THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Jean Giraudoux and a Vision of Germany

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF

FRENCH, ITALIAN AND SPANISH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1995

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

It was evident to Jean Giraudoux in the aftermath of the Great War of 1914-1918 that something needed to be done to improve Franco-German relations, on an intellectual plane at least. He wrote *Siegfried et le Limousin* in an attempt to impart his own vision of Germany to a wider public.

It is in the nature of his book that it suggested as much about the nature of France as it did about Germany, and the "German problem". Usually posed by the French as a moral question concerning an aggressive German militarism, their German problem, and the nature of the Germans, cannot however be broached without also exploring how far France's own situation, and the nature of the French themselves, may have coloured their perceptions of Germany.

By way of just such an exploration, this thesis proposes that the French view of the German problem was essentially skewed, and may be shown to have its origins, in large part, in the susceptibilities of France's own refined sense of nationality; in its own peculiarly troubled history; and in an intellectual tradition which encouraged idealist abstractions at the expense of more concrete engagement with the changing realities of the world which lay outside France.

To Ina, Fiona, and Mairi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I take this opportunity to acknowledge, and express my appreciation for, the great kindness and patience of Tony Greaves and Peter Fothergill-Payne, who have both gone out of their way to give of their time and attention during the preparation of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 Franco-German relations underwent a dramatic change for the worse, a deterioration which in its essentials persisted until 1945 and the defeat of the Nazi regime by the Allied Forces. Of critical importance in that confrontation, and as a matter quite distinct from the reality of German might, were French conceptions of the nature of the new Germany created by Bismarck, and the related role of French writers and intellectuals in reflecting or helping determine those conceptions. Arguably, French writers and intellectuals of the Third Republic did not display that detachment and insight which might have contributed to the formation of an informed and balanced public opinion concerning relations with Germany, and thus to more productive responses to the new problems besetting Franco-German relations.

By 1914 the influence of a reactive French nationalism, which in the extreme had already shown xenophobic, racist, and in particular anti-semitic tendencies, could figure prominently in the patriotic fervour of the "Union Sacrée", which united Frenchmen of all persuasions on the eve of the disaster of the Great War of 1914-1918. Far from solving anything, however, the war and the following peace left various problems unresolved, and added some new ones, so that the inter-war years of 1918-1939 soon gave uneasy notice that a new crisis was in the offing, without holding out much prospect of improvement in conditions, or in the will to find constructive grounds for new initiatives in relations between France and Germany.

In these circumstances Jean Giraudoux' early novel, *Siegfried et le Limousin* (Giraudoux, 1959), appearing in 1922, seemed to distinguish itself by its very different tone in dealing with the apparent differences between Germany and France and their peoples. By seeming to avoid what had by then become an hysterical demonizing of the Germans, in favour of a sparklingly humorous and often ironically satirical view of Germany of the 1920s, Giraudoux aimed to reorient the prevailing popular image of Germany, towards the possibility of a more humanely accommodating understanding, appreciation, and rapprochement of the two nations.

On the evidence of subsequent events, it was almost certainly already too late for goodwill, and a new view, to be able to counteract the forces already bearing on Germany and France, but Giraudoux' stance, and his vision of Germany, is still interesting in that, whilst it incorporated much that had entered into previous assessments of Germany and the Germans, it noted much also that was new and current, and which, with the benefit of hindsight, may be seen to have foreshadowed difficulties yet to come. His book then has interest for what it records about Germany, however obliquely at times, at a critical juncture between the wars, but ultimately of greater importance is the opening which it provides for an exploration of certain deep-seated French attitudes towards the Germans, which he himself may be seen also to have shared.

The objective of this thesis will then be to examine Giraudoux' vision of Germany, as embodied in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, with a view

(a) to determining precisely what he had to say in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, noting and contrasting his perceptions, and his handling of the "German problem", in relation to a selection from the works of certain other writers who may be considered to represent rather different responses of the period after 1870;

(b) to situating him in that broader historical, intellectual, and cultural context which is the appropriate surround for the events which had been unfolding since 1870, and which had both fed and been shaped by the perceptions of French writers and intellectuals; and

(c) to determining how far French writers, including Giraudoux, may have helped or hindered France's perception of a German problem, and thus its alleviation or perpetuation.

The plan of the thesis is accordingly framed as a broadly retrospective review of French perspectives on Germany, from the standpoint of 1922, with further comment relating them to more recent historical insights concerning the nature of

Germany's problems in modern times, as distinct from those of France. In this the Great War here serves as a pivotal divide, in recognition of its widely disruptive effects on European society, a function which may be seen to hold true also in the particular matter of Franco-German relations.

Chapter I therefore first examines *Siegfried et le Limousin* itself in some detail, in the light of Giraudoux' professed aim of improved Franco-German relations, before moving on in Chapter II to a selection of mainly nationalist-inspired works from the period before 1914, which are used largely to illustrate the relatively extreme biases of France's own right-wing nationalist doctrines, in a period when France's greatest complaint against Germany concerned its aggressively militaristic nationalist posturing.

Chapter III then explores, in works of the post-1918 period, an accentuated moral condemnation of Germany, and a new approach to defining a peculiar German mind and national character. Echoes of these attitudes are then apparent in *Siegfried*, with the effect of diminishing Giraudoux' real contribution to the debate on Germany.

Taking these literary impressions and reflections as a starting point, Chapter IV then holds them to the light of a more searching analysis of the Franco-German dispute based on historical, cultural, and other considerations. The justice of France's moral condemnation of Germany is thereby largely erased, at the same time that an alternative, and more productive, economic perspective is outlined as a key to Germany's behaviour.

The thesis' conclusion is finally concerned to explain why it was possible for Giraudoux, in *Siegfried*, to express an essentially defective and ambivalent view of Germany, at odds with his expressions of goodwill, at the same time that he hoped that it might contribute to improved relations with Germany. That explanation is then seen to have wider application to French writers and intellectuals in general.

CHAPTER I

SIEGFRIED ET LE LIMOUSIN

From the vantage point of 1922 it would still have been possible to examine the background to the Franco-German quarrel, and to assess its underlying causes, without the extra baggage of the events of the Hitler era. Although the history of moral condemnation of these events, on the part of countries around the world, might seem to have provided a thoroughgoing justification of France's fear and characterization of Germany and its people ever since 1870, closer examination should suggest that circumstances after 1918 were so radically changed that a new set of forces had come to bear on the Franco-German relationship. Even although greatly influenced by the earlier animosities, the latter period should be regarded as different in kind from what had gone before and, at least at first sight, susceptible to more ready analysis and allocation of responsibility for the renewed outbreak of war. For in fact the Germans were in a much more difficult situation in 1919, and in the years that followed, than the French had been in 1871 and after.

Yet even by 1922 this had not been properly recognized, perhaps least of all by the French, and the possible outcome of continuing difficulties for Germany had not been widely thought through. The experience of 1914-1918 could still seem to be the ultimate expression of the depths to which

Franco-German hostility could fall. France had suffered material devastation spared Germany, but both France and Germany, to say nothing of their allies, had suffered huge losses of life, so that a more generous spirit of reconciliation could have been expected. A sense of spiritual and cultural loss had accompanied the more evident tragedy of losses of life, making all the more important a return to more civilized relations, to a spirit of live and let live at least, and the possibility of never again having to resort to such a war. Sadly, the needed reconciliation had not occurred, no doubt precisely because of the powerful new elements of difficulty pressing on Germany especially, and matters threatened to deteriorate still further.

1.1 Towards Franco-German understanding.

It was at this point, in 1922, that Jean Giraudoux wrote *Siegfried et le Limousin*. (Giraudoux, 1959) In form the novel is constituted around a search by the narrator, a Frenchman in the guise of a Canadian, "Chapdelaine", for his talented writer friend and compatriot, Jacques Forestier. Although Forestier had been lost in action during the war, and long since presumed dead, recent evidence had come to light giving hope that he was possibly still alive, and might be found in Germany. This being in due course confirmed, as well as the fact that he is an amnesiac, and so quite unaware of his real identity and nationality, the search resolves itself as an exercise in gradual rehabilitation of Forestier as a Frenchman, with Chapdelaine's help. The matter is complicated by the fact that in his German personification, as "Siegfried von Kleist", Forestier is already regarded as a counsellor of state of considerable importance to Germany in its attempt to refine the new constitution for the post-war Weimar Republic.The places visited and described by Chapdelaine in Germany, as also in large part the people met, constitute a sort of literary sentimental return by Giraudoux, a device which permits him to revisit the scenes of his own pre-war student days in Germany. He is able then to depict Germany in its new conditions, whilst setting up a series of sweeping comparisons of alleged German and French national characteristics. Ultimately, and perhaps predictably, he helps return Forestier to his native France. At the same time the interplay of the "real" with the literary leaves little doubt that Chapdelaine is for all practical purposes Giraudoux himself. (Body, 1975, 237-238)

As Giraudoux later put it, he wrote the novel with the intention that it should contribute to a resumption of intellectual relations between the two nations. (Body, 1975, 262) In the event, while his book received much favourable attention in France, where it won the Balzac Prize, "critiques et public occultèrent complètement la question franco-allemande posée par le livre." (Dufay, 1993, 243)

Disappointed, then, by the public's lack of response to the Franco-German question posed by *Siegfried et le Limousin*, Giraudoux was already, only a year after its publication, thinking of writing a stage adaptation of his book, the better to draw attention to "la seule question grave de l'univers", as he was wont to put it. (Dufay, 1993, 271) It was only rather later, in 1928 in fact, that his play *Siegfried* appeared "pour attirer l'attention d'un certain public français sur la nécessité de reprendre contact avec l'Allemagne littéraire". (Cited, Dufay, 1993, 243) At that time, if somewhat contradictorily, he also seemed to acknowledge for the earlier *Siegfried et le Limousin* what might have been a different ambition, which perhaps explains its lack of force where Franco-German entente was concerned:

> Le roman a pour but d'apporter dans chaque coeur de lecteur, à domicile, par une douce pression, un balancement à l'imagination ou à la délectation sentimentale. Ce n'était vraiment pas ce que je cherchais cette fois car j'avais à parler de l'Allemagne, et le mégaphone lui-même n'est pas assez sonore dans ce cas. (Cited, Body, 1975, 284)

The play *Siegfried* also enjoyed considerable success in France but had only a mixed and generally hostile reception in translation in Germany. Jacques Body describes the reaction of one German critic, Friedrich Sieburg, otherwise well disposed to Giraudoux:

> Curieusement, Sieberg tolère mieux le roman de *Siegfried et le Limousin*, si cruel à l'égard de ses contemporains, que la pièce de théâtre. C'est que 'le roman ne nous oblige pas à une confrontation

> perpétuelle avec la réalité' et que 'nous écoutons Giraudoux nous parler de Munich comme Voltaire, jadis, parlait de Babylone', tandis que le théâtre exige des personnages, des costumes, des décors sinon exacts, du moins possibles. Or c'est la question que pose Sieburg: le public français, par un 'grave malentendu', ne prend-il pas *Siegfried* pour 'une peinture exacte capable de lui apporter quelque lumière sur un monde qui lui est étranger', ou tout au moins pour un 'véritable reportage poétique sur l'Allemagne'? Dès lors, Sieburg se déclare 'intolérant' et 'proteste': 'Siegfried n'est pas un Allemand, il est tout au plus l'incarnation de l'image qu'un Français intelligent et sensible peut se faire de l'Allemagne. ...' (Body, 1975, 298)

Giraudoux' readers or theatre-going audience, whether in France or Germany , thus evinced some difficulties of interpretation, which may be seen as indicative of the ambiguity which marked so much of Giraudoux' life and works. *Siegfried* may have made more clear to his French public a concern which was ambiguous at best in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, but Giraudoux had not thereby improved his standing with his German public. Given such problematic interpretations, and their origins in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, it is useful to look at Giraudoux' novel in the light of recent critical opinion and interpretations, which offer the benefit of insights derived from its placement within the totality of Giraudoux' life and works.

1.2 Technique and meaning.

Antoinette Weber-Caflisch's "*Siegfried et le Limousin*: un roman de la méthode" (1991) is a critique of literary form and techniques, but it also poses insightful questions about the novel's plot and content. In fact, Weber-Caflisch's exploration of form and method originated in her inability to construct in her own mind any satisfactory representation of plot and meaningful content for the novel, from what seemed merely elusive and disjointed fragments of detail, of images poorly retained in her memory, even after several readings. In this respect she clearly distinguishes the novel from its later stage adaptation in which, to her mind at least, Zelten's plot, the return of Siegfried to France, and Robineau's moral claims on Germany are coherently joined. By contrast, in the novel "ce qui est censé être le point nodal de l'idéologie du roman—le retour de Siegfried—supporte d'être soumis à des jugements contradictoires sans qu'aucune leçon dominante ne soit tirée, alors qu'une réflexion sur ce sujet est clairement engagée." (1991, 247)

Weber-Caflisch's explanation of that phenomenon, starting with an exploration of Giraudoux' treatment of a theory of plagiarism implicit in the text, sees his novel as supremely reflexive and self-referential, with the effect of undercutting the text's links with reality. Nominally still present, the referential function points to something other than an external reality (1991, 250). As she puts it: "L'écriture (selon *Siegfried et le Limousin*) conquerra finalement sa vraie valeur d'art, en surimposant à la représentation du monde sa propre représentation." (1991, 251)

Her identification and evaluation of the procedures and techniques used by Giraudoux in this "entreprise de déréalisation ou d'irréalisation de la référence qui est l'enjeu de la méthode" (1991, 265) is searching and complex, but certain procedures are particularly important in that regard. Pre-eminent perhaps is Giraudoux' use of repetition, contrary to real-life expectations, of unusual or purely accidental matters, with the effect of distancing them from what might otherwise be taken as their normal matrix of reality, to take on instead a separate, formal, and purely literary autonomy (1991, 254). Similarly, by applying a restricting series of vocabulary sets, or codes, to both figurative representations and those of a nominally conventional, if still fictional, reality, Giraudoux contrives to blur the reader's capacity to distinguish one from the other. The same "nomenclature", by turns purporting to describe a "real" world or to transform it by figurative means, ends by redirecting the reader to the closed world of the text referencing itself (1991, 265-266).

Such devices might seem unsuited to the elaboration of any real sense beyond drawing attention to its own literarity, and Giraudoux seems to poke fun at the possibility of a realist reading of the text, but Weber-Caflisch's analysis, supported by illustrations of her method, suggests that a reading which takes account of the inter-relatedness of often widely-scattered themes or motifs may unlock a fictional meaning. Her own overarching "lecture arabesque", as she characterizes that procedure, leads to an understanding of Giraudoux' *Siegfried et le Limousin* as a "réclamation contre le monde de l'agresseur moderne, vaincu certes, mais en qui Giraudoux sait désigner prophétiquement le vainqueur futur de l'Europe archaïque ou 'provinciale' (la Bavière, le Limousin), et sans doute aussi, au vu de la vocation mondialiste qu'il lui prête avec insistance, de l'Europe politique à venir." (1991, 256-257) For Weber-Caflisch at least, *Siegfried et le Limousin* is nonetheless "une oeuvre qui, tout à la fois et dans une commune élaboration, délivre un message significatif et conçoit, expose et joue les propres et singulières conditions où elle se donne à l'existence." (1991, 271)

The search for meaning, for a message, rather than a concern with literary form, has been perhaps the major preoccupation of recent literary criticism concerning Giraudoux. In the main it has sought insights on political, social, and even philosophical levels, whether bearing on *Siegfried et le Limousin* specifically, or on the wider corpus of Giraudoux' works. Before considering such wider perspectives, an article by Jeanne Bem merits attention for its focus on *Siegfried et le Limousin* and Giraudoux at a more personal level. Her article "Ni Siegfried ni Limousin, ou Giraudoux entre l'Histoire et le miroir" (1986), interprets the work as an elaboration by Giraudoux of the myth of Narcissus. Bem's interpretation of the novel, essentially as an expression of desire, is persuasive in that respect, but it does also anticipate Weber-Caflisch's in recognizing the question and role of intertextuality or plagiarism, and the insistently self-referential character of the method of writing. She incorporates these insights in a neat summary of her own reading: "Giraudoux illustre implicitement—mais très consciemment—une théorie de l'écriture qui veut que toute chose relève d'un Autre qui est aussi le Même, ou révèle, comme une intime lézarde, la présence de l'Autre au coeur du Moi." (1986,132)

On the question of any "ideological" meaning, however, Bem is quite categorical—for her there is none to be found in the novel. "Car on ne saura jamais vraiment si quatre ans après la fin de la Grande Guerre, Giraudoux s'est voulu, par conviction ou par coquetterie, germanophile, ou s'il est au contraire patriote français jusqu'au chauvinisme le plus mesquin, ou les deux simultanément." (1986, 126) That opinion is certainly at odds with Weber-Caflisch's, but both make clear how far the practices of Giraudoux' literary method in *Siegfried et le Limousin* have managed to problematize the search for such meaning in the text. Other critics have sought clues to its meaning in Giraudoux' later works, in biographical information, or in associated philosophical and political perspectives. Much ambiguity is apparent in these areas also, however, so that one may readily be struck by a recurrence, in examining Giraudoux' works, of a resort to that same reflexivity of attention, that same "arabesque" form of reading postulated by Weber-Caflisch.

1.3 A writer-journalist.

Yet, despite such difficulties of interpretation it must be noted that, in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, Chapdelaine very early emphasizes two related considerations which confirm Giraudoux' stated intention for the work. Firstly, he sincerely wants a restoration of good Franco-German relations, as exemplified on a personal level by his relations with his German friend Zelten, after the long separation of the war years; and secondly, he recognizes that even if, for him, Zelten personifies a Germany which he had come to love, even need, it is nonetheless a Germany whose validity, as the "real" Germany, is quite problematic. In this, as in much else, Chapdelaine echoes questions of long standing in France with respect to the Germans, for certain extremes of characterization of Germany had long been debated in France. On one side could be counted those believers, such as Mme de Staël, who in a continuing tradition dating from at least as far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century, had admired and the Germans as a cultured and intellectually accomplished people; on the other side were those who, rudely awakened by the events the Franco-Prussian War and confirmed in their view by the devastation of the Great War, insisted on seeing in them an essentially barbaric people, by nature irredeemably alien and aggressively militaristic. Whilst some apparent substance could be found for both opinions, by 1922 much residual French resentment still gave weight to the latter view, and inclined to disparage the earlier tradition of Franco-German intellectual relations, and its associated artistic and literary traditions, as misguided and dangerously sentimental. "Le mot France et le mot Allemagne ne sont à peu près plus et n'ont jamais été pour le monde des expressions géographiques, ce sont des termes moraux..." says Prince Heinrich of Saxe-Altdorf. (Giraudoux, 1959,138)

Chapdelaine's search for Forestier provides the occasion then for yet another exploration of the question, on the contemporary German scene, within the framework of the nostalgic return devised by Giraudoux the sometime germanophile student. Chapdelaine's rediscovery of Germany prompts him to draw out comparisons, whether with his own earlier student days or as between different parts of Germany, but also, and more importantly for present purposes, as between France and Germany. Much that is revealing with respect to the psychology of Franco-German relations thereby comes to light. And what might have served as an earlier vision of Germany for the French seems to be contradicted by other, newer realities of German society in the post-war Weimar Republic. Kleist's visit to Berlin, for example points to the need for new ways of thinking about Germany:

> Kleist était pour la première fois à Berlin. Il en était épouvanté. Cette ville était le démenti le plus formel à tout que ses maîtres lui avaient affirmé de l'Allemagne. (Giraudoux, 1959, 183)

In that connection Agnes Raymond also raises two matters of importance (Raymond, 1963). In so far as the content of his work is concerned, Giraudoux aimed to be so contemporaneous with events that his work should be recognized, as he himself saw it, as that of a writer-journalist: "C'est que l'écrivain doit devenir dans le travail du pays, un élément toujours mobilisable chaque jour, un ouvrier de toutes heures, un journalier, c'est-à-dire un journaliste." (Cited, 1963, 36) Moreover, whilst his political ideas may have taken considerable time to come into view, even long-time followers of Giraudoux might need to be reminded that the various aspects of his literary style and technique were developed early and remained constant in works as widely separated in time as *Les Provinciales* (1909)and *La Folle de Chaillot* (1945). (Raymond, 1963, 43)

Numerous examples of journalistic immediacy in *Siegfried et le Limousin* confirm that understanding. Thus, almost on the eve of his departure for Germany Chapdelaine notes with ironic humour the recurring border tensions which marked this inter-war period:

> Il y eut vers la fin du mois entre l'Allemagne et la France une période de plus grande tension, pendant laquelle barrages intellectuels et commerciaux se rétablirent. . . . La demi-douzaine d'Allemands et de Français qui avaient repris,—après combien de scrupules!—leur correspondance d'avant-guerre durent à nouveau l'interrompre. (Giraudoux, 1959, 14)

Chapdelaine seems to distance himself from current anti-German sentiment, and from a sense of grievance on the part of an apparent majority of Frenchmen about past German injustices done to them. As he later emphasizes, these had their practical counterpart in Germans' responses to what they in turn felt to be the injustices inflicted on them by the French. After all, the old Alsace-Lorraine grievance had been resolved in favour of France, Germany had lost that territory, and as had been the case with the French between 1870 and 1914, ideas of revenge occupied many German minds. Meantime they had to be content with more limited measures of retaliation, against a France commonly perceived to be interfering in Germany's affairs. Chapdelaine seems to make light of their anti-French attitudes. Hence his reports of Spanish language instruction substituted for French in certain schools, of the consequently straitened circumstances of French language instructors (1959, 123), and of the German enmity implicit in the anti-French prayers allegedly prescribed for German schoolchildren (1959, 155), take on a mock-serious tone.

Nonetheless, on the diplomatic level tensions and uncertainties were real enough, and if such was the case internationally, Germany's internal political circumstances were equally uncertain. The atmosphere of stealth and danger suggested by Chapdelaine's cloak and dagger arrival in Germany, complete with false passport, is accentuated by allusions to ongoing political intrigues, and to patrolling machine-gun cars on the very day of his arrival (1959, 63). His friend Zelten's plot to seize political power in Munich comes as no surprise (1959, 93), but rather as symptomatic of an underlying political malaise.

Signs of strain are reported on the social scene too, and although also given a lightly humorous description, attest to very real problems. At least some of them can now be seen to have boded ill for German society. Emigration as a fact of recent German history is noted (1959, 69), confirming indirectly the swift population growth in nineteenth century Germany, and a basis therefore, however ill-founded, for later national-socialist calls for *Lebensraum*. Inflation, likewise to be so critical for the formation of public attitudes in the years ahead, is already a corrosive reality whose effects are however only lightly sketched:

> Enfin, car il était fonctionnaire et convertissait le premier du mois, comme ses collègues, de l'instituteur au directeur des postes, sa solde entière en marchandises dont la valeur resterait fixe . . . Tous les objets de seconde nécessité n'étaient dans ma chambre que par dizaines et ceux de première par grosses... (Giraudoux, 1959, 79)

> Les fiacres sans roues caoutchoutées, au compteur dont on multiplie le chiffre par vingt-deux et demi, stationnaient au pied des obélisques, car les monuments en avril fournissaient plus d'ombre que les arbres, surveillés des mausolées par les taxis dont on multiplie le compteur par cent huit.(Giraudoux, 1959, 199-200).

Racism, in the form of latent anti-semitism, is foreshadowed by descriptions of the prominence in German society of Jewish lawyers (1959, 132), intellectuals and artists (1959, 202), and in suggestions as to their influence (1959, 228), and perhaps their ambitions:

> Dans la chambre de ma voisine, la voix de Lieviné Lievin faisait assaut avec une voix d'enfant. . . .
> —Tais-toi, tais-toi, dit la voix d'enfant. Que fait Zelten?
> —Que veux-tu qu'il fasse! Il attend Kleist, il attend Thomas Mann, il attend sa lettre de Gorki, sa lettre d'Anatole France! Les dictateurs collectionnent les autographes et disparaissent. En tout cas, il a trouvé au courrier la mienne où je réclame les 230 marks. Au fond, tu le connais, ce n'est qu'un Allemand, ce qu'il attend c'est Goethe, c'est le vrai Kleist. Mais la France est le seul pays où les morts règnent et arrivent au commandement. Il ne veut que des Bavarois en Bavière. C'est comme si il ne voulait que des Allemands en Allemagne. A qui est l'Allemagne, sinon à nous? Cette belle bourgade de Berlin, à qui est-elle? A qui est le village de Francfort? A qui est le district de Leipzig? A moi. A toi. A nous. Que Zelten me trouve un bâteau, un théâtre, une barque où nous ne soyons pas les maîtres? Chez Rheinhardt, l'autre soir au Marchand de Venise, il n'y avait pas un seul chrétien dans les quarante-trois acteurs qui insultaient Shylock? Que Zelten me cite un seul beau livre ou me montre un seul beau tableau fait depuis trente ans par d'autres que par nous! Qui est Schnitzler? Qui est Cassirer? Qui est Rathenau? Qui est Liebermann? Le bec de l'aigle allemand c'est notre nez.
> —Tais-toi. Tu parles comme un national-libéral! On nous écoute. (Giraudoux, 1959, 228-229)

Putting aside the farcically humorous wrappings, social and political reportage of that sort might seem to sit poorly with Weber-Caflisch's conception of a literary method concerned to sever the text's links with reality, but it does illustrate why she could also conclude that *Siegfried et le Limousin*, at one and the same time, "délivre un message significatif et conçoit, expose et joue les propres et singulières conditions où elle se donne à l'existence." (1991,271)

In an important identification of one such methodological condition, among others, Weber-Caflisch notes Giraudoux' use of parallels, as applied in the many instances of comparison of France and Germany, and recognizes their tendency to generate corresponding antitheses. At the level of the individual too, as in the case of Jean (the narrator) and Forestier, "l'opposition des contraires est nécessaire pour éviter la fusion (contre-nature) des 'mêmes': il faut donc que des deux héros, Jean et Forestier, l'un soit Français et l'autre Allemand, comme il fallait, sans doute, que l'un fût vivant et l'autre mort." (1991, 260-261)

Closely juxtaposed as they are, Weber-Caflisch's observations suggest the interesting possibility that the function of that "opposition des contraires" might be in point not merely at the individual level, but at the national one too, with further effect on the meaning to be derived from the novel as a whole. The possibility of a Franco-German "fusion", for example, long a tantalizing ambition for some Frenchmen, might then also be taken as "contre nature" for Giraudoux' purposes, thus suggesting limits at the very least to his appreciation of Germany, and therefore also to the nature of any Franco-German reconciliation.

1.4 Politics and economics.

The same awareness of the presence of unremitting contradictions also perhaps explains Agnes Raymond's route to her understanding of Giraudoux' novel. Frustrated in her initial attempts to treat Giraudoux' works as a "littérature d'évasion", as opposed to a "littérature engagée", she ended by noting a recurring concern with political matters in works spanning the years 1922-1934, from *Siegfried et le Limousin* to *La Folle de Chaillot*. Far from avoiding the political reality of his time, Giraudoux could then be seen to have pursued a consistent political interest from his early works into those of his later years, but one which he was long concerned to hide from the possibility of public censure. As she put it, if the price of candour was the loss of his audience, he might have been left to make his case in a void. Instead he chose a different path. For Raymond then "l'art de Giraudoux vit de la lutte qu'il avait engagée pour dire ce qui ne se dit pas et pour libérer la prose française de son prosaïsme." (1963, 9-15)

What Giraudoux had to say was then so well hidden by his humour, fantasy, and language that critical examination of his work was more often than not of the opinion that it had no rational meaning. (1963, 36) In Raymond's estimation, however, that view missed Giraudoux' interest in the Franco-German question, which he pursued right up to 1934, and his further concern with the rehabilitation of France, which in many respects he came to see as decadent, and falling behind Germany. By 1930 he could already even suspect that the victory of 1918 had been turned around, and that France was no longer up with the times. (1963, 22-28)

Implicitly, Raymond's view would suggest that from the outset Giraudoux had something to hide from general notice about his political views, but something which a narrower public would be able to decipher in his works. By contrast, his views on economic matters were perhaps subject to a certain evolution, which only some time later permitted him to see the comparative significance of the economic domain for Franco-German relations. In 1922, however, whilst not unaware of the economic dimension to German life, he still seems more inclined in *Siegfried et le Limousin* towards examination of the states of mind involved than to any consideration of their economic implications for France in the longer term. The nature and pace of life in Berlin, for example, posed in stark contrast to the more traditional and structured Bavarian style of Munich, points up the feverish extremes of German society life associated with Berlin in the inter-war years. Yet it is there especially that the economic complexion of Germany, seemingly boundless in its ambitions and scope, is most readily remarked. Chapdelaine is impressed by a German passion for making money, and with humorous hyperbole depicts the intensity with which Berliners approach the dawn to dusk pursuit of their fortunes:

> Une ville amoureuse de l'or, qu'elle se procure par les pierres philosophales, l'électricité, la distillerie de l'air, mais qui n'en ressemble pas moins, par ses moeurs, aux villes d'Alaska où l'on cherche l'or lui-même, où les perturbateurs et voleurs sont arrêtés et jugés aussi vite que les cow-boys et où, au lieu de ruiner un homme ou une société peu à peu, ainsi qu'il est d'usage, il s'agit pour la fille ou le banquier de les dépouiller en une heure, comme dans les films américains. (Giraudoux, 1959, 185)

Astonishing in its vitality, the increasing importance, perhaps dominance already, of the economic and business ethic is there to be surmised. With no apparent sense of defeat with respect to the recent war, Berliners exhibit instead an expansive sense of economic possibilities within a pan-European context, in which national boundaries, national distinctions, would take second place to economic development:

> Des passions dont le dénoument, puisqu'il n'y a pour le retarder ni la pâtisserie à cinq heures comme en France, ni le thé à six heures comme en Angleterre, éclate à n'importe quelle époque du jour, avec le suicide aux heures des repas. Un tel départ journalier dans chaque famille vers la réalité et la fortune qu'on dirait un départ pour la pêche et que Berlin donne tous les accidents de la vie d'un port. Le fils sort heureux du logis de sa mère au soleil levant, et le soir, après avoir aimé, souffert et tué, il est engagé à la légion. Bref, une vie d'éphémères, les plus gros éphémères du globe; plus éphémères encore depuis que la journée est réglée non par le calendrier, mais par le taux du change que donne le journal. En se frottant les yeux, au réveil, chaque Berlinois double ou diminue par trois ou par cinq ses projets et ses illusions, et, le crâne rasé au rasoir, ravalant son café au lait comme de l'ectoplasme, il se précipite à la besogne européenne la plus rapacement et la plus largement conduite depuis César-Auguste. Kleist rentrait chaque soir plein d'horreur et d'admiration.
> — Ce sont des gens qui change chaque jour de péché originel, disait-il... (Giraudoux, 1959, 186-187)

1.5 The essential France and Germany.

By 1934 however it was France itself, and the morale of Giraudoux' own nation, that came under scrutiny, and gave him increasing cause for concern. Giraudoux could by then sense that writers in France had fallen from favour in public life, and that the Republic had placed too much trust in politicians, to the detriment of the professional classes, including writers, whom he saw as the rightful source of leadership for the country. (Raymond, 1963, 28-29) Increasingly, as the threat of war intensified, he spoke out openly on both political and economic matters, such as those set out in *Pleins Pouvoirs* in 1939, so that a certain progression of his ideas as well as of his active political involvement may be surmised. Raymond thus sees Giraudoux' literary works as a series of so many links in a chain of ideas, played out over the inter-war years and the period of occupation, and confirmed in his own words:

> Un livre, une pièce ne se trouve nullement séparée de celle qui le précède, de celle qui le suit. Chaque oeuvre en elle-même ne compte pas. Je n'ai pas la préoccupation du livre, mais de la série de livres. Le fait qu'ils prennent un titre est indèpendant de moi et autour de chacun d'eux je publie toujours cinq ou six prolongements. De même pour nos pièces dont quantité de morceau paraissent séparément après que le metteur en scène a trouvé sa pâture dans ce que je lui apporte. (Cited, 1963, 35)

A more developed economic view was part of that progression, as well as a growing sense of renewed conflict looming between France and Germany, but there are indications that on strictly political matters Giraudoux had by 1922 already taken a position which he was at some pains to reveal only very discreetly. Nonetheless, one constant of Giraudoux' political and social universe, his conception of France and his concern for its wellbeing, was no secret. In "Giraudoux et l'idée de mesure nationale" (1978), Charles P. Marie traces its source to that idealistic essentialism early identified by Sartre in Giraudoux' work. In Marie's words: "Chez Giraudoux, les choses sont avant les mots. Le signifié précède chronologiquement son signifiant et lui donne un sens parfait qui est son sens." (1978, 65) For Giraudoux then "le nom de la nation contient pour votre imagination toute sa richesse, sa particularité, son rôle prédestiné dans le théâtre des nations, et il n'est pas un de ces noms qui ne soit un programme" (Cited, Marie,1978, 66), and Marie is led to conclude that the same essentialism is "implicite au niveau de l'axiomatique dans la quasi totalité des ouvrages de Jean Giraudoux . . ." (1978, 75).

In that respect *Siegfried et le Limousin* is no exception. The discovery of Forestier in his Kleist role leads to a psychological struggle for his heart and mind, between competing French and German claims of nationality and belonging. An extensive gamut of conflicting German and French national characterizations is brought into play, both directly and indirectly, as Chapdelaine pursues his aim of restoring awareness to Siegfried of his essentially inescapable origins. Inescapable since, for Chapdelaine, "belonging" would seem to be naturally bred in the bone for a Frenchman, the product of a unity of factors of inheritance, environment, and psychological stance which ultimately must be respected and answered. By contrast, the claims on a German are apparently of a different, and lesser order.

The rivalry between Eva and Geneviève, for Siegfried's affections, may then be recognized as a symbolic representation, and confrontation, of the competing attractions of Germany and France as systems of values and temperaments, expressed in the natures of the two young women:

> Je sentais l'affection de Kleist vaciller entre les deux femmes, et il s'étonnait que ce fût avec quelque angoisse, ne se doutant pas, tant chacune en était la fille, qu'il hésitait entre deux pays. (Giraudoux, 1959, 213)

The structure of the novel is in this fashion characterized by a pervasive polarity, deriving it must be assumed from the inherent clash of ideas and loyalties which, for Frenchmen at least, had come to represent the reality of Franco-German relations ever since 1870. The rivalry of Eva and Geneviève is symbolic of the competing temperaments of Germany and France, but the precise outcome of this literary version of the confrontation must turn on the conflicted psyche of Forestier/Kleist.

The struggle is posed as one of nurture versus nature, of the effects of environment and training, of the systematic, against those of the natural, even racial, inheritance. So it is that in his German role Forestier is always aware of a frustrating incongruity of predisposition, for

> Kleist d'ailleurs rentrait rarement satisfait de ses réunions politiques. Toujours quelque détail le choquait, le député qui avait raison crachait par terre, le député loyal était celui qui avait tort. Il allait de groupe à groupe, de conseil à conseil, impuissant à donner un mouvement raisonnable et réel aux débats. Tout cela rappelait la mer au théâtre, quand le régisseur n'a pu trouver qu'un seul enfant pour glisser sous le tapis et l'agiter. (Giraudoux, 1959, 199)

Only with the help of his French friends, Chapdelaine and Geneviève, and in the aftermath of Zelten's parting denunciation of his foreign identity, is he able properly to identify the source of his unease in his essential French nature. There is then a certain inevitability that the call of his French heritage should prevail on him, to resume his life as Forestier, a Frenchman, in a tacit privileging of the natural over the contrived or synthetic, of French over German values and possibilities in the last analysis.

1.6 Revolutionary conservatism.

Yet Giraudoux' idealization of France cannot be taken as completely unequivocal. Already, in *Siegfried et le Limousin* there are some clues, admittedly slight, to just those political positions which Giraudoux might well have wished to keep hidden from public scrutiny for a number of years. For example, in his "German" role as Siegfried von Kleist, Forestier is crucial to the project of revision of the

Weimar Constitution. In light of the complex of unstable and contradictory conditions apparent in Germany, as exemplified by Zelten's unsuccessful political coup, Kleist's critical project for the new republic's Constitution may then be seen as going to the heart of its chances of political stability and survival. That it should be made to depend on such a slender thread perhaps says something about Giraudoux' opinion of the Germans' chances of success on their own. And if the question of a Frenchman being needed at all to assist them in this way is a moot point, it is significantly and puzzlingly nullified by Forestier's repatriation before his task can be completed.

That was the difficulty identified by Weber-Caflisch in reaching her interpretation, but F.G. Dreyfus is helpful in that regard. In "Un non-conformisme des années trente: Giraudoux et la politique" (1983) he opens up a quite different perspective on Giraudoux, based on a view of his fundamental political orientation, which may well satisfactorily explain otherwise puzzling features of his works. Dreyfus traces certain political influences in Giraudoux' background and suggests that the dominant, and recurring, political themes for Giraudoux were: peace; the mediocrity of parliamentary institutions; and the inadequacy of economic and demographic policies in France. (1983, 729)

Of first importance in that regard was the influence of Charles Andler, that "germaniste incomparable" (1983, 726) who not only taught the student Giraudoux preparing for his "agrégation" on Germany, but also inspired those socialist groupings in France of the 1930's known as the "non-conformistes". His influence affected both Giraudoux' literary vision of Germany and his view of political problems, but it is probable that renewed contacts with Germany after 1918 also gave Giraudoux some insight into the theories of the "révolution conservatrice" then emergent in Weimar Germany. (1983, 726-727) It was exemplified by Germany's National Bolsheviks who were "hostiles à la République de Weimar, aux impérialismes français et anglo-saxons, antisémites et partisans d'un Etat fort et organisé et au dessus des partis." (1983, 727-728) The French "non-conformistes" in their turn questioned traditional democracy in France, and proposed an economic and political regime radically different from that of the Third Republic (1983, 732) to replace the "désordre établi" (1983,727) which they saw as the hallmark of the Republic.

Dreyfus sees a similar revolutionary conservatism in *Siegfried et le Limousin* as well as in Giraudoux' later *Pleins Pouvoirs (1939)* and *Sans Pouvoirs (1946)*. He takes it to explain the politics of the revolutionary Zelten in *Siegfried et le Limousin* as well as Giraudoux' anti-parliamentary stance in *Pleins Pouvoirs*, in which his criticisms of the Republic are much closer to those of the French "non-conformistes" than to those of the Right. "Tout le long de son oeuvre, le moins que l'on puisse dire, c'est que Giraudoux ne porte guère en son coeur le régime parlementaire" (1983,731) suggests Dreyfus. As a senior civil servant Giraudoux had good reason to wish to keep that fact largely to himself in the early years of his official career.

1.7 The militarist characterization.

Giraudoux' idealist conception of France may then be understood to owe little to the Third Republic's parliamentary record, and in his literary search for the "real" Germany he could have had little inclination to believe that republican democratic impulses might usefully be allied with that country's more natural or essential attributes either. Chapdelaine has difficulty anyway in identifying the "real" Germany, just as Zelten, although ready to die for it, foresees. "Rassure-toi, il faut d'abord la trouver..." (Giraudoux, 1959, 49) he tells Chapdelaine. For indeed the essential German seems to present a multiplicity of faces, deriving from the many differences, whether of time and place, social classes and functions, and the like, which come into view. The distinction drawn between the Bavarian and the Prussian temperaments, for example, is readily apparent, as the scene changes from Munich to Berlin. It may be characterized as that between the mannered, cultured southern German and the bustling, practical northern German. From another perspective, it is also the distinction between the historical and the modern visions of Germany.

Commonplace, and perhaps thereby persuasive, that perception is however of a quite different order from the observation attributed to the Bavarian, Prince Heinrich of Saxe-Altdorf, concerning the German orientation to war:

> Nous parlerons de cela un autre jour, mais apprenez que c'est une impropriété de parler d'une Allemagne en paix. Il n'y a que l'Allemagne. Entre la paix allemande et la guerre allemande, il n'y a pas, comme entre la paix française et la guerre française, une différence de nature, mais de degré. La guerre ne transforme ni nos âmes ni nos moeurs. (Giraudoux, 1959, 135)

Scarcely conciliatory, and deriving no doubt from French fears of alleged German militarism, that observation finds its corollary, and further affirmation, in a direct representation of Germany and France as essentially movement and rest, respectively. It suggests an aggressively thoughtless energy confronting a calm reflection and contentment, and lays responsibility for the war directly at Germany's door:

> Le premier Américain qui fit un prisonnier en 1917 s'appelait Meyer, et son prisonnier aussi. En Allemagne, nous n'avons jamais pris au sérieux cette brouille de famille. Mais la guerre a été réelle entre l'Allemagne et la France. Il est vain de discuter le problème des responsables. L'Allemagne est responsable, pour la raison que l'Allemagne est le mouvement et la France le repos. Aucun peuple ne jouit plus de ce qu'il possède et ne se limite plus à cette possession que le peuple français, . . .—ce qui est signe de paix. Aucun peuple n'attache plus ses désirs à ce qu'il n'a pas que le peuple allemand,—signe de guerre. (Giraudoux, 1959, 137-138)

A cultural and philosophical bias thus intrudes in matters which, unlike much else in Giraudoux' work, cannot properly be treated poetically or simply pictorially, so that one becomes aware of echoes of others' attitudes, others' opinions surfacing in the complex of impressions presented.

However humorously presented, it is implicitly a nationalist perspective which comes into view, seemingly at odds with Giraudoux' stated purposes, and whose sources and character therefore call for further examination. Already the question seems to be couched in terms of intellect, of morality even, under which the Germans, viewed ultimately as a single national identity, notwithstanding the diversity hinted at in the Bavarian/Prussian distinction, come off worse than the French. Taking further an opinion prefigured by the "neutral" Chapdelaine, in contrasting a basic German militarism with the peace-loving nature of France, an unabashed partisanship claims for France the distinction of most civilized of nations, by way of Heinrich Heine's "letters" no less:

> La France est actuellement le pays le plus civilisé. Le Français a refusé ces missions fausses sur lesquelles l'Allemagne se précipite parce qu'elles comportent un uniforme, d'être Dieu, d'être mondial, d'être démon, et quand il lui arrive un de ces reflets semi-divins dont nous sommes gratifiés tous les deux cents ans, il ne s'en sert que pour éclairer le visage ou l'esprit humain. Sa langue et son raisonnement ne permettent que des vérités humaines. (Giraudoux, 1959, 239)

That sort of sensibility surely permeates Giraudoux' own existential and political consciousness, and provides the impetus for that sense of prophetic mission for his literary work which allowed him to explain, in connection with the forces of war, "Je m'attache à dénombrer ces forces obscures et à leur enlever ce qu'elles ont d'obscur, à les montrer en pleine clarté. Je fais mon métier; aux hommes qui m'écoutent, si je les ai convaincus, d'agir contre elles, de les briser." (Cited, Duneau,1987, 113)

Perhaps, therefore, Giraudoux was less concerned to be anti-German than anti-militarist, but the romantic impulse ascribed to a German prince, in the oriental images of the *Arabian Nights*, nonetheless also imputes an alien otherness to the Germans, and a predisposition to the irrational and impulsive, as opposed to the coolly logical and controlled:

> C'est l'Empire d'Haroun-al-Raschid, avec ses sept frères Mannesmann et ses quatre-vingt-treize intellectuels, brutal, savant; même inégalité prodigieuse entre les castes toujours distribuées en maréchaux, princes, marchands et esclaves, et même prodigieuse égalité dès que comparaît l'appareil poétique, larmes, attouchements, musique et brasserie; même mépris de la mort, même brutalité de tous ceux qu'on dresse en pays occidentaux à la douceur, porteurs, cochers et gérants de cafés; même maladies nerveuses sans nombre, même impuissance à concevoir un vice défendu; même ardeur du mensoge dans les récits; même amour des bâtiments en rotonde et, preuve suprême, alors qu'il paraîtrait ridicule d'imaginer les *Mille et une Nuits* avec Edouard VII pour sultan, avec Grévy ou avec le roi d'Italie, personne ne serait étonné d'apprendre qu'un prince allemand, tous les soirs, se fait conter, par l'archiduchesse sa femme, assistée de la cour en tenue de gala, les orchestres jouant, les femmes nues dansant, les lions d'Hagenbeck rugissant du parc, mille ampoules électriques rendant bleue ou rouge la nuit, un conte qu'il exige chaque soir nouveau, sinon il la tuera... (Giraudoux, 1959, 196-197)

The same suggestion of excess, the same flawed sense of proportion, is implicit in the ironically comic depiction of Berlin notables and businessmen rotating from hotel room to hotel room, from one sweeping decision to another, all in the space of a morning. It is a scenario nonetheless intriguingly reminiscent of the sweeping projects and changes of France's own Second Empire:

> La seule ville d'ailleurs qui paraisse employer des moyens à la taille exacte du monde, où directeurs, généraux, banquiers, assemblés dans une de ces petites chambres d'hôtel et gênés par le lit, mettent aux voix deux ou trois théories et appliquent dès le lendemain la théorie élue à l'Allemagne et à l'univers. Kleist couchait dans la chambre 28 où avait été décidé la chute du mark; Eva dans la chambre 41 où il avait été convenu de doubler la largeur des voies et des canaux allemands. La mienne était le 111, où venaiit d'être décrétée l'injection de teintures dans les arbres des forêts de l'Etat pour obtenir des bois colorés. (Giraudoux, 1959, 185)

The project devised for Kleist carries the implication also of a seemingly extreme lack in Germany of critical minds, fitted to the task of revision of an allegedly flawed Weimar constitution. At the same time, the demands thereby placed on Kleist by Germany are made to suggest, in a fashion likely to prompt recollection of Kant's categorical imperative to the contrary, an insensitive instrumentalism in relation to the individual, used as a means for the purposes of the state:

> Eva s'était assise, lasse. Le verbiage de Schmeck m'avait servi. Cette façon mécanique de faire d'un homme sans patrie l'allemand le plus conscient soudain la choquait Je vins m'asseoir près d'elle. Je passai mon bras autour de sa taille. Je réunis un peu les deux planches flottantes du radeau qui portait, sur une mer si menaçante, notre ami. (Giraudoux, 1959, 164)

Such representations of Germany's national character resolve themselves as varieties of more or less sophisticated stereotypes, but many of the traits attributed to France are no less so. Thus Chapdelaine's counter-claims on Kleist's loyalties are framed in terms of an idealization and privileging of French culture, temperament, society and homeland, expressive perhaps of Giraudoux' own conception of a legitimate French nationalism, or patriotism as he might prefer. Zelten's musings at the time of his "abdication", for example, lend support to that ideal:

> Mais les grands peuples, à part peut-être la France, n'aiment être gouvernés et régis que par ceux qui ne partagent point leurs soucis. Dès que le dieu de la poésie et du romantisme agite soixante millions d'hommes, comme l'Allemagne en ce moment, ils se donnent corps et âme à des trafiquants en pétrole. Dès qu'un peuple est sauvagement pratique, comme l'amèricain, il élit, pour guider ses pas, les plus fumeux et ignorants idéologues que l'univers ait jamais connus. Chez vous du moins, la sagesse est entretenue par le corps même des fonctionnaires. Du cantonnier au président de la République, du plus infime traitement au plus élevé, quatre millions de Français sont élevés ainsi à l'école de la modération, de la liberté, et le percepteur et le receveur de l'enregistrement sont des prêtres de la sagesse. Avec quatre millions de brahmanes, un pays est tranquille. Tous les excès sont commis en dehors de ce corps officiel qui est en Allemagne le seul inintelligent et le seul dominateur... (Giraudoux, 1959, 251-252)

Giraudoux, then, would have us see in France a nation at peace with itself and the world, content in its territory, and persuaded of its civilizing example in the world at large, based on an inherently humane and responsible culture and society.

> Il se demandait pourquoi toutes les grandes formes imaginaires nées sous d'autres climats, Tristan, Parsifal, et tous les dieux normands, venaient mener en Allemagne une existence plus reconnue, plus officielle et plus affective que celle des plus grands allemands,— et pourquoi tous les grands hommes vivants et réels se précipitaient ou aspiraient à la France comme à un refuge ou à un sanction et souvent aimaient à rendre

> leur âme d'humain à ce pays qu'on disait privé d'âme de nation, que ce fût Tourgueneff, d'Annunzio, Borne ou Heine... Etait-il juste d'appeler cette Allemande véridique et cette Française artificielle, alors que chaque mouvement de l'esprit ramenait celle-ci aux humains de sa taille, et accolait celle-là à des géants et à des spectres? (Giraudoux, 1959, 213-214)

> —Je ne sais si je hais tous les Français, dit Eva, perfectionnant l'exemple classique de la litote: je hais la France. Tous les soirs, je fais réciter à mes petites cousines la prière contre la France, que répandent nos ligues . . . Voilà! Il n'est pas un enfant bien né en Bavière qui ne récite cette invocation sur sa petite descente de lit alors que monte la lune derrière les vitraux.
> Elle réfléchit.
> —Que font les petits Français à pareille heure?
> —Ils disent aussi leur oraison. Vous voulez la connaître?
> Je récitai:
> 'Saint Gabriel . . . Saint Michel . . . Saint Raphael . . . Quand le temps sera venu de pardonner aux petits Allemands . . . convenons d'un petit signe qui sera une petite fille hessoise refusant de dire le soir sa petite prière homicide, car, Archanges, en nous donnant la victoire, vous nous avez enlevé le droit de haïr.' (Giraudoux, 1959, 155-156)

But to this ideal he opposes his description of a nation of Germans "soudain amoureux de l'univers" (1959, 138-139), heedlessly imposing themselves on others, with scant regard to the reactions of those caught up in the German embrace.

> C'est cette amour du globe qui éparpille nos enfants sur chaque continent, d'où s'échappent aussitôt le fumet des choucroutes et les voix des quartetts et des harmonicas; un amour physique de la planète . . .
> Je n'eus pas le temps de répondre que l'Occident eût peut-être préféré d'autre affection que l'amour de Kluck, d'autres tendresses que la tendresse Kronprinz, et qu'il eût peut-être convenu de les réserver d'abord à l'Orient,—car on frappa... (Giraudoux, 1959, 139-140)

1.8 Contradiction as method.

At this point the pervasive polarities involved in such national characterizations would seem to impose themselves to such a degree as to beg explanation in terms going beyond any merely patriotic essentialism. Some larger sense of their significance for Giraudoux suggests the need for further exploration of that "opposition des contraires" identified by Weber-Caflisch as part of Giraudoux' methodological repertoire. To the extent that his antitheses are for the most part concerned with differing mind-sets attributed to the French and German peoples, it may reasonably be suspected that philosophical notions other than essentialism are also implicated in Giraudoux' literary technique in *Siegfried et le Limousin*. In "Les tentations philosophiques de Jean Giraudoux" (1979) Alain Duneau examines the record of Giraudoux' wider literary production for evidence of philosophical affinities. Although in the result he concludes that it escapes "toute assimilation philosophique stricte" (1979,113), several points of reference are identified which are helpful both for some understanding of Giraudoux' literary method and as pointers to his intellectual approach to other matters.

Early philosophical notions may be invoked to place Giraudoux in some respects in the tradition of the pre-Socratic materialists, to associate him with Heraclitus especially, "pour leur même philosophie du langage et leur usage continuel des antithèses." (1979, 98) The question of antitheses or contradictions thereby raised is not given prime place by Duneau, whose focus is elsewhere. For him ". . . Giraudoux a, semble-t-il, éprouvé avant tout la tentation spiritualiste" (1979, 99), but elsewhere he notes also that for Giraudoux "devant les contradictions de la réalité et celles de la sensibilité, seule une esthétique de la contradiction a chance d'élever l'esprit à la liberté." (1979, 111)

Other philosophical contacts may then be seen to assume only an ambiguous character or presence in Giraudoux' thinking. Thus, while his philosophical "tentation spiritualiste", as emphasized by Duneau, has a strong mystical component, it is also markedly intellectual, at the same time that it involves a no less marked concern to decry the rationalist intellectualism of his time, and set limits to its often pretentious claims (1979, 111).

Similarly, while Duneau identifies Freud as Giraudoux' point of closest affinity with German thought of the twentieth century, as distinct from the clear influence of nineteenth-century German idealism, Freudian notions too are given only ambivalent expression by Giraudoux. No matter that an attraction to psychic phenomena and the workings of the unconscious is apparent in the treatment of dreams and secrets in his own work, Giraudoux bluntly rejects Freud's psychoanalytical theories. On the basis of works as varied as *Electre*, *Intermezzo*, and the film *Béthanie*, Duneau is then led to conclude that "chez ce poète de l'amour qu'est et veut être Giraudoux, tout se passe comme si les découvertes freudiennes étaient présentes et niées à la fois" (1979, 103-105).

All of which no doubt expresses Giraudoux' instinctive response to that very old dilemma raised in his "Prière sur la tour Eiffel": "Te rappelles-tu le jour où tu me demandas de choisir entre le stoïcisme et l'épicurisme, et où je ne pus t'obéir, aimant les deux? Tu en étais indigné. Tu me dis que c'était interdit et indélicat de chérir à la fois la souffrance et le plaisir . . ." (Cited, 1979, 95-96) Antithesis is thereby clearly raised to the status of a method, but one whose aims surely reflect Giraudoux' sense of the importance of the intuitive in grappling with the contradictions of reality, and of the recurring need to direct his readers' attention to it.

1.9 Contrary impressions.

The hazards and difficulties of Giraudoux' chosen method are however apparent in the variety of divergent interpretations provoked by his *Siegfried et le Limousin*. Intuitive insights, however radical the antitheses which might prompt them, cannot be relied upon to generate some sort of new consensus, whether with regard to Frenchmen's and others' understanding of Germany, or merely with regard to their understanding of Giraudoux' personal vision of

Germany. If Giraudoux' principal concern in 1922 was in fact with the question of war, and its sources, a clear bias in favour of his peaceful and civilized France emerges. The characterizations of French and German propensities highlighted here, focused as they are on just that issue and related modes of thought, tend to define Germany by its shortcomings, in proximity to France. Yet, incidental to such characterizations, Giraudoux presses into service a German capacity for self-criticism, for self-disclosure, as shown by Prince Heinrich and others. Although no doubt intended by Giraudoux to corroborate as it were the justice of the shortcomings suggested, it has the curious result, in the event, of calling into question, for this reader at least, the otherwise seamless unity of the characterization given of the French.

Perhaps contrary to his intention, Giraudoux may then be understood, more ambiguously, to have depicted a confrontation of energy and enthusiasm, on the part of a younger nation, with a certain lassitude and resignation, on the part of an older one. However touching the impression of love of country and place evoked by the return of Forestier to the France of the Limousin (1959, 271-283), Giraudoux' readers may nonetheless be drawn to the vigorous life force of the young, questing Germany. Paradoxically, from what may be interpreted as a contest of rival nationalisms, focused on the Forestier/Kleist dilemma, and weighted in favour of France, there seems to emerge, rather than a clear sympathy with the French argument and imagery, a more problematic impression. It is that of a professedly contented, but perhaps merely self-satisfied French nationalism struggling to come to terms with a people whose late national formation seems, in some quarters at least, already to have been transcended in favour of a wider sense of internationalism. Based on an already strong sense of economic interdependence, and already curiously analogous with recent developments in what is now the European Union, German initiatives, and the apparent French distaste for them, already seem to call into question the practical significance of the French universalist stance, as opposed to its high ideals. Fear of a political reversal, if not yet of an economic one, is already possible, as suggested by Kleist's observations:

> Il pensait qu'à Berlin surtout devrait être ressentie la honte de la défaite. Il n'en était rien. . . . Par orgueil ou par calcul, tout Berlin semblait croire que le patriotisme est un sentiment périmé (théorie votée dans la chambre 29 de l'Adlon), que les frontières n'existent pas (axiome accepté au 261 de l'Esplanade). L'Allemagne ayant supprimé ses frontières, il restait seulement à obtenir, avec l'aide de l'Angleterre (Hôtel Kaiserhof, 12) que la France et la Pologne supprimassent les leurs, et la victoire ainsi revenait du bon côté. (Giraudoux, 1959, 187)

Thus, Giraudoux seems inadvertently to open the door to an alternative interpretation of Franco-German relations, which might rather correspond with that of the Germans, namely of a young and modernising nation colliding with an older, in many ways more conservative, and even moribund one.

Giraudoux' own inclinations seem to reflect just such a conservative tendency, and an associated resistance to change. Although through Chapdelaine he expresses both appreciation and distaste, however indirectly at times, for the varied aspects of German life depicted, he does display a preference for the old ways of life over those which seem to represent the trends of modern times. Chapdelaine expresses his own need of an older, and clearly historically and culturally derived, vision of Germany. At the same time, on another level of awareness, he recognizes that newer realities have overtaken those of the old Germany, realities which he finds much less appealing. Even as he draws a beautifully picturesque tableau of his old-style, and beloved, Bavaria, and acknowledges the traditional "Saxe-Altdorf" image of Germany still current in the minds of Americans and others, he already clearly conveys a nostalgic sense of its obsolescence. The failure of the Goethe Centenary Festival to evoke the old spirit of its celebrated patron serves only to emphasize Giraudoux' sense that

> L'Allemagne est un grand pays humain et poétique, dont la plupart des Allemands se passent parfaitement aujourd'hui, mais dont je n'avais point trouvé encore l'équivalent, malgré les recherches qui m'ont conduit à Cincinnati où à Grenade. (Giraudoux, 1959, 23)

The same sense of change may be found elsewhere, although less explicitly. The failed marriage of Zelten and Geneviève is surely symbolic of the rift in Franco-German relations, just as the failure of Zelten's coup, on the one hand, would represent the last gasp of the old Germany, and Geneviève's death, on the other, a recognition of the passing of much that was valuable in the old France too. Geneviève's touching "legacy" to Forestier would denote a last effort to salvage what is most essential in older French values for the new Forestier, which is to say for contemporary France.

Clearly, in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, Giraudoux recognizes the Great War as a watershed in European affairs, and its effects on European society as fundamentally different in nature from those of the Franco-Prussian War, implying for Frenchmen a certain resolution of the "real" Germany issue. However, if the intellectually and culturally distinguished Germany seems to be gone, or passing, should this be taken to imply that the "other", still militarist Germany is now the only reality for France? Certainly the dominant characterization of the German offered by Giraudoux is recognizably that "other" German, as materialized for the French after 1870—romantically irrational, nationalistic, militaristic, often brutal, insensitive and coarse. That characterization too had been closely associated with the historical Germany, and might also have been seen as obsolescent, but Giraudoux gives no indication of believing so. Instead, he draws out that profile from his old-style Bavarians, rather than from his more recognizably "modern" Prussians in Berlin, who offer up no such self-analysis. Prussians they may be, but they provoke only wonderment, as if a phenomenon still too recent for a proper placement within the French conception of Germany. Giraudoux' insistence on what are ultimately merely stereotypical views of an undifferentiated Germany then merely draws attention to his intransigence regarding Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War, on which point he yields not even a little (Body, 1975, 262). France may be understood to have suffered too much for that.

1.10 A new understanding.

It now seems opportune to examine directly one of Giraudoux' clearest statements of his political beliefs, given its pivotal importance for any critical understanding of his thinking, in his later years at least. *Pleins Pouvoirs* was first published by Giraudoux in 1939, by which time he was prepared to be much more explicit about social and political views which were not so readily apparent in his prior plays or novels. Charles P.Marie's article, "Giraudoux et l'idée de mesure nationale" (1978), drew on that work but did little to elucidate the more practical aspect of the political concerns expressed in it. In chapter 1 of *Pleins Pouvoirs*, "Le vrai problème français" (1950, 9-24), Giraudoux himself sheds light on these matters, however, and contributes to some sense of a progression in his political views also over the inter-war years.

Contrary to still prevailing political wisdom, Giraudoux there insists that France's real problem lies within: "On ne saurait trop le répéter: le problème français est un problème intérieur, non extérieur." (1950, 23) He discounts the suggestion that the ominous threat posed by apparently totalitarian countries like Germany and Italy represents France's biggest problem. He reminds his readers of earlier periods of France's history when external threats were readily taken in stride by the nation, for whom more recent dangers had merely accentuated the essentially internal character of France's problems, which need to be addressed as such (1950, 13-16). The time-frame should not be misunderstood either, as his own words make clear: "On peut dire que notre politique extérieure, depuis trente ans, nous a fournis à tous un prétexte quotidien à reculer l'examen de notre politique et de notre bilan intérieurs." (1950, 16) A long-standing problem is thereby suggested, and although he gives no indication of when he first became aware of it as such, he does point to some specifics, and acknowledges certain French shortcomings, which are notable for their absence from *Siegfried et le Limousin* in 1922.

As an outcome of the Great War and its settlement, France had found itself in the position of exercising "une hégémonie de droit et de fait qui ne correspondait plus à la réalité politique et morale" (1950, 23) in Europe. The fact was was that France, even before 1914, was already on the brink of falling into the ranks of the second-rate powers in a material sense. Whatever its moral and intellectual standing, conferred by a glorious history, that standing itself could only provoke unwanted attention in conditions of national weakness (1950, 20-24). For Giraudoux the key to France's weakness is now clear—France has a population shortage such that, for a more populous neighbour, "le libre exercice de notre jugement et de notre langage dans une contrée où la campagne se vide, où la vie est douce, devient peu à peu un déni de justice." (1950, 20-21) France must maintain a level of population sufficient to qualify it as a first-rank power, capable of exercising its traditional role in the world.

Whatever the merits of an analysis concerned to place so much importance on population, the mere acknowledgment in *Pleins Pouvoirs* of a long-standing and multi-faceted national malaise represented a significant shift from the perceptions of *Siegfried et le Limousin* in 1922, with its focus rather on German deficiencies. That *Pleins Pouvoirs* represented a significant new point of arrival in Giraudoux' career, comes through clearly in Jacques Body's "Giraudoux et les rendez-vous de l'histoire" (1983). "Giraudoux alors a une politique, une histoire à écrire dans les faits . . ." (1983,872) he says, although he acknowledges also that at least some of the views in *Pleins Pouvoirs* had appeared as early as 1933 and 1934 in *Marianne*, and in *Figaro* too, starting in 1935 (1983, 873).

The sense of change in Giraudoux' thinking, or at any rate in its public expression, as well as his progressive shift to a more active involvement in public affairs is concisely summarized by Body: "Indifférent, puis embarqué, puis engagé, puis illuminé, puis piégé, et terrassé, il a essayé et illustré un peu toutes les attitudes face à l'histoire, et toutes les conceptions de l'histoire." (1983, 877)

With each of these adjectives it would be possible no doubt to associate particular works at different points in Giraudoux' writing career, but here it is enough to note that even if in *Bella* (1926) he had already made a public political statement against Raymond Poincaré, in favour of Aristide Briand and his own diplomatic mentor Philippe Berthelot, he promptly turned aside from further expressions of the sort, explaining his position in words evocative of the political evasions of *Siegfried et le Limousin*: "Après Bella, . . . j'avais eu l'idée d'écrire une série de romans sur la vie politique et sociale, envisagée d'un point de vue sentimental; en raison de mes fonctions j'ai dû y renoncer." (Cited, 1983, 871) But the pressure of events presumably became to much for him. In the period from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, the increasing threat of war contributed to a major revision of Giraudoux' perspective on the world of politics and public affairs, and on his own relation to it. The writer-journalist became concerned that "à trop s'engager dans le présent, il risquait non seulement de perdre une partie de son audience, mais aussi de courir après l'actualité." (1983, 873) It was that sort of concern which culminated in *Pleins Pouvoirs*.

"Engagé, puis illuminé" is Body's shorthand for that process of development, but it is in the convergence of Giraudoux' personal, literary, political, and diplomatic functions that is to be found the understanding of "puis piégé et terrassé", and the reasons for that moral ambiguity which ironically came at the end to surround the life and works of such a master of literary ambiguity and contradiction. Appointed to the post of "Commissaire général à l'Information", briefly responsible for France's wartime propaganda, and perhaps given inadequate powers, he was clearly ineffective, which did little for his reputation in the aftermath of defeat in 1940.

More importantly, however, his name came to be associated with the anti-semitic policies of the Vichy regime which he had prefigured in *Pleins Pouvoirs* in rather unambiguous terms (1983, 874-876). He could not have anticipated the extremes of anti-semitism as they were to emerge in Nazi Germany , nor even their repercussions in Vichy France, but he did also seem to have considered accepting a post in the Pétain government in its early days, and thereby tarnished his reputation by association with collaborationist ideas. In retrospect it is apparent that, having spent most of his life cultivating a mysterious reserve about his real political views, Giraudoux very quickly opened himself to criticism when he chose to venture onto the political stage. In time the anti-semitic charge became more onerous, but the question of his essential patriotism was sooner placed in doubt, and was not properly clarified by the time of his death in 1944.

René Garguilo, in "Giraudoux devant les portes de la guerre" (1983), seems to respond sympathetically to that problematic. He portrays Giraudoux as a man of peace, concerned about Franco-German relations, certainly from the standpoint of the potential for a renewed outbreak of war, but also as someone whose cultural and spiritual allegiances owed something to both countries.

Garguilo has no doubt that Giraudoux was first and foremost a French patriot. "Le plus français de nos écrivains par le génie littéraire, l'a été aussi par son attachement à la patrie française" (1983, 755), he writes, and goes on to instance, and quote, Giraudoux' sense of France's moral mission to the world, which underlies her need for a strong presence in world affairs: "La destinée de la France est d'être l'embêteuse du monde. . . . La mission de la France est remplie si le soir en se couchant tout bourgeois consolidé, tout pasteur prospère, tout tyran accepté se dit en ramenant son drap: 'Tout n'irait pas trop mal mais il y a cette sacrèe France...' " (Cited, 1983, 755)

That was a fine ideal for a Frenchman, but the real issue which Garguilo addresses is just how far Giraudoux' writing and his political role as "Commissaire général à l'Information", following the outbreak of war with Germany on September 3, 1939, measured up to the ideal. On the evidence of *Pleins Pouvoirs*, and of the essentialist conception of France there advanced by Giraudoux, Garguilo quite correctly asserts that Giraudoux' wish was "que la France se ressaisisse." (1983, 756) But he also explains away Giraudoux' ineffectiveness as Information Commissar, and sees his *Armistice à Bordeaux* as a "texte d'espoir", as a denial of the Vichy propaganda which would have had Frenchmen attribute their defeat in 1940 only to their own shortcomings. And despite the apparent ambivalence on Giraudoux' part about the Vichy regime, Garguilo argues that any initial attraction it might have had for Giraudoux was quickly overcome, and that "on peut donc considérer que, dès 1942, Giraudoux est dans la résistance." (1983, 761)

1.11 Giraudoux as literary prankster and French nationalist.

Clearly, in Garguilo's estimation, the historical judgment of Frenchmen at least should be favourable on Giraudoux' behalf, but he says little to explain the contradictory impressions presented by Giraudoux' life and literary works as a whole, and which give rise to the difficulty of judgment in the first place. In that regard it is worth noting the insight offered by Agnes Raymond's "Giraudoux mystificateur" (1982). There she draws draws attention to the element of the playful hoaxter apparent in the early Giraudoux, in the tradition of the sometime "normalien" that he was. Always good company for his friends, he nonetheless cultivated a sense of mystery about his own doings. That mystery may have taken a particular form in his close friendship with Franz Toussaint, self-styled translator of oriental literature. The friendship was marked by youthful high spirits, as instanced by Toussaint's whimsical attempt at his own epitaph, to which Giroudoux could playfully add: "Célèbre traducteur d'arabe, de persan, de chinois, de japonais, langues qu'il ignorait complètement. Mais il savait un peu le français." (Cited, 1982, 221) Toussaint has left us several humorous tales of the youthful Giraudoux' escapades from before 1914, but it is together that Giraudoux and Toussaint may have perpetrated one of their biggest hoaxes. On the basis of largely circumstantial evidence, and a certain unevenness of literary style, Raymond suggests that Toussaint's *Jardin des caresses*, a collection of poems published in 1910, and allegedly translated by him from an ancient document found in Timbuktu, was probably written jointly by Toussaint and Giraudoux , in a collaboration early suspected but never confirmed. Suffice to say that the work's success went beyond anything else written by Toussaint (1982, 213-220).

The presence of that early literary prankster suggested by Raymond was perhaps not absent from *Siegfried et le Limousin* either. Giraudoux' inherently iconoclastic elaboration of that self-referential plagiarism theme noted by Weber-Caflisch actually went beyond the explicit signposts provided, to encompass a much broader expression of that "Autre au coeur du Moi" suggested by Bem. Intertextuality is implicit in the many instances of stereotypes used by Giraudoux in his scheme of antithetical comparisons of French and German attributes, but an early intimation of Giraudoux' approach may also be taken from the response of the editor of the weekly review where Forestier's friend aimed to expose "S.V.K.'s" apparent plagiarism:

> "Mais surtout, mon cher petit, quelle importance ont ces querelles? . . . Votre S. V. K. a oublié de mettre des guillemets, mais y a-t-il des guillemets autour des parcelles du corps de votre ami, qui sont (c'est Brunn et Hirschfeld que je cite là), qui sont peut-être amalgamées déjà au corps d'un bel enfant ou d'un jeune tilleul?..." (Giraudoux, 1959, 13)

Giraudoux may have meant to create a slyly allusive puzzle for his readers, in addition to the always ambiguous possibilities of interpretation afforded by his method of repeated antitheses, but at least one vein of intertextual indebtedness imposes an awareness of its presence. It is that presence which has provided the focus for the interpretation of *Siegfried et le Limousin* favoured by this thesis, which, whilst recognizing the possibility of other interpretations, nonetheless sees it as an inherently moralistic and anti-German project. The echoes of a French nationalism always insistently concerned to denounce a perceived German militarism serve to confirm the essentially patriotic character attributed to Giraudoux by Garguilo, so that in these respects his debt to a tradition of anti-German literature and thought invites further examination.

To the extent that he relies on that tradition, and to the extent that the tradition may itself be shown to be deficient in its vision of Germany, Giraudoux' literary method contrives to open up merely imaginary spaces for the play of any new intuition about Germany and the nature of Franco-German relations. In particular, the absence of an early and more insightful view of the economic dimension of the German situation guaranteed that his ambition for *Siegfried et le Limousin* would fall short of the mark. His intention may have been to help foster a new synthesis, in a manner reminiscent of the Hegelian dialectic, from the antitheses of his literary depictions of France and Germany, but his use of mischievously ironic stereotypes to suggest a certain German national character, when allied to his own patriotic susceptibilities, perhaps ensured that any such synthesis would not occur for his French readers, let alone their German counterparts.

Stereotyping apart, his German readers may have been most sensitive to the implicit moral tone of much of his characterization of them, but it is also important to recognize that, by his emphasis on polarization of alleged differences, he neglected to give recognition to that commonality of intellectual, cultural, and even political currents which argue the fact of a European rather than a peculiarly French "civilization". Had he done so he would perhaps have remarked that France herself was not immune to those influences so readily condemned in his view of

Germany, and could even be considered to have helped shape them in no small measure.

Manifestations of militarism, aggressive nationalism, and racism, to mention the more morally reprehensible charges levelled at Germany had their counterparts in France, and could trace their development to similar historical and intellectual sources. An examination of some of these sources in French thought in particular, and impressions from several works of nineteenth and twentieth century French literature, may provide the opportunity to see just how far Giraudoux himself was indebted to certain habits of French opinion thereby encouraged, and to what extent such habits had determined both a general mode of response to the German question, and ultimately that of Giraudoux also.

Whether entirely acquiescent or not, Giraudoux was a product of a French tradition of letters and ideas which served to unite Frenchmen in a cohesive cultural community of long standing, where intertextual boundaries could only too readily be blurred and assimilated to a common consciousness. Giraudoux' ostensibly minor, and personal, play on the question of plagiarism and intertextuality is therefore also entirely in point with regard to the larger issues of natinal consciousness raised in *Siegfried et le Limousin*. The literary exploration that follows is an attempt, in an impressionistic manner rather than by exhaustive treatment, which would in any case be impossible, to suggest how far the net of such intellectual and literary appropriations may be cast to unite with Giraudoux an otherwise disparate gathering of French writers, who may be taken to illustrate the functioning, "sans guillemets", and at the national level, of the presence of that "Autre au coeur du Moi" suggested by Jeanne Bem.

CHAPTER II

SELECTED WORKS TO 1914

The years which followed France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 were the formative years of the Third Republic. By holding its political opponents at bay, and by affirming its right to exist, it seemed to bring to fruition those democratizing tendencies which had been so dramatically announced by the Revolution of 1789. But if the success of the Third Republic during those years is now clear, it is nonetheless true that whilst traditional opponents such as the Royalists and the Bonapartists were on the retreat, new political tendencies were coming into view, at once contradictory and dangerous, which had the potential to undermine the republican regime. They signalled the rise of a new nationalist ideology, which found its immediate impetus in resentment of the relative decline of France in Europe in the face of the new reality of German power, as announced by the outcome of the war in 1871, and confirmed by the Treaty of Frankfurt and the loss of former French territory in Alsace-Lorraine.

Important in any assessment of this new nationalism were its origins in political and philosophical thought. From the latter it derived both a certain subtlety of approach and a suggestion of intellectual legitimacy which, taken together, proved particularly attractive to those critical factions, still to be found in the midst of the Republic, who wished to restore the power and glory of France, starting perhaps with revenge on Germany.

It was to be expected that this new tendency would find expression not only in political opinion, but also in the literature of the period, which was certainly the case. In addition it will be seen that, at least in the case of certain literature, some writers would consciously apply themselves to the promotion of this still evolutionary nationalism and its attendant principles.

It is to explore this literary aspect of the nationalist phenomenon that close examination will here be made of three novels and an essay drawn from the period leading up to the Great War. The first is *Cosmopolis* by Paul Bourget; the second *Les Déracinés,* in two volumes, by Maurice Barrès; the third "Notre Patrie", an essay selected from Charles Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*; whilst the fourth and last,by Barrès again, is *Colette Baudoche*.

Any discussion concerning the nature of French nationalism in this period must very quickly remark its distinctive character in relation to most manifestations of nationalism which had preceded it, whether in revolutionary France after 1789 or elsewhere in Europe. Most striking is a new emphasis on traditional values, metaphorically encapsulated by the expression "la terre et les morts", which is to say on the importance, insofar as national identity is concerned, of a people's debt to its native soil and to its ancestral traditions, both elements being regarded as fundamentally constitutive of that unique pattern of traits which conspire to make of a people a nation distinct from all others. To trace the origins of this notion, which the Germans in their turn were to capture in the expression "Blut und Boden", regard must be taken of the social theories of Auguste Comte in the first instance, then of those of Hyppolite Taine.

From the vantage point of his positivist philosophy of science, Comte postulated a three-stage evolution of human thought, which he considered to have passed from an initially theological mode to a metaphysical, and finally to a scientific or positive mode. He also formulated a purportedly scientific sociology based exclusively on objective facts. As such it repudiated the metaphysical principles of Rousseau and the French Revolution in favour of a social and political system whose avowed objective should certainly be the well-being of its people, but one in which force, rather than popular will, would be the legitimating principle of social authority. Government of his positivist society would be the business of certain notables, subject to the spiritual guidance of a class of philosopher-priests who would concern themselves with positive facts and with their meaning for the larger society. The people, seen simply as a proletariat, would exercise only a moral influence through the expression of public opinion. In the absence of material force, it could be expected that the intellect and the heart would otherwise be only too feeble to govern a people. With these notions Comte effectively laid some of the groundwork for the idea of the dictatorial superman, and gave comfort to those adversaries of democracy, whether to be found amongst the aristocracy or the middle classes, who favoured a government of the rich and talented. In contrast to the abstractly humanitarian world of the eighteenth century philosophes, Comte provided by this new direction in the nineteenth century, a formidable tool for some who were to figure among the most powerful statesmen of the twentiethth (Hayes, 1951, 168-173).

It fell to Taine to provide certain other features for this emergent nationalism of the end of the century. From a Catholic family background, and an anti-Jacobin like Comte, by whom he was no doubt greatly influenced, Taine was also somewhat pessimistic about human nature. He developed his thought around the three notions of "race, environment, and historical moment," as determinants of all human activity.

It was in the course of his researches for his major work, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, and in particular from his studies of the Ancien Régime and the First Empire, that he concluded that the ills of the Third Republic and of modern France were attributable to the Jacobin spirit, and especially to its theories of social contract and popular sovereignty. Against these ideas he therefore posited a responsibility rather to national and even regional traditions, seen as the expression of a sort of ancestral patrimony, which should accordingly be revered and further cultivated, with a sense of obligation to those who would follow. Their interest should be served by a spirit of stewardship in each era, concerned to nurture a heritage held in common. Taine saw it as necessary in consequence to lend support to the monarchy, and the aristocracy, as the principal sources of traditional culture, and of cultivated and informed leadership. The Catholic church, likewise rich in tradition and cultural contributions, and therefore useful according to this perspective, also merited continuing respect. And finally, Taine believed in clearly discernible racial differences distinguishing various peoples, and especially in the superiority of the Aryan as opposed to say the Chinese or Semitic races (Hayes, 1951, 173-184).

What Taine had proposed was a traditional nationalism, in which race would play an important role. Within a particular environment, already the product of a unique configuration of historical, cultural and geographic influences, race would operate to produce further social and cultural effects, within the constraints of the particular historical epoch or moment. "Race, environment, and moment" thus represented the justification for a system of traditional and deterministic nationalism, in which the three elements, by their interaction, would produce the unique character of each nation.

These were significant intellectual influences which, encountering the concerns and frustrations of certain Frenchmen after 1870, contributed profoundly to those more extreme nationalist effects to be found in the literature of the period. The same effects may be identified also in that broader sweep of nationalist evolution which has persisted into our own time, and which may be seen to have entered materially into the whole troubled question of Franco-German relations.

COSMOPOLIS

As a first example of the literature of the period Bourget's *Cosmopolis* (Bourget, 1902) is of interest for the way in which it portrays a small group of upper-class people in Rome at the end of the nineteenth century. Some of the group are long-term residents, others merely visitors, but together they represent various nationalities, from which cosmopolitan character is of course derived the work's title. Bourget offers a largely psychological portrayal of the members of the group, and of what happens to them during a relatively short period of crisis, ended by a tragedy in which most of them find themselves closely involved. For present purposes the plot is of little concern, for the issue is cosmopolitanism, and how Bourget treats it.

To give some idea of the mix of nationalities, loosely referred to as races, the group includes, among others:

firstly, the aristocratic marquis de Montfanon who is French, as is the young writer Julien Dorsenne; the Polish aristocrat Count Boleslas Gorka, whose wife Maud is English; the widowed Italian Countess Catherine Steno, and her daughter Alba, who are from a very old aristocratic Venetian family; the painter Lincoln Maitland who is American, as are his wife Lydia and her brother Florent Chapron, both of these two having also some negro blood; the banker Baron Justus Hafner and his daughter Fanny, who are of German-Jewish extraction; and finally Prince Peppino Ardea, who is also Italian, from an old and formerly very distinguished aristocratic Roman family,.

Having regard to the behaviour of the members of the group amidst the press of events, de Montfanon expresses the main proposition of the novel, which is that these rootless cosmopolites are to be condemned as despicable types. By contrast, the importance and value of ties to one's native soil are emphasized, as well as veneration of ancestry and tradition, leading very quickly to notions of race. De Montfanon is already verging on racist attitudes when he summarizes his point of view:

> Quand je vous disais ma haine pour ces Cosmopolites qui vous ravissaient alors, je m'exprimais mal. Un vieux soldat n'est pas un philosophe. Ce que je haïssais, ce que je hais en eux, c'est que ces déracinés sont presque des fins de race, les consommateurs d'une hérédité de forces acquises par d'autres, les dilapidateurs d'un bien dont ils abusent sans l'augmenter. Ceux dont ils descendent ont travaillé du vrai travail, celui qui additionne sur une même place l'effort des fils à l'effort des parents. C'est ce travail-là qui fait les familles, et les familles font

> les pays, puis les races... Vos Cosmopolites, eux, ne fondent rien, ne sèment rien, ne fécondent rien. Ils jouissent... (Cosmopolis, 1902, 482)

As a writer, Dorsenne early expresses his interest in this cosmopolitan aspect of the little group. Closely related notions, about national and racial stereotypes, surface almost throughout the novel, anticipated as it were by Dorsenne himself:

> Vous les étudiez avec tout ce que vous savez de leur origine et de leurs hérédités, et, petit à petit, sous le vernis du cosmopolitisme, vous démêlez la race, l'irrésistible, l'indestructible race!... (Cosmopolis, 1902, 31)

And in due course we are given to believe the Slavs neurotic, the Germans individualistic and free, the Latins systematically clear-thinking, the English energetic and loyal, and so on.

What is at issue is an aristocratic philosophy, at once traditionalist and reactionary, in terms of which the social orders should best keep to their customary, time-honoured roles and positions. Predictably, a marked determinism is also present, expressed in résumé by de Montfanon after the dénoument of the events comprising the action of the novel, when he purports to confirm the validity of those ethnic and racial judgments which he had made to Dorsenne at the outset. The "drame de race" had unfolded according to a " . . . programme fort juste, ma foi, et que l'événement s'est chargé de réaliser presque complètement." (Bourget, 1902, 480) Only Fanny Hafner had been able to escape de

Montfanon's vaunted determinism: "C'est une sainte sur laquelle je m'étais trompé." (Bourget, 1902, 481)

In large measure Bourget himself may be taken as an admirer of aristocratic values. Although he is not, on the evidence of his works, a committed ideologue in the manner of Maurice Barrès, the attitudes and points of view expressed here are very close to those of *Les Déracinés*. Similarly, if certain prejudices are fundamental, others flow from them, more or less logically, as secondary phenomena.

Two matters of the sort arise rather clearly, and are worthy of attention. In the first place there is the repugnance shown for Ribalta, owner of a second-hand book store, and a republican too, who represents in his person all of those tendencies seen to be so dangerous for the hereditary authorities in Europe of the time, and come together in that democratic and parliamentary liberalism which had already pushed back the conservative and hereditary classes in France. Secondly, and more perversely, there is the manifest anti-semitism implicit in the descriptions of Baron Justus Hafner, this no doubt emanating from the same reactionary and traditionalist attitudes.

The disdain shown the foreigner, or the arriviste, is understandable on the part of people so intensely aware of class distinctions; more so perhaps is their condemnation of the financial trickery of the bankers, ever more clearly becoming a new power in an era of capitalist expansion; but they are very quick to equate them with the Jew. Apparently, nothing Baron Hafner might do would ever be acceptable in the eyes of such as de Montfanon, or even Dorsenne, both of whom exhibit a quite markedly anti-semitic aversion to him.

In Hafner's person are concentrated all that may be seen in the "other", so detested by de Montfanon, the aristocratic and catholic reactionary. There is the Jew; the businessman; the international background and connections; the recently acquired title; and the convert, in this case from judaism to protestantism. Regardless of his great ability, Hafner will never be pardoned his origins. His reputation as a principal in the *Crédit austro-dalmate* financial scandal condemns him. No matter that he had emerged from it acquitted of any blame for the crash. His very politeness towards de Montfanon, on the occasion of negotiations for a duel between Gorka and Chapron, only serves to disgust the soldier aristocrat, just as Dorsenne had foreseen:

> Vous allez voir la tête de Montfanon, lorsque nous lui annoncerons ces deux témoins-là. C'est un homme de quinzième siècle, vous savez, un Montluc, un duc d'Albe, un Philippe II. Je ne sais pas lesquels il déteste le plus des francsmaçons, des libres penseurs, des protestants, des juifs, et des Allemands. Et comme cet obscure et tortueux Hafner est un peu tout cela, il lui a voué une de ces haines! (Bourget, 1902, 242)

But Dorsenne himself cannot help but feel a shiver of antipathy every time his eyes meet " . . . les terribles yeux de ce terrible homme." (Bourget, 1902, 55) And when all is said and done, Bourget too, much like Dorsenne, seems unable to stand back critically from this tale of prejudice, for nothing is offered to suggest that people everywhere, without being saints, might regularly be seen by simple observation to transcend these prejudices, and the stultifying philosophy which would aim to legitimize them. Not surprisingly, given its essentially traditional and aristocratic impulses, *Cosmopolis* is notable throughout for an air of unreality, having little apparent connection with the lives, with the daily concerns, of other levels of society, which for want of other indication would seem to exist only in relation to an idealized conception of rural existence dear to a landowning aristocracy. Perhaps only in such an environment might the notions of "la terre et les morts", as presented by Bourget here, and the stifling determinism associated with them, find a degree of approval which elsewhere would be much more problematic.

LES DERACINES (I)

In *Les Déracinés* (Barrès I, SD) Maurice Barrès relates what happens to a group of young men, on completion of their baccalaureat studies in Nancy, who decide to go together to Paris to further their studies and careers, in the hope of winning opportunities there which might otherwise escape them in the quiet backwaters of Lorraine.

Les Déracinés is a "roman à thèse", in which Barrès' intention is to criticise the philosophical, political, and social foundations of the Third Republic. His point of view intrudes to such a degree that it is very early evident that the plot is subordinate to his theories, for which the characters and their circumstances are but so many means to the elaboration of an anti-republican argument. The line of argument is therefore a matter of prime importance, to be followed closely for what it suggests or reveals about the Third Republic.

The point of departure is Lorraine, Barrès' own birthplace, where he points to a serious social problem, itself indicative of a larger national one. Lorraine is in decline, its best young men seek their fortune elsewhere, and the region is losing its vitality, its traditions, and its culture. The causes of this decline, according to Barrès, are to be found in the ill-advised policies of the republican government, which are capable of meeting the needs neither of the regions, as exemplified by Lorraine, nor of the country as a whole. He lays the groundwork for his argument by drawing attention to the nub of the problem: the political and philosophical links between the republican program and the secular education of the lycées, an education thereby rendered inimical to the best interests of the students and the nation.

In this respect his criticism is not without some foundation, for after 1875 the republicans had seen in secular education the means of consolidating their political victory, by inculcating in the electorate the democratic principles which would be fundamental to their attempt to organize and discipline the new Republic. To this end they promoted the spread of liberal, democratic and republican ideas, in which reason and the needs of humanity were given a place of first importance. Their aim was nothing less than the creation of a new personnel for government, of the cadres who could constitute a new ruling class drawn from the people (Bury, 1985, 150-151).

The conservative Barrès, to the contrary, was fundamentally distrustful of the masses, and of reasoned liberal democracy, with its promise of wider opportunities for them. A critical irony is readily apparent as he considers the circumstances of his group of young students, when at the lycée in Nancy, in relation to their teacher of philosophy, M. Bouteiller:

> Que rêvent-ils, ces Lorrains-ci, jeunes gens de toute classe, grossiers et délicats mêlés? M. Bouteiller est venu, l'ami de Gambetta, démocrate délégué par ceux qui se proposent d'organiser la démocratie. Il leur a prêché l'amour de l'humanité, puis de la collectivité nationale. (Barrès I, SD, 39)

To Barrès' mind, this republican teacher has failed to produce quite the desired effect on his students. By extolling the merits of reason, and the beauty of a love for all of humanity, as ideals to which to devote their lives, he has undermined their will to apply themselves to less elevated destinies. Instead of strengthening their sense of responsibility, of the need for discipline on behalf of the country and the Republic, he has merely strengthened their ambitions as free individuals to uproot themselves and seek their careers in Paris.

> Déliés du sol, de toute société, de leurs familles, d'où sentiraient-ils la convenance d'agir pour l'intérêt général? Ils ne valent que pour être des grands hommes, comme leur maître dont l'administration est le seul sentiment social. (Barrès I, SD, 39)

Barrès is clearly strenuously at odds with the republican philosophy. A national policy ought not to operate so as to deprive the regions of France of their best and brightest. He can therefore only deplore its effect on the young Lorrainers, for whom he would rather a surer path, tending to the heart of their own Lorraine country. To the contrary, however, they want only " . . . se délivrer de leur vraie nature, à se déraciner." (Barrès I, SD, 40)

Moreover, his ideal for society, to the extent based on regionalism within a traditional nationalism, has to contend with other difficulties, illustrated by the situation of Saint-Phlin. Even if, to a greater degree than than the other young Lorrainers, Saint-Phlin shows a certain affinity for the nature and traditions of his native province, Barrès himself has to admit that his course is already more difficult, that the old values which represented the traditional source of Lorraine's vitality are already waning:

> Le système des idées auxquelles, par les traditions et les moeurs de son monde, Saint-Phlin demeure disposé, est, lui-aussi émietté et délaissé de tous. Il n'a même plus de nom dans aucune langue. C'est un ensemble désorganisé que ne savent plus décrire ceux qui lui gardent de la complaisance. Plutôt qu'un système

> vivant, c'est une poussière attestant la politique féodale qui attachait l'homme au sol et le tournait à chercher sa loi et ses destinées dans les conditions de sa lieu de naissance. (Barrès I, SD, 55)

It is therefore as part of a problem of even longer standing that, instancing the case of the young Lorrainers, he can point up an apparent disjunction between the available human talent, prepared as cadres according to republican policy, and the real needs of France, which are not being met. These young men, and France itself, had been ill-served by the educational system, which functioned apparently without regard for their real prospects, whether in Paris or elsewhere:

> A l'heure où on écrit ces lignes, il y a sept cent trente licenciés de lettres où de sciences qui sollicitent des places dans l'enseignement; ils tiennent leur diplôme pour une créance sur l'Etat. En attendant, plus de quatre cent cinquante pour vivre sont fait pions. Et combien de places à leur fournir? Six par an. (Barrès I, SD, 142)

Yet, if this is a national scandal in its way, it is no isolated case. Barrès considers that other mismatches, other squanderings of resources, are to be found throughout republican society:

> Mais entre ces divers groupes d'énergie, - nous venons de le constater quand nous essayions de les caractériser très brièvement, - il n'y a point de coordination... Bien au contraire, ils s'appliquent à s'annuler. Manifestement, notre pays est dissocié. (Barrès I, SD, 258)

And, just as in the case of the ill-conceived educational policy, he knows where to lay the blame:

> De cette situation les bureaux sont responsables. . . . Le système des 'humanités' ne rend pas l'homme apte à l'agriculture, au commerce, à l'industrie, mais au contraire l'en détourne. L'administration les a préparés seulement pour elle et pour qu'ils deviennent des fonctionnaires. Ils s'y sont refusés... (Barrès I, SD, 259)

Les Déracinés(II)

In his second volume Barrès continues his narrative about the students from Lorraine, newly arrived in Paris, as also his critique of the Republic, both themes being closely tied to the fortunes of Bouteiller, their former teacher, who has also moved to Paris with the intention of entering parliamentary politics. The Lorrainers collaborate to found a new newspaper, *La Vraie République*, but soon find themselves confronted with the disapproval of Bouteiller who feels obliged to point out the philosophical gulf now separating his former students from himself. He clearly confirms the opinions of Barrès about the failure of the government's policies, in their case at least, when he says to them:

> Messieurs, il y a deux sortes de républicains: ceux de naissance, qui ont horreur qu'on discute la République; ceux de raisonnement, qui s'en font une conception à leur goût. Vous êtes des rèpublicains de raisonnement. Je puis les estimer, mais je ne les accepte pas. Nous nous rencontrerons dans la vie, nous ne nous entendrons jamais. (Barrès II, SD, 51)

Philosophically and politically Bouteiller moves away from them, and towards the more practical world of the politicians and financiers. Bouteiller's harsh response to his younger compatriots provides the occasion for Barrès to take his own critique further, to reveal more of his own political and social philosophies, which lead him to assert that

> la République peut éviter les maladies sociales. La loi du 22 mars 1882 est excellente. Il faut l'instruction obligatoire: un homme sans instruction est un ouvrier médiocre, un médiocre citoyen et un médiocre défenseur du pays. Mais la loi n'est pas complète: Il faut une philosophie obligatoire. L'instituteur est le représentant de l'Etat; il a la mission de donner la réalité de Français aux enfants nés sur le sol de France. (Barrès II, SD, 14-15)

The interests of national unity requiring the creation of a state philosophy, Barrès then suggests what such a state philosophy might be, by noting approvingly the "good sense" of Roemerspacher in identifying the need for a quasi-religious principle to attract the support of the people. Speaking for the group, Roemerspacher effectively rejects Bouteiller's point of view. He discerns the weakness in Bouteiller's proposition, concerning the question of duty and discipline, and explains to his friends:

> Pour que ce soit notre 'devoir', comme il disait et répétait, de servir un parti, c'est-à-dire, n'est-ce pas? un groupe d'individus, il faut qu'il nous montre le lien de ces individus et de leur doctrine à un principe que nous acceptions. . . . C'est cela, Bouteiller ne serait compréhensible et légitime que si sa politique découlait d'un principe religieux. Vous comprenez bien ce que j'entends par religion: une certitude affirmée en commun. (Barrès II, SD, 53)

Roemerspacher expands on this thought, affirming approvingly what their friend Suret-Lefort has to say, on closer examination of the question, about the probable nature of such a religious sort of conviction:

> Il est vrai aussi, comme l'affirme Suret-Lefort, que la France aime à être gouvernée, - non pour qu'on la dirige, mais pour qu'on réalise l'idéal qu'elle secrète. Patriotes, dictatoriaux, encyclopédistes, voilà les trois termes auxquels il faudrait qu'un principe supérieur donnât une autorité indiscutable, une valeur religieuse. (Barrès II, SD, 58)

Significantly, Barrès here shows himself in agreement with the republicans, at least on the question of means. He would retain the system of education established by the Act of 1882, whilst substituting, in place of the liberal democratic principles of the republicans, an alternative philosophy, based on traditional and quasi-religious values. For Barrès' purposes also the teacher would play a singularly important role in his capacity of representative responsible for implementation of the nationalist program. He speaks however of a "représentant de l'Etat", and of a "philosophie obligatoire" to inculcate the necessary "réalité de Français" to schoolchilden "nés sur le sol de France." (Barrès II, SD, 14-15) He wants in effect to educate them into a traditional and exclusive nationalism in which "la terre et les morts" would be fundamental influences. A strong element of fatalism and determinism would also be present, as the following suggests:

> Des milliers d'êtres sont sacrifiés, voire damnés, uniquement parce que la nature en fera, dans ses abîmes, comme dit Hugo, quelque chose de grand. C'est de là que tout monte et s'affranchit. Il y a des instants ignobles, mais leur somme fait une éternité noble. . . . Acceptons notre rôle et les rôles que

> jouent nos voisins. Plaise à la nature que nous soyons de naissance conditionnés pour le bien et que rien d'extérieur ne vienne trop fortement tenter notre libre arbitre! (BarrèsII, SD, 215)

And the better to emphasise the character of his ideal, he makes much of the destabilizing individualism of Sturel, which he compares unfavourably with the good sense of Roemerspacher, grounded in respect for tradition and the collectivity. Barrès and Bouteiller are apparently not so far apart in terms of means. Both want to tame the rebellious spirit of the individual, in furtherance of the duties and the discipline prescribed by party or the government. Central to each approach is the need for an ideology, rendered quasi-religious since beyond questioning, whose aim would be to capture and control the hearts and minds of the people.

Already Barrès' cult of the nation, perhaps already tending towards that of the state, is assuming a narrowly exclusive aspect. Under the guise of deploring the manipulations of the world of the big financiers, often enmeshed in that of the parliamentarians, he contrives to exploit anti-semitic and xenophobic sentiments. So it is that he describes the banker Reinach in the following terms:

> Le fameux, influent et actif banquier juif, baron Jacques de Reinach, est un produit de la République parlementaire. Né à Francfort en 1840, il a obtenu la naturalisation française depuis la guerre. Un de ses frères, demeuré Allemand, dirige encore, à Francfort, la banque à la tête de laquelle mourut leur père en 1879. (Barrès II, SD, 3)

There can be little doubt that Barrès is targeting both the foreigner and the Jew at once, with the intention of associating them with republicanism, characterizing them, in one way or another, as harmful for France. He drives the point home when he describes Reinach's close relations with government personnel, established by means of his money. Even more directly, Sturel is seen to watch with undisguised animosity the arrival of several Jews in Neufchâtel, and to express the consternation, not to say revulsion, which they arouse in him:

> Avec ceux-là, comment avoir un lien? Comment me trouver avec eux en communauté de sentiments?... Moins instruits que ces nomades, moins liseurs de journaux, moins renseignés sur Paris, les bourgeois de Neufchâteau, qui sont en train de périr, submergés sous leurs bandes, avaient une façon de sentir la vie, de goûter le pittoresque, de s'indigner et de s'attendrir, enfin, qui faisait qu'avec eux je m'accordais et je profitais. Nous avions, ce qui ne s'analyse pas, une tradition commune: elle nous avait fait une même conscience... (BarrèsII, SD, 71)

In justification Barrès invokes the current national enfeeblement which no longer permits France to assimilate incoming foreigners as before:

> La France débilitée n'a plus l'énergie de faire de la matière française avec les éléments étrangers. Je l'ai vu dans l'Est, où sont les principaux laboratoires de Français. C'est pourtant une condition nécessaire à la vie de ce pays: à toutes les époques la France fut une route, un chemin pour le Nord émigrant vers le Sud; elle ramassait ces étrangers pour s'en fortifier. Aujourd'hui, ces vagabonds nous transforment à leur ressemblance! (Barrès II, SD, 72-73)

It is noteworthy that he comes at his anti-semitism from two directions. Taking a nationalist reaction as his point of departure in the first instance, he promotes xenophobia, which soon turns to racism, and finally to its particular manifestation in anti-semitism. Secondly, by dint of attacking the business world, here as elsewhere so often prone to intrude on the political, he encounters the bankers of the world of finance, including in their ranks Germans, Jews, or other outsiders, and ends up again with xenophobia and anti-semitism. Already his nationalism is shot through with xenophobia and anti-semitism, and associated with a system in which the role of the individual, and of free thought, would in large measure be circumscribed.

It is then in a contradictory fashion that he plays the advocate for the man of action, whom he sees standing in sharp contrast to the moralizing inactivity of the philosophers:

> Les métaphysiciens, les moralistes en chambre agencent des mots auxquels ils ne demandent que d'être conformes aux définitions du dictionnaire; par leurs fenêtres fermées sur la vie, nulle poussière ne peut pénétrer jusqu'à eux; . . . Mais ceux qui agissent, qui assument des responsabilités?... Les nécessités de leur action les empêchent de demeurer irréprochables. Ils ne se bornent pas à coudoyer les pourris, ils collaborent avec eux, les ménagent et les sollicitent. (Barrès II, SD, 101)

In this way he opens to the possibility of a different morality for those who govern society, a morality distinct from that appropriate for other citizens, and so to the possibility of the superman as dictator. It then comes as little surprise that he has great respect for Napoleon Bonaparte, which in turn explains his views concerning that "énergie nationale" to be tapped by Frenchmen in the mere presence of the tomb of Napoleon, the most celebrated of all their heroic dead. It is a question of Napoleon the "Professeur d'Energie", with a power to magnify other men's energy, and of whose tomb in Les Invalides Barrès could say: "On n'entend pas ici le silence des morts, mais une rumeur héroïque; ce puits sous le dôme, c'est le clairon épique où tournoie le souffle dont toute la jeunesse a le poil hérissé." (Barrès I, SD, 234)

NOTRE PATRIE

Written on the occasion of a visit to Paris by the King of Spain, "Notre Patrie" may be found in Péguy's *Cahiers de la quinzaine* (Péguy, 1988). It is a fairly short essay, dated October 22, 1905, whose main interest, for present purposes at least, lies in his reflections on French attitudes towards war and peace. Specifically, he raises the question of a psychological, and ultimately political, contradiction at the heart of contemporary France. Although at the time officially democratic, republican and pacifist, in Péguy's estimation the French still retained a penchant for military glory, although one which was usually repressed. In spite of republican efforts in the field of popular education, royal and military pomp still exercised a seductive appeal for the people. Even France's beloved Victor Hugo, publicly a pacifist, was susceptible to the same sentiment, his very poetry revealing his debt to Napoleon Bonaparte:

> Il n'y a pas de poème de paix réussi dans toute l'oeuvre de Victor Hugo; j'entends un poème de paix militaire, sociale, nationale ou internationale; de paix pacifique; et encore moins de paix pacifiste . . . (Péguy, 1988, 40).

Péguy concludes that the French still harbour a fundamental hypocrisy of attitude towards war and peace. Whilst outwardly espousing peace, the people, like Hugo, still cherishes the memory of Napoleon in its innermost heart:

> Officiellement donc il fallait, comme tout bon populaire, exterminer, maudire Napoléon. Mais dans le dedans du poète, on en profitait pour faire des vers comme pas un. En réalité Victor Hugo poète - et qu'est-ce que Victor Hugo en dehors de Victor Hugo poète - , Victor Hugo poète ne sortit jamais du culte napoléonien. (Péguy, 1988, 40)

> Il y a là une hypocrisie pacifiste parfaitement insupportable. On maudit la guerre ouvertement, formellement, officiellement, pour se donner du mérite et de la vertu, pour acquérir de la renommée pacifiste, conduisant à de la gloire humanitaire. Et secrètement, sournoisement, disons le mot honteux, clandestinement, on demande à la guerre, aux militaires, premièrement les apparats des pompes extérieures, deuxièmement les puissances, les excitations des imaginations intérieures. Triple bénéfice. Détournement occulte. (Péguy, 1988, 43)

His perception in this regard is important in that it suggests a certain ambivalence of thought, of attitudes carefully repressed, which others have been much less prepared to acknowledge in modern times. Whatever the implications of that for public life in France, and whatever its potential for future problems in its train, for the time being at least Péguy for one could take some consolation from his further observation that, at the end of the week which marked the visit of the King of Spain, the French had become aware, as it were by some process of collective intuition, of a looming German threat on the horizon. For good or ill, their warring instincts, refined by centuries of national struggle, were apparently not at all extinct.

Despite the ostensibly rational efforts of republican education, the memory of national glory, and of the nation's heroes, was still capable of exercising an emotive and patriotic force for the defence of the nation. On the other hand, Péguy's essay also confirmed that Barrès' ideal too might still find an echo, however muted, in the heart of the French people. The call of the past, and of its traditions in general, was no doubt capable of evoking other modes of thinking, these too equally well submerged in the national unconscious.

COLETTE BAUDOCHE

In *Colette Baudoche* (Barrès, 1909) Barrès gives every indication of trying to influence French anti-German sentiment towards a more explicitly aggressive posture. He tells of what happens to a young German teacher, Frédéric Asmus, on moving to a new post in Metz, the principal city of Lorraine, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. Frédéric rents a furnished room, in the apartment of a certain Mme Baudoche, an elderly widow who has guardianship of her grand-daughter Colette Baudoche, a young woman of some nineteen years old.

The two Baudoche women being of old Lorraine stock, Frédéric in due course comes to understand something of the character of such Lorrainers of French background, and of their culture. He falls in love with Colette, whose hand he asks in marriage. Unfortunately for Frédéric, Colette decides not to marry him. She holds him in high regard but feels obliged, before all else, to honour her responsibility to her people, the French Lorrainers, and to traditions which must be preserved at all costs in the face of the constant threat of assimilation by the Germans. For Colette it is a matter of submission to a duty, to a reality, greater than the will of any individual.

Once again we meet with Barrès' nationalist ideology, as earlier elaborated in *Les Déracinés*. He recalls the historic grievance against the Germans, conquerors of Lorraine, to whom the territory had been ceded in 1872 by the Treaty of Frankfurt, and insists on the superiority of the culture and civilization of the old French Lorraine, that of Metz especially, over that now represented by the German incomers. Merely to listen to the two Baudoche women was to understand that ". . . ce n'était plus seulement des leçons de grammaire et d'accent qu'il recevait, mais des principes de civilisation." (Barrès, 1909, 84) Barrès clearly means to signal a people worthy of the sympathy and help of France, to the effect that, following Colette's personal sacrifice, he sees fit to appeal to France to help these Lorrainers earlier abandoned to the Germans:

> Nous, cependant, acceptons-nous qu'une vive image de Metz subisse les constantes atteintes qui doivent à la longue l'effacer? Et suffira-t-il à notre immobile sympathie d'admirer de loin un geste qui nous appelle? (Barrès, 1909, 257-258)

But it is not only a question of the territory and its remaining French people. There are also responsibilities owed to the dead. In Metz Cathedral Colette feels the very presence of her ancestors, and recognizes ". . . l'impossibilité de transiger avec ces morts qui sont là présents." (Barrès, 1909, 252) Barrès envelops them in an elevating mysticism which determines Colette's decision concerning Frédéric:

> Colette, maintenant, perçoit avec une joyeuse allégresse qu'entre elle et M. Asmus, ce n'est pas une question personnelle, mais une question française. Elle se sent chargée d'une grande dignité, soulevée vers quelque chose de plus vaste, de plus haut et de plus constant que sa modeste personne. (Barrès, 1909, 254)

Just as in *Les Déracinés*, homage is here also paid to the glory of Napoleon, the most glorious of all France's dead. And so much the better if that homage can also come from the lips of Frédéric, a German, in front of his class:

> Le livre insiste trop sur les travers de Bonaparte. C'est un fait que Bonaparte a enthousiasmé des millions d'hommes. On peut dire qu'il a rendu de diverses manières d'immenses services à l'humanité, et par exemple, il est probable que, sans lui, l'unité allemande se fût faite moins rapidement. (Barrès, 1909, 163)

The same notions surrounding "la terre et les morts" are thus once again exploited by Barrès, and once again secondary effects are in evidence. His is a sentiment of ironic superiority towards the Germans, expressed several times over. He attacks their unthinking militarism, describing its effects on Frédéric whom he sees reduced to ". . . un humble molécule d'un grand corps." (Barrès, 1909, 125) But the same Frédéric, by way of contrast, is brought to a state of mystical wonderment at this ". . . degré supérieure de civilisation," (Barrès, 1909, 161) which is the French Lorrainers' heritage. From which it is only a short step to the idea, expressed by "Goethe, Schiller et beaucoup de grands hommes . . . qu'il fallait à la pâte allemande un peu de levain français." (Barrès, 1909, 174) And if even German unity owes something to France, and to a Napoleon who had "enthousiasmé des millions d'hommes" (Barrès, 1909, 163), a new depth in ironic reversals is seen when, on Colette's refusing Frédéric's proposal of marriage, Barrès describes him as a "victime de la guerre" (Barrès, 1909, 256), of a war still unfinished for patriotic French Lorrainers.

More perverse perhaps are these other effects which, stemming from the same nationalist impulse to revenge, could only encourage some degree of xenophobia, by attributing to the Germans a barbarously rapacious role in history, such as to awaken the worst French fears. Once again Barrès has a German seem to condemn himself by his own admission:

> Nous apparaissons toujours au milieu des civilisations qu'il faut régénérer et assainir. C'est le vieux service que nous avons rendu dans le monde. Aujourd'hui, tout ce qui a des origines germaniques doit retourner à l'empire. Nous réclamons l'Artois, la Picardie, la Flandre, la Champagne, la Bourgogne, et la Franche-Comté. (Barrès, 1909, 172-173)

In the face of such a threat, the appeal to France at the close of *Colette Baudoche* would clearly not stop short of recourse to arms.

COMMENT

From the standpoint of the literary, intellectual and political climate of France in the period preceding the Great War of 1914-1918, the impressions produced by these literary works are instructive. In so far as their authors tended to reflect already-existing currents in French society, at the same time that they more actively tried to help shape public and intellectual opinion, they reveal a certain malaise in that society. Indicative both of internal tensions and a degree of dissatisfaction with France's international standing vis-à-vis Germany, the malaise was one which sprang essentially from a gathering doctrinal reaction of conservative forces against the policies of the republican government, and the nature of the society it seemed to have produced.

Within this larger movement of reaction it should be recognized that where Bourget might be considered to reflect certain narrower tendencies, certain ideas current in more traditional segments of French society, and having their roots in the theories of Comte and Taine, Barrès by contrast, starting from the similar influences, sought frankly to promote a body of doctrines tailored to the needs of a wider nationalist program. After the failure of Boulangism, to which he had given his active support, Barrès devoted himself to propagating his nationalist doctrines by means of his literary works. In this he was successful in great part. Only Charles Maurras may be regarded as more influential in this area, whilst both are recognized today as the most notable disciples of Taine (Weinstein, 1972, 145). Arguably they both served as intermediaries between the theories of Taine, on the one hand, and those of the full-blown Fascism of the twentieth century on the other. The evolution is not difficult to distinguish, for Barrès' doctrines, although less extreme than those of Maurras at the time, revealed a certain lack of rigour which rendered them always susceptible to degeneration, towards something altogether more troublesome than his initial impulses might seem to imply.

Immediately to be noted is the difficulty of articulating with any precision the nature and limits of his veneration of "la terre et les morts", a difficulty which he himself signals when he talks of the system of feudal values prevailing in the Lorraine of former times. In his own time he sees no one capable of describing it any longer, if ever anyone could. Barrès anyway gives first place to emotion and instinct, rather than reason, with the result that contradictions and confused thinking abound. His traditionalism, in its respect for ancient values and institutions for example, implies a strong conservative tendency, resistant to social change. That would inevitably have come into conflict with the sciences. Dedicated to national strength in confrontation with other nations, his system would have been obliged to accord a prime place to scientific innovation. In practice, one could then have expected to see a steady subversion of his traditional values and institutions, in the long run likely to be observed rather in the appearance than in fact. Ironically, towards the end of his political career Barrès himself spoke, in this connection, of the two poles of French life: Pasteur's laboratory (the sciences), and the ruins of the hill of Sion-Vaudement (the Catholic Church) (Greaves, 1978, 23).

His notion of the national hero is also problematic. In Barrès' judgment, generally speaking the individual should bow to the will of his community and its traditions, say in the manner of Colette Baudoche. Individualism such as Sturel's, capable of prevailing against the collective in whatever manner, is to be discouraged. Only the exact historical moment, according to Barrès, would justify the national hero in imposing his will on society (Barrès I, SD, 263). Yet who could judge the moment if not the individual himself? His national hero apart, Barrès would rather rely on institutional authorities of long standing.

Similarly, recourse to a dictator would surely be based on hopes of a certain efficiency of executive, even legislative, action in times of crisis, but such efficiency would very quickly collide with traditional ideas and institutions, which would no doubt tend to come off worst in the encounter. Beyond which, a crisis having passed, society might well have its difficulties getting rid of its dictator. In the event that it could not, all processes of social change could only submit indefinitely to the will, talents, and energy of one man.

And to the extent that the "national energy" so dear to Barrès would have to depend on the inspiring actions of a dictator, there would have to be brought into play a certain psycho-dynamic of the nation, based on largely emotional responses, always notoriously difficult to sustain over the longer term. For this reason there could then indeed emerge a need for the establishment of a quasi-religious indoctrination of the people, in other words for an official ideology, which in fact would be not much removed from Barrès' ideas on the social utility of religion. Himself a lukewarm Catholic, he would have preserved the Catholic faith nonetheless, in the immediate absence of anything better, to meet the apparently necessary spiritual needs of the people (Greaves, 1978, 23).

Here again, just as in *Colette Baudoche*, the will of the individual, generally speaking, would be subordinated to the interest of the nation, already on the way to becoming embodied in the state. In these circumstances one could only with difficulty talk of what might be wanted by the future inheritors of the national patrimony, on whose behalf Barrès would wish to see exercised a truly national stewardship. What they might want could scarcely be known in any case, given a different historical moment. Today's young Germans would probably not have appreciated what a triumphant Hitler might have left them.

Whatever the contradictions between the ideal professed by Barrès and the reality which might have emerged from it in the long run, the greatest concerns must derive from the possibility of extremism implicit in the very notions of "la terre et les morts", otherwise reckoned as blood and territory. Allied to the principle of force, and directed against the "other", whether at home or abroad, there could all too easily arise an aggressive xenophobia, militarism, and racism, prone to the extremes later seen in the Hitler regime. It is instructive in this regard to note the evolution from *Les Déracinés* to *Colette Baudoche*. In the latter work Barrès was already expressing, on behalf of the people of Lorraine, an excessive veneration of their forebears; lauding the almost sublime virtues of that subjugated people; and claiming an eminently superior quality for its culture. And with extreme results: to end by denigrating and despising the Germans and those Lorrainers already assimilated to them; to expect that Colette yield to the superior claims of the "nation" rather than marry Frédéric, the German; and to appeal to French force of arms if necessary to remedy all the ills visited on the worthy Lorrainers by such an inferior people. Already present in *Colette Baudoche* are the xenophobia, and the recourse to military force anticipated above. Barrès finds himself on the same track as Charles Maurras, towards an "integral nationalism" (Hayes, 1951, 202-212), from a starting position of so-called traditional nationalism. And already *Les Déracinés* is instancing too an anti-semitism which later reached its real extreme under Hitler in Nazi Germany.

Very similar considerations apply to Bourget also. In *Cosmopolis* he explores certain ideas, in the line of Taine and Barrès, without explicitly condemning them, so that we may regard this work as a likely reflection in large part of the currents of opinion, of the values, of his own French milieu. Hence the opinions about rootless cosmopolitans; the benefits for the family, the nation, and the race, said to flow from an attachment to tradition and one's native land; and the notion of the slow maturation of any people which, devoted to its duties, should above all rest anchored to its birthplace through the centuries. From which flow in turn the class distinctions; the antipathy towards the foreigner or the arriviste such as Hafner, the Jew; the antipathy also towards republican universalism; and the social veneration of the Catholic Church.

In light of such attitudes, whether deriving from Barrès or Bourget, it must be concluded that Péguy was identifying a matter of some importance in highlighting those contradictions that he found at the heart of French society. In his view it was a matter of Parisian republicans hypocritically glorying in royal and military pomp and spectacle; or of Hugo, also a Republican, profiting from the reflected glory of Napoleon Bonaparte in his poetry. On a psychological plane, however, Péguy was pointing out more or less unconscious contradictions which had their implications for the domestic political domain, that is to say for the power relations between nominally progressive republican forces and their traditionalist, even revisionist, opponents. Politically progressive ideas gave an impression of wide acceptance, but the seductive attraction of the past and its glory still threatened to undermine a possibly fragile disposition. Which is to say that traditional forces, articulated politically in terms of traditional nationalism, could still threaten to reverse the authority of the Republic, still vulnerable on account of its other social and political problems, of the sort deplored by Barrès, but on account also of the political opportunity given its opponents by a suggested menace from Germany.

CHAPTER III

AFTER 1918: THE TURN TO ABERRATION

By the end of the Great War, attitudes towards Germany and the Germans had apparently acquired a certain stereotypical character in popular opinion, if not perhaps as a rule in the minds of those who had been required to take the part of combatants in that bloody war. Indicative of the form that such stereotyping took are two works of the immediate post-war years, by Pierre Benoit, a very successful writer of popular adventures at the time. Although situated in the pre-war period in the case of *Koenigsmark* (Benoit, 1924), and in the war days themselves in the case of *Axelle* (Benoit, 1967) their immediate significance is that both were written after the war, and might then be expected to have taken on much of the colour of popular opinion as it had evolved through the experience of war.

Going beyond the more typical stereotyping, towards a different conception of the nature of the Germans, and just how they constituted a problem for France, was Jacques Rivière's *L'Allemand* (Rivière, 1919). It was well received, perhaps meeting a need amongst the French for a more radical moral condemnation of Germany in the immediate aftermath of war, but it acquires particular value here, as will be seen, for the light it casts on Giraudoux' *Siegfried et le Limousin*.

KOENIGSMARK

In Pierre Benoit's *Koenigsmark* (Benoit, 1924) a young Frenchman, Raoul Vignerte, fresh from his university studies in Paris, tells of his experiences when he presented himself at the court of the Grand-Duke of Lautenbourg-Detmold as tutor to his son. In the form of a narration by Vignerte to a friend and fellow officer in the trenches at the French front in October 1914, the novel provides a valuable and probably popularly acceptable impression, from a French perspective, of Germany immediately before the Great War. It deals with aristocratic circles in Germany, with the question of German militarism, and with German habits of submission to authority, as well as with the character of its princes, who might, on this showing at least, be thought ready to go to the extremes of treachery in the interest of their dynastic ambitions.

There is much in Vignerte's story, and in the characterization of the Germans brought out, that is a reflection of what seemed most to disturb Frenchmen. Acknowledgment is also made of the respect formerly shown to things French by these same Germans, more recently become a threat to France. The description of the Grand-Duke's palace at Lautenburg, for example, refers to one part as ". . . un palais Louis XIV, copié sans vergogne sur Versailles" (Benoit, 1924, 57), and it is later pointed out that "le grand-duc Georges-Guillaume, pensionné par le roi de France, fut un grand admirateur de Louis XIV." (Benoit, 1924, 59)

But times have changed. It is the turn of the French to find things to respect, indeed things to beware of where Germans are concerned. A military review at Lautenburg gives occasion to Vignerte to observe that

> Cette masse immobile donnait une telle impression de puissance, de force, que je serrai anxieusement la main de Marçais.
> - Hum, murmura-t-il, nos cuirassiers et nos spahis auront de l'ouvrage, si ça vient jamais. (Benoit, 1924, 87)

A formidable military presence there certainly is, but from a Frenchman's point of view it must also be associated with a surprising degree of deference to authority among the people:

> Je vous dis que la loyauté de ces gens est une chose incommensurable. Nous, nous ne sommes contents que lorsque nous avons figure d'opposants. Leur état d'esprit, à eux, et la police impériale, d'ailleurs admirablement faite, en font des moutons auprès desquels ceux de Panurge étaient des imaginitifs et des réfractaires. (Benoit, 1924, 73)

The same thought, if differently expressed, occurs on the eve of the same military review as Vignerte strolls among the crowd newly come to town for the occasion:

> Des étudiants , venus tout exprès de Hanovre, promenaient leurs casquettes différentes et leurs estafilades avec une arrogance qui tombait soudain lorsqu'ils croisaient un officier. (Benoit, 1924, 80)

German officers, on the other hand, are themselves depicted in an unflatteringly coarse light a little later in the same evening. Vignerte is on his way back to his employer's palace when he happens upon the officers' mess and catches a glimpse of their wild merrymaking:

> Une seconde, à travers les vitres lumineuses, un pandémonium m'apparut: ils étaient là une trentaine, dans des nuages opaques, avec, vautrées sur la table, au milieu des fleurs et des flaques de vin, deux femmes nues." (Benoit, 1924, 82)

The impression of a pervasive and brutish militarism at the heart of the German system is only strengthened by the arrogant confidence of another officer, Kessel. In the course of a conversation with Professor Beck, a resident of the palace, concerning the late Grand Duke Rodolphe, who was also a geography scholar, Kessel says:

> -Je n'ai pas connu Son Altesse le grand-duc Rodolphe, répond placidement Kessel. Je sais seulement que le rôle d'un grand-duc est d'être grand-duc, de connaître l'artillerie, la lourde et la légère, afin de permettre aux géographes de travailler en paix. (Benoit, 1924, 72)

Following the declaration of war against France, Vignerte prudently hastens to make his way back to France, but comes upon the German mobilization in progress as he nears the frontier. He cannot escape an ominous impression of brute power surrounding the operations of the German military machine:

> Les quais de débarquement étaient noirs de troupes dont il surveillait les mouvements. Sur la place, un innombrable matériel d'artillerie dressait dans la nuit des silhouettes antidiluviennes. Il y avait là une impression de force et de puissance brutales qui me fit frémir. (Benoit, 1924, 259)

Perhaps improbably, from the standpoint of the historical reality, and in light of the rest of the story told by Vignerte, both he and his friend the Grand Duchess Aurore were in fact surprised by the news of the declaration of war, leading Aurore to question Lieutenant Hagen who had just reported it: "La guerre, vraiment, Monsieur de Hagen, et avec qui?" (Benoit, 1924, 249)

The implication is not to be avoided: France was not responsible for the coming of war. That distinction falls to the militaristic Germans.

AXELLE

Axelle (Benoit, 1967) moves the matter of Germany forward in time, to deal with events set in the period of the Great War itself. A French prisoner, Pierre Dumaine, is sent with a group of other French prisoners to a reprisals camp in East Prussia towards the end of the war. It is situated on the Baltic coast, near the ancestral home of the aristocratic von Reichendorf family. By reason of his qualifications as an electrical engineer, Dumaine has the good fortune to be chosen by the camp commandant to see to the overhaul of the electrical system at the Reichendorf castle. Apart from the advantage of working indoors, away from the often hard Prussian weather, his new employment provides Dumaine with the opportunity to get to know the Reichendorf family and its circumstances, lately become tragically difficult. He meets the old general von Reichendorf, already retired for some years, and his young companion, Axelle von Mirrbach, fiancée of Dietrich, the general's son.

In the course of time, Dumaine falls in love with Axelle, and also learns the real circumstances of this once favoured family. Dietrich is in fact the sole survivor of four sons, all of them officers in the German army, the other three having already fallen in battle during the war. He is himself on active service at the front in France, and his life must be regarded as precarious. Axelle, awaiting his safe return, looks after the General and sees to the running of the household.

It is in the context of this family, and of Dumaine's feelings for Axelle, that Benoit contrives to bring out what is significantly German about the Reichendorfs, from a French point of view. Love of the military is a way of life for the family, going back to a distant past of teutonic knights dedicated to the defence of their territory against invaders. Their militarism is already a thing of the past, its code and values no longer appropriate to modern times, but the old General still refuses to admit it. Dietrich has had to learn the new realities at the front, realities quite different from those of 1870, still so dear to the General. Wedded to an army and traditions which could still be seen as chivalrous in 1870, the old man has sacrificed everything, including his sons and lands, to a system which has culminated in the horrors of trench warfare and in the massacre of millions of men who had not shared their values.

He had not appreciated the significance of the policies of Bismarck, policies which had long since displaced the old Junker tradition in favour of a more scientific and professional militarism, grown correspondingly more deadly.

The younger generation, whether that be Dietrich and his brothers, or Axelle and her brother in their turn, has already acquired the habit of deference to authority, and to family traditions. Although well aware of what awaits him on his return to the front, at the end of his leave passed at Reichendorf Castle, Dietrich is still respectfully, and compassionately, concerned to minimize the responsibility of his father's generation for the disaster of the war, when he talks to him about the differences between the Great War and that of 1870:

> - Mon père, dit-il avec lenteur, Dieu me garde de comparer deux choses qui ne sont pas comparables. Vous vous êtes battus, musique en tète et drapeaux déployés, magnifiquement. La guerre que nous faisons, nous, est une autre guerre. Une guerre, voyez vous, dont vous ne pouvez vous faire une idée. Non, vous ne pouvez pas... vous ne pouvez pas savoir.
> Il avait parlé les yeux mi-clos. En cet instant, son regard rencontra le mien, et nos pensèes se confondirent. Ses lèvres remuèrent pour une phrase qu'il ne prononça pas, mais que je compris, et qui voulait dire:
> - Lui, il sait. (Benoit, 1967, 175)

The same dutiful respect is true for Axelle, in the matter of her engagement to Dietrich, with whom she is really not in love. Following his very correct request to her father for her hand in marriage, she acquiesces in her father's recommendation that she marry Dietrich, although she recognizes that

> l'homme mûr s'inclinait devant la règle contre laquelle, vingt-cinq ans auparavant, le jeune homme s'était insurgé. Le mariage qu'il proposait à sa fille avait pour but de faire rentrer de façon définitive dans la norme ce qui en était autrefois sorti. (Benoit, 1967, 124)

> Cette minute devait être dècisive dans la vie d'Axelle de Mirrbach, . . . Axelle admettait tacitement qu'elle faisait partie d'une caste dont elle s'engageait à ne discuter désormais ni l'esprit ni la loi. . . . Elle en acceptait une fois pour toutes les conséquences sans merci. (Benoit, 1967, 124)

Benoit is at pains to have us see how the notion of duty, once proper to a feudal aristocracy and its system of values, had acquired a harmful character in the changed circumstances of the new German Empire, to which this family had not been able to adjust. Harmful for the family's sons and its fortune, as well as for Axelle, that insistence on duty, and on the obedience owed to authority, only serves to exasperate Dumaine for whom the constraints of family, class, or country are presented as much less compelling. On several levels he is able to think rather as a free individual. Recognizing the militarism, but also the human tragedy at the heart of this family, he is able to forget that they are Germans and to feel compassion for them, just as he can for more ordinary Germans, such as Gottfried and the elderly Dominica, servants to the Reichdorf household, who have also suffered the loss of loved ones in the war. He does so despite the obvious disapproval of his fellow prisoners. Unlike himself, they are much more fixed in their stereotypical attitudes with regard to the German enemy.

Yet, albeit against his will, Dumaine too comes to bend before the force of notions of duty pressing on the individual. Towards the end of the war, the alternating successes of the Germans and the French prompt in him corresponding sentiments of despair and joy, just as they do for Axelle from her German perspective. She feels that she cannot claim the right of not rejoicing in the victories of her country. Everyone is ultimately caught up in patriotic sentiments and prejudices, but none more sadly than Axelle. Given the opportunity of marrying Dumaine who, in distinction to herself, does not at first seem to understand the strength of chauvinist feeling, whether it be French or German, on each side of the quarrel, she asks him:

> - Vous ne comprenez pas? Il ne vous est donc jamais arrivé, mon pauvre ami, de vous répéter deux mots, d'écouter avec épouvante le son qu'ils rendent, l'un après l'autre?
> - Quels mots Axelle?
> - Un Français, une Prussienne! (Benoit, 1967, 268)

And once more the moral scale seems to tip against Germany, with the revelation of an underlying hatred of France on the part of the Germans, and one still capable of denying happiness to the individual, in the name of a larger tradition, and the demands of the German nation.

L'ALLEMAND

Although it was still possible, up to the Great War, to view the Franco-German contest in the more or less conventional terms of great power politics, the French had already begun to cast the Germans in the role of war-mongering militarists. After 1918 however, the underlying tone of moral condemnation intensified for some reason, and as will be seen from Jacques Rivière's *L'Allemand* (Rivière, 1919) a strong tendency also became apparent for them to depict the Germans as alien, lacking both in moral scruples and in those qualities considered most characteristically French, and civilized. The earlier view of the Germans, which saw them as militarists certainly, but largely because simply barbarous, was in process of modification to suggest a much more subtle "otherness", of much deeper significance for a wider public. As Rivière put it: "Il n'est pas vrai qu'ils aient fondu sur nous comme jadis les hordes barbares. Je veux dire que ce ne fut pas en tout cas dans le même esprit. Là encore, il me semble très inexact de les comparer aux Huns." (Rivière, 1919, 129) Other, more exact, insights were required. They would also be more damaging to the German image.

In *L'Allemand* are to be discovered certain critical perspectives, surely derived from German philosophical concepts, which Rivière presses into service to help characterize the Germans at large, but perspectives having ultimately little regard to anything of more concrete significance. Without adopting the manifestly comparative dualism of Giraudoux' work of some four years later, *L'Allemand* is more frankly intent on portraying the German character in critically unsympathetic terms, and in doing so makes clear the extent of Giraudoux' indebtedness to Rivière for the major themes of his own portrayal. Nonetheless, where Giraudoux contrives to be merely intransigent about German responsibility for the war, Rivière goes further in his scathing insistence on a German character that is essentially flawed, even evilly so in its impact. Unlike Giraudoux therefore, Rivière tries to place the Germans beyond the pale of civilized society in general. Almost from the outset, he stresses the lack of a certain moral sense where Germans are concerned, compared to which any occasional French lapses in that direction are of little account. Whereas the French can never escape an innate sense of moral responsibility, the Germans by contrast are now seen as very different: "L'Allemand, au contraire, a besoin d'y penser sans cesse, comme à une leçon difficile, et qu'il faut remâcher si l'on ne veut pas qu'elle s'échappe. Il est irrémédiablement écolier en morale." (Rivière, 1919, 70)

Given that deficiency, and other as it were complementary traits, Rivière's opinion about German responsibility for the war is not left in doubt either. In terms which suggest a model for Giraudoux' Prince Heinrich of Saxe-Altdorf, and his characterization of German attitudes as essentially unchanging, whether at peace or war, Rivière alleges a revealingly matter-of-fact character to the Germans' undertaking of the recent war. Not for them the spontaneous passions of the French in such matters. Rather the war was merely another element in a wider self-serving German programme, itself a product of will and intellect, and thus a measured necessity, to be pursued with all the "good will" and application at their disposal.

As if in a corroborating self-revelation, the German scholar Natorp is brought forward to expatiate on the German nation, and on its attitude to war. The source of its militarism can then seem to be closely related to its drive to express the essence of its being, to a troublingly romantic conception of a German process of becoming, still self-consciously youthful, and hence still potentially dangerous to a contrastingly older, and more mature France:

> Nous sommes jeunes, les plus jeunes de tous, est-ce qu'on ne sent pas cela?
> Cela signifie d'ailleurs, pour aujourd'hui et pour demain, la guerre et non la paix. Car être jeune veut dire combattre. Mais cette guerre qui est notre guerre (*dieser unser Krieg*) est le chemin, le seul chemin possible vers la paix. (Cited in Rivière, 1919, 163-164)

Similarly, the long-standing French perception of German subservience in the face of authority is attributed by Rivière to yet another trait, of more fundamental significance, specifically to a lack of psychological substance, to the absence of a capacity for self-direction. "On sentait en eux une vacance presque infinie," (Rivière, 1919, 33) he says, and notes that having no real desires of their own, not knowing what otherwise to be doing for themselves, they are even placidly, good-naturedly content to be told what to do. And if explanation were needed of

German successes in education, it could be found as a virtual corollary of the same subservience, of the same empty psychological category waiting to be filled. Apart from a few pangermanists, they are not, in Rivière's view, a headstrong people, and are neither fanatical nor sadistic. In fact, they are only too ready and willing to learn, to be taught, and persuaded to another's viewpoint.

Nonetheless, and to revert to their alleged moral deficiencies, such emptiness signals for Rivière a lack of commitment to any conception of the truth as an absolute value, or as a quality inherent in ideas, and consequently denotes a distressing predisposition to compromise the truth, by equating it with mere plausibility: "Le vrai, c'est ce qu'il est possible de faire croire, c'est toute disposition d'objets ou de mots qui peut donner à un spectateur ou à un lecteur l'impression de la vérité. Le vrai, c'est tout ce qui peut être rendu vraisemblable." (Rivière, 1919, 102-103)

It is with that sort of sweeping assertion that Rivière may be seen to reveal the underlying source of the material for his analysis of German character. Essentially he builds on intellectual concepts, left generally unacknowledged, drawn from German philosophical thought , and of course from those most suitable for his purposes, since undoubtedly at odds with the French philosophical, and strongly Cartesian, tradition. At the heart of his case is a perception of the ideological bent of German thought, encapsulated concisely in that phrase: "Le vrai, c'est tout ce qui peut être rendu vraisemblable." (Rivière, 1919, 103) For the notion of truth, as it affected ethical questions and values, as opposed to strictly scientific matters, with their empirical grip on physical reality, had of course been rendered more elusive and problematic in principle than hitherto, with the advent of Kant's "doctrine of the two reasons".

Rivière would have us see the essentially ideological significance of this German insight, and its implied expression in wartime propaganda, as somehow a reflection of characteristics peculiarly innate to the German people. His supporting criticisms, however, of the Germans' handling of wartime information, now seem naive and merely self-serving, from the standpoint of what have come to be accepted as common and quite predictable propaganda techniques in wartime management of public opinion and morale. Some sense of this perhaps prompts him to try to refine his sweeping generality, as he apparently sees the need to explain a French claim to exemption from such moral condemnation. He acknowledges that the French themselves are not entirely innocent of these practices, but insists that when in the extreme case they do succumb, as when pressed perhaps by the absolute necessity of maintaining public morale, it is always with an ultimately corrective sense of transgression. He goes on to press home the point, sarcastically confirming the Germans as strangers to the truth, and therefore owing it no formal responsibility, at the same time that he signals a presumably deplorable German preoccupation with a selfishly nationalistic self-interest: "Il a conscience d'avoir fait tout son devoir envers le seul dieu qui lui ait jamais été révélé, envers le seul qui soit à ses yeux réel, permanent et immuable, envers son intérêt, envers l'intérêt de la patrie allemande." (Rivière, 1919, 108) No doubt the intention was to suggest a contrast with more universally humanitarian principle, without however explaining how French practice had itself ever been otherwise.

Taken together such assertions are perhaps Rivière's indirect expression of a more particular, and recent, French disquiet concerning the Germans. France might have won the war but her impressions of Germany's essential power had apparently not been dispelled. If anything the French may have been obliged to recognize that the results of 1870-1871 could not be reversed. A real revenge, the restoration of French dominance in Europe, could no longer be obtained. Germany was here to stay, but worse, its dynamism showed no signs of flagging. Its energetic people could no doubt still seem distressingly productive and expansive to French eyes, prompting Rivière to the strikingly powerful observation that "L'Allemand accouche directement le réel, avec pour sage-femme sa seule volonté." (Rivière, 1919, 139) He imparts a sense of French frustration with an apparent German capacity to outdo them, rendered perhaps simply more galling by the suggestion, however attenuated, that the German advantage derives at root from that same poverty of psychological resource already alluded to, vis-à-vis the French. Having no expectations of any inspiration coming to inform his actions, the German sets promptly to work, while the Frenchman only delays, awaiting its coming: "C'est pourquoi il a eu si longtemps l'initiative, c'est pourquoi il nous a si longtemps 'manoeuvrés'." (Rivière, 1919, 139)

But there seems to be no denying a huge German capacity for work, inexplicable it would seem other than by recognition of the force of German will, which seems in its turn to defy objective analysis, merely adding to an impression of French bafflement and inadequacy:

> Par le travail , en effet, et par les flots de volonté qu'il répand sans aucune peine, l'Allemand non seulement rattrape ses désavantages, mais encore obtient des résultats qui nous sont peut-être interdits, en tout cas qui nous surprennent toujours. Il arrive, en effet, à une sorte de création *ex nihilo*: il fait sortir tout ce qu'il veut du néant. (Rivière, 1919, 138)

Here too the philosophical underpinnings may be seen breaking through, but once again in a way suggestive of a certain moral bias favourable to the French. The emphasis placed on will, as a peculiarly developed German talent, indirectly evokes the doctrines of Nietzsche, whether it be his often misrepresented "will to power" or his anti-Christian polemic, and thereby imparts a reprehensible connotation to an apparently consummate exercise of will by the Germans. There is a sense of the heretical also, of medieval metaphysics even, in Rivière's expressions concerning creation from the void; a hint of usurpation of divine process, and already of the demonic perhaps, in which the old arguments about the exercise of free will, with all their suggestions of moral danger, are still not very far away. The Germans had clearly, and on this understanding reprehensibly, appropriated to themselves the most extreme powers of free will.

Yet, if Rivière is here properly representative of a more widespread reaction, it must be suspected that the French had come to experience real existential perplexities from their confrontation with the Germans, who are depicted in a way that perhaps says more about a peculiarly French problem than any German one. Superficially, it would seem that for Rivière these were most acutely felt, or at any rate expressed, as an intellectual and moral problem, but French nationalist susceptibilities must be regarded as the real driving force. Against the dogmatic Cartesian world view of the French, based ostensibly on reason, and against the universal verities which they would have constitute "civilization", the Germans had posed a powerful array of philosophical concepts entirely subversive of a would-be settled and relatively static French intellectual world, a state of affairs which found its more practical counterpart in a shaken French nationalism. Even the Germans' defects were, in French eyes, turned to positive practical advantage when joined to such philosophical concepts. Thus German will seemed to take charge of the alleged psychological emptiness signalled by Rivière and to fill it with content, in a never-ending process of becoming, reminiscent of the Hegelian dialectic. The German, and his essential nature, could then be strikingly expressed by Rivière in the powerful mythology of Siegfried in the forest:

> Il est comme le jeune Siegfried dans la forêt: il ne sait rien, il ne comprend rien, il écoute les voix du vent et de la nature, et il rit sans savoir pourquoi. Tout son bien, ce sont ses muscles bien formès et cette âme bien unie qu'il se sent. Mais l'oiseau l'instruit; le hasard le met à l'école de cette voix savante; le monde s'ouvre à lui, avec toutes ses possibilités; il voit l'or dans les profondeurs, et en lui il découvre cet or cent fois plus précieux, cent fois plus fin, plus ductile et plus malléable, l'or de son âme sans préférence et sans défaut, de son âme prête à tout. Il l'extrait d'abord et se met à le forger; à grands coups de marteau sur l'enclume, avec un chant candide, féroce et joyeux, le jeune Siegfried forge son âme qui n'était rien du tout et il en fait un tas de choses. Il en fait, au fur et à mesure, tout ce dont il a besoin. Elle n'est jamais finie; elle n'atteint jamais sa forme ni sa limite. A chaque demande des circonstances, il n'a qu'à la retourner sur l'établi avec sa pince. Le métal est encore chaud; il s'étend, il s'étire, il reçoit tous les prolongements qu'il faut. Et bien malin sera celui qui jamais dénoncera le raccord! (Rivière, 1919, 142-143)

Such a description of the German experience clearly suggests a world of open-ended possibility, corresponding closely with an active interpretation, based on a perceived real-world implementation, of those German philosophical notions which had given German thought such eminence in the nineteenth century. Kant's domain of "practical reason", differentiated from the "theoretical" or scientific sort, was the key which in the hands of such as Fichte had opened the door to a free-ranging German idealism, and in due course to the ready assimilation of concepts of cultural relativism, involving a willingness to explore, in a multi-disciplinary way, the varied "realities" of different cultures. "L'homme qui pense sous la catégorie de la culture n'est pas obligé de choisir un poste d'observation déterminé. La culture, ça consiste peut-être à ne pas être obligé de choisir." (Rivière, 1919, 175) The universality of the French view of "civilization" could only begin to crumble before such forces.

Rivière is obviously perplexed and disturbed by these apparent fruits of German thought. He cannot accept the indeterminacy involved in what are already multi-disciplinary modes in German scholarship, strongly at odds with the more linear traditions of the French. He clearly senses merely an intellectual slipperiness in the new German approaches, consistent with his view of their disregard for the sanctity of his ideal of truth:

> Rien de plus curieux que la revue où ont paru les articles de Natorp, que ce *Kunstwart*, qui s'est transformé pendant la guerre, pour se mettre au diaposon de l'héroïsme allemand, en *Deutscher Wille des Kunstwarts*. Est-ce une revue d'art, ou de sociologie, ou de littérature? Bien fin qui le dirait. Et si l'on interrogeait ses auteurs eux-mêmes, je pense qu'ils refuseraient délibérément d'en préciser le caractère. Leur dessein est très évidemment de s'affranchir de toute obligation discriminative, de secouer, comme le dit Natorp lui-même, la domination des genres et des espèces. Ils pensent atteindre une profondeur nouvelle en attaquant la réalité sous plusieurs angles à la fois et en acceptant comme instrument pour la saisir leur esprit naturellement implexe. (Rivière, 1919, 175)

His aversion, and intellectual irritability, is evident when, in one of his few explicitly philosophical references, he considers a synthetic element (in the Kantian sense) to be at work in the German mind, which is to say, a spontaneous tendency to bring into relation matters which are not naturally so:

> Il veut dire au fond—et, malgré les précautions qu'il introduit, c'est le sens qu'il faut donner à sa phrase—que la culture est le besoin de confondre, la passion de l'identification à tout prix, et si je ne craignais de tomber dans l'injure, j'ajouterais: l'instinct de salade universelle. (Rivière, 1919, 176-177)

He is unable, or unwilling to acknowledge any legitimacy for the instrumental aspect of the synthetic procedure in relation to culture, as a nation-building stratagem for example, nor therefore to consider why that nation-building should have been necessary in the first place. Without mentioning nationalism explicitly, Rivière is at pains to underline the forced, unnatural aspects of any apparent unity claimed for culture in the German sense, thereby presumably casting doubt on the worth of the whole German unification project.

In these respects also, Giraudoux' *Siegfried et le Limousin* may be considered to have echoed Rivière, not only in his overt references to the clash of German culture in contrast to French civilization, but also, and more creatively, in his depiction of Eva as an almost noticeably artificial construct of a German ideal of womanhood, as opposed to the wholly natural grace and fine sentiments of Geneviève. In the same way, the whole question of the creation by the Germans of "Siegfried von Kleist" from the *tabula rasa* of the Frenchman, Jacques Forestier, must be seen as Giraudoux' attempt to offer an extreme example of the Germans' synthetic impulses, of their allegedly unnatural forcing of reality. Yet if German nationalism is a target for both Rivière and Giraudoux, by the very application of the concepts by which they would define the German character, they only contrive to bring into view a unity that is, for them too, an undeniably distinctive German people and nation.

Perhaps in tacit recognition of the reality of that German identity and unity, Rivière is obliged to recognize, on another level, a certain power to the notion of culture employed by the Germans, as opposed to the French ideal of civilization, at the same time that he deplores its alleged formlessness, its lack of meaning. He rounds again on the ideological or instrumental aspect of the rather plastic notion of culture, as an outgrowth of German idealism. But he is at pains to suggest that in practice their culture is nonetheless merely an expression of energy and movement, an ultimately pointless exercise, its transformations of reality, and interactions with it, productive only of the dissolution of all distinctions, of an increasingly undifferentiated interconnectedness of phenomena. The joyous energy and application of the young Siegfried in the forest is surely evoked once again, in relation to the question of culture and its efficacy. There is in it more than a suggestion of unsophisticated and undiscerning youthfulness, intoxicated with creation for the mere sake of creation:

> Elle ne perçoit plus le monde qu'à l'occasion de ce qu'elle fait. Elle ne le voit qu'en le forgeant. Elle l'apprend dans la mesure seulement où elle le fait devenir autre chose.
> La culture, c'est la clé des champs donnée au formidable dynamisme du génie allemand. Livrez-lui le monde: au bout d'un temps donné, tout y aura été soulevé de son siège. On comprendra de moins en moins de choses, mais il y en aura de plus en plus de remuées. "Rien n'existera plus pour soi. Il y aura des liens qui feront communiquer toute chose avec toute autre." De partout on aura lancé des amarres. Ou mieux encore, tous les objets existants seront entrés en danse et, comme les rayons d'une roue vertigineuse, ne formeront plus qu'un magnifique et mobile soleil. Et l'on ne trouvera même plus la moindre trace de l'esprit qui leur aura donné cette gigantesque impulsion, car il aura piqué une tête à leur suite et, comme un acrobate pelotonné à l'intérieur du cerceau qu'il anime, il aura disparu dans leur rotation. (Rivière, 1919, 203)

Yet, whilst suggesting the superiority of an essentially Cartesian rationalist philosophy, as opposed to an irrational German idealist one, and focusing on the principal notions of German philosophical thought in relation to their practical power to shape the world, Rivière himself both confirms its credentials and adopts its point of view. Quite clearly, any argument for a German capacity for creation *ex nihilo*, by force of German will and diligence, is a recognition of the power of the German idealist philosophy in action. His ultimate quarrel is not, however, with its power to shape the world, but with the value, the meaning, of what it creates. Should its energy simply fail, it has to be supposed that Rivière believes its cultural creations would collapse of their own accord, in a reversion to a more "natural" order of things.

Contradictorily, but perhaps not surprisingly, in the light of notions derived during the nineteenth century from the doctrines of romanticism and traditional nationalism, by Frenchmen and Germans alike, a complementary cultural and racial determinism enters into his criticism of the German psyche. He acknowledges that ". . . la vision allemande m'était apparue, non pas bien entendu aussi juste, mais aussi nécessaire que la mienne; une aussi inexorable pente m'avait semblé y conduire." (Rivière, 1919, 17) The impression is strong that he wants to insist on a necessary, and divisive particularity of nations, along would-be natural lines of race and culture.

Yet, if he thereby seems once again only to confirm the reality of the national identity which the power of German thought, of German idealism, has engendered, the merit of this view is that it at least permits him then to emphasize the alien otherness, and dangerousness, of the Germans to French eyes. From this standpoint he has likewise no hesitation in asserting the primacy of the claims of a scornful French nationalism, even over those initiatives for peace attempted by such as France's own Romain Rolland during, and indeed even before, the Great War. Truly humanitarian and universalist, they are thereby deemed simply unrealistic. In the final analysis, the imperatives of the national interest are not to be denied by Rivière either:

> La révolte même ne sert de rien. Je n'ignorais pas que dans tous les pays en guerre, il s'était trouvé des gens pour refuser le point de vue national. Ils avaient voulu échapper au piège de leurs origines et de leur race. . . . Et que peut on rêver, par exemple, de plus

> incohérent, de plus influencé par le sentiment, de plus purement pathétique, que les comsidérations par lesquelles un Romain Rolland a cru s'élever "au dessus de la mêlée"? (Rivière, 1919, 18)

Nationalism drives the confrontation for both the French and the Germans alike. For Rivière its basis is ostensibly a clash of national temperaments, of intellectual cultures, but ironically he seems to misinterpret, or at worst to misrepresent, its nature. His proposition, at the outset, seemed clear enough:

> Si le lecteur pourtant veut bien aborder mon livre, peut-être réussira-t-il à s'intéresser au débat qu'il raconte, d'un esprit féroce et vif, assoiffé d'évidence et d'utilité, contre les forces mal connues qui le ménacent; il y verra peut-être un petit drame d'actualité: la pensée pratique ne projette-t-elle pas de nos jours une ombre immense et grandissante sur la pensèe spéculative? Quelqu'un, dans ce livre, entre, corps et âme, en révolte contre cet oppressant nuage. (Rivière, 1919, 11)

Given his emphasis on propaganda, and on thought corrupted in the service of narrowly national interests; Rivière may have intended to oppose disinterested thought to instrumental thought, rather than simply practical thought, as generally understood. Nonetheless, in the light of an earlier Kantian understanding of the "practical", as denoting ethical thought (Rivière's intention for speculative thought also surely turning back on the ethical and the metaphysical), it is of course arguable that Rivière is ultimately little different from the Germans in his use of the intellect. If Kant's critique of reason, and his conception of practical reason, could lead to Hegel's and Fichte's idealism, and to a new significance for notions of coherence, of internal consistency, as formative of the ideological "truth" of those constructs which form "reality" in a culture, then Rivière's own rigidly Cartesian ideal could clearly present itself to a German idealist as simply another ideological model purporting to describe the nature of his own French society. Its mere distinctiveness from the German one might then seem to be its greatest merit, rather than any underpinning system of universally valid reality or natural ethical laws discovered outside the mind of man, whether by intuition or the exercise of reason. Rivière himself certainly insists on its difference from German culture, but does so by claiming for it an unchanging universal character, the property of "civilization", which would transcend all cultures, although in no way verifiably so, in order to nullify the German particularism as an unnatural aberration. In other words, whilst culture, as realized by the Germans, can only be an artificial mirage, civilization is an unchanging ethical reality for Rivière, as also for Giraudoux, and one already embodied in their own French society and, not unimportantly, in their own French nationalism.

Having seemed at some level already to have acknowledged the fact of German material supremacy over France, however unpalatable its implications, Rivière would seem to have wanted to transform the confrontation into that of an ethical power against an unethical one, calling less on any arguments for the ethical case than on simply unpalatable aspects of German philosophical thought, to suggest an ethical or moral lack in the German people. To do so, rather than to openly critique the philosophy in question, was to be guilty of simple assertion in place of the much vaunted reasoned analysis of French intellectuals. Kant had already pursued ethical concepts from the standpoint of reason, with less than conclusive results, but had thereby also further narrowed the field of possible debate, so that there would have been little point in tackling the Germans directly on that score. Far from having no basis for an ethical vision, German thought had probably taken ethical absolutism as far as it could go, before resorting to a relativist viewpoint. This was not to say that they lacked any ethical standard at all, as Rivière would have his readers believe.

What then emerges as being at stake are the ethical foundations for perhaps legitimately competing world views, each with its intellectually respectable supporters. Rivière for his part has already conceded, however indirectly, much of the Cartesian physical world of the "out there" to the Germans by his astonishing acknowledgment of their uncannily superior power to manipulate it at will. Yet he will not entertain any possibility of mutable values; any possibility either of an Hegelian dialectical evolution or of a cultural relativism which would play havoc with his own eternal ideals of Truth, Justice, and the like, and their implication in civilization. His indictment of the German character would seem to rest ultimately on his perception, his claim, that the Germans are prepared to do just that.

Unfortunately for Rivière's argument, his own, essentially Platonic, idealism is perhaps so prescriptive of his world view that he seems no longer able to see the workaday world that is shared with the Germans, for he never comes down to any matter of more concrete significance which might be considered to have a bearing on the quarrels of Germany and France. German philosophy might already have played a part at some level in German habits of policy and world-view formation, but real, concrete differences in political, economic or social areas could not be attributed to philosophy alone. That world is created from a complex of forces. However astonishing German society's growth in the nineteenth century, and its emergence as a candidate for the role of dominant nation-state in continental Europe, these could scarcely be attributed to philosophical notions and psychological idiosyncracies alone, however wayward yet powerful they might seem to be.

Ultimately, both Rivière and Giraudoux avoid dealing with any of the concrete realities underlying German power. Only indirectly, as when referring to a German capacity for creation *ex nihilo*, or when he grudgingly acknowledges a certain German organizational power, does Rivière give a hint of the real world, of industrial and economic performance for example. Similarly, Giraudoux might give his impressions of the daily round of business and speculative activity in Berlin, not to illustrate a more dynamic economic and social environment, but to imply perhaps a frantically active and unreflective way of life, quite in accord with Rivière's power-mill interpretation of the Germans' culture. For Rivière to talk of creation *ex nihilo* by force of German will, untrammelled by the more refined sensibilities claimed for the French, was merely to avoid acknowledgment of the real causes underlying the divergent German and French experience. It was also to avoid any examination of more properly French psychological idiosyncracies, whether passing or more long-lived, of the sort which might include injured national pride, intellectual pique, and a simple failure of nerve before the German challenge.

By the 1920s it should have been evident that the most salient feature of German life was its new economic power, rapidly developed in the nineteenth century on a scale far exceeding that of France. It was precisely that aspect that both Rivière and, to a slightly lesser extent, Giraudoux failed to address. The question of militarism could have been seen as an historical carry-over into an era in which, for the Germans at least, both economic and related social changes were more critically important, all the more so since they promised to open the way to changes in political structures. Instead, Rivière not only further pursued the militarist argument, into a period of German military collapse and subjugation, but introduced the notion of an aberrant and evil German development, arising from intrinsic defects of what he alleged to be the German character, but in fact founded on an essentially idealist view of the implications of German thought.

If Giraudoux purported to be searching for the real Germany in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, it is apparent that he was merely exploring yet again that long-debated question about the nature of Germany and the Germans which had started after the Franco-Prussian War. Opposing opinion had seen the Germans, on the one hand, as the cultured and intellectually exciting people recommended to France by Mme de Staël and others since the early nineteenth century; and on the other as the perennial militarists responsible for France's humiliation in 1870-1871, and bent on further expansion in Europe. Yet both of these images might have been readily identified in the historical circumstances of the various German principalities from the mid eighteenthth century at least: in the Prussia of the martial Frederick the Great, for example, or in the intellectual brilliance of such notables as Kant, Hegel and Goethe. In fact, up to 1870 it would seem that France quite properly found nothing exceptional in this co-existence of seemingly divergent inclinations, and if a new focus after that time was more inclined to discount the cultured aspect as typical of an earlier period now gone by, in favour of the militarist label, it should be recognized that the latter conception was also a largely historical reality, and perhaps no more of the essence of German life than of most other nations.

Despite his professed intentions for *Siegfried et le Limousin*, Giraudoux may be seen merely to have contrived to flesh out, in a German setting, the more abstract propositions made by Rivière before him. He remained firmly wedded to the same competing historical representations, and despite his sense that the old Germany of his own cultured understanding was disappearing, he seemed unable or unwilling explicitly to identify and characterize the precise nature of that which was displacing it. If anything he merely reinforced Rivière's perception of creation from the void, by his own impressions of movement and energy, of a faster pace to German society, and of a forced, even mad-house effect to life in Berlin, on its various levels.

Whilst there can be no doubting the influence of Rivière on Giraudoux and his generation, if it is assumed that Giraudoux is not merely standing on Rivière's shoulders with respect to the intellectual slant of their characterization, and condemnation, of the Germans, both may arguably be regarded as products of a certain process of intellectual direction, even of an hermetic cultural inbreeding, in French education, evocative of Barrès' concerns about imposed republican values. Despite their grand claims to universalism, the product of both the Enlightenment and the thrust of republican thought since 1789, French writers and intellectuals displayed a strong disposition to further a merely national cultural and intellectual consensus. To the extent that French intellectuals could lay claim to an international, if not universal, stature, it was largely the product of a generous international recognition of the attractions of French artistic and cultural achievement, particularly in the realm of letters. This was not to say that the French were alone, or pre-eminent either, in their service to the ideals of a liberal society, or in the exercise of analytical reason. To the contrary, the impression is strong that French intellectuals were no longer in the forefront of Western thought by the 1920s, and were displaying serious deficiencies in their understanding of the modern world. Nonetheless, the accumulated weight of their intellectual and cultural prestige, in an international sense, was still considerable, and may in fact be considered, on the basis of efforts such as Rivière's, to have been abused by the French, for want of adequate rational analysis of the problem, with the effect of discrediting the Germans before the world.

French education, with its emphasis on the world of letters, and on philosophical perspectives on the world, seemed disinclined, was perhaps even unable, to deal analytically with the new realities of an emergent industrial and scientific age, which others, for better or worse, were already taking in their stride. The narrow logic of Comte's positivism had not been properly acknowledged by the French themselves, who were still inclined to resort to problematical questions of ethical values to gainsay the entirely new phenomenon of the modern Germany, one based largely on the application of positivist knowledge. The real, the modern Germany, if Frenchmen truly wanted to find it, and if it had anything to do with philosophy, had as much to do with the thrust of French positivism as with German idealism.

German unification had certainly owed much to romanticism and to German philosophical idealism, but having served its purpose, unification was already a part of the old Germany. French emphasis on these matters only heightens the impression of the extent to which they were stuck in the past, the extent to which they were trailing events where Germany was concerned. Indeed France's root problem with Germany, questions of simple nationalism apart, may be seen to have derived from its relative power decline vis-à-vis Germany, already apparent in the nineteenth century, and traceable to the same failing. France had not only failed to keep up with the pace of Germany's economic, technological, and social progress, but seemed disinclined to acknowledge the fact, or to recognize its importance, and its relevance for Franco-German relations. Neither did it seem capable of candidly acknowledging its own history, its own part in the creation of the German problem.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF FRANCE'S GERMAN PROBLEM

As might have been anticipated from the terms of the introduction, and from the nature of the exploration made of other literary works considered pertinent to an understanding of *Siegfried et le Limousin*, the approach taken here is a frankly contextual one, concerned to situate Giraudoux' novel in its time and place, and in large part therefore seeing it as a product of several influences, whether these be literary and intellectual, historical and political, or even nationalist. It does seem that *Siegfried et le Limousin* invites precisely this treatment, given the "intentional" character attributed to the work by Giraudoux himself, in his desire to contribute to some amelioration of the very real tensions still existing between France and Germany at the time of its writing. For the same reason, the problematic question of meaning and interpretation, so much the concern of modern literary theory, acquires a certain historical and political direction from the need to focus also on the question of effects. The thrust of this approach is to see real-world circumstances as potentially constitutive in some degree of even the most literary discourse, but elements of other theoretical angles of approach, generally characterized as post-structuralist, are not without relevance either, which merely underlines how productive of critical insights such a situational approach to *Siegfried et le Limousin* may be shown to be.

Inevitably, several historical allusions have already been made in drawing out material from the other literary works chosen for their considered value in establishing the literary and intellectual surround for Giraudoux' work. The act of grouping the works into two periods of production, before and after the Great War of 1914-1918, already suggests my sense of larger historical movement and change, and a conception of how they fit into that movement. Broadly speaking, those preceding the Great War describe a political and intellectual climate in which right-wing, reactionary, xenophobic and racist tendencies could combine in a potentially explosive nationalism, which although itself apparently inclined in principle to the use of force, was able at the same time to adopt a tone of moral condemnation of alleged German militarism. By way of contrast, those works written after the war suggest a certain evolution of anti-German sentiment, in which deeper questions of a flawed German character and history are brought forward, to be explained by the peculiar nature of German thought, and an irrational cast to the German mind. The militarist charge is still present, but the shift to the realms of thought and personality tends to elevate the moral stance assumed by the French to a more philosophical level. At the same time if the overtly nationalist and extreme stance of the French right-wing is less in evidence in these works, it cannot, for reasons which will become clearer later, be taken to have gone away with the victory of 1918.

Giraudoux is exemplary in his gathering up of all these strands of the French viewpoint, but if he tried to re-state the Franco-German relationship, towards some sort of reconciliation, perhaps based on recognition and understanding of differences of national temperaments, his effort was perhaps destined to failure from the start, for reasons which an historical and cultural perspective may go a long way to explaining.

To this point it should already be abundantly clear that central to the French vision of Germany was the emphasis placed on the aggressively militaristic nature of the Germans' new Empire, proclaimed at Versailles in 1871. From that perception flowed a determined moral condemnation of Germany by the French, and the effort to find support for their stance in an essentially flawed German character. Despite the inconsistencies in their perspective, a matter which will be examined here, much of the French view developed in this regard has endured to some degree in wider circles to this day, largely because any examination of the Franco-German quarrel, from the vantage point of the post-Hitler era, cannot escape the shadows cast by the events of 1939-1945, when many other nations were caught up in the German question. Foremost among those events, and from which derives the greatest moral condemnation of Germany, was of course the Nazis' extermination of several million European

Jews, alongside which France's own experience of Nazi domination must be regarded as of relatively little account.

The demonic image of Germany, to the extent that it may still exist today, is surely based on this "Holocaust" before all else. It is noteworthy, however, that by 1914 the French themselves had not yet begun to emphasize anti-semitism as an aspect of the "German problem", for anti-semitism was clearly a fact of life in France too. German anti-semitism in the nineteenth century, besides having greater resemblance to anti-semitism in France than to the later Nazi position, never reached the degree of intensity seen in the Dreyfus Affair until after 1933 (Pulzer, 1992, 14). After 1945 there was obvious reason not to labour the point in France.

If the question is raised then as to the origins of the demonic characterization of the Germans, prior to 1939, the conventional French answer would seem to be that it was the natural result of an aggressive and militaristic German nationalism in Europe. More precisely, it should rather be attributed to the clash of German nationalism with a French nationalism of much longer date than that attributed to the Germans, which may reasonably be considered to have been provoked by the long domination of the German states by France. The same domination may also be taken to explain France's misjudgment of the new strength of German nationalism, which cost them so dearly in 1870-1871, and even beyond, as customary habits of mind apparently still prevented a clear understanding of the emerging German reality on the part of the French.

During the course of the nineteenth century, France was at best merely indebted to the Germans in the realms of thought and literature, but at worst falling behind them in population growth, military might, and economic development, this last underpinned by an arguable advantage in educational methods and the application of science. It was against this background that a complacent French nationalism, despite the rude awakening of 1870-1871, only slowly became aware of the real extent of Germany's disruption of long-standing power relations in Europe. When eventually it clearly did, one consequence was the emergence of that much more self-conscious and militantly anti-German nationalism of the Right articulated so vehemently by Barrès and others of like mind.

For all that, the complexity of French attitudes, and of their sources, makes a clear distinction of French, as opposed to German, nationalism difficult for Frenchmen even today. And although their own nationalism was undoubtedly a factor in the German problem, as it materialized for them after 1871, Frenchmen in those years of greatest stress obviously had even greater difficulty in acknowledging both the strength and depth of their own nationalist tendencies and how these might have contributed to their perception of a German problem (Girardet, 1966, 7-25). As a result, the impression is often given that French nationalism originated with the right-wing Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras, and that it was merely a response to the German threat, and therefore almost a transient phenomenon in France, with effect that its more reprehensible features could be the more easily dismissed, so avoiding the embarrassment of moral contradiction.

If it cannot be assumed that, even by 1914, the more extreme ideas of Barrès and the right-wing nationalists were those of Frenchmen generally, for in the matter of Germany, as on other political and social questions, they were far from expressing a consensus of opinion, the tragedy of the Great War surely lent itself nonetheless to an intensification of the demonic impression of the Germans engendered by nationalist writers such as Barrès.

Rivière aptly represented this tendency, whilst Jean Giraudoux clearly also contrived to absorb much of the complex of anti-German sentiment generated in certain intellectual and right-wing circles. As shown by both of them in the inter-war period, little of real substance was advanced in support of the anti-German case, which may be seen to rest on a complex interaction of elements of both republican and right-wing thought. The patriotic "Union Sacrée" of 1914 may be seen as a precursor and expression of this convergence of opinion, but perhaps more important is the consideration that by 1918 neither right- nor left-wing sympathisers could wish to claim any responsibility for either the war or the victory. Theoretically, the Left was universalist, pacifist and increasingly socialist, whilst the Right, which might have been spoiling to settle old scores with Germany before the war, could scarcely wish to acknowledge any share of responsibility for the carnage and devastation brought on France by the war, and for the essentially Pyrrhic victory with which it had ended.

All sides could therefore find reason to emphasize German responsibility for the war, and to adopt an even more strongly moralistic view of German developments leading up to 1914. This expressed itself, as we have seen, in the depiction of a grand contest of eternal, civilized French values on the one hand, and barbaric, repressive German militarism on the other.

Such attitudes arguably owed much to a stubborn preoccupation with the headier realms of thought and political theory, among certain French leaders and intellectuals, to the exclusion of the more practical realities of national and international developments affecting both Germany and France, to say nothing of the rest of the world. Yet even such a limited perspective contrived to suggest much about the alleged "traditions" of French thought and politics that was surely open to question.

Implicit in these so-called traditions were essentially universalist republican attitudes derived from Enlightenment and revolutionary Jacobin ideas, not least among them the doctrine of the Rights of Man. After 1871 these had gained a dominant position in French political life, as deplored for example by Barrès in *Les Déracinés*. Yet these aspects of French social and political thought, for the most part merely theoretical rather than practical in most of the world, had of course come into their own in France only in 1789, since when they had enjoyed a very uneven course, as borne out firstly by the experience of the Empire, then by the bitter factional disputes and political disruptions characteristic of the nineteenth century France. Comte and Taine among others had seen fit to condemn the Jacobin spirit for its divisive effects on French society, and for its role in bringing on a decline in France's international standing. For them it had been a fundamental and unfortunate departure from traditions of much longer standing in French society.

It was of course the republican focus on education after 1871 that had done much to inculcate a sense of the essential Frenchness of the Jacobin revolutionary spirit, and of its close association with ideas of progress for humanity at large. From this came the missionary and moralistic tone of much social and political theory in France, based on a sense that France should be in the van of this progressive, universalist, and civilizing movement. Despite the obvious contradiction involved, even the French right-wing nationalists seemed not to be immune to such leadership sentiments, so that, despite their disavowal of the efficacy of universalism in the conditions of relative

French national weakness after 1871, could not escape the same sense of moral superiority in international affairs, particularly in relation to the *arriviste* Germans. The seeming absence in Germany of democratic processes to compare with the French model, when allied with charges of aggressive militarism, only seemed to confirm a generalized assertion of German backwardness, even peculiarity, so that both the Left and the Right in France could claim to be defending essentially human values, those of civilization itself, in opposing the rise of a Germany seen as a threat to France. By 1914, and certainly after 1918, Germany could therefore be portrayed as at least somehow aberrant, at worst even demonic, whether in the light of such French "traditions", or of those of other liberal nation states, such as Great Britain and the United States of America, all seen as representing the mainstream of progressive, liberalizing political society.

But France's experience had not been at all like that of Britain and the U.S.A., and the universalist Jacobin theory was not properly "traditional" to France at all. After 1789 Jacobinism and the effects of revolution had of course been seen as a new and dangerously unhealthy development by the rulers of all of Europe, who had been obliged to combine in arms against it, ultimately to subdue its Napoleonic derivative in 1815. The discordant history and vacillations of French society and polity in the nineteenth century had resulted from the attempts of older, more truly traditional, elements to reassert themselves in the face of a tenacious and still vigorous republicanism.

Also apparently unappreciated by the French was that their preoccupation with political and social theory, born out of its particular intellectual and revolutionary experience, was elsewhere being displaced by the more immediate and practical concerns of capitalist economic development, particularly, and most dramatically in Germany, Britain and the United States of America. France was laggard in this respect, so that economically too it could be seen as differing, at least in degree, from the ongoing development pattern of those other liberal or liberalizing nation states.

The French could take a certain pride in their political sophistication, but despite the political rhetoric of the Third Republic, and its emphasis on parliamentary processes, its reality was rather different from that suggested by theory. At its heart were unresolved conflicts which had been handled variously by suppression and compromise in the interest of a spurious national unity and stability, whose main motivation derived from the maintenance of republican power and influence, even if that involved some adulteration of theory and practice (Zeldin, 1973, 632-634).

The ambiguous nature of the regime might have been anticipated from the outset, given the suppression of the radicals of the Paris Commune, and the role played in that by Adolphe Thiers, the Republic's first premier. Essentially conservative by nature, and responsible for even earlier suppression of radical working-class agitation, both in the 1830s and in 1848, he used his position and influence to oppose political and social innovation, in favour of preservation of the power of the new ruling class. His interest lay in preservation of the institutions of Napoleon I, and thus in the perpetuation of a highly centralized state, using the methods of the old regime. No matter that a section of society was excluded from full participation in political life, the instruments of power were at least in the hands of former provincials, who could now make use of what they had previously deplored (Zeldin, 1973, 606-610).

And as the Republic in due course consolidated the power of the deputies over the processes of government, the complaints of Barrès against the suffocating bureaucracy of the Republic, and against the opportunistic corruption shown by the parliamentary system, were not unfounded. For the system was neither particularly democratic nor responsive to the larger needs of the nation. Quite apart from the financial scandals, such as that surrounding the expansion of the railways in the 1880s, which served business and financial interests at great cost to the nation, the system also encouraged mediocrity in government, and the postponement of controversial measures, whenever judged prudent for the maintenance of stability. The result was eventually stalemate and immobility, in stark contradiction to the earlier promise of republicanism (Zeldin, 1973, 632-639).

Just as the Republic was not what it seemed, so also the invocation of French traditions of universalism and peaceable intent do not stand up to scrutiny. Only the passage of time, and the inadequacy of their world view, can at first sight reasonably explain the sanctimonious nature of the condemnation of Germany's motives and character which became such a commonplace among French writers and intellectuals after the 1890s, when Kaiser Wilhem II's posturings gave them their excuse. By that time the circumstances of Napoleon III's Second Empire, and the events leading up to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, could perhaps be conveniently forgotten. French opinion had in fact mobilized behind Napoleon III, at least amongst the influential elites, on the question of German unity, which it was a tradition of French policy to oppose. It might not have supported him in any scheme to extend French power to the left bank of the Rhine, a long-standing French ambition, but he had talked in such terms, as also of annexing Belgium or Luxembourg (Lauret, 1965, 40-42). And it was precisely these issues which had persuaded the southern German states to throw in their lot with Prussia in 1870. No matter that Bismarck had aimed for precisely that result, he had merely played upon French susceptibilities whose existence and implications the French themselves were apparently unable to acknowledge.

It may be suspected that France's real complaint about 1870-1871, at the outset at least, had less to do with defeat at Germany's hands than it had with the Second Empire's mismanagement of French ambitions, with which the country was perhaps not altogether uncomfortable. Had Napoleon III been successful in thwarting German ambitions, and perhaps acquired further territory at the same time, it has to be supposed that little complaint would have been heard. After all, Napoleon III's personal reservations apart, the French army itself had been quite confident of victory. From this point of view the opportunity presented to the republicans to assume the powers of government, in the midst of war, had little to do with anti-militarism or any sense of national moral repugnance in the face of violation of universalist republican principles. Rather, it represented the victory of these more moderate political tendencies which, in the more liberal Empire inaugurated in January 1870, were already affecting Napoleon III's hold on power before the war (Zeldin, 1973, 544-552), and simply took advantage of a return to reliance on republican enthusiasm in times of national danger.

The contradictions between theory and practice in French political life went right to the heart of the system, and may be considered to account for much of the blurring of lines apparent in the positions taken by republicans and right-wing nationalists alike in the years between 1870 and 1914, whether in relation to their view of the German problem or of France and its own political and social arrangements. In particular, much attention has been drawn to the gradual waning of patriotic sentiment, and ideas of revenge, as a feature of republicanism, and their promotion after about 1890 by the right-wing nationalists in their turn, who thereby contrived to monopolize nationalist fervour and the militarist viewpoint in France (Droz, 1973, 24-30). What was perhaps becoming clearer nonetheless was a polarization of French society, of which the Dreyfus Affair was symptomatic, in response to the shortcomings of the republican system, as a growing socialist Left and an increasingly nationalistic and vociferous Right pressed their claims for change. Republican opportunism had not worked well, and the social harmony to it which it aspired was becoming increasingly elusive. From a practical standpoint, France's difficulties and relative failure to establish a genuine political and social consensus at home may well have slowed both social and economic development, weakened her standing and power internationally, and rendered her particularly vulnerable to perceived pressures from Germany, already the most economically dynamic of the European powers by the end of the nineteenth century.

By that time the French right-wing nationalists were acutely aware of, and disturbed by, the apparent threats to French power and prestige which were coming into view. C. Digeon has traced the development of right-wing nationalism in France, and has pointed out how quickly attitudes were changing among writers and intellectuals between 1895 and 1905, under the impact of the "generation of 1890". By 1905 a strong contingent of younger writers favoured the nationalist position, and signs of disquiet were apparent among the younger generation as a whole. But most writers were not politically oriented, and certainly not the best of them. Among those who were so inclined, nationalist sentiments derived much from memories of 1870-1871, given new force by the diplomatic moves of the seemingly ambitious German Kaiser, Wilhelm II (Digeon, 1959, 464-471). By 1914 their fears and instincts seemed to have been proven justified, and as already apparent among the works instanced here, were influential in forming the attitudes of French writers and intellectuals between the wars, as also, no doubt, much government policy towards Germany. Nonetheless, history may be seen to show that these perspectives were not well-founded, and may in their turn have contributed in undesirable ways to the outcome of the Franco-German confrontation.

At the heart of French perceptions of Germany was an essential misdirection of attention, based in large part, as suggested by the foregoing, on a preoccupation with internal divisions arising from unresolved problems and tensions left over from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, but also on certain complacent assumptions about France itself, and about its role in the world. These domestic conditions found expression in a succession of unsuccessful constitutional regimes, which reached some troubled sense of stability only in the period which began with the consolidation of the Third Republic in the 1870s. Other matters, perhaps as a consequence, were given less attention than they warranted.

Chief amongst these matters, since of great significance for any assessment of the justification, or otherwise, of the French nationalist reaction, must be the general failure of French writers and intellectuals, and consequently of the general public, to awaken to the realities and importance of economic developments in nineteenth century Germany, especially following its unification. Only after 1900 did awareness of the German Empire's astonishing economic and industrial development impose itself in any meaningful way on French observers, and that mainly in specialist reviews, so that even by 1914 the new perspectives which they might have afforded French writers were still essentially "pre-literary", and the wider public was likewise unaffected (Digeon, 1959, 476-480). The fact was that economics in nineteenth century France had a low status, being taught in the Faculties of Law and at the independent "Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques" rather than the "Ecole Normale", so that no one came to study economics in Paris (Brogan, 1957, 216-217). As a result, French opinion was necessarily grounded on traditional, and increasingly unproductive perspectives on international relations, which failed to recognize that a different and more intense kind of social and economic revolution having taken place in Germany than Frenchmen had yet experienced, the German political and diplomatic scene was likely to reflect certain difficulties based more on these changes than on the personal whims of the German Kaiser.

From this perspective, Barrès should then be seen as typical of the general run of French nationalist writers of his time, in his neglect of changing economic conditions, whether in France or Germany, and most particularly of the relative impact of industrialization in the two countries, which was driving a real, and likely permanent shift in power relations. When considered in relation to his narrowly partisan political and historical perspectives, it is not surprising that, like so many others, he had little in the way of practical suggestions to offer to help remedy his country's difficulties (Curtis, 1959, 12-13).

Having recognized this much, however, about the inadequacy of French writers to come to grips with the concrete realities of the forces acting on the two nations in the nineteenth century, one may also be struck by the persistence, the durability, of the underlying habits of mind productive of it, into the inter-war years of the twentieth century.

French writers, even today, enjoy a prestige and influence in French society possibly greater than that of their counterparts in any other Western country, so that for cultural and historical reasons writers may still be expected to provide insightful leadership in the identification, analysis and interpretation of significant features and trends apparent in society. Giraudoux was no doubt prompted by that tradition to try, with *Siegfried et le Limousin*, to cast light on France's German neighbour, long maligned and still distrusted by Frenchmen in 1922, but in his view still possessed of redeeming qualities. He had no hesitation in expressing the aim of improved Franco-German intellectual relations for his new work (Body, 1991, 262), but it must be regarded as a relative failure in that respect, both in the light of history and of the very mixed reception that the work received both in France and Germany. That outcome may be attributed to the idiosyncracies of his art, but also in a more fundamental sense to the fact of his position within a literary and intellectual tradition which was showing increasing signs of irrelevance to the pressing realities and concerns of the society of which it formed a part.

As opposed to the cultural, psychological and even racial modes of analysis and interpretation which, on the French side at least, had dominated the Franco-German confrontation since 1870, the question was long overdue for examination along new lines, as suggested by the rapid and manifold changes in the economic and social, as opposed to the merely political, features of European life. Effectively, the emerging modern world had gone curiously unremarked, or at any rate uncredited, by the bulk of literary and intellectual partisans of France in Europe.

The origins of this seeming divorce of the literary or poetic from the scientific, or rational, and practical world, may be traced to Renaissance times, but it may also be pointed out that the distinction is spurious nonetheless, that the mentalities involved are arguably complementary rather than antagonistic. Modern science employs metaphor and symbol extensively, and clearly needs imagination and conceptual imagery of a high order. Yet, and very importantly, the suggestion is apparently well founded that it is impossible to find in modern literature, and especially that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the equivalent of that imaginative grasp of the available body of scientific knowledge formerly shown by the likes of Dante or Lucretius in their times (Mazzeo, 1967, 308-333).

The point is, of course, that the volume and pace of discovery in the physical sciences have become overwhelming in modern times, and correspondingly so in the social sciences. Making sense of such rapid and multi-faceted change is now problematic. An interpretive gap, of the sort long familiar to historians, has become a commonplace problem for policy-makers in modern societies, even in the presence of conscientious effort to overcome it. To some degree, then, hindsight may overstate the obvious with regard to French, and more particularly French writers', attempts to deal with their perceptions of Germany, even after 1870, but regarding those who were or wanted to be influential, it is apparent that little or no effort was devoted by them towards the identification and analysis of the underlying forces feeding into the problem. Some of them should have been obvious on reflection. Others were more subtle. What was widely lacking, however, was apparently a willingness to look for them.

For these reasons, the real nature of Germany's development, and of its very particular route to nationhood, as of the alternative choices which might have been made in the field of great power politics, by both France and Germany, had by 1914 been so little considered in France as to render reasoned interpretation well nigh impossible. Julien Benda, in his *Treason of the Intellectuals* (Benda, 1969), could scathingly deplore what he saw as the abdication of the intellectuals in their surrender to the irrational forces of nationalism fed by ignorance (Benda, 1969). In doing so he recalled earlier French traditions of thought, but implicit in such a criticism must also be the question of the role of the emerging social sciences, which promised to undermine much of the intellectual status traditionally associated with writers and commentators of a more literary bent.

In *La France byzantine* (Benda, 1945), another work of more properly literary criticism, Benda pointed specifically to significant questions of literary trends in the first half of the twentieth century, involving, in his estimation, the promotion of form over content, and a seemingly self-conscious retreat by leading writers and intellectuals from substantive issues, in favour of the irrational, and the unreal. Their treatment of moral and political issues, when attempted, was notable for an absence of depth and rigour of inquiry, strikingly at odds with the example of their literary predecessors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Benda, 1945, 145-146). But of course, even by the 1880s, with the advent of the Symbolists, rational and universal knowledge was already being rejected in favour of subjectivism and an allusive vagueness of expression, more suited to the emotional, and to a purely verbal virtuosity, than to a clear-thinking literature (Benda, 1945, 172-173). Significantly, Benda could instance Giraudoux amongst his exponents of this most recent manifestation, in an old French tradition, of a new precious literature, and left little doubt that, in his opinion, the effects of such self-indulgence could only be to neglect real moral and social problems of pressing concern to France (Benda, 1945, 182).

A precious writer in point of style and technique, Giraudoux did indeed fit squarely inside this trend. Nonetheless, he had taken on the Franco-German issue, however obliquely, in *Siegfried et le Limousin*. His use of suggestive symbolism, in combination with much historical and cultural allusion certainly revealed a poetic sensibility towards Germany and its people, but as we have seen provided neither practical nor impartial insight into the historical antecedents and likely causes of the continuing Franco-German animosity, to say nothing about plausible remedies.

Ironically, although preciosity may indeed have been a tradition of French literature, other parallels can be drawn, emphasizing the irrational aspect of these trends, which may plausibly be traced to the influence of German romantic and philosophical currents, expressed in the transcendental idealism of the German *Fruhromantiker*, and reflected in large part in the much later French symbolists' works (Furst, 1977, 111). Like the Symbolists, the *Fruhromantiker*, were opposed to scientific rationalism, favouring the poetic perception over the rationalistic explanation (Furst, 1977, 137). Giraudoux' optimism was precisely that of the Symbolist movement, with its thought of revealing the nature of the real world by means of its transcendental imagery, but such impulses, whatever their derivations, clearly did not favour the possibility of a constructive role for literature in the investigation and elaboration of practical questions such as the background to, and the issues at stake in, the Franco-German confrontation.

From this perspective, France's patriotic "Union Sacrée", forged on the eve of war in 1914 by the otherwise disparate political factions in France, confirmed in its own way the effects of intellectual and literary inadequacy argued by the foregoing. It represented the perhaps inevitable culmination of years of misunderstanding, on the part of politicians, intellectuals and writers generally, of the real nature, and often necessary differences, of the German and French experience in the nineteenth century, and especially in the years after 1870.

France's own tradition of nationalism, taken over and given more explicit focus by the Right in the 1890s, had contrived to outweigh those more moderate tendencies which might, with time and better-informed application, have pointed out and held to another way. Notable amongst these was the French socialist movement, under the leadership of Jean Jaurès. With its close contacts with the German Social Democratic Party it had held out some promise of international co-operation, but events conspired with differences of style, doctrine, and circumstances, to overwhelm the possibility of independent action by either group in the face of nationalist pressures in both France and Germany. This did not prevent great bitterness on the part of the French socialists at what they considered a betrayal by the German party. Nor did it help that Jean Jaurès was assassinated on the very eve of war. To the nationalists' anti-Germanism was thus added, in the heat of events, the opprobrium of the Left too.

In so far as their attitudes rested on intellectual and literary foundations, all of these conditions may be taken to have contributed to the strong impression of widespread intransigence on the part of Frenchmen about Germany's responsibility for the Great War. In the earlier *Colette Baudoche*, about an earlier war, Barrès' had carried his bias to obvious extremes, idealizing his Lorrainers at the expense of the German "barbarians". Giraudoux was clearly also in the same tradition, in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, if to a less marked degree, in his unyielding allocation of blame to the Germans for the outbreak of the Great War, and in his drawing of the German psyche as one quite indifferent to distinctions between war and peace in its relations with the world. A frankly scathing psychological approach was taken by Rivière to the Franco-German problem in *L'Allemand*, where he purported to explain German "national" character on the strength of rather limited personal observation and knowledge of the Germans, but with much philosophical underpinning, and no attempt at analysis of their real situation in political, economic, or social terms, and hence of the force of circumstances which might have been seen to be pressing on them.

The durability of the French stance, running from Barrès, through Rivière, to Giraudoux, albeit perhaps in less consciously antagonistic form in the latter case, may also be seen as late as 1947 in the sentiments of J. M. Carré's scholarly *Le Mirage allemand* (Carré, 1947). He purported to trace an alleged misapprehension, on the part of Frenchmen of excessive goodwill, as to the existence of a "good" Germany—that of the idealistic, romantic, scholarly, and cultured world early signalled to her countrymen by Mme de

Staël in *De l'Allemagne* of 1810—but surely served instead to raise questions about a still active anti-Germanism, and about the biases of a French literary and intellectual tradition of nationalism which predated by far any German manifestation of national self-interestedness.

From the literary standpoint, for example, the emergence of the Romantic movement in France was arguably retarded by a period of reaction during the First Empire against an earlier French interest in foreign literature. Prompted by loyalty to the indigenous tradition in the cause of French nationalism, the reaction only intensified under the xenophobia of the Napoleonic Wars, for the French genuinely thought themselves the cultural leaders of Europe, and reacted with indignation to any perceived challenge to their hegemony in cultural as in other matters (Furst, 1977, 32-33).

Whilst foreign influences were merely delayed, and eventually modified to reconcile them with older French traditions, the nationalist impulse in French literature clearly did not go away with the demise of the First Empire. It must be taken as a factor in much of the antagonism towards Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, given the French habit of filtering knowledge of their neighbour through a literary and intellectual prism which was only too acutely attuned to the particular eminence and influence attributed to German thought in Europe from the end of the eighteenth century forward. Naturally, not everyone reacted adversely, but on the extent to which some still could depended no doubt much of the tone of the nationalist literary reaction in France in the years immediately after 1871, and certainly after 1890. For, with the passage of time, German claims to power and influence, if not the material basis for them, became increasingly apparent to Frenchmen. That served only to enhance their impression of a German assault on French prestige and self-esteem. Increasingly, Germany's groundbreaking role in certain literary and intellectual areas was to become apparent in other matters too, most notably in economic development and trade.

In these circumstances, and contrary to the nationalists' abuse of the German mind and character, a real issue for French writers and intellectuals should have been, at least, how to interpret the reactions of the French national psyche in the face of diminishing power and prestige, clearly suggested by the very existence of the German Empire. The assumptions of French national identity, however, were apparently so ingrained as to be virtually unconsciously held, transparent to any examination. By contradistinction the idiosyncracies of the "other", of the German in particular, just like those of the Jew, were seemingly much easier to determine. From this may be taken to derive the coherence of the nationalist writers' attacks on the Germans before 1914. Péguy for instance was already describing the Germans as ". . . un peuple de soumis et obéissants, pour ne pas dire plus, un peuple de nuques basses et de discipline passif", or reflecting that if France was the Good, then Germany truly represented Evil (Cited in Digeon, 1959, 511-512). The resonances of such notions were to become the commonplace of the literature.

Complicating the issue were other questions. It must be asked, for example, whether internal conflicts in French society and politics were projected on to Germany for partisan purposes, by which may be explained the long-standing bitterness of the debate about the "good" and "bad" Germanies of French imagination, suggestive rather of opposing political stances than of any rational appraisal of the complexity of the German reality from a national policy perspective. Just as the republicans came to power in a time of national crisis, and effectively profited from nationalist, and anti-German sentiment during the years when they were consolidating their grip on power, so too the intensification of a sense of crisis after 1890 could only have been expected to work to the advantage of the traditional elites, and other elements too, who were prepared in their turn to take up the nationalist cause, and the defence of the nation, once again. If republicans were moving away from nationalism, if not entirely from fear of Germany, the Right could find opportunity in adopting an oppositional stance, especially when Wilhelm II obliged by reviving old fears and prejudices. A Germany represented as evil could only help their cause.

Still, French nationalism was real enough also, and no doubt contributed to an unrealistic attitude about international relations. Whether these are considered in the abstract or in the light of historical experience, nationalism perhaps helps explain Frenchmen's apparent readiness to overlook a French history of adventurism in Europe, in favour of their indulgence in a moral stance of more recent origins, whether justified or not. From this may partly flow the charge of militarism directed at the Germans, but one needs look no further than Napoleon Bonaparte to confirm the full extent of the French penchant for military glory, in pursuit of adventures of wide-ranging impact in Europe, and to discover the enthusiastic support which the French people gave to them.

In point of fact, if there was some sense that France's military establishment was not a match for Germany's between 1871 and 1914, it was not for want of ambition in that direction. It was at the insistence of Adolphe Thiers that France, for reasons of national prestige, opted for a professional army after 1871, rather than for a conscript one like Germany's, which had of course been modelled on Napoleon Bonaparte's practice (Zeldin, 1973, 610). Presumably Thiers had no thought that the French army would thereby be less effective, or that France would somehow be seen to be less militaristic than Germany.

The case is strong therefore for a certain parallelism of nationalist inclinations, and a convergence of tendencies, in France and Germany, sufficient to gainsay the moralizing stance of so many Frenchmen towards these issues. In fact, the right-wing nationalists themselves, under the tutelage of Charles Maurras, even inclined to a grudging admiration of Germany, and to a desire to emulate what was seen as her disciplined nationalism, seemingly achieved under the leadership of her traditional elites.

Somewhat surprisingly, given that the impulses of the French right-wing nationalists owed much to the contentious preoccupation of French intellectuals and writers with German thought, Barrès' ideas on tradition also owed much to German romanticism, and clearly aimed to replace a detested republican universalism with a particularism of the same sort as Germany's, one which would also require submission of the individual to the imperatives of national glorification. Further, although never constituting a majority of opinion, the right-wing nationalists had already largely succeeded in gaining a monopoly on patriotism and militarism in France before 1914 (Curtis, 1959, 269-270).

Similarly, it is significant that the French right-wing nationalists, in a foreshadowing of later German developments, rather quickly introduced racist considerations into their characterization of the Germans. Barrès' anti-semitism too merely reflected the reality disclosed by the Dreyfus Affair, in which a broadly right-wing and nationalist combination of military, aristocratic, and Church interests had allied with others of like mind against the Jewish Albert Dreyfus, and his largely republican supporters. Barrès' ostensibly traditional, but xenophobic, nationalism also had most of the ingredients for the sort of Fascist-style evolution later witnessed in the National-Socialism of Hitler's Germany. Perhaps therefore only differences of circumstances, and historical accident, saw Germany alone take its nationalist doctrines to the extremes of National-Socialism.

In one respect at least, French attitudes could be seen as very different. In French intellectual and literary circles could be detected a strong anti-bourgeois feeling, dating from the early 19th century, and indicative of opposition to precisely those materialistic and modernizing tendencies which were increasingly coming to characterize the new Germany. In *Siegfried et le Limousin* Giraudoux clearly favoured the old Germany over its modernizing successor, which was already evidently assuming the pluralistic, and thoroughly materialistic, aspect nowadays recognized as characteristic of evolving industrial societies, driven by science and technology, and the commercial spirit.

Questions of relative economic and population stagnation apart, precisely these attitudes amongst its cultural and intellectual elites, for whom France already had the stature of a finished form, might have been seen to constitute a fundamental impediment to France's future as a great European power. For a France long since ostensibly civilized, cultured, and humane, its apparent political and social shortcomings could be considered of relatively little account in the larger scheme of things, especially when, as a Barrès would have it, France could seem to be menaced by "barbarian" German hordes. To use Maurras' terms, a superior Latin civilization was being challenged by an inferior Teuton one. It was a confrontation of Christian and Pagan values perhaps, but either way the sense was the same. Such views were conducive to that relative stagnation which in time was to place France at such a material disadvantage vis-à-vis Germany. France's inclinations were tending towards preservation rather than development and growth.

Their views were of course gross over-simplifications. Broadly speaking, similar forces were ultimately at work in both France and Germany, providing for certain similarities of tendencies, which were generally not appreciated as such, since the differences were really of degree more than anything else. The effects of nationalism, of militarism, and of the influences of the traditional or hereditary classes were features of both countries' experience, but so too were those of capitalist industrialization, and socialist responses. Unlike France however, Germany had embarked on an intense process of economic and social transformation, the nature of which went unappreciated in France due to only superficial interest in and examination of the phenomena involved, and their relationship to the political process. The underlying forces of change were simply not properly identified and analyzed. Instead, Frenchmen persisted in viewing Germany, and France for that matter, under outmoded categories of thought.

Essentially, many political and cultural developments in France had preceded their counterparts in Germany, and had evolved differently in large measure, and accounted for her earlier dominance, but in economic development France had unwittingly fallen behind, leaving her with only "out of phase" perspectives on the new German and European reality. Long past the point where rapid economic development and its social effects, rather than political arrangements, had become the critical engine of revolutionary change in German society, France persisted in attaching importance to political rights and institutions in Germany, and to how these could be related to the mind set of Germany's hereditary and military classes. To have avoided this error France should have paid much closer and earlier attention to Germany's route to nationhood, and the motives of its leaders and cultural elites.

What might first have been taken into account was the nature of nineteenth century Europe's liberal nationalist movements, their impulses and their likely effects on international power politics as played by the traditional incumbents, most notably, apart from France herself, by Austria, Russia, and England. Both Italy and Germany were clearly intent on making a place for themselves in Europe in the second half of the century, but Germany alone presented a new problem for France and the balance of power in Europe, although to what extent did not become apparent to France until the shock of 1870-1871.

Germany had evolved, in the first half of the century, from the interplay of strong popular liberation movements and the calculations, both political and economic, of the rulers of its various principalities, most notably those of Prussia. It was distinguished by a self-conscious search for a national unification mythology capable of welding its disparate elements and traditions into a cohesive whole. A wealth of intellectual and cultural talent had addressed the problem, and with remarkable success (James, 1989, 11). The result, as time was to reveal, and notwithstanding inevitable contradictions at its heart, was a nation with a virtually mystical sense of its distinctiveness and worth, even in the face of older nation-states such as France or Britain. The effect was one of unity through a cultural nationalism of the masses in support of national awakening and growth. This was something very different from the French experience, and accounts no doubt for their much repeated sense of the artificial nature of the German creation, which for some long time they could have hoped to see collapse under its "unnatural" contradictions, much as suggested by Rivière.

What the French could see, after 1870-1871, was however only the seemingly rudimentary political structure of the new Germany, whose highest political assembly, the

Reichstag, had emerged from the need for military unification and its financing. The inherent political complexity, and difficulty, of governing and developing what was otherwise a loose political federation, contrasting sharply with the highly centralized French tradition, escaped them (Sagarra, 1980, 143-145). Rather than acknowledge, for example, the absence of fully democratic institutions in Germany, or at any rate their relatively rudimentary presence at the national level, as indicative merely of later historical development, in circumstances simply different from those in which France herself had approached parliamentary democracy, France preferred to see Germany's political institutions and particularity as tailored to the needs of an essentially feudal leadership in furtherance of aggressively militaristic ambitions. This was taken as a sign of backwardness, based on a peculiar, and inferior, German character, and readily led Frenchmen to endow even the average German with the alleged defects and ambitions of his rulers, or to characterize him as their subservient dupe.

The promptings of their own nationalism could only reinforce the appeal of that perspective for the French. In time it clearly emerged as the basis for what was simply an unreflective stereotyping and vilification of the Germans, along psychological lines purporting to define an essential German nature (Lauret, 1965, 40-41). If Germans were seen as dangerous, however, little consideration was given to just how alleged traits of character, in and of themselves, should have come to be such a significant source of fear to France.

That Germany's ambitions could only be realized, to some degree, at the expense of France, was surely predictable. That she should have had such ambitions was also understandable, given the traditions of great power politics in which she had been schooled, and for which she simply represented another newly qualified player. But that France should have reacted as bitterly as she did was quite out of character for a nation which had for so long dominated the continental European scene, and so often to her neighbours' cost. It suggested a serious inattention, or perhaps even a form of denial, with respect to the changing nature of the modern world, and to France's relative decline in it.

It must be assumed, then, that the French anti-German reaction, as it evolved between 1870 and 1914, derived fundamentally from these older, nationalist habits of mind, born of a perceived French prestige, national glory, and cultural dominance in Europe, already on the wane. From this may be understood, in the first instance, the necessarily psychological character of the French anti-German reaction, and the self-regarding tone of their polemic, otherwise lacking in real substance. It is apparent that the French did not feel any great compulsion to examine the nature of their own nationalism, whose background and underlying assumptions therefore also went unexamined.

From this perspective Bismarck's complex diplomacy up to 1890 may credibly be seen as purely defensive, driven by fear of a French desire for revenge, which might undo the achievements of Germany's unification (Lauret, 1965, 53). This state of affairs went unappreciated in France, as did also the fact that, with Bismarck's departure from European diplomacy, the peace of Europe deteriorated rapidly in the hands of less able men at the head of German affairs, who were faced with increasingly difficult political and social conditions inside Germany, which had the potential to spill over into international diplomacy.

In these new conditions of perceived danger, the real longer-term threat to France, whether appreciated or not at the time, was nonetheless the underlying economic and population surge which took place in Germany between 1870 and 1914. In sharp contrast France had a relatively stagnant economy and little population growth in the same period (Curtis, 1959, 13-16). Yet, since French writers and public opinion generally had not properly awakened to that fact, even by 1914, they were not obliged to examine France's own relative economic failure as a potential source of their own difficulties. Germany's rapidly advancing industrial and scientific development provided the real basis for her evolving ambitions in Europe and the world, commensurate with her new political status and population, and therefore also for a well-founded French concern (Digeon, 1959, 476).

The Republic's policy, in response to the political and economic thrust of the new Germany, had that been properly understood, should have been one of purposeful social and economic renovation in France, aimed at restoring the practical basis of balanced relations. Her problem was that, contrary to the German experience, and despite France's highly centralized government control, internal political divisions dating from 1814 had prevented her from matching German successes in setting and achieving agreed national goals, and that the political practices of the republican regime, rather than resolving these divisions, had merely papered over the cracks. France's relative failure in these respects left her overly reliant on a defensive system of international alliances. Unfortunately, her efforts in that direction were ill-considered, as were Germany's for that matter, so that both may be considered to have contributed directly to the outbreak of the Great War of 1914-1918 (Lauret, 1965, 56-59).

A central fact to be remembered about the Great War is that it was an Austro-Russian war rather than a Franco-German one. Wilhelm II, by his renunciation of Bismarck's Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, originally arranged by Bismarck as a counterweight to Germany's alliance with Austria-Hungary, made a Franco-Russian alliance inevitable, so that both France and Germany found themselves with dangerous allies, support for whose quarrels they provided, for all practical purposes, unconditionally. Both should have given support only with reservations. Their failure to do so meant that they were both dragged into a war over Serbia, which meant nothing to them, after having for forty-three years successfully avoided war over Alsace-Lorraine, which did. Given this fact, it is not perhaps surprising, nationalist warnings to the contrary, that those who lived through those times remembered that before June, 1914, war was not in the air. Nor was there really a desire for conquest in Germany, where the feeling in the pre-war years was rather a sense of growing unease about the growing strength of the opposing French alliance. Good reasons could be found in both Paris and Berlin for the avoidance of war. The same could not perhaps have been said about the Austrian and Russian capitals (Lauret, 1965, 53-61).

The failure of the French elites to appreciate the nature of these diplomatic blunders makes understandable perhaps their intransigence about German responsibility for the war, for events moved quickly after the assassination of the Arch-Duke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo in June, 1914, allowing little time for reflection about matters which had clearly also been long ignored or misunderstood. The main thing was that this time Germany had declared war on France, and little reflection was given to the fact that French foreign policy, under the direction of successive ministers, had itself vacillated widely in the pre-war years, alternating between the possibility of alliance with either England or Germany, and opposition to one or the other.

Clearly, in the minds of ministers and diplomats at least, the realities of international diplomacy allowed for a flexibility of perspective which was absent from public opinion, but this was forgotten by 1918, so that the peace which followed the war, was shaped by a deep-seated French bitterness and need to make Germany pay for her presumed wickedness.

Unfortunately, the peace thereby inevitably contained the seeds of the next war. Economic circumstances obtaining in Germany, whilst not adequately evaluated by French observers before 1914 as perhaps the most dominant force driving the new Germany forward, became critically decisive by their dramatic deterioration between the wars. Intent on visiting retribution on their defeated enemy, by way of quite unrealistic reparations demands, the French failed to appreciate the possibility of political revolution in Germany as a consequence of economic difficulties, and most damagingly so when the world-wide depression of the 1920s and 1930s set in. How far French policies contributed to the strictly economic problems experienced in Germany has been much debated, both then and since, but it is certain that only France among the former wartime allies insisted on the view of reparations which prevailed during the critical years of the failing Weimar Republic. It is now equally certain that Germany could never have paid the sums demanded, amounting to some 132 billion gold marks, of which 52% were to go to France (Dreyfus, 1991, 113-114).

Having unwittingly situated his *Siegfried et le Limousin* on the very eve, historically speaking, of the unfolding of the events which were to lead to 1933, and the accession to power of Adolph Hitler, Giraudoux nicely exemplified the French inability to acknowledge the economic problem which reparations represented for Germany, and to consider their effect on already fragile political and social conditions. The combination of Germany's sense of national victimization and the seeming international failure of liberal capitalist economics could only have contributed to the success of National-Socialist claims of systemic failure in Germany, which only they confidently promised to remedy. In the event, history has shown that France and Germany were once again set on a collision course for war.

It is by now apparent that there were many reasons why the French view of Germany showed itself incapable of meeting the German reality, and especially of understanding how German economic development had influenced social and political processes, not least among them the prospects for democratization of German political life. By way of contrast, it might have seemed after 1945 that the lesson of the inter-war years had been learned. The importance attached to the economic restoration of Western Europe was reflected in the Americans' Marshall Plan, which in Germany's case laid the groundwork for its post-war "miracle" of economic recovery, within the context of a new Federal Republic of West Germany. Nonetheless, although other nations had generally not shared in the intensity of French anti-German sentiment prior to 1933 and the rise of Hitler, international support for it it became apparent after 1945. Under the impact of the war and the sense that the roots of the Nazi phenomenon were to be found in a peculiar wrong turning of German history, the notion had arisen by the 1950s of a negative German "Sonderweg", of a peculiar history leading directly to 1933, in which the main elements of the French case were discernible.

The combination of militarism and political "immaturity" were still in play, along with related questions surrounding a peculiar German mind, subject to a sinister irrationalism, or yet again concerning an authoritarian misdevelopment of German political life, based on a legacy of pre-industrial and traditional institutions handed down at unification in 1871 (Blackbourn, 1984, 286). The essentials of the earlier French view of Germany, formed for all practical purposes before 1914, thus enjoyed a new formulation, but that wider acceptance was rather short-lived. Although influential British historians, for example, were soon after 1945 already examining such matters as the authoritarian and militarist model of German society, the essential thrust of which parallelled the French view almost exactly, such approaches began to be seriously questioned by historians in the 1960s, when the early staples of the German question were subjected to closer examination, in a new attempt at evaluation of Germany's development.

The outcome was a much more sophisticated analysis, grounded on Germany's very intense capitalist transformation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It recognized the strains which it had placed on her political and social structures, and sought to understand its consequences for both liberal democratic impulses and mass political life, to the point of Hitler's coming to power in 1933. The history of German anti-semitic excesses gave a particular moral dimension to the question, and was no doubt a significant factor in motivating the new studies, but militarism per se was not seen as the critical issue.

The French view of German peculiarity had not been derived from the same impulses. It had not been concerned about anti-semitism, nor had it taken any account of Germany's economic growth or of its effects inside Germany, so that it was not inclined to the far-reaching analysis undertaken by others after 1945. At the heart of the French view, in so far as any matter of substance was concerned, remained therefore a merely political assessment, formed around the apparent lack of a developed parliamentary system of democracy, which for them meant, implicitly, a retarded liberal bourgeois revolution, and the continuing dominance of essentially feudal authority. And at the heart of the "Sonderweg" perspective too lay the notion of a failed bourgeois revolution in Germany, which had precluded the possibility of "normal" democratic institutions.

It is precisely that aspect of both the French and the "Sonderweg" views that was brought into question in the 1960s. Of first importance was the recognition that the allegedly exceptional nature of the German political experience relies on its comparison with the myth of a painless "western modernization" as a normative standard, without which however the German case may be seen as merely distinctive rather than *sui generis* (Blackbourn, 1984, 292).

Contrary to the French view, the importance and intensity of political life in Germany, and the importance of the bourgeoisie's role in it, both before and after 1914-1918, should be stressed (Blackbourn, 1984, 26). On closer examination, the German parliamentary system, whatever its limitations of form, was already notable before 1914 for its strength and workability, whilst the Imperial state demonstrated an impressive functional vitality (Blackbourn, 1984, 151-152). Reflection on the scope and magnitude alone of the German social and economic transformation in the years after unification, surely bears out that view, which then may be seen to serve as a clue to the German political experience.

An economic perspective on German development thus offers an understanding of the dynamics of a very real bourgeois participation in German politics, but one that differed, with good reason, from experience elsewhere. On the basis of this approach, and examination of concurrent social changes, what emerges is an unusually rapid and intense capitalist economic transformation, which had largely met the bourgeoisie's ambitions in German civil and associational life, and within the existing political framework; however, their very success had caused social and economic grievances amongst the lower classes, which were necessarily displaced on to the political stage. Evidence of this pressure from below could be seen in the activity of the German Social Democratic Party, whose growth even before 1914 was much more dramatic than anything experienced by the socialist parties in France in the same period (Sagarra, 1980, 180-186).

Itself politically fragmented, the liberal bourgeoisie's response to such pressure was to promote the need for a strong state (Blackbourn, 1984, 289), but the pressure merely intensified during the post-war Weimar Republic under a heightened democratic parliamentarism (Blackbourn, 1984, 27), with the effect of confirming their inclination, already apparent during the political turmoil before 1914, to retreat from public scrutiny on the political stage. In these circumstances it may plausibly be argued that the bourgeoisie's role in German politics, far from being one of subservient capitulation to any authoritarian feudal or "pre-industrial" élite, reflected a rational calculation of its political interest, in circumstances where further democratization could only have worked to the advantage of the German Left. From which it follows that the hereditary elites alone cannot therefore be blamed for what was in fact an effect of a dynamic late-comer capitalist transformation of German society (Blackbourn, 1984, 153-155).

A better understanding then emerges of just how the French were able to misconstrue the nature of even the political scene in Germany before 1914, by failing to appreciate the real circumstances and role of the German liberal bourgeoisie in the face of a quite new economic and social situation. The German bourgeoisie had been obliged to respond differently to a threat from the Left which, although certainly not absent in France, it had been possible for the French bourgeoisie to neutralize in large measure in the very different circumstances of the Third Republic.

It turns out that even the political dimension of the French case against the Germans was seriously defective, which confers a particular irony on the French view of the need for further democratization in Germany after 1918. Precisely that political stance was echoed by Giraudoux in the constitutional project set up for Siegfried in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, with its counterpart in the easy attribution of French political and critical talents to Siegfried, Forestier's amnesiac *alter ego*. But history has shown just how much more complex and unstable German politics became following the imposition of a more theoretically satisfactory democratic system in the Weimar Republic, which perhaps no amount of constitutional tinkering would have saved. It may be assumed that French political perspectives too were irrelevant in the German case.

CONCLUSION

First impressions of *Siegfried et le Limousin* are likely to be much influenced by the literary virtuosity and style of that ironically eccentric and humorous rendering of Jean Giraudoux' Germany of the inter-war years. In the course of the preceding pages, it has also been necessary to take account of a significant undertow of forces bearing directly on the more serious purpose, of Franco-German rapprochement, which he had himself projected for that work.

To start to explore the historical circumstances surrounding the question of Franco-German relations is to begin to understand the conciliatory impulses which had motivated Giraudoux to address the writing of *Siegfried et le Limousin;* but more than that, when the historical record is placed beside a selection from the "already written" in the literary field, bearing on the Franco-German quarrel, Giraudoux himself begins to emerge as a point of focus or intersection of such an active and problematic complex of French opinion concerning the Germans as to restrict his chances of success from the very outset.

By tracing the effects of French nationalism in several earlier works, Giraudoux' debt to them, in a continuing tradition of French opinion about Germany and the Germans, is the better appreciated, but most particularly so it has seemed with respect to Rivière's effort in the immediate post-war atmosphere of 1919, which may be seen to have both brought into sharper focus and "hollowed out" the content as opposed to the figures of Giraudoux' work. That consideration alone would not however invalidate the ideas which he has elaborated. This study has therefore otherwise questioned the French view of Germany, and the nature of those manifestations of French nationalism which came into view in the literature, using certain perspectives on the historical, literary, and intellectual conditions of the period ushered in by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The approach, in attempting to separate, and give separate weight to, the moral and militarist strands of the French view, and to evaluate the basis for both by introducing relevant historical and cultural perspectives, has largely erased the distinctions set up around them by the French. Moreover, if it has otherwise pointed to real economic and political differences and effects, at best only belatedly recognized by the French, their absence from consideration has only served to emphasize the inadequacy of French writers' and intellectuals' vision of Germany and the Germans.

Little of any substance is therefore left to the French anti-German case in its broad terms, which must raise questions, even leaving economic matters aside, about Giraudoux' own understanding of the issues, and of his own "real" function in the continuing debate, as opposed to that which he might have intended. In particular, how was Giraudoux able to retail anti-German ideas so closely aligned with those of Rivière, and hence unlikely to find favour in the eyes of German readers, whilst ostensibly intent on improving Franco-German relations?

It is in the nature of any dialogue between the parties to such a conflict as the Franco-German one that it is likely to acquire certain characteristics from the simple fact of the confrontational stance assumed by each side. Several branches of knowledge may be brought to bear on the understanding of such a conflict, or the discourses which represent it. Not least among them the are the resources of modern critical theory, which in the present case may be seen to have application in prying open the space for some concluding perspectives on *Siegfried et le Limousin* and Giraudoux' place in that dialogue.

A pointer is already available to suggest the nature of the movements of mind at work. In the most general understanding of the term, the question of ideology was introduced by Barrès in *Les Déracinés*, in essential opposition to the thrust of republican policies bearing on education, thereby suggesting by contradistinction the real ideological nature and effect of republican practice. In this Barrès was pursuing domestic political aims, at least for the time being, as distinct from anti-Germanism. The two matters are closely related, although it has been suggested elsewhere that in the last analysis, since he was less inclined to fight Germans than to bring down the republicans' parliamentary democracy, the nationalist Barrès would not have risked war over Alsace-Lorraine, (Sternhell, 1972, 360-361).

If such was perhaps the case, contrary to the impression given in *Colette Baudoche*, and domestic political leverage was the principal aim of Barrès, and perhaps of other right-wing nationalists, in raising the spectre of Germany, it still remains that for yet others again the German problem did loom large as an external threat. Their fears had of course long been opposed by students of Germany in France, who chose to stress rather the quality of German culture, especially its philosophical thought, as an indication of German merit. The debate in France after 1870 over the "good" versus the "bad" Germany, rested on just that difference of perspective, over which of the cultured or the militarist views of Germany represented the "real" Germany. That debate itself had tended to reflect domestic French political positions of the Left and Right, so that broadly speaking, and especially from the 1890s forward, it had aligned the university and government, although still always alert to Germany's diplomatic manoeuvring, on the side of German culture, against the right-wing nationalists and others who had chosen to emphasize German militarism. It is therefore significant that Rivière should have taken up the matter of German thought again after 1918, but with a negative assessment which was at pains to make German philosophical thought, and German character for that matter, a ground for its alleged militarism. For what came out of

L'Allemand was an impression of a strongly ideological confrontation. Based no doubt on a re-assessment of the implications of German power in relation to a seemingly very different world view, it was also indicative of a turn in republican views of Germany.

To the extent that Giraudoux' *Siegfried et le Limousin* largely echoed Rivière, it raises the possibility that Giraudoux too was serving an ideological purpose. He has in fact presented a deeply ideological work. Having chosen a literary form rich in symbolism, and replete with binary oppositions and contrasts - reflective of a continual comparison of perceptions of the characteristically German with those of the characteristically French - he had also taken on the mark of ideological discourse (Eagleton, 1983, 131-134). Despite the suggestion that he had intended some sense of reciprocal tolerance and understanding, he "does violence to things" instead.

And just as a predilection for binary oppositions, involving hierarchies of domination and subordination, is characteristic of the ideological process, so too is its tendency, or at least its susceptibility, to hierarchical reversals, whether self-induced or the result of critical questioning. An overarching instance of binary opposition was seen in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, in the distinction drawn, in the tracks of Rivière and others before him, between French "civilization" and a mere German "culture", as also in the suggestion of its virtual corollary, opposing the natural to the merely synthetic or factitious. Yet, for this reader at least, a reversal of values also became apparent, in a movement of sympathy for the implicitly subordinated as against the privileged, emerging from the attempt to contrast German energy and movement with a privileged French tranquility and repose. There a purportedly fulfilled and satisfied France, when set against the suggestion of a relatively unsophisticated Germany, still in process of becoming, evoked a reversal of hierarchy, in a perhaps more fundamental and powerful impulse to privilege instead the young, questing, and growing aspects of Germany, over the older, perhaps complacent and moribund character of France.

As a product of the republican educational system himself, and clearly steeped in its values, Giraudoux' presumably uncritical promotion of those values privileged by his hierarchies illustrates another aspect again of the ideological function, specifically that its effects are routinely taken for granted, as a natural order of things, largely transparent to its recipient subjects (Althusser, 1984, 44-51). When Giraudoux exalted French civilization over a mere German culture, as did also so many others, leading naturally enough to an idealized conception of France as a virtually finished creation, he was reflecting a useful republican view of things, which would be at least resistant, if not immune, to suggestions of further change, of any evolution likely to disturb the republican ascendancy. In this respect the republican ideology, ostensibly on behalf of liberal parliamentary democracy and its values, served a primarily domestic political function, on behalf of the status quo in France, both as against conservative reaction on the one hand, and as against further left-wing encroachment on the other. However, whilst effective enough in a relatively closed context, such as the French domestic political system, that ideology would be vulnerable to external standards of comparison, if in the wider international sphere it could be seen only inadequately to meet real material conditions of the world.

It is in precisely that connection that the inadequacy of French intellectuals and writers to meet the new economic realities of Germany assumes ideological significance. It has in more recent times been suggested that every society has its "regime of truth", which sets the terms for what it accepts and makes function as truth, but which at the same time may be seen to depend largely on a complex web of institutionalized inputs of knowledge, whether political, cultural, or economic, these being closely related to effects of power, and therefore also to multiple effects of constraint. A principal effect of such a developed "economy of truth" has been the displacement of the universal intellectual in favour of the specific intellectual peculiar to any one of a multiplicity of scientific, professional, and other specializations (Rabinow, 1984, 67-75). Within certain limits, truth being closely related to power, truth for a given society may then be seen to have a certain contingent character. These limits come into focus in the context of a larger society, such as Europe or even the world today, and in the last analysis must depend on the functionality of that truth so defined. French "truth" before the Great War, vis-à-vis Germany's was in precisely that position. Relying still on the type of the universal intellectual, and for want of an institutional elaboration or professionalization of certain social sciences, its "regime of truth" was inadequate to deal with their German problem, posed in a larger European context. In particular it lacked the essentially economic view which would have made much sense of the German situation, and for that matter of its own. Universalism, in these conditions, could not mean very much. Nonetheless, for want of anything else, French writers and intellectuals in the main could only persevere in their support for it, and for the republican ideology which claimed it as its own.

German philosophical notions, to the extent that they were derived from a Hegelian perspective of eternal dialectical historical progress, and thus suggestive of notions of perpetual revolution, were therefore inherently potentially subversive of the French republican ideology, a point obviously not lost on Rivière in *L'Allemand*. In the normal course of events these notions might not have been expected to make material inroads in France, where their irrational aspects ran counter to the tradition of

Enlightenment rationalism purporting to be a pillar of the republican ideology. In the event, however, of a Germany become manifestly more powerful than France, for demonstrably material reasons, the influence of German thought could be expected to increase, adding an ideological threat to an economic or military one. Third Republican France might then have every reason for concern.

By 1918 the discovery of a very real German military capability, if not necessarily of a peculiarly German militarism, could not escape accompaniment by a clear understanding in France of the economic reality which had underpinned the German war effort. In the conditions of a post-war examination of the relative power and real capacities of France and Germany, it might well have seemed that the prestige and validity of republican ideology and government was at stake. This was sufficient reason for a new republican concern with the threat posed by German thought which could seem, in French eyes at least, given an inherently rational idealist and superstructural political view of the world, to be intimately associated with their material economic progress. That association was certainly made by Rivière, but the French also still linked German thought to the authoritarianism of traditional German elites still seen as irredeemably feudal.

In these circumstances, the establishment of the democratic Weimar Republic might have seemed a central component of any plan for the conversion of the German state to something more closely resembling a French model of society in Germany. It could be expected to limit the power of those traditional authorities charged with responsibility for the war, at the same time that, by promoting liberal parliamentary processes, it would move Germany towards alignment with the broad ideological principles of the governments of the victor nations. For the reasons outlined earlier, based on a different interpretation of the German bourgeoisie's real political situation in pre-war Germany, this view was almost certainly mistaken. German politics simply became more difficult, and dangerously exposed to economic difficulties, which became particularly severe in the late 1920s, when the danger from the Left became more apparent, but also less capable of containment by the democratic system in place.

Implicitly it would seem that the French republican government continued to equate the former Wilhelmine German authorities with the French right-wing nationalists, which is to say that they persisted in seeing the Right as their principal enemy, whether at home or abroad. At the same time they failed to recognize the real presence, the real role and concerns, of their own natural counterparts, the liberal bourgeois elements, within the German political system. These elements had already, in Wilhelmine Germany, been very much concerned instead with containment of a Marxist-inspired Left which was much stronger than anything experienced in France. Thus a French preoccupation with

German thought, already recognizable in Barrès' approach, may have led the French republicans to take that as the common possession of an authoritarian Right in both countries, and as it were to "misrecognize" their own liberal bourgeois counterparts in Germany, as well as the much more revolutionary danger emanating from the German Left. That error may also be indicative of the French republicans' continuing sense of their own distinctiveness as the revolutionary element of European political life, but of a sense which was also already at odds with the reality of its much diluted principles as practised at home.

At this point a not inconsiderable irony may be discerned in the fact that it was already the political theories emanating from the German Left, especially the Marxist ones which had stood the Hegelian dialectic on its head, that might now have been recognized for their revolutionary potential to undermine the political and ideological dominance of the inheritors of the French Revolution. As elsewhere in Europe, the implications of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and of its German Marxist elements of social and political theory, should not have been lost on the French. Yet in these respects the French republicans, despite their great instinct for self-preservation on the domestic political scene, apparently could not recognize the real nature and power of the threat that their liberal counterparts in Germany had been facing, and continued to face, in the very different circumstances of German society.

Such was the power of their own ideology, with its insistence on the presence of an essentially feudal German militarism, and therefore of a failed bourgeois or liberal democratic revolution in Germany, as the fundamental German problem.

To the extent that this thesis has contrived to undermine the perceived distinctions or differences between France and Germany, promoted largely by the operation of an obdurate French nationalism, and ultimately not solely by that of the right-wing, it moves in the direction of suggesting instead a certain commonality or interdependence of Western European cultural, social, and political experience, which is not to be denied even by France's own, and very distinctive, particularism. That would tend to suggest the coalescence of seemingly national experiences into a common European ground. In *Siegfried et le Limousin*, to the contrary, Giraudoux may be seen to have collaborated, more or less unconsciously but certainly uncritically, in keeping open a system of merely "synthetic" differences, giving rise to a space for the expression of essentially ideological preferences and distinctions. These no longer reflected the reality of the French and German situations in Europe, and could only collapse under a deeper examination and questioning of their apparent origins and values, against that larger surround examined here. As an ideological text, *Siegfried et le Limousin* may well have evoked recognition, entertainment, and perhaps comfort for a French reader, but for a German, as for others, the essential "violence done to things" would have been only too readily apparent, despite the professions of goodwill.

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