Andler

even contributed an article to La Revue blanche in 1895 on the subject of Marx's Capital.<sup>11</sup> The interest in Nietzsche which he would manifest in later years was not present during his collaboration on les petites revues, a fact which is surprising considering that it was within such literary circles that the fame of the philosopher first spread. Andler's biographer and former student, Ernest Tonnelat, attributes this to the preparation required to complete his thesis, which precluded affording serious attention to foreign writers.

Being an unconventional figure in socialist and academic circles may partly explain why Andler might have embraced the ideas of Nietzsche. Both the friends and enemies of Andler have generally indicated the unconventional nature of his brand of socialism, a quality which earned him the respect of both bona fide party members as well as their anti-intellectual counterparts. "Andler's influence was that of a professor, an historian, a philosopher, a poet," remembered Hubert Bourgin, "because he had been all of that. . . . [I]f he belonged to the socialist party, for his own sake he retained all of his freedom of judgment and action."<sup>12</sup> Even Charles Péguy, who broke with Herr, Blum and official socialism generally after 1902, admitted that Andler had admirably maintained his independence from doctrinaire socialism:

One can be opposed, one can be diametrically contrary to the ideas of M. Andler, to the thought of M. Andler, to the method of M. Andler, to the system of M. Andler, one must agree that at least he followed his own line, and that his is a life all of a piece.<sup>13</sup>

Such a critical distance from perceived political orthodoxy, among other factors, may explain the predilection that this socialist had for Nietzsche.

During the 1890s Andler was a clearly marginal figure in French academic life. Having entered the École Normale Supérieure as a student in 1884, Andler pursued his studies toward an agrégation de philosophie, but failed twice in 1887 and 1888 after a disagreement with his jury regarding German philosophy. Apparently, the young scholar had been much too "intoxicated with metaphysics from beyond the Rhine." Undaunted, Andler finished first the following year in the agrégation in German, but retained his deep interest in German philosophy. No doubt this conflict with the philosophical establishment at the École and his subsequent failure in his original career track contributed to his later defense of unorthodox philosophical sources such as Nietzsche. After obtaining a travelling fellowship to Germany (1889-1891) and a brief stint as a German professor at a lycée in Nancy, Andler became maître de conférences in German at the École Normale in 1894, a position he would hold until his appointment to the Sorbonne in 1904 and through which he would obtain his doctorat ès lettres in 1897.<sup>14</sup> Andler's important essays on Nietzsche would only be published well after the turn of the century, notably in the prestigious Revue de métaphysique et de morale and La Revue de synthèse historique.<sup>15</sup> Yet the intellectual labor involved with the production of his massive six-volume study of the philosopher spanned the fourteen-year period before World War I. With his sometime-rival Henri Lichtenberger, Andler treated the philosopher as a legitimate object of study, and published essays and reviews in some of the more influential academic journals of the day.

As an academic, Andler had a stake in the intellectual battles of the day, and on more than one occasion would turn his critical gaze upon the literary avant-garde. To a certain extent, Andler like Lichtenberger hoped to salvage the reputation of Nietzsche from the apparent misuses of the avant-garde, and did not hesitate to blast the amateur Germanists of the latter from the standpoint of academic professionalism. On one occasion, Tonnelat writes, Andler revealed the translation errors committed by Henri Albert, noting that the work as a whole was "not on the level of what one requires of a first-year German student [un étudiant germanisant]." <sup>16</sup> Thus in a sense effecting a break with his youthful past, Andler represented Nietzsche as a legitimate object of scholarly inquiry. The prestigious Revue de synthèse historique, for example, which to that point had little reason even to consider the German, would publish Andler's comparison of the philosophies of history of Nietzsche and Jacob Burckhardt in 1907. <sup>17</sup> Based on the inclusion of the philosopher's texts and ideas into his courses at the Sorbonne, Tonnelat speculates that Andler decided to embark upon his lengthy study of the life and thought of Nietzsche during the late-1890s: "I remember having heard Ch. Andler at the Sorbonne, around 1901 or 1902, make an ample exposé of Nietzsche's doctrine, which supposed already a long familiarity with the work of the writer." <sup>18</sup>

Unlike his colleagues in academia, Andler refused to reject the writings of Nietzsche outright, endeavoring instead to read them as sympathetic to the republican and socialist cause. One of the few academics to challenge Fouillée's

shrilly negative depiction of the philosopher in Nietzsche et l'immoralisme, Andler exchanged heated essays with the academician in Notes critiques. "I am saying, I maintain, I have proven briefly and could prove at length that M. Fouillée does not have the right to have an interpretation," Andler charged in 1903. "There must be more reading and conscientious analysis."<sup>19</sup>

Despite the appropriation that members of the Action Française and other right-wing thinkers effected, Andler resisted relegating Nietzsche to the exclusive sphere of radical conservative politics. Péguy wrote admiringly of Andler's projected magnum opus on the German philosopher: "He will not give us his Nietzsche before having exhausted the literature and the documentation on Nietzsche."<sup>20</sup> In his famous six-volume work Nietzsche: sa vie et sa pensée, the publication of which was postponed by the war, Andler would boldly state "that one can legitimately call Nietzsche's [philosophical] system a socialism."<sup>21</sup> Against such royalists as Pierre Lasserre, who asserted that Nietzsche envisioned a society of slaves ruled by a caste of masters, Andler contended on the contrary that "He wants a European working class that will be a class of masters."<sup>22</sup>

While many commentators have stressed the immense authority of Andler and Herr over the political orientation of their students, Christophe Charle has argued that this conception is largely a myth propagated by both proponents and opponents of socialism. In fact, Charle demonstrates that both the librarian and the German professor were very marginal figures at the École Normale. As the school's librarian, for example, Herr only dealt with students as they entered the

library, while Andler's position as maître de conférences in German rendered him somewhat suspect in the eyes of the largely Germanophobic student population. Moreover, their relative youth and common Alsatian origins deprived them of both the academic power and credibility necessary to mold minds. Those students who did fall under the influence of Herr and Andler therefore constituted a clear minority that has been greatly exaggerated by most commentators.<sup>23</sup>

The very marginality of Herr and Andler at the École Normale should give pause to those who would overemphasize the role of the institution itself in fostering an enthusiasm for Nietzsche. However, coupled with a consideration of the geographical origins of the individuals involved, one can hypothesize that the school did provide the ideal conditions for a specific group of intellectuals. As we have seen throughout this study, a large number of those who championed Nietzsche during this period were born in Alsace or Lorraine, which imparted a certain ambivalence regarding Germany which colored their readings of the philosopher. Thus, in the cases of Henri Albert and Maurice Barrès we witnessed two writers from that region who appropriated Nietzsche as a cultural weapon against Germany. A similar phenomenon occurred in the academic sphere, where Germanists like Henri Lichtenberger, Lucien Herr, and Charles Andler all hailed from Alsace and shared a skeptical view of Germany. The university city of Nancy thus emerges in this context as a center of Nietzsche studies. Indeed, Andler taught briefly at a lycée in Nancy, while Lichtenberger held a position for years at the university. Moreover, during the pre-war years students of the two would also

assume posts in Nancy (Albert Lévy and Louis Benoist-Hannapier) and continue the tradition of Nietzsche studies.<sup>24</sup>

Despite a modest following, some of the students drawn to socialism at the École Normale became open to the ideas of Nietzsche. Yet, in most cases, these students were like Herr and Andler marginal to the academic mainstream. On the whole, in the eyes of Halévy, most students at the École "were largely young studious bourgeois, great readers and passers of exams."<sup>25</sup> The most notable normaliens were therefore those who distinguished themselves from their less-politicized peers. Péguy, for example, was himself an isolate at the rue d'Ulm and quickly attached himself to Herr, Bergson, and Romain Rolland, who taught the history of art at the École Normale. Much like Andler, Léon Blum was another normalien tempted by anarchism during the early 1890s and enamored with the philosophy of Nietzsche. A collaborator with Halévy, Gregh, and Henri Barbusse on Le Banquet, and later as a frequent contributor to La Revue blanche, Blum was hardly immune to the influence exercised by such a militant network. Years later he would nevertheless renounce his youthful dalliance with these ideas: "One must appreciate," he explained, "how seductive individualist doctrines are for very young men."<sup>26</sup> It is not unlikely that this early enthusiasm for Nietzsche was encouraged by Andler at the École Normale, where Blum also succumbed to the influence of Lucien Herr's socialism, perhaps the most decisive political influence on his life. Halévy nevertheless remembered Blum with contempt, describing him as "State legal advisor, man of letters, dandy; barrésien before the Affair, jaurésien since,

always a dandy."<sup>27</sup> While not a frequent or extensive commentator on Nietzsche, Blum was for a time quite well-integrated into the literary avant-garde and shared the perspectives of his colleagues by pointing out in various critical essays the intellectual proximity of the philosopher to Stirner, Stendhal, and Barrès.

On some occasions Andler was able to exercise a decisive degree of influence over certain of his students. For example Marcel Ray, a student of German literature under Andler at the École Normale, had evidently adopted his teacher's penchant for Nietzsche, whose ideas he presented to his students in his classes at the Université de Montpellier. The writer Valéry Larbaud, who was associated with the Nouvelle revue française, had been friends with Ray, and on one occasion wrote congratulating him on his academic heterodoxy. "I was happy to see the subjects you give to your students at the Faculté," wrote Larbaud. "It departs from the routine, and one senses the novelty of comparing your subjects with those of other professors. The ignorance of the name of Nietzsche is Kolossal [sic]."<sup>28</sup> Marcel Drouin was a leftist philosophy student at the École Normale who ultimately blended an academic lifestyle with specifically literary pursuits. A student of Andler and friend of both Herr and Péguy, Drouin was lured into literature by Gide and, after writing for La Revue blanche and L'Ermitage under the name Michel Arnauld, would help to found with Gide the Nouvelle revue française in 1909. As an agrégé de philosophie (who ranked first), and perhaps upon Andler's encouragement, Drouin broke with accepted academic philosophical standards by taking Nietzsche seriously as a thinker, a problematic position he could only hold



successfully within the literary field.<sup>29</sup> Like Lasserre, Drouin became attached to the philosophy of Nietzsche through his travelling fellowship to Germany. During this period he divided his activities between literary criticism and teaching philosophy at the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly in Paris. Indeed, in many ways Drouin might be seen as a left-wing--though far less prolific--version of Pierre Lasserre, another agrégé de philosophie who broke with academic convention to apply the ideas of Nietzsche to royalist politics. One might also cite similarities between Drouin and the sociologist Georges Palante, who pursued much more seriously an academic career.

Certain representatives and sympathizers of official French socialism found attractive elements in the ideas and image of Nietzsche. Alexandre Bracke-Desrousseaux, the socialist deputy and Hellenist scholar, took time enough away from his classical texts to present a French translation of Human, All Too Human in 1898.<sup>30</sup> From this normalien milieu also hailed Félicien Challaye, who would not write his socialist interpretation of Nietzsche until 1930. Yet, like Andler, this agrégé de philosophie was no conventional socialist thinker. Bourgin described him in the negative but telling terms of a dilettante:

There was in him, perhaps proceeding from the same dilettantism, a search for extreme viewpoints, a taste for radical opinions and eccentric positions, and finally an infatuation with immoderate theories, which resulted in the most unforeseen, the most surprising sectarianism and fanaticism.<sup>31</sup>

Georges Palante, despite his rejection of the solidarism of Émile Durkheim and Léon Bourgeois, held political convictions that resembled those of Jaurès while

applying the ideas of Nietzsche to his own brand of socialism. In 1902 he noted with some reason that "Nietzsche [sic] proclaimed the true principle of all true socialism and all true democracy: the value and infinite prize of the person. Today, many socialists . . . agree on this point of view."<sup>32</sup>

One must be careful not to overestimate the actual penetration of Nietzschean ideas into the discourse of socialist intellectuals. For many socialists, the Dreyfus Affair prompted a re-examination of their position on the philosophy of Nietzsche; yet this reappraisal could not be effected without some consideration of the uses being made of the thinker by the French right. Remy de Gourmont, who had been quite welcome in royalist circles--observed in 1900 how the publication of the first Nietzsche translations coincided with the intellectual divisions of the Affair. According to Gourmont, who was a Dreyfusard despite his conservative links, the events of the past two years seemed to corroborate Nietzsche's notion of master and slave morality:

Reduced to what concerns Justice, it makes us understand the eternal antinomy between the slaves who speak of pity and the masters who speak of force. . . . [N]ever was this opposition more visible than in the evolution of the present affair. Instinctively and without examining the facts, some are arrayed on the side of sentiment, others on the side of force. . . . Some . . . would have said: it is my force which creates my justice; others: it is my justice which creates my force.<sup>33</sup>

The unstated element of this brief essay is the fact that the radical right had utilized recently just such a view of Nietzsche in support of their politico-literary project, an appropriation which perhaps made many Dreyfusards rethink the utility of the philosopher for their program. For Gourmont, a devoted advocate of the

philosopher, a fundamental choice had to be made despite his admiration: "I would separate myself here from Nietzsche, if I entered into philosophical discussion, and would permit pity and disdain to enter together into the house of the masters. One must either finish the vanquished or treat them with humanity."<sup>34</sup>

That Nietzsche was often associated with the anarchist Max Stirner would become a liability for the reputation of the author of Zarathustra among socialists after 1900. As discussed previously, the connection between these German philosophers had been established during the 1890s by the anarchist-leaning literary avant-garde, a cultural association rendered more plausible given the statements of others attesting to a fundamental influence of Stirner upon Nietzsche. According to the literary scholar Victor Basch, who criticized Nietzsche in both academic and political terms, the vogue for "individualisme anarchiste" had roots in the contemporary state of Europe: "one of the reasons for the vogue of the poet of the Overman was that it opposed itself violently to the great democratic and socialist current which seems necessary to carry away all contemporary humanity."<sup>35</sup> A socialist professor of German literature and an expert on Kantian philosophy, Basch refused to take Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher, and deplored the influence that he apparently exercised over contemporary youths, "our adolescents, in search of a conception of life, no longer searched for anything other than models of style and poetic motifs and not ferments of action."<sup>36</sup>

An explicit link between Nietzsche, Stirner, and Herbert Spencer was cited again by Eugène Fournière, a well-known and regular contributor to La Revue

socialiste. In his Essai sur l'individualisme (1901), Fournière agreed--as did many socialists--that the individual has a positive existence and should not be treated as an abstraction: "I completely support this point, even more so than Max Stirner and Nietzsche combined."<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, most individualist theories appeared to him as "more literary than philosophical" and could only be truly useful as "critical instruments." Stirner and Nietzsche functioned as rhetorical foils in Fournière's text, and could be invoked to illustrate the dangerous extremes to which unbridled individualism might lead. "[T]heir alleged 'individualism' is aristocratic and brutally makes the slavery of almost all the essential condition for the liberation of a few."<sup>38</sup> The "subversive [bouleverseur] par excellence which was Nietzsche" merited in Fournière's eyes a degree of "high philosophical value," mostly because the iconoclastic thinker forced socialists to clarify and reformulate their ideas. "He was, in short, a masterly instrument of critique, one of these subversives [bouleverseurs] of our old store of ideas who obliges us, after their passage, to restore all order, which is an excellent occasion for us to rid ourselves of [ideas] with no value." Nietzsche himself, Fournière suggested, could no longer be viewed as a threat after the intellectual spring-cleaning he had induced. "Peace therefore to the damned one who made such beneficial war on us," Fournière declared. Yet, consistent with most negative commentaries on the philosopher, the lion's share of scorn was reserved for the self-proclaimed disciples of the philosopher:

But pitiless war be on the imbeciles who take a critique for a rule, and on the rogues [coquins], these other imbeciles, who, basely, only see in the magnificent and revolting theory of the "overman" the justification of all their physical, intellectual, and moral laziness.<sup>39</sup>

In short, Nietzsche only posed a threat when he was taken seriously and applied as a "subversive" agent against the established social and intellectual order. As we have seen, disorder of all sorts was most imminent when Nietzsche and les nietzschéens united.

The conventional wisdom that associated Nietzsche with Stirner--and therefore with anarchism--would be repeatedly criticized from both within and outside the socialist party. The socialist normalien Albert Lévy, who was a student of Andler and Péguy's best friend at the École Normale, wrote a thèse d'état at the Sorbonne examining the extent to which one could reasonably cite connections between Nietzsche and Stirner. Like his teacher Andler, Lévy was an unconventional socialist who operated at the fringes of the party; yet like his friend Péguy, he eventually gravitated towards nationalism in 1914, a move which might be explained by his Alsatian origins.<sup>40</sup> Before a jury composed of Andler, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, and Émile Durkheim, Lévy argued successfully that in fact few real similarities could be correctly cited between the two thinkers, despite some superficial similarities. This conclusion was reached after the comparison and contrast of each thinker in each of their three stages of intellectual development, and supported by an extensive list of the books (reproduced in the appendix) that Nietzsche borrowed from the university library at Basel.<sup>41</sup> Despite such differences, Lévy declared nevertheless that the rapprochement of both Nietzschean and Stirnerian individualism could produce the new man necessary for innovative social formations.<sup>42</sup> Durkheim, who had always considered

Nietzsche a dangerous anarchist, appeared somewhat unconvinced by the distinctions drawn by Lévy, and asked whether the thought of Stirner was not merely continued through the philosophy of Zarathustra, if it was ultimately the very same thought under a different form.<sup>43</sup>

Significantly, the review of Lévy's book in La Revue de métaphysique et de morale a few months later attempted to reinstate the connection between Nietzsche and Stirner: "The question of the rapports between Stirner and Nietzsche is one of those that we are at first tempted to solve by a purely intuitive appreciation."<sup>44</sup> That is, the intimate association of the two thinkers in a cultural constellation was sufficiently embedded in the intellectual imagination as to appear self-evident, eliciting a virtually "intuitive" response by those participating in academic discourse. The attempt to dissolve the former interpretive paradigm linking Nietzsche to Stirner was nevertheless already underway in the literary field as early as 1900, when André Gide insightfully criticized those who would so quickly "judge one with the other in order better to englobe the two in a more facile reprobation or admiration."<sup>45</sup> Charles Andler would argue a similar point years later, and even Hubert Lagardelle, the syndicalist editor of Le Mouvement socialiste praised Lévy's clarification of the alleged Nietzsche-Stirner connection, which Basch had apparently ignored.<sup>46</sup> Because they need not rely exclusively on empirical evidence for support, cultural constellations retain their strength and appeal long after the stated links between thinkers have been shown to be superficial or even erroneous. In the case of Nietzsche, it was always easier to

invoke the link with Stirner if it served some rhetorical and social function.

### **The Apogee of Socialist Fascination with Nietzsche**

The worst readers are those who proceed like plundering soldiers: they pick up a few things they can use, soil and confuse the rest, and blaspheme the whole.

--Nietzsche<sup>47</sup>

The high point of official socialist fascination with Nietzsche took place between 1900 and 1902, after which links between the party and the philosopher were generally discouraged. As the writer Paul Léautaud observed in 1904, the walls of one socialist Université Populaire in Paris, formed in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair to educate the working classes, were adorned with the portraits of many contemporary culture heroes, including those of Wagner, Tolstoy, Littré, Comte, Zola, and even Nietzsche. The irony of certain of these portraits was not lost on Léautaud: "How many of those whose portraits are there would have been partisans of a U[niversité]. P[opulaire]., Carlyle, Wagner, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, Ibsen, Becque, perhaps?"<sup>48</sup> At the turn of the century, however, the topic of Nietzsche was not uncommon in certain academic circles. Charles Andler, we have seen, lectured on the philosopher at the Sorbonne, while the largely Dreyfusard École des Hautes Études Sociales featured Eugène de Roberty's three conférences on "Frédéric Nietzsche, sa morale, ses disciples" during its 1900-1901 academic year.<sup>49</sup> Despite these few positive accounts of the philosopher, others lectured on Nietzsche only as a means of discrediting his thought. A peripheral member of the Durkheimian school, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl lectured on Nietzsche at the

École Libre des Sciences Politiques during the 1905-06 academic year, and perhaps earlier; yet, in these presentations Lévy-Bruhl explicated Thus Spoke Zarathustra as an example of doctrinal pangermanism.<sup>50</sup> Finally, the Bergsonian philosopher Georges Dwelshauvers also lectured at the École des Hautes Études Sociales in 1908, only to conclude that the philosopher was essentially self-contradictory and, despite his pretensions to being Mediterranean, "essentially German."<sup>51</sup>

With so many references to Nietzsche in socialist discourse, one wonders if members of the working class had ever taken an interest in the philosopher. As Steven E. Aschheim has shown, evidence exists to suggest that the German working class had been familiar with the writings of Nietzsche. In 1897, for example, a survey conducted at a Leipzig workers' library concluded that the works of Nietzsche had been borrowed more often than those of Marx, Lasalle, or Bebel. A survey conducted in 1913 by Adolf Levenstein on Friedrich Nietzsche in the Judgment of the Working Classes revealed once again that many workers were acquainted with Nietzsche, and that many even found that his philosophy served a positive function.<sup>52</sup> From time to time French writers contemplated such a rapprochement between Nietzsche and the workers, and often appealed to the example of the German proletariat. "The works of Nietzsche have become almost popular in France. They have a considerable influence over young writers, over painters," marvelled Guillaume Apollinaire in 1910. "Nevertheless, his Zarathustra has not yet penetrated into the lodgings of the workers among us. I remember



seeing copies of it in the libraries of the most humble people, in Berlin, Munich and Cologne."<sup>53</sup> A writer for La Petite revue reported on Levenstein's recent survey of the reading interests of German workers: "Many have read Nietzsche, above all Thus Spoke Zarathustra. The greatest number [of these] exalt the philosopher."<sup>54</sup> Despite these events from across the Rhine, there is clearly no evidence to suggest that a parallel development had taken place among French workers. One might thus tentatively conclude that in France Nietzschean socialism was produced for and consumed by the socialist intellectual elite.

Socialist journalists made an effort to adopt Nietzsche for their political program despite the apparent lack of interest among the French working classes. Upon the death of the philosopher in 1900, a lengthy obituary was published in Alexandre Millerrand's socialist newspaper La Petite république, where the author Jean Méliá heralded the passing of the "most illustrious philosopher of contemporary Germany. . . . Frédéric Nietzsche had just died in Weimar."<sup>55</sup> Remembering Nietzsche as a silent friend of the socialist cause would necessitate employing a very selective memory. As a sign of the solidarity or even complicity of socialists with the European intelligentsia, Méliá stressed from the outset that "It is an international loss for artists and savants." Aside from the admission that "Nietzsche was, before all, antisocialist", most of this article may be read as an exercise in the appropriation of the philosopher for the socialist cause. The issue of anticlericalism, for example, was raised at one point in very clear terms:

If he attacked Christianity, if he said that the Christian faith entails the "sacrifice of all liberty, of all pride, of all independence of mind, at the

same time slavery, insult to oneself, mutilation of self", it is because, above all, he exalted life, the very struggle for life.<sup>56</sup>

"Moreover," he suggested in a blatant gesture of intellectual appropriation, "in the work of the German philosopher, we will find many ideas from which we could take our profit."

Mélia found in the writings of Nietzsche a number of ideas that could be wielded against the enemies of the socialists. First, he contended that the philosopher had been firmly set against nationalism when he called for the creation of the good European, a phenomenon which had a clear analogue in the socialist desire for a united and non-violent international working class, to which Jaurès himself appealed in the face of increasing militarism after 1910. This conception had been stressed for years by the most republican of Nietzsche's readers, including Henri Lichtenberger. In addition Mélia demonstrated that, despite the call for European unity which he professed, Nietzsche "profoundly loved our country" in particular:

Frédéric Nietzsche declared publicly: "Today France is still the refuge of the most intellectual and most refined culture there has ever been in Europe and remains the great school of taste."<sup>57</sup>

Clearly, Mélia was not above making such appeals to nationalistic fervor as a means of persuasion, the very strategies employed by those on the right who also wished to convince their readers to embrace the philosopher. Third, in an apparent about-face, Mélia contended that despite Nietzsche's virulent antisocialist rhetoric, he had in fact been a silent supporter of the socialist cause in his own country: "His recent death makes us think of that of Liebknecht, also recent. The

philosopher certainly had to applaud the struggle of the socialist against Bismarck. Both had, in effect, the same opinion of the iron chancellor."<sup>58</sup> Finally, Mélia demonstrated that Nietzsche was not anti-Semitic, a point obviously aimed at securing the sympathy of the large Jewish population among French socialism against the increasing claims to the contrary posited by many conservatives and radical rightists.

La Petite république was not the only socialist newspaper to note the passing of Nietzsche with hope of sharing in the philosopher's glory. In L'Écho de Paris the renowned socialist journalist Henri Fouquier deplored the relative silence attending the philosopher's recent death in the French press, and like Mélia presented an image of Nietzsche designed to render him more attractive to a liberal audience. The specter of the rightist Nietzsche, which haunted much of Fouquier's article, served as a straw man to be toppled by a purportedly more suitable reading. A "declared enemy of Christianity," Fouquier wrote, Nietzsche "was neither the man of faith nor the man of race, but 'a man of humanity.'"<sup>59</sup> Against these alleged misappropriations of the German, Fouquier advanced ever more forcefully his vision of Nietzsche as a radical republican by linking his philosophy to the positivist thought of Ernest Renan:

Renan estimates that, if humanity can be happy, it will be so by the triumph of the "divine", for which certain men of great science will be like priests. Nietzsche, who did not pronounce this word "divine", estimates that the happiness of humanity would will come from the appearance on earth of perfected men of the cult of beauty, at this point that the "overman"--that's his expression--will differ from today's men even more than our contemporaries differ from animals.<sup>60</sup>

In a remarkable leap of logic, Fouquier equated these two apparently opposed philosophical projects: "At heart, this is the same idea, the same faith in the indefinite progress of humanity."<sup>61</sup> The philosophy of Nietzsche received an important degree of official consecration in early-1902 when Parti socialiste chief Jean Jaurès delivered a series of lectures in Geneva entitled "La philosophie de Nietzsche et le socialisme." While the manuscripts for these lectures have not survived, a summary of each lecture was published in La petite république by a Swiss correspondent, Robert Haas.<sup>62</sup> That Jaurès, a normalien agrégé de philosophie, would make this connection suggests the extent to which the prestige of Nietzsche had spread beyond purely literary circles by 1902, and therefore highlights the potential profits that forging such an alliance could yield. No doubt familiar with his friend Andler's contention that Nietzsche could be harnessed for socialist ideology, it is evident that Jaurès integrated this perspective into his lectures.

Much of the three lectures presented an ambivalent interpretation of the philosopher, stressing a number of fundamental points of disagreement between Jaurès and Nietzsche, especially the belief in the tendency of the masses toward mediocrity. "Nietzsche, according to him," wrote the correspondent, "is neither an individualist or a socialist."<sup>63</sup> Following the Danish critic Georg Brandes:

Jaurès defined Nietzsche: Un révolutionnaire aristocrate. A revolutionary, in effect, since he overthrows the metaphysical and religious traditions, wanting neither to lead men back to the past forms, nor to maintain the current aristocracy, the aristocracy of money.<sup>64</sup>

Simultaneously, for Jaurès, Nietzsche predicted the coming of "a new aristocracy" that would appear after democracy had run its course. Perhaps invoking Nietzsche's own rejection of the ressentiment that marked slave morality, which he had associated with socialism, Jaurès stressed that "Jealousy, envy, is not revolutionary . . . on the contrary, it is a counter-revolutionary force."<sup>65</sup> Against such a negative view of the proletariat, Jaurès asserted that "We want . . . the force of the conscious individual, and it is all humanity which will be the surhomme."<sup>66</sup>

Jaurès' 1902 lectures clearly represented the apogee of the French socialist flirtation with the philosopher, for a broader socialist reaction against Nietzsche was imminent and already underway. Victor Basch's rejection of the philosopher on the grounds of republican education was already an early indication. In 1899 a writer for Le Mouvement socialiste, then still in its Dreyfusard stage, presented a review of the Pages choisies of Nietzsche which blasted the author from a socialist perspective. "Nietzsche [sic] does not like socialism, which prepares the triumph of the number, of the slaves over the insignificant class of free men," he wrote. After featuring several quotations attesting to this, the reviewer noted that, from a Nietzschean perspective:

The modern proletariat should be suppressed. What truly free man could enjoy life if his happiness had been linked to the misery of the humble masses? The "overman" of Nietzsche is a barbarian.<sup>67</sup>

The republican condemnation of Nietzsche effected by Alfred Fouillée was happily acknowledged by many socialists, one of whom remarked, a propos an essay of

Fouillée, that the "expansion of life culminates, with Nietzsche, in a scientifically absurd and morally inhuman individualism."<sup>68</sup> Yet, as we will see, in time opinions at Le Mouvement socialiste on both official socialism and the philosophy of Nietzsche would change as the review shifted towards the extreme left.

The essays of the young socialist writer Paul-Louis Garnier clearly expressed the anti-individualist tendency within official socialism, which for him consisted in demonstrating "here and there our antipathy for the reactionary individualism of Stirner and Nietzsche."<sup>69</sup> Writing in La Revue socialiste in April 1902, Garnier presented a review essay of the recently published Origine de la tragédie, which he prefaced with a denunciation of the author. Like many enemies of Nietzsche, Garnier stressed the connection between the life and writings of the philosopher: "it is necessary to say in effect that his concepts result immediately from his health."<sup>70</sup>

His egoism and severity are proof of the overabundance of his inner energy. No one dreams of considering him a logician or finally a philosopher. He is, we repeat, a man who has come to us from the future; his existence and his thought are prodigious and illegitimate."<sup>71</sup>

While Garnier's opponents went unnamed, it seems likely that he was reacting to the emerging conservative conceptions of the philosopher, especially those propagated by Lasserre and the Action Française. Ironically, both sides of the Dreyfus debate considered the other to be preaching a dangerous individualism:

The individualist mind considered in its blemishes, the friend of authority, of the unlimited expansion of being, carries in itself a pride which leads to a nearly burlesque attitude before things. It personifies wonderfully the anthropocentric conception of which [Ernst] Haeckel

speaks in the Discourse on Monism [sic].<sup>72</sup>

Invoking the contemporary idea of the collective force over the individual popularized by Durkheim as well as the Lamarckian notion of the milieu, Garnier noted that "individualism conditions the morality of the surhumain."

Willingly misrecognizing the influence that les milieux exercise on him, thinking to remove himself from the determinism that a period of history, a caste, a constitution [complexion] weighs upon him, the disciple of Nietzsche carries through life, with the audacity of a conqueror, the illusion that he has retrieved his primitive essence.<sup>73</sup>

Characteristic of discourse on the philosopher, the rejection of Nietzsche always entailed the social aspect of a rejection of the always-unnamed nietzschéens.

Aside from the efforts of Andler to sustain a socialist interpretation of Nietzsche, most official socialists would continue to renounce the philosopher after 1902. A 1911 survey of Nietzsche's influence in French intellectual life united mainstream socialist and mainstream literary opinion on the German. Here such prominent socialists as Léon Bazalgette, Henri Genet, and Albert Thomas explicitly denied the influence of Nietzsche on their intellectual formation.<sup>74</sup> Thomas, a noted socialist politician, even explained his drift from Nietzsche by reference to his intellectual maturity as a socialist:

In the past I read Zarathustra with a very lively joy. Since then I have been a socialist and have been indignant over the absolute contradiction that certain [people] want to establish between socialism and the passionate moral thought of Nietzsche. My friend and teacher Charles Andler has offered to establish all that a socialist civilization can borrow from Nietzsche. I await his book with impatience.<sup>75</sup>

Such would be the position of a number of socialists who had outgrown Nietzsche:

an icon of the young and the dispossessed, a socialist apparently could only with difficulty assert Nietzschean ideas from positions of true power or intellectual maturity. Andler, who was critical of official socialism, remained a notable exception to this trend, as he was to a number of intellectual trends during this period. Andler's monumental study of the philosopher would not appear in its complete form until after the war.

**Anti-Intellectualism of the Left:  
Nietzsche and the Socialist Avant-Garde**

Socialism is a moral question, in the sense that it brings to the world a new manner of judging all human acts, or, following a famous expression of Nietzsche, a new evaluation of all values.

--Georges Sorel<sup>78</sup>

The left-liberal political and intellectual alliance that had ushered the Dreyfusards into political power in 1902 would by mid-decade begin to unravel in significant ways. The ministry of Georges Clemenceau, which reigned from 1906 to 1909 and promised a number of significant social reforms, was marked by a series of often violent confrontations between the government and organized labor which were the worst examples of social unrest since the Paris Commune. The official socialist party itself witnessed a split between Jean Jaurès and his longtime rival Jules Guesde, who in 1904 rallied his supporters at the Second International to pull the party from the collaboration with the Radicals to become united in a single non-collaborationist body. Meanwhile, the Confédération Générale du Travail began rallying for an eight-hour day, and declared that on May 1, 1906 the



syndicalists would take through direct action what was rightfully theirs.<sup>77</sup>

The rehabilitation of Alfred Dreyfus in July 1906 marked, for all intents and purposes, the end of the Affair as well as a fundamental shift in radical socialist thought in France. The significance of the Dreyfusard electoral victory of 1902 that signalled the cooperation of radicals and socialists would be greatly diminished by the elections of 1906. The protest of the royalists against the rehabilitation of Dreyfus had some serious repercussions on the left, where revolutionaries picked up the battle cry against the republic. Many writers associated with Le Mouvement socialiste, which had formerly embraced Dreyfusism, by 1906 rejected the opportunism and even betrayal of their erstwhile colleagues, a capitulation to the bourgeois order constituting a betrayal of the revolution. Much like the royalists of the Action Française, the social characteristics of the Dreyfusards were criticized throughout this intellectual debate. In fact, this rejection of les intellectuels quickly became translated into an anti-Semitism, with the many Jewish representatives of official socialism depicted--despite their revolutionary rhetoric--as subtle collaborators with the state capitalism. Official socialism was therefore consistently identified as inherently Semitic, a charge traditionally made by the radical right.<sup>78</sup>

Paul Mazgaj has observed that the increasing intellectual prestige of revolutionary syndicalism around 1906 was made possible by its apparently avant-garde qualities, which contemptuously challenged official socialism and the Third Republic generally.<sup>79</sup> I would take this further by stressing that the theorists of revolutionary syndicalism constituted an avant-garde in reality as well as in

appearance, and that this social condition played a significant role not only in their ideological formulations, but in the subsequent appropriation of Nietzsche. The revolt against les intellectuels of party socialism by their more marginal counterparts was conducted on the same terms and with the degree of hostility often manifested by the literary avant-garde against the literary establishment. The anti-intellectual socialists possessed many of the social traits of other avant-gardes: younger and/or less integrated into mainstream socialism, they condemned their elders for compromising with the bourgeois order, a gesture recalling and even reproducing the tension between "pure" and "mercenary" art so often articulated on the literary field. In terms of cultural politics, then, it would be most propitious to wage war upon one's enemies by reference to the cultural goods they most rejected. That the radical left and right arrived at a concurrence around 1906 becomes even more understandable: similarly dominated intellectuals with a common enemy could find, for a time, some common ground in their mutual subordination.

In many ways Georges Sorel and other theoreticians of revolutionary syndicalism perceived and depicted themselves as the avant-garde of socialist thought, and therefore activated similar distinctive strategies vis-à-vis official socialism as their literary counterparts had with the literary establishment. Louis Pinto has noted that, unlike the anti-intellectualists of the literary world, the hostility of radical socialists sprang from a common feeling of being menaced in their very existence by more established groups. In their eyes, the Sorbonne and Parlement

represented the cold machinery of a system which denied those who occupied unstable and unorthodox positions in the intellectual world.<sup>80</sup> As culturally (and often economically) dominated thinkers within the field of socialist thought, radical socialists opposed themselves to the mercenary socialism of Jaurès and other leftist intellectuels. "[D]reyfusisme," explained Charles Péguy, "which used to be a system of absolute liberty, of absolute truth, of absolute justice, and of a profound spiritual order, has become under the name of combisme and jaouessisme [sic] a system of constraint and raison d'État, a system of political lie, a system of favor, of oppression, of iniquity; also a system of corruption; and a system of fraud and a system of turpitude."<sup>81</sup> After his active involvement with the revisionist cause, Daniel Halévy also became disenchanted with the activities of the official socialists. "Blum, Herr, [and] the Five were capitalists in their manner, aspiring capitalists," Halévy charged years later. Significantly, the capitalism of these socialists was not economic, but social: their capitalism was "Not of money, but (what is worse) of men. Their ambition was to govern the socialized multitudes."<sup>82</sup>

The syndicalist and royalist Georges Valois perceptively described the pretensions to purity that Dreyfusard socialists demonstrated in their hypocritical denunciation of money: "The writer and the pedagogue do not know real life. They both live outside of real life: that's why they have deprecated money in our mind."

The writer wants to be a hero; he wants to present himself as a disinterested man. . . . he is paid by the present and by a future that he will not know in his short human life. It is thus that, profiting only partly from this payment, he likes best to say that there is no payment at all for him.<sup>83</sup>

Such claims to intellectual and doctrinal purity were nevertheless designed to command allegiance among socialists, thus constituting a heteronomy that only further produced and provoked the rebels. "The chiefs of the party," Sorel declared, "dread nothing as much as independent thinkers whose words are not susceptible to being explicated, like those of the official enemies of the faction, by hatred, bad faith or interest."<sup>84</sup> The syndicalist Édouard Berth also criticized the pretensions to political purity demonstrated by official socialists: "the intellectuals are wrong to despise the merchants: they are no less 'merchants' themselves; and the political bohemia is no less 'bourgeoise' than the literary, artistic, or anarchist bohemia, despite the disdain in which all these bohemias have always held 'the bourgeois.'"<sup>85</sup>

That the anti-intellectual socialists defined themselves as a political avant-garde becomes evident when considering the different organs through which they disseminated their ideas. Christophe Prochasson has rightfully stressed the marginal social status of those involved with the anti-intellectualist socialism.<sup>86</sup> Unlike the official socialists, who depended upon the mass-circulated newspaper as "an effective instrument of education and combat,"<sup>87</sup> radical socialists eschewed this means of intervention as vulgar. As Sorel himself noted, "Newspapers make journalism" while "les revues make culture."<sup>88</sup> This assertion of cultural distinction also functioned as a defense mechanism against the very real economic straits in which the avant-garde socialist reviews found themselves after 1898. Péguy for one believed that the proliferation of socialist newspapers

discouraged people from buying books, and ultimately hurt business in his bookstore.<sup>89</sup> The growing dissatisfaction with the activities of the Dreyfusards resulted in the appearance after 1900 of a new network of radical leftist reviews committed to the struggle against official socialism. Hubert Lagardelle's Le Mouvement socialiste, which had been sympathetic to the revisionist cause at its inception in 1899 became increasingly anti-intellectual after 1902, as did Péguy's militant Cahiers de la Quinzaine.

Hubert Lagardelle's Mouvement socialiste, which was launched in 1899 with the blessing of Jaurès, experienced significant financial crises after its split with the socialist party that were exacerbated by the defection of some notable collaborators to L'Humanité and Le Petite république. Robert Louzon's explosively anti-Semitic essay "La Faillite du dreyfusisme ou le triomphe du parti Juif," which appeared in 1906, increased the number of boycotts against the review, thus compounding an already uncertain financial condition.<sup>90</sup> This increased marginalization, which was largely due to the efforts of the Dreyfusards, surely drove the collaborators on this review even further from traditional leftist politics.

That the Dreyfus Affair had served as an important catalyst for the new socialist reviews was stressed by Hubert Lagardelle. As an event it tended to "unchain latent conflicts and precipitate crises. They are the developing forces of historical movement. Such has been the Dreyfus Affair."<sup>91</sup> By 1902 Lagardelle had detached himself from this unified socialist camp, however, to conclude bitterly that "socialism has decomposed in France, upon contact with democracy."<sup>92</sup> Like

Sorel, Lagardelle claimed that the new socialism would be effected on moral grounds: "The working class carries within it the new economic man and the new moral man."<sup>93</sup> This rupture between Lagardelle and official socialism partly explains the increasing interest in Nietzsche at Le Mouvement socialiste. In 1909, for example, Lagardelle featured an essay written by the German Ernst Gystrow (alias Willy Helpach), who had been instrumental in interpreting Nietzsche as a socialist at the turn of the century.<sup>94</sup> Commenting upon the recent French translation of Ecce Homo, Gystrow argued that Nietzsche should be read neither as a romantic, a capitalist, nor as a nationalist. Rather, Gystrow concluded that socialists should recognize that "Nietzsche was one of our own."<sup>95</sup> If the philosopher had so adamantly opposed socialism, it was only because of the "inferior form of socialism" that he had known during his lifetime.

He had been our prophet without knowing it. He announced in advance that we should seek out a work and research force, to learn that the value of humanity is in man himself and that all effort on high has an aristocratic sense. This idea is eternal, it is a power which can neither perish nor brutalize.<sup>96</sup>

Gystrow's observations on Nietzsche and socialism surely struck a chord with many socialists who had become dissatisfied with orthodox party politics. Indeed, Gystrow had revealed how socialism in the past had been marked by dogma, a fact which surely had its analogue in France. Even before Gystrow had published his essay in Le Mouvement socialiste, non-Durkheimian sociologists such as Georges Palante and Eugène de Roberty commented approvingly on their German counterpart's rapprochement of Nietzsche and socialism. This conciliation of

"nietzschéisme and socialism" was, in the eyes of Palante, a just assessment of the philosopher's work: "Today, many socialists, following the remark of M. Gystrow, draw together around this point of view."<sup>97</sup>

It is important to note that Daniel Halévy's La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche appeared during this period of syndicalist fascination with Nietzsche. Indeed, the often-cited chapter on "Le Travail de Zarathustra" appeared in Péguy's Cahiers de la Quinzaine in 1909. The association between Halévy's political sympathies and the philosophy of Nietzsche did not go unnoticed by commentators. The mainstream socialist Georges Guy-Grand denounced Halévy's biography which, "without profession or affectation of nietzschéisme," appeared nonetheless "more pathetic than a novel."<sup>98</sup> As mentioned earlier, Halévy's biography contributed significantly to the prestige of Nietzsche in socialist circles. It is evident that this new breed of socialist wanted nothing to do with the pacifism and humanitarianism of Jaurès and other official socialists. "The Gods are dead, long live the Overman!" declared one unnamed and self-proclaimed "Nietzschean socialist" in 1908. "Nietzsche announces the imminent return of the ideal, but an entirely different and new ideal. To understand this ideal there must be a category of free spirits, strengthened by war, solitude, and danger."<sup>99</sup>

Some anti-intellectual socialists, in an attempt to flee the orthodoxy of the Parti Socialiste, became involved in a movement known as vitalism, which was partly inspired by the celebrity of Henri Bergson. In many cases, socialist vitalism did not entail a socialist rapprochement with Nietzsche. Charles Péguy, who clearly

preferred Bergson, rarely cited the German philosopher in his writings.<sup>100</sup> The trend towards socialist vitalism--which was expressed at such reviews as Pages libres and L'Effort--included in its constellation of cultural influences Romain Rolland, Walt Whitman, and sometimes Nietzsche, the last two being an intellectual combination of the 1890s revived for a new purpose. In 1908 the socialist Pierre Nicholas made a direct link between the American poet and the German thinker by his simple statement "Whitman, surhomme."<sup>101</sup> Despite this general dissatisfaction with official socialism, the Nietzschean presence could be felt less strongly in certain circles. Jean-Richard Bloch, who had launched the review L'Effort as an organ of vitalist socialism, remained skeptical of the true socialist potential in the philosopher's thought. Bloch described his misgivings in a 1911 letter to Romain Rolland after rereading The Birth of Tragedy: "[W]hile I have never admitted [Nietzsche's] ideas other than as the fragmentary thoughts of a marvelously gifted artist, I have never been as sensitive to the arbitrariness which dominates his conception of the purely aesthetic world." Is this aesthetic, a world where eight out of ten men live in Gehenna, in physical suffering, material insufficiency, intellectual poverty, moral misery? Where hatred and envy are systematically cultivated by the arbitrary inequality of condition between men? . . . Nietzsche has forgotten to hear the concert of lamentations raised by slaves subjected to hard labor from Byzantium to the pillars of Hercules.<sup>102</sup>

Because Bloch's L'Effort stood somewhat on the margins of anti-intellectual socialism, such reservations regarding Nietzsche are understandable.

### **On Sorel and the Sorelians: Nietzsche and Revolutionary Syndicalism**

According to Zeev Sternhell, most of the theoreticians of syndicalism,



especially Sorel, Berth, Pouget, and Pelloutier, fell under the spell of Nietzschean philosophy after the turn of the century.<sup>103</sup> In 1909 Alfred Fouillée wrote that the "Zarathustras", individualists, and other heretics at the fin de siècle posed a significant but necessary threat to the authority of orthodox socialism in France.<sup>104</sup>

A serious bone of contention among scholars studying the political philosopher Georges Sorel concerns the extent of Nietzsche's influence upon his writings, a disagreement rendered all the more frustrating by the fact that Sorel himself rarely cited the German. This lack of explicit reference has compelled those who uphold the notion of influence to adopt fairly impressionistic arguments in support of their case.<sup>105</sup> Comparisons and contrasts may be drawn between the reception of Nietzsche among royalists and syndicalists: on the one hand, as in the case of Charles Maurras, Sorel's students gladly embraced Nietzsche even though their teacher rarely mentioned him; yet, unlike Maurras, Sorel never actually discouraged the reading of the German philosopher. No doubt this tolerance on the part of Sorel partly explains the continuing loyalty of his disciples, while royalists such as Lasserre and Valois soon broke with Maurras over this and related issues.

For years Sorel operated at the peripheries of French political and philosophical life. A regular participant in the Société Française de Philosophie, Sorel would have several articles published in the Revue de métaphysique et de morale as well as in the more radical socialist journals, including Le Mouvement

social. Despite these occasional forays into the academic philosophical establishment, Sorel took great pride in his autonomy, and wrote in 1908 that "I am neither a professor, nor a vulgarisateur, nor an aspiring party chief; I am an autodidact who presents to a few persons the notebooks which have served his own instruction. This is why les règles de l'art have never much interested me."<sup>106</sup> Indeed, these "few persons" who congregated at Péguy's bookshop generally referred to Sorel, who frequented the establishment, as "the Master."

Whether Sorel directly imbibed the philosophy of Nietzsche and reproduced it in his own writings is certainly a moot point. Rather than trying to determine Sorel's view of Nietzsche, it is more illuminating to note how Sorel's contemporaries perceived the relationship between the two thinkers. That is, viewing Nietzsche in terms of his symbolic value on the intellectual field affords a greater insight into why so many have asserted the connection in the first place. For those leftists already favorably disposed to both Nietzsche and Sorel, linking the two amounted to a veritable increase in prestige. In the opinion of Georges Valois, who served as mediator between syndicalism and royalism, Sorel was nothing less than the "French Nietzsche."<sup>107</sup> The royalist Pierre Lasserre also argued for the significant role of Nietzschean thought in the work of Sorel: "the biographer who would have followed Sorel into the boutique when, on some fine day of his curious youth, he discovered and bought the works of Marx, would still not have finished his rounds. He should have followed him into that [shop] where he likewise discovered and bought Nietzsche."<sup>108</sup> "Without a doubt," Édouard

Berth attested, "like everyone, Sorel had read Nietzsche."<sup>109</sup>

It is doubtless that Sorel had ample opportunity to think about the ideas of Nietzsche in a socialist context, even though ultimately he rarely invoked the German in his own writings. Like many other social thinkers, Sorel agreed in 1897 that "the authority of Nietzsche is pretty weak in social science." After 1898 this view of the philosopher would change as Sorel moved away from the Dreyfusard position he had initially adopted. "Evidently," he would conclude, "Nietzsche should take his place at the side of the most eminent thinkers produced by the West."<sup>110</sup> Such a re-evaluation would have only been encouraged by the friends and acquaintances of Sorel, especially Daniel Halévy, whom he had met at the École Normale in 1899. Indeed, a 1907 letter to Halévy comprised the preface to the final published version of Réflexions sur la violence.<sup>111</sup> In addition, when Halévy's biography of Nietzsche appeared Sorel wrote to Croce that "I believe that this book merits, in effect, a serious examination", and asked if Croce would review it in his journal La Critica.<sup>112</sup> In addition, Sorel's two particularly devoted disciples, Édouard Berth and Georges Valois, drew explicitly upon Nietzsche in their own work.

It is also significant that Sorel had known Charles Andler since 1897, and for some time after met with him to discuss the many contradictions in orthodox Marxism as well as the new revisionist ideas "in the air." At one point Sorel wrote enthusiastically to Croce: "When [Antonio] Labriola sees Andler's large volume, he will open his eyes wide and realize that the decomposition of Marxism is a very real

fact."<sup>113</sup> In fact, Andler was working at the time on a study to be entitled "La décomposition du marxisme", which was never published. Apparently inspired by the notion, in 1902 Sorel borrowed the title for one of his own works.<sup>114</sup> "Of all socialists," Shlomo Sand notes, "Andler earned the greatest intellectual respect from Sorel, who appreciated his rigorous approach to the texts of Marx."<sup>115</sup> As Sorel himself claimed, "M. Andler is the man most familiar with socialist theories in France."<sup>116</sup> Thus, despite the precious few direct references made to the philosopher in the work of Sorel, it is clear that the theorist of syndicalism moved in intellectual circles permeated by the ideas of Nietzsche.

A brief look at the ideas of Sorel suggests the importation of Nietzschean thought into the political program of revolutionary syndicalism. The vision of the proletariat as a creative and autonomous avant-garde, to which many syndicalist theorists subscribed, is especially clear in Sorel's Réflexions sur la violence, and it is not surprising that several commentators have cited the similarities between Nietzsche and the Frenchman. Above all other qualities, Sorel emphasized that this new form of socialism had to be composed of artistically creative individuals who, exalting the "individuality of the life of the producer," must "consider art as an anticipation of the highest and technically most perfect forms of production."<sup>117</sup> That is, the new proletariat would possess the same qualities as the theorists who would nourish their minds: both would assert their artistic capacities for free expression against the base materialism of the bourgeoisie. These artist-producers had to strive continually to "surpass everything that has been done before"<sup>118</sup> in

search of ever new creations: "the artist dislikes reproducing accepted types," Sorel declared in quasi-Tardean terms. "The inventor is an artist who wears himself out in pursuing the realization of ends which practical people generally declare absurd."<sup>119</sup>

Sorel believed that the moral regeneration of society had to be achieved through the actions initiated by an avant-garde proletariat through protracted and violent class warfare. What was called for was a "proletarian violence which escapes all valuation",<sup>120</sup> that is, an action which would transcend all conventional morality. As Sorel asserted:

[The] moral progress of the proletariat is as necessary as material improvement in machinery. . . . In its insatiable desire for reality, [the proletariat] tries to arrive at the real roots of this process of moral perfection and desires to know how to create to-day the ethic of the producers of the future.<sup>121</sup>

Under the guidance of the revolutionary syndicalists--which constituted a clear intellectual avant-garde--the proletariat would seek through class warfare both the heroic and the glorious. According to Sorel, the proletariat would separate itself from the other parts of society and, "regarding itself as the great motive power of history,"<sup>122</sup> would concentrate on combat and the creation of new institutions. Conscious of its own nobility, Sorel explained, and of the "glory which will be attached to its historical role and of the heroism of its militant attitude. . . [the proletariat] longs for the final contest in which it will give proof of the whole measure of its valor."<sup>123</sup> Loosely put, this entire scheme appears to have been an attempt to attribute to the proletariat the lofty and heroic qualities of Nietzsche's

caste of masters. For example, was not Sorel in Les Illusions du progrès comparing the middle class to the proletariat when he stated that a "class of clerks' cannot construct its ideology on the same model as that of a 'class of masters'?"<sup>124</sup> One of Sorel's early critics, Georges Guy-Grand, was quick to indicate this apparent connection with the German: "The virtues that Nietzsche assigns to the Overman, M. Sorel desires for the proletariat."<sup>125</sup>

Sorel noted in the capitalist type strong similarities with the warrior type, especially in their common "conquering, insatiable, and pitiless spirit";<sup>126</sup> yet Sorel lamented that this strong capitalist ethic was really only practiced in the United States.<sup>127</sup> In fact, Sorel saw this vital capitalism found in the United States to be a prime example of Nietzsche's conception of the masters:

I believe that if the professor of philology had not been continually cropping up in Nietzsche he would have perceived that the master type still exists under our own eyes, and that it is this type which, at the present time, has created the extraordinary greatness of the United States.<sup>128</sup>

Sorel observed in Europe at the turn of the century, on the contrary, a middle class which, "led astray by the chatter of the preachers of ethics and sociology" had returned to "an ideal of conservative mediocrity"<sup>129</sup> by reforming itself economically and socially. "We are today faced with a new and very unforeseen fact", Sorel declared: "a middle class which seeks to weaken its own strength."<sup>130</sup> In addition, the middle class upheld the value of democracy, which both Sorel and Nietzsche despised as a gross form of mediocrity. "What is called by the pejorative term mediocrity in this study", Sorel explained in Les Illusions du progrès, "is what

the political writers call democracy."<sup>131</sup>

Sorel was certainly aware of the services to which the ideas of Nietzsche had been pressed, including the efforts of official socialists to appropriate the philosopher for their own programs. Sorel learned of Jaurès' Geneva lectures in Jean Bourdeau's Maîtres de la pensée contemporaine, and noted in the Réflexions:

The author [Bourdeau] informs us on the other hand that 'Jaurès greatly astonished the people of Geneva by revealing to them that the hero of Nietzsche, the superman, was nothing else but the proletariat' (p. 139). I have not been able to get any information about this lecture of Jaurès; let us hope that he will someday publish it, for our amusement.<sup>132</sup>

As we have seen, Bourdeau misquoted Jaurès. Indeed, Sorel saw Jaurès and the Parti socialiste, despite their revolutionary rhetoric, as mere bourgeois sympathizers whose humanitarianism and pacifism sapped the capacity for creative energy of both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, thus postponing or even preventing the outbreak of Marx's cataclysmic class war. As such, although he rarely afforded Nietzsche credit directly, Sorel articulated in his own works a philosophy of revolutionary violence to be effected by a creative and individualistic proletariat, arguably composed of Nietzschean overmen.

If one is nevertheless unable to cite a direct relationship between Nietzsche and Sorel, the disciples of the latter and other revolutionary syndicalists were eager to acknowledge the importance of the German for their radical socialism. The republican Georges Guy-Grand wrote that "the New Socialist School plainly admits the fundamental principle of Nietzsche, which is also that of Marx and Proudhon:

there is no force above force."<sup>133</sup> Jean-Baptiste Séverac, a syndicalist from Montpellier who would become the editorial secretary for Le Mouvement socialiste, provided an excellent example of an alternative academic position on the philosophy of Nietzsche. One of the first to write a thesis on the philosopher, Nietzsche et Socrate, Séverac defended him against those who were too quick to point out the paradoxes in his thought: "Certainly, to make of Nietzsche an amateur of paradoxes, coldly resolved to surprise at all cost by the audacity or ingenuity of his ideas, would be profoundly unjust and would risk, being prejudiced against his philosophy, falsifying the interpretation of it." Above all, the philosopher was no mere dilettante bent on producing a reaction: "The patient search for the paradoxical idea destined to give the reader pause does not accord with the profound sincerity of Nietzsche."<sup>134</sup> For Séverac the third period of Nietzsche's intellectual development was also his "most fruitful."

This is the epoch where Nietzsche elaborates and exposes his own philosophy. He is voluntaristic, as he was as a disciple of Schopenhauer, but [also] optimistic. He violently criticizes traditional morality, in which he sees, under the forms given by modern philosophy and Christianity, a nerve-wracking discipline, appropriate only to inferior classes of a humanity in decadence.<sup>135</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that in late-1909 Séverac would offer unqualified praise for Halévy's biography of Nietzsche: "One feels that he [Halévy] knows the existence of Nietzsche in all its details. . . . The result is that the Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche is a fine book [and] at the same time, a true book."<sup>136</sup>

Not unlike the literary establishment, the socialist establishment viewed the ideological and intellectual experiments of its avant-garde as excessive and



flamboyant. The Durkheimian sociologist Célestin Bouglé deplored on one occasion that syndicalists like Sorel, Lagardelle, Berth, and Séverac--all of whom another critic had called "gourmets of theory"--could cite in addition to Marx and Proudhon the questionable ideas of Nietzsche, Hegel, "and above all of Bergson."<sup>137</sup> All of these intellectual constellations were for Bouglé only "constructions of intellectualism. . . . an ideal of intellectuals, of people who believe in the superiority of theoretical man, like Nietzsche said."<sup>138</sup>

While official socialists might criticize with some justification the lofty detachment of these revolutionary syndicalist theories, these critics were no doubt aware that the ideas of Nietzsche had some fairly concrete results in the sphere of radical political action. Standard for republicans and socialists alike was the condemnation of individualism, which was traditionally equated with anarchism and egoism in French culture. While this charge was often levelled against the aesthetic reveries of the avant-garde, one could also point to the more politically militant anarchists grouped around the journal L'Anarchie between 1905 and 1914. Initiated and abetted by an obscure orator and street-fighter named Albert Libertad, this group of individualist anarchists drew heavily upon the ideas of Stirner, Sorel, Proudhon and Felix Le Dantec as well as Nietzsche to provide an intellectual rationale for the street brawls they sparked and in which they participated around Montmartre.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, some militant anarchists--such as Paraf-Javal--rejected the pure individualism advocated by Libertad and supported by the ideas of Nietzsche and Stirner.<sup>140</sup> No doubt the existence of such radical groups--which

were generally denounced by mainstream anarchists such as Jean Grave--offered concrete confirmation to republicans and official socialists alike of the morally destructive potential of all individualist ideas.<sup>141</sup> In such cases these staunch opponents of Nietzsche could correctly charge his devotees with being deviant and criminal, an accusation they would simplistically apply to all of his enthusiasts.

**Conclusion:  
From Nietzschean Socialism to National Socialism?**

It is perhaps no coincidence that the brief association of the revolutionary syndicalists with the philosophy of Nietzsche seemed to rise and fall with Sorel's interest in the movement. Indeed, by 1907 or so Sorel had become dissatisfied with the apparently unheroic qualities of the syndicalists who, rather than bringing about the promised general strike, entered into ignoble compromises with the bourgeois state much like their official socialist enemies. In 1908 Sorel officially broke with Lagardelle's Mouvement socialiste, which had been declining for several years due partly to the editor's apparently casual attitude towards the operation of the review. Édouard Berth, Sorel's friend and disciple, broke his own ties with Lagardelle the following year.<sup>142</sup> Thus began Sorel's flirtation with the radical right, whereupon he contributed articles to the primary organs of the royalist movement, including l'action française and La Revue critique des idées et des livres.<sup>143</sup>

Thus rapprochement between the radical left and right resulted in what has been considered the first truly fascist intellectual organization in France, the Cercle Proudhon. Founded in December 1911 by the royalist Georges Valois and the revolutionary syndicalist Édouard Berth, the Cercle Proudhon was given the

blessings of Charles Maurras. In addition were counted the syndicalist Marius Riquier from the Terre Libre team, and five more "social" Maurrasians--Henri Lagrange, Gilbert Maire, René de Marans, André Pascalon, and Albert Vincent.<sup>144</sup> Of these founding members Valois would go on to espouse fascism after the War, while Berth would become a communist. In their declaration, the members of the Cercle would claim that "democracy is the greatest error of the past century."

As Zeev Sternhell has observed, the convergence of Sorelian and Maurrasian ideas in the Cercle Proudhon was no fortuitous phenomenon, but the result of two very similar conceptions of politics and historical forces. Both groups represented the radical fringe of the left and right which, despite their apparently opposed ideologies, shared the exact same enemies in the Third Republic, an important common denominator that could permit for a time the union of such dominated groups.<sup>145</sup> It would also become obvious that, in addition to the avowed penchant for Bergson and, obviously, Proudhon, this group represented the convergence of the two most opposed versions of Nietzsche produced by the Action Française and the revolutionary syndicalists.

### Notes

1. Parts of this chapter appeared in Christopher E. Forth, "Nietzsche, Sorel, and French Nietzschean Socialism" E.C. Barksdale Lectures 1991-92 (12), 3-34.

2. Jean-Richard Bloch, Destin du siècle (Paris: Éditions Rieder, 1931), 262.

3. Madéleine Rebérioux, "Avant-garde esthétique et avant-garde politique: le socialisme français entre 1890 et 1914" in Esthétique et marxisme (Paris: Union générale d'Éditions, 1974), 30-31.

4. Robert J. Smith, The École Normale Supérieure and the Third Republic (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 63-64.

5. Ronald Hayman, Sartre: A Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 71.

6. R.C. Grogin, The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900-1914 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1988), 114-115.

7. Saint-Antoine, "Chroniques: Échos de L'Ermitage" L'Ermitage mai 1895 (10), 319. L'Ermitage changed its general political outlook after Henri Mazel stepped down as editor in 1896, after which the review would become dominated by André Gide's circle of left-leaning but resolutely non-committed young writers.

8. Émile Zola, quoted in Anna Boschetti, The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and Les Temps Modernes Richard C. McCleary, trans. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 15.

9. Charles Andler, Vie de Lucien Herr (1864-1926) (Paris: Rieder, 1932), 188.

10. Cf. Ernest Tonnelat, Charles Andler, sa vie et son oeuvre (Paris: Société d'édition, 1937), 48-55. Charles Andler's essays for Entretiens politiques et littéraires included: Théodore Randal, "Conte pour le premier mai" EPL mai 1891 (2), 163-172; "L'Encycle" EPL juillet 1891 (3), 26-31; "Figarisme et socialisme" EPL février 1892 (4), 74-79; "Dépopulation et révolution sociale" EPL mars 1892 (4), 208-214; "Le livre libérateur" EPL septembre 1892 (5), 117-128; "Si Kropotkine voulait" EPL décembre 1892 (5), 259-263. Translations included Max Stirner, "Apologie du mensonge" EPL novembre 1892 (5), 201-204.

11. Cf. Charles Andler, "La fin du 'Capital' de Karl Marx," La Revue blanche 1895 (8), 450-454.

12. Hubert Bourgin, De Jaurès à Léon Blum (Paris: Fayard, 1938), 133-134.

13. Charles Péguy, L'Argent suite (originally published in the ninth cahier of the fourteenth series of Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 22 avril 1913), in Oeuvres en prose de Charles Péguy, 1909-1914 (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 1174.

14. Christophe Charle, Les Professeurs de la faculté de lettres de Paris: dictionnaire biographique, 1809-1908 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1985), 17.

15. Charles Andler, "Le Premier système de Nietzsche ou la philosophie de l'illusion" Revue de métaphysique et de morale janvier 1909 (17), 52-86.

16. Andler, quoted in Tonnelat, 105.

17. Charles Andler, "Nietzsche et Jacob Burckhardt: leur philosophie de l'histoire" Revue de synthèse historique octobre 1907 (15), 121-149.

18. Tonnelat, 113.

19. Charles Andler, "Discussions: Réponse à M. Fouillée" Notes critiques avril 1903 (4), 100.

20. Charles Péguy, L'Argent suite (originally published in the ninth cahier of the fourteenth series of Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, 22 avril 1913), in Oeuvres en prose de Charles Péguy, 1909-1914 (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 1174.

21. Charles Andler quoted in Bianquis, 95.

22. Charles Andler, "Les opinions sociales de Nietzsche" La Revue du mois 10 novembre 1910 (10), 530.

23. Christophe Charle, "Avant-garde intellectuelle et avant-garde politique, les normaliens et le socialisme (1867-1914)" in Madeleine Rebérioux and Gilles Candar, eds., Jaurès et les intellectuels (Paris: Éditions ouvrières, forthcoming).

24. For a discussion of these Germanists, cf. Michel Espagne, Le Paradigme de l'étranger: Les Chaires de littérature étrangère au XIXe siècle (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 225-238.

25. Daniel Halévy, Péguy et les Cahiers de la Quinzaine (Paris: Grasset, 1941), 44.

26. Léon Blum, cited in Joel Colton, Léon Blum: Humanist in Politics (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 16. See also Gilbert Ziebura, Léon Blum et Le Parti Socialiste, 1872-1934 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1967), 16-19.

27. Daniel Halévy, Péguy et les Cahiers de la Quinzaine (Paris: Grasset, 1941), 74.

28. Christophe Charle, "Introduction" Correspondance entre Charles Andler et Lucien Herr, 25; Valéry Larbaud to Marcel Ray, 24 février 1908, Correspondance, 1899-1909 (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 248-249.

29. Anna Boschetti, "Légitimité littéraire et stratégies éditoriales" in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds. Histoire de l'édition française: le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 499.

30. Cf. Alexandre M. Desrousseaux, trans. Fables de Babrius (Paris: Hachette, 1890), Les Poèmes de Bacchylide de Céos (Paris: Hachette, 1898), Morceaux choisies de Lucien (Paris: Hachette, 1899). See also A.M. Desrousseaux and Max Egger, trans. Jugement sur Lysias par Denys d'Halicarnasse (Paris: Hachette, 1890); Michel Onfray, Georges Palante: essai sur un nietzschéen de gauche (Romillé: Editions Folle Avoine, 1990), 64-65.

31. Bourgin, 378.

32. Georges Palante, Précis de sociologie (Paris: Alcan, 1902), 182.

33. Remy de Gourmont, "Nietzsche et l'affaire" in Épilogues, 1899-1901 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1915), 91, 92. This essay first appeared in the October 1900 issue of Mercure de France.

34. Ibid., 92.

35. Victor Basch, L'Individualisme anarchiste: Max Stirner new edition (Paris: Alcan, 1928), iv.

36. Ibid., ix.

37. Eugène Fournière, Essai sur l'individualisme (Paris: Alcan, 1901), 78.

38. Ibid., 132.

39. Ibid., 81.

40. Jean-François Sirinelli, Génération intellectuelle: khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-guerres (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 348-350.

41. Albert Lévy, Nietzsche et Stirner (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, 1904).

42. Michel Espagne, "Lecteurs juifs de Nietzsche en France autour de 1900" in Dominique Bourel and Jacques Le Rider, eds., De Sils-Maria à Jérusalem: Les intellectuels juifs et Nietzsche (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), 238-240.

43. Cf. "Thèses de doctorat," Revue de métaphysique et de morale mai 1904 (12), supplément, 23-24.

44. Anonymous, review of Albert Lévy, Stirner et Nietzsche, Revue de métaphysique et de morale septembre 1904 (12), supplément, 6. The published thesis was dedicated "A Monsieur Lucien Herr, Témoignage de reconnaissance affectueuse."

45. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle: De Stirner et de l'individualisme" L'Ermitage janvier 1900 (20), 61.

46. Hubert Lagardelle, "Notes bibliographiques: les livres" Le Mouvement socialiste 15 mars 1905 (15), 415.

47. Nietzsche, Human, All Too Human 137.

48. Paul Léautaud, 15 juin 1904, Journal littéraire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1956), I: 133. On the université populaire movement see George Weisz, The Emergence of Modern Universities in France, 1863-1914 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 311-314.

49. Cf. "École des Hautes Études Sociales: Programme des cours" Cahiers de la Quinzaine (premier cahier de la deuxième série, 1900), 36.

50. Pierre Rain, L'École Libre des Sciences Politiques (Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1963), 47; Stéphane Sarkany, Paul Morand et le cosmopolitisme littéraire (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1968), 24.

51. Georges Dwelshauvers, "La Philosophie de Nietzsche" Revue hebdomadaire des cours et conférences 4 mars 1909 (17), 780.

52. Steven E. Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 168-169.

53. Guillaume Apollinaire, Oeuvres en prose complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), II: 1165. This statement is from Apollinaire's review of Daniel Halévy's La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, Paris-Journal 24 janvier 1910.

54. Paul Lévy, quoted in "Revue: Les ouvriers allemands qui lisent Nietzsche" Les Marges octobre 1913 (12), 197-198.

55. Jean Mélia, "Frédéric Nietzsche et le socialisme" La Petite république 30 août 1900.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Nestor [Henri Fouquier], "Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Echo de Paris 30 août 1900, 1.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. These lectures were delivered between 18-22 February 1902, in the concert room of Victoria Hall, Geneva. Cf. Robert Haas, "Jaurès à Genève" La petite république 21 février 1902.

63. Robert Haas, "Jaurès à Genève" La petite république 23 février 1902.

64. Ibid.

65. Robert Haas, "Jaurès à Genève" La petite république 26 février 1902.

66. Ibid.

67. Em. Tharaud, review of the Pages choisies of Nietzsche, Le Mouvement socialiste 1 juin 1899 (1), 637-638.

68. Les Rédacteurs, "Le Mouvement artistique: la philosophie: Nietzsche et Guyau" Le Mouvement socialiste 11 janvier 1902 (7), 95.

69. Paul-Louis Garnier, "Le Préjugé philosophique" Le Mouvement socialiste 22 mars 1902 (7), 572.

70. The editorial board of La Revue socialiste consisted of several socialist deputies who proved staunch opponents of the thought of Nietzsche, notably Gustave Rouanet (director) and Eugène Fournière. In addition, the practitioner of the roman exotique Louis Bertrand was a socialist member of the Belgian parliament.

71. Paul-Louis Garnier, "Revue des livres: L'Origine de la Tragédie, par Frédéric Nietzsche [sic]" La Revue socialiste avril 1902 (35), 496.

72. Paul-Louis Garnier, "Réflexions sur Nietzsche" L'Ermitage mai 1902 (24), 335.

73. Ibid.



74. Léon Bazalette, Henri Genet, and Albert Thomas, contributions to Jean Viollis, "Enquête sur l'influence de Nietzsche" La Grande revue novembre 1910 (64).

75. Albert Thomas, contribution to Viollis, 126; Prochasson, 122-129.

76. Georges Sorel, "Préface" to Merlino, Formes et essences du socialisme.

77. Paul Mazgaj, The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 62-65.

78. Simone Fraisse, "L'Antidreyfusisme de gauche entre 1906 et 1910" in Géraldi Leroy, ed., Les Écrivains et l'Affaire Dreyfus (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983), 113-117.

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80. Louis Pinto, "La Vocation de l'universel: La formation de la représentation de l'intellectuel vers 1900" Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales novembre 1984 (55), 28-29.

81. Charles Péguy, L'Argent suite in Oeuvre en prose complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1992 [1913]), III: 943.

82. Halévy, Péguy, 90.

83. Valois, 105, 106.

84. Georges Sorel, "Préface" Méfais des intellectuels by Édouard Berth (Paris: Rivière, 1926 [1914]), iii.

85. Édouard Berth, Les Méfaits des intellectuels (Paris: Rivière, 1926), 168.

86. Christophe Prochasson, Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre, 1900-1938 (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 35.

87. Jean Jaurès, quoted in Christophe Prochasson, "Revue et mouvement ouvrier 'fin-de-siècle'" CFDT-Aujourd'hui 1991 (100), 11.

88. Georges Sorel, quoted in *ibid.*

89. Wolf Lepenies, Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 66.

90. Marion de Flers, "Le Mouvement socialiste (1899-1914)" Cahiers Georges Sorel 1987 (5), 52, 54, 60-61, 65.

91. Hubert Lagardelle, "Le Socialisme et l'Affaire Dreyfus" Le Mouvement socialiste 15 février 1899 (1), 155.

92. Hubert Lagardelle, "Action de parti et action de classe" Le Mouvement socialiste 15 février 1905 (15), 284.

93. Hubert Lagardelle, "Les Intellectuels devant le socialisme" Pages libres 9 février 1901 (1), 118.

94. R. Hinton Thomas, Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918 (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1983), 28-30; Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 172.

95. E[rnst]. Gystrow, "Nietzsche et son temps" Le Mouvement socialiste octobre 1909, 204.

96. Ibid., 205.

97. Georges Palante, Précis de sociologie (Paris: Alcan, 1921 [1902]), 182.

98. Georges Guy-Grand, La Philosophie syndicaliste (Paris: Grasset, 1911), 196.

99. Quoted in Henri de Lubac, S.J., Le Drame de l'humanisme athée (Paris: Éditions Spes, 1965 [1943]), 337n.

100. Interestingly, as with Lucien Herr, the biography of this socialist was written by an admirer of Nietzsche who noted the "rapports between the solitude of Péguy and that of Nietzsche." Halévy, Péguy, 144.

101. Pierre Nicolas, "Walt Whitman (1819-1892)" Pages libres 11 juillet 1908 (16), 40.

102. Jean-Richard Bloch to Romain Rolland, August 7, 1911, Cahiers Romain Rolland: Deux hommes se rencontrent (Paris: Albin Michel, 1964), 67-68.

103. Zeev Sternhell, La droite révolutionnaire, 347; Sternhell, Ni droite ni gauche, 70, 88, 95.

104. Alfred Fouillée, Le socialisme et la sociologie réformiste (Paris: Alcan, 1909), 52-53.

105. See Fernand Rossignol, La pensée de Georges Sorel (Paris: Bordas, 1948), 52-53; Georges Goriely, Le pluralisme dramatique de Georges Sorel (Paris: Rivière, 1962), 54-55; Shlomo Sand, L'illusion du politique (Paris: La découverte, 1984), 261, note 3; James H. Meisel, The Genesis of Georges Sorel (Ann Arbor,

Michigan: George Wahr Publishing Co., 1951), 13-14; John L. Stanley, The Sociology of Virtue: The Political and Social Theories of George Sorel (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 53-54, 244-245, 247; John L. Stanley, ed., From Georges Sorel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 3-5, 214; and H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930 (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), 171-172. See Jack J. Roth, The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980); Richard Humphrey, Georges Sorel: Prophet Without Honor (New York: Octagon Books, 1957), 38-39, 218-19; Irving Louis Horowitz, Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 32, 34, 200. See Reino Virtanen, "Nietzsche and the Action Française: Nietzsche's Significance for French Rightist Thought" Journal of the History of Ideas April 1950 (2), 201; Pierre Lasserre, "Georges Sorel, théoricien de l'impérialisme" Revue des deux mondes 1927 (41), 453, 459; Georges Guy-Grand, La philosophie syndicaliste (Paris: Grasset, 1911), 81, 83; Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (Paris: Alcan, 1929), 83-84; Eric Hollingsworth Deudon, Nietzsche en France (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 21; E.H. Carr, "Sorel: Philosopher of Syndicalism" in Studies in Revolution (New York: University Library, 1964), 154, 156-57; F.F. Ridley, Revolutionary Syndicalism in France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 199, 243; and Zeev Sternhell, Ni droite ni gauche (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1983), 70, 88, 95.

106. Georges Sorel, "Introduction aux 'Réflexions sur la Violence'" Pages libres 9 mai 1908 (15), 522.

107. Georges Valois, quoted in Jack J. Roth, The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 88.

108. Pierre Lasserre, "Georges Sorel, théoricien de l'impérialisme" Revue des deux mondes 1 septembre 1927, 152.

109. Édouard Berth, Du "Capital" aux "Réflexions sur la Violence" (Paris: Rivière, 1932), 178-179n.

110. Georges Sorel, quoted in Shlomo Sand, L'illusion du politique: Georges Sorel et le débat intellectuel 1900 (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1985), 260-261n.

111. Alain Silvera, Daniel Halévy and His Times (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 197; Sorel, Reflections, 31-65.

112. Sorel, "Lettere di Georges Sorel a B. Croce" La Critica 26 (20 maggio 1928), 191-192. This letter was originally dated 23 novembre 1908.

113. Sorel quoted in Sand, L'illusion du politique, 140.

114. Sorel, La décomposition du marxisme (Paris: Rivière, 1907).
115. Sand, 140.
116. Sorel quoted in Sand, 255.
117. Sorel, Reflections on Violence, 269, 271.
118. Ibid., 270.
119. Ibid., 271.
120. Ibid., 96.
121. Ibid., 250.
122. Ibid., 189.
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124. Georges Sorel, The Illusions of Progress, 39.
125. Georges Guy-Grand, La Philosophie syndicaliste (Paris: Grasset, 1911), 83.
126. Sorel, Reflections, 103.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid., 258.
129. Ibid., 103.
130. Ibid., 106.
131. Sorel, Illusions, 185.
132. Sorel, Réflexions sur la violence, 359, n. 2.
133. Guy-Grand, La Philosophie syndicaliste, 81.
134. Jean-Baptiste Séverac, Nietzsche et Socrate (Paris: Cornély, 1906), 66.
135. Ibid., 45-46.
136. J.-B. Séverac, review of Daniel Halévy, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche in Le Mouvement socialiste novembre-décembre 1909 (26), 396.

137. Célestin Bouglé, "Syndicalistes et bergsoniens" Revue du mois 10 avril 1909 (7), 405.

138. Ibid., 408-409.

139. Aside from the fact that he came from Bordeaux, little is known about the anarchist named Albert Libertad. Cf. Victor Méric, Les Bandits tragiques (Paris: Simon Kra, 1926), 95.

140. Ibid., 100.

141. Louis Patsouras, "Jean Grave: French Intellectual and Anarchist, 1854-1939" Ph.D dissertation, Ohio State University, 1966, 91-94.

142. De Flers, 66-67.

143. Cf. Georges Sorel, "Modernisme dans la religion et dans le socialisme" Revue critique des idées et des livres 10 août 1908 (2), 177-204.

144. Sternhell, La droite révolutionnaire, 391n.

145. Zeev Sternhell, "Georges Sorel, le syndicalisme révolutionnaire et la droite radicale au début du siècle" in Jacques Julliard and Shlomo Sand, eds. Georges Sorel et son temps (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 84, 94-96.

**PART FOUR:**  
**THE TWILIGHT OF AN IDOL**

Later, when the young soul, tortured by all kinds of disappointments, finally turns suspiciously against itself, still hot and wild, even in its suspicion and pangs of conscience--how wroth it is with itself now! how it tears itself to pieces, impatiently! how it takes revenge for its long self-delusion, just as if it had been a deliberate blindness! In this transition one punishes oneself with mistrust against one's own feelings; one tortures one's own enthusiasm with doubts; indeed, one experiences even a good conscience as a danger, as if it were a way of wrapping oneself in veils and the exhaustion of subtler honesty--and above all one takes sides, takes sides on principle, against "youth."--Ten years later one comprehends that all this, too--was still youth.

--Friedrich Nietzsche  
Beyond Good and Evil

**CHAPTER EIGHT:**  
**IMMORALISM AND THE MATURITY OF THE AVANT-GARDE:**  
**FROM THE MERCURE DE FRANCE TO THE NOUVELLE REVUE FRANÇAISE**

While the symbolist aesthetic never went entirely unchallenged during the 1890s, at the very least it represented an organizing principle for a number of young writers of the avant-garde who chose to identify with it. Concurrently, by virtue of the large number of writers who espoused this style, symbolism also came to represent an avant-garde establishment seeking to name the dominant mode of dominated literature at the same time that it challenged the institutionalized literature of the Académie Française. Yet, with the recognition that many had achieved during the 1890s, the symbolists themselves had long been on the road to the very consecration which would render them ineffective as a true avant-garde. That is, as the established mode of avant-garde literature, symbolism could be attacked more easily by young writers seeking to enter the field; hence the efforts of Halévy and Le Banquet in 1892, and the more successful disruptions of Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér and the naturists in 1897, and Maurras, Moréas, and the École romane after 1898.

The demise of symbolism was hastened by a number of factors, not least of which revolved around the deaths or marginalization of the aesthetic's key representatives. Verlaine, for example, died in 1896, with Mallarmé, Rodenbach, and Gustave Moreau to follow two years later. Huysmans, who converted to Catholicism in 1894, had already left the Parisian literary scene. Remy de Gourmont, who had been totally disfigured by lupus in 1891, lived a relatively

solitary existence, as did Marcel Schwob, who underwent a series of unsuccessful operations in 1895. Finally, Camille Mauclair left Paris for Marseille at the end of the century due to a chronic chest ailment.<sup>1</sup> This lack of personnel permitted aesthetic oppositional forces to cause more damage in their attacks on the dying movement, a situation that was only aggravated by the closing of Lugné-Poë's symbolist Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in 1899. With the shift away from literary cosmopolitanism, the renaissance of a national and classical literature partly inspired by the Dreyfus Affair, and the decade-long drive towards political commitment in avant-garde literature left symbolism effectively dead by the turn of the century. Naturalism, whose elegy the symbolists thought they had read in 1891, would prove to outlive its young would-be assassins.

Of the former editors of Le Banquet and contributors to La Revue blanche, which merged with La Revue after 1902, only Daniel Halévy, continued his series of essays on Nietzsche, which he published in the Revue de Paris and in his primary review, Charles Péguy's Cahiers de la Quinzaine, where he was joined by his longtime colleague Robert Dreyfus. Finally, after the collapse of L'Ermitage in 1908, André Gide and his small circle of Nietzsche enthusiasts (Marcel Drouin and Henri Ghéon) formed La Nouvelle revue française with Jacques Copeau and Jean Schlumberger in 1909. Indeed, after 1909 only Halévy and the NRF group would pose any leftist literary challenge to the right-wing Nietzsche produced by Lasserre, Gautier, and Valois--a challenge concurrent with the broader literary differences between the two warring camps.



The demise of symbolism after 1898 gave way to a massive literary reaction against romanticism in all its forms in the name of a return to classicism. Yet despite this reaction against symbolism, few writers could agree on any central aesthetic which could serve as a unifying principle. Rather, perhaps following the example of the symbolists years earlier, many writers came to believe that the way to enter the literary field was through aesthetic revolution: to effect a rupture with the past of the field as a legitimate means of attaining recognition. Hence did manifestos proliferate for Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier's "naturisme" (1897), Fernand Gregh's "humanisme" (1902), Jules Romain's "unan  misme" (1903), etc. One by one the literary reviews of the previous decade dropped away, leaving by 1908 the Mercur   de France as the sole central organizing periodical of the avant-garde. As the symbolist years faded even farther into the past, young writers would compete to supplant this central literary position by appealing to the entire new literary generation as a whole. The competition between these for the hearts of the young divided the non-royalist avant-garde in the years before World War I.

An effective literary organ for this shift towards the classical was Eug  ne Montfort's review Les Marges, which was formed in late-1903. A founding member of Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier's naturist school in 1897, Montfort remained faithful to the anti-idealist tenets of naturism. Indeed, he and his collaborators at Les Marges shared the growing avant-garde disdain for romanticism, "a grave malady which has infected French literature."<sup>2</sup> In addition, conforming to the mold of the literary avant-garde, Montfort launched a bitter campaign against the literary

establishment that was forming, especially the Académie Goncourt, which constituted a new means of literary consecration. Despite the youth of its key members and their adamant insistence on originality, the naturalist school represented less the cutting-edge of young literature than a somewhat reactionary rejuvenation of the naturalism of Zola, who was generally idolized by these writers. In the widespread reaction against romanticism--and its literary descendant, symbolism--the naturalists rejoiced in the demise of their aesthetic enemy: "Symbolism," argued Maurice Le Blond, "for which the only reason to exist was to oppose itself to the aesthetic of M. Zola . . . has ended its career."<sup>3</sup>

Founded in 1903 with money from the estate of Edmond de Goncourt, the Académie Goncourt was established to provide ten hommes de lettres with an annual rent of six thousand (reduced later to three thousand) francs to free them from servile labor: "We want to liberate our academicians from the labors of functionaries or from base works of journalism."<sup>4</sup> Closed to politicians, grands seigneurs, and members of the Académie Française, the first ten members clearly represented an older generation of literature drawn from Parnassians, naturalists, and other representatives from the larger literary market.<sup>5</sup> As a new institution of literary consecration, the Académie sponsored in 1903 an annual prize of five thousand francs for the "best work of imagination" of the year, of which the "novel . . . will always have preference."<sup>6</sup> Despite the alleged lack of bias of the awards committee, only rarely was a writer from the avant-garde named a laureate of the Prix. In fact between 1903 and 1913, only two prizes went to books published by

les petites revues; the remaining winners hailed from the larger publishing houses.<sup>7</sup> Thus very closely associated with the broad literary market, the Prix Goncourt served to improve significantly the sales of its laureates' works before World War I, and would continue to function as a means of symbolic and economic consecration in the years to follow.

This new state of the literary field would have significant implications for the reputation of Nietzsche within French letters. This chapter will show how, amidst the scramble for literary allegiances in the wake of the collapse of symbolism, the reputation of Nietzsche underwent two diametrically opposed transformations corresponding to two very different audiences. On the one hand, the ideas of Nietzsche became detached from the purity of the avant-garde as the Mercure de France moved closer to the literary mainstream, resulting in the appropriation of Nietzschean themes by writers for the general literary market and the bourgeois theatre of the Boulevard. Concurrently, the group of young writers that revolved around André Gide persisted in a stubbornly avant-gardist reading of the philosopher that would soon become transported to their grand literary enterprise in 1909, La Nouvelle revue française.

### **On the Flies of the Marketplace: The Maturity of the Mercure de France**

Confronted with the theatre, this mass art par excellence, I feel that profound scorn at the bottom of my soul which every artist today feels. Success in the theatre--with that one drops in my respect forever; failure--I prick up my ears and begin to respect.

--Nietzsche<sup>8</sup>

As the various petites revues of the 1890s dropped out of existence after the turn of the century, the Mercure de France nevertheless prospered and endured. The longevity of the Mercure was largely due to the success of its publishing house, which produced some of the most important literature of the fin de siècle and functioned as the locus of avant-garde literary activity for over a decade. Yet as early as 1895 the Mercure had gradually moved towards l'édition courante, taking the review farther from its central position in avant-garde literature and leaving behind a space to be filled readily by new entrants to the field, notably the young writers of the Nouvelle revue française.<sup>9</sup> As a prominent representative of the older symbolist avant-garde in the process of achieving consecration, several long-time collaborators found themselves in the uncomfortable and truly novel position of defending their project against other young writers, for whom the expansion of the Mercure into the commercial sphere was tantamount to a distasteful compromise--not only with bourgeois literature, but with the bourgeois social order itself.

After the turn of the century the Mercure de France became gradually integrated into the literary establishment, thus tarnishing its hitherto unchallenged reputation as the flagship of the literary avant-garde. To say that the public image of Nietzsche was transformed along with that of the Mercure would not overstate the case. One might suggest that this consecration was completed by late-1902, when the collected works of Nietzsche won the Académie Française's Prix Langlois, which carried a monetary award of 1,200 francs for Henri Albert.<sup>10</sup> The

editors of the Mercure would soon exploit this symbolic capital in order to boost the sales of the collected works: in 1905, for example, it featured a full-page advertisement for the "Oeuvres complètes de Frédéric Nietzsche," a work which had been "crowned by the Académie Française" and "honored by a subscription of the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique."<sup>11</sup> That these representatives of the literary and academic establishment would consecrate the Nietzsche translation project--and that the Mercure would so proudly wear these signs of consecration--suggests the changing image of the philosopher in the literary field as well as the maturation of the former avant-garde: moving from the fringes of the literary field to the center, these fellow-travellers entered into somewhat of a compromise with the very order they had so vociferously contested a decade earlier. Indeed, the Nietzsche translation project emerged as having been a good very financial risk, with sales of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, which had gone through several editions, allegedly nearing 20,000 copies by 1914.<sup>12</sup> In a 1908 advertisement featured in Vers et prose, the Mercure described its own evolution towards the consecrated avant-garde: "The Mercure de France occupies a unique place in the French press: it has the characteristics of both a review and a newspaper. Almost exclusively literary at the beginning, it has considerably enlarged its domain."<sup>13</sup> That is, a staunch opponent of commercial art during its avant-garde youth, the Mercure eagerly moved closer towards the general literary market, in the process rendering the ideas of Nietzsche more acceptable to mainstream tastes. This progression accords with Bourdieu's statements on the life-cycle of avant-garde

groups: a period of ascetic renunciation and steady accumulation of symbolic capital is generally followed by the exploitation of symbolic profits, assuring thereafter temporal profits but a loss of prestige.<sup>14</sup>

The Mercure de France, which had been eclectic during the 1890s seemed to have become after 1900 susceptible to a variety of avant-garde opinions, sometimes from the left but more noticeably from the right. While Henri Albert nevertheless continued his vigilance in the field of German literature and Nietzsche interpretation, his effective influence in this latter realm had dramatically diminished as newer contributors like Jules de Gaultier, Georges Palante, and Georges Batault began writing regularly for the review. It may be concluded that the central position of Albert in Nietzsche interpretation was undermined both from without and from within.

After 1902 the vogue for Nietzsche in other sectors of the literary field had become established and resisted by conservatives and socialists alike, and by 1905 the question of the philosopher's influence in French letters became a fairly standard question in a well-known literary survey conducted that year. Those conducting the survey, Georges Le Cardonnell and Charles Vellay, spoke with André Gide, Henri Ghéon, Charles-Louis Philippe, Charles Morice, Jules de Gaultier, and Édouard Ducoté about the role of Nietzsche in French letters. Indeed, with the publication of Gide's novel L'Immoraliste and Fouillée's critical Nietzsche et l'immoralisme in 1902, immoralism became very much à la mode in Paris. Republican professors warned of the dangers of immoralism, the spread of which

they hoped to check through the restoration of republican civic values. Conservative writers likewise warned of the moral turpitude that seemed inherent in the writings of the German as well as those of his champions. As one might predict, the more the academic and literary establishment denigrated the German philosopher, the more popular he would become among those seeking to subvert the intellectual establishment. In 1905, for example, Guillaume Apollinaire launched the short-lived La Revue immoraliste in apparent homage to the new literary fashion.<sup>15</sup> Alfred Jarry, who had learned of Nietzsche in 1889 through his lycée professor Benjamin Boudon, incorporated some clearly Nietzschean themes into his "Pataphysics" and in such works as Ubu roi and especially Le Surmâle.<sup>16</sup> "I find his [Nietzsche's] influence good, without sharing his doctrine," wrote the former symbolist Charles Morice. "Perhaps in terms of literature he is the principle of a beneficial reaction against the tearfulness [éploration] of the Russian novel."<sup>17</sup> And as André Salmon remembered, "Nietzschéisme, largely esteemed and manifested around 1900, could really render the Nietzscheans gay when it had only rendered the solitary Nietzsche mad."<sup>18</sup>

Much to the chagrin of the avant-garde, however, Nietzsche had never been a total stranger to the literate French middle classes. As the table above illustrates, after 1898 the number of studies published in French on Nietzsche rivalled those devoted to such figures as Kant and Comte, both of whom enjoyed considerable intellectual prestige during the pre-War years. Jules de Gaultier, for example, had introduced the philosopher to readers of the popular magazine L'Illustration, who

soon learned how this "admirable genius" had rendered "a constant and magnificent homage to French culture."<sup>19</sup> Since 1896 the Paris-Parisien, a veritable handbook for snobisme, had counselled its readers to "know how to speak of Nietzsche [sic], Ibsen, Darwin, and go to mass."<sup>20</sup> Camille Mauclair remembered with amusement a literary salon held by Robert and Madame de Bonnières during the 1890s, where the hostess boastfully announced to one of her company, "with a superior air: 'I am translating Nietzsche, my dear. He is a philosopher whose genius is going to subvert everything.'"

There was a clamor of admiration, and someone hazarded: 'Ah! truly! And what is his theory?'--I can tell you nothing about it if not this: 'he denies the phenomenon!' This surprising woman and her husband, ruined, disappeared later from the world where they had shone, and perished tragically. I judge myself today very puerile for having hated them. . . . When I studied Nietzsche, I was never able to imagine without mad laughter what joyous translation had been given to us there: and the 'he denies the phenomenon', which nearly made me drop with amazement [avait failli me faire choir de stupeur], has remained for me the emblem of amateurs intruded into letters.<sup>21</sup>

The art world, considered as a world apart, was not to be safely traversed by the uninitiated. In particular, the works of Nietzsche--as the product and property of that other world--could never be fully comprehended by outsiders. Such insight required the intervention of the consecrated few, the cultural aristocracy who also served as the literary clergy of pure art administering to the faithful. Thus the apparent humor with which Mauclair treats such dilettantism and snobbism thinly conceals the persistent cultural aristocratism of the world to which he belonged.

Despite the disdainful chuckling of this small elite, the embourgeoisement of Nietzsche was a process set in motion by the very avant-garde enterprise of



translation that Camille Mauclair had privileged. By propagating the works of Nietzsche and providing for the greatest dissemination of his writings in translation, the avant-garde contributed to the very commercialization it had originally vowed to resist. As the Mercur de France shifted further away from the pole of pure art, the cultural goods it produced soon lost the very rarity for which they had been prized. The banalization of Nietzsche was part of this process whereby the auratic quality of his ideas became dispersed through reproduction and consumption. Henri Lichtenberger, the literature professor who hoped to "humanize" the philosopher, "to show us a much more neighborly Nietzsche [beaucoup plus voisin de nous], less abnormal than he seemed at first,"<sup>22</sup> also contributed to this banalization process by publishing his essays in the most fashionable middle-class reviews of the day. Indeed, the academic respectability that Lichtenberger conferred upon Nietzsche could hardly be approximated by his more literary counterparts. By 1903 L'illustration informed its fashion-conscious readers that Nietzscheism was the morality à la mode.<sup>23</sup> The widely-read Revue encyclopédique had carried essays on the philosopher since the early-1890s, ensuring that its general readership was kept abreast of recent developments in Nietzsche news, albeit from a distinctly right-wing standpoint. Moreover, as Émilien Carassus has suggested, popular studies like Lasserre's La Morale de Nietzsche (1902) and Halévy's La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche (1908) brought the ideas of the German--though in a less simplistic manner--to an even wider audience favorably disposed to the latest intellectual fashions.<sup>24</sup> The activities of all these writers--in

conjunction with the availability of Nietzsche in translation--helped create and sustain a penchant for Nietzsche among the haute-bourgeoisie after 1900.

By 1902 the control of the Mercure de France over interpretations of Nietzsche had clearly diminished as the ideas of the philosopher became appropriated either by the radical right, the emerging post-symbolist avant-garde, or by the general literary market. This latter phenomenon, it turned out, would prove most offensive to the writers of the Mercure. There had always been disagreement regarding the social qualities of those who should legitimately read the works of Nietzsche. Julien Benda, for example, once mentioned "our mondains, who today understand couramment Nietzsche and Ibsen."<sup>25</sup> The availability of Nietzsche to a wider reading public after 1898 inevitably entailed a degree of vulgarization and commercialization. That the beloved object of the avant-garde could be so readily appropriated by the sphere of commercial literature was virtually inconceivable to the faithful. As early as 1897 Remy de Gourmont expressed his misgivings about the pseudo-Nietzscheans of the literary world: "Nietzsche has without a doubt a responsibility in the madness of quasi-childlike [quasi-impubère] writers, little pathological overhumans."<sup>26</sup> Yet, such inappropriate appropriation illustrates the tensions between the purism of avant-garde production and the reality of the avant-garde publisher--always much closer to the sphere of "vulgar" commerce than its cultural products, the publishing house of the Mercure de France had created what, from the perspective of pure art, was a commercial monster released into the world of the bourgeoisie.

In 1904 the socialist literary critic Abel Hermant wrote in the influential newspaper Figaro of the latest and most hateful literary fashion sweeping Paris, "the Nietzsche of the salons." In an apparent response to Faguet's recently published and very popular book En lisant Nietzsche, Hermant asked his readers:

What is the good of reading Nietzsche, if it is proper that les nietzschéens are necessarily indifferent patriots, cosmopolitans, cynical anarchists, and that indifferent patriots, cosmopolitans, [and] cynical anarchists are necessarily nietzschéens?<sup>27</sup>

Hermant was correctly citing a vogue within polite French society for the ideas of the philosopher which did not require a comprehensive understanding of his work. Academic philosophers, always ready to condemn the fashion-consciousness of aesthetes and snobs, negatively cited the Nietzsche vogue repeatedly throughout the pre-War years. During a 1904 lecture series Gustave Belot of the Lycée Louis Le Grand noted that Nietzsche was "l'immoraliste à la mode" whose individualism, along with that of Stirner, was bound to "end in individual anomie and social anarchy." In a 1909 article for La Revue de métaphysique et de morale Louis Weber, stressing the need for social morality, noted sadly that "the grandsons of our egalitarians of 1848 infatuate themselves with the hyper-aristocratic ideal of Nietzsche. The Ueberschensch is à la mode." And Abel Rey, agrégé de philosophie, articulated virtually the same discourse in his 1911 book on La Philosophie moderne: for him both Nietzsche and Stirner were nothing but "intellectual anarchists."<sup>28</sup>

"But really," wrote Marcel Proust to Anna de Noailles in a rather hypocritical attack on snobbism, "it seems that all those who have been too superhuman, who

have committed the crime of Prometheus or Nebuchadnezzar (sp?), should finish by eating l'herbe like Nietzsche."<sup>29</sup>

The increasing popularity of Nietzsche in French letters resulted in the typical condemnations of conservative critics, but also prompted the outcry of the avant-garde, whose members were outraged by the misuse and commercialization of the philosopher. From an avant-garde perspective, that Nietzsche could be the topic of conspicuous discussion in bourgeois literary salons was an unfortunate but ultimately tolerable (and perhaps inevitable) result of the dissemination of his name. Indeed, the existence of such clearly unqualified commentators marked ever more clearly the distinction between artists and snobs, serving to heighten the prestige of the former. Yet the transformation of this harmless prattle into material works of literature would provoke the outcry of the avant-garde: after 1902, the middle-class consumer of conspicuous cultural goods could choose from several novels and stage-plays featuring identifiably Nietzschean heroes and heroines. Among the helpful hints provided for society elites in the Paris-Parisien--the high society handbook which, among other things, suggested that one "cut the books of those authors who dine with you"--recommended cultivating a familiarity with the works of Nietzsche.<sup>30</sup> The philosopher, the product of an avant-garde whose very raison d'être was to reject the material profits of bourgeois culture, was now dragged from the artistic purity of avant-garde anonymity to the base world of commerce and familiarity. "Poor great Nietzsche!" wrote Henry Roujon. "How little he merited the condescension [tutoiement] of mondain success!"<sup>31</sup>

Remy de Gourmont, the prominent literary critic of the Mercure de France, warned of the dangers of Nietzschean ideas falling into the wrong hands. "We do not recommend Nietzschean philosophy to impressionable people and those who need consoling beliefs," Gourmont asserted in 1900. "It is offered to the strong and not to the feeble."<sup>32</sup> To illustrate this point Gourmont discussed the Princess Bovary, an apparently fictitious personage who combined the qualities of Flaubert's heroine and the contemporary literary snob: "We said that she had read Nietzsche, this lamentable princess whose ideal was to be like our disorderly and foolishly perverse petites bourgeoises, and that her husband deplored this frequentation with a debilitating moralist."

If she had read Nietzsche, she would have learned that the search for happiness (the happiness of romances and novels) is the clear sign of a servile sensibility and that, of all disgraces, the worst is that of the privileged person who abdicates her power or merely disavows the external signs of it. The power of Nietzsche is not debilitating; but, like alcohol, it is perhaps too rich a nourishment for enfeebled organisms.<sup>33</sup>

Like Henri Albert, Gourmont was quick to indicate those circumstances where Nietzsche was misapplied by literary snobs.

In mid-1903 Jean de Gourmont, in an effort to check the advance of such basely commercial applications of the philosopher, lashed out at Gérard d'Houville and Anna de Noailles, both of whom had published novels that featured heroines who were commonly described as "nietzschéennes." Like his older brother Remy, Jean de Gourmont was a fervent Nietzsche enthusiast who would contribute several essays on the philosopher in a number of literary reviews before 1914.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, Gourmont noted, in La Nouvelle espérance the author Anna de Noailles had selected a quotation from Nietzsche to serve as an epigraph; yet, as the actions of the heroine clearly contradicted what Nietzsche wrote about socialism and pity, this quote must be seen as "a spiritual irony, and perhaps a delicious feminine lie."<sup>35</sup> As for the heroine of Gérard d'Houville's L'Inconstante, she "is neither a Saint nor a Philosopher, she is a being for whom one can never have enough indulgence--a woman."<sup>36</sup>

By criticizing these two novels Gourmont primarily hoped to counter the claims of the influential literary critics of two major newspapers who, by reading these two novels as clear examples of Nietzscheanism, "have pushed the cri d'alarme against the immoralism which is invading our literature, this dangerous doctrine preached by Nietzsche." "Public opinion," he wrote, "represented by journalism, also has its bovarysme."

When [Bovarysm] seizes a philosopher or a writer, it recreates him according to its own sentiment, his stature to its measure; it cuts-down branches that are too rich, or adds artificial ones; he becomes what it wants, and always something other than what he is.<sup>37</sup>

"Nietzsche is hated for what he is not," concluded Gourmont, and the critics of the mass press had eagerly reproduced this misconception for their own purposes.<sup>38</sup>

A critic for L'Eclair, E. Ledrain, for example, had summarized Nietzsche's philosophy as "'that man develops himself and does great things not by allowing himself to be marginalized by virtue, but by following, in the course of his life, his passions and his egoism.'"<sup>39</sup> "Thus never spoke Zarathustra," declared Gourmont, "and that is nevertheless why Mme de Noailles is a Nietzscheenne."<sup>40</sup> Had Ledrain

not yielded to the opinions of others and actually read Nietzsche, Gourmont continued, "he would have seen that immoralism is a much more complex thing than immorality. He would have also seen that Nietzsche is not an anarchist, but a conservative like himself, skeptical of all ideas of progress."<sup>41</sup>

Gaston Deschamps of the republican newspaper Le Temps registered characteristic disdain for the philosopher and his champions, and claimed that Noailles and d'Houville had drawn upon the ideas of the German as a rationale for a foolhardy feminist agenda. "If women," he wrote, "arresting in themselves the instinct of devotion and sacrifice, run after the fleeting mirage of a chimerical freedom, they are carried towards a whirlpool, to a veritable abyss."<sup>42</sup> Jean de Gourmont also took issue with Deschamps' characteristic disdain for the philosopher:

M. Gaston Deschamps is more cruel still. The hatred that he has sworn to "the inevitable Nietzsche" is inexplicable. This is only a prejudice. In the name of "Indo-European" families, in the name of "Aryan morality" he rises up against an invasion of ideas he believes Germanic, and which are all French.<sup>43</sup>

Despite Gourmont's defensive measures, the establishment attack on immoralism--which was merely one stage in its continuing attack on the avant-garde--continued on large scale. Not only was the avant-garde to blame for contemporary immoralism, but now the general literary market had become involved, thus conferring upon Nietzsche the double-stigma of dilettantism and commercialism. For René Doumic, who as literary critic at La Revue des deux mondes had long criticized the fashions of contemporary literature, the novels of Noailles and

d'Houville provided an excellent opportunity to cite the deleterious effects of both immoralisme and avant-garde literature in general:

[T]hese novels owed to some women of the world come to us impregnated with the atmosphere within which they were conceived. . . . How precious, from this point of view, are the novels of Mme la comtesse de Noailles! Living in a world which is precisely that where new intellectual fashions are immediately adopted and exaggerated, they excel at reproducing its physiognomy. . . . They had with difficulty begun to Tolstoyize when it was necessary to become Ibsenian or Nietzschean.<sup>44</sup>

"These novels are modern, of a very acute modernism: the ideas and the situations, all is marked with the stamp of today."<sup>45</sup>

The double influence of these two novels would be augmented in 1906 with Paul Adam's even more controversial contribution. A veritable barometer of literary and political trends, Adam had published Le Serpent noir in 1905, a novel based on Nietzschean ideas that was adapted into a play called Les mouettes the following year. Indeed, while the novel itself did not elicit the fire of the avant-garde or, for that matter, the attention of the literary world, the production of the play at the prestigious Comédie Française, provoked an angry attack by Henri Albert, who had been most instrumental in constructing Nietzsche as specific to avant-garde tastes.<sup>46</sup> Albert summarized the despair over the desecrated object of admiration in these lines: "We did not think that our philosopher could ever descend from the lofty heights where we placed him."

Indeed, that could not last. It was necessary to pull Nietzsche down from his intellectual sky, to take him down from the heights where we want to hold him up, to offer him as fodder for the snickering of the Boulevard.<sup>47</sup>



As Nietzsche had for many in the past come to represent the literary avant-garde as an autonomous space that defied the conventions of bourgeois literature as well as the detached aesthetic of l'art pour l'art, the production of this play for the bourgeoisie was tantamount to a mockery of the avant-garde itself. "But what a lot of weaklings," prophetically warned Paul Valéry in 1902, "will imagine they are strong merely because they've read him!"<sup>48</sup> As Charles Andler suggested a few years later, Henri Albert himself must take some of the blame: had he presented less of a literary translation of the philosopher such abuses might have been avoided. Such misappropriations of Nietzsche provoked much discussion at the editorial offices of the Mercure. Paul Léautaud wrote of a private conversation with Remy de Gourmont on the subject of these novelists: "We spoke also of many other things, for example the purportedly nietzschéen novels of Paul Adam and Mme de Noailles, whose heroes are only uncultured [grossiers] people, who have a morality [based on] abolishing all that obstructs their path, which prevents them from arriving at their goal."

As I have not read these novels, it is Gourmont who informed me. He tells me: 'Such is the philosophy of Nietzsche for Paul Adam and Mme de Noailles.' I say to him: 'But that's stupidity, then?' He approved, laughing.<sup>49</sup>

A writer for the republican and academic Revue du mois observed in 1907 the "brilliant fortune" that Nietzsche was enjoying in France.<sup>50</sup> Others believed that Adam had distorted the ideas of the German philosopher in the character of Chambalot: "Chambalot appeared, in general, to have been designed with the intention of a caricature," noted J.-L. Charpentier in La Revue du mois. "The

overhuman of Nietzsche has nothing in common with this representative of pharmaceutical products, more man than overman."<sup>51</sup>

Predictably, much like Noaille's novel, Adam's play provoked the disapproval of the Revue des deux mondes, whose critics had never been friends of the German. "Many consciousnesses are in disarray," explained René Doumic, attacking Adam's example of "deliquescent theatre" for holding "good sense suspect" and being instead "favorably disposed to all les bizarreries." <sup>52</sup> The "Darwinian and Nietzschean" nature of the character of Chambalot, around which the entire piece gravitates . . . is certainly the most uncultured personage that, for a long time, we have seen on the stage."<sup>53</sup>

The march of immoralism in literature was not to be discouraged by such rejections, however. Daniel Lesueur's controversial 1908 roman de mœurs, provocatively entitled Nietzschéenne, even merited a review essay in the popular magazine L'Illustration, as well as the predictable condemnation of both established and avant-garde critics. The rather well-known mistress of the crowd psychologist Gustave Le Bon, Daniel Lesueur (Jeanne Loiseau Lapauze) was inducted into the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, a rare feat for a woman at the time.<sup>54</sup> From an avant-garde perspective, the novels of Noailles, d'Houville, Adam, and Lesueur were perceived as examples of commercial literature aimed more at the tastes of a broad audience than the more cultivated consumers of pure art: both d'Houville's L'Inconstante and Lesueur's Nietzschéenne were officially classified as romans de mœurs, while Noailles'

Nouvelle espérance appeared under the somewhat unfortunate rubric "les anormaux".<sup>55</sup>

In the wake of such commercial appropriations of the philosopher it would become clear to many in the intellectual world that Nietzsche had become the subject matter of polite society. In 1910 an anonymous critic at the Journal des débats noted the double-function that Henri Albert's recently-revised version of the Pages choisies of Nietzsche would inevitably serve in intellectual life: "To studious readers, it will serve as an analytical table, it will spare them time and research." Yet to that other class of Nietzsche enthusiasts it would serve much less scholarly purposes:

Elegant nietzschéennes, whose mundane duties do leave them the leisure of reading fifteen volumes, will be able to effortlessly find there some precious citations and subjects for distinguished conversations.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the disparaging remarks of established critics, the cooptation of Nietzsche by various commercial playwrights continued. In 1910 Henry Bataille completed his four-act play La Femme nue, which featured the character of Mademoiselle Blochenthal, a rich Parisian literary snob who fancied herself a "Nietzschéenne."<sup>57</sup> On December 10, 1910, Marie Lenéru (1875-1918) had her three-act Les Affranchis performed at the Théâtre Nationale de l'Odéon, a piece which dealt explicitly with Nietzschean themes that even drew the attention of an unsympathetic American correspondent.<sup>58</sup> Described nevertheless as alternately Nietzschean and anti-Nietzschean, Les Affranchis was discovered and promoted by the Parnassian poet Catulle Mendès as an example of le théâtre

psychologique.<sup>59</sup> According to the critic Edmond Stoullig, this was "a remarkable work which was a régal for all les lettrés, I mean, for all les purs lettrés who labor to research at the theatre what the public . . . runs the risk of imperfectly appreciating."<sup>60</sup> This play was performed five times at the end of 1910 and ten more times in the beginning of 1911, testifying to the popularity of the Nietzschean themes in the commercial theatre.<sup>61</sup>

All of these examples of middle-class literature attest to the commercialization of Nietzschean philosophy that took place as a result of the translation of his collected works into French. It is undeniable that such banalization contributed to a negative image of the philosopher in the public eye as Nietzsche became more closely associated with flashy new novels and popular plays. As we shall see in the following chapter, this association with basely commercial literature would constitute one factor in the gradual rejection of Nietzsche by vast segments of the literary world in 1911. Nevertheless, a very different development was taking place deep within the literary avant-garde that would emerge at odds with the progressive commercialization of Nietzschean thought.

**The Pleasures of Immoralism:  
The Formation of the NRF Group, 1898-1908**

Far from the market place and from fame happens all that is great: far from the market place and from fame the inventors of new values have always dwelt.

--Nietzsche<sup>62</sup>

Have we ever complained because we are misunderstood, misjudged, misidentified, slandered, misheard, and not heard? Precisely this is our fate--oh, for a long time yet! let us say, to be modest, until 1901--it is also our distinction; we should not honor ourselves sufficiently if we wished it were otherwise.

- - N i e t z s c h e<sup>63</sup>

The group of friends that would launch La Nouvelle revue française (NRF) in 1909 coalesced around André Gide during the late-1890s when the writings of Nietzsche became popular within symbolist circles. Attached to the less-successful avant-garde review L'Ermitage, Gide and his friends remained in the shadows of their more renowned symbolist peers, which permitted them to effect a truly avant-garde appropriation of the philosopher that would retain its relevance despite the commercial successes of the philosopher in the general literary marketplace. An inquiry into the intellectual orientation of this group during its early years suggests the central role of Nietzschean philosophy as a cultural rallying point for this emerging avant-garde.

The group around Gide that would form the NRF found themselves repeatedly invoking the ideas of Nietzsche in their works of literary creation and criticism. Romain Rolland remembered his youth during the early 1890s: "We were

thus a number of young men, who breathed the Nietzschean atmosphere, before even knowing that Nietzsche existed." Gide had written in 1899 that despite the time required to present the first translation, the ideas of the German "fall on prepared terrain." "I have said that we had been waiting for Nietzsche long before knowing him; it is just that Nietzschéisme began long before Nietzsche."

Nietzschéisme is at once a manifestation of superabundant life which was already expressed in the work of the greatest artists, and also a tendency which, following the epochs, baptized "Jansenism", or "Protestantism", and that we will now name Nietzschéisme because Nietzsche dared formulate until the end all that which was still murmuring latently in it.<sup>64</sup>

Though peripheral to the NRF group itself, Rolland also asserted the existence of a Nietzschéisme in French letters that antedated the actual dissemination of the philosopher's works in France. It is difficult to view this curious assertion as anything other than an aesthetic strategy:

That will only surprise those who think that it is only the great men who create the atmosphere of their time. . . . Nietzsche was the major of our class; but our class would have been formed without him.<sup>65</sup>

It was Rolland who nevertheless encouraged other young writers, notably André Suarès, to read the works of the German, despite his own growing dissatisfaction with them after 1900.<sup>66</sup>

This attempt to maintain a distance from the philosopher while nevertheless espousing many of his ideas was typical of many literary friends of Gide. The writer Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, an intimate of Gide's circle, remembered her wedding to Doctor J.-C. Mardrus, whom she tellingly described as "nietzschéen before

Nietzsche and much more sincerely, more originally than Nietzsche."<sup>87</sup> While evidently favoring the ideas of the German, by positing a "pre-Nietzschéisme" these writers were nevertheless able to assert their autonomy and even superiority over such a philosophy, a tactic designed to preserve the requisite image of creative independence while loyally defending the German from more stalwart opponents. In short, like the avant-garde of the 1890s, to defend and advance Nietzschean thought was for these people implicitly to defend and advance oneself, with an important qualification: rather than the passive recipients of foreign influences, members of the proto-NRF group depicted themselves as veritable contemporaries of Nietzsche, kindred free spirits who could nevertheless stand quite well on their own. "Everywhere I enjoy seeing la force triumph," Jacques Rivière wrote to Alain-Fournier. This declaration was followed by a warning: "I am going to speak a bit like Nietzsche, and yet I am much higher than Nietzsche."<sup>88</sup>

While it would be difficult to isolate with precision the sources of this apparently general predilection for the ideas of Nietzsche, the triad of André Gide, Marcel Drouin, and Henri Ghéon would be a likely place to begin. Jean Schlumberger remembered how Gide's brother-in-law Marcel Drouin had encouraged the reading of the philosopher during the mid-1890s, where the three met at the salon in the town of La Roque. "Everyone," Schlumberger wrote, "and Gide the first, admired his supple intelligence, his vast reading. . . . His presence multiplied the subjects on which I dared me hasarder... [sic] It was the epoch where the name of Nietzsche began to circulate."<sup>89</sup> A student of Charles Andler

and friend of Lucien Herr, Drouin finished first in the agrégation de philosophie at the École Normale, but ultimately abandoned a university career for literary pursuits, though he did teach philosophy in a Parisian lycée. His association with the avant-garde no doubt prepared him for dealings with the literary establishment: "I had the fortune," Drouin remembered, "to be a student of [Ferdinand] Brunetière [at the École Normale] in an epoch when his students no longer called themselves his disciples."<sup>70</sup> Lucien Herr attributed Drouin's marked lack of published works to his laziness. "In my entire career," he told a surprised Gide, "I have never met anyone who knew as much and took so little from it."<sup>71</sup> Like many writers, Drouin became exposed to the ideas of Nietzsche during the 1890s, which were widely discussed in avant-garde circles; yet unlike most of these he had the extra advantage of exposure to the courses of Andler at the rue d'Ulm as well as a trip to Germany as a boursier during the 1895 school year, where Nietzsche was discussed in more scholarly terms. "Do you know," he wrote to Gide from Berlin in 1895, "that a course, a rather sympathetic one, on Nietzsche is being offered this year by a theologian?"<sup>72</sup> According to a friend at the Sorbonne, Fernand Baldensperger, the 1894-95 academic year abroad solidified Drouin's interest in the German philosopher, thus instilling in the young man an interest which would play no small part in the intellectual formation of the NRF group.<sup>73</sup> Gide himself seemed to have profited greatly from such an acquaintance: "Perhaps I should be more grateful to you for these single hours than to Nietzsche for the days and weeks I pass with him."<sup>74</sup> Months later Gide wrote again: "I remember our conversation at



Cuerville, when you returned from Germany and revealed to me the whole theory of values."<sup>75</sup>

Other members of the group were initially not so easily won over to the German philosopher. For the friends Jacques Rivière and Alain-Fournier, Nietzsche would remain a difficult pill to swallow. "When you think about it, there is nothing more piteous than dilettantism," wrote Rivière to Alain-Fournier in 1905. "And Nietzsche, a great poet, isn't he a poseur of thought?"<sup>76</sup> A similar indictment of the German was forthcoming several months later by his correspondent. "Those who disgust me," Alain-Fournier noted, "are people who want to understand nothing and who laugh--or are insulting, like Nietzsche. And one calls that philosophy."<sup>77</sup>

As the charismatic center of the budding NRF group, André Gide was the figure whose works were most lauded by his cluster of younger admirers.<sup>78</sup> "I have not reread him [Gide] since my last letter," confided Rivière to Alain-Fournier. "But I adore him more and more."<sup>79</sup> Henri Ghéon explained in 1905 that "A strong personality . . . creates a center of attraction, and inevitably a school is formed."<sup>80</sup> It was Gide himself who helped create the aura of Nietzscheanism about his works, especially through his 1902 novel L'Immoraliste, which directly borrowed a term often used by the philosopher and which had by the turn of the century become virtually synonymous with a certain school of thought. Le Cardonnell and Vellay made a point of describing Gide in appropriate terms: "The entire oeuvre of M. Gide reveals a tormented mind, ceaselessly in search of itself. . . . The influence of Nietzsche circulates there obscurely."<sup>81</sup> Indeed, Gide strategically utilized such

common cultural symbols to his advantage, and seemed to revel in the attention that such an association promised. Gide was also responsible for the unsigned obituary that appeared in L'Ermitage following the philosopher's death in 1900. "Frédéric Nietzsche is dead," he wrote. "The news will touch all those who would have mourned lately, if not for him, at least for themselves, the precocious beatitude where s'égrare his all-too-new thought."

His day has not come. But we will understand very quickly that in the century of Napoleon, Balzac, and Beethoven, he was perhaps the greatest, the most "important" without a doubt.<sup>82</sup>

Moreover, Gide had himself visited Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche in Weimar in August 1903, thus initiating a contact with the Nietzsche-Archiv that would last far beyond the First World War.<sup>83</sup> This reputation for immoralism was extended by many literary competitors to Gide's coterie as well. Some of Gide's literary associates--who sympathized with the general image of Nietzsche--nevertheless became impatient with the novelist's unbridled enthusiasm for the philosopher. "I like best to express these things to you by letter," wrote Francis Jammes to his friend, "It is impossible [to do so] by chatting with you, because you respond to me with Nietzsche, and I have known him little."<sup>84</sup>

In the years to come Gide would discover the burden that Nietzsche presented to the public image of his own creative freedom, and would take steps to relieve himself of the anxiety of this particular influence. Gide foresaw this possibility in 1898, and confided to Drouin that "Later one will accuse me of having been formed by Nietzsche."<sup>85</sup> Upon its publication in 1902, Gide's friend Lucie

Delarue-Mardrus directly linked L'Immoraliste to the doctrine of Nietzsche. While the German, she wrote, preached human liberation in his philosophy, "we have not yet seen the new man, he who, in flesh and bone, will dare to walk across the deeds and beings that his soul released. . . . Let's read L'Immoraliste of André Gide."<sup>86</sup> The royalist writer Lucien Jean, who had gone through his own Nietzschean phase, lamented how "the heavy and imperious shadow of Nietzsche" hovered over Gide's novel: "it is in effect the great madman who is the hidden master of this work. Ah! how he weighs already over our entire generation! . . . Because he is so thoroughly impregnated with Nietzschean agony, M. Gide offers a great social interest."<sup>87</sup>

Despite his own avowed penchant for the philosopher's thought, Drouin loyally defended the originality of Gide's novel against such overly-hasty associations with the philosopher: "Nietzsche said: 'We other immoralists...'; that is enough for an immoralist adventure to appear, even to the most fully informed, as an illustration of Nietzschéisme." For Drouin as for most writers priority was given to the defense of pure literary creativity against charges of servile imitation of cultural influences:

L'Immoraliste is a work of art, complete in itself, born of itself. The germ existed in it, without Nietzsche; I am not saying that, without Nietzsche, it would have been able to rise. The influence of great men, which enchains weak minds, liberates strong minds by revealing to them what one can dare. . . . The Immoralist, Michel, is not inspired by Nietzsche. . . . Nietzsche invites man to transcend man, to master himself, to master the weak[:] Michel only dreams of freeing himself.<sup>88</sup>

Implied in this explanation was yet another example of the notion of a literary

aristocracy, a social body of the culturally-elected who claim to possess the requisite personal qualities for the legitimate appreciation and understanding of Nietzsche, as well as a host of other cultural goods. Jacques Copeau would continue the homage to Gide in L'Ermitage.<sup>88</sup>

All of the most active members of the NRF's inner circle had been involved during the first years of the century in the ongoing project of fashioning Nietzsche in their own image, an important corollary of the avant-garde enterprise of the 1890s carried out, not only in the Mercure, but in La Revue blanche and L'Ermitage. Édouard Ducoté, who had edited L'Ermitage since Henri Mazel's departure in 1896 and had loyally supported the critical efforts of Gide and Ghéon, explicitly indicated the overwhelming role of a subordinate social position in determining one's appreciation of Nietzsche. "Artists write for artists, and not for the public, this enormous public which does not care for art," he wrote in 1905.

This separation of the writer and the public has been one of the most favorable circumstances for the influence of Nietzsche among us. And this influence has been considerable, precisely among those that Nietzsche calls the untimely ones, that is to say those who are first and foremost artists.<sup>89</sup>

That is, the partisan of pure art who held commercial art in contempt was more likely to find in the writings of Nietzsche a reflection and confirmation of an entire lifestyle based on a series of aesthetic refusals. This appeal to the virtues of pure art by the staff of L'Ermitage was directly related to the literary fortunes of the journal itself: since 1895 or so the symbolist review existed in the shadows of its more illustrious neighbors, La Revue blanche and the Mercure de France. As is so

often the case in literary strategies, this necessity was made into a virtue when the editorial staff announced proudly in 1902 that their review was the only one which, as a matter of policy, "addresses itself to a limited number of readers."<sup>81</sup> That is, recognizing that the other petites revues were on the way toward consecration, L'Ermitage struggled to check the flow of cultural time by arresting its own perhaps inexorable development. Gide himself, whose L'Immoraliste was largely ignored by the literary public, could easily identify with and even cultivate the image of the unjustly ignored writer--the artiste maudite. Such references to "les inactuels" (the untimely ones) appeared often in the critical work of his supporters.<sup>82</sup> The virtue to be discovered in being misunderstood as artists extended to the understanding of Nietzsche as well, as Gide wrote to Valéry: "Is there anything surprising about the fact that everyone isn't keen on going mad in the manner of Nietzsche? And, anyway, so much the better if it's reserved for the few."<sup>83</sup> Thus, against the general corruption of both art and Nietzsche in the marketplace, the group at L'Ermitage asserted in isolation the virtues of the worthy but happily unrecognized few.

The virtue of being "first and foremost artists" was often directed against such committed writers as Barrès and Anatole France, who had forsaken the realm of pure art for the less spiritual realm of politics. Gide and his comrades, on the contrary, while registering their support for the Dreyfusard cause, nevertheless eschewed political engagement entirely. Reflecting the overwhelming influence of Gide, L'Ermitage proudly defined itself as "the only Revue which concerns itself

with neither politics nor sociology . . . [but] which treats only literature and art."<sup>94</sup>

This distinction between pure and committed artists could also be employed to separate Gide and the former symbolists from the naturists, who had been much more active as Dreyfusards at the turn of the century. Nietzsche was for Henri Ghéon--like himself--an artist above all else:

Contrary to the philosophers--and above all the German ones--he pressed his ambition, less to construct a noble, bold and solid system. . . than to assemble and polish, for a future construction, some heavy, durable and beautiful elements. The substance of his genius and his experience, he condensed it by turns in each stone of the edifice, in each cell of the being, in each paragraph of the complete oeuvre. This substance we have seen before our eyes, unrefined, uncondensed and without the miracle of art, in the two volumes of the Will to Power. I invite everyone to the confrontation.<sup>95</sup>

"Literature, so be it," Ghéon concluded. "But in the present case, what higher praise?"<sup>96</sup> *L'Ermitage's* well-known letters to and from Angèle--which were actually between Gide and Ghéon--provided an excellent forum for encouraging the reading of Nietzsche. Gide expressed his ideas about new aesthetic forms in such serialized essays: "I believe that for a new theatre, we need a new ethic. . . . Nietzsche has given us this ethic: you know that is my conviction."<sup>97</sup> That is, the ideas of the German could be best applied to the realization of an avant-garde revolution that might effectively challenge the commercial power of boulevard theatre, a notion that Jacques Copeau would pursue quite seriously with the formation of the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in 1913. In the meantime the campaign would continue, and Gide counselled his readers, "Be sure to read Nietzsche, dear friend; I am doing what I can on my side."<sup>98</sup>

Against the banalization of Nietzsche that had taken place by expanding his audience into the general literary marketplace, this young avant-garde found in the philosopher something that was still profoundly their own. The double game of disciple/contemporary did not deter these writers from explicitly invoking and defending the philosophy of Nietzsche on many occasions, despite the fact that such explicit references might prompt others to simplistically and derisively dismiss them as les nietzschéens. In fact, in their critical essays of this period, Gide, Ghéon, and Drouin stood an unofficial watch over the various commentaries on the philosopher, thus offering Henri Albert and the Mercure de France group a degree of competition and implicit support which went largely unrecognized by the critics of les grandes revues. This early rivalry would have a lot to do with the formation of the NRF in 1909 as a replacement of the Mercure, and the subsequent hostilities between the two reviews.

In his critical essays Marcel Drouin kept a vigil over what the university and the radical right had to say about the philosopher. Writing in La Revue blanche Drouin criticized the various methods of les grandes revues and academic philosophers to discredit Nietzsche, especially by relegating him to the literary field. "A more delicate means of belittling Nietzsche and of arresting his influence, is to declare him a poet," he wrote in 1900. "I fear that [the philosopher] M. René Berthelot favors this thesis a bit by insisting on the real affinities of Nietzsche with the romantics."<sup>99</sup> Yet, as a representative of a more liberal conception of Nietzsche, Drouin also reacted vigorously against Pierre Lasserre's first royalist

articles, expressing his annoyance that "one has not failed to draw upon Nietzsche [as] the apology for a regime, a rejuvenation of the monarchic idea."

A certain bulletin of the Action française offers a troubling mixture of truths and errors. Without a doubt Nietzsche is an aristocrat; but he resists being made into a reactionary. He does not judge progress necessary, but he conceives it as possible, now that man has become conscious.<sup>100</sup>

That is, against the ridicule of academic philosophers and the improprieties of the radical right, Drouin advocated the liberal/socialist interpretation of the philosopher that clearly characterized the avant-garde Nietzsche Industry of the symbolist period. These two points of tension would be retained by the NRF group in 1909, as they emphasized their distinction from a host of contrary aesthetic positions.

At the review L'Ermitage, Henri Ghéon pursued a similar watchful stance over interpretations of Nietzsche, whom he once characterized as "the most French of German thinkers."<sup>101</sup> In 1902, for example, Ghéon observed that Paul-Louis Garnier's Réflexions sur Nietzsche "will merit long commentaries. . . . his discussion is severe, colored, lyrical, and even, because of that, sometimes a bit confused."<sup>102</sup> In response to the literary poll of 1905, Ghéon admitted that the twin poles of anarchy and classicism coexisted in Nietzsche's philosophy. "His ambiguity corresponds well to our intellectual state," Ghéon explained; yet, apparently due to the common tendency to relegate Nietzsche to the romantic and anarchist camp, an important point had to be stressed: "It is his classicism to which we have submitted, we French."<sup>103</sup> Again, in a 1907 issue of the review Antée, Ghéon defended Nietzsche against recurrent charges of romanticism: "If



you knew how much I hate, how much we hate romanticism! . . . Nietzsche appeared to us one day as a revelation... [sic] but a revelation about ourselves." Like Henri Albert, Ghéon defended the reputation of Nietzsche against those who would disrespectfully reduce him to the commodifiable subject-matter of bourgeois theatre:

Therefore, le nietzschéisme which had still not touched the masses has just retained for all [à tous] the echoes, from the raised stage of the grand Comédie, from the megaphone of M. Paul Adam. And, good people, le nietzschéisme, listen well, it's... Charnbalot!!--Let's not persist. M. Henri Albert has sufficiently repudiated the unworthy and comical disciple in a recent article. Any doctrine would have thus known ridiculous and meaning-deprived exaggerations, as soon as it would have separated from the book [dès qu'elle aura quitté le livre]. And Nietzsche did not want disciples. And it is not a doctrine that we have inherited from him.<sup>104</sup>

Much like Drouin, Ghéon was characteristically effusive in his praise of the philosopher: "Nietzsche, precursor of all in universalité."<sup>105</sup> The same year Louis Dumont-Wilden wrote in Antée: "We have long ago sent the logicians to all the devils. What we were searching for was an aliment for our fevers, for our ardors, for our dreams, it was a motive for acting and feeling, it was a self-sufficient heroism. The lyricism of Nietzsche, this at once burning and frozen thought, furnished that for us. It gave us what we already had. But what else were we going to demand?"<sup>106</sup>

While the ideas of Nietzsche exercised considerable sway over many members of the NRF group, the German was by no means the only star in their conceptual firmament. Nevertheless the other cultural elements of this burgeoning aesthetic would often be compared and associated with the German. An important

common denominator of the NRF group had also been its fascination with Dostoyevsky, Stendhal, and Goethe who became closely associated with the German philosopher in yet another cultural configuration. In his very first essay on Nietzsche in 1899, for example, Gide indicated the similarities between the Russian and the German.<sup>107</sup> "Nietzsche names Dostoyevsky, at the side of Stendhal, as his maître in psychology," Drouin observed in 1902.<sup>108</sup> "Nietzsche claimed that Dostoyevsky was the only novelist who taught something about man," Ghéon added the same month. "A world of action, of passion, of drama; a world without values; before Nietzsche, a monde nietzschéen."<sup>109</sup> Yet Dostoyevsky and Stendhal were not the exclusive partners of Nietzsche. "However one objects [Quoi qu'on objecte] to his thought," Ghéon wrote, "Gobineau like Nietzsche excites us to think; to think, before Nietzsche, of social and moral problems, that Nietzsche, after him, will pose."<sup>110</sup> Finally, Gide himself conceived of a slightly different cultural configuration: "Yes, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Browning and Blake are truly four stars in the same constellation," who form a "chariot" in the cultural firmament.<sup>111</sup>

This avowed penchant for Nietzsche was one of the features that Gide's literary rivals would employ against him and his group in the years to come. Peaceful relations were never conducted with the naturist literary school which, as the closest rivals in the avant-garde represented the most immediate threat to Gide. Open hostilities quickly erupted in early 1897 between the naturists at La Plume and the symbolists at L'Ermitage. The estrangement of these two groups

may be explained by social factors relevant to the dynamics of the new state of the literary field after 1902. Indeed, as Christophe Charle has written, the literary avant-garde of the 1890s may be viewed as the uneasy union of conflicting yet mutually-dominated writers, many of whom would manifest their fundamental social unity as Dreyfusards against the literary establishment in 1898. However, the need to assert one's difference in the struggle for recognition would lead to the reassertion of certain fundamental structuring principles of avant-garde literature. One division was the tension between pure and committed art. Maurice Barrès, we have mentioned, was viewed by Gide and his colleagues as having forsaken the realm of pure art for that of the highly politicized and committed journalist, a distinction which could be as easily applied to fellow Dreyfusards as to the enemy anti-Dreyfusards.

As Bourdieu notes, the apparent identity of position among mutually-subordinated writers, aside from occasional rapprochements, is not sufficient to found a literary school. Both groups sustained an intense affective solidarity as well as an attachment to their respective and generally better-established leaders, which would provoke almost inevitable collisions between the two groups.<sup>112</sup> It has been noted how the naturists called for a return to Nature and national literature along the lines of their greatest literary hero, Émile Zola. Yet the commercial success of naturalism had been an important rationale for the continuing symbolist revolt against Zola, who noted on one occasion how "money has emancipated the writer, money has

created modern letters."<sup>113</sup> The symbolist rejection of naturism was therefore not unrelated to this perennial condemnation of the commercial aspects of naturalism. Indeed, the naturists had specifically faulted symbolism for taking literature far from the general public through its often esoteric style and content.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, the writers of naturism manifested a clear productive superiority over the proto-NRF group, suggesting a more advanced integration into the general literary market. Finally, while both groups signed petitions supporting Zola during the Affair, the naturists became directly involved in the fray while Gide--in the interest of practicing pure art--counselled his friends at L'Ermitage to refrain from political engagement.<sup>115</sup> In all of these respects naturism and naturalism were perceived as virtually identical literary rivals of Gide's group. Indeed, Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier and Maurice Le Blond had written articles and books in defense of Zola and his position in the Affair in 1898.<sup>116</sup> Thus, from the perspective of the future-NRF group, the naturists had forsaken the purity of the avant-garde project in two important ways: by virtue of the naturist aesthetic itself, which steered them much closer to the commercial market, and by their active engagement in defense of Zola, which made them appear more as committed writers rather than serious artists.

In an effort to distinguish themselves on the literary field, the naturist newcomers openly engaged the more firmly entrenched and besieged symbolists, which necessarily brought them into conflict with the future NRF group. When Jean Viollis suggested broadening the meaning of the term "naturisme" in 1897 to

include more writers under the rubric, several of Paul Fort's "friends and camarades d'art" protested the aesthetic limitations involved in conforming to any category. Gide, Ghéon, and Ruyters as well as Francis Jammes, Paul Valéry, Paul Léautaud, and Jean de Tinan were among those who defended Fort.<sup>117</sup> The following year Henri Ghéon responded bitterly to the subsequent charges of Maurice Le Blond that Paul Fort and other symbolists had launched an attack on his literary school, denouncing "the lack of sincerity of the Naturists in their public life."<sup>118</sup> Fort responded directly to Le Blond, asserting that "There has never been a naturist school . . . . Come on, Monsieur Le Blond, Monsieur de Bouhéliier, you know very well that all that is a joke." Implying the need of the naturists for a larger audience, thus divorcing themselves from the realm of pure art, Fort concluded contemptuously: "You are ripe for a succès parisien."<sup>119</sup> The symbolists, according to Le Blond, "display themselves as thinkers [cérébraux], experts at intellectual games, passionate lovers of ideology."<sup>120</sup>

Gide himself soon entered directly into the fray, noting how "it only required six weeks for the legitimate protestation of Paul Fort to degenerate into a miserable dispute."<sup>121</sup> "With M. de Bouhéliier," Gide charged, "pride in the work precedes the work." Throughout this entire dispute Gide nevertheless reserved his praise for the work and personality of Eugène Montfort, "perhaps because he is the most restrained."<sup>122</sup> By 1900 relations between the two groups would deteriorate even further, especially when Gide responded acidly to Saint-Georges de Bouhéliier by charging: "Vous abîmez notre langage, Monsieur; voilà mon 'grief personnel.' . .

. It is because I love my art that I hate the journalism which destroys it."

By the word journalism, I mean a great deal, I mean too much; I mean also bad writing, when it becomes the fact of a born-writer, such as yourself, because your gifts used to be great, enough to make me grieve at present if they are lost.<sup>123</sup>

In short, Gide activated the literary distinction between "art" and "argent" by relegating Saint-Georges de Bouhélier to the mercenary sector of the literary field, far from the realm of "pure" art where presumably he and his colleagues were situated. The sting of such charges would not fade with time.

The tensions between these two competing groups locked in the struggle to name the legitimate avant-garde aesthetic endured beyond the turn of the century, but would not again prove truly explosive until 1910. Yet throughout this conflict Nietzsche played an important role. That Nietzsche had already been appropriated by bourgeois novelists and playwrights who saw in his philosophy only a means of making money was for some an important reason to dispense with him. Yet, as Nietzsche had also been associated with Gide's literary circle, the philosopher would become a convenient target for enemies from a number of positions on the literary field who sought--through the proxy of Nietzsche--to undermine Gide and his group, all of whom had managed to make a number of powerful enemies. Likewise, some writers found in Nietzsche an excellent alternative to the naturalism/naturism problem. Daniel Halévy, who had also detested naturalism, was able to suggest in his biography of the philosopher that even Nietzsche had detested Zola. "He ran through some volumes of Zola," Halévy wrote, "and did not allow himself to be seduced by a merely popular style of

thought, by a merely decorative art."<sup>124</sup>

An associate of the Action Française, Lucien Jean criticized the foolishness of les nietzschéens in their apparently uncritical defense of their hero. Indeed, with his friends Georges Valois and Charles-Louis Philippe, Jean had been a great enthusiast of the philosopher around 1900; yet later he would grow to regret this earlier fascination.

This whole great tragic life [of Nietzsche], they transcribe it on paper, cut it into little pieces and make amulets of it. These are the strong men. They would never say: "Ich bin dumm." Doubt killed Jesus and Nietzsche, but it does not torment the Christians and les Nietzschéens.<sup>125</sup>

As a member of the royalist movement, Jean could have easily had in mind a number of writers, as much Pierre Lasserre and Jacques Bainville as the friends of Gide; yet the appearance of this brief note in L'Ermitage suggests that the latter had been the primary target. Perhaps indicative of his own opinions on the philosopher, Montfort reprinted this passage in Les Marges soon after its initial publication. It was incumbent upon young writers to search for new French exemplars, a sentiment that Jean clearly expressed in a 1906 letter to Montfort, in which he indicated the benefits that Jean Moréas, the founder of the École romane, could offer to contemporary artists: "He can restore to us the taste for concentration, reserve, dignity, and lead us towards a discipline more French than that of Nietzsche."<sup>126</sup> This drive towards specifically French sources of cultural power would serve for many as a convincing rationale, not only for the rejection of Nietzsche, but for the final demise of the romantic and symbolist heirs of

Mallarmé who defended him: "They will therefore be immoral, and the new romanticism is born."<sup>127</sup> Above all, the beauty of this strategy resided in the fact that it could be effected by any number of mutually-exclusive positions on the literary field to rid themselves of the nuisance that Gide and his circle represented.

**The New Avant-Garde Center of Gravity:  
The Nietzscheans at the NRF**

But Nietzscheism is like a road that seems to us all the more beautiful because we don't very well know where it leads. . . . It is just because it is very difficult (if not impossible) to reduce Nietzscheism to a system--that we shall not get over it easily.

--André Gide<sup>128</sup>

Many scholars have stressed how the formation of La Nouvelle revue française in 1909 was a true meeting of like-minds that produced the most influential avant-garde enterprise of the immediate pre-War years. "Our understanding was not established around a program," specified Jean Schlumberger in retrospect. "[O]ur program was the expression of our understanding."<sup>129</sup> Given the fragmentation and confusion to which many writers attested after 1902, many were hopeful that a new review could unite these disparate and apparently mutually-exclusive literary orientations. Yet the appearance of such an influential, audacious, and pugnacious literary enterprise would inevitably arouse the ire of literary rivals, especially the naturists, who competed for the right to unite the young generation.

After uniting their efforts at La Revue blanche and L'Ermitage, including a brief colonization of the Belgian review Antée, Gide and his closely-knit coterie



joined forces with the naturist writer Eugène Montfort of Les Marges in 1908 to found a new review, which the latter dubbed La Nouvelle revue française. From the start, however, this project was doomed to collapse, the debris from which would not settle before 1914. There was above all a fundamental aesthetic difference among these writers: as Schlumberger remembered, "[Montfort's] predilections went towards a rather hackneyed naturalism, for which we had no great interest; but we liked his critical honesty and frankness of tone."<sup>130</sup> With the naturist Montfort as director, it would turn out, the first issue of the Nouvelle revue française would be aesthetically eclectic in a manner that dissatisfied members of Gide's circle, who surely remembered the bitter split between symbolists and naturists in the late-1890s. "[O]ur articles and those of the friends of Montfort were exactly balanced there."<sup>131</sup> Schlumberger reproduced in his memoirs the 1908 declaration of purpose issued in the review by Montfort:

It is the hope of the founders of this review that they will help rescue as soon as possible, as much in their own eyes as in those of criticism, the property which should distinguish the writers of today from those of yesterday.<sup>132</sup>

For Montfort, who believed that symbolism was an effectively dead aesthetic belonging only to the past, contemporary styles had gravitated more towards recapturing nature. The final straw in this entire affair was yet another attack on Mallarmé, who was held by Gide in the highest esteem.

Despite the apparent desire for unity, the fragmentation of the avant-garde was far too advanced to be checked by this initial attempt at collaboration. "[W]ith an inexcusable levity," Schlumberger wrote, "we had not considered that he

[Montfort] belonged to a family of spirits very different from ours."<sup>133</sup> The internal divisions following the first issue resulted in the angry departure of Montfort and his naturist colleagues, leaving only Gide and his friends to resurrect the review in 1909. This final rupture between Gide's circle and the naturist writers was the long-awaited signal for the renewal of open hostilities between the two groups over the future of the literary avant-garde: in short, the advances of the NRF after 1909 would be countered by the writers associated with Montfort's Les Marges, one of the only other serious contenders in the competition for the central position of the avant-garde. As we shall see, the figure of Nietzsche became an important stake in this competition, and would often be invoked once hostilities erupted.

From its inception in 1908 the Nouvelle revue française presented itself as the legitimate heir to the central position in the avant-garde left vacant by La Revue blanche and the Mercury de France, a claim made explicit in an advertisement heralding its forthcoming inaugural issue. A writer for Vers et prose conveyed the ambitious intentions of this new literary enterprise: "The Nouvelle revue française wants to bring a direct and very lively reflection of what the new generation thinks. We are going to speak often of this review."<sup>134</sup> After the "false start" with Montfort, Gide and his colleagues pursued this tack with greater commitment. Under the direction of Gide the NRF provided a new means of expression for two literary genres that had become marginalized during the hegemony of symbolist poetry: the novel and the theatre. For years, control over the novel had been divided between the naturalists and psychologists, and the theatre--aside from the ever-

present commercial influence of the boulevard--had vacillated in the avant-garde between the symbolism of Lugné-Poë and the naturalism of Antoine. As early as 1898 Gide expressed his distaste over the expansion of the Merçure, and his continuing preference for L'Ermitage, where he would publish his work until its closing in 1908.<sup>135</sup> While La Revue blanche, "seat of the intellectual extreme left," had disappeared in 1903, "the Merçure de France was dominated by the sufficiently suffocating personality of Remy de Gourmont."<sup>136</sup> The review Vers et prose, edited by Paul Fort--who had directed the symbolist Théâtre d'Art during the early-1890s--was devoted almost exclusively to poetry and lacked provisions for literary criticism. At the Merçure, Schlumberger recalled, "reduced, as he [Gide] was then, to an audience of two or three hundred," the works of Gide "were considered unsalable, he was hardly taken for anything but a distinguished amateur."<sup>137</sup> The establishment of the new review put an end to such isolation.

By usurping the vacant space left by the Merçure de France the young writers of the NRF were brought into an almost inevitable confrontation, not only with the reigning literary establishment, but with the royalist avant-garde enterprise of the Action Française, whose sphere of influence had been enlarged during the previous year by launching La Revue critique des idées et des livres. Undoubtedly, these audacious young writers relished such opportunities to assert their difference by provoking those with opposing views. Henri Ghéon drew certain distinctions between the NRF group and right-wing literature: "If we had not had Barrès and Maurras, towards whom we wish to keep our autonomy to defend our own

positions and maintain our differences, it is the *Nouvelle Revue Française* [sic] that would have been nationalist!"<sup>138</sup> Indeed, the radical right proved to be the most violent enemy provoked by the audacious young group. Schlumberger had his own take on this conflict:

What so greatly provoked against us nationalists and reactionaries of all kinds . . . was that we accompanied such bizarre taste with perfectly reasonable critical judgments. This mixture of nonconformism and good sense blurred in their eyes the categories of good and evil and made them judge our influence as particularly dangerous.<sup>139</sup>

In this endeavor of provocation the NRF surely succeeded, perhaps too well: on one occasion the young monarchist Jean Variot challenged first Copeau and then Gide to a duel in response to an offensive article that Copeau had written--and which Gide had apparently condoned--in the NRF.<sup>140</sup>

There was also a strong need for the NRF group to distinguish itself from the consecrated avant-garde of the previous two decades, including Pierre Loti, Paul Bourget, Anatole France, and Maurice Barrès. As the nationalist writer Henri Massis charged, in an effort to distinguish himself from literary elders and the literary right, Gide positioned himself as the polar opposite of Barrès. According to Massis, Gide was obsessed with the psychological novelist, less with the artist than the influenceur: "To be the Anti-Barrès, there is one of the master preoccupations of André Gide."<sup>141</sup> Like his friends Gide admired the young Barrès of Le Culte du Moi; yet the severe partisan of rootedness of Les Déracinés proved an affront to Gide's aesthetic sensibilities, which emphasized rootlessness.<sup>142</sup>

Above all these young writers set out to eclipse the Mercure de France, the

flagship and only surviving journal from the older consecrated avant-garde of the 1890s. Yet, much like this review the NRF championed "pure" art and despised the mondain salons, the Boulevard, and the Académie, thus rearticulating the typical distinctive strategies of the avant-garde.<sup>143</sup> Schlumberger recalled the two-front battle waged by the writers of the young review: "on one side, against the so-called Boulevard or serialized literature [littérature de journal], without roots or continuations; on the other against traditionalist literature which was enclosed in worn-out formulas."<sup>144</sup> The history of tensions between Gide and the Mercure--especially Remy de Gourmont--lends an aura of inevitability to the break that occurred soon after the formation of the NRF.

By 1914, the key members of the NRF had founded the publishing house of Gallimard, supported Jacques Copeau's Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, and regularly attended Paul Desjardin's Décade de Pontigny, thus spreading their influence broadly across the field of cultural production and establishing the NRF group as the avant-garde enterprise to be reckoned with.<sup>145</sup> In addition to eclipsing the Mercure de France as the epicenter of the literary avant-garde, one could also cite the seeds of a second Nietzsche-industry, which would bear fruit during the mid-1930s with the new translations by Geneviève Bianquis and others published by Gallimard.<sup>146</sup>

The specter of immoralism which haunted French letters after 1902 was openly cultivated by the writers of the NRF, and served to bolster their avant-garde reputation. In the eyes of many, Gide had formed a distinct school with which the

NRF's collaborators were often associated. Even those who began collaboration with Gide at a later date, such as Valéry Larbaud, tended to be sympathetic to Nietzsche. In 1910 Jean de Pierrefeu wrote in L'Opinion about the young "disciples" who had been drawn to Gide, their "master," focusing on the recent work of Jean Schlumberger, L'Inquiète Paternité as an "application" of Gide's immoralism, "a sort of symbolist novel where we see appear, under a hateful day, the immoralist of André Gide." As we have seen, wherever immoralism was invoked Nietzsche was not far behind:

You recognize the formula of Nietzsche: Live dangerously. M. Jean Schlumberger is impregnated with it, and he attaches to it this other credo which is swollen with consequences: Think dangerously. Truthfully, there is the originality that he takes from his maître André Gide.

It was neither unreasonable nor uncommon for such observers to reduce such writers as Schlumberger to the ideas of the more prominent Gide, who had for years himself been closely associated with Nietzsche. Moreover, the first issues of the Nouvelle revue française testified to the fact that enthusiasm for the works of Nietzsche, a striking characteristic of the group in its early years, was easily transported into their new project. The first issues of the Nouvelle revue française featured special sections where quotations from a variety of authors which, as Schlumberger declared later, "clearly marked what tendencies we reclaimed for ourselves."<sup>147</sup> It is significant, then, that this series of quotes united under the rubric "Textes" would feature several from Nietzsche, Stendhal, and Dostoyevsky. Clearly, even after 1909 the thought of Nietzsche continued to permeate the

thinking and, it would become clear, especially the reputation of the group.<sup>148</sup>

In addition to the presence of such suggestive quotations from the philosopher, several brief essays on Nietzsche soon appeared in the NRF. In particular, despite the negative reception that the book received by the radical right, Daniel Halévy's long-awaited biography, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, was greeted in 1909 with general enthusiasm by Jacques Copeau and others at the NRF. Indeed, Henri Ghéon had earlier praised "the remarkable brochure" which was Halévy's provocative Le Travail du Zarathoustra, which appeared in the Cahiers de la Quinzaine several months before the publication of the complete biography.<sup>149</sup> In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that this book, which had been panned by Gaston Deschamps of Le Temps and Pierre Lasserre of L'Action française, was championed by the writers at the NRF. "Daniel Halévy's book," noted Schlumberger, "belongs to that criticism that we could call: legitimate,--as opposed to the impassioned critique that we like today to find merely fruitful."<sup>150</sup> Yet, by 1909 Halévy appeared somewhat as a man of the past whose youthful enthusiasm for Nietzsche perhaps seemed compromised by his socialist commitments and his attempts at scholarly precision in his biography. Despite the fact that the biographer had on one occasion called Nietzsche a "saint," Schlumberger affirmed that "Daniel Halévy does not have the enthusiasm of a disciple. . . . The book of Daniel Halévy is not for young people."<sup>151</sup>

Like many of his colleagues, Schlumberger never believed that the works of Nietzsche were very suitable for the general literary marketplace. In fact, as a

representative of the avant-garde, Schlumberger most likely deplored the commercialization made of the philosopher at the hands of such novelists as Paul Adam and Daniel Lesueur. Addressed to a large public--indeed, the book had been published by the commercial publishing house of Calmann-Lévy--Halévy's biography surely overshot what should have been its natural target. "Alas, we tremble as soon as a book, even an excellent one like this, reconciles to the large public an oeuvre which was not made for it."

If this Vie de Nietzsche had been more hirsute, the chroniqueur of Le Temps would not have been tempted to review it; . . . But it is heinous to reproach Daniel Halévy for the jokes of M. Deschamps. Habit should have dulled irritation...<sup>152</sup>

The continuous tension between the restrained readership of the avant-garde and the great audience of journalism is clearly reproduced in Schlumberger's remarks.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, Halévy's biography broke new ground in Nietzsche scholarship by exposing Elisabeth as having manipulated for her own purposes certain facts about her brother's life. André Gide, who had made the acquaintance of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche in 1903, was immediately contacted by the philosopher's sister after the publication of Halévy's biography. Gide notified Ghéon of this communication: "Madame Förster has sent me some interesting papers, on the subject of the quarrel where she wished to see me take part clearly against Halévy;--I will show them to you."<sup>153</sup> It is unknown whose side Gide ultimately supported in this controversy.

Despite the apparent enmity between Halévy and Gide, the latter defended the biographer against the attacks of Lasserre. "I do not often read L'Action



française," Gide wrote in late-1909, "for fear of becoming a republican." "When [Gaston] Deschamps speaks of Nietzsche as in his last feuilleton, we know well that he is not playing the fool, that he cannot understand better; yes, but Lasserre!"

[B]etween his book and those of Nietzsche, Lasserre has felt a great deal of kinship. What is he going to invent against this book, a portrait of the son of a pastor written by a Jew?<sup>154</sup>

Indeed, perhaps to provoke those royalists and Catholics who sought to draw the philosopher into their camp, Halévy declared that Nietzsche's "hatred of Catholicism is instinctive and has far-off origins; always when he approaches it, he shudders."<sup>155</sup>

Other regular contributors to the NRF were less comfortable with the ideas of the German; yet these tended to be those who were somewhat peripheral to the inner workings of the review itself. As early as 1903 Claudel expressed serious misgivings to Gide about Nietzsche: "I don't understand your admiration for the flatulent Verhaeren--or for Nietzsche, although your pages on this agitated being are very interesting."<sup>156</sup> "How can minds as elevated as Gide and Jean Schlumberger admire a man like Nietzsche?" Claudel later asked Jacques Rivière. "The only book of Nietzsche I have been able to read entirely is Ecce Homo. But it is unbearable."<sup>157</sup> Yet others with earlier reservations about the philosopher had apparently resolved their difficulties: as Jacques Rivière wrote somewhat incredulously to Alain-Fournier in 1908, "You told me that your novel would be unconsciously nietzschéen."<sup>158</sup>

In short, the inauguration of the Nouvelle revue française under the exclusive leadership of Gide and his colleagues provided a new center for those with leftist avant-garde literary sympathies. The pugnacious nature of this new review prompted the retaliation of a number of different literary groups on the left and the right, and the fact that Nietzsche had become so closely associated with the NRF permitted some to attack the philosopher as means of undermining Gide and his friends.

### **Nietzsche, Naturism, and the NRF**

The split between the NRF group and the naturist writers who gravitated around Montfort's Les Marges was widened by an attack launched by Gide against the religious skepticism of Remy de Gourmont, the prominent literary critic of the Mercure de France. Some scholars, in an attempt to explain this curious attack on Gourmont, have cited the influence of Paul Claudel, who rejoiced in the controversy. Gide, after all, had never been a great defender of religious faith, and would never succumb to conversion like others at the NRF. From the perspective of distinctive literary strategies, a more illuminating explanation is possible: given the history of tensions between Gide and Gourmont, the gradual commercialization of the Mercure itself, and the fact that the NRF unabashedly presented itself as the avant-garde successor to a review that was hardly defunct, the actual outbreak of hostilities was virtually inevitable.

It is interesting to note that Gourmont and Gide were perhaps the two most visible and professed Nietzscheans linked to the avant-garde after the turn of the

century. Apollinaire once described Gourmont as a "younger and more knowledgeable, but idolatrous Renan. He kneels before Nietzsche."<sup>159</sup> Thus, while initially sparked by Gide's questionable criticism of Gourmont's alleged skepticism, the figure of Nietzsche was soon pulled into the fray. "Skepticism," Gide wrote of Gourmont, "is perhaps sometimes the beginning of wisdom; but it is often the end of art."<sup>160</sup> Perhaps to provoke Gourmont, Gide invoked at one point the example of the philosopher against the older critic, who claimed to be a disciple: "Nietzsche, when he amputates, always gets his hands bloody; one could say that Gourmont only operates on planches anatomiques."<sup>161</sup> In addition to the attack on skepticism, Gide was also trying to show how far Gourmont, a professed Nietzschean, was from the true meaning of the philosopher.

Eugène Montfort, who had steered clear of the naturist-symbolist conflict a decade earlier, was unavoidably entangled in the "false start" of the NRF in 1908. In his opinion, Gide's attack was inexcusable and represented the fashion-consciousness of the entire NRF group:

Some intelligences exist who, for each new intellectual fashion, were eager to dress themselves in this fashion, some sensibilities who, when a poet discovered a new manner of feeling, immediately felt in the same manner.<sup>162</sup>

The particular literary fashion at issue in this debate was the trend towards religious conversion among many French intellectuals. "M. Gide represents literary opportunism," Montfort accused acidly. "He is always à la mode."<sup>163</sup> To illustrate his point, Montfort noted a series of articles by Gide and Arnauld (Drouin), where a common theme was articulated: "There is an ensemble, it shows particular

preoccupations; for the moment, matters of faith and religion--of Protestant religion--and struggle against the spirit of skepticism."<sup>164</sup> Above all, Montfort wanted to show that the inner circle of the NRF was part of this trend towards religious conversion and the subsequent rejection of the skeptical spirit.

At this point the association of Gide and his friends with Nietzsche became highlighted. "[T]he so-called immoralist, the so-called nietzschéen, is a man for whom skepticism provoked horror," Montfort declared. "This immoralist is a furious moralist, the nietzschéen is a Christian, a shrill Christian."

And his revolt before Gourmont, that is the clamor of the Protestant, of the puritan of the Bible against Voltaire. The article of Arnould against [Anatole] France, the article of Gide on Gourmont, so many revolts [cabrements] against the Voltairian spirit, against the skeptical spirit. A curious repudiation of the former effort towards immoralism.<sup>165</sup>

Eugène Montfort and his naturist colleagues, who in their avowed classicism opted for a return to French sources and more concrete literary themes, had never welcomed Nietzsche into their cultural constellation. Of the myriad of literary groups which abounded after the turn of the century, the naturists were one of the most vociferous in their search for alternative French culture heroes. Montfort, who had himself never been anything but ambivalent towards the philosopher, began presenting him in negative terms in 1909. In an essay on Walt Whitman, for example, Montfort noted the similarities of the American with the German: "The poet of energy, of force, [and] of health will continue among us the work of Nietzsche [sic]." There were, however, important distinctions to be made: "He is very different from the German philosopher. . . . if they both sing of force, without

a doubt one will put it to worse use than the other."<sup>186</sup>

The attack on Gide and Drouin may also be read as an attack on the NRF as a whole, the members of which tended to mobilize against offensives directed against their brightest star. Montfort widened the scope of his attack by implicating Gide and his friends in the question of patriotism. By attacking skepticism with such zeal, Montfort explained, Gide attacked the French spirit itself: "For the most French spirit of France . . . is the spirit of skepticism, the Fronde spirit [l'esprit de fronde], the spirit of unbelief, the spirit of the démon."<sup>187</sup>

Montfort's attack on the false-Nietzschéisme of Gide and Drouin was taken very seriously at the Nouvelle revue française. André Ruyters responded to Montfort directly, especially regarding the latter's claim of an "opposition of nature" in the about-face effected by Gide: "The entire oeuvre of Gide, for a long time, should have given notice of this!" "More generally, has M. Montfort followed from such a distance from Nietzsche and all that his influence for ten years rescues and releases among us to have still not recognized that nothing is more moral, extracted from morality, and devoted to morality than Nietzschéisme?"

To what is he therefore responding in this Nietzschéisme--if one must call by this name that which lends itself to the most troublesome misunderstandings--if not to the effort and enterprise of the man who, sensing in himself the presence of a conscience which no longer commands theological authority, intends to create for himself a rule, laws, a whole ethical discipline, in a word a "morality," that is to say the art of reconciling the most unreasonable rights of the individual with social duty and the very rights of one's neighbor.<sup>188</sup>

The battle between the NRF and the naturists, the two most powerful non-royalist groups in the avant-garde, may be seen as a struggle for the distinctive symbols

with which one might conquer the hearts and minds of the population of young French writers in search of some degree of aesthetic unity. It was therefore incumbent upon Les Marges to indicate the excessive pugnaciousness and hostility of its counterpart: "M. André Gide, who last month attacked M. de Gourmont . . . this time lays hold of Jules Lemaître, who, it seems, had spoken badly of Luther and the Reformation."<sup>169</sup> "In June, with all its forces [the NRF] attacks M. de Gourmont. . . . in December, bang! new and brutal aggression... What then! What's going on? La Nouvelle revue française makes politics. Too much."<sup>170</sup> Montfort indicated the disarray of the literary field in "this transitional period, where one generation succeeds another," when he inaugurated a series of articles inquiring into "where the young people are going, this entire generation which has not attained twenty-five years and which seems so numerous, so active, and, one could say, so voracious."<sup>171</sup> As we have seen, what passed for an innocent description of the literary world quite often carried an implicit prescription of a desirable state of affairs in that world. Other writers for Les Marges joined in the attack on the NRF: in 1912 Georges Le Cardonnell spoke of how the "chapel of M. André Gide" was populated by "all too serious young men and a few young women. . . . a Protestant [huguenote] and naked chapel . . . [with] some beautiful intellectual distractions."<sup>172</sup>

A particular point of tension concerned the fate of the promising young writer Charles-Louis Philippe who, after being snubbed (unjustly, many believed) in the competition for the Prix Goncourt, died of typhoid in 1909. Associated with

both naturism and symbolism, Philippe's actual literary allegiances became a significant bone of contention after the novelist's death--both groups stood to gain by claiming the writer as one of their own. The specter of Philippe would function strategically in the apparently inevitable break between the NRF and the naturists in 1910. Eager to reclaim this beloved writer as one of their own, the Nouvelle revue française group published selected letters of the late writer suggesting his proximity to Gide and his circle. Indeed, the selections could not have been more strategically chosen. "Because I have read Nietzsche, oh my beautiful heart," Philippe wrote to the naturist Henri Vandeputte in 1900, "he is a remedy to my ills, a great cordial which makes me very strong."<sup>173</sup> Since the reading of Nietzsche had been discouraged among naturists from the start, perhaps Philippe was not of their ilk. A year later Philippe again wrote to Vandeputte: "I am a bachelor once again and feel full of force for the life to come, with some Nietzsche in my bag and all my thunder of the God of will. . . . And I am perhaps closer to Nietzsche than to Dostoyevsky."<sup>174</sup>

Montfort, who had known all about these letters, publicized Philippe's penchant for Nietzsche a year before, but in different terms that might serve to defuse the later NRF publication: "The influence of Dostoyevsky, to whom he had submitted in his first youth, yielded now to the domination of Nietzsche whose reading had disturbed [fortement agité] him a great deal."<sup>175</sup> The NRF persisted in its appropriation of Philippe's memory, however, and published another letter where the novelists criticized an early novel of Montfort. This too prompted a reply

in Les Marges, where Montfort waged his ongoing war against Gide and company by suggesting the impropriety of the latter's tactics: "The Nouvelle revue française," he informed his readers, "publishes a letter of Charles-Louis Philippe, in which one of our earliest works, Chair, was critiqued very vigorously."

We do not hold very much by this work, written at age twenty--we truly hope to have made some progress since then--and the criticism does not appear unjust. What seems less proper . . . is seeing the N.R.F. carefully publish letters of this fashion about Philippe's friends. Would he himself have approved of this impression? Let M. Gide suppose for an instant that there existed some letters of the author of Bubu where his work, that of M. Gide, and let's include his recent work, is judged without indulgence. If Les Marges published those letters, what would [Gide] say?<sup>176</sup>

Let Gide be reassured, Montfort concluded with a superior air, that "we will not follow the N.R.F. along this crooked path [dans ce chemin pas très droit].--But many people are not far from thinking that the N.R.F. is a bit too helpful [servie] of the poor Philippe since he died. One need not be abusive."<sup>177</sup> Montfort's friend Lucien Jean also came to the defense of the deceased Philippe, whose novel Bubu de Montparnasse he described as oscillating between the extremes of "Russian emotion" and "Nietzschean heroism." Nevertheless, those with an interest in appropriating the memory of Philippe would read the novel in terms of only one of these poles and produce an image of the author which identified him with the Gidean avant-garde: "But the admirers do not hesitate: this will be a Nietzschean book, it will be called Bubu, and Philippe will be 'the author of Bubu.'"<sup>178</sup>

All of these volleys between the NRF and Les Marges--where Nietzsche was often invoked as a means of cultural warfare--would continue until the outbreak of



war in 1914, and constituted one of the most notable struggles among those literary rivals attempting to lead the post-symbolist avant-garde after 1902. That Nietzsche and the NRF team became so closely associated would provide the social background for a large-scale naturist reprisal: the 1911 survey conducted by Jean Viollis which questioned many writers on the influence of Nietzsche in their work. It will be demonstrated in the next chapter that, despite the apparent innocence of such a poll, the population of those selected to posit opinions was strictly controlled to produce a general response corroborating that of most naturists: with the reputations of both Nietzsche and the NRF so intimately entwined, showing the impotence of the former would surely imply some powerful commentary on the latter. Perhaps in response to the enquête on Nietzsche's influence conducted by La Grande revue, Jean Schlumberger wrote that "Those who believe that our national genius is compromised because we read Nietzsche or Tolstoy, perhaps they will be reassured if they knew that in Germany alone, Verlaine has tempted twenty or thirty translators."<sup>179</sup>

## Notes

1. Jean Pierrot, The Decadent Imagination, 1880-1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 241.
2. Eugène Montfort, "Un romantique que nous pouvons aimer: Gérard Nerval" Les Marges novembre 1903 (1), 4.
3. Maurice Le Blond, "Zola devant les jeunes" La Plume 15 février 1898 (9), 108.
4. Edmond de Goncourt, quoted in Roger Gouze, Les Bêtes à Goncourt (Paris: Hachette, 1973), 15.
5. The First Ten: J.-K. Huysmans (president), Léon Henrique, Gustave Geoffroy, Octave Mirbeau, Paul Margueritte, Rosny aîné, Rosny jeune, Elémir Bourges, Léon Daudet, Lucien Descaves. Cf. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Littérature française: le XXe siècle, 1896-1920 (Paris: Arthaud, 1973), 156-157.
6. Edmond de Goncourt, "Testament" in Léon Deffoux, Chronique de l'Académie Goncourt (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie., 1929), 190.
7. These books were: John-Antoine Nau, Force ennemie (Éditions de la Plume, 1903), and Louis Pergaud, De Goupil à Margot (Société du Mercure de France, 1910). Of the remaining eight prize-winning books, two were published at Plon (1906, 1907), two at Grasset (1911, 1912), and the rest at Albin Michel (1904), Flammarion (1905), Émile Paul (1908), and Fasquelle (1909). Élisabeth Parinet, "Le prix des Goncourt" in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds. Histoire de l'édition française: le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 493.
8. Friedrich Nietzsche, Nietzsche Contra Wagner in The Portable Nietzsche, 665.
9. In 1910 a book published by the Mercure, Louis Pergaud's De Goupil à Margot, won the Prix Goncourt. Cf. Élisabeth Parinet, "L'édition littéraire, 1890-1914", and "Le prix des Goncourt," and Claire Lesage, "Les petites revues littéraires, 1890-1900" in Histoire de l'édition française, IV: 163, 165, 492; Jean-Yves Mollier, L'Argent et les lettres: Histoire du capitalisme d'édition, 1880-1920 (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 456-461.
10. Cf. "Académie Française--Les Prix de Vertu" Le Temps 21 novembre 1902, supplément 2.
11. "Oeuvres complètes de Frédéric Nietzsche," Mercure de France septembre-octobre 1905 (57).

12. This figure is cited by Capitaine breveté Méra, "Nietzsche et ses pensées sur la guerre" Le Spectateur militaire 1914 (no. 562), 295n.

13. This advertisement appeared in the last pages of Vers et prose septembre-novembre 1908 (4), and in several issues thereafter.

14. Pierre Bourdieu, Les Règles de l'art, 355-356.

15. Ironically, the editorial offices of La Revue immoraliste were located in a building owned by the Catholic Church. Cf. Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France (New York: Vintage, 1968), 264.

16. Shattuck, 193; Théri Foulc, ed., Le Surmâle by Alfred Jarry (Paris: Editions Le Terrain vague, 1977), 174n; R.W. Flint, ed., Marinetti: Selected Writings (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1972), 15-16.

17. Charles Morice, contribution to Le Cardonnel and Vellay, 60.

18. André Salmon, Souvenirs sans fin: Première epoch (1903-1908) (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 255.

19. Jules de Gaultier, "Frédéric Nietzsche" L'Illustration 15 septembre 1900 (116), 172.

20. Paris-Parisien 1896 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1896), 333.

21. Camille Mauclair, Servitude et grandeur littéraires (Paris: Ollendorff, 1922), 93. The author does not cite the date of this incident.

22. Henri Lichtenberger, "La Littérature nietzschéenne" La Revue encyclopédique Larousse 6 janvier 1900, 2.

23. Cf. L'Illustration 23 mai 1903.

24. Émilien Carassus, Le Snobisme et les lettres françaises de Paul Bourget à Marcel Proust, 1884-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), 363.

25. Julien Benda, "Les livres" La Revue blanche janvier 1902 (27), 78.

26. Remy de Gourmont, contribution to "L'Influence des lettres scandinaves" La Revue blanche 15 février 1897.

27. Abel Hermant, "Le Nietzsche des salons" Le Figaro 29 mai 1904, 1.

28. Cf. Ringer, 230; Gustave Belot, "Les principes de la morale positiviste et la conscience contemporaine" in Alphonse Darlu, et al., Études sur la philosophie

morale au XIXe siècle: leçons professées à l'École des hautes études sociales (Paris: Alcan, 1904), 8, 9-10; Louis Weber, "La Morale d'Epictète et les besoins présents de l'enseignement moral" Revue de métaphysique et de morale mars 1909 (17), 216; Abel Rey, La philosophie moderne (Paris: Flammarion, 1911), 302.

29. Marcel Proust to Madame de Noailles, January 15, 1904, in Proust, Correspondance, 1904 (Paris: Plon, 1978), IV: 38.

30. Paris-Parisien 1902 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1902).

31. Henry Roujon, "Nietzschéisme" L'Illustration 8 février 1908, 103.

32. Remy de Gourmont, "La mort de Nietzsche" Épilogues, 1899-1901 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1915), 189-190.

33. Remy de Gourmont, "Nietzsche et la princesse Bovary" Épilogues, 1902-1904 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1916), 131.

34. Cf. Jean de Gourmont, "Nietzsche à Sorrente" Festin d'Esopé 1903, 26-29; "L'Idée du Retour éternel dans les religions de l'Inde" Mercure de France 1 octobre 1905 (57), 338-356.

35. Jean de Gourmont, "Les Nietzschéenes" Mercure de France juillet 1903 (47), 108.

36. Ibid., 111.

37. Ibid., 101.

38. Ibid.

39. E. Ledrain quoted in de Gourmont, 101.

40. Ibid.

41. Jean de Gourmont, 102.

42. Gaston Deschamps, "Livres des femmes" Le Temps 19 avril 1903, 3.

43. Ibid., 108.

44. René Doumic, "Romans de femmes" Revue des deux mondes 15 mai 1906, 449.

45. Ibid., 451.

46. This play was first performed at the Comédie-Française on November 14, 1906, and was performed a total of 19 times throughout the year. Cf. Paul Adam, Les Mouettes in L'illustration théâtrale: journal d'actualités dramatiques 24 novembre 1906, 1-32. See also Gaston Sorbet, "Les Mouettes à la Comédie-Française" L'illustration théâtrale 24 novembre 1906, printed on front and back cover; Edmond Stoullig, Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique. 1906 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1907), 76-79, 89.

47. Henri Albert, "Nietzsche et M. Paul Adam" Mercure de France 1 décembre 1906 (64), 385.

48. Paul Valéry to Henri Albert, postmarked December 10, 1902, "Four Letters on Nietzsche" in Masters and Friends (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 262.

49. Paul Léautaud, "18 août 1905," Journal littéraire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1955), I: 185.

50. Paul Van Tieghem, "Le Surhomme dans les romans de Gabriele d'Annunzio" Revue du mois 10 juin 1907 (3), 658.

51. J.-L. Charpentier, "Les Médecins et l'idéal scientifique à la scène" Revue du mois 10 octobre 1908 (6), 477-478.

52. René Doumic, "Le théâtre déliquescent" Revue des deux mondes 15 décembre 1906, 912.

53. Ibid., 913-914.

54. Robert A. Nye, The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1975), 85, 161-162, 183.

55. Cf. Charles Arnaud, "Romans, contes et nouvelles" Polybiblion: revue bibliographique universelle 1903 (98), 289-291, 309-310; Polybiblion 1908 (113), 295-297.

56. Anonymous, "Notes et notules: Pages choisies de Nietzsche" Journal des débats 11 novembre 1910, 941.

57. Jacques Bernard Besançon, Essai sur le théâtre d'Henry Bataille (Groningue: Librairie J.-B. Wolters, 1928), 83-90.

58. Edmond Stoullig, Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique. 1910 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1911), 178-182, 187. The American writer noted that "It is unquestionable that the French public takes more interest in any other German

philosopher." Anonymous, "Nietzsche on a Parisian Stage" The Saturday Review 14 January 1911 (111), 44-45.

59. René Lalou, Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine (Paris: G. Crès, 1931), 529-531.

60. Stoullig, 178-179.

61. Stoullig, Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique. 1911 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1912), 200.

62. Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 164.

63. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 371.

64. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage janvier 1899 (18), 55, 62-63.

65. Romain Rolland, Mémoires et fragments du journal (Paris: Albin Michel, 1956), 106-107.

66. Sidney D. Braun, André Suarès: Hero Among Heroes (Columbia, SC: French Literature Publications Company, 1978), 65-66. Cf. also Cette Ame Ardente. Choix de lettres de Suarès à Romain Rolland (Paris: Albin Michel, 1954), 322-323.

67. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Mes mémoires (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 114.

68. Jacques Rivière to Henri Fournier, 28 août 1906, Correspondance, 327.

69. Jean Schlumberger, Éveils (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), 148-149.

70. Michel Arnauld, "Notes sur Brunetière" Antée 1 février 1907 (3), 887.

71. Lucien Herr, quoted in André Gide, "Marcel Drouin" La Table ronde mai 1949 (17), 709.

72. Letter from Marcel Drouin to André Gide, quoted in Gide, "Marcel Drouin", 722.

73. Renée Lang, André Gide et la pensée allemande (Paris: Egloff, 1949), 89, 211n.

74. André Gide to Marcel Drouin, 30 mars 1898, cited in Peter Schnyder, "Gide lecteur de Nietzsche" Travaux littéraires 1990 (3), 207-208.

75. André Gide to Marcel Drouin, 30 mai 1898, quoted in Delay, 257.

76. Jacques Rivière to Henri Fournier, Janvier 1905, Correspondance, 1905-1914 Paris: Gallimard, 1926), I: 9.
77. Henri Fournier to Jacques Rivière, 23 septembre 1905, Correspondance, 73.
78. Cf. Henri Ghéon, "André Gide" Mercur de France mai 1897 (22), 237-262.
79. Jacques Rivière to Henri Fournier, 20 septembre 1906, Correspondance, 351.
80. Henri Ghéon, contribution to Le Cardonnel and Vellay, 94.
81. Le Cardonnel and Vellay, 86.
82. Anonymous [André Gide], "Notes" L'Ermitage octobre 1900 (21), 320.
83. André Gide, Journal, 1889-1939 (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 136-137.
84. Francis Jammes to André Gide, juillet 1900, Correspondance, 1893-1938 (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 163.
85. André Gide to Marcel Drouin, 28 mars 1898, cited in Schnyder, 208.
86. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, "Essai sur L'Immoraliste" La Revue blanche 1902 (28), 414.
87. Lucien Jean, Parmi les hommes (Paris: Mercure de France, 1910), 277,  
278. Cf. also V. Biétrix, review of André Gide, L'Immoraliste, Revue de philosophie février 1903 (3), 281-282.
88. Michel Arnauld, "Les livres" La Revue blanche décembre 1902 (29), 471, 472.
89. Jacques Copeau, "Quatre proses: A l'Immoraliste" L'Ermitage novembre 1903 (28), 212-216. See also Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du mois: Les lectures du mois" L'Ermitage août 1902 (25), 155-158.
90. Édouard Ducoté, contribution to Le Cardonnel and Vellay, 273.
91. Kevin O'Neill, "Gide and 'L'Ermitage,' 1896-1906" A.U.M.L.A.: Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association Novembre 1963, 273. See the inside cover of L'Ermitage January 1902.
92. O'Neill, 273.
93. André Gide to Paul Valéry, October 19, 1899, The Gide/Valéry Letters: 1890-1942 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 217.

94. O'Neill, 267.
95. Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du mois" L'Ermitage septembre 1903 (28), 65-66.
96. Ibid., 66.
97. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage novembre 1899 (19), 411-412.
98. Ibid., 412.
99. Michel Arnauld [Marcel Drouin], "Frédéric Nietzsche" La Revue blanche 1900, 113.
100. Ibid., 120.
101. Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du mois: Les lectures du mois" L'Ermitage décembre 1902 (25), 464. The doctor, Henri-Louis Vangeon, was born on March 15, 1875, and began publishing under the name Henri Ghéon in 1896. From 1897 he was linked to the circle of André Gide.
102. Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du mois: Les lectures du mois" L'Ermitage novembre 1902 (25), 398.
103. Henri Ghéon, contribution to Le Cardonnel and Vellay, 97.
104. Henri Ghéon, "Dieu à Paris: romantisme et classicisme nietzschéens" Antée 1 janvier 1907 (3), 856.
105. Henri Ghéon, "Chroniques du mois: Les lectures" L'Ermitage mars 1904 (29), 225.
106. Louis Dumont-Wilden, "Réflexions sur l'immoralisme" Antée 1 mars 1907 (3), 1033.
107. Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage janvier 1899 (18), 63-65.
108. Michel Arnauld, "Les livres" La Revue blanche septembre 1902 (29), 71.
109. Henri Ghéon, "Chronique du mois: Les lectures du mois" L'Ermitage septembre 1902 (25), 235, 237. Schlumberger also remembered the importance of Dostoyevsky in the 1890s for the young NRF group. Cf. Schlumberger, Éveils, 146.
110. Henri Ghéon, "Notes: Le roman" N.R.F. 1913 (10), 467.
111. André Gide, quoted in Béatrice Didier, Un Dialogue à distance: Gide et Du Bos (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976), 46.



112. Bourdieu, Les Règles de l'art, 370-371.
113. Émile Zola, quoted in Bourdieu, Les Règles de l'art, 136.
114. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Littérature française: le XXe siècle, 1896-1920 (Paris: Arthaud, 1975), 171-174.
115. Cf. the lists of names supporting Zola in Livre d'hommage des lettres françaises à Émile Zola (Paris: Société libre d'Édition des Gens de Lettres, 1898). The naturists were represented, in order of appearance, by Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér, Maurice Le Blond, Eugène Montfort, and Émmanuel Delbousquet, while signing members of the future NRF group included Marcel Drouin, Jean Schlumberger, André Gide, Charles-Louis Philippe, and André Ruyters.
116. Cf. Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér, L'Affaire Dreyfus. La Révolution en marche (Paris: Stock, 1898); Maurice Le Blond, É. Zola devant les jeunes (Paris: Aux bureaux de La Plume, 1898).
117. Cf. Jean Viollis, "Observations sur le Naturisme" Mercur de France février 1897 (21), 304-314; "Echos: Une lettre de M. Paul Fort," MF mai 1897 (21), 627-628; "Echos: Une lettre de M. Jean Viollis," MF avril 1897 (22), 187-188.
118. Henri Ghéon, "Le naturisme en danger ou comment les symbolistes inventèrent Francis Jammes" L'Ermitage août 1898 (17), 123-129. See the letters of Maurice Le Blond and Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér in "Tribune libre" La Plume 15 juillet 1898 (9), 463-464.
119. Paul Fort, "Tribune libre" La Plume 1 août 1898 (9), 479.
120. Maurice Le Blond, "La parade littéraire: Talents nouveaux" La Plume 15 août 1898 (9), 501-503.
121. André Gide, "Lettre à Angèle" L'Ermitage septembre 1898 (17), 212.
122. Ibid., 213.
123. André Gide, "Notes: Lettre à M. Saint-Georges de Bouhéliér," L'Ermitage septembre 1900 (21), 239-240.
124. Daniel Halévy, The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche J.M. Hone, trans. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), 320.
125. Lucien Jean, "Notes: Les hommes forts" L'Ermitage janvier 1904 (29), 70.
126. Lucien Jean to Eugène Montfort, November 6, 1906, reprinted in Louis Thomas, Souvenirs sur Jean Moréas (Paris: Sansot et cie., 1911), 241.

127. Lucien Jean, Parmi les hommes, 314.
128. André Gide, detached pages (1911), Journal I: 301.
129. Schlumberger, Éveils, 184.
130. Ibid., 187.
131. Ibid., 188.
132. Ibid.
133. Jean Schlumberger, "La Nouvelle revue française (1909)" in Oeuvres (1903-1912) (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), I: 139.
134. T[ancrède de]. V[isan]., "Notes: 'La Nouvelle revue française'" Vers et prose septembre-novembre 1908 (4), 2
135. As Gide wrote to Henri Ghéon on January 7, 1898, "Je n'ai point reçu le dernier Ermitage; et ne sais si Les Déracinés y ont été l'occasion de quelque étude particulière; si non,--peut-être aurez-vous la gentillesse d'y porter mes quelques feuilles. Le Mercure est trop grand pour elles." Correspondance, 1897-1903 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 148.
136. Jean Schlumberger, Éveils, 185.
137. Ibid., 153.
138. Henri Ghéon, quoted in Henri Massis, Maurras et notre temps (Paris: La Palatine, 1951), I: 127. See also an exchange between Gide and Maurras regarding Barrès' Les Déracinés in Gide, "Chronique du mois: La querelle du peuplier" L'Ermitage novembre 1903 (28), 222-228.
139. Ibid.
140. Cf. Jack J. Roth, The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 101. Gide and the NRF group were not content with provoking the radical right, as is evidenced by the exchange between the NRF and L'Indépendance of Georges Sorel. Cf. Philoxène Bisson [Eugène Montfort], "Revues" Les Marges mars 1912 (9), 132-133.
141. Henri Massis, D'André Gide à Marcel Proust (Paris: Lardanchet, 1948), 201-202.
142. Robert Soucy, Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 96-97.

143. Anna Boschetti, "Légitimité littéraire et stratégies éditoriales" in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds. Histoire de l'édition française: le livre concurrencé, 1900-1950 (Paris: Promodis, 1986), IV: 499.

144. Schlumberger, "La Nouvelle revue française," I: 140.

145. Mollier, 466.

146. Cf. Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra M. Betz, trans. (1936); Ecce Homo Alexandre Viallette, trans. (1939); Le Gai savoir Alexandre Viallette, trans. (1937); Lettres choisies Alexandre Viallette, trans. (1937); La Naissance de la philosophie à l'époque de la tragédie grecque Geneviève Bianquis, trans. (1940); La Volonté de puissance Geneviève Bianquis, trans. (1936).

147. Schlumberger, Éveils, 194.

148. Cf. "Textes", Nouvelle revue française janvier 1909 (1), 91; 1909 (1), 457. Yet as Auguste Anglès has observed, such references to Nietzsche and other foreign writers declined sharply after 1911. Cf. Auguste Anglès, André Gide et le premier groupe de la Nouvelle revue française: L'Age critique, 1911-1912 (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 227-228.

149. Henri Ghéon, "Ecce Homo, ou 'Le Cas Nietzsche'" NRF 1909-10 (2), 165.

150. Jean Schlumberger, "Notes: La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche" NRF 1909-10 (2), 421-422.

151. Ibid., 422.

152. Ibid, 422-423.

153. André Gide à Henri Ghéon, 26 octobre 1910, Correspondance, 1904-1944 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 765-766. It is evident that Gide had little regard for Halévy. When the latter broke with the Cahiers de la Quinzaine team in 1910 after Péguy's caustic response to the former's "Apologie pour notre passé,"

154. André Gide, "Journal sans dates" NRF décembre 1909 (2), 407-408.

155. Daniel Halévy, The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche, 261.

156. Paul Claudel to André Gide, 7 August 1903, The Correspondence between Paul Claudel and André Gide, 1899-1926 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), 37.

157. Paul Claudel to Jacques Rivière, 8 octobre 1910, Cahiers Paul Claudel 12 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 167-168.

158. Jacques Rivière to Henri Fournier, Correspondance, 1908, 9.
159. Guillaume Apollinaire, Oeuvres en prose complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), II: 1263. This originally appeared in Le Festin d'Esopé août 1904.
160. André Gide, "L'Amateur de M. Remy de Gourmont" NRF avril 1910 (3), 430.
161. Ibid., 431.
162. Eugène Montfort, "Mélanges: Gide contre Gourmont" Les Marges mai 1910 (5), 159.
163. Ibid., 159.
164. Ibid., 162.
165. Ibid., 163.
166. Eugène Montfort, "Mélanges: A propos de Walt Whitman" Les Marges juillet 1909 (4), 10.
167. Ibid., 163-164.
168. André Ruyters, "Notes: A propos d'un article de M. Montfort" NRF juillet 1910 (4), 112.
169. Philoxène Bisson [Eugène Montfort], "Revue" Les Marges juillet 1910 (6), 70.
170. Philoxène Bisson [Eugène Montfort], "Les Marges" Les Marges janvier 1911 (7), 65.
171. Eugène Montfort, "Notre nouveau siècle" Les Marges novembre 1910 (6), 186.
172. Georges le Cardonnell, "Les Romanciers" Les Marges janvier 1912 (9), 58-59.
173. Charles-Louis Philippe, "Lettres de jeunesse de Charles-Louis Philippe: A Henri Vandeputte" NRF juin 1911 (5), 674.
174. Ibid., 685, 687.
175. Eugène Montfort, "Charles-Louis Philippe" Les Marges janvier 1910 (5), 20.

176. E[ugène]. M[ontfort]., "Revue" Les Marges mars 1911 (7), 137.

177. Ibid. Montfort would take a final shot at Gide years later in his history of contemporary French literature, where he described his rival as a "subtle author, curious, but deceiving, sophisticated and with une pensée fuyante, affligé de sérieuses tares morales et intellectuelles, écrivain d'ailleurs surfait." Cf. Eugène Montfort, "Le Roman" in Vingt-cinq ans de littérature française (Paris: Librairie de France, 1920), I: 269.

178. Jean, Parmi les hommes, 314.

179. Jean Schlumberger, "Notes: traductions" NRF mars 1911 (5), 482.

## **CHAPTER NINE: THE TWILIGHT OF AN IDOL: EXORCISING NIETZSCHE AND LES NIETZSCHÉENS**

In 1919 a professor of literature at the Sorbonne, Fernand Baldensperger, noted that in literary life "resistance to the overman had been one of the characteristics of the Avant-guerre."<sup>1</sup> This astute assessment of the cultural condition of France demands further clarification. We have seen how Nietzsche was, from 1891 until about 1898, virtually the exclusive property of the largely Dreyfusard literary avant-garde. The publication of his translated collected work beginning in 1898 at once diffused Nietzsche's philosophy to a larger product as it defused its once purely avant-garde potential. The coincidence of this diffusion with the intellectual cleavage of the Dreyfus Affair prompted some conservative and royalist writers to employ the philosophy of Nietzsche as a weapon in their own politico-literary projects against those of the Dreyfusards. Concurrently, the diffusion of Nietzsche to a wider audience entailed the apparent banalization of his thought as explicitly Nietzschean ideas became integrated into commercial bourgeois literature. These last two phenomena surely contributed to the growing uneasiness of official socialists, many of whom had once embraced his philosophy only to reject him around 1902. The subsequent revolutionary syndicalist fascination with the philosopher was only one factor in its continuing struggle against the socialist establishment.

Between 1910 and 1911 established segments of the intellectual field moved to exorcise the specter of Zarathustra as both an expression of growing nationalism and a form of intellectual housekeeping. Mainstream novelists and

poets as well as established socialists and conservatives took steps to discredit both Nietzsche and his followers. The outbreak of the War in 1914 retroactively vindicated these attacks on Nietzsche, who would himself soon become identified as the philosopher of German aggression. This is not to assert that the wholesale rise in nationalism after 1910 had no effect on the rejection of Nietzsche during this period. Indeed, as a relatively autonomous sphere the intellectual field was certainly susceptible to the realities of international politics. However, such external crises were typically translated into the logic of the field itself, rendering Nietzsche excommunicable for reasons only partly explained by the general resurgence of French nationalism. In short, the backlash against Nietzsche after 1910 may be seen as related to internal considerations of the field itself--as a form of intellectual housekeeping whereby both Nietzsche and his troublesome champions were made to feel the power of established intellectual groups bent on recouping lost power and prestige. Initiated as a specifically avant-garde phenomenon, Nietzscheanism would return fully to this original marginalization by 1918.

The collapse of the symbolist avant-garde around the turn of the century resulted, among other things, in the loss of the monopoly on Nietzsche that such journals as Mercure de France had enjoyed throughout the 1890s. In many ways the success of the avant-garde Nietzsche industry was its own undoing, for translating the works of the philosopher and therefore making them available to the general intellectual field inevitably led to what were considered

inappropriate uses of his ideas. As we have seen, on one front the leftist representation of Nietzsche cultivated by the literary avant-garde had been challenged by the right-wing and classicist image propagated primarily by writers associated with the Action Française, a new avant-garde of the early-twentieth century. In addition, while writers such as Henri Albert had celebrated the fact that Nietzsche's ideas, like the writings of the avant-garde, would never appeal to the general literary market, after 1902 a number of novels and plays appeared that explicitly invoked Nietzschean philosophy in the arena of the general bourgeois public. This new bourgeois front against the avant-garde image of Nietzsche constituted a violation of the entire autodefinition of the dominated sector and the image of Nietzsche it had helped to construct.

However, it must be stressed, between 1908 and 1914 it is difficult to describe the continuing experience of the French with Nietzsche except in terms of struggle. Some sympathetic observers even declared that by 1908 the influence of Nietzsche was not all that significant outside of Paris. Marcel Ray, a former student of Charles Andler now teaching German at the Université de Montpellier, informed his friend Valéry Larbaud about a question a student had recently asked him in class: "Sir, who is this Nietzsche at question in the text? Isn't he a chemist from the epoch of Lavoisier?"--"No, I responded simply, he is the greatest German prose stylist since Goethe."<sup>2</sup> Within the royalist movement itself one notes a strong tendency towards the rejection of the philosopher whereas previously there had simply been disagreement. In 1908 the Revue



critique des idées et des livres was launched and would supplant the Revue de l'Action française as the primary organ of Maurrasian royalist thought. Indeed, despite Maurras' own misgivings, the Revue critique would generate widespread interest in the novelist Stendhal, who would be seized upon as a French substitute for Nietzsche by many young royalists. In many ways, therefore, a slight split was therefore effected between the older royalists (Lasserre, Valois, Bainville) who championed Nietzsche, and the young ones (Henri Martineau, Henri Massis, Alfred de Tarde) who advocated a truly French model. As Alfred Capus wrote, Stendhal was yet another antidote to Rousseau and Tolstoy: all that was strong in Nietzsche and Ibsen was already present in Stendhal and, unlike the German and the Norwegian, the French writer's thought led not to anarchy or individualism, but to the highest civilization.<sup>3</sup>

### **Thunder on the Right: Symbolic Violence and the Culture Debate, 1908-1911**

In many ways, with the decline of literary cosmopolitanism and the renewed interest in classicism, French cultural producers declared war on Germany as early as the late-1890s. That is, while the rest of the nation would have to wait until 1914 for the outbreak of actual hostilities, many French writers had been engaging the enemy with less tangible weapons for years. While T  odor de Wyzewa had indicated the kinship between Nietzsche and Bismarck in the 1890s, this theme would be resurrected in 1909 by Henri Andrillon. "We will see, in the course of this study that the expansion of the Germanic race can have, for us, the French, formidable consequences," Andrillon wrote. "[T]he

Germanic race believes itself superior to all others and . . . has the will to establish its supremacy over all."<sup>4</sup> This chauvinism springs directly from its intellectual and cultural tradition, especially from "Hegel and Nietzsche [who] unveil for us the foundation of the Germanic soul."<sup>5</sup> "What is good and healthy is la force. . . . The morality of masters prescribes being strong, being hard on inferiors and on oneself, being pitiless." To make his point very clear, Andrillon cited a striking "identity between the theories of Nietzsche on the one hand, and, on the other, the acts or theories of Bismarck, Moltke."<sup>6</sup> In short, "all Germans tiresomely repeat that the Germanic race is predestined to dominate the universe[,] and Nietzsche justifies a social state where the strong reduce the weak to slavery."<sup>7</sup>

The use that some writers associated with the Action Française made of Nietzsche fell under heavy fire both from Catholic critics from outside as well as from young writers from within the royalist movement. In early 1910 a writer for La Revue critique des idées et des livres took issue with a contemporary who asserted the mutual benefits to be found in the writings of Barrès and Nietzsche. Among the "'most immediately useful'" teachers, "M. [Gonzague] de Reynold names Maurice Barrès, [which] we can only encourage and le féliciter; but we no longer follow when he recommends Nietzsche."

[S]urely, Nietzsche is no longer democratic anarchism, but he is a new form of anarchism. One should not confuse brute, undisciplined Force, with the Authority which acts in accordance with a precise goal, the public good.<sup>8</sup>

Undermining the credibility of Nietzsche in conservative circles entailed breaking

apart the established cultural constellations that permitted the philosopher access to the right-wing intellectual pool. The common link with Barrès had to be broken by demonstrating how Nietzsche was no longer a fitting complement to la doctrine barrésienne.

In 1910 a more direct attack was launched by the Abbé Jules Pierre in Avec Nietzsche à l'assaut du Christianisme, where the cleric charged that the Action Française had directly employed the ideas of Nietzsche in its attack on Catholicism.<sup>9</sup> Such an attack by representatives of Catholicism was not new, for the royalists had always to contend with charges of anti-Christianism. In fact, two years earlier a famous attack was launched by the Abbé Lugan in his book, L'Action française et l'Idée chrétienne, which elicited the lengthy responses of Lucien Moreau and others.<sup>10</sup> According to Jules Pierre, the largest "School of Nietzscheism" in France could be found at the heart of the Action Française, which had hypocritically "affected the most beautiful zeal for the defense of the persecuted religion!"<sup>11</sup> Not only was the entire editorial staff of the review composed of atheists, but it had the audacity to cite and recommend the works such "Atheist Nietzscheans" as Jules de Gaultier, Remy de Gourmont, and Georges Vacher de Lapouge, and to salute regularly as "Masters and Half-Masters" such "Nietzscheans before Nietzsche" as Pierre Bayle, Voltaire, Goethe, Stendhal, Proudhon, and Saint-Beuve.<sup>12</sup>

All involved with the royalist movement, Pierre contended, "salute in Nietzsche the prophet of the new Gospel."<sup>13</sup> Not only was such a stance

dangerous from the point of view of the national religion, but it even posed a threat to the national spirit in general. Indeed, for Pierre each of these concerns was intimately bound up with the other. "Let's note in passing that Nietzsche, whatever M. Maurras says, is not a Slav, but a pure Saxon Prussian, the son and grandson on both sides of Protestant pastors."<sup>14</sup>

Following an angry response by Maurras, Pierre expanded his denunciation of the royalist movement beyond its apparent kinship with Nietzsche. "Have I slandered the Action Française by accusing it of marching, with Nietzsche, in the assault on Christianity?" Pierre asked in 1914. "He [Maurras] declares that the mere title of my work 'Avec Nietzsche à l'assaut du Christianisme' [sic] 'was laughable.'"<sup>15</sup> The fact that several royalists had distanced themselves from the German did not alter Pierre's fundamental charge: "Doesn't it happen frequently that one affects, through the author's vanity, to treat with the most disdain those to whom one is aware of having borrowed the most?" "We see that for M. C. Maurras as for Nietzsche, the idea of the fraternity of men is a barbarism."<sup>16</sup> Lasserre's La Morale de Nietzsche was also quite suspect: "First of all, this little book is 159 pages long: that is more than enough to poison many young minds, because the Nietzschean poison counts among the most virulent: it is properly hydrocyanic acid."<sup>17</sup> That Lasserre's book had been serialized in L'Action française--and, moreover, that the author had been given a chair at the Institut de l'Action Française--suggested that the royalist movement was "more than sufficiently solidarized

with these published and reedited ideas, without having ever seriously retracted them." All of these examples contributed to Pierre's conclusion that "le nietzschéisme is the common mark of all the teachers of the Action Française, and it still remains!"<sup>18</sup>

There was yet another book published in 1910 that engaged directly the reception of Nietzsche in French intellectual life and, more importantly, predicted the happy end of that influence: Victor de Pallarès' Le Crépuscule d'une idole: Nietzsche, Nietzschéisme, Nietzschéens.<sup>19</sup> While primarily presenting a critique of the works of Nietzsche--with the apparent hope of bringing about the very "twilight" that he predicted--Pallarès reserved ample space for an exposé of the disciples of the philosopher. "The disciples? They are legion, and a very mixed legion at that."<sup>20</sup> According to Pallarès, Nietzsche's very style of writing was the fundamental reason behind his popularity in cultural circles, especially the aphoristic and fragmentary form through which he expressed his thoughts. Replete with "grands mots à effet"--including "Will to Power," "Transvaluation of all Values," "Be hard!", "Pathos of Distance," "Morality of Masters, Morality of Slaves"--Nietzsche's writings were sufficiently violent in tone and crudity to be adopted by those who had an interest in wielding such a powerful vocabulary themselves. "One asks for nothing more in the 'salons.'"<sup>21</sup>

The legion of Nietzscheans of all ages complied with what Pallarès identified as "the fundamental thesis of our philosopher: There is no power, no value in the world superior to force." With this statement serving as the first

article of a creed, Nietzscheism united "in a picturesque brotherhood" such contemporary bugbears as Cartouche, Mandrin, Napoleon, Troppmann, Bismarck, "and generally the ambitious, strugglers and arrivistes of all plumage and all wing-span [envergure]." <sup>22</sup> But what of the present-day followers, the "disciples of election" who form that contingent of "good Nietzscheans" within France itself? In that case one must resort to a different classification:

They have a great quality, which is also a great charm: they are young, young at heart, understand, because all ages of life are represented among them. Many have known other paths and exalted other ideals. Schopenhauer, Wagner, Tolstoy, [and] Ibsen conquered them. Their choice of the moment is determined by the superlative of novelty and the boldness of a doctrine, of an art, of a music, of a literary genre, indeed of a religion. <sup>23</sup>

In order to classify adequately the population of Nietzsche enthusiasts it was necessary for Pallarès to depict them either as dilettantes or as snobs--that is, as the very ones who, in the eyes of many, had been responsible for the dangerous cosmopolitan cultural fashions of the 1890s and who had, in so doing, had seriously undermined the sanctity of national cultural exemplars. In this sense, Pallarès seemed to imply, these French Nietzscheans posed the same threat to national security as a Troppman or a Bismarck.

This need to summon the spirit of the 1890s in order to exorcise the specter of Nietzsche from contemporary intellectual life was effected the following year in the famous survey conducted by Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde, Les Jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui. Writing under the pseudonym "Agathon," these fervent young nationalists alleged that the intellectual generation of 1912

was at profound odds with the previous generation of 1890: whereas their elders escaped from reality into subjective aesthetics, renounced hope in political and social action, and strongly rejected nationalism, according to Agathon the youth of 1912 stressed physical vitality and action, optimistically searched for political order, and ardently espoused nationalism, even to the point of accepting the inevitability of war with Germany.<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to the observations of Pallarès, however, Agathon stressed that the young people of the day were not interested in Nietzsche at all; rather, it was only the older generation who still adhered to Nietzscheanism. While the young people of 1912 were pleased with the "heroic optimism of Zarathustra, who counsels a dangerous ideal", Agathon asserted that Nietzsche was "read with difficulty by our youth." Henri Massis explained his own early relationship to Nietzsche's thought in a survey conducted in 1930 by a German scholar, Jean R. Kückenburg. "As a student I read Nietzsche with enthusiasm," Massis recalled, "but during the crises which I went through, like all other young men, his teaching helped me not at all, in fact, rather [it] hindered me in finding a passable road to society."<sup>25</sup> "For the anaemic intelligences of our elders," Agathon declared, "he [Nietzsche] was a powerful cordial and prepared the restoration of courageous values, of force, of energy, [and] of the beautiful audacity of noble races." In the present, however, "the young people have no need for this 'tonic':"

This unhealthy taste for life, this anxious call for health inspires their mistrust. This obsession for what is vigorous and powerful,

[and] the frantic apology for force seems justly suspect to a strong man. All that was in Nietzsche only a hygiene for neurasthenics has no more meaning for those who are coming.<sup>26</sup>

In short, according to Agathon the impotent generation of 1890 found a source of strength in the philosophy of Nietzsche; the youth of 1912, however, had found inspiration in the novelist Stendhal, the "Nietzsche of our race" who is "much closer to their soul."<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche was portrayed by Agathon as a stimulant for a weaker and more decadent era, a foreign influence which had no place among the stronger and militantly nationalist generation of 1912. One important qualification was posited by the royalist Pierre Hepp, a slightly older respondent who collaborated on Adrien Mithouard's L'Occident: "I grant you, in revenge, that we are detaching ourselves from Nietzsche," he conceded. "But it is that he was assimilated."

Those who, like me, have frequented Nietzsche were bound . . . to recapture from him what is good: the high French and classical culture, on which he had been nourished. . . . He played for a generation the role of initiator and sharpener [déniaiseur] that Stendhal had played for the preceding generation. . . . Devinait-il qu'un Maurras lui ravirait son ascendant?<sup>28</sup>

In 1913 the young novelist François Mauriac noted with disapproval in L'Enfant chargé de chaînes how "Unconsciously, these young people had submitted to the influence of the crude nietzschéisme to which the world today is reconciled. Le Maître had been for them in the manner of an overman. Moreover, they said ingenuously of themselves: 'we are the elite.'<sup>29</sup>

### **The Return of the Repressed: Surveying the Nietzschean Influence in France**



My enemies have grown powerful and have distorted my teaching till those dearest to me must be ashamed of the gifts I gave them. I have lost my friends; the hour has come to seek my lost ones.

--Nietzsche<sup>30</sup>

The naturist and socialist rejections of Nietzsche--which carried the concomitant attack on the rebellious writers who embraced his thought and upset the intellectual order--achieved an important convergence in 1911. The struggle for the right to name a cultural fashion, one manifestation of the larger conflict between competing fractions of the literary field, is vividly illustrated in the "Enquête sur Nietzsche et la Jeunesse d'aujourd'hui," which appeared in the January 1911 volume of La Grande revue. Conducted in late-1910 by Jean Viollis, himself a young writer associated with the naturist school of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, this literary poll represented over forty writers whose opinions purportedly reflected the state of contemporary literature and who more or less heralded the end of the Nietzsche vogue in French letters. An investigation of the social positions of the respondents and the cultural positions implied in the responses themselves, however, reveals less a consensus of the literary field than an attempt by the most established authors of the general market to impose their vision of legitimate literature upon the field as a whole: Viollis predetermined the result of the survey by the initial decision which delimited the population to be submitted to analysis.<sup>31</sup> By therefore declaring--in the name of "young" contemporary literature--the end of the Nietzsche vogue these writers presented a veiled assault on those who had the most to gain by

using Nietzsche, in particular the neo-classical and royalist avant-garde and the largely leftist NRF group.

The school of naturism, founded by Saint-Georges de Bouhélier in 1897, defined itself as a rejection of the symbolist aesthetic of escape and decadence. Above all, the naturists aimed at the cleansing French literature of foreign influences in the name of a return to "le culte classique de la nature et de l'homme", which suggested a return to Zola, Rodin, and Monet. According to Pierre-Olivier Walzer, this meant placing "Zola over Ibsen, Rousseau over Wagner, Diderot over Nietzsche."<sup>32</sup> In the "Manifeste de naturisme" it was declared:

We are going to sing the high celebrations of man. For the splendor of this spectacle, poets will summon the plants, the stars, the winds and the dangerous animals. A literature will be born that will glorify the sailors, the laborers born of the womb of the sun and the shepherds who live near the eagles. Once again, the poets will blend with the tribespeople.<sup>33</sup>

Much like Zola and the naturalists, the naturists berated the symbolists for rendering their literature inaccessible to the general public--in short, for stubbornly pursuing an aesthetic of pure art over commercial art. This discussion of naturism is indispensable for an understanding of the 1911 survey, which could be seen as a revenge of the largely naturist and naturalist literary market against both Nietzsche and the avant-garde. The continuing tension between the naturists and the NRF, which had erupted once again in 1910 with Montfort's defense of Gourmont against Gide, must be cited as an important element informing this literary survey.

In his introduction to the enquête Viollis expressed amazement at the success of Nietzsche in the literary field as well as the variety of interpretations provoked by his work; yet the exemplars indicated represent clearly non-central positions on the field, especially when considered in relation to the position of La Grande revue. That is, from the left and the right Viollis cited the biography of Halévy and the study of Lasserre, as well as the avant-garde literature of Paul Adam, Daniel Lesueur, and Anna de Noailles, all of which featured the Nietzschean heroes quickly indicated by many critics. "Finally, an even more convincing symptom, such critics of weight, of very great weight, raise their discourse in the name of Nietzsche."<sup>34</sup> In addition to those with such clear symbolic capital Viollis also cited the words of a fire chief from a small Southwestern commune, who at a banquet cried to his company: "Now, I will add only one word, be overmen!" The presence of this last example, Viollis explained, was what truly warranted such a survey:

Don't laugh, each of these manifestations is important in its own way. That a fireman, of Paris or the provinces, speaks of the Overman, the newspapers or the books he reads must have frequented [the Overman] to his ears. All this nietzschéisme floating in the air therefore betrays, perhaps, a serious movement. In order to assure itself, La Grande revue has just addressed a questionnaire to the personalities who have appeared to represent, in the young generation, French culture, in order to know what influence Nietzsche had exercised on their intellectual formation.<sup>35</sup>

In short, Viollis and the editors of La Grande revue wanted to assure themselves that contemporary French letters had not succumbed to the influence of the German philosopher, and therefore approached the most like-

mindful writers to obtain the proof needed. In addition, by attacking Nietzsche these writers were undoubtedly attempting to neutralize the effects of literary competitors of the left and the right--in particular, those who invoked Nietzsche most often at the NRF and the Action Française. These figures were less representative of contemporary culture than of one particular sector of the field of cultural production--primarily the intermediate sector of the novel--attempting to impose its vision upon the field as a whole.

While the primary thrust of the enquête was to discern the influence of Nietzsche among contemporary culture, most of the respondents hailed from the literary field. Nonetheless, Viollis also polled certain representatives from those social fractions standing in positions of relative dominance over the literary field. Thus from the field of the university were featured the opinions of professors of literature (Louis Benoist-Hanappier), sociology (René Worms) and music history (Romain Rolland), while from the field of political power appeared the statements of five deputies (three socialists, one liberal-catholic, and one of unspecified politics), two of which (Albert Thomas, Albert Métin) were also introduced as agrégés de l'Université. Possessing little specifically literary capital (though high in academic and political capital), then, these representatives from the dominant intellectual and political fractions functioned in this enquête as an assurance of both breadth and legitimacy of intellectual opinion--of the right of the dominant to name the present state of affairs and the life-span of Nietzsche as a cultural fashion. Yet the very fact that such writers

were selected as being able to posit legitimate opinions of the state of contemporary culture suggests the central or dominant position of Viollis and La Grande revue: situated between the poles of commercial art and pure art, writers associated with this review, themselves typically hailing from homologous positions in the social field, would be less inclined to reject the system of literary power within which they were enclosed--thus opinions from representatives of the field of power might be seen as legitimate.

A look at the various ages of the respondents suggests no clear criteria regarding what constituted a "young" writer: those who were biologically the youngest (Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, Robert Vallery-Radot) were born during the early 1880s while the oldest (Henri de Noussanne, Romain Rolland) were born in the mid-1860s. The average year of birth for the writers surveyed was 1875, placing most in their mid-thirties by 1910. This twenty-year range of possible age-differences therefore discourages the conclusion that for Viollis (himself born in 1877) youth was synonymous with biological age. One might also investigate the degree to which these writers were artistically young by examining the number of books published by 1911 as an index of their participation in the literary market; yet here as well no clear pattern emerges that might convincingly unite all of these writers under the rubric "youth."

Most of those surveyed posited two responses that can be readily classified: opinions on the influence of Nietzsche personally and among contemporaries, and general impressions regarding the philosopher. Of the

forty-two writers polled, twelve claimed to have been influenced by Nietzsche, and therefore expressed a decidedly positive attitude towards the philosopher; twenty-nine denied the influence of Nietzsche on their work and registered a variety of accompanying opinions on the philosopher ranging from admiration to indifference and outright contempt. Apparently, then, by a ratio of more than 2-to-1, the featured representatives of contemporary French culture declared that Nietzsche had no influence on their intellectual formation, which corresponded to the outcome desired by Viollis. In order to understand the strategic elements of this survey, one must therefore compare the responses registered to the literary capital and aesthetic allegiances of the writers in order to obtain a clearer picture of the literary struggle being surreptitiously waged.

I have divided the population of those polled according to the social positions with which they were most likely associated in 1910. Shown above are those writers who were seen as occupying the fringes of the literary world and who embraced the ideas of Nietzsche. An analysis of the social and cultural composition of these writers reveals that the twelve who admitted Nietzsche's influence were socially the youngest of the group, that is, each had by 1911 published an average of three books while the other twenty-nine had published nearly three times as many. In addition the remarks included in the responses of these twelve further suggest the relatively unconsecrated quality of these writers, which could place them within the avant-garde sector of the literary field. What is more, these remarks also suggest that the division in Nietzsche

interpretation between Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards mattered little to Violis, who rejected any enthusiasm for the philosopher regardless of political stance.

Two notable contributors to the avant-garde Nouvelle revue française, which had just been launched two years before, were represented in this survey whose hostility towards the general literary aesthetic--expressed either directly in the enquête or elsewhere--indicated their own dominated position on the field. One might note the obvious absence of André Gide who, while a leading representative of the avant-garde, exercised a degree of influence beyond avant-garde circles. Henri Ghéon, a critic and avant-garde playwright who had recently converted to Catholicism, reflected upon the turn of the century when the symbolist aesthetic was in decline:

This had been at the decline of a rich and singular period when, in revolt against vain juggling and this cerebral wave which had been in fashion, we tried, some of us, to extract from a noble and profound aesthetic--symbolism--what the taste for allegory had already desiccated, the quintessentially human.<sup>36</sup>

Ghéon, who would fall in with the monarchists of the Action Française during the War, lashed out at the dominant aesthetic which was also, incidentally, that of La Grande revue: "To what vulgar art, basely social and naturo-naturalistic do we risk sliding towards, faute d'appui!"<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche, for Ghéon and many others at the turn of the century, had been a crucial ingredient for the aesthetic and social self-assertion of the avant-garde. Unlike bourgeois literature, "Nietzsche repels far from him all servile imitation." In short, Ghéon declared that the avant-garde rejection of bourgeois art had not ended:

One word summarizes everything: it is to an accentuated [tonique] influence that we have submitted. We have reacted, and we are reacting still, each following our own nature. It is not up to me to say which art has gone out and which will go out.<sup>38</sup>

As a theater critic, Ghéon had been a tireless opponent of boulevard theatre and all other forms of commercial art; hence his statement served as somewhat of a battle cry of an avant-garde writer deep within the enemy territory of bourgeois literature.

Jacques Copeau, who was also associated with the Nouvelle revue française and who established the avant-garde theatre of the Vieux Colombier in 1913, expressed himself in less pugnacious terms than his colleague: "I believe that Nietzsche has had, on the men of my generation, a still incalculable influence."<sup>39</sup> Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, the brother-in-law of Daniel Halévy, also cited the positive influence of Nietzschean thought, though he admittedly learned of the philosopher primarily through Halévy's 1909 biography.<sup>40</sup> What is more, Francis Miomandre, the only naturalist of the twelve, had won the 1908 Prix Goncourt and was clearly (with eight published books by 1911) the most established writer among the Nietzsche enthusiasts; he noted that "it is undeniable that the influence of Nietzsche has been considerable in France. . . . he has liberated us from many shackles without unbalancing us in the meantime."<sup>41</sup>

Louis Benoist-Hanappier, docteur-ès-lettres and maître de conférences at the Université de Nancy,<sup>42</sup> contributed a lengthy response conforming to the liberal model of interpretation and explication practiced by Lichtenberger and



Andler. While expressing reservations about certain central ideas, such as the eternal recurrence, Benoist-Hanappier praised the life of Nietzsche, "the most beautiful example of disinterested labor . . . and of heroically endured sufferings." Indeed as a republican professor of literature, the ideal of the disinterested savant was surely attractive to Benoist-Hanappier, but was also an image that would provoke the critical response of the literary right in their campaign against the New Sorbonne.

In addition to the leftist avant-garde interpretation of Nietzsche one also notices in this survey an expression of its opposite--namely, the right-wing, Catholic and even royalist interpretation that had gained currency after 1899 among the adherents of the classical renaissance. This tendency was conveyed quite clearly through Jacques Bainville's contribution to the enquête, where the royalist historian articulated the distinctive rhetoric of the Action Française. "I believe that my friend Henri Albert, translator of Nietzsche, has not produced a useless oeuvre."

Nietzsche would have served as a revulsive for many young men who belong to my generation. He has helped them--and they have often needed it--to emancipate themselves from Rousseau and Kant, to reject the religion of the Rights of Man. This sort of barbarous Voltaire administers a violent and succinct medication, always necessary for success in serious cases, like that of the young French who are coming out of our University. Nietzsche is good to communicate scorn for republican fanaticism and conformism.<sup>43</sup>

Like most other royalist appropriators of Nietzsche, Bainville rejected les nietzschéens, such as Paul Adam and Daniel Lesueur, of the literary world: "As

for the lecteur who would make a 'Nietzschéen' of himself and the lectrice who would make a 'Nietzschéenne' of herself, it is quite evident that we must avoid these dangerous animals."<sup>44</sup>

The same penchant for neo-classicism may be found in the statements made by Charles Verrier, a little-known writer who nevertheless shared Bainville's rejection of the republican University:

I read Twilight of the Idols and the Genealogy of Morals during a nonchalant summer, laying on the bottom of a bark, on the Seine, in an epoch where the need to react against the education of les universitaires pushed me to search for teachers according to my heart. . . . I believe, at present, that the philosopher of Sils-Maria is the most subtle of educators and that he has exercised a real influence on the young people of my generation. . . . He has denounced Rousseau and romanticism.<sup>45</sup>

"For my part," Verrier concluded, "I owe him a great deal, but we are very ungrateful and I do not think of my debt." Another royalist and collaborator on the review L'Occident, Pierre Hepp, agreed that "I am certain that Nietzsche has exercised a considerable influence on my mental formation." However, Hepp suggested definite limitations to what could be accomplished with the ideas of the philosopher, claiming that "In flaming language, he proposes to us an heroic acceptance which a dilettante, an idle amateur of beaux gestes, would be happy to need, but which would hardly trouble an individual impassioned by motivated action."<sup>46</sup> Recurrent in neo-classical distinctive strategies, we have seen, is this need to distance oneself from the "dilettantes" of the previous avant-garde, the same group that Téodor de Wyzewa had scornfully labelled les nietzschéens during the 1890s. The Swiss royalist novelist, Jean Binet-Valmer,

also expressed admiration for Nietzsche, but like many other Maurrasians he had replaced this German with specifically French heroes: "I think that the most ardent of our contemporaries are the brothers of Julien Sorel. . . . [Nietzsche] wanted to bring us hope. He has not succeeded in convincing us. We are still searching..."<sup>47</sup>

Aside from this clear minority of positive responses to the question of Nietzsche's influence, the majority of those polled denied such influence, and occasionally in tellingly emphatic terms. After conveying the opinions of this group, all of whom were operating on the fringes of the general market, Viollis himself revealed his own position and perhaps his view of those who claimed the influence of the German:

If I were one of Nietzsche's believers, that, already, would cause me to reflect. But I would worry above all about the small number of blasphemers that my divinity encounters. The force of a truth is recognized less among those who proclaim it than among those who deny it.<sup>48</sup>

Thus did Viollis introduce Henri de Noussanne, the director of the anticlerical Gil Blas who declared that he "owe[s] nothing to Nietzsche and to what you honestly call his ideas, old catchwords",<sup>49</sup> and the brothers Marius and Ary Leblond, 1909 Prix Goncourt laureates and socialists who "dream of an Anti-Nietzsche, an attempt at egalitarian morality." For them, this "student of Germanic history professors," was filled with "Prussian instincts" and wrote "pages [which] are often the dionysian (but faithful) commentaries of Mommsen, Sybel, Treitschke, etc."<sup>50</sup> This dual emphasis on nationalist and republican

virtues was reiterated throughout the survey, suggesting once again the more mainstream liberal position of many of the writers polled and the differential relations conducted with the featured writers of the avant-garde. Moreover, such comments helped produce the almost universal condemnation of the philosopher by the French after 1914. The brothers Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, who had won the 1906 Prix Goncourt, asked "How could he have an influence on a Frenchman? One finds clearer and spiritual thoughts expressed in Chamfort, Rivarol, and Renan."<sup>51</sup> For Louis-Frédéric Sauvage, "outside of tea at five o'clock" Nietzsche had exercised absolutely no influence: "in the street, Zarathustra . . . becomes M. de Bismarck or Jack the Ripper," a veritable monster whose excesses prompted this writer to stress his own belief "in Justice, in Goodness, in Pity, in Happiness."<sup>52</sup>

The inclusion of three recent laureate of the Prix Goncourt (Miomandre, Leblond, Tharaud) underscores an important strategic feature of this enquête. Such writers, as discussed in the last chapter, were generally firmly situated in the broad literary market and were often open to the abuse of the avant-garde, representatives of which were typically snubbed in the competition for the Goncourt. Not surprisingly, two of the three winners polled vigorously rejected the influence of Nietzsche in their work, a characteristic feature of the general literary market.<sup>53</sup> By including such recent laureate Viollis employed the symbolic power of consecrated literature against the generally unconsecrated avant-garde, whose opinions--which were mostly favorable towards Nietzsche--

he strategically placed at the beginning of the survey.

A number of writers were polled who expressed either indifference towards Nietzsche, or hostility toward those who claimed to have submitted to his influence. Most of these claimed to have not even read the philosopher, such as Tristan Klingsor, Jules Sageret, Gaston Chérau, and Eugène Montfort--and neither, charged a few others, had those who frankly described themselves as disciples. Sageret, for example, prided himself on not having read the German, adding that even some of his confreres claiming to be in the know take "some strange orthographic liberties" with his name.<sup>54</sup> François Albert, described only as an agrégé de l'Université, also admitted to having "no direct commerce with Nietzsche", and stated that "many convinced nietzschéens are in my situation."<sup>55</sup> Gaston Chérau, a naturalist novelist who would be elected to the Académie Goncourt in 1926, observed that "there are too many people who know him without having ever read him. . . . Not writing beautiful novels à tendances, . . . having only the claim of being an artist, I leave Nietzsche in peace."<sup>56</sup> This tendency to distinguish oneself from popular literature as well as from the avant-garde suggests once again the central position of these writers on the literary field. As another naturalist, Ernest La Jeunesse, noted: "I owe him nothing. . . . Nietzsche is a tragedy, nothing more, when he is not a sign-board or poster for a roman-feuilleton. Let's leave him to the most pitiful adventurers of letters or others."<sup>57</sup> To be a nietzschéen was, from the perspective of the intellectual mainstream, to be demonstrably trendy and therefore to be taken

less seriously.

Finally, the majority of responses denied the influence of the German, but nevertheless expressed a degree of admiration for his writing if not for his thought which, as typically applied and therefore perceived, was at antipodes to their literary aesthetic. Nietzsche had for Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier, the founder of the naturist school, "given me nothing, I feel no debt toward him, and if he was able to act upon me, this is only through reaction."

The sentiments which are mine, Nietzsche combats. It seems to me that he had understood nothing of the truly human beauty which lies only in the valiant patience, in stoic simplicity, in everyday heroism, in the sacrifice of our base elements to the grandeur which each of us carries inside. As he is, Nietzsche is therefore as foreign to me as a barbarian.<sup>58</sup>

This writer's investment in the school of naturism, itself a call for a return to nature and to Zola (and therefore to the intermediate position of that aesthetic on the literary field), undoubtedly had something to do with his perception of Nietzsche, which was itself formed through the essays and studies produced by the avant-gardes of the previous fifteen years. Just as Zola and most naturalists maintained a persistent silence regarding the production of the avant-garde Nietzsche during the 1890s, many naturists were unlikely to comment positively (if at all) upon his work. No doubt Viollis realized this probability when he compiled his list of potential respondents. Nevertheless, like many others who perhaps felt compelled to register appreciation for Nietzsche the poet, Saint-Georges de Bouh  lier admired "his genius. . . I regard him as a poet filled with magnificent artistic visions."<sup>59</sup>

The predominance of naturalists and naturists in this enquête was complemented by numerous representatives of the Parti socialiste who, as noted in Chapter Seven, generally came to reject Nietzsche after coming to power after 1902. The writer Léon Bazalgette, an active collaborator on Jean-Richard Bloch's vitalist socialist review L'Effort--as well as an admirer of naturism--responded to the question of Nietzsche's influence by reporting simply "To this day, none."<sup>60</sup> Henri Genet, an editor of La Revue socialiste, stated that "Nietzsche is a littérateur and a very intelligent man. . . . He often irritates me, but those who always irritate me are his bad readers. . . . When I need to be comforted, it is not Nietzsche I go to see."<sup>61</sup> The prominent unified-socialist deputy and normalien agrégé Albert Thomas, who was responsible for uniting a number of Dreyfusards under the banner of socialism, issued this statement:

Our effort at daily propaganda, of cooperative, syndical, or political action, has for eight or ten years permitted me to reread nothing of Nietzsche. In the past I read Zarathustra with a very lively joy. Since then I have been a socialist and have been indignant over the absolute contradiction that certain [people] want to establish between socialism and the passionate moral thought of Nietzsche. My friend and teacher Charles Andler has offered to establish all that socialist civilization can borrow from Nietzsche. I wait for his book with impatience.<sup>62</sup>

"In any case," Thomas concluded, "I will not dare say that my thought is, at any moment, impregnated with nietzschéisme."<sup>63</sup> Another writer, an agrégé, radical-socialist deputy, and former collaborator on La Revue blanche, Albert Métin, admitted experiencing "the freshest and strongest literary joys" upon

reading Nietzsche, but was left morally unmoved by his work: "I should confess moreover that his aristocratic tendency has not pleased me and does not suit me today further. In short, I have read him and recall him as an artist, not as a philosopher."<sup>64</sup> Finally, Romain Rolland, who had become quite popular by 1910 as a representative of vitalist socialism and had recently won the literary prize of the Académie Française for Jean-Christophe, declared that "nietzschéisme is as old as the world: there are latent currents which persist eternally in the human soul."

I believe the air of Nietzsche to be unbreathable for the immense majority of men, and even for the elite. He is a meteor that passes. Let's admire him, and allow him to pass. But let's search for other luminaries.<sup>65</sup>

It is clear that the naturist Jean Viollis, consciously or not, predetermined the outcome of this enquête by his initial selection of those who were supposed to "represent, in the young generation, French culture." An analysis of the conceptual geography of this intellectual population reveals that only a minority from the literary avant-garde were represented, an exclusion rendered even more suspicious given the fact that for years the issue of Nietzsche had been almost an exclusively avant-garde preoccupation. It is important to remember the bad feelings produced over the previous two years between these literary factions: when Eugène Montfort split from the NRF group in 1909 to return to his own journal Marges, he took with him the allegiances of several other naturist writers, including Louis Codet and Jean Viollis. The bitter argument between Montfort and Gide the following year, where the former attacked the



Nietzscheanism of the latter, surely provided a convenient motive for conducting such a survey: by illustrating the marginal position and suggesting the negligible influence of Nietzsche in French letters Viollis was able to demonstrate vividly the marginality of the avant-garde vis-à-vis La Grande revue, the general literary market, and the most consecrated writers and political thinkers. As such, the apparently objective and democratic gesture of the inquiry conceals the counter-offensive strategy of the much assailed market of general literature against those writers who despised it the most. By diminishing the importance of Nietzsche in French letters, Viollis and his peers could symbolically diminish their avant-garde competition and thus vindicate their own aesthetic.

The strategy of Viollis described above would be more vividly illustrated two weeks later in the article where he drew conclusions from the data collected. "It seems, on the whole, that the most favorable judgments (on Nietzsche) reveal more ingenuity than passion," Viollis began. "In regard to the average opinion, we will summarize in these two terms: indifference, mistrust."

Whose fault is it? Assuredly the doctors of nietzschéisme. One wanted to make of Nietzsche a maître of ideas; rather the mastery of words pertained to him.<sup>66</sup>

Reiterating the reservations of Albert Thomas, Viollis also invoked with skepticism the efforts of Andler, "who had the illusion 'of using, one day, for socialism, the overhuman morality of a Nietzsche.'"<sup>67</sup> "The best service that the 'nietzschéens' can render to Nietzsche, is to leave him in peace."<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the majority of those polled reacted in the manner that Viollis considered the most

intelligent:

He was noble through his suffering and his dignity, great through his lyricism. Do not ask him for intellectual nourishment, he will deceive you. Simply love him, admire him. But keep yourself from the involuntary bitterness of his work. . . .<sup>69</sup>

Thus did Viollis and his colleagues present an image of the cultural world which coincided with their attempt to impose their vision upon the field as a whole.

Thus, rather than a direct and exclusive attack on the philosopher, this survey may be viewed as a symbolic gesture of the establishment to curb the influence of those troublesome intellectuals who, among other things, embraced Nietzsche.

### **Nietzsche and the Great War**

The German soldiers, we have ascertained, have the works of Nietzsche in their knapsacks.

--Léon Daudet<sup>70</sup>

What! Nietzsche enlists in our foreign legion and you fire at him! . . . Goethe and Nietzsche . . . are our hostages. I maintain that undervaluing our hostages is one of the greatest of all the blunders at which our country excels.

--André Gide<sup>71</sup>

If we could dispense with wars, so much the better. I can imagine more profitable uses for the twelve billion now paid annually for the armed peace we have in Europe; there are other means of winning respect for physiology than field hospitals.--Good; very good even: since the old God is abolished, I am prepared to rule the world--

--Nietzsche<sup>72</sup>

As it has been demonstrated above, the actual experience of the "nationalist revival" in France was not the singular cause of the backlash against

Nietzsche after 1910. Indeed, it has been argued that growing French disenchantment with the German was due to intellectual social conditions that were largely internal to the field itself. In short, the attempted expulsion of Nietzsche as an unwelcome foreign intruder and corrupter of youth had begun long before the actual breakout of hostilities in 1914, and cannot be solely explained by the war experience itself. The terrain had therefore already been prepared by the time war was declared, permitting the wholesale rejection of the philosopher as well as a condemnation of the entire German cultural tradition whose representatives seemed complicit in the wartime atrocities committed after 1914.

The exclusion of Nietzsche from the realm of acceptable cultural goods may be understood as the insertion of the philosopher into yet another cultural constellation with which he had been only periodically associated years before. Having been linked to Ibsen and Stirner at one point, and Stendhal and Gobineau at a later date, by 1914 all connections to other figures were severed as Nietzsche entered into the orbit of specifically German cultural exemplars. Thus by 1914 Nietzsche was depicted in cultural circles as having much more in common with Hegel, Bismarck, and Treitschke than with any French thinker.

Christophe Prochasson has observed how French intellectuals embarked in 1914 on their own "war of manifestos" against the German intellectual and cultural tradition. Indeed, in many ways the manifestos of 1914 were launched in response to a German initiative against the culture of its enemies. With their

own cultural networks dismantled during the war, such forms of collective expression were sometimes the only form of expression possible.<sup>73</sup> In particular, many intellectuals responded to the destruction that the war had brought to French national treasures in the north, and were unified in the 1915 text, Les Allemands destructeurs de Cathédrales et de Trésors du Passé.<sup>74</sup> In such manifestos a marked convergence was effected between former Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards as well as partisans of pure and commercial art, permitting these cultural producers to forget for a time their long-standing differences in order better to combat the cultural threat from Germany.<sup>75</sup>

"The German soldiers," declared the royalist Léon Daudet, "have the works of Nietzsche in their knapsacks."<sup>76</sup> Indeed, to a certain extent Daudet was correct: not only had there been a dramatic increase in the sales of Nietzsche books in Germany during the war, but about 150,000 copies of Thus Spoke Zarathustra were distributed to the German soldiers. Yet, it should be noted that the Germans were not the only ones to have Zarathustra as a brother-in-arms.<sup>77</sup> Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, for example, who would become a well-known French fascist during the 1930s, had read Zarathustra for the first time at the age of fourteen and likewise carried a copy of this text into battle in 1914.<sup>78</sup> For the writer Paul Adam, who had formerly praised the philosophy of Nietzsche, the entire German intellectual tradition contributed to the atrocities during the war, notably the destruction of the thirteenth-century cathedral at Rheims: "The Barbarians acted according to the spirit of Hegel and Nietzsche,

according to the practice of Treitschke and Bismarck," he wrote in 1920. "Leibniz, Kant, Goethe, Lessing, Wirchow, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner, Mommsen, leaning on the battlements of the look-outs, in the persons of their disciples in uniform, direct under helmet this destruction of the beautiful Latin symbol."<sup>79</sup> Léon Daudet added his voice to the growing din in 1915. "On all sides, in England, in Russia, in France," he wrote, "it is only a cry against Frédéric Nietzsche and his responsibilities in the barbarous methods of the Germans on campaign."<sup>80</sup> Daudet explained the previous vogue for Nietzsche in terms of the literary debates of the *fin de siècle*: "Nietzschéisme was a reaction against Russian pity, the vogue of Tolstoy and of other followers in non-resistance to evil."<sup>81</sup> Reflecting years later on the turn of the century, Daudet retained his acrimonious attitude toward the disciples of Nietzsche: "The ass plays a big role in Zarathustra, [and] an even bigger role in the bibliography of nietzschéisme."<sup>82</sup>

André Beaunier's Les Surboches blasted the popularity of Nietzschean thought in Germany, which he believed had most clearly contributed to German aggression and violence. "This German madness," noted Beaunier, "I call it a crisis of nietzschéisme."<sup>83</sup> The megalomania that had washed over Nietzsche himself had also caused the Germans to degenerate into les Surboches. "Didn't the soldiers who devastated Belgium and the north of France follow the advice of Zarathustra? . . . When they scrounge and murder, don't they prove that they, submitting to the gospel of Zarathustra, have broken the old tables of law,

those which forbid theft and murder?"<sup>84</sup> Beaunier admitted that, several years earlier, many Nietzscheans had abounded in France "among the sharp [délurées] little women and fiery hooligans [apaches], those here and there resolved to live their lives: these impulsive gallants and, likewise, these fickle creatures did not read Nietzsche, God forgive them!"<sup>85</sup>

"It is fine to be overhuman," wrote Rolland in 1914. "It is finer and more difficult to be human."<sup>86</sup> Rolland commented on the deleterious effects of the masses on "the words of a sage. One superman is a sublime spectacle. Ten or twenty supermen are unpleasant. But hundreds of thousands who combine arrogant extravagance with mediocrity or natural baseness become a scourge of God, such as that which has just ravaged Belgium and France."<sup>87</sup> For his friend André Suarès, who had been loosely associated with the NRF, the actual war offered an opportunity to place the blame squarely on the shoulders of the German. "The morality of Nietzsche is one of war," he wrote in 1916. "And of war according to race only."<sup>88</sup>

As had been the case throughout the crisis, attacks ostensibly directed against an external enemy always carried implicitly an element of internal critique against unknown traitors: in the case of Nietzsche, it has been shown, at least part of the commentary was directed at les nietzschéens. Paul Voivenel, in his essay on "The Germans and the Science of the Sick Mind," tried to explain the unfortunate demand for German cultural products of the turn of the century: "So that French minds could gobble them down, a strange receptivity

had to be developed by the defeat of 1870, by an unconscious snobisme like that of the Wagnerians and the Nietzschéennes.<sup>88</sup> For the crowd psychologist Gustave Le Bon, Nietzsche had along with Hegel, Fichte, Treitschke, Lasson, and Bernhardt developed and disseminated the notions of the Prussian state and the cult of force that had informed German aggression.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the mounting attacks on the philosopher from a number of points on the intellectual field, his loyal French defenders remained undaunted. As Anna de Noailles wrote to her friend d'Annunzio after her pilgrimage to Weimar in August 1913: "Yesterday, in the house of Nietzsche, we read with veneration your poem on giant wings [aux ailes géantes]; this song from one eagle to another eagle rising so high!"<sup>91</sup> As the Nietzsche cult in Germany had expanded throughout the pre-War years, an ambitious new project was initiated by Count Harry Kessler to build a Nietzsche memorial temple and stadium. on a hillside outside of Weimar. The French sculptor Aristide Maillol agreed to construct the huge statue of Apollo, modeled after the ballet star Vaslav Nijinsky, that was to accompany the stadium. Based on the plans of the famous Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde, this cosmopolitan public space would accommodate the thousands who would presumably flock to the site to become immersed in a Nietzschean totality of art, dance, theatre, and sports competition.<sup>92</sup> To fund such an expensive enterprise Kessler recruited the help of his friends around Europe, including Gabriele d'Annunzio and H.G. Wells. From France he received assistance from a number of people, notably André

Gide, Henri Lichtenberger, and Anatole France. It was decided that the cornerstone for the new Nietzsche monument would be laid on October 15, 1914, the seventieth anniversary of the philosopher's birth. In attendance at the solemn ceremony would be an international elite of Nietzscheans.<sup>93</sup>

The outbreak of war in 1914 effectively scrapped any plans for a future ground-breaking for the planned stadium, and the project would never come to fruition. The backlash against Nietzsche and the Nietzscheans by the established sectors of the intellectual field put the philosopher's loyal followers on the defensive. Indeed, this united front of establishment writers forced the representation of Nietzsche back into the margins of French intellectual life. The defenders of Nietzsche during the war were generally those who had championed his ideas throughout the turn of the century and took issue with those who charged him with complicity in German aggression. In many ways, therefore, the social composition of those groups who debated the influence of Nietzsche in French intellectual life had not been greatly transformed. "Reading Nietzsche on the fields of battle!" Henri Albert exclaimed with dismay in a 1915 essay. "Does the German army busy itself with such readings?" The answer that Albert provided to his own question was in line with his view of Germany held throughout the past twenty-three years: "Without any doubt, the Germans, who for forty years have not known what to do with Nietzsche, have been incapable of connecting his work to the current war."<sup>94</sup> Henri Lichtenberger, who was now teaching at the Sorbonne and defined his political stance as that of a



"European," admitted that "Today still the statist ideal dominates minds in Prussia and in Prussianized Germany." However, such a fact need not implicate the philosopher in the barbarism of pangermanism, to which Nietzsche had been clearly opposed. "Nietzsche is a resolute adversary of this 'new idol', this 'cold monster among all monsters' which is the State."<sup>95</sup>

He disliked especially the German State, Prussianized Germany, because he saw in the new Empire the principal hearth of this statist and nationalist superstition where he foresaw one of the most formidable obstacles to a favorable evolution of modern humanity.<sup>96</sup>

In short, the "democrats are surely mistaken when they denounce Nietzsche as an apologist for slavery and a theoretician of the exploitation of man by man."<sup>97</sup> Even a committed nationalist such as Maurice Barrès, despite the mounting charges of his contemporaries, was still able to recognize Nietzsche as essentially a cultural ally of the French: reflecting in 1914 upon the Franco-Prussian War, he remembered that "When the Louvre was bombed [*miné*], Nietzsche cried."<sup>98</sup>

The socialist politician Édouard Herriot proved an unlikely advocate for the philosopher in the court of public opinion. In his essay in Annales politiques et littéraires, Herriot contended, against the assertions of the "Intellectuals of 1914," that the works of the young Nietzsche clearly illustrated the degree to which he was profoundly at odds with German culture. In fact, according to Herriot, the "pangermanists understand very quickly that this young Nietzsche is their most formidable enemy."<sup>99</sup>

A European, yes. One without a country, perhaps. A German, no. And it is a savory vengeance for us to be able to oppose to the heavy affirmations of the Intellectuals of 1914 this protest of one of the most powerful minds of the modern epoch, a rebel against the hypocritical and thick-headed dogmatism of his own country.<sup>100</sup>

André Gide was a defender of the philosopher who responded to the numerous contemporaries who condemned the philosopher for causing the war itself. "Up to the present," Gide wrote in 1917, "I hardly saw but two possible attitudes regarding the great Germanic philosophers: either to hold them responsible for this war (like Louis Bertrand, and numerous imbeciles), or to oppose it with them (and I confess that this is how I look at it)."<sup>101</sup> That is, Gide believed that one could demonstrate how philosophers such as Nietzsche would have themselves condemned the war as an atrocity. Henri Ghéon likewise came to the defense of the philosopher by way of poetry. "What would you say, Nietzsche, of this war?" asked Ghéon. "Are you going to stretch to the race of the empire/The arms of the father who has recovered his son/After having doubted him for too long?" For Ghéon, as one might expect, the guilt for the war hardly fell upon the head of the philosopher, who all along had championed France over all other countries.

Where are the strong?--they are in the Paradise of  
France  
Where you led the delicate nymphs to dance  
Which holds the secret of art, inherited from the  
daughters of Greece;  
Where the free play of thoughts seems to rock caprices to sleep;  
Where you came to gather, in the shade, the fruits of  
delight;  
In our paradise, the only one you recognized on  
earth.<sup>102</sup>

The literary critic and longtime champion of Nietzschean thought, Remy de Gourmont, likewise defended the philosopher against those who would hastily link him to German aggression. "It has been said, a bit inconsiderately it seems to me, that Nietzsche was one of the educators of Wilhelm II. He has, in any case, profited badly from his lessons, because Nietzsche does not preach to men domination over their peers, but domination over themselves."<sup>103</sup> Thus, the philosopher was to be exonerated of all the charges levelled against him: "Nietzsche ne participa aucunement à la grande folie germanique qu'il n'avait préparée en rien."<sup>104</sup>

By the end of the war one was hard-pressed to find pockets of support for Nietzsche in the French intellectual world. Indeed, the title given to the collection of German statements published during the war, Also Sprach Germania,<sup>105</sup> leaves little doubt as to the negative image of Nietzsche in France by 1918. The "war has redoubled interest in Nietzsche," noted Romain Rolland in 1917; yet the attention given to the German was usually of a most negative sort. "Attributing to Nietzsche, along with Treitschke and Bernhardi, the greatest share of the moral responsibility for the imperialist tendencies of the new Germany, the writings of the Allies, especially those of the English, have inspired in the Germans the desire to know if this accusation was true."<sup>106</sup>

The remnants of the generation which had first embraced Nietzsche remained loyal, though in a state of cultural--and sometimes physical--debilitation. The writer Paul Léautaud, who was a secretary at the Mercure de

France, confided to his journal how Jacques Morland, an essayist and translator in the Nietzsche industry, had degenerated into "the type of sick, worn-out, dejected, even unhealthy man, l'homme à régime, that a trifle upsets and throws on the ground, who grasps furniture in order to walk, who does not say a word without being exhausted by it, [a man] with neither will, personality, nor character. Aside from all that, a passionate nietzschéen, always talking about the overman, of overcoming himself, etc."<sup>107</sup>

## Notes

1. Fernand Baldensperger, L'Avant-guerre dans la littérature française, 1900-1914 (Paris: Payot, 1919), 147.
2. Marcel Ray to Valéry Larbaud, 20 février 1908, Correspondance, 1899-1937 (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), I: 246.
3. Eugen Weber, Action Française, 80-81. Cf. also Pierre Lasserre, Action française, 11 août 1908, and Revue critique 10 mars 1913; and Alfred Capus, Revue critique avril 1913, 87ff.
4. Henri Andrillon, L'Expansion de l'Allemagne et la France (Angoulême: L. Coquemard et Cie., 1909), 1, 61.
5. Ibid., 77.
6. Henri Andrillon, L'Expansion de l'Allemagne et la France (Angoulême: Imprimerie militaire L. Coquemard et Cie., 1909), 70.
7. Ibid., 73.
8. Henri Rouzaud, "Revue des revues" La Revue critique des idées et des livres 10 février 1910 (8), 295-296.
9. Jules Pierre, Avec Nietzsche à l'assaut du Christianisme: exposé des théories de "l'Action Française" (Limoges: Dumont, 1910).
10. Cf. A. Lugan, L'Action française et l'idée chrétienne (Paris: Bloud, 1909); Lucien Moreau, "La Politique de l'Action française: réponse à M. Lugan et à quelques feuillets anonymes" L'Action française 15 juin 1909 (23), 393-420; 15 octobre 1909 (24), 271-302. See also G. de Pascal et al, "Une Lettre de M. Lugan" L'Action française 15 janvier 1910 (25), 50-59.
11. Ibid., vi.
12. Ibid., x.
13. Ibid., vi.
14. Ibid., 6.
15. Jules Pierre, Réponse à M. Maurras: L'Action Française et ses directions païennes (Paris: Charles Amat, 1914), 160, 166.
16. Ibid., 97n.

17. Ibid., 176.
18. Ibid., 178, 181.
19. Victor de Pallarès' Le Crépuscule d'une idole: Nietzsche, Nietzscheïsme, Nietzscheïens (Paris: Grasset, 1910).
20. Ibid., 355.
21. Ibid., 148.
22. Ibid., 355.
23. Ibid., 357-358.
24. Agathon [Henri Massis and Alfred de Tarde] Les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Plon, [1912] 1914), iii, 6, 9-10, 19; Robert Wohl, The Generation of 1914 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 8-9.
25. Massis, quoted in Anonymous, "French Views on Nietzsche," Living Age November 1930 (339), 315.
26. Agathon, 55.
27. Ibid.
28. Pierre Hepp, contribution to Agathon, 230.
29. François Mauriac, L'Enfant chargé de chaînes in Oeuvres romanesques et théâtrales complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), I: 39.
30. Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 195.
31. Pierre Bourdieu, Les Règles de l'art (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 312.
32. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Littérature française: le XXe siècle, 1896-1920 (Paris: Arthaud, 1975), 172.
33. Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, "Manifeste du naturisme" in Le Figaro 10 janvier 1897, quoted in Walzer, 173.
34. Viollis, "Nietzsche et la Jeunesse d'aujourd'hui," 109.
35. Ibid.
36. Henri Ghéon, contribution to Viollis, 111-112.

37. Ibid., 212.
38. Ibid.
39. Jacques Copeau, contribution to Viollis, 113.
40. Vaudoyer, in Viollis, 119.
41. Francis Miomandre, contribution to Viollis, 112. Miomandre was a member of "l'école provençale" of naturism, which also featured Edmond Jaloux and Gilbert de Voisins. Cf. Walzer, 172.
42. Louis Benoist-Hanappier had previously published a collection of poetry, A l'Ombre de la Mort (Paris, 1900), as well as Le Drame naturaliste en Allemagne (Paris: Alcan, 1905), which was crowned by the Académie Française. He would later publish En marge de Nietzsche (Paris: Eugène Figuière et Cie, 1912).
43. Jacques Bainville, contribution to Viollis, 115.
44. Ibid. Daniel Lesueur's Nietzschéenne was classified as a roman de mœurs in Charles Arnaud, "Romans de mœurs" Polybiblion 1908 (113), 294-296.
45. Charles Verrier, contribution to Viollis, 113.
46. Pierre Hepp, contribution to Viollis, 114.
47. Binet-Valmer, contribution to Viollis, 113.
48. Viollis, 117.
49. Henri de Noussanne, contribution to Viollis, 117.
50. Marius and Ary Leblond, contribution to Viollis, 117. Writing under these pseudonyms, Georges Athenas (1877-1955) and Aimé Merlo (1880-1958) won the 1909 Prix Goncourt for their novel En France, which like most of their books raised colonial and social issues with a decidedly exotic flavor.
51. Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, contribution to Viollis, 119. The brothers Tharaud won the 1906 Prix Goncourt for their 1902 novel, Dingley, l'illustre écrivain. What is more, Jean Tharaud had been for years the secretary of Maurice Barrès, thus perhaps implicating him in a position that by 1911 was mainstream if not dominant.
52. Louis-Frédéric Sauvage, contribution to Viollis, 125.

53. Parinet, 492-493.

54. M. Sageret, contribution to Viollis, 118.

55. François Albert, contribution to Viollis, 118.

56. Gaston Chérau, contribution to Viollis, 118. One critic wrote of Chérau that he is "taken today for the most authentic descendant of Maupassant." Cf. André Billy, La Littérature française contemporaine (Paris: Armand Colin, 1928), 94-95.

57. Ernest La Jeunesse, contribution to Viollis, 118-119. Interestingly, a correspondent for The Saturday Review cited La Jeunesse's L'Imitation de Notre Maître Napoléon (along with the works of Barrès and Maurras) as a literary version of Nietzsche's philosophy "which was for a few months the breviary of thousands of young fools. . . . the cynicism of a great deal of the light literature at the end of the past century was only Nietzschean at its revels. These things are already forgotten. M. La Jeunesse has passed as a meteor, and is only taken seriously by a few very green foreign journalists." Cf. A Correspondent, "Nietzsche on a Parisian Stage" The Saturday Review 14 January 1911 (111), 44.

58. Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, contribution to Viollis, 121.

59. Ibid.

60. Léon Bazalgette, contribution to Viollis, 122. See also Bazalgette's praise of naturism and naturalism in his L'Esprit nouvelle dans la vie artistique, sociale et religieuse (Paris: Société d'éditions littéraires, 1898), 17-19. L'Effort, launched in 1910 by a young professor, agrégé d'histoire Jean-Richard Bloch, would be renamed L'Effort libre in 1912. The fascination with vitalisme, often associated with the works of Bergson, Nietzsche, and Sorel, also featured those of Romain Rolland, Émile Verhaeren, and Walt Whitman, to whom Bazalgette had devoted several volumes. Cf. Christophe Prochasson, Les intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre, 1900-1938 (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 72-74.

61. Henri Genet, contribution to Viollis, 121.

62. Albert Thomas, contribution to Viollis, 126; Prochasson, 122-129.

63. Ibid.

64. Albert Métin, contribution to Viollis, 126.

65. Romain Rolland, contribution to Viollis, 127-128.



66. Jean Viollis, "Nietzsche et la Jeunesse d'aujourd'hui (suite)" 25 janvier 1911 (65), 319.
67. Ibid., 329.
68. Ibid., 330.
69. Ibid., 331.
70. Léon Daudet, Hors du joug allemand (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1915), 94.
71. André Gide, "Réflexions sur l'Allemagne" Nouvelle revue française juin 1919 (13), 36, 38.
72. Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, unpublished draft, 800.
73. Cf. Marcel Cachin, "Les Intellectuels allemands" L'Humanité 21 octobre 1914, 1; "Intellectuels de France et intellectuels d'Allemagne" L'Humanité 24 octobre 1914, 2; "Un Intellectuel français s'élève éloquemment contre l'impérialisme" L'Humanité 26 octobre 1914, 1.
74. Cf. Les Allemands destructeurs de Cathédrales et de Trésors du Passé (Paris: Hachette, 1915). This text was dedicated: "Aux associations littéraires et artistiques étrangères, et à tous les amis du beau, afin de porter à leur connaissance le système de destruction des armées allemandes, le présent mémoire est offert. . . ." This declaration was signed by a quite varied group of intellectuals, including Juliette Adam, Paul Adam, Maurice Barrès, Elémir Bourges, Émile Boutroux, Alfred Capus, Paul Claudel, Lucien Descaves, Émile Faguet, Paul Fort, Anatole France, André Gide, Francis Jammes, Marie Lenéru, Anna de Noailles Rachilde, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, Gabriel Séailles.
75. Christophe Prochasson, Les Intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 114-117.
76. Léon Daudet, Hors du joug allemand (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1915), 94.
77. Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in France, 135.
78. Robert Soucy, Fascist Intellectual: Drieu La Rochelle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 45.
79. Paul Adam, Rheims dévastée (Paris: Alcan, 1920), 7, 134.

80. Léon Daudet, Hors du joug allemand (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1915), 93-94.

81. Ibid., 98.

82. Léon Daudet, L'Entre deux guerres (Paris: Grasset, 1932), 165.

83. André Beaunier, Les Surboches (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1915), 19.

84. Ibid., 23.

85. Ibid., 31.

86. Romain Rolland, Journal des années de guerre, 1914-1919 (Paris: Albin Michel, 1952), 105.

87. Ibid., 156. Elsewhere Rolland noted that "Ces pauvres intellectuels s'imaginent qu'avec leur étalage de Nietzscheïsme et de Bismarckisme forcenés ils font de l'héroïsme et en imposent au monde!" Rolland, Au-dessus de la mêlée fifty-ninth edition (Paris: Ollendorff, 1916), 92.

88. André Suarès, "Nietzsche et l'empire" L'Opinion 20 mai 1916, 483.

89. Docteur Paul Voivenel, "Les Allemands et la science de l'esprit malade" Mercure de France 1 septembre 1915 (112), 37.

90. Gustave Le Bon, Enseignements psychologiques de la guerre européenne (Paris: Flammarion, 1917), 40-41, 47-48.

91. Anna de Noailles, quoted in Giovanni Gullace, Gabriele d'Annunzio in France (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 205.

92. Aschheim, The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 48-49.

93. H. F. Peters, Zarathustra's Sister: The Case of Elisabeth and Friedrich Nietzsche (New York: Crown Publishers, 1977), 200-201.

94. Henri Albert, "Nietzsche contre les barbares" L'Opinion 23 janvier 1915, 60.

95. Henri Lichtenberger, "Nietzsche et la pensée contemporaine" La Revue politique internationale 1914 (6), 537.

96. Ibid., 538.

97. Ibid., 540.

98. Barrès, "Trent-huitième cahier (commencé à Paris le 6 juillet 1914," Mes cahiers (Paris: Plon, 1938), 11: 117.

99. Édouard Herriot, "Nietzsche contre la culture allemande" Annales politiques et littéraires 4 juillet 1915, 24.

100. Ibid., 24.

101. André Gide, letter to Guillaume Lerolle, 20 octobre 1917, cited in Journal, 1889-1939 (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 634-635.

102. Henri Ghéon, "A Frédéric Nietzsche" Mercure de France 1 octobre 1915, 223.

103. Remy de Gourmont, Pendant la guerre (Paris: Mercure de France, 1917), 36.

104. Ibid., 34.

Jean Ruplinger, Also Sprach Germania: paroles allemandes pendant la guerre (Paris: Editions de la Sirène, 1918). Ruplinger was professeur honoraire de l'Université; includes a preface by Edouard Herriot.

106. Rolland, Journal, 1060.

107. Paul Léautaud, 24 Juin 1918, Journal littéraire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1955), II: 234.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, the rise and decline of the Nietzsche vogue in France at the turn of the century may be explained by the social dynamics of intellectual groups as they confronted each other in their mutual struggle for recognition. Understood in symbolic terms, Nietzsche was employed as lever with which young writers could attempt to topple their elders. By virtue of being utilized as a symbolic weapon for several years, the philosopher became closely associated in the intellectual imagination with the rebellious literary avant-garde of the 1890s. Thus, those who would attack the disruptive activities of the avant-garde would habitually wage war upon its cultural icons. That is, to reject Nietzsche entailed the implicit rejection of an entire sector of the literary world, a gesture which became even more vital during the intellectual divisions of the Dreyfus Affair.

The development of a rightist version of Nietzsche has also been explained by the eruption of hostilities during the Affair, whose factions had been formed long before 1898. Long accustomed to the image of Nietzsche as a romantic and an anarchist, which was the result of the philosopher being so closely identified with the Dreyfusard avant-garde, anti-Dreyfusard intellectuals waged war on their enemies by appropriating their cultural icons. That is, rather than merely rejecting Nietzsche outright (like some anti-Dreyfusards), royalists such as Pierre Lasserre, Jacques Bainville, and Lucien Moreau condemned the previous image of the philosopher by stressing, on the contrary, Nietzsche's love of order and classical French culture.

This appropriation of Nietzsche by the radical right also had its analogue among leftist political groups. Allied with the literary avant-garde during the 1890s, young socialists such as Léon Blum, Charles Andler, and Lucien Herr utilized Nietzschean thought for a socialist political program. Yet, as the Dreyfusard alliance began to break down after 1902 Nietzsche was invoked less often by socialist groups, partly because of the appropriations of the extreme right. With the radicals and socialists having secured political power, revolutionary syndicalists such as Georges Sorel, Édouard Berth, and Georges Valois employed Nietzschean ideas in their struggle against the capitalist order.

The contemporary philosopher Vincent Descombes has correctly identified three "moments" of the reception of Nietzsche in France: among writers at the end of the nineteenth century, among "nonconformist" intellectuals between the two world wars, and among philosophers writing in the late-1950s amid the decline of the intellectual fashions of existentialism, Marxism, and structuralism.<sup>1</sup> There is thus an apparent pattern in the three manifestations of the Nietzsche vogue in French intellectual life in the twentieth century.

In terms of the politics of intellectual life, one may assert that in each of these moments the ideas of Nietzsche were appropriated as a means of radical distinction. At the end of the century, it has been shown, Nietzschean philosophy was employed by young and/or unestablished (and therefore marginal) intellectual groups seeking to challenge intellectual hegemony. A similar phenomenon took place in the wake of the First World War, during the

second moment of the French reception of Nietzsche. Discredited by the popular belief that the philosopher had encouraged German wartime atrocities, the early-1920s were a period of reconstruction of the intellectual prestige of Nietzsche. For example, dissatisfied with both Kantian and Bergsonian philosophical currents dominating French academic philosophy, young rebels such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Nizan, Henri Lefebvre, and Georges Bataille became interested in the works of Nietzsche. The Nouvelle revue française, which had ceased publication during the war, was revived in 1919 to become the most important engagé periodical of the interwar years. Perhaps as a testimony of this journal's commitment to the philosopher, during the late-1930s the NRF would publish all-new translations of Nietzsche's work.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period, the radical fringes of the left and the right which had embraced Nietzschean philosophy before the war would continue to do so despite popular association of the philosopher with German aggression. Georges Valois, for example, who had quit the Action Française shortly before the war, employed the ideas of Nietzsche as an intellectual justification for his Faisceau, the first bona fide fascist movement in France. In addition, the syndicalist Édouard Berth, who became a communist after the war, continued to invoke Nietzsche in his texts. In all of these examples, therefore, one notices the thought of Nietzsche being invoked most often by radical and marginal intellectual groups both to promote their own programs and to distinguish themselves from the political and literary establishments.

It must be stated that the conclusions drawn here regarding the creation of the Nietzsche vogue in French intellectual life at the turn of the century constitute only one stage in an ongoing study of French intellectual history in general. It is the hope of the author that, after a period of intensive revision, a published version of this study will appear in years to come. Thus, given the time constraints and professional imperatives involved with producing a dissertation, this study cannot be considered complete at this time.

**Notes**

1. Vincent Descombes, "Le Moment français de Nietzsche" in Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, eds., Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzschéens (Paris: Grasset, 1991), 101.

2. Between 1936 and 1940, the Nouvelle revue française published the following new translations of Nietzsche: Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra, M. Betz, trans. (1936); La Volonté de puissance, Geneviève Bianquis, trans. (1936); Le Gai savoir, Alexandre Viallette, trans (1937); Lettres choisies, Alexandre Viallette, trans. (1937); Ecce Homo, Alexandre Viallette, trans. (1939); La Naissance de la philosophie à l'époque de la tragédie grecque, Geneviève Bianquis, trans. (1940).



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