

HUGES REBELL, A ZARATHUSTRAN DISCIPLE, A ZARATHUSTRAN WRITER

by

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Abstract

Hugues Rebell, A Zarathustran Disciple, A Zarathustran Writer

by

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This dissertation seeks to give Hugues Rebell, born Georges Grassal (1867-1905), the attention he deserves but has not yet received from the Anglophone world as a fin-de-siècle essayist and novelist whose writings are as distinct within the French literature of the period as they are distinctive as some of the first to be inspired by the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. A descendent of aristocrats and *grands bourgeois* in Nantes, Rebell took up in writing the rebellion that his penname signified, a rebellion against the socio-political systems that his family dreaded and that the Third Republic represented, or, those that originated in the French Revolution: egalitarianism, and its expression in democracy, socialism, and Christianity.

I establish early that given Rebell's privileged reception of Nietzsche over his French contemporaries, he was able to form an original understanding and interpretation of Nietzschean thought. In so doing, Rebell, as I contend, does not borrow Nietzsche's ideas wholesale but rather uses them to authenticate his own aesthetic in two main areas: in politics and in fiction, each of which is the focus of Parts I and II, respectively.

Part I shows how Rebell's political thinking both develops and deviates from Nietzsche's elitism, and also distinguishes itself from that of his extreme-Right French cohorts. Part II shifts the focus from Rebell's nonfictional political writing to one of his most neglected novels, *La Femme qui a connu L'Empereur* that I argue should be recognized in a special place within the history of the French novel and as an example of great Nietzschean fiction, as it can be seen to exhibit amazing synchronicity with the theory of perspective considered at the levels of character development, narrative structure, and French History rewritten as a story. In both Parts, I strive to make salient my contention that, like Nietzsche's writings, Rebell's pose irresolvable inconsistencies that render any attempt reduce the author to a one-sided position—whether political or other— impossible. I connect Part II to Part I primarily by suggesting that there are at least two Rebells: the perspectival novelist whose multi-voiced narrative opposes the fascist political thinker.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Professors Nickolas Pappas and Steven Cahn. Meeting each of you proved to be destiny-defining moments in my life, for the fulfillment of my dream would not have been possible without you.

If ever I created my own reality, it was when I discovered one spring semester that a Professor Pappas was offering the very seminar on Nietzsche that I had been hoping to find since I was an undergraduate. Despite some apprehension about taking a graduate course outside of my discipline, I remember that after I heard your first lecture, I sensed more than your ability to teach: I sensed in you the wisdom, kindness, and compassion that I could not know at the time would be the beginning of one of the most important friendships of my life. I could not know that you would eventually deign to be a member of my dissertation committee and that you would never stop believing in me even when I stopped believing in my goal to obtain the doctorate.

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Both of you know better than anyone that the journey of my candidacy turned out to be one that compelled me to live the philosophy that guided my research and filled me with awe, the philosophy of Nietzsche. You had the generosity of spirit to know me in my darkest hours, to accompany me when I felt the greatest abandonment, to lift me into new heights, Zarathustran heights, when I no longer had the will to do more climbing. Now that I’ve reached the summit, I recognize that it is only one of the first in my

greatest self-overcomings. I am at peace to look down while continuing to strive above:
thanks to you, I have *amor fati*.

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I also thank my good fortune for having been able to acquire Professor Eve Sourian as one of my readers before her retirement. Prior to her appointment to my committee, she long mentored me through school and teaching. *C'est vous qui m'avez initiée au monde universitaire, c'est vous qui m'avez offert les outils et les armes pour braver quoi que ce soit dans ce champ de bataille académique, c'est vous qui m'avez instruite aussi bien que Madame de Beauséant !*

I finally thank my first and last educators, my parents, whose unconditional love enabled me to have the ambition to enter graduate school, the courage to leave, and the faith to return.

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Introduction

Hugues Rebell, born Georges Grassal (1867-1905), was a fin-de-siècle writer whose diversity is manifest in his poetry, novels, philosophical essays, and articles in literary reviews. In this study, I will seek to excavate Rebell from the French literary mines in which he has been buried for most scholars.¹ He is little known for his importance to his era as a great writer, in particular a novelist, a socio-political thinker, and one of the first French inspired by the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche in both his fiction and non-fiction.

According to Rebell's principal biographer and scholar, Thierry Rodange in *Le Diable entre au confessionnal: biographie de Hugues Rebell* (2002), Auguste Grassal and Augustine Maréchal de la Veillarderie, the parents of Rebell, each from a distinguished family in Nantes, Auguste being a descendent of both the *grande bourgeoisie* and the *ancienne noblesse* while Augustine being a pure aristocrat,² were able to provide their fourth and last child, Georges Joseph, with the means and the opportunities to cultivate what would become his lifelong passion for foreign languages, including the Classics, English, Italian, German, and a devoted career in literature.³ He baptized himself "Hugues Rebell" upon his literary début when he published his first poetry collection, *Les Jeudis saints*, in 1886. As Rodange's biography explains the origins of this penname, the young writer associated "Hugues" with some Germanic heroes he admired and "il signera ses ouvrages du pseudonyme de rebelle pour bien montrer son opposition aux systèmes politiques régissant la France"⁴ while leaving out the final "e" in the French in order to have a more Anglo-Saxon look to his name, in honor of his Anglomania (Rodange 41). The political systems to which Rodange is referring as the target of Rebell's rebellion

were those that the Third Republic represented and that stemmed from the French Revolution: egalitarianism and its expression in democracy, socialism, and Christianity.

Although too young to have experienced the political transformations surrounding the birth of the Third Republic, Rebell was deeply beset by French history, and his *oeuvre*, written mostly within the last decade of the 19th Century when fin-de-siècle France was at its peak, attests to his investment and contribution to his era and the events that led up to it. As Eugen Weber's *France, Fin de Siècle* (1986) explains the general mood of the French at the onset of this period (after 1870), "The notion of the end... goes with thoughts of diminution and decay... defeat and occupation in 1814-15 [the fall of the First Empire with the Battle of Waterloo], defeat and occupation again after 1870 [the French capitulation to the Prussians with the Treaty of Frankfurt], suggested, then confirmed, that France's conquering days were drawing to a close, to be replaced by the new, uneasy experience of decline" (11). Thus, after the fall of the Second Empire at the close of the war of 1870, and the loss of French honor with the surrender of Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia, the Third Republic, proclaimed on September 4, struggled to prevail from its very beginning. With the short-lived and violent civil war that ensued with the installation of the Paris Commune (March-May 1870), the Third Republic settled in a climate of depression, disappointment, and dread that would linger through the turn of the century.

From the time that he moved to Paris in 1891 to embark on his literary career, Rebell used his pen to fight against the socio-politics that dominated 19th-century France while fighting for many pre-revolutionary institutions and values, such as aristocratism and monarchism. As Ali Nematollahy aptly characterizes Rebell, the extreme-Rightist in

the half a chapter that he devotes to him in his dissertation entitled *Anarchism and Literature in France (1870-1900)* (2001), he is an “anarchiste de droite,” which entails “an individual revolt in the name of aristocratism and the rejection of all constituted forms of authority” (225).

But Rebell’s literary fervor was not merely motivated by the politics of his society; it was just as strongly inspired by fin-de-siècle aesthetics, which itself stirred significant transformations. The main one of these, known as “decadence,” grew naturally out of the mood of decline and dissatisfaction. Weber thus describes this movement in literature spawned by Joris-Karl Huysmans’s novel *A Rebours* (1884): “The disgust with humanity, already striking in the writings of the Naturalists, erupts among the aesthetes of the fin de siècle” (Weber 148). For the decadent writers who eclipsed the Naturalists, Weber explains, “description or denunciation of decline” is on “one side of the coin” while on the other is a “glorification of things or attitudes identified with decadence,” such as expressions of human triumph over nature and its constricting laws or the affirmation of enervating artificialities (such as of sensuous refinements) (Weber 14).⁵ Rebell’s novels, some of which are no doubt influenced by decadence, tend primarily to show signs of the historical reaction against it. In *Contre la décadence* (1987), Pierre Citti examines the transformation from the decadent artist’s depressed turning inward to escape the world of mediocracy to the anti-decadent’s will to action to change that world: “Au point de vue de la décadence que symbolisait la tour d’ivoire ‘des âmes fières qui se gardent à l’écart une vision singulière du monde’ ... succède celui de l’accomplissement, celui des moi à venir qui recueilleront l’héritage du moi actuel; celui de la destination du moi actuel” (93). Citti quotes the principal writer of anti-

decadence, Maurice Barrès, in his novel, *Sous l'oeil des Barbares* (1888). Rebell, a personal friend of Barrès, who with his cult of self-affirmative energy opposed the enervating spirit of decadence and sought a national hero capable of reviving French patriotism, can be paired as much with Barrès in literature as with Huysmans and other decadent writers. Further, Rebell also identified himself with Charles Moréas's *Ecole Romane* whose manifesto (appearing in *Le Figaro* in September 1886) expressed a reaction to symbolism, replacing it with a return to classicism and a preservation of the French language analogous to the ideals drawn by the 16th-century *Pléiade*. Rebell was thus receptive to a medley of influences in French literature and, as I hope to show, created his own aesthetic.

Yet what I will argue was the most important source of inspiration for Rebell was not within French literature at all; it was the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. His interest, understanding, and use of the German's thought in his writing singularly distinguish him from other French writers, and also form the root of his literary ideals. Despite Rebell's eclecticism and the diverse literary movements he occasionally espoused, he never wavered in his identification of Nietzsche as a "friend,"⁶ an intellectual ally who shared his discontent with present society and hope for the future. Since Rebell's originality can be considered most evident in his borrowings from Nietzsche to cultivate his own ideas, I focus an assessment of his politics and literary art in the much ignored context of their relationship to Nietzschean philosophy.

As I will show, many of the same works in which Rebell expressed his political views also merit attention for their marked influence from Nietzsche's political philosophy. Rebell wrote articles, which I will introduce and analyze in Part I, in several

petites revues, including the politically conservative *L'Ermitage*, the more literary-based *La Plume*, the eclectic *Mercure de France*, which was particularly interested in foreign literatures, the monarchist *La Cocarde* and *Le Soleil*, and finally, the extreme-right journal, *L'Action française*. His major pamphlet, *Union des trois aristocraties* (1894) develops the most his political philosophy, while his poetry collection, *Chants de la pluie et du soleil* also significantly reflects on his socio-political vision. His *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* (1898), the central focus of Part II, and *Le Diable est à table* (1905) are his only novels that directly treat aspects of 19th-century French politics and society. These particular works of fiction also interestingly treat aspects of Nietzschean thought both about and beyond politics, including perspectivism (in the earlier novel) and Christianity (in the later one).

1. Rebell's Discovery of Nietzsche

Rebell's discovery of Nietzsche, which came at a time when few French were familiar with the philosopher's name, and at the same moment in which he embarked on his first literary project, proves to have a fundamental and lasting inspiration on his political and literary writings. According to Rodange's *Le Diable entre au confessionnal*, it was originally through a friend of the Grassals', Etienne Destranges, a local journalist and avant-garde music critic who had been responsible for introducing Richard Wagner to the Nantais, that Rebell discovered both Wagner and Nietzsche (Rodange 37). Although Rebell did not start to accompany his friend on his trips to Germany until 1891, Destranges had already fostered in him and in some of his peers an enthusiasm for the philosopher's ideas as early as the mid-1880s, when they decided to start a poetry club, later circulating amongst themselves a publication which they called *Le Gai Savoir*, in

homage to Nietzsche's work that first appeared in Germany in 1887 (Rodange 38). If this biographical account of Rebell's childhood poetry club is indeed correct, with the group forming in 1885 and their periodical being a tribute to Nietzsche's 1887 work, it is important evidence that Rebell's extraordinary early encounters with a Germanophile and the German language enabled him to learn about Nietzsche (and Wagner) almost as soon as they produced their works, and therefore, much before French reception of Nietzsche, which did not officially begin in Paris until 1891, could have possibly tainted his own perspective on the man and his thought.

Yet Rebell did not read Nietzsche's texts until 1892, as he himself suggests in the two major works in which he addresses his discovery of Nietzsche, the French reception of him, and his personal interpretation of his ideas. In the first, "Sur une traduction collective des oeuvres de Nietzsche," published in January 1895 in the *Mercure de France*, written in response to the journal's announcement in its previous issue of its intention to publish the complete works of Nietzsche in a collective translation, Rebell recalls,

Pour ma part, je m'occupe depuis trois ans d'une traduction de Nietzsche.
 Ma rencontre avec ce grand esprit marque une époque de mon existence.
 Dans cette douloureuse solitude que le monde moderne ménage à ceux qui ont le culte de la pensée, j'ai trouvé Nietzsche, comme au milieu d'une foule d'indifférents et d'étrangers on rencontrerait l'ami longtemps cherché. ("Sur une traduction" 101)

Referring to the two passages he translated from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which I will introduce later, Rebell suggests that he was reading Nietzsche as early as 1892, the same

moment when he encountered him as a kindred spirit who belonged to an intellectual elite in opposition against the democratic mass culture. In his second work addressing Nietzsche in France, an essay entitled “Le Nietzsche (1898-?)” published in 1902 in *La Plume*, he again makes an indirect allusion to 1892 as the probable year he discovered the philosopher’s texts: “Je me souviens de la joie que j’éprouvai il y a une dizaine d’années en ouvrant mon premier livre de Nietzsche” (915). Further, according to Rodange’s biography, Rebell quite possibly finished reading all of Nietzsche’s texts by October 1893, when he returned to Paris from a summer trip to Munich where he went to the library three times a week to read his works (Rodange 140). By that time, Nietzsche had already published all of the books that he intended for publication, including the major ones that I will argue served as the original sources of inspiration for Rebell’s own writing, which did not begin until 1894. The two exceptions to Nietzsche’s works published by 1892 are the posthumous editions of *Ecco Homo* (1908) and *The Will To Power*, first unreliably compiled by Nietzsche’s sister in 1901. While Rebell could not possibly have had access to these works, I will nevertheless make reference to passages from them where it is evident both that they can be considered epitomes of Nietzsche’s thought, and, that Rebell’s shares an amazing propinquity with that thought.

2. Rebell’s Unique Position in Fin-de-Siècle Literature and in the Nietzsche Reception in Paris

But before one can decipher how Rebell read, interpreted, and used Nietzsche’s philosophy in his writings, one must first understand that the position Rebell represented in French literature is as distinctive as his reception of Nietzsche within the wider frame of the Parisian reception of him. I study the period from Nietzsche’s introduction in Paris

in 1891, the year in which Rebell moved to Paris and T  odor de Wyzewa produced the first article about Nietzsche, through 1902 when Rebell wrote his second and last work addressing Nietzsche’s continued influence in France.⁷ While, as I already suggested, Rebell admired the literary decadence, and some of his novels can be seen to borrow elements from this movement, he can also be associated with the literary avant-garde that praised Nietzsche as a champion of their revolt against decadence. Alessia Corselli’s dissertation, *Hugues Rebell: romancier d  cadent* (2000), is the primary study which makes the case for Rebell as a decadent writer. In it, Corselli classifies what she contends are typical decadent themes—such as a pessimism marked by extremes in corruption, violence and eroticism—which dominate four of Rebell’s novels.⁸ Yet despite Rebell’s reputed fascination with the template of the decadent novel, Huysmans’s *A rebours*, and his adoption of certain decadent themes in his own works, Thierry Rodange believes that Rebell’s life was far more decadent than his writings: “le Nantais pr  sente ind  niablement, dans sa vie, de nombreux signes r  v  lateurs d’un certain esprit d  cadent, mais... son oeuvre est l   pour attester qu’il en va tout autrement,” pointing out that Rebell’s works express a brimming optimism, such as his desire for a return to (and reconciliation with) nature in *Chants de la pluie et du soleil* and his eroticism, which seeks to celebrate thriving human life (TR diss 750). While I will argue along with Nematollahy⁹ that Rebell’s *oeuvre* is unclassifiable, I also second Rodange’s contention that it sorely lacks decadent influence (such as a pessimistic denial of life) in order to propose that his *oeuvre* largely cultivates an anti-decadence. As one of the main objectives of this study, a more complete reading of Rebell is necessary, one that will

take into account his multiple tendencies without either excluding them or limiting the author to any one of them.

That Rebell was indeed, as the title of Rodange's dissertation¹⁰ indicates, in the margins of the French decadent movement made him an extraordinary appreciator of both Wagner, whose music and writings, according to Christopher E. Forth's *Zarathustra in Paris: The Nietzsche Vogue in France (1891-1918)* (2001) made him a "cult figure" in Paris among the decadents in the 1880's and 1890's, and Nietzsche (21). The latter was associated at the time of his reception among Parisian intellectuals in 1891 (which was also the apogee of the French decadence) as the leader of the younger generation of anti-decadent writers (Forth 22). The reason for this association with Nietzsche was that he was first known in Paris by *The Case of Wagner* in which he expressed his ultimate break with Wagner's decadent worldview, translated into French in 1892 by Daniel Halévy and Richard Dreyfus, both writers of the avant-garde review, *Le Banquet*, seeking to overthrow decadence. As Forth explains, "Wagner represented both the 'decadent' type and by implication the entire symbolist worldview, which had renounced reality for mystical inner states in both its aesthetic content and its social stance," whereas Nietzsche, on the contrary, "offered an alternative to decadence, a philosophy of vitality and action rather than impotence and escape" (Forth 26).

This dichotomy coincides with the popular association of Maurice Barrès, who started his career as one of the most important members of the literary avant-garde, as a French Nietzsche. According to Forth, Barrès's novels, especially the *Culte du moi* trilogy (completed in 1897), were considered to express a strong similarity to Nietzsche's philosophy (Forth 63). His cult of the self, specifically, which he weighed against the

vulgar and mediocre, or the majority of humankind, and which only a great individual, like Napoleon whom he famously termed a *professeur d'énergie* could incarnate, resembled Nietzsche's Superman whose extraordinary will to power (in the manner of Barrèsian energy) could breathe new meaning into humanity. This affinity of Barrès's vision of a future leader with Nietzsche's, is one of the same that Rebell has with the German philosopher, and the Barrèsian *Übermensch* will find many avatars in the Rebellian heroes, (among whom is Napoleon III), all of whom I study in Parts I and II.¹¹

Yet even though Rebell can be grouped with the anti-decadent writers who championed Nietzsche's call for self-affirmative power and the triumph of a select few over the many, his view of Nietzsche, unlike the ones fostered by the majority of his Parisian contemporaries, cannot be polarized. According to Laure Verbaere's dissertation, *Le Nietzscheïsme français: approche historique de la réception de Nietzsche en France de 1872 à 1972* (1999), Parisian intellectuals tended to break themselves down into two mutually exclusive groups: the Wagnerians and the anti-Wagnerians, with the latter supporting Nietzsche's philosophy as beneficial to a vigorous and robust humanity and the former, most famously Théodor de Wyzewa and Edouard Schuré,¹² having a simple mission to destroy the influence of the enemy of their artistic master, portraying him as a destructor and nihilist (225).

But Rebell was exceptional in that he remained aloof from the quarrel between Wagnerians and anti-Wagnerians, most probably because he was able to discover Wagner and Nietzsche prior to their reception in Paris and also because he found himself able to appreciate both the decadent and anti-decadent modes of art. Thus, Rebell is able to write in "Littérature d'actualité," published in January 1893 in *L'Ermitage*, "quelle que

soit mon admiration pour le philosophe allemand, je ne puis admettre ses critiques,” in regard, for instance to *Parsifal* (67) and continues to explain his reason for disagreeing with Nietzsche’s criticism of Wagner:

Sans doute le philosophe s’irrite de ce que le poète semble avoir ajouté aux traditions, du pessimisme et du christianisme apparent de leur interprète, mais comment ne s’est-il pas aperçu que le christianisme, dans l’oeuvre de Wagner, n’était qu’un décor? Comment surtout n’a-t-il pas remarqué qu’en dépit de son culte pour Schopenhauer, l’auteur de la tétralogie est l’un des rares artistes de ce temps qui possède la santé de l’esprit? (68)

Instead of either bashing decadence in favor of Nietzsche’s alternative of a vigorous, healthy life or of bashing Nietzsche in favor of Wagner’s mysticism and horror of materiality, Rebell incredibly views a Nietzschean optimism for life in Wagner in spite of Nietzsche. This example of Rebell’s originality in his analysis of Wagner is indicative of the original stance that he continually takes in his own writing in relation to his literary contemporaries and in his reading and interpretation of Nietzsche.

Rebell indeed often manifests his originality in his resistance to any type of consistent classification—political, literary, or Nietzschean. For instance, I will later show in Part I that Rebell also remained aloof from perhaps the most important socio-political quarrel of the 19th Century, the Dreyfus Affair, his writings indicating sympathy for both his anti-Semitic friends and for Nietzsche’s defense of the Jews. Further, I will argue that it is precisely Rebell’s knack for being able to switch between opposing perspectives while evaluating each of them that makes him amenable to Nietzschean

perspectivism. Such an understanding of Rebell's refusal of categories will ultimately help to undo any simplistic reading of him while at the same time, bring him on par with his philosopher friend, who similarly expressed his originality.

3. Rebell's Critique of French Translations and Interpretations of Nietzsche

Rebell also distinguishes himself within the history of French translation of Nietzsche. Although himself a minor translator of the philosopher, having published only two passages from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *L'Ermitage* in 1893 and in 1894,¹³ Rebell deserves credit for being one the first to translate him into French. He was also a very important critic of Nietzsche translations and of the vulgarization of his thought in Paris, which would both steadily develop in the last decade of the 19th Century.¹⁴

While Rebell was in favor of a French translation of the complete works of Nietzsche, enthusiastic to introduce his philosophy to France, he was opposed, firstly, to the manner in which Henri Albert, who had recently signed a contract making him the personal holder of the copyrights on Nietzsche's translations into French,¹⁵ was attempting to organize such a project:

J'applaudis... très vivement à tout projet de faire connaître aux nobles esprits la philosophie de Nietzsche, mais je retire mon approbation dès que l'on sollicite pour une œuvre pareille des collaborateurs de bonne volonté.... Engager ainsi le premier venu à traduire un écrivain de la valeur de Nietzsche, c'est faire descendre l'œuvre intellectuelle au rang des tâches vulgaires. ("Sur une traduction" 99)

According to Christopher Forth, Rebell was specifically aiming his attack in this passage at Albert, who was at that time "a virtual unknown to the literary world," not having

published any books yet, and at those whom Albert had recently commissioned, including George Art, Louis Weiscopef and Alexandre M. Bracke-Desrousseaux, who had done very little either of writing or of translation (Forth 38). Thus, Rebell's first objection to Albert's collective translation is founded on the little faith he had in inexperienced translators to tackle the challenge of accurately and fairly portraying the ideas of a great thinker whose intended audience, moreover, was an intellectual elite, or "noble spirits."

Rebell was opposed to Albert's project secondly because of the dangers that he feared would occur if the ideas of an elitist philosopher were first translated by the very democratic thinkers he opposed. Known for their political leftism, Albert and company could easily distort his political philosophy and then force the public to become subject to those distortions. As Rebell explains in regard to Nietzsche,

Ce génie qui, durant toute sa vie intellectuelle, en dépit de ses transformations, a eu le culte de l'homme supérieur, la haine de la démocratie et de la populace, ses traducteurs, en leur prose maladroite et lourde, vont le transformer, lui, le plus farouche autoritaire qui se soit jamais rencontré, en un bon petit socialiste admirateur de Marx ou en un anarchiste à la Kropotkine. ("Sur une traduction" 101)

According to Forth, Rebell was a significant exception to the first readers of Nietzsche, who were members of the leftist literary avant-garde (Forth 33). Rebell's reading belongs to the shift in the reception of Nietzsche from the Left to the Right, or with those neoroyalists who believed that his philosophy advocated aristocratism with Zarathustra's cult of higher men as the cultural if not political caste of leaders in a new hierarchy.

4. Rebell and the French Rightists' Readings of Nietzsche

Yet even within Rebell's Rightist interpretation of Nietzsche, the full implications of which will be the focus of Part I as well as the validity of such a reading, he distinguishes himself from both the philosopher and other conservative Nietzsche enthusiasts.

A few writers with whom Rebell shared a literary and/or political propinquity had views of Nietzsche that can be compared and contrasted to his. They include Rebell's conservative co-collaborators in the *petites revues*: Henri Mazel, the director of *L'Ermitage*, a friend who had worked on his own translations of and essays about Nietzsche since 1893; the decadent novelist Remy de Gourmont, another personal friend whose literary aesthetic and socio-political vision has much in common with Rebell's,¹⁶ and Jacques Morland, a writer he knew while working for the *Mercure de France*. According to Forth, "in an effort to depict themselves as an artistic aristocracy at war with the vulgar literary market, these writers [Mazel, Gourmont and Morland] gladly embraced Nietzsche's notion of the Superman as well as the idea of the superior caste of masters continually threatened by the rule of the uncultured and resentful slaves [i.e. the common people]" (Forth 36).

Like Rebell, these writers deplored the literary industry that democracy had created and saw Nietzsche as a member of an intellectual elite and his philosophy as one advocating a cultural aristocracy. Further, like his political cohorts, as I will show, Rebell has a tendency throughout his writings to separate Nietzsche's master morality from slave morality, in favor of the former. Part I will address the way in which Rebell, perhaps in a similar fashion to Mazel, Gourmont and Morland, attempts to politicize

Nietzsche in order to shape him into an advocate of his rightism. Yet unlike them, Rebell was opposed to Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermenschen*, as he explicitly indicates as part of his criticism of the philosopher in "Le Nietzsche (1898-?):" "Que [vaut] aussi sa théorie du Surhomme?" (915).

5. Rebell, A Zarathustran Disciple of Nietzsche

But Rebell does not only prove himself to be an extraordinary figure in his unclassifiable position vis-à-vis the literary and intellectual movements of fin-de-siècle France, including the Parisian reception of Nietzsche. By explicitly dissociating himself from Nietzsche's disciples, whom he acknowledges in "Le Nietzsche (1898-?)," that the philosopher did not want and moreover, who *prevent* an appreciation of him, Rebell also proves himself in reality to be the ideal disciple whom Zarathustra had wished for: one who could be loyal to him only by straying away from him and even betraying him. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the philosopher commands his would-be followers to leave him alone, to even "resist Zarathustra" and to go their own way:

You say you believe in Zarathustra? But what matters Zarathustra? You are my believers—but what matter all you believers? You had not yet sought yourselves: and you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore all faith amounts to so little. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you. (Z I: "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" 3)

Implicit in this passage is a refusal of traditional discipleship (i.e. Christ's followers whom Nietzsche suggests risk losing themselves [or sacrificing their authenticity] in favor of adopting their master's ways wholesale.) But in stark distinction, the followers of

Zarathustra, as he would have them, must foremost preserve themselves in the midst of their admiration for their master. Hence, by their denial of him, Zarathustra's disciples do not become molded by their master, but conversely, mold his thought in order to reaffirm their own.

Rebell demonstrates a keen understanding of this passage in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* when he writes: “Il y a dix, vingt, trente esprits par le monde que Nietzsche peut rendre heureux, qui trouveront en lui un encouragement *pour leurs propres pensées*, et une consolation de leur solitude spirituelle. Ce ne sont pas des Nietzscheistes. Nietzsche a dit lui-même qu’il ne voulait pas de disciple” (“Le Nietzscheisme” 916; my emphasis). By calling the cult worship of Nietzsche “le nietzschisme,” rather than “le nietzschéisme,” which Verbaere uses throughout her dissertation as the fin-de-siècle noun referring to the general enthusiasm for Nietzsche, Rebell implicitly separates legitimate appreciation of the philosopher from what Luc Tirenne’s “Hugues Rebell: traducteur et interprète de Nietzsche” (1975) aptly calls the target of Rebell’s criticism, “l’engouement populaire pour Nietzsche” that came at the turn of the century (61). In “Le Nietzscheisme (1898-?),” Rebell reveals the essential meaning of Nietzsche/Zarathustra’s message to his audience: that his philosophy aims to encourage not mere influence but inspiration, so that his readers do not simply model it and reproduce it, but rather use it to better create, develop and express their own thought, distinctive from his.

That Rebell denies himself to be a disciple or believer of Nietzsche is precisely what enables him to be extraordinarily receptive to Nietzsche’s inspiration in his own thought. For instance, he describes his discovery of the German philosopher as follows: “Ce fut tout de suite pour moi un ami,—un maître? non—car Nietzsche a des maîtres

qu'il est facile de connaître et qu'on peut lui préférer, depuis Aristippe jusqu'à Voltaire, depuis Machiavel jusqu'à Hobbes et La Rochefoucauld" ("Le Nietzscheisme" 915). By identifying Nietzsche as his friend rather than as his master, he immediately associates himself as a peer rather than as a follower of the philosopher, pretending to have already followed those whom he presumes to be Nietzsche's masters of thought. He therefore suggests that Nietzsche's ideas helped to promote the development of his own and not that they served as the source and model of them.¹⁷ As a disciple of Zarathustra, Rebell appropriates the Nietzschean thought he admires to authenticate his originality.

Although Tirenne is justified in his evaluation of Rebell's Nietzschean reading that he "n'a pas vu la nouveauté, l'originalité de la pensée nietzschéenne" but saw the philosopher as "un moraliste, héritier des Cyniques et des moralistes français," I believe that Rebell possibly attempts to discredit Nietzsche's originality in an effort to downplay the profound effect that his ideas had on his own thinking (Tirenne 61). Accordingly, then, Rebell would succeed in asserting his intellectual independence from Nietzsche as well as his loyalty to the French tradition in contradistinction to the Germano-Slavic, despite and in spite of his deep inspiration from him. Henri Mazel's testimony of his friend's life in "Hugues Rebell dans *Mercur de France*" (1905) supports my theory, suggesting that Rebell's early encounter with Nietzsche had a fundamental impact on his thought:

Rebell s'était épris de [Nietzsche] bien avant que la mode s'en mêlât. En 1892, alors qu'on ne parlait encore du grand penseur allemand qu'à propos de Wagner, il avait salué en lui le sauveur, 'l'homme vraiment nécessaire à notre société sans direction et sans principe.' La première traduction de

fragments un peu considérable d' *Ainsi parla Zarathoustra* fut son oeuvre dans l' *Ermitage* d'avril 1893, et son nom mériterait d'être conservé comme celui d'un des combattants de la toute première heure... Toute la philosophie de Nietzsche, amour de la force, mépris de la débilité, de l'humilité... Hugues Rebell la portait déjà au plus profond de son âme.

(485)

If Mazel's judgment is accurate, which it is the most essential task of this book to prove beyond doubt, Rebell may very well admit the importance that Nietzsche's thought had on his own by his very denial of it. In doing so, Rebell, as Zarathustra hoped his disciples would do, was able to find himself before returning to him (or before acknowledging his appreciation of him). Rebell therefore appears to embrace Zarathustra/Nietzsche the most when he diverges from, questions, and criticizes him.¹⁸ Implicit in this ability to weigh and to evaluate Nietzsche is the task of the multiple-perspectivist which I will show in Part II Rebell extraordinarily undertakes in one of his novels.

6. Rebell, a Zarathustran-type of Writer

If Rebell can be classed as an ideal disciple of Zarathustra, I posit the corollary that he succeeds in being a "Zarathustran writer," or one who is able to use, interpret and borrow, whether the ideas of Nietzsche or of any other type of source (such as a literary movement like decadence), in order to reevaluate them and recreate from them in his writings, thereby founding his artistic originality. As a Zarathustran writer, Rebell particularly appreciates Nietzsche/Zarathustra as an artist, as a creator of values¹⁹ when he acknowledges that, "Les hommes de la race de Nietzsche sont surtout des artistes"

(“Le Nietzsche” 916). Not surprisingly, then, Rebell allows himself his own selective reading of Nietzsche: “Mais il faut faire avec Nietzsche comme le seigneur Pocourante faisait avec les anciens, n’admirer que ce qui est vraiment admirable, ne prendre que ce qui est à votre usage” (“Le Nietzsche” 916). This study takes into account two main levels within Rebell’s reading of Nietzsche that are implied in this passage. While Rebell may often have a partial and incomplete appreciation of the German’s philosophy, as he here seems to allow himself the liberty to have, he also uses or borrows what he admires in order to suit his own interests and/or purposes. But in so doing, he offers a new perspective on the German philosopher.

In the body of this study, I examine how two main aspects of Nietzschean thought inspire Rebell in his writings, prompting him to express his originality from Nietzsche as well as within the French fin-de-siècle culture: politics and perspectivism. Part I, as I have already suggested, focuses on Rebell’s political reading of Nietzsche, mainly in his non-fiction. The objective of such a study is to gain a better appreciation of what Rebell’s personal politics were, how they both develop and deviate from Nietzschean elitism, and how they enabled Rebell to establish a unique socio-political vision from his French political foes and allies alike. Although in the first part I also analyze some of Rebell’s fictional works, such as his last novel and one of his poetry collections, I do so only in the context of the political philosophy they express and its possible relationship to Nietzsche’s. I shift focus to Rebell’s literary aesthetics in Part II where I examine one of his major novels, *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*. In this work, I establish how Nietzsche’s philosophy of perspectivism is a most useful approach to analyze the development of the Rebellian characters and narrative structure, which in turn, attest to

Rebell's creative originality within the tradition of the French novel. I choose to devote a full part to the study of this particular novel partly because it has been so little acknowledged, and partly because when it has, it has not been granted its distinctive place among French novels.²⁰ I will finally be able to esteem the original contribution that Rebell made to the French literature of his era.

With few exceptions as I have already noted, scholars have indicated little if any awareness of Rebell and/ or of the important impact that Nietzsche's thinking had in his works, especially in his fiction.²¹ While Laure Verbaere and Christopher Forth have shed light on Rebell's place within the Parisian reception of Nietzsche in the 1890's, both of them ignore the bulk of Rebell's writings outside of those that address Nietzsche's impact on the French culture, which rarely, if ever, make allusion to the philosopher but which often highlight his thought. Yet even though most Rebell scholars, including his primary specialist Thierry Rodange in his near 1000-page dissertation (the first ever devoted entirely to Rebell's life and works) and some minor contributors, such as Luc Tirenne or Michel Leroy in "Hugues Rebell: poète nietzschéen" (1974), and still others I will discuss all acknowledge Nietzschean thought in Rebell's writing, they concentrate mainly on his non-fiction and on his poetry collection, *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, which Rodange claims is the first of his works inspired by Nietzsche (TR diss 637). Yet none of these scholars so far mentioned draw any connection between Rebell's novels and Nietzschean philosophy. Rodange claims in fact that, "Si nous ne tenons pas compte de son oeuvre romanesque, la presque totalité des ouvrages restants sera marquée par l'empreinte de Nietzsche" (TR diss 647). But in this dissertation, which, to my current knowledge is the first in the Anglophone world devoted entirely to Hugues Rebell, I intend to explore,

beyond the scope of past studies, the very critical relationship that Rebell's writings, including two of his novels, shares with the ideas of Nietzsche. For this mission, I have undertaken research in Rebell's native Nantes, both at the public library, where I was able to procure copies of original manuscripts and at the University library, where I reviewed critical works, including Verbaere's dissertation.

Notes

¹ The few scholars who have attributed importance to Rebell will soon be introduced as their studies become relevant.

² Rebell's paternal grandparents were Augustin Grassal, a wealthy landowner and Thérèse Fleury de Quiry who came from an aristocratic family in Nantes (Rodange 15-16). Rebell's father, Auguste became a banker and wholesale trader while boasting ownership of property he inherited from his own family as well as of that which he acquired through his marriage to Augustine (Rodange 17). Rebell's most cherished political values for wealth and nobility are certainly reflected, if not directly influenced by his family background.

³ Born on 28 October 1867, Georges Joseph Grassal enjoyed a private education among the Jesuits where he first developed a love for French and a predilection for other languages in which he became fluent, allowing him to later read with ease foreign literature in their original form, including Nietzsche's works. Thanks once again to his family's wealth, Rebell was able to pay with money his father gave him for the printing costs of his first two works published by Vanier, *Les Jeudis saints*, a collection of poetry, and *Les Méprisants*, his first work in prose in 1886 (Rodange 42-3). When a year later at age 20 he found himself an orphan, he inherited 500 million francs, which allowed him, almost until his death, to live the life he desired: an apartment decorated to his tastes in Paris, a literary career in which writing was an end in itself and not a sole means of profit and voyages to England, Germany and Italy, where he explored other literatures (Rodange 51).

⁴ All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

⁵ For a more elaborate discussion of the literary decadence, see Jean Pierrot's *The Decadent Imagination, 1880-1900* (1981). According to Pierrot, the decadent aesthetic is first of all based on a "somewhat pessimistic conception of human existence, seen as subject to the pitiless necessities of a physical, physiological and social determinism that hold man in thrall to the laws of heredity... the exceptional individual to the law of the majority creed by democracy.... Nature, far from being the attentive and responsive witness conceived by the romantics, is an unfeeling and pitiless mechanism. The best thing for us to do therefore... is to attempt to escape that nature, to reject the biological laws of our species as far as is possible, and to hold ourselves aloof from society. Influenced by this conception of life, artists were to shut themselves away inside their inner worlds.... They were to seek for escape from the banality of everyday life through exquisite refinements of sensation.... By throwing themselves ... into this desperate quest for the new, the rare, the strange, the refined, the quintessential in everything, for the exceptional... they were to come eventually to feel that they had pushed literature to its furthest limits" (9-10).

⁶ I will identify the sources of Rebell's association with Nietzsche when I analyze his writings later in the Introduction.

⁷ I use this subsection along with the next two to cover entirely Rebell's role in the Parisian reception of Nietzsche in this time frame.

⁸ For example, by citing Rebell's 16th-century Venice ruled by its passion for the most beautiful courtesan in *La Nichina* (1897); his fin-de-siècle Paris centered on a young man's obsession with a *femme fatale* in *La Câlineuse* (1899); his Italy corrupted by the birth of the Neapolitan mafia in *La Camorra* (1900); and his Saint-Domingue on the eve of the Haitian Revolution, dominated by a Baudelairean *mûlatresse* in *Les Nuits chaudes du Cap français* (1902), Corselli observes: "[un] appel vers les périodes de luxure éclatante, de corruption criminelle et érotique se développant dans les mauvais lieux et palais... est typique du courant décadent" (100). She comes to conclude from her analyses of each of these novels in which a lust for violence and a violent eroticism reach a paroxysm: "ses romans montrent aussi l'autre face du décadentisme [the first being extremes in life-promoting jouissance], celle du pessimisme... les intrigues rebelliennes sont toujours marquées par la mort, la maladie et la corruption. Le motif de la mort est

d'ailleurs très aimé par les décadents, car, attirés par le néant, ils éprouvent presque une volupté par l'anéantissement" (Corselli 111). Although a more complete analysis of Rebell's decadence is beyond the focus of the present study, I am leading up to an establishment of how Rebell's unique literary position vis-à-vis his French contemporaries also makes him a unique French reader of Nietzsche.

⁹ Cf. Nematollahy 5

¹⁰ Cf. *En marge de la décadence : Hugues Rebell* (1990)

¹¹ The intellectual relationships Barrès had with Nietzsche and with Rebell each warrants its own study in order for adequate appreciation of their complex dynamics. It is interesting to note here, however, that Barrès, who met Rebell while working for *La Cocarde*, whose conservative appeal united both men from the start, entertained a lifelong friendship with him, in spite of later differences in literary opinions they would have (Rodange 199). Similar to his relationship with Rebell, Barrès's popular connection with Nietzsche survived his break-up with the avant-garde and his eventual adoption of conservatism (Forth 13). I do not include Barrès in my discussion of the Rightist readings of Nietzsche in subsection 5, since Barrès, unlike Rebell and other conservative *Nietzschéens*, did not make any claim to adopt Nietzschean philosophy to support his politics. According to Forth, it was not Barrès, but rather other conservatives who linked Nietzsche with his name in an attempt to make both Barrès's conversion to the Right from the avant-garde and the German's philosophy more palatable to their political views (Forth 65)

¹² Tédor de Wyzewa introduced this pejorative view of Nietzsche in light of his criticism of Wagner in his article "Frédéric Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien" published in *La Revue Bleue* in 1891. Edouard Schuré, a known collaborator in *La Revue wagnérienne*, adopted Wyzewa's anti-Nietzsche campaign.

¹³ The first published in May 1893 is from Chapter IV in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On the Higher Man," translated as "De l'homme supérieur," and the second, published in February 1894 is of Z II: "On Virtue That Makes Small," translated as "De la vertu qui rapetisse," both of which I formally introduce in Part I.

¹⁴ Verbaere claims that Rebell was the best known of all of the first French translators of Nietzsche who, besides Halévy and Dreyfus, include P. Lauterbach, Fernand Gregh, S. Brandeis and Henri Mazel (Verbaere 111).

¹⁵ Henri Albert's ownership of the Nietzsche translation copyrights amounted to a monopoly that allowed him to occupy the most essential place in the reception of Nietzsche. According to Verbaere, "Grâce au contrat qu'il a signé en 1894, Henri Albert devient personnellement propriétaire des droits... cela présente l'avantage d'être le seul traducteur autorisé et peut se révéler très rentable. Pour la réception de Nietzsche, cela joue naturellement un rôle important sur la diffusion de l'oeuvre. Ce monopole implique que toutes les traductions sont signées Henri Albert ou dépendent directement de lui" (Verbaere 183-4). A main result of Albert's monopoly over the Nietzsche translations from about 1893 until his death in 1921 was that the non-German speaking population of France encountered Nietzsche only through Albert's interpretation of him. Due to Rebell's exceptional circumstances, he was able to completely avoid the effects of Albert's monopoly.

¹⁶ Nematollahy's description of the social organization that Gourmont called for is wholly consistent with Rebell's cultural vision: Gourmont desired such an organization "most favorable to the elite, who can dissociate themselves from the mediocre majority and devote themselves to the production of the only significant thing in life: art" (Nematollahy 246).

¹⁷ He later echoes this view of his relationship to Nietzsche, emphasizing what he saw as his lack of originality in response to Louis Le Cardonnell and Georges Vellay's interview with him specifically in regard to the role Nietzsche's influence had on French thought in *La littérature contemporaine* (1905): Nietzsche a été seulement pour moi un auxiliaire de circonstance et dans les fragments que j'ai traduits, j'ai essayé de concevoir *en français* des conceptions germano-slaves, mais je ne l'ai jamais pris pour maître;

j'aurais préféré les siens. Ce qu'il y a de fécond dans ses livres se retrouve chez nos sages: un Montaigne, un Voltaire, un Renan; et ce sont des guides plus sûrs. (109)

¹⁸ Tirenne's thesis comes closest to mine when he writes of Rebell: "Peut-être ne fut-il jamais plus proche de Nietzsche que lorsqu'il le critiqua" (Tirenne 63). But beyond Tirenne's study, I intend to show not only how Rebell criticizes Nietzsche but how he evaluates his philosophy and reincorporates it into his own thought, especially at the constant risk of distorting it in order to reestablish his creative independence from him.

¹⁹ For instance, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche differentiates between the philosophers of the past who merely aim "to determine and to press into formulas... former positings of values" which have since been called "truths" and "genuine philosophers" who are "commanders" and "legislators" of new values, given that "Their 'knowing' is creating, their creating is a legislation" (BGE 211). Nietzsche also has Zarathustra continually express the importance of creating new values, such as when Zarathustra proclaims: "To esteem is to create... Through esteeming alone is there value" (Z I: "On the Thousand and One Goals").

²⁰ The only two scholarly works that address *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*—Rodange's dissertation, which examines this work within the historical context of Rebell's personal life and Nematollahy's dissertation which offers only about a one-page analysis of the novel's politics—do not discuss the importance of the Rebellian narrative. Nematollahy's conclusion that "Rebell presents intricate characters whose political attitudes cannot be categorized" (Nematollahy 237) hardly touches on this novel's resistance to categorization in general, whether of the politics it expresses through characters or of its place within French literature. Alessia Corselli most likely excludes *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* from her study of Rebell's *décadentisme* precisely because it is an example of Rebellian fiction that is neither decadent nor naturalist.

²¹ Let it suffice here to name one example: Micheline Tison-Braun does not include Rebell's *oeuvre* in her study, *La Crise de l'humanisme* (1958), where she focuses on 19th-century literature "comme la conscience d'une société," surveying both the intellectual Left and Right, including many authors from Rebell's conservative associations, like Maurras and Barrès (11). She thus appears to be unaware of the role Rebell played in the intellectual culture of Third Republic France.

Part I

Rebell's Use and Abuse of Nietzsche In His Politics

In this part, I study first what Rebell's rightist politics has potentially in common with Nietzsche's elitism and even borrows from it, and then how Rebell's French royalism remains in stark distinction from Nietzsche's refusal of political engagement. It must be understood from the beginning, however, that any such comparison of Rebell's political thought to Nietzsche's is relative and never absolute, since Rebell's writing, like Nietzsche's, constantly entertains new possibilities without yielding any definite conclusions.

Rebell's reading of Nietzsche is most congruent to rightist interpretations of him from his scholars, both past and present. The Danish critic and philosopher, Georg Brandes, responsible for introducing Nietzsche's writing to Scandinavian culture, wrote a letter to him on November 26, 1887, published in his *Friedrich Nietzsche*, in which he finds the German thinker to be in agreement with his own ideas, namely, "the profound disgust with democratic mediocrity, your aristocratic radicalism" (63). In response, Nietzsche wrote to Brandes on December 2, 1887, "The expression *Aristocratic Radicalism* which you employ is very good. It is, permit me to say, the cleverest thing I have yet read about myself" (*Friedrich Nietzsche* 64). Although Nietzsche does not explicitly declare himself to be an aristocratic radical, he does seem to judge this oxymoronic view of his political philosophy to some degree as just and accurate. Don Dombowsky and Keith-Ansell Pearson have capitalized on Brandes's opinion of Nietzsche and have developed in their own turn the idea that Nietzsche tends to favor an aristocratic politics. According to Dombowsky's thesis in *Nietzsche's Machiavellian*

Politics (2004), “Nietzsche is an aristocratic liberal—and radicalizes this position insofar as he is a proponent of centralized rule (pan-European hegemony), an unconditional opponent of democratic equality and the proponent of individualism (Renaissance-inspired) that entails hierarchy and domination and is strictly antiegalitarian” (102). Thus the term “aristocratic radicalism” is often used to stress Nietzsche’s antiegalitarian critique of 19th-century democracy. Nietzsche would be “aristocratic” in the sense that he often describes a society in which an order of rank distinguishes individuals and/or classes of individuals based on merit and privilege. Such a society, according to Dombowsky, would justify the dominance of a few elite members over a majority and even the former’s exploitation of the latter. Dombowsky also contends that this supposed ideal society Nietzsche envisioned is inspired by historical aristocracies. In particular, for both Dombowsky and Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche’s ideal society is inspired by Machiavellian absolutism. In *An Introduction To Nietzsche As Political Thinker* (1994), Ansell-Pearson advances the view that Nietzsche is most consistent throughout his writings in his conception of an “aristocratic-politics,” which can be likened to a “Machiavellian-inspired immoral politics,” or one that “believes it is able to justify its despotic rule through the cultivation of a higher and nobler culture, and which will redeem the Christian-moral culture [of egalitarianism]” (148).

Rebell’s political vision most closely converges with Nietzsche’s insofar as the latter can be described as aristocratic radicalism. *Union des trois aristocraties* (1894), where Rebell bases his ideal society on a hierarchical order in which the nobilities of birth, money, and intellect dominate the mediocre masses, draws the most from Nietzsche’s conception of an aristocracy. Certain passages from *Beyond Good and Evil*,

most especially, in “What is nobility?” the last chapter, from *On the Genealogy of Morals* and from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where Nietzsche appears to favor the rule of some noble type or elite group, are some sources of influence for Rebell’s vision of three nobilities. The aristocratic society that Rebell envisions in the *Union* is closely related to Nietzsche’s conception that great culture is possible only in a hierarchy based on merit and in which the common class serves the privileged minority responsible for giving society its meaning through the creation of art. Rebell and Nietzsche resemble each other the most in their desire for an intellectual aristocracy. In this, a source that could have indirectly influenced Rebell through Nietzsche was Plato’s philosophocracy outlined in *The Republic*. Nietzsche, as I will show, certainly drew from Plato’s city in which the few best suited to rule (i.e. for Plato, the philosopher-kings) were able to delegate every citizens’ proper function within a caste system. But Nietzsche quickly divorces himself from Plato by setting up his ideal rulers, not as the unselfish guardians serving the good of the whole city as Plato would wish them to be, but rather as natural dominators, or those who cannot separate their inclinations to conquer and exploit from their function to rule.¹ Tracing the formation of this gap between Nietzsche and Plato will serve to highlight the far greater affinity Rebell’s aristocracy and ideal rulers have with Nietzsche’s than with Plato’s.

Further, like Nietzsche, Rebell consistently criticized contemporary society and its politics rooted in the principle of equality, and he attacked the French Revolution, democracy, and socialism. As a result of their discontent with the 19th-century democratic order as an offshoot of the Christian belief in equality before God, both Nietzsche and Rebell were in search of a newly defined aristocracy. Similar to

Nietzsche's desire in *Beyond Good and Evil* and in *The Will To Power* for future rulers who would subvert the present egalitarian society, Rebell promotes a new ruler capable of self-mastery as well as mastery over the democratic masses.

Yet these very similarities between Rebell and Nietzsche are also fundamental points of divergence between their political views. Like all rightist readings of Nietzsche, Rebell's may distort Nietzsche's thought by limiting it to a certain form of politics. One way Rebell seems to restrict Nietzsche is that he disregards the inextricable dynamic between master and slave moralities, favoring master morality over slave morality. As I will show, this weakness in Rebell's interpretation is the same in Ansell-Pearson's and Dombowsky's, as they all suggest that Nietzsche not only prefers master morality to slave morality but that he advocates a social caste of masters modeled after historical ruling classes. The rightist interpretation of Nietzsche concludes that he approves of a master race that would dominate humankind.

But according to Tracy B. Strong's *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (1975), "*The Genealogy of Morals*... does not seek a return to master morality, nor even advocate it" (238). Even though, as Strong acknowledges,² the first essay of *The Genealogy* bases all distinctions between masters and slaves on social structures of power, Nietzsche does not promote the masters as political leaders. One crucial divergence then between Rebell and Nietzsche is that Rebell *advocates* a master race while Nietzsche does not. In the *Union*, Rebell attempts—inappropriately perhaps—to use Nietzsche's concepts of "nobility" and "master morality" to define his nobilities grounded in traditional categories such as birth and wealth. An important reason for this divergence stems from the difference in their modes of thought: while

Nietzsche was a pure philosopher who tended toward the abstract, Rebell can be described as a social philosopher who tended toward the practical. I will show how Nietzsche's "nobility" in *Beyond Good and Evil* is not limited to politics at all, and how Zarathustra's "new nobility" is at odds with Rebell's counter-revolutionaries. I further argue that despite Rebell's promotion of a master morality in his politics, Rebell, the man, and his opinions are far from being exclusively noble, and have strong slavish elements.

Another major restriction in Rebell's political reading of Nietzsche is on the concept of will to power. In *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy* (1995), Lawrence J. Hatab distinguishes two kinds of will to power which have different political implications for certain other Nietzsche scholars: "power-for, which suggests autonomy" and "power-over, which suggests domination, the control over others" (49). Hatab relates that, "Those who advocate democratic politics are comfortable with the category power-for, but not power-over" (Hatab 49). Both Dombowsky and Ansell-Pearson appear to overemphasize the will to power as "power-over" and ignore the other category of "power-for," since they argue that Nietzsche's aristocratic politics seeks to justify the domination and exploitation of an inferior majority by a privileged minority. Yet Hatab, unlike Dombowsky and Ansell-Pearson, ultimately avoids the pitfall of reducing will to power to a fixed dichotomy by acknowledging that, "power-for cannot be separated from power-over" (Hatab 50). Thus, while Hatab recognizes "the fact that Nietzsche's texts do suggest that political domination is in some way connected to will to power," his thesis argues that power-over need not be limited to "crude, direct control over other people's lives" (Hatab 50). Rebell, however, would miss Hatab's appreciation of the ambiguities

in will to power and would instead focus on the category of power-over as crude domination and exploitation in order to argue for the rule of his three nobilities and his desire to suppress any opposition to them. Like the other rightist readings of Nietzsche's will to power, Rebell's is therefore not incorrect, but too limited. In particular, Rebell's politics is confined to his advocacy of despotism in a single authoritarian will, namely the king's.

Moreover, rightist interpretations of Nietzsche such as Rebell's neglect Nietzsche's other political possibilities and entirely avoid the question of whether the philosopher had a politics at all. For instance, it may be that Nietzsche's hierarchy based on individual (or group) merit and achievement is not political, but cultural. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche not only separates the political from the cultural, but seems to suggest that the two are opposing forces: "All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even *anti-political*" (TI VIII: 4). If culture develops best in an aristocratic society, as Nietzsche argues in *Beyond Good and Evil* (257), his aristocratic radicalism is perhaps irreducible to a political category and is, instead, cultural. Lawrence J. Hatab summarizes the problem of classifying Nietzsche's aristocratism: "If the 'role' of creators amounts to measuring cultural excellence and life affirmation, this can be allowed but separated from concrete politics. There can be a cultural meritocracy without a politically managed or entrenched hierarchy. In short, *it is not clear what Nietzsche's political aristocracy would accomplish*" (Hatab 138; Hatab's emphasis).

This question of Nietzsche's political aristocracy signals a pivotal difference between Nietzsche and Rebell. While Nietzsche's philosophy may be considered elitist

but not necessarily political in nature, Rebell's is both, since he sought a monarchical restoration with a reinstatement of the blood nobility allied to nobilities of wealth and intellect in *Union des trois aristocraties*. Understanding the nonpolitical dimension in Nietzsche's philosophy may serve to point to a separation between the cultural and political in Rebell. *Union des trois aristocraties*, which perhaps more clearly than any other of Rebell's political writings advocates both a cultural and political aristocracy, therefore permits a close comparison to Nietzsche's own vision of a meritocracy, such as in "The Greek State" or *The Antichrist* (57). Rebell's cultural meritocracy, which should be considered his rule of intellectuals, artists and especially writers, is therefore the element in Rebell's aristocracy that has the most in common with Nietzsche's. Rebell's political meritocracy, however, which consists of the Old Regime nobility and moneyed class and whose alliance is perhaps also a reflection of his own family heritage, decisively separates him from Nietzsche. Besides, Rebell has a concrete politics. He is perhaps most consistent throughout his writings in his adherence to the French royalist party. In his letter in answer to Charles Maurras's first *Enquête sur la monarchie* (1909), which posed the survey question on whether the monarchy was the only medium that could restore order to France, Rebell wrote, "Votre enquête sur la monarchie doit réjouir tous ceux qui voient dans le rétablissement de la royauté nationale l'unique moyen de sauver la France," certainly counting himself as one of these devout royalists (146). This singular political view is perhaps the key factor that would have prevented Rebell from fully understanding Nietzsche's subordination of politics to philosophy.

Just as studying the cultural elitism in Nietzsche may help to bring out the nonpolitical in Rebell, studying the politics in Rebell may bring out the possible political

elements in Nietzsche. As I will argue, Rebell seems to use Nietzsche's antiegalitarianism to justify his own power politics. For instance, his ideal tyrant king, whom he defines in his *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, seems to be inspired by Zarathustra's "higher men." Yet in this same collection of poetry Rebell appreciates the differences between Zarathustra's "higher men," whose traits he admires as possible future leaders, and his "supermen," whom he rejects as incapable of incarnation. Rebell also borrows Nietzsche's antiegalitarian critique of 19th-century democracy to attack the French Third Republic. I therefore also study Rebell's purely political writings, specifically various articles he wrote for the *petites revues* already mentioned in the Introduction, where he expresses his criticisms of the Third Republic and his desire for a Bourbon Restoration. Finally, Nietzsche's cultural elitism as manifest in Rebell's thought can serve to measure how politically (dis)similar Rebell was to his extreme-right cohorts like Charles Maurras.³ A comparison of Maurras's anti-Republican royalism and his nationalism with Rebell's views on these subjects will help to show how Rebell is inconsistent both to other fin-de-siècle French rightists and to Nietzsche, who expressly favors cosmopolitanism. I conclude that just as Nietzsche's unpolitical or even antipolitical stance does not exclude his possible attraction to aristocratic radicalism, Rebell, too, maintains inconsistencies in his thinking. I choose finally to analyze Rebell's conflictual view of the Jews as one such unresolvable inconsistency in his thinking that sets him apart both from French rightists and from Nietzsche. By determining such patterns in Rebell's writing, I hope to address new readings of him that undo the reductionist ones of past scholars.

Chapter 1

Points of Convergence In Nietzsche and Rebell's Political Thinking

The view of Nietzsche's political theories as aristocratic radicalism, or, the view that Georg Brandes originally advanced and to which Nietzsche himself responded in favor, is the one that is most similar to Rebell's politics. A study of this possible propinquity Rebell's thought shares with Nietzsche's may serve to show both the nonpolitical dimension in Rebell's elitism as well as the personal preference Nietzsche seemed to have had for an aristocracy despite his defiance of political classification.

1. The Concepts of an Aristocratic Society and the Noble Type

At the basis of their ideal societies, Rebell's aristocracy in the *Union des trois aristocraties* seems to concur with Nietzsche's concept of hierarchy as the condition for great humans to exist. According to Nietzsche in his last chapter, "What is noble?" in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "Every enhancement of the type 'man' has so far been the work of an aristocratic society" that "needs slavery in some sense or other" (BGE 257). In such a society where a "*pathos of distance*" is maintained between social strata, "the ruling caste constantly looks afar and down upon subjects," and where another "mysterious pathos," or "the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul" cultivates "ever higher, rarer, more remote ... states," producing the enhancement of man (BGE 257). Thus one type of *pathos of distance* may be promoting a political aristocracy while the other is spiritual and individual. In Nietzsche's view, the social and political institutions of the warrior aristocracies of antiquity or what he calls the "barbarian" caste in this passage provided the optimum conditions for the development of both society and man. In *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (1990),

Bruce Detwiler aptly explains the political and nonpolitical message in *Beyond Good and Evil* 257: every enhancement in culture is due to an aristocratic society “because the political tension between castes is fortifying; because the political distinctions that are the defining characteristic of such societies give rise to spiritual distinctions, which in turn engender a perpetual... striving for self-conquest and self-perfection” (119).

While Rebell does not write about Nietzsche’s types of *pathos of distance*, he maintains, parallel to Nietzsche, a significant nonpolitical element in his aristocracy. Before defining the three types of aristocracy he prefers, Rebell anticipates those readers who would attempt to categorize him politically by affirming all possibilities for his elite: “Une aristocratie, vous écriez-vous, mais laquelle? Je réponds hardiment: toutes les aristocraties,” since “Le philosophe ne détruit rien, mais accepte la vie dans son immensité, dans sa variété” (*Union* 15). As the author of the *Union*, Rebell may be identifying himself as this philosopher cautious not to limit himself to one type of nobility. In any case, with respect to this *philosophe*, Rebell suggests that the aim of his work is to elucidate a political philosophy rather than a definite political system. In this, Rebell’s *philosophe* is compatible with Nietzsche. Victor Nguyen’s *Aux origines de l’Action française* (1991) is therefore justified in speaking of the *Union des trois aristocraties*: “Rebell ne préconise nullement une entreprise qui serait directement politique, touchant les actuelles institutions” (692). In particular, the union of Rebell’s three aristocracies in itself may be a hierarchical society but not one that necessarily advocates a certain politics with certain political institutions: “Honneur, travail et intelligence, tels sont les fondements de toute société: notre désir est de réunir dans une même alliance la noblesse du nom, celle de l’argent et celle de la pensée” (*Union* 15).

For Rebell, the birth nobility, the wealthy and the intellectuals have a primary function above all others, including a political one that they might serve: they are natural leaders because they teach the virtues of honor, work and intelligence, the fundamental principles upon which, according to Rebell, any society is predicated. Thus, Rebell's *Union*, like Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (257), promotes an aristocratic society for a moral reason since it provides the conditions (indeed, the best) for humans to strive toward self-betterment.

Yet the nonpolitical aspects of Rebell's or of Nietzsche's aristocracy do not preclude their potential political meaning. Rebell's ideal society that relies uniquely on its noble classes to produce higher culture is consistent with the theory that Nietzsche favors master morality over slave morality, the former based on the values of historical aristocracies, values responsible for creating great culture. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (260), Nietzsche credits the distinction in values between master morality and slave morality as having originated in the differences between the ruling group and the ruled, or slaves. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche further appears to establish master morality as an original, self-affirming mode of valuation, indigenous to real noble classes and which must necessarily pre-exist slave morality. The rulers or noble type "experiences itself as determining values" (BGE 260), and its mode of valuation created the original distinction between "good," to glorify their "superiority in power," and "bad," or everything that was their opposite (e.g. the lowly, the common) (GM I: 5, 10). Slave morality, however, had to presuppose the existence of master morality since, "in order to exist, [it] always first needs a hostile external world... its action is fundamentally reaction" (GM I: 10). In particular, slave morality reacts against master morality: with

the “slave revolt in morality” (“der Sklavenaufstand in der Moral”) begins *ressentiment*, or an impotent hatred of the slaves for their masters, which compels them to seek an “imaginary revenge” (GM I: 10). The slaves avenge themselves on their masters by inventing the concept of “evil” in the world to designate all that was once called “good” under master morality. A politics that participates in slavish resentment would mean that a particular class of individuals, whether actually oppressed or perceiving themselves to be so, causes an unnatural disjunction to occur in the world between the impossible ideal it invents and the material reality upon which it tries to impose its condition. Nietzsche would indeed object to such a politics.

Moreover, Nietzsche’s development of master morality is inspired by certain past, aristocratic social orders, for example, “of the pattern of Rome or Venice” (TI IX: 43) or of the “French seventeenth and eighteenth century” (GM I: 16) and the “knightly-aristocratic value judgments [which] presupposed a powerful physicality, a flourishing, abundant, even overflowing health, together with that which serves to preserve it: war, adventure, hunting, dancing... and in general all that involves vigorous, free, joyful activity” (GM I: 7). According to Don Dombowsky’s *Nietzsche’s Machiavellian Politics* (2004), “the Nietzschean aristocracy or nobility does not strictly conform to any particular hereditary or existing ruling class or elite, no European royal family. Yet the content of Nietzsche’s aristocratic radicalism is derived from historical models... [such as] Roman, pagan, classical or Renaissance” (24). For Dombowsky, Nietzsche not only endorses master morality over slave morality but politicizes it by complementing his profile of master rulers with a character or virtue ethics inspired by Roman or Renaissance models that would in turn serve to define the ideal art of governance.

Parallel to Dombowsky, Rebell (mis)uses Nietzschean master morality as a kind of supra-morality, crediting Nietzsche in particular for having cited classical French nobility as a model in order to justify the rule of the hereditary class that he, Rebell, wanted to promote. In the *Union des trois aristocraties*, Rebell's characterization of the French nobility he would like to see rule manifests the virility, will, and passion that Dombowsky saw as the foundation of the Nietzschean noble type:

Il faut d'abord qu'aux yeux du peuple la noblesse héréditaire se replace à son rang et qu'elle prenne conscience d'elle-même. Représentant la fidélité aux serments, l'attachement au prince, la soumission fière et le fier commandement, elle perpétue de hautes traditions de vertu et de virilité auxquelles on ne saurait toucher sans détruire la civilisation. (16)

Only France's birth nobility has "un esprit fier et intelligent de domination" and "le droit de porter [ses] titres" (*Union* 17). Further, Rebell believed that the writer's audience is ideally an aristocracy, and in particular he should write for kings as writers once did during the 18th Century (*Union* 10). In "Le Dilettantisme" (1893), Rebell echoes Nietzsche's praise of the classical and pagan nobilities for having the natural qualities of a ruler: "C'est la liberté des instincts et la tyrannie politique des aristocraties qui ont produit les belles civilisations de l'Antiquité et de la Renaissance" (281). Perhaps Rebell is most consistent throughout his political writings in his quest to define the character traits of his masters.

2. Cultural Meritocracy

The extent to which Rebell was inspired by Nietzsche's master morality as the basis of some political aristocracy can be explored by examining what elements Rebell's

union of three aristocracies has in common with the cultural meritocracy in which the people serve the production of the few superior men that Nietzsche describes in various writings, such as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *The Antichrist*. For instance, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche clearly promotes a meritocracy, although the type of rulers that would govern it remains unclear: “The best should rule, the best also want to rule. And where the doctrine is different, there the best is lacking” (Z III: On Old and New Tablets 21). While Zarathustra’s “best” is perhaps indefinable, Rebell leaves no doubt as to its meaning in the union among the nobilities of birth, wealth, and intellect. Rebell defines the function that each of these three ruling classes contributes to each other and reinforce. First, the blood nobility is responsible for ruling. Second, fortune, “Ce grand superflu chez quelques-uns fait naître des aptitudes, excite des activités multiples,” supplying the means by which the birth nobility can provide for their posterity and artists can be rewarded for their works (*Union* 19). But the union between the nobles and the wealthy needs

un autre but que la continuation d’une race ou de l’établissement d’une famille, par exemple, un idéal nouveau qui règle notre conduite, domine notre pensée et entraîne tout un peuple. Cet idéal, générateur de vastes œuvres et qui réunit dans une même action la multitude des hommes, c’est idéal nécessaire, c’est l’intellectuel qui un jour le présente au monde.

(*Union* 27-8)

Thus, it is the intellectuals, financially supported by the wealthy and protected by the blood nobility, who give this triple meritocracy its ultimate meaning. In Rebell’s “Préface” to his 1893 translation of the chapter, “De l’homme supérieur” of *Zarathustra*,

he declares Nietzsche's philosophy to be "une morale qui s'adresse aux aristocraties de la pensée, et qui ne s'occupe point du bonheur de la multitude" (263). Although Nietzsche supported neither a hereditary nor a new moneyed class, Rebell evidently believed that Nietzsche desired, like him, a sort of intellectual aristocracy,⁴ though he does not offer suggestions as to how it might be formed.

Further, Rebell's concept of meritocracy relies on the Nietzschean view that a hierarchical society in which rights are a privilege for the few is needed to combat the *ressentiment* emanating from democracy. For Nietzsche as well as for Rebell, it is the resentment of those lacking power that incites them to create egalitarianism as the principle by which they justify their vengeful attack on all noble distinctions. According to Rebell in the *Union des trois aristocraties*, "ceux qui la prêchent [l'égalité] sont les premiers à ne pas y croire" (16). Rebell here seems to echo Zarathustra's disdain for the preachers of equality, whom he sees as spiteful "tarantulas" vis-à-vis those who rightfully have power: "You preachers of equality, the tyrannomania of impotence clamors thus out of you for equality: your most secret ambitions to be tyrants shroud themselves in words of virtue" (Z II: On the Tarantulas). For Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "the equality of rights" is "a war on all that is rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul... the abundance of creative power and masterfulness" (BGE 212). Here Nietzsche gives a clue in defining Zarathustra's "higher men," but also why he sees any superiority as anathema to an egalitarian society. Rebell certainly agrees with Nietzsche that the principle of equality promotes homogeneity in order to deny individual distinction and that it therefore represents an assault on the "higher men," or, in Rebell's terms, on the superior creative power of intellectuals and financial wizards and on the

masterfulness of hereditary rulers. Thus for Rebell, “il n’est pas de plus funeste mensonge que celui de l’égalité des hommes... il n’est pas de société plus misérable que celle où l’on ne reconnaît aucune hiérarchie” (*Union* 39-40). He therefore yearns for a future in which “cette richesse, cette noblesse, cette science [qui] se dissimulent aujourd’hui prendront conscience de leur valeur” (*Union* 40). According to Nietzsche in *The Antichrist*, the belief in equality that gave rise to this assault on all forms of superiority stems from the historic Christian slave revolt in morality, which originally aimed to give power to the oppressed against their masters: “The aristocratic outlook was undermined from the deepest underworld through the lie of the equality of souls”; it was the “faith in the ‘prerogative of the majority’ that “makes and will make revolutions. Christianity is a rebellion of everything that crawls on the ground against that which has height” (A 43). For Nietzsche, the doctrine of equality is a lie, invented by priests, intended to act as the spiteful revenge of the powerless against the powerful, or of the slavish type against the noble type.

“The aristocratic outlook” that Nietzsche prefers to the Christian morality of egalitarianism is the caste system of the Hindu Law of Manu, which takes as its premise that, “The *inequality* of rights is the first condition of any rights at all” (A 57). In this type of aristocracy, Nietzsche describes three castes: the “highest” which also has the “privileges of the fewest,” including the right to rule; the “guardians of the law” whose duty is to maintain “order and security”; and the “mediocre,” who are “destined by nature” “to be a public utility, a wheel, a function” of the highest type (A 57). According to Dombowsky, the caste system described in this passage of *The Antichrist*, inspired by Plato and Machiavelli as well as by the Law of Manu, is “Nietzsche’s ideal radical

aristocratic regime” that features an “order of rank, differences in value between man and man, ingrained difference between strata... and the need for slavery” (Dombowsky 112). The society that Nietzsche depicts in A 57 most directly reflects Plato’s. In *The Republic*, Plato proposes that since every person is naturally suited to a particular occupation (370b), a society should have rulers who know how to delegate every role so that “the entire city will be well governed and prosper accordingly” (421c). As the best possible “craftsmen” within their roles as the “governors” of the city (421c), Plato’s philosopher-kings are rulers not because they want power-over, but because they alone know how to manage the best interests of the city. Hence, the power of the philosopher-kings is predicated on their ability to follow and serve the “law” that “is concerned not with the happiness of any particular class in the city but with the happiness of the city as a whole” (519e). For Plato’s city to be possible, he requires his rulers to be free of personal want and therefore, devoid of any dangerous inclination to wield power for selfish purposes: “We want no scoundrels governing us. Our purpose is to create true guardians of our liberties, men least likely to do the city harm” (420b). Nietzsche comes closest to supporting Plato’s aristocratic utopia when he proposes that the highest caste members act tenderly toward the mediocre because they “are not free to be second;” they “rule not because they want to but because they are” (A 57).

Like Plato and Nietzsche, Rebell endorses a society with an aristocratic caste system in which everyone must perform his/her role, especially those who are predisposed to ruling. Rebell would acknowledge the prerequisite for a ruler to have an unselfish personality seeking power-for rather than power-over when he reminds the birth nobility where their right to rule comes from: “Vos pères, quelle que soit la manière dont

ils s'élevèrent à la puissance, ont créé pour vous un esprit fier et intelligent de domination qui vous rend, *non des tyrans, mais des dispensateurs*" (*Union* 17-18 ; my emphasis).

Both Nietzsche and Rebell in these particular passages concur with Plato that ruling is a natural right for those to whom power is a privilege and a manifestation of generosity; it is not a means to tyranny. Rebell also agrees with Plato on the assumption of every person serving a particular function and with Nietzsche on the role and purpose of the common class who compose the majority. Like Nietzsche's "mediocre" caste for whom "to be mediocre is their happiness," and "mastery of one thing, specialization" is a "natural instinct," (A57) Rebell believes each class should stay within its limits, that the aim of society should be "permettre à chaque homme de manifester l'activité spéciale dont il est capable" (*Union* 37). Finally, Rebell's interpretation (and promotion) of the morality Nietzsche conceptualizes for the higher man that is indifferent to the happiness of the multitude is also consistent with the aim of the Platonic law over the good city: it is the happiness or well-being of the whole city, and not that of any particular class that matters. Yet, for Plato, happiness for the city as a whole is necessary only because it assumes a fair and just social order, which is the reason why the philosopher-kings originally want to establish the city. But Nietzsche and Rebell will part from Plato because they are not concerned with justice or with everyone being able to obtain the benefits from their work that they deserve to obtain; rather, they will show concern only for those great or strong or talented people in the elite class to get what they deserve. Plato, however, would see the elite's privileges only as part of his quest for justice.

In addition, Rebell justifies distinctions between social strata similarly to Nietzsche's, and ultimately, both divorce themselves from Plato for similar reasons.

Whereas the latter wants no special privileges for his rulers in an effort to maintain them as servants of the general good,⁵ Nietzsche and Rebell will not adhere to the philosopher's fantasy of relying on an altruistic authority that for Plato wants nothing to do with power-over. Instead, they will prescribe an elite class that is entitled to serve its own interests *before* those of the state. Nietzsche is emphatic in proposing that those naturally predisposed to being masters could not logically want anything other than what "the birds of prey" strive for, which is a desire "to overcome," "to throw down," to compete against enemies for power-over (GM I: 13). As I will develop and conclude in the next subsection, Rebell inevitably turns out to be an inheritor of Nietzsche's philosophy rather than Plato's, since, like the former, he conceives of rulers whose primary interest is, moreover, domination and subjugation.

Nietzsche reasons that the highest caste deserves the most privileges because it bears the greatest responsibility and performs the greatest service to society: "As one climbs higher [up the social hierarchy], life becomes ever harder; the coldness increases, the responsibility increases" (A 57). The highest caste thus distinguishes itself by its superior ability to take on the challenges demanded by life and the responsibility that necessarily accompanies them. In this metaphor of climbing great heights that Zarathustra often uses for self-overcoming,⁶ the physical challenge of braving coldness suggests the spiritual one of overcoming resistance needed to attain greater freedom.⁷ Further, it is interesting to contrast Zarathustra's striving for heights (and distance from the common people incapable of such a challenge) to the allegory of the Platonic leaders in *The Republic* who must bring their knowledge of the truth to the people by descending back into the cave: although Socrates will have the leaders "scale the heights in order to

reach the vision of the good,” he warns that they must not “Remain above, refusing to go down among those prisoners to share their labors and rewards, whatever their worth may be” (519d).

Contiguous with Nietzsche, Rebell stresses the importance of the elite’s needs over those of the common. Whereas the former writes about coldness as a test of physical strength for his elite, Rebell concerns himself with the physical nourishment of his leaders. Rebell argues on behalf of the works of bankers, ingenious artists and blood aristocrats,

Comme certains êtres d’une constitution robuste et dont la dépense de forces est excessive, ont besoin de plus de nourriture que des hommes d’énergie et de travail ordinaire, nous, qui naturellement et fatalement accomplissons une œuvre supérieure à celle de plusieurs milliers d’êtres, nous avons des besoins et des droits supérieurs. (*Union* 24)

Rebell compares the physical needs of healthy, strong individuals to those of his superior caste of men who have a right to demand more from society, since it is their work that requires the greatest strength and offers the most to humanity. Similar to Nietzsche, Rebell establishes the privileged caste based on the exceptional energy that it expends toward self-perfection.

Further, both Nietzsche and Rebell argue that artists and men of genius should be given a status above the laws of ordinary men, since they are the sole contributors of culture. In “The Greek State,” Nietzsche justifies the need for a majority to serve the special producers of art: “In order that there may be a broad, deep and fruitful soil for the development of art, the enormous majority must, in the service of a minority, be slavishly

subjected to life's struggles" (6). In return for "the surplus of [the] labor" of these menial servants, "the privileged class is to be relieved from the struggles of existence" so they can save their energy "to create and to satisfy a new world of want" ("The Greek State" 7). Likewise, Rebell reflects on past eras when extraordinary men, or those who saw their work as an end in itself, necessarily enjoyed extraordinary rights:

A certaines époques les peuples ont senti à la fois la suprématie et l'infortune de ces grands hommes qui, distribuant au monde des trésors, ne surent rien garder pour eux-mêmes ... on convint qu'ils ne seraient point soumis aux obligations communes ; des rois les prirent sous leur protection, et le génie, à cause de ses continuels bienfaits, reçut des privilèges. (*Union* 30)

Rebell gives the example of Pope Paul III who absolved Benvenuto Cellini, a great sculptor and writer in 15th-century Florence, for murder (*Union* 30). Both Nietzsche and Rebell justify a superior social and political status for those artists whose work is more important than common labor, since it requires the artists' total self-consumption in the ideals he invents and sacrifices to the perfection of society. They also both use examples from past aristocratic societies (the Greek state for Nietzsche, the Renaissance for Rebell), to illustrate their ideal of higher culture. They both reach the conclusion that culture is compatible only with an aristocratic politics, or one that maintains a distance between the few elite producers and the multitude, and further privileges the former by exempting them from the latter's common law. Although neither Nietzsche nor Rebell articulates a state policy or constitution, both believe in antiegalitarianism as the basis for

their ideal society. Inspired by Nietzsche's belief in a superior caste of natural rulers, Rebell developed his own vision of a meritocracy in the *Union des trois aristocraties*.

3. Domination, Exploitation, and a Machiavellian-Inspired Politics

While Nietzsche and Rebell seem to advocate a peaceful co-existence of different social castes in the above passages, they suggest elsewhere a politics of domination and exploitation, thereby definitizing their rift from Plato. According to Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, the doctrine of equality is unnatural in its aim to suppress struggle, competition and domination of one group or individual over another, since the desire for power-over is a fact of life: "Exploitation' does not belong to a corrupt or imperfect society: it belongs to the essence of what lives, as a basic, organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life" (BGE 259). In *An Introduction to Nietzsche As Political Thinker*, Keith-Ansell Pearson interprets *Beyond Good and Evil* (259) in terms of what he believes to be Nietzsche's justification of his authoritarian politics: "Nietzsche supports his belief in aristocratic rule by drawing on his notion of life as will to power, which he posits as a law of nature" (151). Taken as power-over, will to power is a universal law that governs every living body, including the body politic and it may therefore be seen as Nietzsche's critique of the cult of "pity" and "compassion" he sees at the heart of egalitarian society (BGE 202). Perhaps the *Genealogy* Essay II makes the best case for proposing that Nietzsche does, at least sometimes, imagine a master morality based on a master race that wants power-over at any cost: he describes "some pack of blond beasts of prey" as a "conquerer and master race, which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace" (GM II. 17). This race, which was responsible for

forming the original state, did so without any regard to a social “contract” based on mutual pity and compassion between men as Rousseau would locate the origins of society: “He who can command, he who is by nature ‘master,’ he who is violent in act and bearing—what has he do to with contracts!” (GM II.17).

Rebell seems to directly borrow Nietzsche’s devaluation of the principle of equality as a value counter to Nature’s laws of exploitation and domination and then draws upon this principle to justify a similar master race. He writes in “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies” (1894), “La Nature qui fait les êtres beaux ou estropiés, sains ou malades, intelligents ou idiots, a le plus souverain mépris de l’égalité. Donc une société qui aurait pour base le principe d’égalité serait anti-naturelle et par là même ne peut exister” (100). In defense of his financial aristocracy, Rebell argues that money and acquisition are instruments of struggle and competition (*Union* 19). Further, in “A propos d’un manifeste,” published in *Les Chroniques du Soleil* (1901), Rebell suggests that war is more natural than peace: “nous ne pensons pas que la justice parfaite ni que la paix universelle règneront jamais sur le monde, parce que les conditions de la vie humaine sont la lutte et l’inégalité, parce que l’esprit même ne peut concevoir l’existence comme un repos absolu” (*Chroniques* 168). In these last two passages, Rebell echoes Zarathustra’s preference for war over peace: he promotes all struggles between “good and evil,” “rich and poor,” “high and low” (Z II: “On the Tarantulas” 213), and in his “Conversation with Kings,” he tells them, “You shall love peace as a means to new wars, and the short peace more than the long!” (Z IV 359). These writings logically anticipate Rebell’s last novel in which the main character, an archbishop who exemplifies the

author's ideal aristocrat in support of the domination of the majority of mediocre by the few superior men, extols cruelty as a value of the masters:

La cruauté apparaît... comme la forme nécessaire, chez un être, de sa supériorité ou de sa vigueur, soit qu'elle s'exerce par jeu et instinctivement, soit qu'elle se manifeste comme un acte réfléchi, ayant pour but de prévenir des offenses probables... Tous les grands hommes dont le nom illumine les siècles, dont le courage a subjugué les peuples furent des hommes cruels. (*Le Diable est à table* 149)

The archbishop goes on to list: Alexander the Great; Bessus, a prominent Persian nobleman who betrayed Darius III by deposing him and proclaiming himself king; Philotus, Alexander's most experienced and talented general; and, Bonaparte among these great and cruel men. These ideal rulers, in turn, certainly exemplify Nietzsche's "beasts of prey" whose violence enabled them to become masters. Dombowsky believes Nietzsche was inspired by Machiavelli's conception of *virtù*, which meant "energy, courage, daring, strength of will, valour and political capability, intelligence and excellence" (Dombowsky 139). These are the very traits that define Rebell's three kinds of aristocrats.

But Dombowsky, like Ansell-Pearson, views a Machiavellian-inspired politics emanating from Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche's "immoral politics," to use Ansell-Pearson's term, is an absolutist meritocracy that finds meaning and self-justification in subjugating the masses that it sees as a threat to the cult of superior humans (*Introduction to Nietzsche As Political Thinker* 148). This view of Nietzsche's politics is consonant with Rebell's own Machiavellian type of elitism. Michel Leroy's "Hugues Rebell: poète

nietzschéen” (1974) is justified in its claim that Rebell’s major source of inspiration from the Renaissance was Machiavelli (37). As I argue, Rebell’s absolutist politics is cross-bred from Nietzsche and Machiavelli. In particular, Machiavelli’s view of the common people as a function rather than the meaning of government is crucial in understanding the apparent despotism that Nietzsche and Rebell would permit their elite. Rebell expresses Nietzsche’s disgust for modern men, who, numbed by the pacifistic leveling effect of equality, have no appreciation for life as perpetual struggle and competition. For instance, Rebell was surely inspired by another passage of Zarathustra he chose to translate for *L’Ermitage* in 1894, “De la vertu qui rapetisse,” in which Nietzsche deprecates “the small people [who] need small virtues,” like kindness, weakness, pity, and justice since they have become content with Christian morality which has enfeebled their will and taught them resignation (Z III: “On the Virtue That Makes Small”). In “On the Higher Man,” Zarathustra opposes the “mob,” or the believers in “equality before God” to those higher men who know that “god had died” (Z IV: “On the Higher Man” 1-2). Although Rebell never proclaimed the death of God, he does associate the people or “crowd” with the cult of Zarathustra’s “small people” or “mob”⁸ who have been brainwashed by the egalitarianism which they have inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition. For Rebell, “l’humanité n’est point représentée par la foule, mais par une elite,” and this “crowd” represents the democratic majority responsible for the downfall of the rich, the nobles and the intellectuals (*Union* 24). While “la foule ne songe qu’au résultat de son labeur, l’intellectuel ne songe qu’au labeur lui-même” (*Union* 29). Likewise, Zarathustra claims that “nobles... do not want to have anything for nothing, least of all, life” while “the mob wants to live for nothing” (Z III: “On the Old and New

Tablets” 5). Nietzsche seems to associate the mob here with the majority in “The Greek State” whose duty is to work for the production of the privileged class. Rebell, too, equates the crowd with those whose work is a means and who should therefore devote their labor to the intellectuals whose work is an end in itself.

Moreover, Rebell uses Nietzsche’s view of the common people’s natural instinct to obey to justify his preference for authoritarian meritocracy. The mentality of Zarathustra’s “small people” is what Nietzsche refers to as “the herd instinct of obedience” (BGE 199). As he explains the latter, modern Europeans unquestioningly obey Judeo-Christian “thou shalt” that they have inherited in their culture, as well as commands from “parents, teachers, laws, class prejudices, public opinions” (BGE 199). “Morality in Europe is herd animal morality,” Nietzsche writes because the community instinct of blind obedience to traditional forms of authority is responsible for bringing about the decay of modern man into a herd animal without a will or mind of his own (BGE 202). What Nietzsche calls “herd mentality” Rebell calls “the cult of the imbecile” in his article with the same title published on December 28, 1894 in *La Cocarde*: “Il y a dans leur attitude [of those of the cult in question] une immense fatigue de la vie, un dégoût profond d’exister, peut-être une peur de l’avenir qui les incline vers leur future image, peut-être un orgueil trop lâche pour s’élever et qui réjouit le spectacle de la décadence et de la misère” (“Le Culte de l’imbécile” *De mon balcon* 53).⁹ Rebell thus justifies his highest objective—the return to aristocracy that will put an end to the “cult of the imbecile” or to the “sovereignty of the mob” (*Union* 17) in the present-day egalitarian society: “*créer une hiérarchie, pour sauver le monde de la grande maladie démocratique, de cette grande fièvre populaire du commandement*” (16). For Rebell,

popular command is little more than the command to obey the doctrines of equality and sameness which have destroyed his three aristocracies. He proposes a hierarchy as a solution to the masses who have a fever to command but who would be better to obey a worthy and capable leader. He would therefore agree with Nietzsche's view of the masses as those who have an innate need for obedience and who are "in need of a commander" (BGE 199).

4. Nietzsche and Rebell's Ideal Leaders

Rebell's view of the people is consistent with Nietzsche's and Machiavelli's, and his call for a new group of dominators in the *Union*, as in other writings like *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, would support the Nietzschean critic's claim that the philosopher desired the coming of a new caste of superior men to rule the world. In *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, Rebell envisions the coming of a supreme tyrant who embodies Nietzsche's virtue ethics of aristocratic or master morality: "J'attends le Tyran, le Tyran beau et fort qui va venir;" he is in fact, "supreme Man;" he will concern himself neither with "the humble" nor with "pity;" he will rid the world of prejudices (*Chants* 44). When Rebell announces in the "Examen" following this work that he intended his *Chants* to be read as "l'annonciateur d'une morale noble et humaine," (*Chants* 199), he was obviously thinking of the ideal type of leader Nietzsche described as practicing an "aristocratic morality" in *Beyond Good and Evil*: modeled after the "aristocratic commonwealth" of Venice, "a species of severe, warlike... men" who excelled in "hardness" and "intolerance," who could survive under "constant *unfavorable* conditions" (BGE 262). According to Ansell-Pearson's *Introduction to Nietzsche As Political Thinker*, "Nietzsche is adamant that it is only an aristocratic society which can justify terrible but noble

sacrifices and experiments, for only this kind of society is geared towards, not justice or compassion, but the continual self-overcoming of man—and of life” (149). For this reason, both Detwiler and Ansell-Pearson believe that Nietzsche promotes the cultivation of a master race that will constitute the future masters of the earth.¹⁰ These Nietzsche scholars, like Rebell, necessarily assume that Nietzsche’s “master morality” was not only grounded in the valuation of historical aristocracies, but that he desired real future leaders who would inscribe such a mode of valuation on the body politic. Nietzsche indeed writes about “a new caste” that would rule Europe (BGE 208), and in the *Will To Power*, he defines “highest man” as “he who determines values and directs the will of millennia” (WP 960). Rebell’s Tyrant, like Nietzsche’s exemplary commander, knows how to subjugate the crowd to his will: “Il saura être roi./ Il saura dominer de sa verge de fer les multitudes et les courber sous son joug de beauté et de gloire” (*Chants* 44), but most importantly, one should see in this tyrant-king “le rêve d’une autorité réelle, d’un homme qui *veuille* sans faiblesse et sans transaction” (*Chants* 197 ; my emphasis).

Yet aside from the possible political vision that Rebell or Nietzsche attributes to an absolutist ruler or caste of rulers is the cultural mastery they both desire in a leader. Rebell’s intellectual aristocracy (writers and artists) can be likened to his Tyrant capable of mastering the world with the help of the wealthy and the blood nobles: “Que l’artiste ait le culte de l’or. Il ne s’agit point de sacrifier sa pensée, mais de l’imposer... à défaut de protections princières, la fortune reste la meilleure façon de dominer les hommes” (*Union* 36). Further in the *Union des trois aristocraties*, Rebell calls for a class of “dominators,” or intellectuals to speak as “masters” to other “masters” (15). The artists who would be involved both in politics and in creating new culture outside the political

realm is the ideal leader in his writings that most closely converges to Nietzsche's "artist-tyrants" in *The Will To Power* who will "seize the dominion of the earth and force the will of millennia on new tracks" (WP 960). Both Rebell and Nietzsche indeed seem to promote a master race in an intellectual aristocracy, even though neither of these writers develops a clearly defined political agenda for their future leaders. What is certain is that Nietzsche and Rebell were discontent with their era and desired an ideal human to transcend the Christian moral tradition that had robbed the world of new outlook on life, in and beyond politics.

5. Criticism of the French Revolution

The French Revolution, which largely shaped their era, provoked similar attacks from Nietzsche and Rebell, who both saw it as a particular triumph for Christian morality. Although the revolutionists reputedly sought to subvert the Church's authority and to distance themselves from the Catholic faith, Nietzsche (and Rebell) would see these objectives as ironic, since the revolutionists with their slogan for liberty, equality and fraternity, were upholding ever more strongly the Christian values of free will, equality before God, and love of one's neighbors.¹¹ Nietzsche thus mockingly refers to the French Revolution's concepts of fraternity and equality in *The Gay Science* as having aimed at the "brotherhood of all nations" and a "blooming universal exchange of hearts" (GS 362). Rebell seems to adopt Nietzsche's criticism of the French Revolution as a secularization of the Judeo-Christian slave revolt in morality to support his opposition to what he considered to be the single advent in French history responsible for eradicating aristocratic values and installing in their place an egalitarian society. In the *Will To Power*, Nietzsche views the French Revolution as "the continuation of Christianity" (WP

94) and in *On The Genealogy of Morals*: “With the French Revolution, Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal... the last political *noblesse* in Europe, that of the French seventeenth and eighteenth century, collapsed beneath the popular instinct of *ressentiment*” (GM I: 16). Nietzsche meant that the slave revolt in morality originated with priestly Judea, when Jewish slaves revolted against their Roman masters and inverted the “aristocratic value-equation (good=noble = powerful= beautiful= happy= beloved by God)” and said, “the wretched alone are the good; the poor, the impotent, the lowly alone are good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious” (GM I: 7). Christianity then inherited this slave revolt from the Jewish priests (GM I:7). Nietzsche blames the French Revolution for being yet another form of the slave revolt in history since it, like the Jewish priests against Rome, leveled a society (the *Ancien Régime*) that was constructed upon special claims and privileges and an order of rank.

Rebell appropriates Nietzsche’s theory that the French Revolution represented another form of the Judeo-Christian slave revolt. In “La Mauvaise honte,” (1901), Rebell borrows Nietzsche’s argument that “Les doctrines de la Révolution... [sont] empruntées au judaïsme et au puritanisme saxon” (*Chroniques* 132). And in “L’Intelligence du Jacobin” (1901), Rebell hints that the Reign of Terror was an expression of slavish *ressentiment* : “La Révolution française est bien réellement l’œuvre des passions basses, de l’envie impuissante... de la vengeance, de la rancune, de l’ambition sans fierté” (*Demon balcon* 102-3). Like Nietzsche, Rebell thus argues against the utopian revolutionist’s belief that revolutions install justice. Instead, the Revolution brought senseless violence. Nietzsche’s great fear of revolution, too, according to Ansell-Pearson’s *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau*, was that it would “unleash a destructive spirit of

revenge and resentment on mankind, since, in order to win support amongst the disgruntled masses, it must appeal to the basest human instincts” (35).

Moreover, Rebell was against the fundamental leveling effect of the French Revolution’s doctrines. In the *Union des trois aristocraties* he gives a sarcastic thanks to the Revolution for making the “gentleman” feel pleased to be robbed of his titles, to have his château burned and to become a “commoner, ” for giving rise to the proletariat who makes the rich man feel guilty for being rich and for advancing freedom of speech and the press, obligating the intellectual to include the public’s ignorant opinion in his writing (13). Rebell, the royalist and aristocrat would have particularly delighted in Nietzsche’s analysis of the French Revolution in *Beyond Good and Evil*: the French Revolution was a “corruption” since the aristocracy had to “throw away its privileges” after it had demoted itself to a “mere function of the monarchy” (BGE 258). In contrast to this state of demise, Nietzsche explains that a “healthy aristocracy” “experiences itself not as a function [of the monarchy] but as [its] *meaning* and highest justification” (BGE 258). Thus Rebell and Nietzsche can be considered advocates of aristocratic radicalism in their attack on the French Revolution for deprecating noble values such as privilege and erasing a *pathos of distance* between social classes.

6. Criticism of 19th-Century Society and Its Political Institutions

Consistent with their antiegalitarianism, Nietzsche and Rebell were fierce critics of 19th- century democracy, socialism, and anarchism, believing that these institutions, as offspring of the French Revolution, were to blame for the decline of man and culture. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche identifies the democrats, socialists, and anarchists as heirs of the Christian movement: all believe in a religion of pity, equality, and faith in the

“autonomous herd,” or community in which neither high nor low, rich nor poor, friend nor foe is distinguishable, and further, they are all hostile to any other form of life (BGE 202). According to Nietzsche in *Human All Too Human*, *ressentiment* manifests itself in the socialist for whom the demand for equality is not about justice but greed (HAH 451), since for Nietzsche “non-possessors” of land have no more right than “possessors” (HAH 452). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche establishes critical links between “The Christian and The Anarchist,” as his chapter title suggests: both “the anarchist,” who acts as “the mouthpiece of declining strata of society” demanding “equal rights,” and the Christian, “feel vile” and have a need to suffer, and so prescribe for themselves revolution as a solution (TI IX: 34). The Christian condemns the world and awaits the “Last Judgment” as the socialist worker condemns society and awaits revolutions (TI IX: 34). Thus, their common attitude that makes revolutions is: “If I’m *canaille*, [scum of the populace] you ought to be so, too” (TI IX:34). Even Nietzsche’s style of writing with his insertions of French words displays his elitism.

Like Nietzsche, Rebell isolates the Christian slave revolt in morality as the common denominator of contemporary society’s political institutions. In particular, Rebell makes the same connections between Christianity and the democratic and socialist movements. In “Judaïsme et révolution” (1898), he proclaims that “the two sons of Christianity” are “the Protestant” and the “democrat” and compares the Bible to a Pandora’s box among whose enclosed evils are “mépris de l’autorité, égalité des hommes, révolution, insurrection universelle, confusion, désordre” (380). In “Hugues Rebell dans *Mercur de France*” (1905), Henri Mazel confirms that Rebell’s hatred and contempt for democracy and Christian morality amounts to the same: “Toutes ses idées

revenaient à celle-ci: le droit absolu pour le fort d'exercer sa force même au détriment des faibles. Or une doctrine niveleuse qui poursuit de son envie malfaisante toutes les supériorités, qui réserve ses tendresses pour tout ce qui est maladif, déchu, taré ou inepte, ne pouvait que lui être odieuse" (486-7). Perhaps without realizing it, Mazel gives not only a perfect depiction of Rebell's political position, but also a summary of Nietzsche's influence on Rebell's criticism of 19th-century politics.

Rebell is particularly virulent in his criticism of socialism and anarchy. He continues the same Nietzschean attack on the Christian mentality behind leftist anarchism: "le christianisme, à son origine, a été surtout un parti populaire, et n'a pu naître et se développer qu'en relevant les pauvres aux détriments des riches" (*Union* 20N). Rebell also associates Evangelists with Marxists, echoing *Twilight of the Idol's* Part IX passage on "The Christian and The Anarchist:" "les paraboles sentimentales des Evangiles ... ont été le point de départ des froides déductions de Marx et de ses disciples sur le salaire et le capital" (*Union* 21). Moreover, Rebell tends to confound the socialist movement with the violence of leftist anarchists: in "Démocratie contemporaine" (1893), he refers to the socialist's "accès de sadisme populaire," his desire to rob the rich of their fortune and his pride in having stripped the nobility of its titles (119). He further refers to the socialist as "canaille," as Nietzsche does of the anarchist and Christian in *Twilight of the Idols* (119). Thierry Rodange explains in his dissertation that Rebell made no distinction between socialism as a legitimate political movement and the clandestine terrorism of anarchists: "Rebell les considère [les socialistes] comme de véritables terroristes, aux intentions évidentes de destruction, tels des anarchistes," even though "Prétendre qu'anarchisme et socialisme... présentent les mêmes dangers est très exagéré"

(TR diss 265). Rodange's contention can serve to show the extent to which Rebell borrowed his ideas on socialism and anarchism from Nietzsche, for example, from the *Antichrist* which posited that the socialist and anarchist share a main commonality with Christian morality, namely the instinct to destroy (A 58). In defense of his financial aristocracy, Rebell uses Nietzsche's arguments once again to condemn the socialists on the basis of their instinct to destroy all that is life-affirming and durable, and which they are impotent to obtain for themselves: "Supprimer l'or, proclamer l'égalité des fortunes, ne pas laisser à chacun le droit d'acquérir... ce serait souhaiter la mort ou le sommeil, la vie et le plaisir n'étant qu'un effort, un travail continuel" (*Union* 19-20). Rebell no doubt appropriates Nietzsche's theory of the Christian slave revolt in morality as the psychology of the modern democrat, socialist and anarchist to denigrate contemporary society in order to reaffirm power to his three elite groups.

Further, Rebell borrows Nietzsche's idea that democracy breeds mediocrity, homogeneity, and mass culture in order to argue that the vulgarization of art in the Third Republic was responsible for an intellectual crisis that brought about the decline of great literature and a general reign of ignorance. Ideally, "Le public est le collaborateur nécessaire de l'artiste" (*Union* 10). But as Rebell explains in "A propos des noces de Figaro" (1892), "En ces temps de démocratie, l'écrivain ne s'adresse plus à un public très restreint de lettrés et de raffinés, mais à une foule de toutes classes et de toutes nations, ignorante et grossière, occupée seulement de babillages, de politique et d'intrigues" (66). Rebell views democracy and art as irreconcilable enemies, since democracy hates all noble ideas in its effort to deny any form of individual distinction. This conception of democracy undoubtedly comes from Nietzsche, for whom, "the diminution and leveling

of European man constitutes [the] greatest danger” (GM I:12). For Nietzsche, “the democratic movement is not only a form of the decay of political organization but a form of the decay, namely the diminution, of man, making him mediocre and lowering his value” (BGE 203). Democracy thus conceived not only fails to appreciate human differences, such as aptitude, but denies the possibility of these differences, causing individuals to neglect and depreciate any outstanding potential within themselves. Such a society naturally gives way to mediocrity and stupidity.¹²

Rebell writes in the *Union des trois aristocraties* that in such a society, no creative will is possible: democracy popularizes art, destroying all higher culture. “Romans, théâtre, histoire, philosophie, science, tout s’adresse à la populace: les démocrates veulent, comme ils le disent plus justement encore qu’ils ne le croient, tout vulgariser” (*Union* 11). Since contemporary writers must cater to an uneducated audience, Rebell argues that they study nothing, imagine they know everything and favor quantity over quality: the literary profession reduced to mass culture has thus become a form of prostitution (*Union* 34). Rebell echoes Nietzsche’s invectives against democratic culture. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche declares of contemporary literature, “Books for all the world are always foul-smelling books, the smell of small people clings to them” (BGE 30).

Since for Nietzsche and Rebell, democracy implies similarity, they both object to public opinion and the press. Like Zarathustra, who mocks the “revolting verbal swill” of newspapers (Z III: “On Passing By”), Rebell aims his anger at the journalism industry: “Liberté de la presse signifie esclavage de la pensée, puissance de tous veut dire oppression des meilleurs” (*Union* 11).¹³

Hence, to remedy these problems emanating from the contemporary egalitarian society, Nietzsche envisions his artist-tyrants who will restore higher culture in the world while Rebell proposes a union of his three aristocracies to arm themselves against democracy. In *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, Rebell calls upon his "writer-aristocrat" to take up his pen as a weapon in a literary war against contemporary society: "En ces temps de honte où penser est regardé comme un outrage à l'humanité .../ Tiens ta plume toujours prête; /Et puis habitue-toi à voir le sang couler, car l'heure est proche où il te faudra combattre" (*Chants* 43). Rebell is referring to his own mission but it is Nietzsche who is among the fiercest initiators of such a battle.

7. Rebell's Platonic Criticism of the Third French Republic¹⁴

Although Rebell evidently borrows Nietzsche's criticism of 19th-century democracy as the establishment of herd morality, meaning unanimity in morals and actions, Rebell uses other criticisms of democracy, specific to Plato's in *The Republic* Book VIII to express particular complaints about the Third French Republic. According to Plato, "every individual is free to do as he likes" (557b). Further, *The Republic* claims that a democracy contains a complete assortment of constitutions (557d). It therefore follows that the self-rule each person has the freedom to exercise in a democracy constitutes an individual constitution. For Plato, then, it is not the sameness of values but the disparateness among them in a democracy that allows each individual to become a constitution unto him/ herself. But since, according to Plato, liberty has no limit in a democracy, a state of lawlessness results in which each citizen becomes selfishly oriented toward his private constitution: "the minds of the citizens become so sensitive, that the least touch of authority is resented as intolerable, till finally... in their desire to have no

master they disregard all laws, written or unwritten” (563d). Even though Nietzsche would agree with Plato’s indictment of the anarchical element in the democratic masses,¹⁵ Nietzsche mainly focused on its anonymous (herd) element. Thus, when Rebell expresses his fear that democracy could lead to the absolute rule of self-interested egoists, who, he claimed, made possible the corruption and scandals under the Third Republic, he is most directly reflecting Plato’s views.

Rebell would no doubt agree with Plato that democracy is produced by those who think they have a right to be wealthy just by being citizens. According to Plato, democracy appears as the collapse of an oligarchy in which the poor citizens, covetous of the riches of the few rulers, revolt against them: “democracy originates when the poor win, kill or exile their opponents, and give the rest equal civil rights and opportunities of office” (557a). Further, Plato argues that the excess of wealth which was to blame for the fall of the oligarchs is also the root cause for the demise of democracy, since all citizens, now wealthy, vie against each other in their desires for possessions (562b). The Panama Affair¹⁶ exemplifies the sort of scandal, that in the eyes of Rebell, was caused by private persons, corrupted by democracy’s obsession with money, who exploited the failing project for self-gain. In “*Démocratie contemporaine*,” Rebell praises Lesseps as a genius, “superior man” who became a victim of democrats, namely the bribed deputies: “Il est vraiment inique qu’un homme soit condamné pour escroquerie parce qu’il n’a pas réussi, ou parce qu’il n’a pas fait gagner d’argent à ses actionnaires” (120). For the corrupt deputies and journalists, Rebell claims, “peu importe qu’une vaste et magnifique entreprise soit compromise, que l’activité humaine se ralentisse, que Paris et toute la France soient bouleversés... ils sont heureux, ils ont abaissé l’homme qui s’élevait au-

dessus des autres, ils ont égalisé et nivelé : que personne ne sorte du rang et qu'il n'y ait plus d'homme supérieur" ("Démocratie contemporaine" 120-1).

Rebell's blame on the corrupt individuals in the government and in the journalism industry for exploiting the scandal for their own profit, and his further blame on the "leveling effect" of democracy for ruining Panama and putting an end to Lesseps's exceptional ambition are somewhat distorted, however, since the project was already a financial disaster before the need to keep it secret occurred. The real target of Rebell's attack, according to Rodange, was the commoners elected to the Chamber of Deputies: since the Jules Grévy presidency (1879), the *petite* and *moyenne bourgeoisie* were brought to power and this participation of the common classes in government was the cause of Rebell's outrage (TR diss 22). Thus, Rebell may have used Plato's criticism of private self-interest in democracy to use as a strategy to defend his own self-serving view that commoners as government representatives could only abuse their political power.

Rebell also fears the tyranny that Plato believed would inevitably emerge from democratic rule. When each democratic citizen becomes thoroughly corrupted by "an excessive desire for liberty at the expense of everything else" (562c), a state of pandemonium among conflicting interests ensues. This is only ended, Plato claims, by the citizens' demand for one of their number to seize power in order to restore order: "In this struggle [of interests]... the people normally put forward a single popular leader, whom they nurse to greatness.... This leadership is the root from which tyranny invariably springs" (565c-d). Perhaps inspired both by Plato's conception of how democracy always collapses into tyranny as well as by Zarathustra's depiction of "mob-rule,"¹⁷ Rebell describes General Boulanger¹⁸ as the people's elected tyrant: "la

domination d'une foule barbare, le commandement maladroit et indifférent de l'anonyme.... On a vu, par l'aventure du général Boulanger, avec quelle facilité elle [la foule] allait créer un dictateur" (*Union* 39). As Plato mistrusted the despotic potential in the democratic masses, Rebell accuses the Third Republic of the anonymous, impersonal rule of the people that gave way to a favored member among them.¹⁹

Moreover, Rebell's claim that Boulanger represented the attempt of the democratic masses to unite their voices in a common dictator is accurate to a certain extent. According to Michel Winock's *Nationalisme, antisémitisme et fascisme en France* (1990), boulangism appeared as the marriage of two social aspirations: "le désir d'une véritable souveraineté populaire" and "une attente de l'imaginaire collectif, qui s'incarne dans un Sauveur [in an overthrow of the Third Republic]" while "La communication de masse fait le reste," for example, in the form of pamphlets, placards (314). But as Rodange's dissertation claims, Rebell was at first pro-Boulanger when he believed like other royalists that he was the only man to topple the Third Republic; but when he failed to do so, Rebell became anti-Boulangist (TR diss 25). Once again Rebell's criticism of democracy seems to stem from his own private self-interest, which in this case was to reject a leader whose failure had disappointed him by branding him the democrat's dictator.

Analogous to Rebell's apparent usage of Nietzsche's anti-democratic arguments is his adaptation of Plato's: he seems to use the ideas of both of these philosophers on the subject of democracy in order to bolster his own opinion that commoners did not deserve political power. In particular, Rebell borrows Plato's view of the possible despotism in the masses and of individual abuses of power in a democracy to attack those who did not

conform to his personal political expectations (a government that did not unconditionally support a genius like Lesseps or a leader who failed to overthrow the Third Republic).

Chapter 2

Points of Divergence In Nietzsche and Rebell's Political Thinking

Rebell's possible misappropriation of Nietzsche as an aristocratic radical is blind to Nietzsche's non commitment to politics. But in so doing, he suggests a (new) re-reading of each of their philosophies. In the "Preface" of *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche defines the "free-spirits" as skeptics who cast suspicion on all habitual evaluation and perspectives, who are masters over themselves, controlling their "For and Against" (HAH Preface 6). Further, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche calls the "free-spirits" "genuine philosophers" and "commanders" who have an unconstrained view (BGE 211). Although Nietzsche himself does not always endorse the open-mindedness of his "free-spirits" in politics,²⁰ he manages to control his "For and Against" in that he consistently abstains from choosing political sides and from making any concrete political engagement. In contrast to the "free –spirits" are "men of conviction" who "are not worthy of the least consideration in fundamental questions of value and disvalue," since they never question "true and untrue" (A 54). "Convictions" are therefore "prisons" (A 54) since they are nothing more than opinion that has become stiffened because of laziness of spirit (HAH 9: 637). As uncontested claims of truth, convictions are precisely what Nietzsche resists in matters of politics and morality.²¹ Nietzsche and Rebell's divergence will therefore come as no surprise when one takes into account the fundamental difference between the abstract thought of the pure philosopher and the practical thought of the French social critic.

1. Rebell's Political Conviction

Rebell, however, can be thought of as a man of political conviction, representing the singular view of the French royalist party: “Le parti royaliste a un but et il n’en a qu’un seul: restaurer la Royauté nationale. Il voit le salut, la prospérité, la gloire de la France dans cette restauration, et uniquement en elle” (“L’Autorité illégitime,” (1902) *Chroniques* 145). Though Rebell is not always clear that he is a legitimist (proponent of a monarch by birth right) and not an Orléanist (proponent of an elected monarch), he is consistent throughout his writings in expressing his preference for a French king.

According to Raymond Recouly’s *The Third Republic* (1928), the royalist party (legitimists and Orléanists) initially believed that the Third Republic was only temporary until a French monarchy would be restored, but when the royalist Marshal Mac-Mahon resigned from the presidency in 1879 after he failed to dissolve the Republican Chamber, the Republic became permanent (82). Rebell, however, can be categorized in the extreme Right that, according to Michel Winock’s “L’Héritage contre-révolutionnaire” (1993), survived the death in 1883 of the Comte de Chambord, grandson of Charles X, (who died in exile in 1836) and that thus survived the last hope of a legitimist restoration (40). In “La Retraite de M. Maurice Barrès” (1901), Rebell implies that he is a legitimist, a fan of the Comte de Chambord who had failed to win the support of the majority after he refused to give up the Bourbon white flag in favor of the Orléanist tricolor: “Nous autres royalistes nous avons un drapeau, nous savons ce que nous voulons: arracher la France à la folie démocratique, anéantir toute l’oeuvre de la Révolution: il n’y a pas d’ambiguïté possible” (*Chroniques* 109). Rebell’s steadfast legitimist conviction led him to a narrow view of France reduced to two opposing groups: “the party of the Republic or or anarchy” and “the party of France or of royalism” (“La Retraite de M. Maurice Barrès,”

Chroniques 111). For Rebell, the French were either in favor of a monarch, most preferably a Bourbon and were therefore among his allies, or they were diametrically opposed to one and were his most bitter enemies. Rebell often appears as a prisoner of his political convictions, believing in a hereditary king as the only legitimate authority, and little inclined to compromise his view or to admit others.

Rebell's conviction in a monarchy is further hardened by his belief that it should be absolutist, since it would serve as a safeguard against what Rebell saw as the tyrannical potential within democracy. While Nietzsche, too, is opposed to the despotic mob in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he proposes in *Beyond Good and Evil* (242), contrary to Rebell's solution of a tyrant-king to democratic rule,²² that the tyrannical element democracy cultivates may be for the betterment of democracy. Nietzsche claims that democracy as an inevitable movement in Europe will produce "in single, exceptional cases the strong human being [who] will have to turn out stronger and richer than ever before," thanks to the medley of influences he will need to learn how to master and resist (BGE 242). Nietzsche calls democracy's production of this rare higher type the "cultivation of tyrants," considering "tyrants" in the "most spiritual sense," as perhaps enlightened despots who will be able to use democracy as an instrument in creative domination (242). The despotism Nietzsche favors in this passage is therefore not an alternative to, but an option within democracy, since this form of government is capable of producing its own rare higher type that can in turn effectively command it. But for Rebell, unlike for Nietzsche, since no good can ever come from democracy, a tyrant separate from the popular masses is needed to completely suppress them, especially their own type of tyranny. Accordingly then, Rebell prefers absolutism to democracy because

a despot appears more stable, since he does not permit disagreement or defiance of his measures and would also automatically favor the privileged caste. Hence, Rebell claims,

les gouvernements absolus nous semblent les moins tyranniques, car rencontrant plus de difficultés que les autres pour subsister, ils tournent toutes leurs préoccupations vers la politique. On doit même préférer les mesures arbitraires dont ils sont coutumiers au fonctionnement invariable de la machine démocratique, à cette administration effrayante où tout le monde commande, sans que personne ose prendre une décision.

(*Union* 38)

Rodange explains in his dissertation that what Rebell feared in a democratic state was parliamentarism, which a totalitarian authority would necessarily subdue: “[un état démocratique] n’est pas régi d’une main de fer par un homme dont les décisions sont irrévocables et qui n’hésite pas à employer la force pour les faire appliquer. Le pouvoir étant, dans une démocratie, divisé et décentralisé, il n’y a plus un chef mais plusieurs hommes qui... cherchent, pour la plupart du temps, à satisfaire le plus grand nombre” (TR diss 256). Rebell judges such a multi-party government inept, claims Rodange, because it is composed “d’atermoiements, de discussions, d’hésitations” (TR diss 256).²³ Besides, the only tyrant capable of imposing his will on a people, as Rebell contends in his *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, is a king (*Chants* 44). Rebell’s royalism is representative of the extreme Right that Charles Maurras led and eventually developed into the Action Française. Samuel M. Osgood’s characterization of Charles Maurras’s type of monarchy in *France Under the Third and Fourth Republics* (1960) is wholly consistent with Rebell’s: Maurras wanted a traditional, hereditary, anti-parliamentary

government in which the king “is the absolute dictator in all matters involving the general interest” (63). Such a government would therefore represent the salvation from the Third Republic’s parlementarism and constant shifts in power.²⁴

Rebell therefore shows himself to be much closer to Maurras than to Nietzsche in that he fostered a political conviction he always maintained and fought for in his writings. Although Nietzsche’s political philosophy includes the possibility and even the advocacy for a despotic power, especially in his later writings such as *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, unlike Rebell, never definitively commits himself to a particular ideal type of authoritarian regime. For instance, even if Nietzsche desires to see a new ruling caste in Europe with an unrelenting will, he is never specific about what that power would entail politically. *Beyond Good and Evil* particularly shows that Nietzsche’s vision of rulers remains fractured and inconsistent: he expresses admiration for a popular autocrat like Napoleon (BGE 199); he also wants “a new caste” of rulers (208, 251), but who they are, such as his “good” cosmopolite Europeans (208) or his democratic higher type of the future, is as unclear as what they would do; and still, he proposes the rule of his “philosopher-legislators,” his “free-spirits” (211). On the contrary, however, Rebell never falters from his clear-cut rightist politics and is perhaps the most consistent with himself in his political engagement.

Besides, Rebell’s insistence on an absolute monarch as the only legitimate political authority can be seen as the restriction of will to power to one particular form, namely power-over as crude domination over others. As Hatab warns against all such reductions of Nietzsche’s central philosophical concept, “will to power cannot be restricted to modes of physical, social, or political control. Although domination is

indeed an instance of will to power, there are other forms of power that do not involve domination over other people,” such as self-mastery and self-overcoming (Hatab 45). Thus, while Rebell’s political reading of Nietzsche from the Right may be justified, it is also severely limited and limiting.

2. Preference For the Human Over the Superhuman: Rebell’s Master Race

Since Nietzsche never clearly defines the political authority he would like to see rule, one could also argue that he does not endorse a caste of masters, bred from the characteristics of historical aristocrats, whose mission would be to dominate the world, as critics like Ansell-Pearson suggest about Nietzsche’s artist-tyrants in *The Will To Power*. Nietzsche’s concepts of nobility and master morality may not be specific to class but rather psychological traits that anyone can acquire. Nicholas Martin’s “Breeding Greeks: Nietzsche, Gobineau and Classical Theories of Race” (2004) argues that, “Nietzsche stresses the possibility that nobility (*Vornehmheit*)²⁵ is an acquired rather than a biological trait” (43). For instance, for Nietzsche, being noble, which should be a “great concept” in contemporary society, entails “wanting to be by oneself, being able to be different, standing alone and having to live independently” (BGE 212), in addition to being able to “create values” (BGE 261), having a “strong exercise of will” (BGE 260), “having reverence for oneself” (BGE 287) and “never thinking of degrading its duties into duties for everyone” (BGE 272).

Rebell, however, seems to limit Nietzsche’s *Vornehmheit* to define the traits of his three nobilities who would be masters of their society. In the “Préface” to his translation of Zarathustra’s “On the Higher Man,” Rebell characterizes Nietzsche’s “homme supérieur” as having “le désintéressement, le noble amour, la réelle charité [qui] ...

seront toujours méconnus de la foule,” that in contrast, is composed of “cowards” and “the vain” (263). Consistent with how he describes the traits of his three types of aristocrats in the *Union*, Rebell seems to want to create his own noble or master morality based on those good-natured noble souls whom the crowd despises. Due to their moral superiority over the crowd, (i.e., by their disinterestedness, noble love and real charity)-- Rebell wants to argue that his higher man has a natural right to dominate the crowd. Rebell’s attempt to politicize Nietzsche’s higher men and “noble” type is comparable to Dombowsky’s: believing that the spiritual qualities of the noble type justify the right of masters to rule, Dombowsky claims that, “In the present, in the guise of the noble free spirits, they are engaged in an ideological warfare and a war of cunning, and support a reversal of values in which... premodern, classical values take precedence. Their ultimate objective is to resist and subvert egalitarianism and undermine the democratic social contract” (Dombowsky 54). Rebell’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s noble type has the same weakness that Dombowsky’s has: both reduce Nietzsche’s philosophy to politics whereas Nietzsche seems rather to subordinate politics to philosophy. Rebell evidently fails to understand that Nietzsche wants to avoid all self-justified truth claims and diverges from him by attempting to use philosophy to justify his, Rebell’s, own politics: “L’esprit monarchiste n’est pas seulement un esprit politique... il y a une morale, une littérature, une philosophie monarchistes” that Rebell thinks will bring about “l’ordre dans les moeurs et l’intelligence” (“Pour nos écrivains français” (1901), *Chroniques* 99). Tracey B. Strong aptly summarizes the weakness in all such interpretations of Nietzsche’s noble type: “Nietzsche is not calling for some aristocracy

of noble producers... in modern societies, all attempts at moral valuation are simply ideological falsifications designed to justify a self-serving position” (Strong 207).

While Rebell’s superior humans do at least appear to have the psychological traits of Nietzsche’s, Rebell did not accept the *Übermensch*, who, distinct from Zarathustra’s “higher men,” is not a realizable ontology but who may represent every man’s, (including the men among the most superior) interminable need to self-overcome. In *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*, Rebell opposes his ideal man whom he calls the “beau tyran” to Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*, whom he explicitly rejects: “Cette terre est mon paradis,/ Et mes héros et mais saints sont des hommes de la terre .../ Mes héros sont des hommes complets ./ Ils n’ont pas besoin d’être des *surhommes*” (157 ; my emphasis). Michel Leroy’s “Hugues Rebell : poète nietzschéen” (1974) is therefore inaccurate in purporting that Rebell exalts “le Surhomme [nietzschéen]” (32). Rebell seems to object to Nietzsche’s superhuman²⁶ as an unrealizable ideal whereas his heroes of the future are real people, capable of a complete, ultimate self-improvement. In his “Examen” to the *Chants*, Rebell further clarifies that “le héros à qui je songe [le beau tyran]... n’est encore qu’une figure idéale, mais l’idéal parfois se réalise” (198). Thus, in contradistinction to Nietzsche’s superhuman, Rebell’s ideal will one day incarnate itself. By his refusal of the superhuman, Rebell proves once again to be a social philosopher who requires real individuals to embody what he idealizes while distinguishing himself from the pure philosopher Nietzsche who resists the concrete.

Rebell’s preference for the human over the Nietzschean superhuman is, moreover, fair and warranted. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche perhaps best defines the *Übermenschen* by what they are not: the superman is “not man: not the neighbor, not the

poorest, not the most ailing, not the best” (Z IV: “On the Higher Man” 3). Alan D. Schrift’s “Nietzsche For Democracy?” (2000) is therefore justified in proposing that “the *Übermensch* does not indicate an ontological state or way of being that a subject could instantiate” (225). Rebell would argue, along with Schrift, that Nietzsche’s emphasis in the word *Über-mensch* is on the *über*, the process of going rather than on a destination reached. Rebell opposes the superhuman precisely because it is not simply an improved man. In the Preface of *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche confirms: “The last thing I should promise would be to ‘improve’ mankind. No new idols are erected by me... *Overthrowing idols* (my word for “ideals”)—that comes closer to my craft” (EH Preface 2). The overman, then, is a sort of anti-ideal, since Nietzsche seems to create it in order to overthrow past ideals, namely the ideal/idol, God, which is the personification of the Christian moral view to which the Western world has limited its thinking and upon which it has based every aspect of its self-assurance.²⁷ Rebell, however, believed in a future humanity in which the “Tyrant” would dominate the world with an “real authority” (*Chants* 197). In contrast to Nietzsche’s aim to overthrow idols without constructing new ones, Rebell sees the writer’s duty as “ayant à briser des idoles et à relever des Dieux” (*Union* 35). In his writings, Rebell never proclaims the death of God, perhaps because he is not ready to deal with the void that exists as a consequence of the destruction of the Christian tradition. Unlike Nietzsche, he may still believe in a universal meaning to take new authority over the world once the old one (of monotheism) has been overthrown.

While Rebell rejects the *Übermensch*, he seems to be inspired by Nietzsche’s superior men, who are as much above the law as they are at the center of it, even though they, too, differ from Rebell’s leaders. Both Nietzsche and Rebell believe in exceptional

human beings. Nietzsche, however, unlike Rebell, does not espouse any particular ruling class or ideology. Yet while Nietzsche may appreciate the qualities of a Cesar (TI IX:38) or a Napoleon (GM I:16), he esteems them simply as great humans. Besides, according even the best must be overcome: “A people is a detour of nature to get to six or seven great men.— Yes, and then to get around them” (BGE 126). For Rebell, however, these several great men would represent ends in themselves for humanity. Rebell’s great men would specifically be despots whom Nietzsche ultimately criticizes. For example, Rebell admires Bismarck for the same reason Nietzsche disapproves of his *Realpolitik*. In “L’Alsace-Lorraine et l’état actuel des esprits” (1897), Rebell appreciates Bismarck’s absolutism as the force that allowed him to build an army that defeated France which did not have a strong military in the war of 1871 (29). He further hypothesizes that the German army continues to be superior for the same reason of its superior political leadership by a strong emperor:

si une guerre éclatait entre la France et l’Allemagne [aujourd’hui], les contradictions et les rivalités, inévitables dans un gouvernement sans chef, rendraient inutiles le courage et le savoir-faire de tant de braves Français, tandis que l’Allemagne aurait cet avantage incomparable de se trouver organisée sous le seul homme, peut-être, en Europe, qui ait encore souci de la grandeur, des droits et des obligations du pouvoir: l’Empereur d’Allemagne ! (“L’Alsace-Lorraine” 29)

Yet as Strong suggests, although Nietzsche may have admired Bismarck’s skill as a warrior, he came to dislike him because he used the state to serve his own ends (Strong 200). The difference in Nietzsche’s opinions of Bismarck and Rebell’s view of imperial

Germany in general re-emphasizes the French writer's significant divergence from Nietzsche in his conviction for an absolutist ruler.

3. Rebell's Preference For Master Morality Over Slave Morality

Perhaps Rebell's failure to see master and slave moralities as a dynamic applicable to politics accounts for this divergence.²⁸ Like Nietzsche scholars such as Dombowsky and Ansell-Pearson, Rebell is blind to the possibility that Nietzsche deliberately sets up master morality to appear as a supra-morality. If understood as such, Nietzsche's strategy would show that the masters' system of valuation, like any morality, has no preeminence over others. When Nietzsche first introduces master and slave moralities, he adds immediately that, "in all the higher and mixed cultures there also appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities, and yet more often interpenetration and mutual misunderstanding of both, and at times occur directly alongside each other—even within the same human being, within a *single* soul" (BGE 260). The higher being or higher culture is thus marked by its ability to combine these moralities in some articulation with each other. Although Nietzsche claims that democracy is the heir of the Christian movement (BGE 202), implying that it is perhaps wholly slavish, he acknowledges later that there exists an "intermarriage of masters and slaves" in the contemporary democratic order (BGE 261). Rebell's criticism of democracy does not seem to consider the latter passage. The problem confronting the 19th-century democratic order is that most often slave morality overpowers master morality in the ordinary individual, so he adopts the "herd" mentality. Yet the conditions established by the mediocritization of man can favor the appearance of a few exceptional humans (BGE 241, 242), as I've already mentioned, or even give rise to good elements in

the crowd, the “industrious, handy, multipurpose herd animal” (BGE 242). Lawrence J. Hatab’s *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy* (1995) considers that “Cultural creativity is made possible by a dialectic of master and slave characteristics, so that not everything in the latter is slavish and not everything in the former is noble” (43). On one level, Nietzsche may therefore condemn a slavish “herd” community for lacking creative will because it may also lack the necessary noble ingredient to posit new values. But on another level, Nietzsche suggests that no community is entirely slavish or entirely noble; and specifically the contemporary democratic community, despite its tendency to favor slave morality over noble, still allows for some new values to be posited, however few.

Although Nietzsche and Rebell may have a similar disdain for the common people who do not cultivate their individualism and unique talents, the latter does not believe in the existence of great individuals emerging from the crowd or even the mediocre industriousness of the common man but suggests that his elite classes exist separately and independently of the masses. In *Union des trois aristocraties*, Rebell writes, “Le temps n’est plus de ces nobles princes [during the Renaissance] qui savaient dans la foule reconnaître leurs semblables. La démocratie moderne n’admet ni ces faiblesses, ni cette supériorité” (31). In an attempt to distinguish his nobilities from the crowd, Rebell thinks of wealth, birth, and intellect as traits which the common person is unable to have. While Nietzsche does not allow his criticism of contemporary society and man to prevent his appreciation of them, Rebell criticizes without appreciating. This difference stems from Rebell’s lack of consideration for the inextricable relationship between master and slave moralities in modern culture and individuals.

4. A Higher Type In Spite of Himself: Rebell As a Resentful Noble

Yet despite his preference of master morality to slave morality, Rebell himself carries the “decisive mark” of the “higher,” “more spiritual nature” in whom the master and slave moralities are in conflict (GM II:16). Rebell can be considered to represent, as a member of the French royalist party of the end of the 19th Century, a unique hybrid morality stemming from a tension between Nietzsche’s masters and slaves, a noble morality which, incapable of reclaiming power for itself after 1789 and impotent to change the present, harbored *ressentiment* against the makers and preservers of the French Revolution’s ideals. Rebell’s rejection of the Revolution as the work of the envious against the noble class is consistent with Nietzsche’s claim that *ressentiment* is the “catalyst of revolution” (TI IX: 34) in that *ressentiment* represents “the great rebellion against the domination of noble values” (EH GM). Therefore, Rebell appears to oppose slave morality. Yet Nietzsche’s depiction of *ressentiment*, unique to slave morality, is applicable to Rebell’s own politics. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche establishes *ressentiment* as the pivotal difference between master and slave moralities: “While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is ‘outside,’ what is ‘different,’ what is ‘not itself,’; and this No is its creative deed... this need to direct one’s view outward instead of back toward oneself—is the essence of *ressentiment*,” since slave morality requires a hostile external world for its existence (GM I: 10).

The hostile external world against which Rebell arms his three nobilities is the Third Republic as the inheritor of the French Revolution’s principles. His politics can be thought of as noble morality turned against itself, as unforgiving of those who had toppled the aristocracy as of the aristocrats themselves who had initially demanded

revolution and who had voluntarily given up their title and privileges. In Rebell's last novel, *Le Diable est à table*, the prince de Chéronne blames the Revolution on the nobles who initiated it and lashes a bitter attack on those who gave up their feudal rights on the night of August 4, 1789, believing that these aristocrats turned revolutionists are "les seuls à exécrer," and not the "petits rhéteurs de la Convention" and the "canaille jacobine" (195):

Misérables apostats des ancêtres! ... vous n'avez eu besoin que d'une nuit pour gaspiller le trésor séculaire des aïeux, ce magnifique héritage de gloire, d'orgueil, de puissance ! Vous avez eu honte d'être beaux et forts, honte de votre race ... vous avez admis pêle-mêle avec vous vos ennemis. Si aujourd'hui on pille votre château, si demain on vous égorge, ne criez pas, ne demandez pas pitié. En renonçant à vos privilèges, vous avez renoncé à vivre, et je ne veux même pas voir vos funérailles, vous puez depuis trop longtemps le cadavre ! (196)

For Rebell via his aristocrat character, the nobility's surrender to the Revolution represents the ultimate act of cowardly suicide for the class he believed should have unconditionally resisted the *Grande Peur* and defended its right to rule. He refuses to forgive those who either accepted the Revolution or fled to other countries, leaving behind their property and name. Rebell would not accept that some of his old aristocratic ancestors, members of both his mother's class and his paternal grandmother's, could think differently from him and so he reviles them. Hence, Rebell manifests *ressentiment* as the "will to persecute" and as "hatred of those who think differently" (A 21). He exemplifies "slavery" that is itself "the narrowing of perspective" (BGE 188).

This narrowing of Rebell's perspective, which prevented him from viewing his contemporaries as anyone other than either his allies or adversaries, stemmed from his outrage against the society in which he lived. His violent hostility toward his external environment was based on his impotent need to avenge his aristocratic ancestors, who were overthrown from power and who would never again regain it. In addition, according to Rodange, Rebell rejected democracy and socialism primarily because "ils correspondaient à la disparition de ses privilèges," for instance, of education, which was no longer exclusively for the blood nobles and rich, but became free and available to the public as Rebell was growing up,²⁹ and to the horror of his parents who had sent him to a Jesuit school (TR diss 263). Thus Rebell's desire to reject the society that had taken away his social and political privileges was an expression of the "vengefulness of the impotent" which is opposite of the "noble-mode of evaluation" (GM I:10). To explain Nietzsche's characterization of the true noble individual in precise but simple terms, he is one who is marked by his ability to forgive and forget: if *ressentiment* appears in the noble man, it "consummates and exhausts itself in immediate reaction;" the noble man is incapable of taking his enemies seriously or even his misdeeds for very long (GM I:10). In contrast, Rebell could neither forget the "vie magnifique et glorieuse de la monarchie française" (of the Old Regime), as he expresses in his letter to Maurras's *Enquête sur la monarchie* (147), nor forgive anyone who cast off this monarchy, believing that the Third Republic's "founders" and "heros" "sont couverts de sang royal" ("Les Vrais régicides" (1901), *Chroniques* 108).

5. Rebell's Revaluation of Values

Rebell's *ressentiment* would have prevented him from fully appreciating Nietzsche's revaluation of values, which does not aim at a simple recovery of aristocratic values once suppressed under slave morality but rather at the future redemption from all past modes of valuation, including perhaps the political. Recall that the first historic "revaluation of values" Nietzsche posits is the one he equates with the Judeo-Christian slave revolt in morality that devalued master morality by inverting its values (BGE 46; GM I:7). The second "revaluation of values" in Nietzsche's work is the one that he calls for at the end of *The Antichrist* as a revaluation of all Christian values (A 62). This last revaluation would undo the previous one by another devaluation and inversion of everything placed under the ban of Judeo-Christian morality. For Dombowsky, Nietzsche's coming revaluation has "a definite political dimension:" it would represent a counterattack against contemporary society's egalitarian values (Dombowsky 114). Dombowsky further suggests that Nietzsche's revaluation presupposes that pre-modern, pagan values are necessarily healthier and that Nietzsche desires a "hermeneutic process that involves recovery and emulation of these ideals, and not their mere restoration..." (Dombowsky 50).

Like Dombowsky, Rebell seems to understand the second revaluation of values as a total recovery and reaffirmation of past political and social values. His ultimate political goal was a restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, along with the recovery of the Old Regime values that the Revolution had crushed. The objective of the union of his three aristocracies is "d'effacer de nos moeurs et de nos institutions le souvenir du Quatre-vingt-neuf" (*Union* 40). Unable to master his *ressentiment* of all those who had taken power ever since, Rebell expresses the desire for his "maledictions" against the

Revolution to resonate: “L’ère des médiocres est finie, qu’une ère de noblesse recommence!” (*Union* 40). Although Victor Nguyen interestingly concludes that Rebell was inspired by Nietzsche in this final passage of the *Union* but that this inspiration was far from being a “déalque,” or an exact reproduction of Nietzsche’s philosophy, Nguyen does not further explain himself (Nguyen 693). I argue that while Rebell is inspired by Nietzsche in this passage, he is ultimately in conflict with his philosophy and even betrays it here. Both Dombowsky and Rebell’s political interpretations of Nietzsche’s coming revaluation of values are flawed, since Nietzsche’s vision is not a recovery of past values founded on an aristocracy of Rome or Venice but is instead oriented toward the future. Zarathustra warns against the “spirit of revenge” who fails to understand that “The will cannot will backwards” (Z II: “On Redemption”). Revenge as anger against the past manifests itself as “the will’s ill will against time and its ‘it was’” (Z II: “On Redemption”). Rebell’s invective against the Revolution appears to be such a “spirit of revenge.” Zarathustra suggests instead that the aim of the will should be to accept the past and say, “But thus I willed it, thus I shall will it” in a self-affirmation of joy in the future (Z II: “On Redemption”). Rebell is far from this self-assurance in a future pregnant with hope for a new socio-political order founded in a union of his aristocracies when he pronounces his curse on the Revolution: “Révolution méprisable! Ton seul bienfait fut d’augmenter en nous la haine de la bassesse que tu représentes” (*Union* 40).

While the end of *Union des trois aristocraties* shows that Rebell is a prisoner of the past, unable to will the future until the last memory of the Revolution is destroyed, Nietzsche associates himself with the task of his “free-spirits:” “we ourselves, we free spirits, are nothing less than a ‘revaluation of all values,’ an *incarnate* declaration of war

and triumph over all the ancient conceptions of ‘true’ and ‘untrue’” (A 13). Nietzsche’s mission, in contrast to Rebell’s, is to liberate humanity from all past modes of valuation, whether slavish or noble. Finally, Nietzsche and his free spirits embody this revaluation, implying that they carry it with them in their present and toward their future. Rebell’s (or Dombowsky’s) political interpretation is at most therefore a partial appreciation of Nietzsche’s revaluation of values, as it considers only that Nietzsche meant to topple the religio-moral tradition currently ruling the political order in the form of egalitarianism.

Yet despite and in spite of Rebell’s *ressentiment* of the principles of the French Revolution and his inability to overcome his desire to reinstall the pre-revolutionary political and social order, he did strive to be a noble creator of values (namely, the value he saw in his union of three aristocracies) and wanted to believe that the future would integrate this new order. He indeed believed in a capable monarch to come, however despotic, who would promote a higher culture in favoring his three elite groups.

Although Rebell consistently claims to hate French history since 1789, he did necessarily support the emergence of the *grande bourgeoisie*, to which his own father belonged and which the French Revolution made possible through its egalitarian principle of allowing anyone to make money. Rebell’s intellectual aristocracy, despite its opposition to contemporary famous writers, did allow for the emergence of new writers to exist, and with them, a new audience. As he declares in the *Union*, “Se créer un public! travail immense! Il nous faut devenir *révolutionnaires*, -- révolutionnaire, il est vrai, d’un genre nouveau. Nous ne songeons pas à détruire, mais à restaurer” (12). This passage gives credence to Victor Nguyen’s assertion that “[Rebell] ne souhaite nullement une éventuelle contre-révolution au sens où elle ne serait, comme le redoutait Joseph de

Maistre, qu'une révolution contraire. Il ne s'agissait pas de bouleverser mais bien de restaurer" (Nguyen 695-6). Here Rebell seems to contradict the conclusion of the *Union* that proposes that all remnants of the Revolution's ideals must be destroyed. Even if Rebell's revolution in this passage is of a new type in that it will not overthrow institutions, it is paradoxically based on the restoration of old values that those institutions rejected. Although he bases at least two of his nobilities on traditional modes of valuation, such as money and a hereditary right to rule, Rebell still seems to intend their union to be original and to give a new meaning to future generations.

Fernand Vandérem's "Les trois noblesses" (1895), published in the conservative academic journal, *La Revue bleue*, which reviews the *Union*, takes into account the inconsistency in Rebell's idea of a new type of revolution. Of Rebell's three nobilities, Vandérem comments, "les idées de M. Hugues Rebell ne sont pas, je crois, semblables à celles de sa génération... elles marquent une façon nouvelle, il me semble, parmi les jeunes auteurs" (Vandérem 211). But however original and anticipatory of future posterity Rebell's *Union* appears to be, Vandérem adds, "je n'augure rien de bon de cette presque irréalisable mixture [of wealth, intellect and blood nobility]" (Vandérem 211). According to Vandérem then, Rebell's union of three nobilities was a new way of thinking among young authors precisely because it was out of touch with the reality of the democratic times and that it would never therefore be realized in the future. Rebell's revolution, both a restoration as reaffirmation of past values and a counter-revolution or attack on present institutions perhaps reflects back onto the inner self-contradiction that tore at Rebell: his slavish *ressentiment* against his society that he claimed had disempowered his elite groups and his desire to affirm them as noble types capable of

creating new values for the future. Vandérem's reading of the *Union* is thus a valuable one, since it appreciates the tensions within Rebell's counter-revolution that made it original however impractical.

6. Different Visions of the Future

Rebell's vision of the future ultimately diverges from Nietzsche's since his politics of *ressentiment* would not have been able to redeem itself from the past in the way that Zarathustra predicted of his "new nobility." As I will show in this subsection, Rebell fluctuates in his view of the future, and in so doing, entertains a multiplicity of possible readings of his proposed place for France within the European community.

To appreciate how Rebell resists classification among other French royalists of his generation, understanding how his nobility differs from Zarathustra's is first necessary. In the third part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche introduces his concept of a new aristocracy: "a *new nobility* is needed to be the adversary of all mob-rule and of all that is despotic" ("On Old and New Tablets" 11). Thus Zarathustra's "new nobility" will not be a group of new tyrants, since by definition they oppose all tyranny, whether of the democratic masses, of the state, or of one person or commander. Nietzsche emphasizes that this "new nobility" is not a nobility that is bought with "shopkeepers' gold," and so it is therefore neither Rebell's financial aristocracy nor, as, Dombowsky (24) would have us believe, Napoleonic nobility (Z III: "On Old and New Tablets" 12). Further, Zarathustra's "new nobility" will give "new honor, it is not the kind that has serviced a prince," and so therefore is not a royal blood or birth nobility ("On Old and New Tablets" 12). Instead, this new nobility must be entirely founded in the future: "your nobility should not look backwards but ahead. Exiles shall you be from all father

and fore-father lands! Your children's land shall you love; this shall be your new nobility!" ("On Old and New Tablets" 12). Rebell would have been horrified by such a passage, believing that the birth nobility's worst disgrace was their emigration, especially during the *Grande Peur*. Zarathustra's new nobility is therefore diametrically opposed to Rebell's Old Regime aristocracy that indeed looks backwards on their fore-fathers from whom they inherited their power, and *not* ahead. Rebell's birth and wealth nobilities are two points of major divergence from Nietzsche, whose Zarathustran-defined new nobility are grounded neither in hereditary nor in money or social status.

In "Les Poisons de l'université," written for *Le Soleil* in 1902, eight years after the *Union*, Rebell shows most clearly the struggle his vision of the future would have had with Zarathustra's new nobility:

La République n'apparaît le gouvernement de l'avenir qu'à ceux de nous [Rebell and his political party] pour qui l'avenir est la mort. Tout royaliste qui a foi en lui-même et dans les forces secrètes du pays espère bien voir un jour disparaître dans la honte ou au milieu des colères d'un peuple enfin clairvoyant [perhaps a people in whom the three nobilities can unite?], ce troupeau de petits tyranneaux pillards et bavards,

thanks most probably to a "roi-tyran" who will dominate this tyrannical herd ("Les Poisons de l'université," *De mon balcon* 107). Rebell thus expresses a self-contradictory desire for hope in a future founded on a reinstallation of an obliterated past.

Rebell's conception of the future diverges from Nietzsche's in another crucial way: Rebell, too strong an advocate of nationalism, would not have been able to accept Nietzsche's cosmopolitan "good European" in *Beyond Good and Evil*. In addition to

their common political objective of a Bourbon Restoration, Rebell can be considered, to some extent, a supporter of Maurras's rightist nationalism that became an outlet for extreme rightism during the 1880's, as Winock's "L'Héritage contre-révolutionnaire" explains: "La rencontre du nationalisme et de la Contre-Révolution c'est toute l'histoire de l'Action française" (48). Concerning Maurras's nationalism, Winock writes in "L'Action Française" (1993), "le mal est venu de l'étranger. Pour envisager de survivre, le Moi national doit s'affirmer comme une identité absolue, intolérante, protectionniste. Le nationalisme maurrassien est d'abord le refus farouche de toute altération de l'être français par ce qui lui est étranger" (130). Although much has been made about Rebell's adoption of this kind of nationalism as a fundamental point of comparison and contrast between his political philosophy and Nietzsche's international European in *Beyond Good and Evil*,³⁰ I will show how Rebell tends to vacillate between xenophobic, right-wing nationalism and appreciation for foreign cultures in France. By appreciating the differences Rebell had from Nietzsche, a new reading will emerge of the insoluble differences within Rebell's writing.

An understanding of how Nietzsche represented the exact opposite views of Maurrasian nationalism is imperative before Rebell's position between these two philosophies can be ascertained. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche longs for the European nations which he sees as "dynastic" or "democratic" "splinter wills" "to acquire one will by means of a new caste that would rule Europe..." (BGE 208).³¹ Nietzsche sees a growing trend in his contemporary Europe: "that Europe wants to become one" instead of remaining divided into individual nation-states (BGE 256). The main obstacle to this natural trend is nationalism, or the "fatherlandishness" and "soil addiction" that

Nietzsche longs for Europe to overcome so that “good Europeans” may then emerge (BGE 241). As Strong explains, “Nietzsche sees [nationalism] essentially as a reactionary movement since, as the characteristic form of modern politics, [it] focuses the interests of individuals on entities that prevent... the cultural unity of Europe” (Strong 204). For Nietzsche, the “good Europeans” receive major setbacks from nationalism, since they are those who do not base their identity on their particular European nationality, but instead identify themselves with all Europeans, whatever their native country. This new, ideal type of European will therefore be “supra-national” and “nomadic” (BGE 242). Nietzsche therefore endorses integration and cosmopolitanism.

In at least some of his writings, Rebell represents the opposite of Nietzsche’s “good European.” In the right-wing review, *La Cocarde*, he published an article, “Le Maître d’école à Paris” on January 17, 1897, in which he defines the sort of patriotism that grew out of extreme-right nationalism at the end of the 19th Century:

Le cri ‘La France aux Français,’ qui est comme un mot d’ordre à *La Cocarde*, va rallier tous les esprits droits que l’art, la politique et la sociologie divisent, mais que doivent unir les mêmes intérêts et un héritage commun de gloire à conserver.-- On oublie trop, en effet, que le patriotisme n’est pas un mot sans signification et que si nous donnons notre temps, notre argent et notre sang, ce n’est pas pour le plaisir de faire la guerre ni de nous habiller en soldats, mais pour défendre des traditions de race, la liberté de nos mœurs et de notre esprit. (*De mon balcon* 55)

Like Maurras, Rebell clung to the idea of “patriotism” as essential to maintaining a sense of national identity that he saw in peril due to the Third Republic’s weak government, its

parliamentarism and its assimilation of foreign immigrants. Thus Rebell defends the idea of “race” and tradition, unique to France. His French pride or “patriotism” is a clearly exclusionist politics. Rodange’s dissertation explains this article in *La Cocarde*: “c’est... la négation de toute autre culture, qui risquerait de se mélanger à notre patrimoine et d’avoir sur lui une influence néfaste. C’est donc un refus catégorique de tout ce qui n’est pas français et une exhortation à la foule pour que celle-ci prenne conscience des périls qui risquent de la menacer” (TR diss 167). By espousing the nationalist cry, “La France aux Français,” Rebell calls a battle against any non-French individual or institution seeking to install itself in France. Hence, his nationalism expresses itself as slave morality which can only define itself in terms of its negation and therefore needs an adversary to blame and upon whom it can direct its *ressentiment*.

Further, this “nationalisme fermé,” to use Winock’s term for Maurras’s type of patriotism in *Nationalisme, antisémitisme et fascisme en France* (1990), which regrouped those who desired an ultimate counter-revolution, is consistent with Rebell’s impotent rage against those who gained power after the Revolution (114). Thus, in “L’Alsace-Lorraine et l’état actuel des esprits,” (1897), Rebell claims that “Depuis que les religions ont perdu une partie de leur empire, depuis que le pouvoir du prince et des aristocraties s’est affaiblie, l’idée de patrie demeure la plus puissante pour réunir les forces humaines, les discipliner, et les employer utilement” (“L’Alsace-Lorraine” 28). In this article, Rebell defends Catholicism and the army as nationalist institutions par excellence. In addition, he supports that French identity depends on its absolute rejection of past enemies. To the *Mercure de France*’s survey question in 1897: “Prévoit-on un moment où l’on ne considérerait plus la guerre de 1870-1871 que comme un événement purement

historique?” (27) Rebell responds, “La France ne peut oublier les événements de 1870 qu’en perdant tout dignité nationale et en refusant de tenir sa place parmi les peuples” (28). Consistent with Maurras who saw all other non-French nations as enemies to French identity, especially Germany (Prussia) for its humiliating victory in the war of 1871, Rebell is opposed to a Franco-Prussian alliance in this article.

Yet Rebell diverges from Maurras since he demonstrates acknowledgement and appreciation of nationalisms, other than French. He welcomes foreign travel and the importation of foreign intellectuals and artists (of course Nietzsche, for example) while remaining loyal to French patriotism. For instance, Rebell was greatly influenced by Italy in his novels such as *La Nichina* (1897) and *La Camorra* (1900) and saw Italy as a surrogate mother country. In “France et Italie” (1893), he exclaims, “Je suis toscan! Je suis toscan!” (135). He appears much softer in attitude toward Germany in this article than in the one on “L’Alsace-Lorraine”: “Que les Allemands désirent la gloire de l’Allemagne; moi, je dois vouloir la France victorieuse” (“France et Italie” 137). Indeed, Rebell’s response to the *Mercure de France*’s (1897) survey, which elicited anti-German sentiment, does not preclude Rebell’s admiration for Bismarck, whose absolutist leadership he credits for defeating the French in 1871. Although his admiration for Bismarck’s absolutism still sets him apart from Nietzsche, Rebell also distances himself from nationalist xenophobia. For passages like these as well as for consideration of Rebell’s voyages to Italy, England and Germany and his love of learning foreign languages and literatures, Rodange insists in his dissertation that, “S’il loue le nationalisme, Rebell n’en est pas pour autant xénophobe,” unlike Maurras (TR diss 753). While Rodange considers a partial appreciation of Rebell’s waverings between

nationalism and tolerance of other cultures, he does not admit his rare but equally important acceptance and/or praise of foreign lands such as Italy and of foreign leaders such as Bismarck. A more complete reading of Rebell on (inter)nationalism acknowledges the full range of his fluctuating thought, and thereby refrains from reducing Rebell to either nationalist or anti-xenophobe.

This reading that I offer in fact avoids all simplistic interpretations of Rebell's vision of the future: that Rebell was capable of as much distance as he was approximation to Nietzsche on this issue. He comes closest to Nietzsche's international European community in one poem of *Chants de la pluie et du soleil*: "Je voudrais que la France douce, et la laborieuse Angleterre et les magnifiques golfes de l'Italie, et l'Amérique et toute la terre fussent comme un corps de femme qu'on peut enlacer et serrer contre son corps./ O monde! Je t'aime comme une maîtresse" (100). In this poem, Rebell appears to flirt with cosmopolitanism and ready to embrace all cultures and peoples. Perhaps nowhere else in his writings does he appear to exemplify Nietzsche's "nomadic" or "supra-national" European, capable of transcending his addiction to French soil, narrow boundaries of national identity and xenophobia.

As my main thesis argues, Rebell ultimately shows himself to be unclassifiable in his writings. He neither wholly embraces the prejudices of his political party nor wholly adopts Nietzsche's liberation from all forms of political *ressentiment* in a redemptive future, based on one united people in a new Europe.

Chapter 3

Consistent Inconsistencies in Rebell: His Problematic View of the Jews

Perhaps Rebell proves to be an exemplary disciple of Nietzsche in that his political writings, like the German philosopher's, is the most consistent in its inconsistencies. A perfect example that illustrates both Rebell's inconsistent influence from Nietzsche as well as his unresolvable political views, particularly the question of his potential xenophobic nationalism, is his complex opinion of the Jews. Rebell's writings on the history of the Jewish people in France and his criticism of Judaism as a religion combine two contradictory positions: they demonstrate a marked influence from anti-Semitic currents in late 19th-century France, but also from Nietzsche's attack on these very currents circulating throughout Europe. According to Rodange's dissertation, while Rebell's few pejorative remarks on the Jews may be explained in part by taking into account that Rebell worked for extreme-right reviews and was in close association with many right-wing anti-Semites such as his best friend, René Boylesve, as well as Maurras and Maurice Barrès, he argues that Rebell's major admiration for the Jews was a fundamental "point of divergence" between Rebell and his anti-Semitic cohorts (TR diss 696). In particular, Rebell abstained from the Dreyfus Affair whereas his political allies were all self-declared anti-Dreyfusards (TR diss 283).

Since Edouard Drumont is famous for largely initiating fin-de-siècle anti-Semitism as a plea to rally the French in defense of their country against Jewish citizens, whom he saw as invaders in the nationalist movement, I will use his *La France juive* (1886) as a yardstick for measuring the anti-Semitic nationalism in Rebell's writings. Drumont's work, however, will also help to show how Rebell ultimately diverges from

French anti-Semitism and was a harsh critic of it, much in the way that Nietzsche was. Further, I will demonstrate how Rebell's abstention from the Dreyfus Affair problematizes any attempt to clearly define his political opinion of the Jews. To this end, I examine the main passage where Rebell discusses modern Jewry and Judaism in his last novel, *Le Diable est à table* (1905), which was originally published in a shortened version, "Judaïsme et Révolution," in *L'Ermitage* in May 1888. The novel's version was expanded to reflect on the Dreyfus Affair and is the longest elaboration of Rebell's thought on the Jews. Although it is also his last writing, it does not preclude his other laudatory and defensive remarks in regard to the Jewish people in nonfictional works like *Union des trois aristocraties*.

1. Rebell's Propinquity with Drumont on Nationalism and Anti-Semitism

Rebell is closest to Drumont and most distant from Nietzsche in his promotion of an exclusionist nationalism which denied Jewish immigrants the ability to become assimilated by French culture or to legitimize their new-found citizenship. Like Drumont, Rebell is opposed to the emancipation of the Jews made possible by the French Revolution and maintained by the Third Republic. According to Drumont's *La France juive*, "Dès le début, la Révolution eut, comme la République juive d'aujourd'hui, le caractère d'une invasion. L'élément français disparut, comme de nos jours devant un ramassis d'étrangers qui s'emparèrent de toutes les situations importantes et terrorisent le pays" (vol.1 291). As Michel Winock's *Nationalisme, antisémitisme et fascisme en France* explains, Drumont depicted the Jews as the enemies of the Christian nation and the French Revolution, which emancipated the Jews in September 1789, as their plot to invade France (121). In *Le Diable est à table*, Rebell's archbishop exemplifies this

Christian anti-Semitic view when he scoffs at the Revolution for being “the advent of the Jews!” (197).

At the end of the 19th-Century, Jews were not only identified as the conspirators of the French Revolution against French Christians but also associated with all foreign immigrants whom Drumont and other conservative nationalists saw as invaders of France but whom the Third Republic protected as its citizens. Winock describes this “nationalisme clos, apeuré, exclusif, définissant la nation par l’élimination des intrus: Juifs, immigrés, révolutionnaires; une paranoïa collective, nourrie des obsessions de la décadence et du complot” (*Nationalisme, antisémitisme, fascisme* 38). These nationalists therefore identified the Third Republic as the enemy of classical, Old Regime France, which represented order, stability, and a traditional French identity that had not permitted foreign immigrants, and especially Jews, to become French citizens. Hence, Drumont dubbed the Third Republic, which protected naturalized citizens, specifically the Jews, as “The Jewish Republic” or “Jewish France.” Thus, conservative nationalists founded their identity by their anti-Jewishness. According to Winock,

En établissant l’antisémitisme comme système d’explication universelle, [Drumont] faisait du Juif le pôle négatif des mouvements nationalistes: c’est par rapport au Juif, c’est contre le Juif, que le nationaliste va définir son identité française... fier qu’il sera d’appartenir à une communauté et de connaître clairement l’adversaire qui menace l’unité et la vie.

(*Nationalisme, antisémitisme, fascisme* 137)

In “L’Alsace-Lorraine et l’état actuel des esprits,” Rebell is wholly consistent with this exclusionist, anti-Semitic nationalism, blaming “l’esprit juif, l’esprit d’étrangers auxquels

l'absence de hiérarchie, la débâcle d'une société ont laissé un rang et une influence prépondérante" (29).

In *Le Diable est à table*, as in some review articles, Rebell also adopts Drumont's anti-Semitic opinion that the Jews were resistant to their integration into France and were therefore incapable of becoming true French citizens. In an effort to justify his opposition to the French Revolution's emancipation of the Jews, Drumont argues in *La France juive*, "Les races les plus diverses, Celtes, Galois, Gallo-Romains, Germains, Francs, Normands, se sont fondues dans cet ensemble harmonieux qui est la nation française.... Seul, le Juif n'a pu entrer dans cet amalgame" (vol.1 188). Similarly, in *Le Diable est à table* argues that Jewish citizens of France mimic French culture but can never truly adopt it: he compares Jews to actors imitating French manners and claims that although they long to be English, French or German, "[leur âme] semble n'exister que pour la galerie et sent le théâtre, comme les conversions juives" (199). Thus, demotes Jewish citizens of France and Jewish converts of Christianity to foreign imposters of other cultures. In "Les Maîtres nouveaux du goût français" (1902), Rebell anticipates 's attitude toward Jewish integration when he blames the Jews' nomadism for preventing them from being loyal to any one nation: "au barreau et dans l'armée ils apportent l'esprit révolutionnaire d'un peuple habitué aux voyages, qui ne s'est jamais fixé, qui a vécu dispersé, affranchi de toute discipline et de tout grand devoir national" (*Chroniques* 136).

2. Nietzsche vs. Rebell on Integration, Race and the Role of Modern Jews

Nietzsche, however, is diametrically opposed to exclusionist nationalism and its anti-Semitic elements. In *Human All Too Human*, he understands "nationalism" as the "separation of nations through the production of national hostilities" and, in particular, as

responsible for spawning anti-Semitism: “the entire problem of the Jews exists only within national states, inasmuch as it is here that their higher energy and intelligence, their capital in will and spirit accumulated from generation to generation... must come to preponderate to a degree calculated to arouse envy and hatred” and so the more nationalist the nation, the more Jews are led to the “sacrificial slaughter as scapegoats for every possible public and private misfortune” (HAH 8: 475). For Nietzsche, nationalist identity that defines itself according to its opposite, its perceived enemy, the Jew, stems from a severe lack of self-confidence and a fear of the Jewish people becoming ever more powerful. As a solution to nationalism, Nietzsche approves of Jewish integration in Europe, which he moreover sees as the ultimate objective of the Jews. According to Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, instead of wishing to be the conquerors of Europe, which the Jews would be capable of becoming, they want rather “to be absorbed and assimilated by Europe; they long to be fixed, permitted, respected somewhere at last, putting an end to the nomads’ life, the ‘Wandering Jew,’” and it is for this purpose that Nietzsche proposes the expulsion of the “anti-Semitic screamers from the country” (BGE 251). Rebell thus appears fundamentally at odds with Nietzsche on the question of the role of contemporary Jews in Europe.

While Nietzsche believes not only that Europe is tending toward an “amalgamation of nations” (HAH I:8: 475) and that Jews should, and are more than willing and able to, integrate themselves into any European nation, Rebell agrees with Drumont and other anti-Semitic nationalists who consider Jews to be intruders into French culture and identity. By borrowing Drumont’s arguments that democracy was responsible for nationalizing the Jews, Rebell blames the Third Republic for making the

Dreyfus Affair possible, since it allowed Jews as equal citizens to join the army, a concession that incited the French to see the Jews as unwanted guests. This justification of the Dreyfus Affair as the French's natural reaction to Jewish immigrants as foreign invaders is consistent with the type of anti-Semitism that Nietzsche associates with the fear of internationalism. In *Le Diable est à table*, de Chéronne doesn't blame Dreyfus but the Third Republic and its newly democratized army for allowing Jews as French citizens to participate in a strictly national institution:

Il a fallu cette absurde démocratie militaire, cette république qui ne veut pas se défendre, qui ne veut pas se battre, qui ne veut pas de maître... et qui cependant entretient à grands frais une armée inutile... il a fallu l'affaire Dreyfus enfin, sottise et monstrueuse comme ce régime avec ses républicains soldats et ses républicains humanitaires, pour que la partie saine et laborieuse de la race [juive] fît alliance avec les fous et les malades. (203)

Although it may seem unclear how de Chéronne distinguishes the so-called sane and hardworking Jews whom he approves of in this affair from the ones whom he calls "crazy" and "sick," he obviously disapproves of Jewish citizenship in France, and rather than blame all Jews for wanting to become citizens, he implicitly blames those who defended their citizenship and who perhaps fought to defend Dreyfus. Yet the Third Republic is above all to blame for its principle of equality which, by allowing Jews to take part in what was a traditionally French career, gave rise to hostility between the French and the Jewish immigrants in France. Thus, de Chéronne explains that as a result of the Dreyfus Affair, "Les Juifs ont maudit l'armée où ils avaient tant désiré entrer; la foule démocratique et

républicaine a maudit les Juifs de se trouver encore où elle les avaient priés de venir” (203-4). The characters in *Le Diable est à table*, who consist primarily of in question and his friends, including an archbishop and an artist, can be thought to entertain a dialogue typical among Diderot’s characters, each who reflects, if not is imbued with one of the multiple conflicting views that underlie the author’s own.³² Although Rebell may not have outrightly chosen “sides” in this Affair, his character was clearly expressing the anti-Semitic nationalist view that Jews were not welcome as French citizens.

Consistent with de Chéronne’s opinion about the Dreyfus Affair is Rebell’s false belief in “Les Maîtres nouveaux du goût français” (1902) that anti-Semitism did not exist before the French Revolution, since Jews were not considered French subjects and therefore could not interfere in French political and social life: “l’antisémitisme est l’oeuvre de la République. Dans un Etat bien ordonné, sous une Monarchie forte où tout n’est pas confondu, l’affaire Dreyfus n’eût pas été possible” (*Chroniques* 134). Therefore, while Nietzsche understood the root of anti-Semitism to be segregation and exclusion of Jews in foreign cultures, Rebell believed, on the contrary, that peaceful cohabitation between different nations and peoples was possible only through those same means.

Further, by claiming the necessity to maintain pure races, Rebell justifies the French anti-Semite’s concern to prevent Jewish integration, and in so doing, he demonstrates the complete opposite position of Nietzsche, who believed that highest culture is precisely where races mix.³³ Rebell consistently argues against Jewish or any other foreign integration in France, believing that each “race” or people should remain separate and distinct from all the others. In the same passage in “Les Maîtres nouveaux

du goût français” where Rebell claims that the Old Regime did not allow for anti-Semitism to exist, since it kept Jews separate from French citizens, he contends that “La civilisation commence avec la *différence*, c’est à dire avec *l’inégalité*, avec les races” (*Chroniques*_134). de Chéronne echoes this argument in *Le Diable est à table*: “Il faut que de la fusion des peuples et du mélange des sangs se manifeste un nouvel être,” but “c’est le devoir des gouvernements comme c’est aussi celui des éleveurs d’empêcher le sang étranger de souiller la race une fois formée” (204). acknowledges that although a people necessarily originates from the incorporation of different peoples, once that new people or race is formed, it must remain pure by not breeding with any other. and de Chéronne agree that “la sottise révolutionnaire” was responsible for ruining “les forces spéciales de deux grandes races [française et juive]” (*Le Diable* 204). Thus, while Rebell’s characters had no particular aversion to the Jews, they believed that the integration of the Jews necessarily meant the decline not only of the French people but also of the Jews themselves.³⁴

Unable to overcome exclusionist nationalism, Rebell seems incapable of appreciating the function that Nietzsche assigns Jews in his new Europe, which is to breed with other healthy Europeans so that their “best” elements may combine to form a “new aristocratic caste” (BGE 251). Contrary to Rebell, Nietzsche sees racial interbreeding as the cornerstone to international peace and especially, to a group of new European rulers: “As soon as it is no longer a question of the conserving of nations but of the production of the strongest possible European mixed race, the Jew will be just as usable and desirable an ingredient of it as any other national residue” (HAH I: 8: 475). For Nietzsche, the improvement of races depended not on their isolation from others, but

just the opposite, on their ability to adapt to new environments and to become assimilated by others. As Martin maintains, Nietzsche's "nobility (*Vornehmheit*), understood as an acquired rather than a biological characteristic, can be bred, educated and mobilized in the service of ... [the] future" (Martin 43).

Therein lies the central disagreement between Nietzsche and Rebell who, like the characters of his last novel, *de Chéronne* and , believed in the supremacy of a biological aristocracy. does not oppose Jewish power per se, but their inability to legitimate it: "[les Juifs] voient à présent que le fait de posséder entre leurs mains toutes les richesses du monde ne suffit pas à leur assurer la puissance, et que cette fortune éclatante peut être leur ruine, s'ils ne savent, comme l'ancienne noblesse, la légitimer" (*Le Diable* 199).

3. The Aporia in Rebell's Conflicting Views of Jewish Power

That Rebell, however, had already incorporated Jewish wealth in his financial aristocracy in *Union des trois aristocraties* seems to be in sharp contradiction to 's unwillingness to recognize the legitimacy of Jewish power. This apparent aporia in Rebell's thought on the role of modern Jews in France also emphasizes the incongruity in the *Union's* belief in a biological nobility and its promotion of nobilities of wealth, created after the Revolution, and of intellect, which need not be founded strictly in pre-revolutionary France.

To further complicate the matter, the *Union* and the article in *La Plume*, "Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies," also published in 1894, seem to contradict certain anti-Semitic elements in other writings, such as *Le Diable est à table* and articles in *Le Soleil* (1902). In the former nonfictional works, Rebell seems to adopt, at least to a certain degree, Nietzsche's view of the importance of the Jews as a new European noble caste by

incorporating them into his financial aristocracy and defending them directly against Drumont and other anti-Semites in general as agitators of slave morality, resentful of Jewish domination. Both Rebell and Nietzsche admire the Jewish people for their strength in self-preservation. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche praises modern Jews: “The Jews... are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe...” (BGE 251). Similarly, in *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche credits the Jews for being able to survive their historical persecution, claiming that they are endowed with the “toughest vital energy” because “confronted with the question whether to be or not to be...they chose...to be at *any price*” (A 24). In the *Union* as in “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies,” Rebell is consistent with Nietzsche’s admiration of the Jews as a master or dominant race in Europe. For example, Rebell also credits the Jews with their ability and will to survive under the worst conditions: “Comment n’admirerais-je pas les israélites qui ont surmonté tous les obstacles, triomphé des persécutions, des mépris, et d’esclaves sont devenus nos dominateurs. Il n’est pas de plus bel exemple de l’énergie et de la volonté humaines” (“Menus propos” 104). In the *Union*, Rebell echoes *The Antichrist*’s compliment that the Jews possess the “toughest vital energy,” arguing that they brought themselves to power, thanks to “leur invincible énergie” (23N).

Although in *Le Diable est à table* uses the same compliment regarding the Jews, he believes that they fail as world conquerors, unlike Rebell’s arguments in the *Union* and in “Menus propos”: “Sa superiority d’énergie vitale, si grande qu’elle soit, est incapable d’asservir, avant de le connaître, l’esprit d’une race qui lui est si étranger” (*Le Diable* 198; my emphasis). For , the question of the Jews being able to conquer the world depends on the legitimacy of their power, which they do not seem to have,

according to him, and also on their ability to be assimilated by other cultures, which he also believes they cannot do. In Rebell's 1894 writings, however, neither Jewish legitimization of power nor integration are raised as obstacles to Jewish leadership.

Thierry Rodange tries to explain away 's anti-Semitic view of the Jews as incapable conquerors by claiming that Rebell was disappointed in his later writing that the Jews had not in fact conquered Europe:

ce qu'il lui [au peuple juif] reproche essentiellement, c'est de n'avoir pas poussé jusqu'au bout les possibilités qu'il avait entre ses mains pour devenir Le Peuple Juif qui soit partout respecté, admiré, envié. Il est presque logique que Rebell émette de telles pensées à la fin de sa vie, lui qui est toujours en quête d'un idéal de puissance et d'intelligence qu'il n'a jamais rencontré. (TR diss 618)

Rodange's assertion would suggest that Rebell was perhaps disappointed with Nietzsche's own contention that the Jews, despite their capability, did not want to be world conquerors and instead wanted to become assimilated by Europe (BGE 251). It would therefore seem that argues that the Jews could not integrate themselves as an excuse to insult their failure to become Europe's master race. That Rebell's writing is fraught with the contradictions of supporting both modern Jewry as a world force and xenophobic nationalism is certain. Yet Rebell possibly uses nationalist arguments that opposed Jewish power and potential domination as a pretext to conceal his own failure to find in the Jews the union of his three aristocracies.

As possible sources of the Jews' "invincible energy," Rebell points to both their intellect and wealth, perhaps in an effort to incorporate them into his ideal noble union,

and definitively in opposition to French anti-Semitic views. In “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies,” he credits the Jews for being the race that gave humanity “its greatest philosopher: Spinoza,” and to Germany, “its greatest poet: Henri Heine” (104). In the *Union*, Rebell gives an anecdote about Salomon Hein, uncle of the great poet who exemplifies a rags-to-riches story of the self-made genius, arriving in Hamburg as a young man, “his pockets empty,” but who eventually became owner of the wealthiest bank in Hamburg (21). Rebell also admires Hein as a model of charity who used his own millions to stop the stock market crash and to rebuild Hamburg after a fire ruined the city in 1842: “ce Heine qui avec sa fortune lentement conquise, était devenu maître de Hambourg et lui rendait la vie” (*Union* 22). In addition, Rebell names other Jewish bankers and philanthropists as examples of his moneyed nobility, such as the Péreires, descendants of Portuguese Jews who had sought refuge in Bordeaux during the Old Regime and the Rothschilds, who Rebell recalls were ennobled after saving Hesse-Cassel’s (William IX of Austria’s) fortune from confiscation by Napoleon (*Union* 21). All of Rebell’s Jewish heroes exemplify the strength to survive, overflowing wealth and magnanimity he sought as traits of his ideal aristocrats, whether biological, newly enriched or intellectual. Rebell’s characterization of Jewish nobility thus seems to have multiple meanings in these passages of the *Union*, and for this reason it most closely resembles Nietzsche’s potential for Jewish *Vornehmheit*.

4. Rebell’s Nietzschean Attack on Anti-Semitism and on Drumont

Moreover, Rebell’s praise of Jewish wealth is diametrically opposed to Drumont’s anti-Semitic fear of Jewish fortunes conquering France. In *La France juive*, Drumont presents the French Christian’s paranoia that the Jews were aiming to destroy

Christian wealth: “[La richesse juive] est essentiellement parasitaire et usuraire, elle n’est point le fruit du travail économisé, mais le résultat de l’agiotage, et du dol” (vol. 1 527).

Contrary to Rebell, Drumont could not believe that Jewish wealth was the result of honest hard work and attempted to fictionalize their real generosity: he writes, “la charité des Rothschild est absolument un mythe,” alleging that Jews were more interested in robbing Christians than in helping their own (*La France juive* vol. 2 125). Rebell’s anecdotes about Salomon Hein and the Rothschilds can therefore be considered an apologia for Jewish charity against Drumont’s Judeo-phobic myth-making.

Consistent also with Nietzsche’s view of anti-Semitism as a form of slave morality, Rebell identifies the anti-Semite with Christians, anarchists and socialists who, jealous of the Jews’ financial success, aim at its destruction. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche isolates *ressentiment* as the psychology underlying the character of the anarchists and anti-Semites: “To the psychologists...presuming they would like to study *ressentiment* close up for once, I would say: this plant blooms best today among anarchists and anti-Semites...,” and this *ressentiment* is the desire “to sanctify revenge under the name of justice” (GM II: 11). Thus, anti-Semitic nationalists use the Jews as a scapegoat upon whom they can vent their anger for their own perceived lack of power. By attacking the Jews as parasites and thieves of their wealth, Drumont and his associates convince themselves that they are fighting for a just cause.

Yirmiyahu Yovel’s “Sublimity and *Ressentiment*: Nietzsche, Hegel and the Jews” (1997) best explains the mentality of the anti-Semite, according to Nietzsche: “The ardor of the anti-Semite conceals deep insecurity: he does not start with the celebrating affirmation of his own being but with the negation of the other’s, by which alone the anti-

Semite reaffirms his own self” (19). The anti-Semite is moreover no different from the Christian and the anarchist who depend on a negative definition of their identities by seeking to eradicate those perceived as their opposite. As a result, all of these types have the common goal to destroy those of whom they are envious.

Rebell clearly adopts Nietzsche’s outlook on anti-Semitism when he writes in “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies,” “Quand nous attaquons la puissance des israélites, nous accusons par là même notre faiblesse et notre inhabilité” (104). In the *Union* where Rebell first names the Rothschilds and Péreires as Jews he admires, he adds a footnote in which he explains why he defends Jewish banks: “parce que c’est toujours aux israélites que s’attaquent non seulement les socialistes, mais les conservateurs catholiques qui ne voient pas qu’ils se liguent ainsi avec leurs ennemis.... La haine que l’on porte aux israélites n’est que celle de l’impuissance” (23N). Although Rebell considered himself Catholic, he reproaches his co-religionists who blamed Jewish wealth for ruining their fortune and aligns himself against all anti-Semites, Christian or other. This passage also hints at the critical distinction Rebell makes throughout his writings between the Roman Catholic Church, which he saw as an honorable tradition, supporting the nobility and king and also genuine charity, and Christianity and its Protestant denominations which exemplified Nietzschean slave morality. But in this passage Rebell identifies Catholics, as Nietzsche would, with socialists who both persecuted Jews from their fear of powerlessness vis-à-vis these masters.

Rebell views all egalitarian thinkers as resentful of wealth in general: “la Démocratie hait tous les riches, chrétiens ou juifs. Elle ne sera heureuse que lorsqu’elle aura, sous prétexte de justice, de moralité, restreint ou arrêté les opérations de bourse et

ruiné la France comme le fit la Révolution” (*Union* 23N). Rebell remains consistent with Nietzsche’s assertion that democracy is a descendent of the French Revolution and the slave revolt in morality by arguing that the believers in equality are none other than those who, unable to gain money and power for themselves, seek revenge against the wealthy and powerful Jews. Further, unlike *Le Diable est à table*’s blame on democracy for declaring Jews equal, the above passage of the *Union des trois aristocraties* blames egalitarianism not for the Jews rising to power, but for the rise of anti-Semites. Rebell argues in fact in the *Union* that Jews are not mere equals of the French, but are superior to the common French democrats comprising the majority of the Third Republic. Like his class of superior artists, the Jews by their extraordinary will and achievements are deserving of special admiration and perhaps also of special privileges. By casting Jews as financial aristocrats in his *Union*, Rebell remains consistent with his political meritocracy, founded on an order of rank and privilege between different peoples and different social strata within a people.

Moreover, Rebell proves to be explicitly anti-anti-Semitic and loyal to Nietzsche when he openly attacks Drumont. In the *Union*, Rebell groups Drumont with leftist anarchists and pits them against their Jewish rivals: “Depuis les habiles et magnifiques Italiens de la Renaissance jusqu’aux Rothschild et aux Péreire, nous rencontrerions dans les annales de la richesse beaucoup d’hommes qui certainement doivent choquer un Drumont, un Grave, un Kropotkine, mais que ne manqueront pas d’admirer tous les esprits vraiment libres et philosophiques” (23). Not only does Rebell defend Jewish wealth against Drumont’s anti-Semitism and the leftist anarchist’s call for the end of the struggle between rich and poor, he incredibly appears to identify with Nietzsche’s “new

philosophers” and “free spirits” to arm himself against all forms of *ressentiment* aimed at Jews. In the footnote beneath this passage, Rebell seems to link Drumont, Grave and Kropotkine with the “grands penseurs du parti révolutionnaire actuel” who aspire to “la destruction de la richesse” (*Union* 23N). Rebell’s anti-anti-Semitic arguments are unequivocally Nietzschean.

In addition, he succeeds in completely undoing Drumont’s myth of the Jews’ destructive usury in France by contending that it was not the Jews but the anti-Semites like Drumont himself who wanted to destroy French wealth. In “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies,” Rebell brings out the *ressentiment* in Drumont’s anti-Semitism: “on laisse dans *La Libre Parole* Drumont exprimer ses doléances hypocrites sur Vaillant tandis que chaque jour il demande au nom de Jésus et de la morale évangélique le massacre des Juifs” (104). Rebell brands Drumont a hypocrite for proclaiming objection to Edouard Vaillant’s Blanquist violence but suggests that he is no better than a socialist revolutionary or Pauline Christian, both types, which, according to Nietzsche, portray slave morality.

5. Between Nietzsche and Anti-Semitism: Rebell’s Abstention From the Dreyfus Affair

Although Rebell’s apparent anti-Semitic writings appear after 1894, ending with his last novel published the year of his death in 1905, they should neither be considered his last opinion regarding the Jews nor a negation of his thought in the *Union* or in “Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies” but rather as other facets of a complex issue for Rebell who defies all labels, whether anti-Semitic or philo-Semitic.

A closer examination of Rebell's references to the Dreyfus Affair may help to emphasize the conflict between disparate elements in Rebell's view of the Jews that render any conclusions impossible. But to appreciate how Rebell's thoughts on the Dreyfus Affair compare to Nietzsche's attacks on anti-Semitism, understanding Nietzsche's differentiation between modern Jewry and the priestly Jews of slave morality is first essential. Nietzsche makes a fundamental distinction between contemporary Jews, descended from original Israel, and Christians, descended from the priestly Jews from the Old Testament. In *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche associates original Israel's conception of God or Yahweh as the "expression of a consciousness of power, of joy in oneself, of hope for oneself" and its people therefore had "natural values" (A 25). Yet around the construction of the Second Temple the Jews became divided with the priestly Jews who opposed original Israel by falsifying the natural, self-affirming concept of Yahweh and introducing the concepts of guilt, punishment and revenge (A 26). The slave revolt in morality begins precisely with this priestly type: "It was the [priestly] Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation and to hang on to this aversion with... the teeth of the most abysmal hatred" (GM I:7).

Most critical to this account of Jewish history, however, is Nietzsche's revelation that priestly Judaism evolved into Christianity. It is as the inheritor of priestly Judea that Christianity remains distinct from original Israel (A 27). By praising modern Jewry in such passages as *Beyond Good and Evil* (251) and *Human All Too Human* (I: 8: 475), Nietzsche associates them with original Israel and not with the priestly Jews who later invented *ressentiment* as the spirit of revenge that pretends to represent justice. In a strategy to attack Christian anti-Semites who denied having any ancestry in common with

Jews, Nietzsche approves of modern Jewry as the continuation of original Israel and further divorces original Israel from ancient Judaism, the slavish morality continued in contemporary Christianity. As Weaver Santaniello's *Nietzsche, God and the Jews* (1994) explains, "Nietzsche exalts original Israel and contemporary Jewry; he attributes the slave revolt in morality to priestly prophetic Judaism, that strand of the Jewish tradition that Christian anti-Semites claimed as their ancestor," or that strand which allegedly professed the coming of the Messiah and that later divinized Jesus, through Paul of Tarsus, the Jewish inventor of Christianity (117).

Although Nietzsche suggests that modern Jews are completely opposite of the Jewish priests ridden with slave morality, Rebell declares that his only objection to modern Jews is that they, like their anti-Semitic counterparts, must also overcome their *ressentiment*. In "Menus propos sur les nouvelles utopies," Rebell, unlike Nietzsche, does not believe that modern Jews are completely free of *ressentiment*, or the desire to persecute their Christian persecutors and that they are not ready to attribute to themselves self-affirming values as in noble morality: "Le seul trait qui me déplaît chez les israélites, c'est qu'ils n'ont encore pu oublier les humiliations anciennes et se délivrer de la réserve qu'ils devaient s'imposer autrefois. Je voudrais voir un des leurs s'écrier: 'Je suis Juif!' comme on accuse sa noblesse et ses titres" (104). Perhaps the problem of Jewish legitimization of power lies with the Jews themselves, who are not able, according to Rebell in this passage, to affirm their right to power as the French birth nobility do.

Perhaps this criticism of modern Jews provides a key in understanding Rebell's blame on both the French and the Jews in the Dreyfus Affair. For instance, this passage may explain, at least in part, de Chéronne's claim that with the advent of the Dreyfus

Affair, “la partie saine et laborieuse de la populace [fit] alliance avec les fous et les malades, avec la postérité des prophètes révolutionnaires et des négateurs nihilistes” (“the sane and laborious part of the mob allied itself with the crazy and the sick, with the posterity of revolutionary prophets and nihilist negators”; *Le Diable* 203). For , the Dreyfus Affair apparently gave birth to new *ressentiment*, both for the French against the Jews and for the Jews against the French. The Dreyfusards, particularly the Jewish, were no better than anti-Dreyfusards, in that they were descendents of priestly prophetic Judaism which had initiated the slave revolt in morality. Perhaps Rebell meant to abstain from the Affair because he disapproved of the mutual *ressentiment* of both parties, which for each, meant affirmation of the self through persecution of the other.

Yet this interpretation of Rebell’s refusal to declare himself as either for or against Dreyfus does not disclude another: the possibility that he, too, harbored *ressentiment* against the Jews’s emancipation. de Chéronne seems to separate the modern Jews he approves of like the Rothschilds, or the “the sane and laborious part of the mob,” from those whom he dislikes, the “revolutionary prophets,” like Marx whom he saw as a Jew jealous of Jewish wealth (*Le Diable* 203), a view consistent with Rebell’s in the *Union*. indeed distinguishes “two adverserial souls” in modern Jews: the one he attacks, or “l’âme du yahvisme, du prédicant oisif et du révolutionnaire social,” that he believes descended from “the race of Judea” and the one he defends, “cette âme souple et habile, acharnée au travail et à la conquête, produisant avec force, consommant avec magnificence,” descended from “the race of Israel” (*Le Diable* 202). De Chéronne’s distinction between original Israel and Judea is analgous to Nietzsche’s genealogy of historical Jews, with the fundamental difference that maps this distinction

also among modern Jews. 's version of Jewish genealogy may serve two opposing strategies: an attempt to show that modern Jews are just as guilty of the spirit of punishment and revenge as their Christian and other enemies; or, an attempt to justify his, 's, anti-Semitism by separating those Jews he approves of as heirs of Israel and representatives of noble morality from those he dislikes as heirs of slavish priestly Judaism.

One other passage in "Préjugés modernes" published in *L'Action française* in 1900 where Rebell addresses the Dreyfus Affair particularly reveals Rebell's problematic borrowing of Nietzsche's view of the Jews as well as the impossibility of fixing Rebell to one political position. In "Préjugés modernes," Rebell's reference to Dreyfus may suggest both an anti-Semitic and an anti-anti-Semitic reading:

[L'Affaire Dreyfus] a montré comment se crée une religion, quelle folie un être suspect, médiocre et antipathique, s'il a seulement de l'orgueil et de l'entêtement, peut mettre en jeu, quelles demi-intelligences il peut séduire et comment il arrive même à convertir l'esprit sans défense et le jugement timide. Il est probable qu'il y a environ deux mille ans que l'aventure fut pareille. (906)

In one way, Rebell seems to agree with *L'Action française's* anti-Dreyfusism: as an anti-Christian anti-Semite, Rebell compares the idiot Dreyfus to the idiot Christ who was able to convert millions and create a cult in his favor. In another way, Rebell adopts the strategy Nietzsche uses to attack Christian anti-Semites. Yirmiyahu Yovel explains, "Whereas the anti-Semite accuses the Jews of having killed Jesus, Nietzsche accuses them of having begotten Jesus [as in *The Antichrist*]" (Yovel 19). Analogously, Rebell

may seem to blame not Dreyfus but those who gave him too much attention precisely by persecuting him as well as those who were willing to fight for him. Thus, without favoring either side of the conflict centering on the question of Dreyfus's innocence, Rebell dismisses both of them for participating in a senseless war. At the same time, however, Rebell cannot extricate himself from either the side of the Affair, and his readers cannot thereby polarize him.

6. A Nietzschean Rebel(I): In Final Defiance of Classification

All past scholars' attempts to categorize Rebell's view of the Jews as either completely Nietzschean or completely rightist anti-Semitic have failed, since Rebell's political writing, and in particular regarding the Jews, resists any final classification. A main difference divides Rebell's thought from Nietzsche's on the Jews. According to Yovel, "Contrary to many anti-Semites—and also to many Jewish apologetics—Nietzsche did not project his critique of ancient Judaism into a political attitude against the Jews of today" (Yovel 15). Yovel's interpretation of Nietzsche's account of Jewish history serves to point to Rebell's ultimate divergence from Nietzsche's anti-anti-Semitism. Rebell's ambivalence, especially regarding Dreyfus, possibly lies in his attempt to play two opposing roles: the anti-Semitic sympathizer and the Jewish apologetic. Consistently inconsistent in his opinions of the Jews, therefore, Rebell cannot be described as exclusively anti-Semitic, anti-anti-Semitic or philo-Semitic, but should instead be considered each alternately. Only this reading can succeed in undoing the much too simplistic ones of Rebell's view of the Jews. While Christopher E. Forth's *Zarathustra in Paris: The Nietzsche Vogue in France 1891-1918* (2001) accurately describes Rebell as a "neoroyalist" writer who had a "radical conservative reading of

Nietzsche,” (33) he commits an error by grouping Rebell with other right-wing anti-Dreyfusards in his appendix listing those for and against Dreyfus (185). Contrary to Forth’s view, but equally objectionable, is Michel Leroy’s opinion that threatens to equate Rebell’s thought on the Jews entirely with Nietzsche’s: “C’est encore [dans *Le Diable est à table*] le discours nietzschéen que nous trouvons à l’origine des idées de Rebell,” namely, ’s and ’s “défense des Juifs” (Leroy 38).

Further, the main weakness in Rodange’s dissertation on Rebell is that he risks becoming an apologist for Rebell’s anti-Semitism, giving his readers the impression that Rebell was a sort of closet Dreyfusard: he argues Rebell couldn’t join the anti-Dreyfusards, “car, en son for intérieur, il éprouve beaucoup de sympathie et d’admiration pour le peuple juif,” (TR diss 286) but that he couldn’t declare himself a Dreyfusard either, because “il préfère adopter une attitude de mutisme n’étant [pas] disposé à rompre avec certaines amitiés—qui se prononcent elles farouchement contre Dreyfus,” like Barrès and Maurras (TR diss 287). When he addresses anti-Semitic elements in Rebell’s writing such as in the 1897 “Alsace-Lorraine” article in *Mercure de France*, Rodange admits he cannot “expliquer, malgré tout, ces remarques anti-Sémites” (TR diss 288). Rodange’s problem precisely is that he tries to explain too much of Rebell’s opinion on the Jews and to dismiss the writings that he sees as discontinuous with the other passages in which Rebell clearly admires the Jews. Moreover, neither Leroy nor Rodange acknowledge Nietzsche’s undoubted influence on Rebell’s genealogy of the Jews in his last novel. These scholars are therefore all guilty of oversimplifying Rebell’s stance, which deserves to be recognized for its openness to unresolved contradiction.

Conclusion to Part I

As a veritable disciple of Zarathustra, Rebell doesn't merely agree or disagree with Nietzsche's political philosophy, he grapples with it and even and especially at the risk of inventing a rightist politics from it, becomes a "free spirit" in the sense that he uses Nietzsche's ideas to create his own political values while remaining a man of royalist conviction. In the process of struggling to make sense of Nietzsche, Rebell struggles with and against his own politics, exemplifying Nietzsche's "higher type" that could not separate within himself the master from the slave. Neither entirely noble nor entirely slavish, Rebell was a defender of Jews as a new power in Europe but was also a supporter of the fin-de-siècle nationalistic fervor that sought to base French identity on the exclusion of other peoples, and especially the Jews. Although Rebell consistently sought in all his writings the obliteration of the French Revolution's principles and a restoration of an Old Regime monarchy and its blood nobility, he adopted, in spite of himself, certain postrevolutionary achievements, such as the creation of a new moneyed class that could become noble. Rebell's intellectual aristocracy, even though meant in part as an attack on all popular artists and writers, perhaps in part since Rebell himself had never gained overwhelming fame, also promoted new creativity with a new meaning for humanity. Rebell's meritocracy was political, in that it justified an order of rank and a pathos of distance between social classes based on the dominance and domination of one group over another, but was also cultural, in that intellectuals would deserve special privileges because of their merit. Anti-Republican, anti-cosmopolitan, antiegalitarian, Rebell personified his own rebellion as resentful of his era, against which he sought to defend his principles as he was desirous to affirm it as the call for a new beginning.

Notes

¹One has only to consider the stark contrast underlying what motivates Plato's philosopher-kings in book 7 of *The Republic* and Nietzsche's in the second essay of *The Genealogy*. Socrates uses the allegory of the cave to explain the willingness of philosophers to rule: after ascending from the cave into the light of truth where they can see "the reality of beauty, justice, and good," they will be able to govern the city "far differently from most cities today whose inhabitants are ruled darkly as in a dream by men who will fight with each other over shadows and use faction in order to rule, as if that were some great good. The truth is that the city where those who will rule are least eager to do so will be the best governed and the least plagued by dissent" (520d [from now on, I will refer to specific sections of *The Republic* by a three-digit number followed by a letter denoting the line]). But while Plato/Socrates imagines rulers who rule from a sense of humility and duty to the people, Nietzsche imagines them quite the contrary: "some pack of blond beasts of prey" that come "like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext," who conquer and exploit without regard to "responsibility," "consideration" or "contracts" (i.e. founding laws) (GM II:17). For Nietzsche in such a passage, those naturally inclined to rule lack even the basic consideration that Plato's philosopher-kings have for the law, and will instead serve their own interest for power-over.

² According to Strong's study of *The Genealogy* Essay I, "Since the very existence of moral categories depended on the desire to assert power over another group of people—and under slave morality to *control* and render them predictable—all morality is fundamentally a form of politics" (Strong 189). Yet this contention does not imply that Nietzsche's master and slave moralities can be mapped out into a political program.

³ Thierry Rodange studies the friendship Rebell shared with Maurras and how Rebell even inspired the latter (TR diss 696-701). Rebell and Maurras collaborated together on their writing for *La Cocarde* and, later *L'Action française*.

⁴ I explore a little later how Rebell's intellectual aristocracy possibly converges with Nietzsche's "artist-tyrants" in *The Will To Power* (960) and to what extent Nietzsche, like Rebell envisioned a "master race."

⁵ Plato takes great pains to protect his philosopher-guardians from self-corruption if they are tempted by money or glory: he forbids them for instance, from touching gold or silver, or even being under the same roof with it, since if "they [the guardians] begin to acquire houses, land, and money... they will cease to help their citizens and instead become their masters and their enemies" (*The Republic* 415b. But for Nietzsche and Rebell, denying privileges to those who deserve it would be to cut off the natural drives for competition and domination that are originally responsible for establishing a ruling class. Rebell would have been particularly horrified by the self-discipline of Plato's rulers, since he promoted money as a cornerstone of political power. As it will become apparent, the rulers both Nietzsche and Rebell sought were free to do as they wished, even without regard for the law.

⁶ For instance, in an effort to inspire his superior individuals to rise above the "tarantulas," or petty, slavish people, Zarathustra tells them that life "requires height" because "Life want to climb and to overcome itself climbing" (Z II: "On the Tarantulas"). Perpetual self-overcoming is Zarathustra's formula for human greatness.

⁷ For Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols*, "freedom" is measured in individuals and in nations "By the resistance which has to be overcome, by the effort it costs to stay aloft" (TI IX:38). Further, the "highest type of free man" is found "where the greatest resistance is constantly being overcome" (TI IX:38). In this passage of *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche believes that freedom is not for everyone, but for those exceptional leaders he mentions such as Julius Cesar. In *The Antichrist* (57), I suggest that the coldness coming from climbing high altitudes represents just such a challenging resistance to the superior individual to stay aloft or on top. In so doing, s/he becomes strong enough to attain her/his own freedom.

⁸ According to Dombowsky, Nietzsche's *Pöbel* (translated as "mob") or *canaille* is the enemy of his noble type which must rely on Machiavelli's *virtù*, or on natural instincts, proficiency, even vices in order to control the mob (Dombowsky 26). Dombowsky assumes that Nietzsche's "philosopher-legislator" (BGE 211) would not be possible without the "oppression of the masses" (Dombowsky 26).

⁹ I use Stéphane Le Couëdic's reprinting of Rebell's *La Cocarde* articles in *De mon balcon* (1994). For subsequent quotations from these articles, I will indicate only *De mon balcon* and the page number.

¹⁰ See Detwiler 53 and Ansell-Pearson's *Introduction to Nietzsche As Political Thinker* 149.

¹¹ As Keith Ansell-Pearson explains in *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau* (1991), for Nietzsche, the French Revolution is the inheritor of the Judeo-Christian moral movement because its principles were based on this tradition: equality, which originated from the Christian idea of equality before God; fraternity, which came from the Judeo-Christian "love thy neighbor;" and liberty, which is derived from the concept of free will (34).

¹² As Tracy B. Strong explains in *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (1975), Nietzsche likens the democratic state, (i.e. one in which there is no ruling class), to a herd in which "at most only there is a shepherd, a person whose total identity emanates from the crowd, leads" (206).

¹³ In *Le Diable entre au confessionnal : biographie de Hugues Rebell* (2002), Rodange takes into account Rebell's reticence to work for a "journal," since doing so meant writing for a mass audience and "écrire pour la masse, pour la foule, signifie donc pour Rebell s'abaisser à traiter de sujets populaires... Mais également contraintes matérielles liées... à l'obligation de respecter la ligne conductrice du journal" (90). Since Rebell, however, upon arrival in Paris, eventually needed money and desired literary renown, he decided to work for "revues" that addressed a more restricted audience and the extreme and center right reviews (e.g. *La Cocarde* and *Le Soleil*) gave Rebell more freedom to express his political views.

¹⁴ Recall that the Third Republic was proclaimed on September 4, 1870, after the defeat of the Second Empire in the Franco-Prussian War. By the Constitution of 1875, the government was vested in a President elected to a term of seven years by the Cabinet, made up of the Senate, chosen for life and the Chamber of Deputies, elected to a term of four years by universal male suffrage. According to Raymond Recouly's *The Third Republic* (1928), the president actually had less power than a constitutional king; real executive authority was in the hands of the Minister of the Cabinet, which in itself, was at best temporary since each government usually changed ministers more than once (86). For Rebell, the Third Republic represented the antithesis of his ideal government, since it meant the participation of the commoner in government and was synonymous with the opposite notions of privilege and social caste.

¹⁵ For instance, in *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche emphasizes that it is the "liberation of the private person" and not of the "individual" that is "the consequence of the democratic conception of the state" (HAH I: 8:472). Nietzsche describes democracy as the "decay of the state," or of a strong, centralized rule in this passage because the sovereignty of the people serves to generate distrust of all government. Once the power of the state declines, a private individual emerges who acts only for his or her own advantage, and in the last stage, "chaos" will ensue (HAH I:8:472). Instead of producing individuals, or citizens who can distinguish themselves from the herd, democracy produces "private" people who may outwardly pretend to conform to the herd's law but who possibly seek to subvert it in secret. Eventually, the "private person" will have the undisciplined, unruly character that Plato sees in the democratic citizen. Nietzsche is thus consistent with Plato who believes that democracy develops into chaos when the citizens favor private law over public. Nietzsche, unlike Plato, however, is concerned about describing the democratic citizen's development from herd animal to anarchist.

¹⁶ After Ferdinand de Lesseps was commissioned to build the interoceanic canal in the Isthmus of Panama in 1878, the project proved to cost way above its expectations, and when workers began to become sick with disease like malaria, the French government wanted to hide its losses from critics of the Third Republic. According to D.W. Brogan's *France Under the Third Republic: Development of Modern France*

(1870-1939) (1940), in 1888 the Panama directors had to bribe Chamber deputies to vote for the bill passing the loans for Panama and blackmail journalists from leaking the disaster to the Panama shareholders (274). In 1891, a committee presided over by Henri Brisson investigated the Panama company: the directors of Panama were tried for fraud and Lesseps and the private shareholders were scapegoated, though many of the politicians never implicated (Brogan 275).

¹⁷ Zarathustra calls upon a “new nobility” to rise up against “all mob-rule and all that is despotic” (Z III: “On Old and New Tablets” 11). In this passage, Nietzsche/ Zarathustra suggests that democracy, which one considers to be the form of government that is liberal and free, contains in fact a potential for tyranny emerging from the popular masses.

¹⁸ General Boulanger, elected as Minister of War (1886-7), became the leader for every malcontent of the Third Republic, from the extreme Right to extreme Left. After renouncing a coup d’état and installing himself in an autocratic regime to replace the Third Republic, he fled to Belgium.

¹⁹ Rebell’s hatred of the democratic masses that clamored to Boulanger as the mouthpiece of their tyranny is very similar to the contempt for the crowd and also for Boulanger that some other writers contemporaneous with Rebell expressed. For instance, at the end of Joris Karl Huysmans’s *Là-bas* (1891), the main characters scoff at the crowd’s cheers for Boulanger who has just been elected Minister of War that very evening. Huysmans’s characters believe that the people of their era supporting Boulanger are even worse off in their stupidity and ability to be manipulated by politics than the crowd of the 15th Century that, out of naïveté and superstition, praised Gilles de Rais’s self-professed repentance before being burned at the stake. As Huysmans’s Gévingey complains, “[Le peuple d’aujourd’hui] n’acclamerait pas de la sorte [for Boulanger] un savant, un artiste, voire même l’être supernaturel que serait un saint” (Huysmans 306). Rebell, like Huysmans, also abhorred the people for their inability to appreciate the intellectual aristocracy. Likewise, Villiers de l’Isle d’Adam’s object of scorn in “Vox populi” published in *Contes cruels* (1883) is the masses of commoners whose blind ignorance allowed them to readily cheer any politician or political movement, whether Napoleon III, the Commune or General Mac-Mahon.

²⁰ For instance, Nietzsche delights in envisioning a “new caste” that will rule Europe, having a “long, terrible will” that it can project millennia into the future and not deviate from its plans (BGE 208).

²¹ Nietzsche’s resistance of convictions is at the heart of his method of perspective which I explore in the next part.

²² Nietzsche’s favorable recognition of the rare type of tyrant that the democratic masses is capable of generating in this particular passage of *Beyond Good and Evil* is as much contrary to Rebell’s view of the tyrannical element in democracy as it is to Plato’s.

²³ In Part II, I will discuss how Nietzsche would not have criticized democracy in this way, since his preference for the Greek “agon” or “contest” between multiple competitors or viewpoints in and out of the political arena enables him to appreciate the cultivation of human differences. Some of Nietzsche’s scholars, like Hatab, for instance, argue that Nietzsche’s desire for a political agon would have made him a champion of post-modern democracy, or “democracy understood as agonistic pluralism,” which aims to maintain a contest of political differences and conflicts (Hatab 163). It is this very form of democracy that Rebell dreads.

²⁴ According to Recouly, on average a Third Republic ministry lasted eight months (83). Rebell, like Maurras, was frustrated with a government that seemed inadequate in maintaining steady authority and order. Michel Winock’s “L’Action française” offers a description of the mentality of Maurras’s fin-de-siècle royalist camp which applies just as much to Rebell: “Maurras a eu le sentiment très vif d’une unité à retrouver, d’une société à refaire, d’un nouvel ordre à construire sur un modèle détruit par la Révolution” (“L’Action française” 129). Such was his mission (as well as Rebell’s) in a restored monarchy.

²⁵ *Vornehmheit* is the original German word for “nobility” that Nietzsche uses throughout *Beyond Good and Evil*, especially in the last chapter, “What is noble (*Vornehm*)?” and may entail not just one’s social status or rank, but also spiritual qualities.

²⁶ According to Keith Ansell-Pearson’s *An Introduction to Nietzsche As Political Thinker*, the *Übermensch* is not a “superman”, possessing superhuman power but is more accurately an “overman” since “über” denotes “across, over, beyond,” thus signifying one who constantly strives to be higher, nobler, better but who could simultaneously overcome self-overcoming (106). Humans, however, can never stop overcoming themselves. The “overman” is therefore above and beyond the human, an imaginary, indeed impossible ideal. To avoid both American comic book associations as well as the much belabored Kaufmann translation of “overman,” I will use the word *superhuman* for *Übermensch*.

²⁷ Ansell-Pearson summarizes the problem of defining the superhuman: “On one level, the overman is Nietzsche’s preoccupation with the problem of the cultivation of humans once the Christian moral view of the world has lost its authority and on another level, the overman is Nietzsche’s consolation for the future in the face of his intense dissatisfaction with existing ideals” (*Introduction to Nietzsche* 107-8).

²⁸ I argue that Rebell favors master morality over slave morality to serve his aristocratism.

²⁹ The Jules Ferry Laws, which established public primary and secondary education were passed in the early 1880’s when Rebell was a teenager.

³⁰ Michel Leroy thinks that Rebell was more influenced by Nietzsche than Maurras, contending that “Peut-être l’admiration de Rebell pour Nietzsche s’est-elle ressentie quelque peu de l’influence de Maurras... qui [fut] un des principaux adversaires de Nietzsche en France” (Leroy 34-5). But in contrast to Leroy’s opinion, Gabriel Lepetit’s “Hugues Rebell” (1988) argues that Rebell’s philosophy, however, “near Nietzsche’s” is “divergent on the essential points of nationalism” (21). But each of these opinions is only a partial appreciation of Rebell’s complexity on the issue of nationalism in its relation to Nietzsche’s philosophy. Rodange’s contention, however, comes closest to my own argument: he suggests that an aporia exists in Rebell’s politics, calling Rebell both a “champion of nationalism” but, influenced by Nietzsche, a “repentant cosmopolite” (TR diss 753). I claim that although Rebell appreciated both French and foreign nationalisms, he never seemed to overcome nationalism itself and would have hesitated to embrace Nietzsche’s new cosmopolitan European.

³¹ Nietzsche calls this process by which the European nations would merge into one international union with a new caste of rulers *Grosse Politik*, or “grand politics” (BGE 208). It is beyond the scope of this comparative study of Rebell and Nietzsche to treat “grand politics.” I therefore do not wish to debate with critics like Dombowsky who sees in this vision Nietzsche’s “pan-European hegemony” (Dombowsky 102) or Strong who associates “grand politics” with “international politics” (Strong 200). It is not even clear what exactly “grand politics” would accomplish except perhaps that it implies that “all power structures of the old society will have been exploded,” as Nietzsche states in *Ecce Homo* (IV: 1). In this, “grand politics” is compatible with the mission of the “revaluation of all values” that seeks to destroy all past modes of valuation without replacing them. Rebell never overcame his own nationalistic fervor to be able to understand “grand politics” in this context. I therefore limit myself to a comparison between Nietzsche’s cosmopolitanism and Rebell’s nationalism.

³² Part II will thoroughly examine such questions of the author’s intrusion and his ability to entertain an open dialogue within the context of narratorial perspectivism.

³³ Rebell clearly adopts Gobineau’s theory of race, according to which, as Nicholas Martin’s “Breeding Greeks: Nietzsche, Gobineau and Classical Theories of Race” summarizes “the unsubstantiated notion is advanced that races are physically, intellectually, and spiritually distinct... and racial interbreeding is diagnosed as the root cause of the terminal culture decline gripping nineteenth-century Europe” (41). Like Gobineau, who, according to Jean Boisseul’s *Gobineau: un Don Quichotte tragique* (1981) did not originally propose a supremacy of race or a utilitarian eugenism, Rebell doesn’t argue, for instance, that the

French or Caucasian Europeans were superior to the Jewish people, but maintains that all races should refrain from interbreeding so that their qualities remain unique and pure (127). Rebell applies Gobineau's theory of race to Jewish immigrants in order to argue against their emancipation. Nietzsche, however, advances the opposite view of Rebell and Gobineau. Nicholas Martin's study of Nietzsche's conception of race in comparison to Gobineau's is instrumental: "Unlike Gobineau, Nietzsche understands that 'race' [Rasse] to be the product primarily of social and environmental, rather than on biological factors. Humans are not fixed biological specimens, in Nietzsche's view, but mutable and adaptable types" (Martin 43). By this definition of race, then the Jews could automatically become a new people (e.g. French) simply by living in a particular environment for a certain period of time.

³⁴ Rebell's characters are once again consistent with Gobineau who, as Nicholas Martin claims, did not have any objection to the Jews, but who was convinced that the Latin and Semitic peoples had degenerated in the course of history through various racial mixtures (Martin 41).

Part II

Rebell's Perspective on Perspectivism in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

In the first part, I explored the possible relationship that Rebell's politics shares with Nietzsche's philosophy. I now focus on how Rebell specifically treats Nietzsche's perspectivism, or theory of perspective, which he accepts at the level of individual experience but ultimately rejects as a possible dynamic in politics. Nietzsche's theory of perspective, which describes how new interpretations are laid on phenomena, can be seen to include his concept of the agon, originally a Greek contest for excellence, which becomes transformed in Nietzsche's language as the creative competition found within and between conflicting perspectives. As I intend to show, Rebell's *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* actively entertains the collective of this philosophy, or what can be called "agono-perspectivism." It should be understood, however, that while Rebell nowhere acknowledges this theory, his novel exhibits an astonishing synchronicity with it, and haunts his readers with an unresolvable question: to what degree was Rebell aware of Nietzschean perspectivism as he wrote? The main works that outline perspectivism, including *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, as well as the early essay "Homer's Contest" (1872) and parts of *The Gay Science* and *Human, All Too Human*, were all available more than a decade before Rebell wrote *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* (1898). Yet whatever the profundity of Rebell's reading of these works, he expresses an undeniable intuition of Nietzschean perspectivism in the development of his characters and narrative in *La Femme qui a connu L'Empereur*.

Understanding Nietzsche's theory is therefore first in order. Perhaps the most famous passage where Nietzsche introduces perspectivism is *On the Genealogy of Morals* (III:12), in which he articulates the fundamental idea that a person or a culture attains knowledge of the world only through interpretation, and further, by using and creating as many interpretations as possible. In his famous metaphor of "seeing" for "knowing," Nietzsche writes, "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'." There are only as many ways of viewing or interpreting the world as there are perspectives. Since, as Nietzsche claims in *The Will To Power*, "We can comprehend a world only that we ourselves have made," interpretation gives the world its sense and meaning (WP 495). Moreover, for Nietzsche, to interpret the world from a certain perspective is not simply from a certain spatial viewpoint, but from a certain mode of existence that cannot be separated from its interests. According to Robert C. Solomon's *Living With Nietzsche* (2003), a perspective "is not just a spatial viewpoint... but a particular context of surrounding impressions, influences and ideas, conceived of through one's language and social upbringing and ultimately, determined by virtually everything about oneself, one's psychophysical make-up and one's history" (37). In *The Will To Power*, Nietzsche specifies that "all evaluation is made from a definite perspective: that of the preservation of the individual, the community, a race, a state, a church, a faith, a culture" (WP 259). Stephen D. Hales and Rex Welshon's *Nietzsche's Perspectivism* (2000) concludes from this passage that, "All of these will be loci of power for Nietzsche, and so all will be entities that adopt or create perspectives" (21). Each locus has a perspective and is capable of generating new ones. In *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, each of the main characters inhabits a certain perspective, each having a

personal history and psychophysical make-up. I will study the degree to which they are all capable of generating new perspectives.

In the novel, a young adolescent named Charles tells the story of his summer visit to his grandmother and aunt who live in Sucé, a village just outside of Rebell's native Nantes during the Third Republic. Charles's narrative centers on his great-uncle and grandmother's brother, Georges Le Vergier des Combes, who took an early retirement under mysterious circumstances from his illustrious career as a *conseiller d'Etat* under Napoleon III. As Charles seeks to uncover the truth about his great-uncle's past, he must include the multiple perspectives on Le Vergier des Combes from his aunt Rachel Dorlinière, a moderately poor widow and doting mother who eventually comes to reconcile with Le Vergier after much family disputing; from his cousin and his aunt's favorite son, Victor, an unemployed free-spirit who has enjoyed a close relationship with Le Vergier since the latter was a famous politician in Paris; from Du Tremblay, a new neighbor of Le Vergier who has also retired from a dedicated career under the Second Empire as a general; and, finally, from Le Vergier's three mistresses. The latter include Hélène Mosto, coincidentally Du Tremblay's niece, a countess who first engaged in an intimate relationship with Le Vergier des Combes when they were both favorite guests of Napoleon III at Compiègne and who now, abandoned by her husband and brother comes to live with Le Vergier in his retirement; Le Vergier's linen-maid, Virginie Chômel who spends her Saturdays mending and distributing Le Vergier's sheets and clothing; and the most recent, a woman Le Vergier meets upon going back to visit the castle of Compiègne, the woman in question who knew and who ultimately reveals the truth about Le Vergier's past, Henriette Glyn. A character who provides interesting insights into the

lives of H el ene and Henriette whom he knew from Paris is Archbishop Rouillard, a friend of Victor's.

As Charles's main interest to learn as much as possible about his great-uncle's life leads him to consult and interpret the perspectives that other characters have about his great-uncle, these characters each can be considered in turn to have a complex of motivations and desires, often in conflict with each other. For instance, Charles's aunt Rachel, in her desire to maintain her social standing as a respectable Catholic, is scandalized by Le Vergier des Combes's recent living arrangement with H el ene, and yet she is also motivated to reconcile with him, since she would also like to inherit his money for herself and her son. Victor, too, is a complex of potentially conflicting motives, since he actively enjoys bringing feuding parties together and observing their unpredictable consequences, such as between his mother and great-uncle. Du Tremblay also manifests multiple conflicting traits, being both a general who believes in war and execution as well as a Catholic who believes in the Commandments. As for each of Le Vergier's three mistresses, H el ene presents herself at once as a prostitute, an abandoned housewife, a negligent mother and yet a loyal lover and a parent concerned for her daughter's financial welfare; Virginie appears as both an innocent peasant seduced by Le Vergier des Combes and a jealous, manipulative young seducer who wants to use her relationship to her employer as a means for gaining money; Henriette is an ambitious *cocotte* capable of love and devotion, whether sexual or Platonic. Finally, Rouillard as an archbishop represents the Church, although he is often motivated to violate its rules, sometimes in favor of personal profit and other times, in favor of what he argues are more humane interests.

La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur above all offers an outstanding example of Rebell's artistry as a novelist, being composed of both multiple character perspectives and multiple levels of narrative. As what Gerald Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology* (1987) calls the "main narrator" (Prince 49),¹ Charles introduces and is ultimately responsible for the entire narrative, which can moreover be described as "extra-homodiegetic," since he tells a story in which he is a character but of which he remains outside as narrator (29). His narrative can also be termed the "primary" one, since it provides the frame for all other narratives in the novel (Prince 76). But since Rebell makes his first-person main narrator just one "focal character," or "character in terms of whose point of view the narrated situations and events are presented" (Prince 31), among all the intradiegetic characters (or those who appear in the frame), who are also focalizers, he allows for the "focalization" of his entire novel, or "the perspective in terms of which the narrated situations and events are presented; the perceptual or conceptual position in terms of which they are rendered" (31), to be located in many characters. As I will discuss, this sort of focalization that Prince classifies in general as "internal," whereby information is conveyed in terms of at least one or another character's "point of view" or "perspective," or, in terms of what s/he thinks or feels besides sees and does, can be considered to provide a literary congruence to Nietzsche's theory of perspective as manifested in an individual and between individuals.

As the ultimate recorder of all internal focalizations or of all other narratives of which he has knowledge, Charles is both the main narrator and the most important narratee-character, or character who is narrated to by other characters. The latter characters can be termed "diegetic" or "second-degree" narrators, since their narration is

embedded in the primary narrative (Prince 46). The embedded narratives told by diegetic narrators can in turn be called “metadiegetic” (Prince 50).

La Pervençère, Le Vergier des Combes’s retirement property in Sucé, becomes the central meeting place for the intradiegetic characters to come to terms with their perspectives on each other, as well as about Le Vergier himself. It is the place where Hélène comes to find her former lover and to reunite with him and further, where she recognizes Du Tremblay, who has recently moved in a neighboring villa as her uncle; it is the place where Victor and Charles are free to visit with their great-uncle, despite Rachel’s misgivings; it is also where Le Vergier brings Henriette after meeting her in Paris, and further where she recognizes Du Tremblay as her new landlord from whom her late husband leased another neighboring villa. It is lastly the place where Du Tremblay meets his new neighbors despite his apprehensions and where Rachel eventually comes to reconcile with Le Vergier. La Pervençère thus provides the main setting for the characters to congregate and to exchange stories. Charles there becomes a narratee-auditor, among others who listen to narrator-characters tell stories about their former lives under the Second Empire.

Henriette’s second-degree narrative, which can also be typified as “autodiegetic” (Prince 9), since she is the protagonist and heroine of her own story (detailing her life and experiences in Paris spanning from the Second Empire through the fall of the Commune) is the longest and most important. It frames other narratives told to her (called “tertiary” in Prince’s language) (Prince 96), and also introduces other characters who exist purely on a metadiegetic level, never appearing outside of Henriette’s or some other character’s narrative. They thus remain the constructs of the perspectives of the diegetic characters

and include le marquis de Sourdis, Henriette's lover, who is a descendant of the *noblesse d'épée*, a fervent Bonapartist and who dies a *Communard*; le marquis de Trescalan, Hélène's brother, who professes to have neither political nor personal attachments, thanks to his multicultural experiences; Alexandre Dorlinière, Rachel's other son who never appears at La Pervençère, since he travels around the world; Napoleon III, who appears as a tired, sickly old man who was once a great dictatorial leader in Henriette's account, and most importantly, Jeanne La Flamme, known only in Henriette's story and in the bust by Carpeaux modeled after her and which Le Vergier owns as a keepsake of the woman for whom he had the greatest love, a woman who was a former mistress of . As a character created by other characters, Jeanne La Flamme's personality and behavior present an enigma of opposites: ugly yet most desired of the Parisian courtesans, she is Napoleon III's mistress who helps to plot against him, and, according to Henriette, she is faithful only to her ambitions for fame and wealth. Finally, other characters (in addition to Henriette and to Le Vergier des Combes) appear in both the diegesis and metadiagesis, and are thus not merely focalized but are also focalizers themselves. They include Hélène's six-year-old daughter, Agathe, whose desire to narrate becomes essential to the very making of Rebell's narrative, and Hélène's husband, Césaire Mosto, also known as the marquis Caraccioli and famous for being the attempted assassin of Napoleon III, who lusts after women and money, and who oscillates between generosity and brutality. Both Agathe and her father appear within characters' narratives as well as at La Pervençère in person. They further play crucial roles in bringing dénouement to Charles's main narrative of his great-uncle's life. *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* not only conceives of its characters as multiple-perspective beings, whether as composites of perspectives

drawn by other characters or as a self-formed set of perspectives, but also of the narrative as a multi-layered structure possessing many truths rather than one.

Nietzschean perspectivism provides an excellent tool for analyzing Rebell's construction of characters and narrative, since it opposes the notion of a strict, impartial, or totalizing knowledge in favor of a pluralized one that is relative to interpretative interests. Moreover, *La Femme qui a connu L'Empereur* is a particularly appropriate Rebellian novel to raise the question of the influence of perspectivism, since it corresponds to the period during and immediately after Rebell matured as a novelist. The novel responsible for earning Rebell reknown and that is considered by Rodange to be his masterpiece, *La Nichina* (written one year earlier), while not without possessing some elements in common with *La Femme* such as one autodiegetic narrative serving as the frame in which all others are told, lacks the dynamic relationship of the narratee characters who challenge the perspective given by the main narrator or who offer others by telling their own stories. The later novels fall even shorter from the complexity of the narrative embedding exhibited in *La Femme*, such as the first-person limited narratives found in *La Câlineuse* (1899) and in *Les Nuits chaudes du Cap français* (1902). Even Rebell's last novel *Le Diable est à table*, which allows for multiple competing discourses between characters who debat at the dinner table, lacks characters on a search for self-discovery and becoming through their reception of the opposing perspectives offered them by other narrator-characters.

In contrast to all these novels, *La Femme qui a connu L'Empereur* alone captures the essence of Nietzsche's theory. In it, he conceptualizes a universe of multiple perspectives such that no one of them can serve as the standard by which all others are

measured and evaluated, and yet each one of them strives to impose its own interpretation on all the others. Although published in final, creditable form posthumously, *The Will To Power* contains passages that can be considered to summarize Nietzsche's perspectivism and offer an accurate measurement of how much Rebell's novel is synchronistic with the epistemological implications of this theory, and also, what the perspectivistic individual's character would entail. As Nietzsche proposes, for instance,

In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings—'Perspectivism'. It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its own perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm. (WP 481)

This passage is significant first and foremost, in understanding Nietzsche's conception of knowledge. As Hales and Welshon explain *The Will To Power* (481), "Nietzsche is not claiming that perspectivism entails that there is no knowledge; rather, he is linking knowledge with perspectival interpretation. He is asserting that our needs inform our interpretations, and that these needs and their corresponding drives determine (in some way) just what we can and do know" (Hales and Welshon 35). Adopting a perspective or changing perspectives is a way of extracting meaning from our experiences that makes the world intelligible. What Nietzsche rejects, however, is traditionally conceived knowledge: "knowledge in itself" and "objectivity" understood as "contemplation without interest," which he calls a "nonsensical absurdity" (GM III:12). In other words,

for Nietzsche knowledge considered extra-perspectively, or outside of our interpretations, each corresponding to one of our needs to make sense of the world, does not exist.

The Will To Power (481) is also significant in its implication that, since all knowledge derives from interest, a problem arises for one's capacity to inhabit a certain perspective and yet to use a multiplicity of them if each perspective is linked to some need or motive which would like to dictate all other perspectives. In the *Genealogy* (III:12), Nietzsche prefers to understand "objectivity" "as the ability *to control* one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge." Thus, truth is indexed to perspectives. But since each perspective corresponds to a "For and Against" (WP 481) or to a "Pro and Con," the problem becomes how one can resist the urge to limit oneself to one perspective so that one may employ a "variety" of them. If, as Nietzsche proposes in the *Genealogy* (III:12), that only by having a multiple perspective on a thing can one hope to enhance one's knowledge of it, he also suggests that one should somehow learn to gain control over them so that they permit one to acknowledge, exchange and create other perspectives. Thus a possible solution to the problem of resisting one perspective from ruling out any other is in entertaining a tension among one's needs and interests, especially when they do conflict with each other. This ability to proliferate one's perspectives distinguishes the exceptional perspectivist from other humans, who, though in general are multiple perspective beings, having a variety of influences and ideas, do not struggle to prevent their "For and Against" from supervening over all others and who therefore sometimes allow one or more of their interpretative interests to express itself as an absolute truth.

Rebell as the author of *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* exhibits this seemingly paradoxical ability to enter into many perspectives while simultaneously inhabiting just one through his particular constructions of embedding and internal focalization. The frame narrative, which represents Charles's own focalization or perspective on characters, situations and events, encompasses at the same time all other characters' focalizations as they express themselves in the second-degree narratives. Thus, Rebell's main first-person narrator represents one "I" who is at the same time many. Further, as I will show, although Charles takes into account all character-focalizations, he does not possess a superior "authority," or, what Prince designates as "the extent of a narrator's knowledge of the narrative situations and events" (Prince 9), to any other focal character's in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, since his only access to an "inside view," or "representation of the characters' minds," is through being a witness or narratee of other characters' first-person narratives (44). As I will further argue, by thus limiting the authority of all of his characters, but especially of his main narrator Charles and his major second-degree narrator Henriette, Rebell succeeds in creating a fictional world of multiple self-limited first-person perspectives. At the same time, however, Charles's and Henriette's narratives also function as superimposed interpretations on the embedded narratives they contain, just as, according to Nietzsche's theory, each perspective strives to impose its meaning on every other.

Besides offering itself as an interesting possibility of Nietzschean perspectivism applied to literature without directly illustrating Nietzschean thought, *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* calls special attention within literature itself as an example of the polyphonic narrative. Studying the tensions in the multi-voiced authority among

characters alternating in their roles of narrators and narratees to each other can help to bring out the Rebellian narrative's quest for a pluralized, indeed, perspectival truth. Such a study can also help to identify which characters are able to control their "For and Against" in order to adopt and create other perspectives.

Since an implicit requirement for the exemplary perspectivist is the ability to contend with perspectives that conflict with his/her needs or prejudices, Nietzsche's theory of the agon is crucial to an understanding of the role of conflict in his perspectivistic world. In "Homer's Contest [*Wettkampf*]" (1872) and in *Philosophy of the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (1873), Nietzsche develops his idea of beneficent strife between opposing forces, inspired by the Greek agon, which employed destructive instincts in the service of a constructive contest between competitors in a variety of public spheres, including the artistic, athletic and political. Nietzsche's view of the universe as an arena for the struggle between opposites is inspired by such Greek thinkers of the agon as the poet Hesiod and the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus. In particular, these Greeks, and later Nietzsche, used Eris, the sister of the war god Ares, associated in antiquity with discord and strife, as a metaphor for the constructive conflict created by and preserved in the agon. In *Philosophy of the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche describes Heraclitus's concept of perpetual strife between opposites as "Hesiod's good Eris transformed into the cosmic principle; it is the contest-idea of the Greek individual and the Greek state, taken from the gymnasium and the palaestra, from the artist's *agon*, from the contest between political parties and between cities—all transformed into universal application" (PTA 55).

The Greeks traditionally considered Eris an evil goddess, but in “Homer’s Contest” Nietzsche cites Hesiod’s *Works and Days* in which the latter posits two goddesses of Eris, one evil, “who leads men to fight hostile wars of extermination against each other,” and one good, “who as jealousy, resentment, and envy stirs men to action—not, however, to the action of wars and extermination, but to the action of *contest*” (HC 38). Thus, for Hesiod, jealousy, resentment and envy are not necessarily “evil” drives, since they don’t always incite humans to destroy each other. Christa Davis Acampora’s dissertation entitled *Philosophos Agonistes: Nietzsche as Exemplar and Educator* (1998) thus explains Hesiod’s praise of good Eris: “To be spurred on by envy is not a punishment because one spurns what one lacks; rather it is a god-given gift that leads to greater human accomplishments” (Acampora diss. 20). Nietzsche capitalizes on Hesiod’s recognition of the action of good Eris as the action of productive contest. It is this contest (*Wettkampf*) that becomes synonymous in Nietzsche’s language with the Greek agon that inspires competitors to outdo each other through striving toward self-betterment rather than through denigration and annihilation of the other.

According to Acampora, Nietzsche’s interest in agon is broadly conceived of as “productive struggle and conflict, not just contest” (Acampora diss. 12). It is this conception of agon that applies to Rebell’s novel. Nowhere, however, does Rebell indicate the agon as a creative contest for excellence in, say, philosophy or art. I argue, moreover, that the agon applied to tensions between political opponents is precisely what Rebell wanted so vehemently to reject and deny, since, as I showed in Part I, Rebell the political philosopher tended toward the exclusion of his political opponents rather than an appreciation of their perspective. Yet at the same time, however, Rebell cannot always

maintain one main political perspective as much as he may have wished, as he was fraught with a contradictory attitude, for instance, toward foreigners and especially, the Jews. I contended that such a tension within Rebell the political philosopher prevented any one-sided reading of him. In this Part, I will show that Rebell the novelist entertains even stronger tension within himself, and is in fact diametrically opposed to Rebell the extreme royalist. As such, Rebell as a novelist allows himself a greater ability to be a perspectivist capable of maintaining multiple perspectives, and consequently of eliciting multiple readings (or multiple perspectives from his readers!). Through his fiction then, Rebell will be seen to share Nietzsche's aesthetic ideal of the artist whose power to create comes from his ability to generate new perspectives. Although I am not claiming that Rebell ever uses anywhere in his writings the words "agon" or "perspective," or that any other term in his language could be considered equivalent to these concepts in Nietzsche's philosophy, I argue that Rebell's *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* presents a practical study of them through characters and situations.

In particular, Rebell's novel can be considered to appreciate that perspectivism requires agon. Lawrence J. Hatab's *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy* (1995) importantly acknowledges that

a perspective needs its Other as an agonistic correlate, since opposition is part of a perspective's constitution [and] a perspective can never escape a certain complicity with elements of its Other. Conflict, therefore, is not simply to be tolerated; affirming oneself requires the affirmation of conflict, since the self is not something that is first fully formed and then,

secondarily, presented to the world for possible relations and conflicts.

(48-9)

Instead, the self is formed in and through agonistic relations. Thus, perspectives are not merely different from each other, since each perspective forms itself, at least to a certain extent, in contradistinction to others. Perspectives therefore require an element of conflict between each other, since they must both distinguish themselves from and struggle with their Other (i.e. their opposite). The concepts of perspective and agon together constitute the whole of Nietzsche's world theory, according to Hatab:

"Nietzsche's global philosophical offering... is a vitalistic, agonistic, perspectivism. The world is a field of becoming in which different perspectives assert themselves and contend with each other" (*A Nietzschean Defense* 153). As a world conceived as "becoming driven by *conflicting* tensions," agonistic perspectivism, according to what Hatab suggests, is multi-tiered: "the notion of contesting forces refers not only to the engagement of self and world and of self and other selves, but also to the dynamic conflict *within* a self" (*A Nietzschean Defense* 9).

These three levels in which Hatab sees the relations between agon and perspectivism at work in Nietzsche's world are precisely what Rebell's novel enacts. In *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, Rebell treats agonistic perspectivism² through characters reflecting on questions of identity of self and other and on the meaning of their environment, from France's Second Empire through its Third Republic. His characters as perspectivists cultivate a series of conflicting inner drives; his groups of conflicting characters also contend with each other in an effort to come to terms with their differences; and, finally, a few of his main characters confront the world in a struggle to

find meaning in it from the perspectives of history and politics, each of which can be considered in its own as a field of multiple perspectives.

In Chapter 1 of Part II, I profile Rebell's main characters, who can be considered to illustrate a variety of types of Nietzschean perspectivists, some potentially better at perspectivism than others, and who can serve to challenge Nietzsche's definition of the self, which he articulates mainly in *The Will To Power* and in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Chapter 2 concentrates on how Rebell's narrative functions perspectively. I study the special relationship between narrator- and narratee- characters which often expresses itself as agonistic debate. In addition, I locate Rebell's polyphonic narrative within the literary tradition in order to gain a better appreciation of how Rebell distinguishes himself as a writer, adapting past narrative devices to illustrate in his own novel that truth can be ascertained only by the struggle of opposite perspectives to understand each other and to adopt ever new ones. Hatab's development of Nietzsche's perspectival, agonistic truth is instrumental in describing how the hermeneutic code in Rebell's novel is unraveled.

Chapter 3 examines to what degree Rebell is able to consider and validate political perspectives on French history that conflict with or even oppose his own. In particular, I look at how Rebell's politics, which his characters' political views represent and support, is fundamentally at odds with agono-perspectivism which, in the political arena, would encourage a contest of multiple perspectives to prevent any one authority from ultimate domination. Hatab's *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, which proposes that Nietzsche's agonistic perspectivism is compatible with postmodern democracy in that the latter allows many points of view to be heard and contested while

ensuring that no power becomes unconditional, will help to emphasize the ultimate schism I see between Rebell's extreme-rightism and Nietzsche's political philosophy. His ability to be a perspectivistic writer will depend on how much one can consider Rebell the novelist maintains agon with Rebell the royalist (that is, how he draws out other perspectives in his novel that do not allow his politics to preponderate).

Finally, Chapter 4 explores how history is a perspective in itself for Rebell's novel. Through the use of his character-historians who reflect on the Second Empire, its figures and its fall, Rebell recreates French history as multiple perspective with a personal meaning that he wishes to offer his contemporary society. Moreover, he models his historical novel after Nietzsche's use of history as art for humanity.

As each chapter in this part reveals, *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can be thought of as offering Rebell's perspective on perspectivism. Nietzsche's theory of perspective invites precisely such an approach since it always already implies a self-referential critique. An enemy of dogmatism, Nietzsche is careful to posit perspectivism itself as a perspective whose self-justification depends on the contention with perspectives that criticize it. Consistent with the notion that no perspective can serve as the absolute truth, Nietzsche believes that it would offend the "pride" and the "taste" of the philosophers of the future if "their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman" (BGE 43). Instead, these philosophers would say to themselves, " 'My judgement is my judgement:' no one is easily entitled to it" (BGE 43).

According to Hatab, Nietzsche anticipates objection to his perspectivism as just another perspective by affirming it precisely that way:

Even perspectivism needs its opponent, even perspectivism must be willed

and committed in the context of opposition... Nietzsche maintains that any viewpoint is constituted by its Other, so the erasure of its Other would be the erasure of itself. That is why it is 'better' that perspectivism be a perspective in the midst of other perspectives (in this case, antiperspectival perspectives). (Hatab 154)

A main split exists between Rebell's perspectivist and antiperspectivist characters. Analogously, Rebell's personal take on perspectivism can be considered to be both for and against perspectivism. Lastly, as opposed to Thierry Rodange's suggestion that Charles alone represents Rebell, I show that virtually all of the characters represent different and competing perspectives within the author. Such will acknowledge once again Rebell's work as naturally stimulating multiple readings.

Chapter 1

Types of Perspectivists in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

Central to Nietzsche's idea of the plural, perspectivistic self is his rejection of an indestructible, indivisible, uniform, and eternal soul. For instance, Nietzsche objects to the belief in the Christian "soul" in *Beyond Good and Evil* (12) and also in the concept of the "ego," "the ego as being, the ego as substance" in *Twilight of the Idols* (IX:33).

Drives and affect, along with impulses, need, and desire are for Nietzsche the basic constituents of the self, for the self is a "communality" (WP 492) of such phenomena, or an "aristocracy" (WP 490), (i.e. hierarchy) of them, or a "social structure" of them (BGE 12). Thus, the constitution of individuals is based on their actions, experiences, thoughts, impulses and drives. Each person is thereby composed, not of one uniform and consistent self, but rather of many selves, and different selves have different perspectives.

As particular kinds of Nietzschean multiple-perspective selves, Rebell's characters can be shown to address some problems that occur in describing Nietzsche's perspectivist individual. Nietzsche claims that, "every single one of them [of the 'basic drives of man'] would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other drives. For every drive wants to be master—and it attempts to philosophize in that spirit" (BGE 6). But Nietzsche doesn't offer a cut-and-dried answer to the question of to what extent the perspectivist cultivates his/her inner tensions without either destroying them or letting them rule. His description of the process of a passion or drive becoming "master" is also far from being concrete. A second and related question Nietzsche's philosophy poses but does not completely answer is how the pluralized self should be organized. While Nietzsche calls for the

proliferation of perspectives and the maintenance of agonistic tensions between them, he also appears to want a certain controlled organization of those perspectives.³

The principal characters in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can each be classified as a type of Nietzschean perspectivist. Since many of them in their unique self-development surprisingly anticipate much of Nietzsche's characterization of individual types of perspectivists outlined in passage 778 of *The Will To Power*, I will reference this text in my analysis of the Rebellian characters and question how they may point to challenges in defining the ideal perspectivist Nietzsche assumed. In particular, Rebell's characters can be divided into the three types of selves Nietzsche envisions: the first, designated as "the definition of health," governs its multiple drives and impulses under a "dominating passion"⁴; the second, defined as "very unhealthy," is marked by "the antagonism of the passions," which leads to "inner ruin, disintegration" and "inner conflict and anarchism;" and the third, considered to be another "healthy" type, allows for "juxtaposition [of its passions] without antagonism or collaboration" (WP 778).⁵

As in some other passages in *The Will To Power*, Nietzsche believes that discipline over one's passions is necessary for health, whereas if one gives free reign to one's inner tensions instead of to one drive or to a set of drives that acts as the disciplinarian of the others, health necessarily deteriorates. For instance, the differentiation Nietzsche makes between the healthy and unhealthy types is consistent with how he distinguishes between "strong" and "weak" wills: "The multitude and desegregation of impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them result in a 'weak will'; their coordination under a single predominant impulse results in a 'strong will'; in the first case, it is the oscillation and the lack of gravity; in the latter, the

precision and clarity of the direction” (WP 46). But this healthy/ unhealthy or strong/ weak distinction complicates the conception of the agonistic self: Nietzsche calls the “wisest man” he who is “richest in contradictions” and has the “method of acquiring knowledge” by allowing himself to feel “many pros and cons” and yet who also experiences “moments of *grand harmony*” (WP 259).

Nietzsche seems to want at once the cultivation of the highest tensions within the individual but some coordination among them so that those tensions will not cause a disastrous fracturing of the individual. If one were to coordinate one’s drives according to one drive that would be normatively in charge, as in Nietzsche’s first healthy type, one might run the risk of losing some, if not all, of the inner tensions that help an individual to adopt or to generate new perspectives. If one were to allow for inner contradictions without “antagonism or collaboration” as in the second healthy type, one might fail to appreciate one’s contradictions as such.

As potential perspectivists who also entertain inner conflict between their passions, Rebell’s characters fictionalize the question as to whether the typology of the individual, especially as it is defined in *The Will To Power* (778), can be reconciled with other passages in the same work where an apparent contradiction underlies Nietzsche’s ideal individual who succeeds in multiplying the tensions between the conflicting perspectives s/he represents while at the same time coordinating them. Comparing Rebell’s characters can further serve to estimate the advantages and disadvantages of one type of Nietzschean self over another and to ultimately elucidate Nietzsche’s recipe for the ideal perspectivist.

1. The First Healthy Type Or Type 1 in *The Will To Power* (778) and *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

The characters who exemplify the first healthy type Nietzsche describes in *The Will To Power* (778) all have a dominating interest or passion or a set of them to which all of their other drives must conform, or in Nietzsche's words, for whom "the coordination of the inner systems and their operation in the service of one end is best achieved." The dominating drive that governs the others, however, sometimes prevents Nietzsche's individuals from adopting new perspectives, since they can only choose those that likewise conform to it. While this problem exists in general for perspectivism, since, as I established earlier, each and every perspective would like to proclaim itself as a rule over all others, it becomes more crucially pronounced in the first healthy type which attempts to define itself solely in terms of one dominating drive or complex of drives. Nietzsche acknowledges the tyrannical potential of a ruling passion within a self: "To our strongest drive, the tyrant in us, not only our reason bends, but also our conscience" (BGE 158). In that case, the drive taken as the "master" or "tyrant" is not merely the central one around which all others must be prioritized and coordinated but is also the one which necessarily outvotes the other lesser drives. But if Nietzsche, consistent with section 778, advocates elsewhere in *The Will To Power* a "drive as master, its opposite weakened, refined, as the impulse that provides the stimulus for the activity of the chief drive," perspectivism as the multiplicity of various and conflicting drives within an individual becomes difficult to maintain (WP 966). Thus, if "health" can be defined as the organization of an individual's drives around a central one that comes to dominate the

others, especially at the risk of outvoting them, a problem exists between preserving one's health and the philosophical use of multiple perspectives.

Some of Rebell's characters exhibit this problem: for them, if one drive comes to dominate, the others will run the risk of being suppressed completely or will become so diminished as to be insignificant to the personality. Thus, at least some of these individuals are incapable of feeling "many pros and cons" as the "wisest man" knows how to do in order to augment the number of perspectives he acknowledges (WP 259). As I will develop, of the Rebellian characters who can be classified in the first type, some favor health, or a vital sense of self-unity based on one dominating perspective over philosophy, or the perspectival insight, while a couple of others favor the philosophical over the healthy tendency, preventing their dominant drive from outvoting their others. Through the similarities and differences in this group of characters, Rebell is able to entertain the tension between health and the philosophical deployment of perspectives expressed in Nietzsche's thought.

Further, Rebell's characters who fit this first category exhibit the self-coordination consistent with the "organizationist" interpretation of the Nietzschean self. According to Hales and Welshon, if Nietzschean selves can be conceived as "bundles" or "quanta of power" (e.g. drives, affects, impulses), one way these bundles may individuate themselves is by "organizationism" (Hales and Welshon 159). This principle of organization intrinsic to the self is most commonly for Nietzsche the "dominating passion" that regulates and defines the collection of drives of which the first healthy type is composed. In another passage in *The Will To Power* entitled, "To What Extent Interpretations of the World are Symptoms of a Ruling Drive," Nietzsche gives examples

of particular organizationist selves, among which there are those who are dominated by the artistic drive and who therefore have the fundamental desires for playfulness and contemplation; others dominated by the scientific drive have the desire to “make comprehensible, useful, and exploitable” (WP 677).

In any case, “the ruling drives want to be viewed as the highest courts of value in general” (WP 677). As Hales and Welshon explain, “Each person is such that some portion of the drives that constitute them can come to dominate the others, the result of which is a self that is eccentric and skewed to that subset” (Hales and Welshon 174).⁶ Rebell’s organizationist characters—Georges Le Vergier des Combes, Rachel Dorlinière, Du Tremblay, and Héléne Mosto—underline some potential problems that arise in a self that is “eccentric and skewed” to a particular complex of drives.

As an unconditionally loyal Bonapartist, Georges Le Vergier des Combes seeks to understand all of his various and potentially conflicting desires in terms of his singular passion for and dedication to Napoleon III, from which he alone extracts the meaning and justification of his life, as well as of French politics. Le Vergier des Combes seems to affirm himself explicitly as an organizationist self dominated by his Bonapartism:

ma pensée, mon âme, mes instincts sont pris par mille liens qu’ils ne peuvent briser. L’Empereur seul pouvait concilier en moi tant de rêves vagabonds, emportés et contraires. Au Conseil d’Etat, je sentais réellement toutes les forces de ma vie s’unir et s’harmoniser vers un seul but. Travailler à ordonner et à discipliner un pays sous une autorité forte, il y a là de quoi fixer les pires vagabondages. (171)

Le Vergier des Combes thus appears to be a good example of the healthy type of perspectivist, organizing all of his inner drives, no matter how varied or contradictory, in the service of his career as a *conseiller d'Etat* to Napoleon III and toward the supreme end of maintaining France under a strong executive power. But a problem inherent in his personality exists: he tends to cast out any perspectives inimical to Bonapartism, or specifically to Napoleon III. Charles describes his great-uncle Georges as: “Plus bonapartiste que Bonaparte... adversaire non seulement de la République et du socialisme, mais aussi de l'empire libéral, combattant acharné d'Emile Ollivier et le seul homme peut-être dont le désastre de Sedan ait laissé intacte la foi à la Dynastie” (*La Femme* 26-7).

Charles here suggests that his great-uncle's devotion to Napoleon III as absolute ruler during the first decade of the Second Empire overshadowed all other views of and of French society. He therefore could not appreciate 's move to liberalize the empire by January 1870 when he named Emile Ollivier to be the head of the new liberal ministry. He also could not accept the fall of Napoleon III when was taken prisoner by the Prussians after the French defeat at Sedan. Last, he could never acknowledge any validity in the formation of the Third Republic which replaced the Second Empire. Instead of adapting himself to the changing circumstances in the Second Empire and its fall, Le Vergier des Combes adapted history to serve his image of , an image that he created and needed to maintain as vital to his own sense of self-unity: “M. Le Vergier des Combes a formé jadis une image idéale de souverain à laquelle s'est d'abord adapté parfaitement le visage de l'Empereur, si bien qu'en servant Napoléon III, il a pu croire qu'il adorait ses propres rêves,” but after the fall of the

Second Empire, “lorsque la politique, la chute du maître, la fin tragique du régime [auraient] pu décourager son espoir, il a conservé le masque glorieux qu’il avait façonné, gardant une reconnaissance à l’Empereur de l’avoir porté sans le lui briser” (*La Femme* 27). The use of the metaphor of the “mask” through which Le Vergier saw as he wanted to see him (i.e., as a supreme dictator), emphasizes that Le Vergier was blind to other perspectives that saw Napoleon III at the end of the Second Empire differently. In this sense, Le Vergier’s ruling drive overpowers his ability to be a good perspectivist able to see both the pros and the cons, especially of the fall of the Second Empire. Thus, in the case of Le Vergier des Combes, health compensates for a lack of perspectival insight. Besides, Le Vergier des Combes seems to be reflecting the personal political perspective of the author of *La Femme* who tended to eschew or willfully deny any perspective that conflicted with his promotion of a rightist politics.

Further for this healthy type’s ineptness at perspectivism, Rebell’s hero is consistent with Nietzsche’s “mediocre man” who “will not take the one with the other—he wants to erase and extinguish the typical character of a thing, a condition, an age, a person, approving of only one part of their qualities and wishing to abolish the others” (WP 881). Nietzsche distinguishes between what this type of mediocre perspectivist wants and what he and the other “highest” humans or superior perspectivists want: “The ‘desirability’ of the mediocre man is the opposite of what we others [the “highest” humans] combat: the ideal conceived as something in which nothing harmful, evil, dangerous, questionable, destructive would remain” (WP 881). The “highest man” in contrast with the “mediocre man,” does not “perish” but rather “grows” “when the multiplicity of elements and the tension of opposites, i.e. the conditions of greatness in

man, increases” (WP 881). Thus, even though Nietzsche approves of a healthy type dominated by one drive, that drive should be able to control the others without suppressing the tensions the others necessarily bring. Otherwise, an individual would be forced to resist agon between his/ her perspectives, agon which is essential for self-development and human greatness.

In the next chapter, I show how Le Vergier des Combes’s love for Jeanne La Flamme, the only other passion equal to the one he has for , is also based on a self-created illusion. In Chapter 3, I study to what degree Le Vergier des Combes’s admiration for Napoleon III’s dictatorship reflects Rebell’s own views and how these views, in turn, prevent the author (or his character) from recognizing the value of his political opponents, namely, the liberals and Republicans.

Like Le Vergier des Combes, his niece, Rachel Dorlinière creates a self-absorbed world for herself in which she chooses to adopt only those other perspectives that conform to her dominating complex of drives. She, too, appears more healthy than perspectival. As Charles writes, “Tante Rachel, ni plus ni moins que M. Le Vergier des Combes, reconstruit le monde à sa manière” (*La Femme* 79). From her perspective as a Catholic conservative who became poor after her husband’s death, Rachel only concerns herself with loyalty to her husband’s memory and love for her favorite son, Victor, as well as with her desire for monetary profit. These three passions—for her husband, for her son and for money—take priority over all of Rachel’s beliefs, and in fact, dictate what she believes and does not, and also what perspectives she can own and acknowledge and which ones she denies or rejects.

Although Rachel is Bonapartist and Catholic and has a conservative moral view regarding sexual behavior, these beliefs are mere pretenses with which she arms herself to defend her personal attachments and interests. Rachel, indeed, accepts any view or instinct that would conflict with her beliefs as long as they do not oppose her love for her son and husband or her desire for money. For instance, Rachel, panicked after reading in the local newspaper that Césaire Mosto, an Italian and an attempted assassin of Napoleon III is on the run and has been spotted in their neighborhood, rushes each night around the house to secure all entrances (1). Yet she ironically lets in the very culprit much later in the novel when she and her son hear him one night in their yard as the disguised marquis Caraccioli who was a good friend of her husband. Immediately abandoning all suspicions, including the marquis's questionable excuse for catching butterflies in the middle of the night, Rachel says, "Ah! mon mari m'a très souvent parlé de vous. Vous vous rappelez quelle superbe collection de papillons il avait achetée" (105). That Rachel admits to her mother, "C'est singulier... ce monsieur ne ressemble pas au marquis Caraccioli qui me fit la cour à Bordeaux, il y a cinq ans," is even more ironic, since she does not hesitate to trust Caraccioli's self-presentation to her in the middle of the night, after having not seen him in years (107). Even though the marquis Caraccioli later risks revealing his true identity as a former Italian anti-Bonapartist conspirator, Rachel insists on his respectability, as Charles recounts, emphasizing the irony in his aunt's comical stubbornness and narrow perspective: "Tandis qu'on le maudissait [Caraccioli] dans ce village dont il n'avait pas assez respecté la simple démocratie, tandis qu'on le chargeait de tous les crimes et qu'on lui attribuait tous les maux du pays, Tante Rachel s'obstinait à

lui trouver l'air gentilhomme et une belle distinction," overwhelmed with happiness to reunite with her husband's friend (112).

Rachel's illusions about Caraccioli are similar to the ones she harbors about her son: despite overwhelming evidence that Victor cannot keep a job and is lazy, preferring to spend money on women and to entertain his friends at his grandmother's expense, Rachel excuses his unemployment on her husband's death, believing Victor could have become rich had he been able to work for his father (79). Moreover, according to Charles, even though "Son fils aîné Victor, lui a tiré sou à sou le peu d'argent qu'elle gardait encore au fond de ses tiroirs et, de plus, tous les pleurs qu'elle avait à sa disposition," (79-80) Rachel is nonetheless overcome with joy to welcome home her currently unemployed son: "L'arrivée de Victor, c'est un rayon de soleil inattendu. Aussi, avec quels soins prépare-t-elle la chambre qui va recevoir le fils prodigue!" (80). Thus, Rachel shows herself surprisingly able to sacrifice little by little her scrupulous economy for her favorite son and most cherished possession. Charles's witty descriptions of his aunt once again serve to signal the latter's inability to adopt other perspectives, (and in this case, the other perspectives that undeniably show her son's irresponsibility and failures).

In addition to her deliberately constructed illusions, Rachel uses her Catholic faith to conceal her monetary values. She blames her uncle for living with a woman of ill-repute (Hélène) and disowns him, telling Charles, "la fréquentation de M. Le Vergier des Combes ne te vaut plus rien désormais. Ce monsieur prend avec la religion, la morale, le devoir, des libertés qui sont du plus mauvais exemple pour toi" (63). She later reveals, however, her real reason for being resentful of her uncle's alleged scandalous

relationship: she's afraid that her uncle will spend all of his money on his mistress and that he'll cheat her and her son out of his will (86). After Rachel and her mother later undertake the task of arranging for Le Vergier des Combes to receive the last sacrament, they are outraged when they learn that he made his other female companion, Henriette sole beneficiary of his will, believing that "l'héritage n'est pas un don, mais un paiement" due to them for their efforts to help him die a Christian" (433). Rachel even decides later to forgive Henriette's reputation as a former prostitute when she suggests to Victor that he should try to wed Henriette in order to win back her uncle's inheritance: "tu conviendras ... qu'une femme qui a connu l'Empereur ne peut être comparée à une... Madame Glyn est très pieuse, charitable. Depuis qu'elle demeure à la villa Marie-Amélie [near La Pervençère], personne n'a eu à se plaindre d'elle, ni à critiquer sa conduite. Je serais persuadée qu'elle ferait une excellente épouse" (436). Ironically, however, Rachel has no idea that Henriette continued her promiscuous life-style when she became Le Vergier des Combes's new mistress, and moreover, never even asks herself why her uncle would so generously bestow his entire fortune on a casual neighbor after his death. Rebell's use of humor and irony underline the contrasts between Rachel's perspective and those of others, such as Charles's on the same characters and situations.

Perspectivism provides the best explanation of Rachel's motivations and behavior, since it can sufficiently account for what would otherwise appear to be a capricious and arbitrary personality. When considered as an organizationist self centered on love for her son and for money, Rachel illustrates how our needs and interests determine how we interpret the world and how in turn, these interpretations lend significance to the world. Her character also provides a plausible account of how a

dominating drive (e.g. her desire for money) can override others (e.g. her will to employ a conservative moral judgment of others). In addition, perspectivism explains how Rachel's dominating motives can outvote any other perspective. Hence, for example, her overwhelming desire to profit financially, even from her uncle's heiress, allows her to be completely oblivious to the nature of the relationship between her uncle and Henriette Glyn.

Thus, like her uncle who creates the object of his passions according to his image of them, Rachel creates her own reality according to her intentional beliefs. The perspectives of these characters are consistent with Nietzsche's claim, in *Beyond Good and Evil* (36), that if

nothing else were 'given' as real except our world of desires and passions, and we could not get down, or up, to any other 'reality' besides the reality of our drives... [then] is it not permitted to make the experiment and ask the question whether this 'given' would not be sufficient for also understanding on the basis of this kind of thing the so-called mechanistic (or 'material') world?

Nietzsche suggests here that the appearance/ reality distinction is one of pure human invention and that whatever our thoughts, drives, and passions, they are as good as any criteria of all conceivable reality. That being the case, a problem with perspectivism remains: if knowledge always stems from some need or interest since those needs or interests make the world comprehensible for us, Rachel's character begs the question of how anyone can choose to acknowledge other perspectives that conflict with one's own views. One possible explanation of this problem is that not everyone is capable of being

a true perspectivist who acquires knowledge by multiplying his/her perspectives, as Nietzsche suggests (see WP 481, GM III:12). It therefore follows that if Rachel can be classified as Nietzsche's first healthy type, since she is able to coordinate her drives according to a set of ruling passions, this healthy type may not always make a good perspectivist if those ruling passions prevent the individual from ever challenging them with other perspectives. In the cases of Rachel and Le Vergier des Combes, health is at odds with the perspectival insight.

Still another character in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* who can be considered to belong to this first healthy type risks ignoring his inner contradictions altogether in favor of maintaining certain dominating drives or interests. In the case of this character, Rebell would ignore the tension altogether between health and philosophy. General Du Tremblay often denies the conflict between his opposing drives: his Catholicism versus his sexual drive and lust for war. As a result, he often appears as a comical opportunist and hypocrite, who, like Rachel, adopts perspectives only when they convene with his interests. For example, Du Tremblay doesn't see any conflict between his Catholic pacifism and his murderous cruelty as a former general in the *Garde Mobile*. When Victor, who escaped his command, confronts Du Tremblay for having ordered his execution during the Siege of Paris, Du Tremblay defends himself: "L'homme peut être coupable devant Dieu, mais le général ne l'est point devant ses soldats," implying God's Commandment against killing applies to everyone except to generals (135). General Du Tremblay's fascism, like Le Vergier's one-sided view of, is no doubt reflective of Rebell's political mentality that can be seen as responsible for creating such perspectives in his fictional world.

Similarly, Du Tremblay doesn't see the contradiction between his criticism of promiscuity and his own relations. Although he hates Le Vergier des Combes, his new neighbor, before ever meeting him on the grounds that he lives "in concubinage" and frequents "la plus mauvaise société" (183), he later discovers that the concubine in question is none other than his niece, Hélène (191). Although he is angry when the general to whom he was going to lease his villa dies and his widow, a woman he insists has "moeurs légères," asks to rent it (181), Du Tremblay later realizes when Henriette tells the story of her life that he himself frequented the very brothel in which she was initiated into prostitution (230), though he never admits forgiveness to her. Further, he is only able to forgive his niece Hélène for living with Le Vergier des Combes when she promises him that she will reconcile with her husband, even though Du Tremblay also does not approve of his adulterous lifestyle (434). When he first recognizes Hélène at La Pervençère, he pretends not to impose moral judgement on either his niece for living with her lover, nor on her husband, but he does precisely that, appearing to be a self-unaware hypocrite: in regard to where he now finds his niece, he tells her,

-- Vous n'êtes pas ici où vous devriez être.

-- [Hélène:] Et où voulez-vous que je sois?

-- Avec votre mari.

-- Vous dites, vous-même, que c'est un gredin.

-- Cela, c'est votre affaire!... oui, c'est l'affaire d'une femme de transformer son mari, de le rendre meilleur.

-- Je voudrais y voir.

-- Il ne m'appartient pas de juger votre conduite. Je veux croire qu'elle n'offense pas Dieu, mais je ne saurais vous cacher qu'elles a toutes les apparences d'une faute. Croyez-vous que ce serait agréable pour moi d'entendre dire que M. Le Vergier a fait sa maîtresse...

-- Oh!

-- Que M. Le Vergier vit avec ma nièce: cela revient au même. (192-3)

When Héléne then demands to know what other options she had since her husband was the one to abandon her, asking her uncle, “Devais-je vous demander de me prendre chez vous,” he tells her, “Cela n’eût pas été plus convenable.... J’ajouterai ceci: dans votre intérêt comme dans le mien, il vaut mieux que le pays ignore toujours notre parenté” (193). In this dialogue, Rebell shows his talent for creating a blind comical character who denies first, having disapproved of Héléne’s husband while criticizing her for not exercising a better influence over him as a wife, then who denies criticizing Héléne’s decision to live under the care of her lover while at the same time trying to disown her, ashamed by her conduct which he suggests is a disgrace to their Christian family. While Du Tremblay may appear to be a contradictory individual to others, he never recognizes himself as such. As a comical character, he incites laughter at his stubborn unwillingness to recognize other perspectives that would conflict with his moral view, such as empathy for Héléne’s plight as an abandoned wife. Rebell’s use of humor aimed at the blindness of certain characters like Du Tremblay thus emphasizes their sore lack of perspectival insight. Consistent with Nietzsche’s first healthy type in *The Will To Power* (778), Du Tremblay allows two central drives, his Christian morality and his

passion for his military career⁷ to alternately dominate his views. In an effort to conform himself to one or to the other, he strives to bring his inner contradictions to an end.

Thus, Du Tremblay can be classified by Nietzsche's typology as healthy but also as weak. In particular, he exemplifies the modern "weaker human beings" described in *Beyond Good and Evil* (200), whose "most profound desire is that the war they *are* should come to an end." Rachel and to a certain extent, Le Vergier des Combes also fit this definition of weakness in that, like Du Tremblay, both of these characters need to create the world in such a way that it never threatens to disrupt their self-uniformity, and which in turn, causes them to refuse other interpretations of the world. But recall that weakness for Nietzsche can also refer to individuals who have allowed the contest between their competing drives to rule, bringing their identity to a complete self-shattering (WP 46). Le Vergier des Combes, Rachel and Du Tremblay therefore suggest not only that Nietzsche's conception of a "weak" self is far from being fixed. They also point to the problem between the self-discipline of inner tensions and their freedom, a problem for which Nietzsche does not provide a definitive solution.

While the above characters may seem to indicate that Nietzsche's first healthy type is incompatible with the perspectivist who admits struggle between drives, H el ene's character shows how both Nietzschean types can coalesce in an individual. In one sense, H el ene, who reunites with Le Vergier des Combes during his retirement when she comes to live with him at La Perven ch ere, is dominated by pecuniary considerations. Although she proclaims her loyalty and love for certain people such as her daughter or Le Vergier des Combes, she is a woman who loves others only when they ensure her financial gain. Yet in another sense, H el ene's promiscuity and desire to make money may not entirely

discredit her sincere expressions of devotion to her lover and daughter. For instance, H el ene forgives Le Vergier des Combes when she discovers him cheating on her with his linen-maid. Further, H el ene may be as much interested in her daughter's financial care as she is in her own, after she had no choice but to resort to prostitution as a means of survival when her abusive, philandering husband left her. Thus, H el ene's character provides an example of an individual whose dominating drive (love for money) may not necessarily outvote others (e.g. loyalty to her lover and her daughter). In her case, health and the philosophical deployment of perspectives do not oppose each other.

Consistent with this analysis of H el ene's character is the view that Archbishop Rouillard, a man whose perspective includes Christian charity and forgiveness, has of her:

Intress ee, ambitieuse pour sa fille et pour elle-m eme, elle n'en a pas moins un besoin violent de se d evouer et d'admirer, qu'elle peut enfin contenter aupr es de M. Le Vergier. Sans doute, elle cr ee de toutes pi eces le malheur [from her jealousy] et la gloire [from her ambition to be kept] qui sont le pr etexte de cette double passion, mais le sacrifice de sa personne et le don de son esprit n'en sont pas moins reels. (350)

Despite her possessiveness of Le Vergier des Combes and her monetary ambition, H el ene does have the capacity for selfless love.⁸ As I will show, H el ene and Le Vergier des Combes are both potentially better perspectivists than Du Tremblay or Rachel, since their dominating passion determines much of who they are yet often without preventing their other possibilities from emerging. The former two characters therefore also exhibit a greater capacity for a harmony between health and perspectival insight.

2. The Second Healthy Type Or Type 3 in *The Will To Power* (778) and *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

The characters who can be thought of in terms of Nietzsche's other healthy type in *The Will To Power* (778) are opportunists who delight in their inner self-contradictions and who do succeed in multiplying their perspectives, thus appearing to be better perspectivists than the first type. They exemplify the "wisest man" who is "rich in contradictions" and who has "antennae for all types of men" (WP 259). Unlike the first healthy type, these characters are self-experts in that they can manipulate themselves in just the right way to proliferate the number of perspectives at their disposal.

They also appear to be self-aware, since they are conscious of the way they juggle their contradictions. It would therefore follow that some people are not self-aware, in that they do not understand the internal organization of their drives while others do. With the exception of Le Vergier des Combes who specifically reflects on the composition of his self dominated by his passion for Napoleon III as absolute ruler, the other characters of the first healthy type show no evidence that they deliberately construct themselves the way they do. Besides, they often appear to be in denial of their contradictions. But Rebell's characters who fit the second healthy type, on the contrary, use their self-awareness to adapt themselves to any given perspective. As a result, they can transcend personal attachments and increase their power. As Hales and Welshon explain, "Nietzsche holds that the drive-constituted self is capable of directing itself along particular avenues for the greater realization of power. This self-direction requires sufficient self-awareness to be able to view oneself as a contingently unified entity

capable of the change needed to augment power” (Hales and Welshon 175-6). This “change needed” is precisely that of willfully changing perspectives.

But this type also has an apparent problem of its own that potentially prevents it from being a good perspectivist: it can run the risk of dissolving its inner agon altogether, since it may not struggle with and against its contradictions. This type organizes its self-contradictions, by juxtaposing them “without antagonism or collaboration,” suggesting perhaps that it can coordinate them without either engaging them in active struggle or letting one prevail over the other (WP 778). Thus, for this type, the question is not whether a healthy individual can use multiple perspectives but whether s/he can entertain a contest among them. Such is the new problem that Rebell’s characters of the second healthy type pose.

A couple of the characters in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* who fit this type follow the pattern of Nietzsche’s chameleons whom the latter establishes under the third category: “The most interesting men, the chameleons, belong here; they are not in contradiction with themselves, they are happy and secure, but they do not develop—their differing states lie juxtaposed, even if they are separated sevenfold. They change, they do not *become*” (WP 778; my underline). A perspectivist who would change perspectives without adopting any of them, could not appreciate the self-development and growth that result from learning to compete with his/her opposite. Thus, the chameleons are capable of change but incapable of becoming. Yet even though Rebell’s characters of the second healthy type—Archbishop Rouillard, Jeanne La Flamme⁹ and Césaire Mosto—often seem to lack the ability to entertain contest between their own contradictory perspectives, they can enter their perspectives into contest with those of others.

Though not a chameleon, Archbishop Rouillard can be considered an opportunist who exemplifies Nietzsche's second healthy type. As a Bonapartist Republican and a Catholic who often flouts Christian values such as humility and poverty, Archbishop Rouillard is adaptable to opposing perspectives but also deliberately uses his inner contradictions to serve his interests. Rebell introduces Rouillard by describing his appearance as the self-willed marriage of contrasts:

Le désagrément de la force, l'air brutal et cassant est corrigé chez lui par des gestes simples, vulgaires parfois, une mimique d'une finesse et d'une ruse étonnantes, comme le ton gras, la chute complaisante de ses phrases atténuent la hauteur, la décision et le retentissement de la parole. Il connaît à merveille la vertu de ses contrastes, et il joue si bien de son teint pourpre, de son nez en groin, de son large rire, de sa facile bonhomie, qu'il rappelle souvent les cordeliers de nos vieux nouvellistes, grands amateurs de ripostes et de ripailles, faits pour bouffonner, parmi des filles et de bouteilles. (*La Femme* 150)

Further, always wearing over his archiepiscopal dress the cross from the Legion of Honor, Rouillard does not see, as Du Tremblay protests, "un manque d'harmonie entre cette robe d'humilité et ce symbole d'orgueil" (151). In effect, Rouillard combines Christian humility with Nietzsche's conception of noble, anti-Christian pride, and can therefore be considered to contain within himself elements from both slavish and noble moralities.¹⁰ When it later becomes a matter of saving his life, Rouillard willingly gives up his clerical role altogether: during the Paris Commune, Rouillard changes out his archbishop's robe to avoid Archbishop Darboy's fate (388).

Rouillard also has the ability to adapt to more than one political view. As a guest at the house of the narrator's grandmother where he observes a portrait of Napoleon III hanging in the drawing room, Rouillard defends and approves of it. But as Charles suspects, "Ces paroles n'étaient peut-être, de la part de l'archevêque, qu'un hommage aux idées politiques de la famille qui l'invitait à dîner" (148). Thus, the Archbishop demonstrates his ability to take on other perspectives that may disagree with his own when they serve his interests. In a later discussion with Le Vergier des Combes, Rouillard adds criticism to his admiration of the Bonapartes and claims that he recognized the Third Republic by default after the fall of the Second Empire (323). Like Nietzsche's chameleons, then, Rouillard can change the role he plays or the view he defends but does not necessarily espouse them, and so therefore, does not *become*.

Instrumental to this type of character in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* is deliberate opportunism, which allows the individual to change without becoming and hence, without growing or learning from adopting new perspectives. Rouillard's opportunism is most evident when he interprets Christianity in a way to enrich himself and profit his own interests. A former missionary in Syria during the Second Empire, Rouillard finds himself without imperial subvention during the Third Republic, and, having debts and forced to abandon his diocese, he takes on the title of "métropolitain de Jéricho" (141). He dreams of creating "a French Africa" and of founding schools and hospitals in Algeria, but he seems to use this enterprise to extort money from people: at the end of the novel, when Henriette Glyn inherits Le Vergier des Combes's fortune, Rouillard brags to abbé Trébuchet how he convinced Henriette to give it over to his mission in Algeria after telling her that God required this sacrifice from her as repentance

for her life of prostitution: “Et le tour est joué. Hein! L’abbé! suis-je fort!... Je casse les testaments et je les récris en faveur de Dieu,” though he really means in favor of himself, as Victor, who, overhearing this conversation, realizes how Rouillard cheated Henriette out of his uncle’s inheritance to her (438). To the shocked abbot, Rouillard responds, “Vous êtes ridicule, l’abbé: vous ne comprenez rien. L’or est beau même couvert d’ordure, même souillé de sang, quand il faut l’arracher à de pauvres gens qui ne rêvent que d’un stérile bonheur pour le donner à l’activité, à la puissance” (439). Rouillard is thus never conflicted about his extortion that he claims, truthfully or not, will be put toward a charitable end in Africa. Moreover, he sees no contradiction between his Christian faith and his dishonesty. Unlike the characters of the first healthy type, opportunism for Rouillard aids rather than prevents him from acknowledging other perspectives since he changes interpretations according to the changes in his interests. Yet this opportunism does not help the characters of the second healthy type to allow for healthy antagonism between their contradictory positions and interpretations.

Another character provides a good example of a true self-serving chameleon who also is not in contradiction with herself. Although Jeanne La Flamme is a purely metadiegetic character in Rebell’s novel, appearing only in Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes’s discourse about her, the latter characters construct her as an interesting perspective of multiple opposites. In Henriette’s narrative, Jeanne La Flamme, a reigning bisexual *cocotte* in Paris, mistress of many rivaling men, including Napoleon III and his liberal opponents, has the ability to don in her most important pursuits of sexual power and wealth multiple conflicting identities to all who know her. She has several names and nicknames that reflect her multiple identity. Although Le Vergier des Combes only

knew her only as “the Baroness of Holz,” (415) she was also called, according to Henriette, “the Baroness Jehanne, or Johanna” (211) but was most popularly known as “Jeanne La Flamme” among her intimates, who believed that she gained her fortune not by her beauty, which she did not have, but “par une ardeur amoureuse extraordinaire” (222).

A master dissimulator, Jeanne La Flamme is able to conceal her physical ugliness and old age with make-up, jewelry, and dyed red hair; she keeps her desires regarding her lovers as secretive as her origins; according to Henriette, no one could discern “quel mystère céleste ou infernal illuminait [ses yeux]” (220). Her ability to dissimulate her identity coincides with her self-manipulation to adapt to any perspective that serves her ambition for power and money. Yet Henriette is able to intuit what her ulterior motives are: “Elle ne devait réellement son pouvoir sur les hommes qu’à sa force de volonté, à son insatiable ambition, d’où rien ne venait la distraire et où elle trouvait à la fois son amour, son jeu et ses fêtes” (222).

A master at self-mastery, Jeanne La Flamme never makes personal attachments, committing herself only to the winning party in any given match. For instance, she approves of a Prussian victory from the onset of the war of 1870 because she thinks that a French defeat is inevitable: she tells Henriette as the French army sets off for war, “Je ne voudrais pas être française en ce moment: je n’ai jamais aimé être du côté des vaincus” (324). During the Paris Commune, she alternates between Communards and Versaillais: she takes a member of the *Comité central* as a lover but later has him killed, explaining to her friend that she only chose a Communard lover so that that party would never suspect her real identity as a spy for the Versaillais (406). When the Versaillais later triumph,

Henriette discovers that she has become Adolphe Thiers's new mistress (413). She finally dies in Berlin, in a castle she has had built with the money she stole from her lovers, and while caressing the treasure-safe of gifts they gave her (413).

Like Jeanne La Flamme, Césaire Mosto is an expert chameleon: appearing as a fictional Felice Orsini, or as the main Italian conspirator in the 1858 plot to kill Napoleon III, he has a talent for manipulation of self and others, and can take on any role or alias he creates in order to serve his monetary ambition, lust, and anti-absolutism. Upon arrival at the house of the main narrator's grandmother, Mosto appears as the marquis Caraccioli, the friend of Rachel's deceased husband. According to Charles's first vision of him as he enters his grandmother's house, "Court et noiraud, [le marquis] avait le front bas, couvert de cheveux luisants, de petits yeux d'enfant à fleur de tête, un nez joyeusement ouvert, un sourire narquois sous des moustaches hérissées et terribles. Son visage semblait un composé de plusieurs physionomies; son costume, un mélange de recherche, de prétention et de négligé" (104). Like the portrait of Rouillard, the Marquis's is a marriage of contrasts, mixing childlike innocence with sinisterness and hinting at multiple appearances blended in one.

Mosto is indeed a chameleon similar perhaps to Balzac's Vautrin, hiding his identity as a fugitive in order to fulfill his interests. Added to this complex composite is an uncanny Italian accent which readers of *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can trace in both Charles's recording of the marquis's speech and Henriette's account: in the primary and second-degree narratives, Rebell reproduces the marquis' accent by spelling phonetically the words he pronounces. As Charles suggests, the purpose of faithfully reproducing Caraccioli's oral eccentricity in his written narrative is to explain why the

townspeople found charm in a stranger whose habits of excessive drinking and of speaking in favor of Mazzini and against a strong executive ruler they would have otherwise found quite offensive: “Ces moeurs qui, de la part d’un Français, eussent scandalisé le pays, passaient, bien plus! semblaient charmantes, accompagnées de l’accent étranger” (109). Henriette, too, was initially charmed by him. Before her narratee-auditors, (and of course, before the readers of Rebell’s novel) learn the identity of the Italian in Henriette’s story, Rebell invites them to become suspicious of his resemblance to Caraccioli as Henriette reproduces the same phonetic peculiarities in her recollection of his discourse. In her autobiographical account, Mosto appears as an Italian count whom she first meets as one of Jeanne La Flamme’s lovers who is kicked out after asking her for a loan (226). When he promises to make Henriette’s happiness and fortune, she hesitates to believe him; but, as she recalls, he insists, “Vous êtes sceptique? Z’aime ça, moi! c’est oune grâce. Seulement, écoutez, môme enfant: vous avez affaire ozourd’houi à ône homme dont le coeur est pleine d’amour et pétri d’idéal. Vous devez avoir confiance en moi. Ze n’ai zamais menti dans mon éistance” (229). Such a reply adds humor to his accent for all narratees of this metadiegesis, since the Italian count has already falsely professed devotion to Jeanne La Flamme in Henriette’s story and since his promise to Henriette turns out later to be a lie when he steals from her and rapes her, keeping her as his mistress only after she has become a successful *cocotte* (247).

Rebell’s written depiction of the marquis’s accent serves several purposes. Besides giving his readers a flavor of Mosto’s colorful personality in his peculiar discourse, Rebell also reinforces the contrast between the charm and dangerousness of

the Italian revolutionary. Henriette's story also reveals Mosto's plot to kill with a band of Italian criminals. Accordingly, readers can more easily understand why a character could have a partial or limited perspective on Mosto as a casual acquaintance. Yet at the same time, they can learn to become suspicious of uncovering his real identity by his accent repeatedly reproduced in Charles's and Henriette's narratives. Toward the end of the novel, Mosto reappears at La Pervençère to reveal himself as Hélène's husband, wanting to reconcile with her after discovering that Du Tremblay will agree to make her his heir (418). Although he consistently portrays himself as a womanizer, woman-beater, and violent anti-Bonapartist, readers learn to realize that Mosto assumes different identities only to obtain his ends.

Since Rouillard, Jeanne La Flamme, and Césaire Mosto tend to remain loyal to one ambition such as greed, they accurately depict the Nietzschean chameleon who changes without becoming, though they also thereby put into question the true perspectivist's ability to cultivate tensions between his/ her conflicting drives. Although these characters are consistent with the theory that Nietzsche associates with Heraclitus's thought in *Philosophy of the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, namely that "Everything forever has its opposite along with it," (54), at least two of them, Jeanne La Flamme and count Mosto, fail to appreciate that "The strife of opposites gives birth to all that comes-to-be" (55). In *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche indicates how one's inner agon, or contest between opposites, serves a beneficial purpose for humanity: he characterizes the perspectival individual as a "hall of culture" who has conflicting powers operative in it "while between them there reside mediating powers with the strength and authority to

settle any contention that might break out” (I: 5: 276). While Nietzsche calls for tensions to arise within an individual, he rejects harmful antagonism.

Rebell’s characters of the second healthy type therefore serve to question to what degree they must “not [be] in contradiction” with themselves in order that they be “happy and secure” (WP 778). It seems that Rouillard, Jeanne La Flamme and Mosto either jeopardize maintaining their contradictions or that they are paradoxically at peace with the war they represent, since they never let one of their drives definitively triumph over its opposite.

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche is more specific about the oxymoronic peaceful war that he implies the true perspectivist must cultivate within him/herself: he advocates the need to cultivate a “spiritualized enmity” within the self that is maintained “on condition that the soul does not relax, does not long for peace” (V: 3). Thus, to be at peace or harmony with one’s contradictions may simply stipulate a complete willingness to yield to the conflict and struggle one’s contradictions necessarily produce. In particular, Rouillard’s practice of Christianity as a priest and his behavior and actions that often question his loyalty to Christian virtue and rules may entail this talent. Further, in this same passage of *Twilight of the Idols*, what Nietzsche means by “peace” can manifest itself as the “temporary satisfaction of overcoming a resistance” (V: 3). He gives examples of this peace, including “the condition which succeeds a vigorous gratification of our ruling passion, the pleasant feeling of a rare satiety” (TI V: 3). Such could be the case when Rouillard gratifies his ambition for his African enterprise, delighting in his ability to maintain his Christian faith and dishonest means of using it toward his ends. Similarly, Jeanne La Flamme’s “pleasant feeling of rare satiety” comes when she rejoices

over her gifts from her lovers that she saw as trophies of her power over them and her ability to always triumph with the victorious side.

But peace as Nietzsche defines it must also be consonant with the “wisest” man’s rare moments of *grand harmony* which never allow for an ultimate state of rest from one’s contradictions. Nietzschean peace may lie precisely in that it always already implies its loss.¹¹ Rebell’s true chameleons, incapable of becoming or overcoming, cannot understand Nietzschean peace as temporary satisfaction that accompanies each of an individual’s countless self-overcomings. These characters may therefore suggest that the third type in *The Will To Power* (778) is capable of being, but is still not always the ideal perspectivist Nietzsche seeks elsewhere.

3. The Cases of Rebell’s “Ugly Plebeian” and Heraclitan Child

Further, Rebell’s chameleons are also amoral and are therefore mediocre perspectivists in that they have not reached a superior vantage point from which they are able to critique morality. Like these individuals who neither make commitments nor have a moral preference, another character in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*—the marquis de Trescalan—can be compared to the type of perspectivist Nietzsche calls the contemporary “ugly plebeian” in *Beyond Good and Evil*. For Nietzsche, the “hybrid European” (BGE 223), hybrid because s/he is a modern descendant of races that have mixed “indiscriminately,” and also because s/he contains “opposite, and often not merely opposite, drives and value standards that fight each other and rarely permit each other any rest” (BGE 200), can further be “a tolerably ugly plebeian” who “requires history as a storage room for costumes” (BGE 223). These “costumes” are metaphors for the various

cultures and moralities, both past and present, which the “ugly plebeian” tries on at will in his present age and society:

To be sure, he soon notices that not one fits him very well; so he keeps changing... It is no use to parade as romantic or classical, Christian or Florentine, baroque or ‘national,’ ... it ‘does not look good’. But the ... ‘historical spirit,’ finds its advantage even in this despair: again and again a new piece of prehistory or a foreign country is tried on, put on, taken off, packed away and above all *studied*: we are the first age that has truly studied ‘costumes’—I mean those of moralities, articles of faith, tastes in the arts, and religions—prepared like no previous age for a carnival in the grand style, for the laughter and high spirits of the most spiritual revelry, for the transcendental heights of the highest nonsense and Aristophanean derision of the world. Perhaps this is where we shall still discover the realm of our *invention*, that realm in which we, too, can still be original, say, as parodists of world history. (BGE 223)

Thus, Nietzsche saw his contemporaries not only as multiple-perspective beings by their multiple origins, but by their new-found experimentation with varying perspectives as they constantly adopted and dropped them, as if they were styles or fashions that never quite pleased them but which they examined nevertheless for the first time in history. Nietzsche ultimately approves of the “tolerably ugly plebeian” as an original comedian of perspectives; his fashion show of cultures and moralities is a comedy in which he stars as an expert at parodying (and thereby critiquing) cultural costumes. Through his art of parody, the “tolerably ugly plebeian” distinguishes himself

from all other characters of past generations, being able to invent a new perspective on perspectives, both past and present, whether within a single culture or across cultures. Thus, even if Nietzsche's contemporary commoner is potentially unable to have a discerning taste for the costumes or perspectives s/he wears (adopts) and might therefore be unable to become, s/he is ultimately an extraordinary perspectivist because s/he gains a superior perspective on the ones s/he parodies, teaching humans to laugh at themselves. This laughter is of primary importance to the continuation of humanity, since it allows one to study, evaluate and eventually to overcome one's past and present perspectives. As Nietzsche concludes *Beyond Good and Evil* (223), "perhaps, even if nothing else today has any future, our *laughter* might yet have a future."

Yet Rebell's character who tries out different cultural perspectives without learning how to become falls dramatically short of the final comedic outcome for Nietzsche's "ugly plebeian." The marquis de Trescalan, Hélène's brother, is a world-traveler who can be likened to Nietzsche's character in *Beyond Good and Evil*, since he has tried on and studied different foreign perspectives but who consequently has no discerning taste. Like Jeanne La Flamme's character, the marquis's is also metadiegetic, being a product of multiple perspectives, based purely on those of Henriette's story and of Hélène's letters. He is described as a "grand voyageur, ayant vécu avec toutes les races de la terre, assistant aux événements les plus inattendus sans en être surpris ni indigné" (*La Femme* 372). Interestingly, Rebell may very well have had *Beyond Good and Evil* (223) in mind, since he makes use of the same metaphor of "costumes" for the different moralities, customs, and tastes that the marquis has undertaken to examine, almost as though he were a cultural anthropologist: "A force d'avoir traîné parmi les peuples les

plus divers, adopté des usages qu'il gardait moins longtemps *qu'un habit*, il avait perdu toute faculté de s'intéresser plus à une nation qu'à une autre et c'est à peine si, dans la lutte franco-allemande, il prenait parti pour son pays" (372; my emphasis). As a result of the marquis's world-wide examination of cultural perspectives, he no longer has any personal passions, such as patriotism. Henriette moreover reports that the marquis de Trescalan told her at the brothel where they met that he didn't even have a need for family ties: "il ne faut pas croire qu'une famille soit un bien si enviable. Moi, qui vous parle, je puis vous dire que j'ai quitté tout jeune mes parents pour échapper à leurs violences. Depuis, je n'ai retrouvé, chez eux, à mes séjours en France, qu'ennuis et tracasseries de toutes sortes" (373).

Although the marquis de Trescalan resembles the "ugly plebeian" insofar as he can be considered to be an expert at adopting and dropping moralities, he lacks the Nietzschean type's essential role of parodist of perspectives. Instead of being able to critique and laugh at the array of cultures he has encountered and studied, the marquis cannot make any evaluation of them and certainly therefore, does not overcome them. Rebell's character can be thought of as illustrating a negative version of the comedy that the ugly plebeian enacts, emphasizing only the potential danger that too much study of "costumes" may bring: the inability to esteem one costume or perspective over another and to form personal commitments to certain ones.

The marquis de Trescalan is also thereby a mediocre perspectivist, being able to proliferate the number of perspectives he acknowledges, but unable to make an ultimate choice which would allow for his self-development and growth. A true perspectivist, in contrast, would understand "how to *conserve oneself*: the hardest test of independence,"

for which Nietzsche gives a list of ways a person becomes independent: “Not to remain stuck to a person... Not to remain stuck to a fatherland... Not to remain stuck to some science” and finally, “Not to remain stuck to one’s detachment” (BGE 41). The marquis de Trescalan is a good perspectivist in that he knows how not to remain stuck to his opinions, fatherland, and family, and so can dispose of his “pros and cons” in order to see from multiple perspectives. He remains stuck, however, to his unwillingness to be stuck, a trait which Nietzsche would view as the fault of the “objective person” who cannot take sides for “good and evil,” who is a “man without substance and content,” who, in short fails to become (BGE 207).

Recall from the *Genealogy* (III:12) that perspectivism precludes all pretensions to “objective” or purely disinterested knowledge in favor of knowledge that weighs as many different perspectives as possible. But Lawrence J. Hatab contends that, “Although Nietzsche considers all knowledge and value to be perspectival, he advocates a *commitment* to one’s own perspective over others; a detached condition or an absence of resolve or a skeptical reserve are diagnosed as forms of weakness” (Hatab 182). By “commitment,” Hatab means a perspective for which one would necessarily strive to contend against other perspectives. It allows loyalty to one perspective but disallows the eradication of any other, since personal commitments need to exist alongside their opposites in order to contend against them. Hatab’s concept of “commitment” consequently avoids two major pitfalls: first, of reducing perspectivism to a strict moral relativism, which Nietzsche opposes in the “objective” person who appreciates human differences but who does not see any one perspective as being better or worse than the next; and second, of allowing any contradiction to exist between simultaneously choosing

one perspective over all others and wielding several at will. A “commitment” escapes the second pitfall, since it may express itself as an absolute truth for one perspective but not as an overarching truth for all. In other words, commitments are not convictions, and they are therefore devoid of the danger that Nietzsche sees in affirming the latter:

“Conviction is the belief that on some particular point of knowledge one is in possession of the unqualified truth.... It is not conflict of opinion that has made history so violent but conflict of belief in opinions, that is to say conflict of convictions” (HAH I:9: 630).

While some of Rebell’s characters of the first healthy type risk making convictions, such as Le Vergier des Combes who cannot permit any interpretation of except his own, the others who belong to the second healthy type avoid this problem but exhibit a new one: the abstention from making commitments. The latter problem becomes even more pronounced in the marquis de Trescalan who is an amoral relativist.

Another character in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, Victor Dorlinière, is like the marquis de Trescalan, since he is open to any and all perspectives, but he is ultimately superior to him. In one way, Victor is a healthy type, having a central drive, namely for sex, that directs most of his experiences, while in another way, he also gives his life up to chance, or to the random play of opposites, as Nietzsche explains is the game of Heraclitus’s world-child. Victor only cares about satiating his immediate sexual urges; but as a result, he cares for nothing else, including his career, his financial security, and his future. He constantly loses his jobs because he steals from his companies to solicit women for sex. During a business trip as a seller for a candy refinery, Victor spends all the money he made on prostitutes, and when he returns broke to his company he is fired (81). On his last job where his mother personally placed him, Victor sells religious

paraphernalia but is wrongly accused of pedophilia when he gives products for free to young girls going to catechism classes (81). Even though his boss does not fire him, he later decides to quit and, upon returning home to his mother, he has no explanation to give her for not keeping his job (84). According to Charles, “Victor manquait absolument de sens moral” (81). Like Rebell’s chameleons, then, Victor’s amorality underscores his independence from personal commitments.

As the above anecdotes illustrate, Victor operates not simply according to his sexual impulses, but according to chance. Insofar as he maintains a constant contention of multiple and opposite perspectives, Victor allows for health and philosophy to co-exist within himself. Hence, Le Vergier des Combes refers to his nephew as a “pistol” since he discharges, or functions by surprise (80). Charles, too, takes into account his cousin’s unpredictability: “L’existence de Victor est pleine d’imprévu, d’ardeurs subites et fugitives, de bonds et de chutes” (80). For example, once he returns home, Victor amuses himself every morning by randomly picking up people on the docks of the Erdre river and bringing them back to his grandmother’s, where he entertains them, allowing many of them, in spite of his grandmother’s outrage, to eat her food, destroy her garden, and steal from her art collection (115-16). As I will show in the next chapter, Victor, like Rouillard, proves himself to be an excellent perspectivist by bringing people together of opposite tastes and views and challenging them to enter into debate. Victor therefore can be likened to Heraclitus’s child, whom Nietzsche mentions in *On the Genealogy of Morals*: “man is *included* among the most unexpected and lucky throws in the dice game of Heraclitus’s ‘great-child,’ be he called Zeus or chance” (II: 16). The purpose of this “great child” or god is to create and to maintain agon in the world by allowing opposites

to intermingle and fight with and against each other at random. As a product and a player of this game, each man is as much a spontaneous collection of agonistic forces as he is a force that contests with his opposite, giving way to unpredictably new collections of conflicting forces in the world.

For Victor, now sex, now boredom comes to predominate over his other drives and affects. Once, out of sheer boredom, Victor imagines that he is sick and, further, that the prescriptions the doctors give him are too mild, and so he decides to deliberately take an overdose (114). But after almost killing himself from one of these overdoses, he is finally “cured” of his hypochondria, as Charles observes: “Cela le guérit pour quelque temps de cette manie de soigner une santé qui fut toujours excellente, et il chercha de moins singulières distractions” (114). Victor’s self-induced sickness that cures him of his need to be sick recalls Nietzsche’s own self-congratulation for being a master at “Looking from the perspective of the sick toward healthier concepts and values and conversely, looking again from the fullness and self-assurance of a rich life down into the secret work of ... decadence” (EH I: 1). Like Nietzsche himself, Victor is an expert at reversing perspectives, such as those of sickness and health. Never purposeful or goal-oriented, Victor plays with opposites like Heraclitus’s “great child.” He is therefore a far better perspectivist than the marquis de Trescalan who, despite his ability to change as many different perspectives as he desires, lacks Victor’s talent for experimentation with opposing forces or perspectives. Yet while Victor avoids the pitfalls of complete detachment and total conformity (as is the latter case for the first healthy type of Rebellian characters), he becomes too disorganized, succumbing to his most immediate impulses and is therefore never able to be a superior esteemer of perspectives.

4. A Nietzschean Unhealthy Type: The Historical Napoleon III

Although Victor lacks a strong coordination of his drives and affects around a central, ruling passion, he is still far from portraying Nietzsche's second character type in *The Will To Power* (778) which he designates as "very unhealthy" by "the antagonism of the passions; two, three, a multiplicity of 'souls in one breast' ." While this description of the unhealthy type may appear to be at fundamental odds with Nietzsche's call for the cultivation of multiple conflicting tensions within the self, Nietzsche is consistent in his precautions against these tensions from overtaking the self.¹²

Rebell shows that he is much aware of the danger threatening the health of an individual torn between his irreconcilable forces, especially when that individual is the leader of a nation. Through Rouillard's analysis of Napoleon III, Rebell criticizes as a Nietzschean unhealthy type of perspectivist whose inner antagonisms risk splintering and weakening his personality, making him fraught with indecisiveness and vulnerable to the potentially dangerous perspectives of others. Rouillard admits that Napoleon III was able to manage his "deux bêtes ennemies," or "l'idée démocratique et l'idée napoléonienne" (*La Femme* 327) at the beginning of the Second Empire, but claims that, after a while, could no longer unite "la Révolution et la Dynastie, le pape et les conspirateurs italiens, le libéralisme et le pouvoir. Chaque jour il fait son examen de conscience et se demande s'il n'a pas été infidèle à l'un ou à l'autre idéal. Hélas! c'était déjà trop d'en avoir un" (328).

As a particularly perspectivistic ruler, Napoleon III was perhaps an excellent historical choice for Rebell's study of Nietzsche's unhealthy perspectivist. In *Napoleon III and His Carnival Empire* (1988), John Bierman's description of Napoleon III's

personality in his politics strongly hints at 's inner agon: "His personal kindness and fashionably progressive outlook, constantly at war with his authoritarian instinct, allowed him to be a despot who believed in democracy" (314). Interestingly, this description of the inner agon Napoleon III faced is similar to Rebell's own: his conflict between remaining loyal to royalism and wanting (or needing) to accept post-revolutionary values or leaders. As Rebell's Rouillard suggests, since the beginning of his rise to power with his coup d'état of the Second Republic on December 2, 1851, Napoleon III was at war with himself, split on the one hand by his drive to suppress socialist revolution and found a government based on the Napoleonic legend of restoring order and stability to France through autocracy, and on the other by his drive to guarantee democratic principles. When the Second Empire was proclaimed exactly one year after Louis- Napoleon's coup d'état, the new emperor maintained the "Napoleonic idea" by declaring himself to be the elect of the people. According to Alain Plessis's *De la fête impériale au mur des fédérés* (1976), "[Napoléon III] a la conviction sincère que c'est dans le peuple qui réside son appui, et sa générosité l'a toujours poussé à se soucier du sort des masses, à essayer d'assurer leur bonheur. [Mais] il sanctionne une démocratie pourvu qu'elle soit autoritaire" (18). Although all executive power was entrusted to Napoleon III by the Constitution of January 14, 1852, allowed for democratic expression in two ways: by keeping his right to have recourse to a plebescite in which the masses could approve of essential decisions, as he did after the coup, and by ruling that the deputies of the Legislative Body be elected by universal male suffrage (Plessis 33). But the power of the deputies was severely limited, according to Plessis: "Le Corps législatif n'a ni le contrôle ni l'initiative des lois. Son droit d'amendement est subordonné à l'agrément du Conseil

d'Etat," the latter's members named by who served as both "les censeurs et les défenseurs des projets ministériels" (Plessis 33). Rouillard argues, however, that Napoleon III became unable to maintain his control over his desires to reconcile the conservative and liberal forces¹³ in France. As a result, was consistent neither in his policies nor in his goals for the empire. Thus, for instance, Rouillard hints at 's inconsistencies in dealing with the question of Italian unification.¹⁴

If a ruler cannot manage his conflicting desires for his nation and becomes an inconsistent policy-maker in his attempt to please everyone all of the time, Rouillard concludes that he will only succeed in losing the trust of all of his supporters and end as a weak and ineffectual leader. Despite Louis Napoleon's "mesmerizing ability to seem to be all things to all men," as John Bierman contends,¹⁵ Rouillard acknowledges the inevitable failure of Napoleon III to juggle so many perspectives: "Un prince vient bien gouverner pour aider au bonheur du pays entier, mais il est impossible que, dans la lutte des intérêts, il puisse toujours satisfaire tous les intéressés. Il doit donc choisir entre les partis celui qui lui représente l'intérêt le plus important" (*La Femme* 328). Napoleon III, without governing with the most important interest in mind only, "non seulement ses mesures contradictoires, les secours donnés, puis retirés aux uns et aux autres, ne produisent aucun résultat, mais ils éloignent de lui tous ses partisans" (328). No longer having the confidence of his people, , Rouillard argues, consequently fell easy prey to the liberal opposition: "De degré en degré, de réforme en réforme, ils [les libéraux] l'entraînèrent" (329).

Moreover, Rouillard's recommendation that a ruler ought to prioritize his interests by choosing the political party that represents the most important one, suggests that a

strong ruler entertains agon with himself as well as with others, but, at the same time, is able to coordinate those people and perspectives entirely by one desire or goal. Thus Rebell, through Rouillard, would advocate a ruler modeled after Nietzsche's healthy, organizationist self as the solution to the threat of a ruler crumbling under his own conflicting forces. After describing the "unhealthy type," Nietzsche affirms that the individual carried away by inner antagonisms can "return to health" if "one passion at last becomes master" (WP 778). Although the philosopher does not explicate what such a "dominating" or "master" passion would entail for an individual's personality or behavior, it might be considered in terms of what it would mean for Rebell's ideal leader: a passion to rule over the perspectives within himself and over those of his people, a passion which neither denies nor outvotes other perspectives, but which also prevents a multiplicity of them to cause indeciveness in himself or disorganization in his state. For Rouillard, (and for Rebell), Napoleon III was this ideal leader during the first decade of the Second Empire: "Il s'est alors servi de l'idée démocratique et de l'idée napoléonienne comme d'échasses pour passer un marécage. Qu'il ait pu faire marcher de front ces deux bêtes ennemies, qu'il ait pu les conduire au lieu d'en être écartelé, cela seul est étonnant" (*La Femme* 327). Rouillard can also be considered to reflect agon within the author himself who struggled to defend his political commitment (to an autocratic leader) over against an historical example of a leader who disappointed him when he changed into the opposite of his ideal. Rouillard's attempt to understand the shortcomings of a leader who failed to realize his (and Rebell's) hopes would therefore mean that Rebell, through his character, could cultivate healthy tension with the political perspective to which he fought to remain loyal. As I will continue to show, Rebell the novelist is often able to

transcend the fascist within himself vicariously through his characters who confront a mode of political thinking that he would otherwise shun.

This ability to create such a fictional world can mean that Rebell the novelist is a superior perspectivist than Rebell the politician, or, that the novelist aids the politician to be better at perspectivism, since Rebell allows his characters to defend his politics by challenging it. With the presentation of Rouillard's disappointment with Napoleon III, for instance, Rebell's readers gain greater appreciation of his preferred leader as wholly consistent with Nietzsche's strong individual who directs the will of his people through his self-direction. For his "great man" who is a master of self-mastery, Nietzsche claims that, "Freedom from any kind of conviction is part of his strength of will. Thus it accords with that 'enlightened despotism' exercised by every great passion. Such a passion takes the intellect into its service ... it removes scruples; it permits itself convictions, it even *needs* them, but it does not submit to them" (WP 963). Rebell's Napoleon III exemplifies this "enlightened despotism" that Nietzsche calls for within the organizationist individual when he used the convictions of his people to gain control over them rather than let their convictions overtake him. And Rebell himself subscribes to the same organizationist self by having his characters defend his political view without letting it overtake them.

5. Rebell's Strongest Attempt At Creating the Ideal Perspectivist

Henriette Glyn, the woman who knew Napoleon III, seems to alternate between Nietzsche's two healthy types, suggesting perhaps that it is this combination which best represents Nietzsche's ideal perspectivist capable of maintaining self-controlled inner tensions between opposing drives. Hence, she adopts both good health and perspectival insight. Like the first healthy type, Henriette is dominated by two central passions: her

love for the marquis de Sourdis and her desire to make her own money. Unlike the first healthy type, however, Henriette actively struggles with and against her two drives which oppose each other: Henriette's monetary concerns compel her to betray her lover when she prostitutes herself. She therefore resembles H  l  ne whose self-contradictory behavior manifests itself in her love for her daughter and her lover, Le Vergier des Combes, and her inability to remain loyal to them because of her prostitution. Yet Henriette distinguishes herself from H  l  ne through her ability to consciously confront her inner conflict and to struggle to maintain it.

After is captured at Sedan by the Prussians, Henriette decides to work for Mme Danglemont's brothel, since she realizes that she needs money to be able to reunite with de Sourdis, who has been stationed at Cassel and who is now broke due to debts and to the fact that he will no longer get his imperial salary (*La Femme* 358). Although Henriette agrees to take on her first customer, John Glyn, inviting him to accompany her to Cassel where she plans to reunite with de Sourdis, she manages to keep her chastity despite the physical danger she encounters from Glyn. He and Henriette stay in separate hotel rooms until one night when forced to occupy a single vacancy with one bed, she must defend herself from Glyn's drunken brutality (365). Henriette succeeds in escaping him by kicking out his tooth and taking a little of his money the next morning to pay for the rest of the trip to Cassel (365). Upon her return to Paris with de Sourdis, Henriette apologizes to Mme Danglemont for rebuffing Glyn and agrees to her terms: Mme Danglemont will allow her to let de Sourdis live in her so-called "pension de famille" to relieve his poverty if she agrees to accept Glyn as her client (366). As Henriette reflects, "Apr  s tout, me dis-je, je ne vivrai qu'une partie du jour, celle que je consacrerai    mon

ami. Mon âme sera absente de mon misérable servage” (366). But after living according to her procuress’s rules, Henriette is overcome with guilt over her double-life: “je ne savais plus jouir d’un amour que je croyais, à certains moments, avoir trahi, dont je me sentais à présent indigne, et les lèvres de mon ami ne provoquaient que mes larmes” (369).

After her lover dies and she marries Glyn who rescues her from her own death during the Paris Commune, Henriette demonstrates control over her attachments, and, consistent with Nietzsche’s second healthy type, is able to maintain a peaceful juxtaposition of inner self-contradictions which allows her to remain open to other perspectives. But she diverges from the latter type since she does prove capable of making new commitments. Instead of mourning the loss of de Sourdis, Henriette is thankful to be alive and, as an expression of her gratitude, marries John Glyn, who should have been an objectionable suitor also because of his strong anti-Bonapartism. Although Henriette herself grew up in an anti-Bonapartist community, she becomes devoutly loyal to after meeting him and later falls in love with de Sourdis, partly because he shares her admiration for Napoleon III. Thus, despite her unconditional love of , Henriette does not allow this passion to prevent her from engaging in a relationship that opposes her politics, just as she does not allow her equally strong love for de Sourdis to prevent her from enjoying new relationships after his death. Even after the death of her husband, whom she found “unbearable,” Henriette expresses a certain respect, however momentary, for him as well (*La Femme* 356). When she notices that Le Vergier’s countenance changes each time she mentions Glyn to him, no doubt recalling to him his violent encounter with the rough Englishman at Compiègne who insulted France to him (as Héléne reported the

incident during their trip in a letter to her procuress) (172-3), Henriette chides him for not pitying him instead of hating him, since, as she tells him in her opinion, Glyn “est mort juste quinze jours après notre rencontre à Compiègne, d’une congestion cérébrale. Je suis sûre que l’altercation que vous avez eue avec lui a contribué à sa fin subite” (355). But Le Vergier questions the sincerity of her own sympathy for her husband, reminding her of how she apparently abandoned him shortly after he was wounded in the fight: “Vous-même, Henriette... avez-vous eu grand-pitié de lui? Ne l’avez-vous pas délaissé pendant que j’étais à Paris?” (355-56). Henriette indeed later followed Le Vergier des Combes back to La Pervençère, where she discovers coincidentally that he is also her new neighbor, thanks to the villa she rents from Du Tremblay leased in her husband’s name. Suddenly abandoning all hints of sympathy for her husband’s demise and of reproach for Le Vergier’s own feelings for him, Henriette, according to Charles’s narrative, “retrouva son accent câlin d’amoureuse, comme pour rappeler qu’une enfant est toujours excusable,” thus taking on the role of the flirtatious *femme-enfant* vis-à-vis Le Vergier for whom she has a newfound loyalty since Glyn’s death: “J’ai quitté John pour toi. Et tu t’en plains encore, Coco!” (356).

As Henriette’s dynamic character illustrates throughout her relationships, she is capable of assuming many roles, including the devoted mistress, the guilty betrayor in spite of herself, a courtesan in need of money to support her *amant de coeur*, a grateful wife, and the *femme-enfant* who alternates between playfully scolding her new companion and excusing her own behavior. Whether she mourns her husband or is eager to proclaim her loyalty to a new protector, none of the roles she plays discredits the genuineness of any other. Henriette thus shows herself to be capable both of making

commitments and transcending them. In this way, she views the world from other perspectives, or other relationships, which in turn, compel her to live beyond them. In her ability to master her tensions without either suppressing them or letting them rule over her, Henriette provides an example of Nietzsche's "strong type" that he sees as a possible potential within the "hybrid European" who too often devolves into mediocrity: "when the opposition and war in such a nature have the effect of one more charm and incentive of life—and if, in addition to his powerful and irreconcilable drives, a real mastery in waging war against oneself, in other words, self-control [appears]," then the "highest type of human being" emerges (BGE 200). Henriette's extraordinary perspectivism thus lies in her power to use her various and conflicting passions as a stimulation for life.

By imagining such varied and varying degrees of perspectivism within the individual, Rebell exhibits a literary aesthetics in harmony, if not in consultation with Nietzsche's theories. In so doing, he also shows that at least through literature, he too was capable of being a strong perspectivist.

Chapter 2

Narratorial Perspectivism and the Pursuit of Truth in Rebell's Novel

Since the search for identity of the other plays as important a role as the search for self-identity in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, perspectivism within the individual and between individuals can be usefully applied to each of Rebell's characters and to their relationships, respectively. I now turn to an analysis of the latter. By having characters of conflicting perspectives interact with each other (both as narrators and narratees as well as in general dialogue¹⁶), and by drawing from them multiple viewpoints of another character, Rebell aptly creates scenarios in which he maintains Nietzsche's claims that the proliferation of perspectives is required for the attainment of knowledge, that absolute knowledge or truth (i.e. independent of perspective) is impossible but that an epistemic hierarchy exists in which those good perspectivists always open to new perspectives can help correct distortions and falsifications caused by the narrowing of perspective.

But *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* is not merely remarkable as a fictional depiction of Nietzsche's perspectivism; it is foremost a remarkable literary advance in what Prince refers to as the "dialogic" or "polyphonic" narrative which is "characterized by the interaction of several voices, none of which unifies or is superior to (has more authority than) the others" (Prince 19). In such a type of narrative, each character often exhibits multiple perspectives while also alternating between the roles of narrator to and narratee of other characters. The relationship between these narrators and narratees can therefore be dynamic in works entertaining polyphony, allowing characters to challenge one another in search for truth about oneself and others, a truth which is in itself multiple

and dynamic, rather than omniscient and fixed. *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can therefore be seen to build upon this very kind of narrative, which was already manifest in novels by such writers as Robert Challe, Laurence Sterne and Balzac.¹⁷ As I will discuss, Henriette's autobiography ironically culminates in being a significant biography of Le Vergier. As Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* attests, the narrative explored perspectivism in the self long before Nietzsche's philosophy. Still other texts in the French literary tradition that also predate Nietzschean philosophy and which can serve as possible models for Rebell's dialogic narrative are Robert Challe's *Les Illustres Françaises* (1713) and Balzac's *Contes drolatiques* (published between 1832- 1837). In Balzac's collection of 30 tales, the multivoiced authorship spread among multiple narrators in an embedded structure, none of whom possess the ultimate authority, can be likened to Rebell's in his novel, where the author can be seen to inhabit at once one perspective and many, having a frame narrator represent one interpretation of events and characters while also yielding authority to all the other narrator-characters whose stories he faithfully records. Rebell's novel particularly resembles Challe's *Les Illustres Françaises*, in which the discovery of truth depends entirely on the verbal interaction between characters who contest the metadiegetic narratives they exchange. While *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* does not entail such a systematic organization as the seven interconnecting stories in *Les Illustres Françaises*,¹⁸ Rebell's narrative pivots on a similar type of rotation among characters, allowing narrators to influence and inspire their auditors or interlocutors, who, in turn, may either tell their own stories or who challenge the narrator's focalization, especially concerning another character. According to Michèle Weil-Bourgougnoux's "L'Equivoque de ma lettre' et les voix équivalentes des narrateurs conjoints" (1993), the

construction of truth as “une active intersubjectivité” (164) in *Les Illustres Françaises* is the result of a very specific type of dialogism: in Challe’s work, “il ne s’agit pas d’une polyphonie, juxtaposition de voix restant distinctes, mais de dialogie, ensemble d’interactions verbales où chaque voix se modifie au contact de celle des autres” (169).¹⁹

In this chapter, I argue that the dialogic narrative as conceived in Challe’s *Les Illustres Françaises* is wholly applicable to *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* in two ways: first, in debates between characters of opposing perspectives, and, second, in the narratorial exchanges between them in which narrators and narratees potentially teach each other new perspectives and inspire still others. I return to the concept of the agon in Nietzsche’s thought to bring out the contest between characters more open to learning and generating perspectives and those who are not, and also to gain a better understanding of Rebell’s dialogic truth. Rebell’s readers will then be able to appreciate how the novelist is at odds with the man of conviction—whether political or other.

1. Perspectival Perspectivists vs. Anti-perspectival Perspectivists and Their Debates

Although conflicts between characters of different perspectives do not lead to the production of creative competition that Nietzsche credits the original Greek agon for achieving, Rebell’s characters do seek to cultivate their tensions, despite their hostility which threatens the contest of ideas between them. This contest often expresses itself in Rebell’s dialogue as debate between those open to new perspectives and those who tend to reject them, or, who can be called the perspectival perspectivist and anti-perspectival perspectivist characters, respectively. As I established in the introduction to Part II, Nietzsche anticipates and resolves the problem of self-reference to his theory of

perspective by affirming perspectivism to be but one perspective in the midst of potential perspectives that would oppose it, or what Hatab calls “anti-perspectival perspectives” (*A Nietzschean Defense* 154). Accordingly then, Nietzsche’s commitment to perspectivism allows him to contend for his philosophical theory against other views of it, but, at the same time, it also disallows him from invalidating or excluding those opposite perspectives. For instance, Zarathustra recognizes the validity of other and potentially opposing perspectives to his own when he tells his would-be followers, “‘This is *my* way; where is yours?’—thus I answered those who asked me ‘the way.’ For *the* way—that does not exist” (Z III:11).

Contrary to the perspective committed to perspectivism, the anti-perspectival perspectives view themselves as absolute truths, as the only perspectives that do exist. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche’s “spiritualization of enmity,” which he defines to be as important to maintain within a self as it is between selves, critically requires the affirmation of one’s opponents:

Another triumph is our spiritualization of *enmity*. It consists in profoundly grasping the value of having enemies: in brief, in acting and thinking in the reverse of the way in which one formerly acted and thought. The Church has at all times desired the destruction of its enemies: we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, we see that it is to our advantage that the Church exists... (TI V:3)

In contrast to the anti-Christians who depend on Christianity as a source for its own meaning, as the perspective against which to defend themselves, the Church, Nietzsche suggests, is anti-perspectival, since it is incapable of affirming opposition.

I borrow Hatab's language to distinguish those of Rebell's characters who affirm both conflict and their opponents as valuable to their self-constitution from those other characters who seek to exclude and deny their opponents. In this chapter, I examine how Rebell is strongly perspectival in his aesthetic insight as a novelist, maintaining agon among the narrator-characters. Besides, I contend that even if Rebell does not attempt to directly address Nietzsche's theories on the aesthetic man who has the power to create from the perspectives he multiplies and modifies, his novelistic genius has an inherent intuition of them. In the next chapter, I explore how Rebell, the author of *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, functions both perspectivally and anti-perspectivally in his fictional presentation of French politics.

As a perspectival perspectivist, Victor insists on struggling for reconciliation between enemies, rather than on their mutual resentment and desire to destroy the other. In particular, Victor is capable of forgiving his own enemies. His serendipitous reencounter with General Du Tremblay, responsible for ordering his execution during the Siege of Paris, leads to a debate and reconciliation between his perspectival and Du Tremblay's anti-perspectival perspectives. As Victor tells Le Vergier des Combes's gardener one day, not far from La Pervençère, the story of how, when he was a soldier in the *Garde Mobile*, he narrowly escaped being killed by orders of his general who objected to his drunken, disorderly conduct, he turns to realize that the stranger near them fishing on the banks of the river who has been eavesdropping on them is none other than General Du Tremblay (134). Thus, Victor's story ironically turns out to be a miraculous "second-person narrative" as the narrator discovers that his unintended narratee was the protagonist in his story (Prince 84). *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* abounds in

coincidental reunions. Among the purposes they serve is the one that is to bring old enemies or conflicting parties together again in agon that ends in peaceful reconciliation. Such is particularly the case between Victor and Du Tremblay, but unlike most of the other lucky reunions in the novel, this one is special, since a metadiegetic narrative has the power to conjure the presence of one of its characters in the frame. This technique allows Du Tremblay, a focalized character of Victor's story, to present his own focalization, and, therefore, his own defense. That Rebell first introduces Du Tremblay as unrecognizable to Victor until the end of his story emphasizes the effect of surprise as the focalized can suddenly become a focalizer.

While still narrating his story, Victor notices that the apparent stranger eavesdropping on him looks at him with an overt expression of *mécontentment*, though Victor attributes this reaction to the horror of his discussion of “guerres and carnages” (133). But upon discovering Du Tremblay's identity and learning that he has bought the property across the pond from La Pervençère, Victor forgives him, even though the latter claims that he has long forgotten his orders to execute Victor (135). Besides, Du Tremblay stubbornly refuses to regret his orders to kill anyone, telling him, “Si j'ai commandé de vous fusiller, c'est qu'apparemment vous l'aviez mérité” (135). Whether this forgetfulness is feigned or real, Du Tremblay is apparently unable to change his views, even after hearing Victor's story and meeting him again. Victor, however, is ready to close the emotional distance between himself and his recognized narratee. He therefore decides to invite Du Tremblay to dinner. But when the general refuses, thinking Victor is about to play a trick on him, Victor insists,

Vous m'avez fait fusiller, moi je vous invite à dîner. C'est le droit d'un

chrétien qui trouve que rien n'est meilleur pour noyer *les ressentiments* qu'une bonne bouteille de vin d'Anjou. Entre nous, vous me devez bien cela. Et puis, écoutez: je suis votre voisin de campagne; si nous devons vivre l'un près de l'autre comme chien et loup, vous verrez comme ce sera agréable! (136; my emphasis)

In his move to make peace with Du Tremblay, Victor specifically uses Nietzsche's word indicative of slave morality, *ressentiment*, in order to emphasize that he is opposed to contempt for and ill-will toward one's enemies. Victor thus identifies himself with Nietzsche's noble man in *The Genealogy*: "How much reverence has a noble man for his enemies!—and such reverence is a bridge to love.—For he desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction" (I:10). Contrary to Nietzsche's association of Christian *ressentiment* with slave morality, however, is Victor's affirmation that it is the mark of a true Christian to dissolve any mutual *ressentiments*, and moreover, that sharing a bottle of wine could serve as a rejuvenating libation from all lingering hostility. Victor's comical tone adds to the spirit of reverence between enemies eclipsing desires to annihilate the other, to which Victor's survival is testimony. Thus, the ultimate result of Victor's second-person narrative allows for a "double focalization," or for a concurrence of different focalizations (i.e., Victor and Du Tremblay's views of each other) in the rendering of their reencounter (Prince 23). In turn, this narrative device serves to reinforce the contest of opponents.

Further, if the perspectival perspective needs to incorporate its opposite in its self-formation and self-affirmation, it must be distinguished from slave morality which also uses its opposite to affirm itself. As I established in Part I, the fundamental difference

between noble and slave moralities is that the latter perspective needs to denigrate its other as a means to secure self-esteem while the former seeks to honor its other as a measure against which to test its superiority. Christa Davis Acampora makes a crucial link between these modes of morality and Nietzsche's conception of agon, showing how the noble-slave interrelation can be grafted onto Nietzsche's reevaluation of the dual nature of the Greek goddess, Eris. According to Acampora's translation of *Human All Too Human* (II: 2: 29) in her article, "The Contest Between Nietzsche and Homer': Revaluing the Homeric Question" (2003), "Someone who is envious senses every way in which another protrudes beyond the common measure and wants to force him back [*herabdriiken*] to it—or to elevate himself [*erheben*] to it: out of which there arise two different modes of action, which Hesiod designated as the evil and the good Eris" (Acampora 93). According to Acampora's dissertation, in "Homer's Contest" Nietzsche is inspired by the Greek concept of the agon in which competitors with mutual respect rather than contempt strove to outdo the other, not by pushing him down or back, as would be the activity of "evil Eris" or of slavish *ressentiment*, but by rising above him, as would be the activity of "good Eris" or of noble morality (Acampora diss. 154).

The dialogues between Rebell's perspectival perspectivists who embrace the agonistic drive and his anti-perspectival perspectivists who reject it express themselves in debates of creative contest. Such is Victor's struggle with Du Tremblay in the former's attempt to elevate himself above old hostilities.²⁰ When Victor tries to cheer up Du Tremblay who lives alone by telling him that he can make friends with his new neighbor, Le Vergier des Combes, they enter into a dialogue in which Rebell contrasts the hermetic, retired old general suspicious of making friends whose politics might disagree with his

own and an extroverted young man who encourages unions between old or new opponents. Victor first argues that the general should be open to make new acquaintances since, living alone,

—Vous devez bougrement vous embêter.

—Monsieur, je ne m'ennuie jamais. A mon âge, il ne me reste pas trop de temps pour revoir ma vie. Je me souviens, je médite, j'écris: le soir vient trop vite.

—N'importe! Vous avez besoin de distraction. Vous trouverez en mon oncle un homme toujours prêt à recevoir vos confidences. Vous échangerez, vous comparerez vos souvenirs. Peut-être avez-vous fréquenté les mêmes hommes. C'est un esprit distingué, mon oncle: un ancien conseiller d'Etat de l'Empire!

—Monsieur, je ne suis pas bonapartiste.

—Raison de plus! Quand on est tous du même côté, il n'y a rien à frire. Mais, si vous ne pensez pas à sa manière, vous discuterez avec lui. Vous lui répondrez, il vous répondra; vous vous chamaillerez tous les deux: ce sera exquis! Et, comme cela doit être, la lumière finira par jaillir du choc des idées. (136-7)

This dialogue demonstrates Rebell's skill at inventing debates as well as the skill he lends Victor at winning such contests, as he is able to rebut every objection that Du Tremblay raises to having an active social life with a new neighbor and potential foe. In this, Du Tremblay plays at defense, at pushing back his interlocutor (perhaps as in the action of *herabdriiken*) while Victor plays at offense, but only to elevate the spirits of his

opponent, (perhaps as in the action of *erheben*) rather than to vilify him. As Victor argues, humans of any age need interaction as a stimulation for life. One way in which they can find this stimulation in each other is by sharing stories. Victor thus encourages the very act of oral narration. He thereby emphatically distinguishes himself from the anti-perspectival Du Tremblay who, afraid of others with different perspectives, seeks to avoid confrontations. In his last utterance, Victor's description of the *lumière* or perhaps the *spark* that appears when ideas clash, seems to be metaphorical of the mutual excitement or even inspiration that results from debating differences. Further, by referring to the French idiom equivalent to the English, "If there is nothing to eat, there is nothing to be gained," Victor puns on his dinner invitation to Du Tremblay, implying that he is most amused to bring as guests to his grandmother's, not those who share the same views and perspectives as his and his family's but, instead, those who will represent just the opposite, and who can therefore bring interesting disputes as food for thought at the dinner table. Thus, Victor not only welcomes his own enemies as a mark of his triumph over life, but also encourages contests between other enemies, or those with opposite perspectives.

When Victor returns to his grandmother's Bonapartist house accompanied by Du Tremblay, he discovers that abbé Trébuchet has already brought Rouillard there for dinner. In another serendipitous reunion that provides the grounds for yet another contest of ideas between perspectives, Victor recognizes archbishop Rouillard as his old friend while Du Tremblay also recognizes him as the Catholic missionary he knew in Syria when he was stationed there as a general in 1860. But to further complicate a situation of conflicting personalities, Victor's guest causes a dispute between his mother and

grandmother who is angry that, it being a Friday, when Catholics must observe the rule of fasting from meat and usually cook fish instead, she has none to prepare (141). Besides, angry once again at Victor's indiscretion, and angry also when she sees that Du Tremblay is an outspoken anti-Bonapartist whom she must nevertheless entertain, Victor's grandmother decides to prepare a chicken and some ham in an attempt to embarrass him. When Rachel doesn't understand why she is willing to prepare such food that she explains would be for no one but the general, she answers, "Alors [le général] va manger tout seul sa poularde devant l'archevêque et l'abbé? Eh bien, il en aura du coeur, cette espèce de libre penseur! Ah! Rachel! C'est ton imbécile de fils qui nous a amené ce beau mirliflore!" (149). But Rachel insists, "Mais, maman, Victor ne pouvait pas faire autrement que de l'inviter. Comprends donc, son ancien général!" (149). She further attempts to excuse her infraction of Catholic law in her efforts to be hospitable to her guests: when Du Tremblay refuses the chicken, Rachel says,

Monseigneur, mon général, monsieur l'abbé, croyez que je suis désolée d'avoir pu vous laisser penser un moment que je ne respectais pas les Commandements de l'Eglise. Par malheur, en ce misérable pays, il n'y a aucune ressource, et j'ai dû, contre mon gré, vous faire faire gras aujourd'hui. J'étais bien embarrassée, je vous assure, partagée entre mes devoirs de chrétienne et mes obligations de maîtresse de maison. (153)

The humorous contrast between Rachel's unconditional acceptance of her son and his friends and her mother's sharp refusal to welcome them underlines their differences in this instance: Rachel as a potentially much better perspectivist than her mother, torn between her Catholic faith and her good hospitality.

Like Victor and as the above example also illustrates about his mother, Rouillard maintains the active interplay of conflicting perspectives. Particularly similar to Victor, he enjoys entertaining disputes. To the astonishment of Rachel and her mother, Du Tremblay refuses the chicken while both clergymen graciously accept it (152). In response to Rachel's apologies for serving the chicken as a dilemma in her attempt to fulfill her duties as both a good Catholic and a good hostess, Rouillard says to her, "Vous les avez [les devoirs] remplis tous les deux, madame, soyez-en persuadée.... Cette poularde est exquise et vous me permettez d'en reprendre. M'imitiez-vous, général?" (153). But when Du Tremblay still refuses, Rouillard pokes fun at his strict conformity to Catholic law while the general reproaches the liberties that the Archbishop allows himself from that law that it is his duty to represent:

—Voyons, général, je vous donne la permission [to eat the chicken]. Au surplus, le bon Dieu n'est pas un inspecteur des cuisines, ni un bourreau chinois pour nous ouvrir le ventre et regarder ce qu'il y a dedans. Ce sont des tâches qui répugneraient à son idéalisme. Et puis, il a bien assez à faire de sonder les coeurs sans s'occuper du reste.

—S'il agit ainsi, il a tort, observa M. Du Tremblay. Quand on donne des ordres, c'est pour qu'ils soient exécutés.

—Toujours des leçons, alors! s'écria l'archevêque. Depuis que je le connais, ajouta-t-il en se tournant vers Tante Rachel, le général n'a jamais perdu l'occasion de me montrer, par sa conduite, que la mienne était inconsidérée. Malgré la confusion qu'il me cause, je lui suis bien reconnaissant, car, sans lui, j'ai la tête si légère que je ne m'apercevrais

pas de mes fautes et que je mourrais avant d'avoir pris le temps de m'en repentir... Vous rappelez-vous vos suppliciés de Beyrouth, général? (153-4)

The ironical incongruity posed by a general who tries to pass himself off as a better Catholic than an archbishop, since he follows a strict, dogmatic perspective of Catholicism while the latter allows for a more human, and therefore, more flexible interpretation of religious rules, makes for one of the most hilarious dialogues in Rebell's novel. But it also significantly emphasizes the contrasts between perspectival characters fully aware of the necessity to take on other perspectives (i.e. a priest who permits and even requires a breach of Catholic rules in favor of a greater appreciation for the spirit of Catholicism as love and forgiveness of others, such as for the venial faults of a gracious hostess) and antiperspectival characters who cannot understand them (i.e. Du Tremblay can only see Rouillard's action as a sin and not one of magnanimity for Rachel).

Besides, even if Rouillard is merely facetious when he expresses his gratitude toward Du Tremblay for helping him to recognize his behavior and actions as sinful, and can therefore not be considered to appreciate the perspective of his opponent, Rouillard's ironical approval of the general serves to better criticize the narrow-mindedness of his Catholic faith. As I will soon discuss, when Rouillard questions Du Tremblay's memory of the incident in which the Archbishop performed a mercy-killing of tortured Syrians, an action that Rouillard again defended as humane but that Du Tremblay suggested was simply a violation of the fifth Commandment, he attempts for a second time to signal Du Tremblay's inability to acknowledge other perspectives (such as mercy) in Catholicism (154-55). In these debates, Rouillard can be considered to bring a Voltairien attack on

Catholic dogmatists,²¹ a position which aligns him closely not only to Rebell's favorite French rebel against Christianity, Voltaire, but also to Nietzsche. In "Préjugés modernes," Rebell expresses his admiration for Voltaire's fight against the Church for which he soon after credits Nietzsche for continuing in the same passage: "Même les voltairiens d'aujourd'hui ne se doutent pas que pour aimer réellement Voltaire il faut commencer par mettre la Bible au rang des livres de pathologie, parmi les traités des maladies humaines" (907). Rebell certainly counted himself as one of the true Voltairiens alongside Nietzsche. Rouillard perfectly demonstrates "spiritualization of enmity" (TI 5:3) both within himself and with his opponents. Nietzsche's self-identification with the "immoralists" and "anti-Christians" who realize that it is to their "advantage" that their enemy, the Church, exists particularly applies to Rouillard, who can be considered to represent not only the Church but also an opponent of the Church's dogmas.

Both Rouillard and Victor serve to uncover the internal war that Du Tremblay represents and that he wants to deny. Rebell underlines Du Tremblay's differences from the other two frame characters in the episode in which the General and the Archbishop alternate as narrators and narratees vis-à-vis one another as they prompt each other to recall their experiences in Napoleon III's expedition to Syria in 1860.²² Their stories have several purposes. First, they serve to challenge the narrators themselves to debate about their political opinions as well as to inspire their narratee Victor, to participate in the discussion. Second, they also illustrate internal focalization that is both multiple, since two different focalizations are given on the event of Napoleon III's expedition to Syria and at the same time, variable, since two different focalizers (Du Tremblay and

Rouillard) present different aspects of this event from their different experiences of it. “Multiple internal focalization” is defined as “A type of internal focalization or point of view whereby the same situations and events are presented more than once, each time in terms of a different focalizer,” (Prince 56) whereas “variable internal focalization” is the type of internal focalization “whereby different focalizers are used in turn to present different situations and events” (101). The effect of both types of internal focalization employed is to expand the overall perspective on the historical event recounted and to reinforce the contest of opinions about it.

Rouillard’s account as a missionary in Syria inspires both him and Victor to challenge Du Tremblay’s Catholic pacificism, which is at fundamental odds with the latter’s lust for violence. Rouillard explains to Victor who wonders with disdain for all Syrians,²³ “comment te fais-tu comprendre par tous ces gens-là [regardless of whether Christian or Muslim],” (144) Rouillard responds that he was able to spread the love of Christ to all of those people (however ignorant of his customs or language) by letting them kiss his archbishop’s cross (145). In reaction to Rouillard’s Christian charity, Du Tremblay believes, “on aurait tort de croire que le sentiment chrétien n’est pas encore développé dans l’âme de ces pauvres gens,” and gives as an example his witness to a violent scene in which a Maronite woman killed a Druse woman to avenge her husband’s death by the latter people, saying a prayer before committing the murder (145). Struck by the difference in Rouillard’s peaceful Christian sentiment and Du Tremblay’s violent one, Victor sarcastically observes,

Oui... je comprends à présent la question d’Orient. Si les Druses
n’égorgent pas les Maronites, ce sont les Maronites qui égorgent les

Druses, et, quand les Turcs ont fini de massacrer, les chrétiens s'y mettent à leur tour. Il s'agit de savoir qui on laissera assassiner. Dans les deux cas, c'est le Sultan qui endosse les meurtres. Voilà un homme chargé de beaucoup de crimes! Il est vrai que, seules, les violences des Turcs doivent être comptées, les violences des chrétiens étant toujours légitimes, en vertu du privilège que ces messieurs possèdent de représenter la justice, toutes les fois qu'ils ne méritent pas la pitié, tandis que ces coquins de musulmans, assassins ou assassinés, bourreaux ou victimes, ne cessent jamais d'être de scélérats, plus coupables d'avoir fait commettre un meurtre par les chrétiens que de l'avoir commis eux-mêmes. (145-6)

Although Victor obviously disdains all those peoples in the Mid-East, whether Christian or Muslim, his retort to Du Tremblay serves to mock the general's conception of Christian sentiment which condemns the violence of the non-Christians (ie., of the Druses) but which justifies the violence and will to persecute of which Christians (e.g., the Maronite woman) are guilty.

Moreover, Victor's speech is particularly revealing of Rebell's skill as an ironist. He employs inverted irony, such as Victor's criticism of Christian racism against Muslims, expressed indirectly as apparent condemnation of the Turkish leader who is to blame for all murders, whether committed by Christians or non-Christians. Inverted irony also manifests itself in Victor's criticism of the Christians' legitimization of ethnic cleansing disguised by his apparent praise of them as unconditional representatives of justice. Victor further multiplies ironic contrasts to describe the Muslims (e.g., *murderers and murdered, executioners and victims*), and overstates their guiltiness

through use of epithets (e.g. *rogues* and *scoundrels*), all of which serve to underscore his sarcastic support of their persecution and merciless extermination by Christians. Rebell's narrative, which uses multiple devices of irony, can be seen once again to reinforce contrasts between character perspectives in their polemical discourse.

In addition, when Du Tremblay objects to Rouillard's mercy killing of two Syrians²⁴ who were being relentlessly tortured and who begged to be put to death immediately so as to be relieved of their agony on the grounds that the Archbishop did not have "le droit d'achever l'existence d'un homme avant l'heure marquée par Dieu," (the right to end a man's life before the time designated by God") Victor is quick to remind him of how he ordered his own execution, telling him, "Oui, vous aimez mieux faire la besogne à vous seul" (156). Rouillard adds, "je ne voudrais pas être de vos soldats: je craindrais plus encore votre pitié que votre justice" (156).

As a witness to (and thereby as an implicit narratee of) this entire debate, Charles makes a commentary on it, the purpose of which is to provide a meaning for what he has recorded at the dinner table he shares with his family and their acquaintances. He concludes that Du Tremblay liked to argue against the ideas of others simply for the sake of opposing them, "trouvant un plaisir incessant à contredire ses compagnons de table, à repousser les objections et à rester seul de son avis" (156). The frame narrator underlines the key difference between Du Tremblay and his dinner companions: while the general needs to attack other viewpoints in order to cling to his own, following a slavish mode of repulsing and pushing back [*repousser*] his opponents similar perhaps to the action of *herabdrücken*, Victor and Rouillard are noble perspectivists who not only affirm their own contradictions, but are able to appreciate the contradictions in others. Thus, dialogue as

debate in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, manifests itself as a practice of contest, not between competitors, as in a game, but as thinkers striving to grapple with their differences. The author's intrusion²⁵ serves to emphasize not only the larger scope of Charles's frame focalization but also the close-knit relationship between narrators and narratees that makes an agonistic discourse possible. The real author (Rebell) is no doubt master of creating such discourse, and shows himself thereby a particularly good perspectivist as a fictional writer.

2. La Pervençère: A Site of Discord and Harmony

Rebell also invents a visible location where the majority of narrator-narratee debates take place. Le Vergier des Combes's retreat, La Pervençère, becomes the geographical site of reunion and agon among the main characters whose prejudices and grievances for one another are brought into open confrontation. A bridge over a pond which separates Le Vergier des Combes's property from his neighbor, Du Tremblay's, and also Du Tremblay's villa from the one he rents out to Henriette (since the latter is on the same side of the pond as La Pervençère), serves as an obvious metaphor for the divisions between quarreling characters and the ties (neighborly or familial) that bond them. Two separate accidents on that bridge dramatize the need for these characters to reconcile with each other despite their differences.

The first one occurs right after Rachel reunites with her uncle but discovers, to her dismay, that H  l  ne is still his mistress. When Victor tells his mother that he plans to accompany his uncle and H  l  ne on a trip to Paris, Rachel tries to coax him to help cause a break-up between them (160-1). Besides, despite her embarrassment at the astonished reaction she receives from Victor in regard to her request (161), she believes upon his

return from the trip that he fulfilled what she asked, since, indeed, Victor affirms that they came back without her, but without explaining that it was not due to his intervention (177). Instead, as H el ene implies in a letter to her mistress which Charles is able to read, Le Vergier himself was responsible for causing an emotional distance between them after he neglected her in Paris following his altercation with John Glyn and his encounter with Henriette (175). But when H el ene makes a surprise sudden appearance to Le Vergier’s guests at La Perven ch ere, Rachel starts to leave, as she is forced to realize that others have not acted according to her self-willed perspective on their expected conduct (185-6).

Similar to Rachel’s abrupt disappointment is Du Tremblay’s, who, not yet recognizing H el ene, is shocked as soon as he sees that Le Vergier des Combes is living with a “concubine” and he begins to leave too (186). But “A ce moment m eme, comme on allait se s eparer pour toujours, on vit accourir du fond du parc, au del a de l’ tang qui bordait la villa ... habit ee par la locataire du g en eral—une robe blanche [Henriette’s]” (188). In effect, Henriette uses the bridge as a short-cut from her villa to La Perven ch ere. As everyone watches her cross the bridge, they see that she never reaches them: “La ‘curiosit e’ [silhouette d’Henriette] n’avait plus d’ailleurs, pour nous rejoindre, qu’  traverser le petit pont jet e sur l’ tang de la Perven ch ere quand, tout   coup, elle s’enfon a, disparut” (188).

Everyone concludes that the cause of the accident was a rotten plank on the bridge that had given way as a result of Le Vergier des Combes’s neglect:

En effet, l’ tang s eparait les deux propri et es [Le Vergier’s and Du Tremblay’s], et, longtemps, M. Le Vergier avait regard e ses voisins comme des ennemis. Son impr evoyance avait caus e l’accident. Le pont

avait cédé sous la course de la jeune femme. L'étang, profond en cet endroit, recouvrait les planches brisées et la passeuse. Des cercles brillants sur l'eau, qui allaient s'élargissant et s'effaçant, en marquaient seuls la trace. (188-89)

But from discord and strife spring reunions and reconciliations. Henriette's fall has the effect of diverting everyone from leaving, and it is no accident, I argue, that Victor, as the conciliator between differences, is the one to save her (189).²⁶ Thanks to this diversion, Du Tremblay recognizes "la mauvaise société" that Le Vergier des Combes keeps as his own niece, Hélène (192), and Rachel is finally able to forgive Hélène, discovering her relationship to the general she admires and also flattered when Hélène compliments Victor's bravery (193).

Moreover, once Henriette is saved, those who bear ill-will towards her—(Du Tremblay and Rachel, believing she is another source of bad company, and Hélène, being jealous of her new rival)—all finally enter into a narrative contract²⁷ with her, agreeing to hear the story of her life in exchange for which they allow their narrator to correct preconceived judgments about herself. Henriette's autodiegetic narrative also eventually leads to a profound understanding about Le Vergier des Combes's view of his own life, the ultimate result of which is that Henriette and Le Vergier become lovers. Thus, the overcoming of spatial distance between Henriette and her neighbors significantly makes possible the closing of the distance²⁸ between the narrator and her narratees, as Henriette is able to form psychological bonds, potentially very deep, with those who listen to her story.

The second bridge accident results in Du Tremblay falling in the pond, which in turn, precipitates his death by causing him to become gravely sick (336). In a certain sense perhaps, Du Tremblay dies of his inability to lose his convictions. Although he calls H  l  ne's husband a "gredin," he insists that he will only make H  l  ne the heir to his will if she reconciles with him (424). Recognizing the need literally to bridge differences, Rachel scolds her uncle after this accident: "je vous ai toujours dit de faire dess  cher cet   tang, vous verrez qu'il arrivera malheur" (336).

But the real cause of both of these accidents is not revealed until later. Virginie Ch  mel, Le Vergier's linen-maid with whom he has sexual relations, admits to him in secret that she sabotaged the bridge planks in a fit of jealousy over Henriette's relationship with him: "Eh ben, c'est moi qu'a d  finc   le pont, parce que j'savais qu'al' [Henriette] allait passer d'sus, qu'al' avait d  j   v'lu venir par l  , trouvant l'ch'min trop long par la route" (338-9). As with the Italian count, Rebell lends his peasant girl an appropriate accent that serves to further authenticate her social-cultural perspective. Virginie, who can be thought of as a representative of evil Eris, used her jealousy and resentment in an action in which she meant to cause harm and destruction to her rival. Her misdeed, however, largely backfired, since it enabled spatially and emotionally distant people to become closer and more intimate. Hence, Rebell shows through these episodes of the accidents on the bridge that evil and good Eris can and do grow out of the same soil. As Nietzsche suggests in "Homer's Contest," the "uncanny dual nature" of humans, capable of nobility and the most terrifying actions, is inextricable: "His [man's] terrible capacities that are deemed inhuman may even be that fertile ground out of which alone all of humanity can grow forth in emotions, deeds, and accomplishments" (HC 35).

Each human, having the dual face of Eris, can use his/her envy that incites destruction of others and discord in relationships to also bring about self-improvement and/or peace.

3. Le Vergier des Combes's Love Life: Multiple Tensions, Multiple Focalizations and Perspectival Truth

In the contest of clashing ideas in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, characters also struggle to learn the truth about one another. As a site of reunion and agon between conflicting characters, Le Vergier des Combes's mansion houses the secrets of his complicated love life that become the object of the novel's focus and the truth of which the narrative eventually attempts to uncover in its dénouement. As I will show, Rebell's narrative consists of a vast network of often interpenetrating and overlapping viewpoints that necessarily contend with each other and that therefore illustrate Nietzsche's claims that all truth is perspectival, finite, and contextual and becomes sharper as more perspectives are employed to ascertain it.

The extent to which Nietzsche compares a spatial viewpoint to a perspective can help to give a better understanding of what it means for knowledge to always come from a perspective and why a multiplicity of perspectives is needed. From his claim in *The Genealogy* (III:12) that, "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'," Nietzsche continues, "and the more affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity be'" (GM III:12). This passage allows for a few important comparisons between knowing and seeing. First, like an angle of vision, a perspective is unable to make claims about what other perspectives bring in to view. Second, Nietzsche asserts that, with the greater number of "eyes" or varying

“perspectives,” or perhaps, the more angles from which we view an object, the more complete our knowledge of it will be. A plurality of perspectives or angles on an object is thus needed so that their limited scope can be verified through comparisons. As Nietzsche suggests in *The Will To Power* (560), “objectivity” is “merely a difference of degree within the subjective,” implying that knowledge of an object is neither absolute nor extraperspectival. Further, following Nietzsche’s claim in the *Gay Science* (374) that the world “*may include infinite interpretations,*” knowledge is always incomplete because the domain of possible perspectives is infinite.²⁹

The variable internal focalization which can be used to characterize the narrative in general in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, given that not one character nor one narrator serves as a focalizer over situations and events in the novel, but rather many, is synchronistic with (if not directly illustrative of) Nietzsche’s concept of perspective, especially in the way it captures vision as a metaphor. As I already hinted in the introduction to Part II, Prince’s association of “focalization” with the “perspective,” the “point of view” or the “vision,” in terms of which narrated situations and events are presented uses spatial and visual metaphors analogously to Nietzsche’s to describe a perspective.³⁰ Just as Nietzsche compares “seeing” with “knowing,” Gérard Genette’s *Figures III* originally coined the term “perspective” in narratology to describe a way how knowledge can be obtained from, or how information is regulated in a narrative:

[le récit] peut ... choisir de régler l’information qu’il livre... selon les capacités de connaissance de telle ou telle partie prenante de l’histoire (personnage ou groupe de personnages), dont il adoptera ou feindra d’adopter ce que l’on nomme couramment la ‘vision’ ou le ‘point de vue,’

semblant alors prendre à l'égard de l'histoire (pour continuer la métaphore spatiale) telle ou telle *perspective*. (183-4)

That Rebell chooses to restrict the capacity for knowledge or the angle of vision of his characters and further, does not allow any one character, or even his main narrator, to exercise a superior authority over any other focalizer, creates an interdependence of multiple narratorial perspectives such that they require as many comparisons as possible to verify each other and to expand the entire scope of knowledge encapsulated in Charles's frame narrative (which is itself limited as I will show).

Since truth in Rebell's novel is neither omniscient nor subjective-relativistic as Jacques Cormier's "Avant-Propos" to his 1996 edition of *Les Illustres Françaises* argues is the case for truth in Challe's novel,³¹ *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* allows for an epistemic hierarchy that is crucial to Nietzsche's conception of perspectival truth. The various perspectives that characters have on Le Vergier des Combes and his female companions—Hélène, Virginie, and Henriette—can be measured and evaluated against each other in order for objectivity precisely as a certain "degree within the subjective" to be obtained. They can therefore be best understood through Lawrence J. Hatab's characterization of perspectival truth as "plural, in that no one perspective can stand as the measure for thought"; as "finite, in that perspectives cannot speak for each other or exhaust their own domains"; and as "contextual, in that different perspectives are variously appropriate in different situations and settings" (Hatab 162). I concentrate my analysis on the characters' perspectives on just two of Le Vergier's relationships: with Hélène and with Virginie, since these cases particularly underline the structure of truth and its uncovering in Rebell's novel. As these cases also illustrate, Rebell's use of internal

focalization is not only variable, since different focalizers present different aspects of Le Vergier's life with each of these women, but also multiple, since many different narratorial perspectives on a particular focalized (e.g. an aspect of H el ene or of Virginie's life) are deployed. Since many of the characters' focalizations on Le Vergier's love life come from stories that they share with one another, the narrator-narratee relationship also deserves attention. I study later Le Vergier's relationship with Henriette in its particular importance to the disclosure of his own truth about himself and his love life.

The perspectives on Le Vergier des Combes's relationship with H el ene shows how each character's perspective is self-limited. After she arrives at La Perven ch ere and accompanies her lover to church the next day, the parishioners gather around to gossip about the new woman whom they saw the night before asking for directions to Le Vergier des Combes's property, one thinking that he is keeping a concubine: "P't et'ben qu'il est mari e de la main gauche," another believing: "C'est toujou pas cette-l a qu'est sa femme.... Il aurait l' age d' et' son grand-p e" (*La Femme* 54). Thus, from the townspeople of Suc e's perspective, Le Vergier des Combes is a local notable currently in retirement; they know nothing about his intimate past. Their ignorance of who H el ene is and of her relationship to Le Vergier is severely limited and gives way to false preconceptions, indeed, purely fictitious narratives which have no real influence on to whom they are told.

But Rachel and her mother do not have much more knowledge than the locals regarding Le Vergier des Combes's relationship with H el ene. It is Victor who is able to confirm what are only suspicions for everyone else: that H el ene is his great-uncle's mistress. When Victor returns to his grandmother's one day from La Perven ch ere (before

his mother and great-uncle reconcile), Rachel is prompted by curiosity of the new woman living with Le Vergier des Combes to ask him: “Victor, quand tu as vu ton oncle à Paris, l’année de la guerre [of 1870], est-ce que... est-qu’il se conduisait mal?” (84). After Victor has her clarify that by “behaving badly” she means “Avoir une vie dissipée, recevoir chez soi une société mêlée, des personnes de réputation douteuse” (84), he is then inspired to narrate to his mother what he knows of his great-uncle’s life in Paris from the time (the Second Empire) that he lived there and kept in contact with him: Le Vergier des Combes enjoyed a successful career as a minister of the State and was a frequent guest at ’s castle at Compiègne as well as at the salon of a countess, also a favorite guest of ’s. But after 1870, when the empire fell, Le Vergier des Combes lost all his power and left Paris, leaving behind the countess whom he suspects was his mistress (85). As a preface to his story about his great-uncle, Victor cautions his mother about his limited authority as narrator: “Mon oncle a toujours tiré très discrètement le rideau sur sa vie privée qui ressemblait, pour moi, à l’escalier de sa maison: on n’y voyait goutte. Je sais seulement qu’il allait à cette époque [before 1870] chez une jeune femme dont le mari était toujours absent” (85). Victor confirms that this woman was a countess but surmises only, based on other stories told to him by his great-uncle’s acquaintances in Paris, that she was his mistress, but he once again acknowledges his limited first-hand knowledge: “Je répète ce qu’on disait autour de lui. Il est vrai que, n’ayant pas la confiance de mon oncle, je n’ai pu vérifier. Peut-être était-ce une liaison purement amicable. Mon oncle, quand il était près d’elle avait des regards fort épris, mais, chez la jeune femme, tout pouvait se borner à une discrète admiration” (85). Thus, Victor’s metadiegesis, which is composed not only of his experiences but of other second-hand

stories about his uncle, exhibits a complex embedding of narratives as well as of perspectives.

During Victor's story about Le Vergier, Rachel frequently interrupts him, such as when she exclaims surprise to learn that her uncle was once an "orator," an "an intelligent man," a "brilliant politician" who frequented the most intimate circles of (85). But Rachel as a narratee also works in close association with her narrator, to help evolve a new story that appears in Charles's frame. When Victor confirms that his uncle's purported mistress whom he had to leave behind when he retired was "an authentic countess" (85) Rachel wonders whether she is the woman Le Vergier presently keeps at La Pervençère, a woman who she previously believed was a common actress (86). In Charles's frame story, Le Vergier's present mistress turns out indeed to be this countess, Hélène Mosto. Victor's narrative thus serves as a perspective that helps his mother correct her own in regard to her uncle's past and to create a new one regarding his present.

But both Victor and Le Vergier himself have limited knowledge of Hélène. When they in turn become narratees of Henriette's story of knowing the marquis de Trescalan, they learn that Hélène occasionally works as a prostitute. The exchange of stories between characters thus often prompts a comparison of perspectives and functions to confirm or drastically modify the more restricted perspectives of narratees. The narrator-characters can therefore be useful teachers to their auditors, among whom is Charles who in turn acts to offer his narratees (whether implied or real readers of his text) the most nearly complete sketch of all of these perspectives and the truth(s) they elicit.

Yet Charles's own perspective is far from being complete or superior to any other focal character. Since he has come to visit his grandmother and aunt for the summer, he

has perhaps the most limited knowledge of who Virginie Chômél is and of the role she plays in his great-uncle's life. According to what the narrator has witnessed, most probably from previous visits to Sucé, "Depuis le jour où M. Le Vergier des Combes l'a rencontrée [Virginie] sur la route, pauvre vagabonde en guenilles, et l'a emmenée à la Pervençère prendre une assiette de potage, on a vu revenir cette fille chaque samedi" (69-70). As Charles describes, eventually, Le Vergier des Combes promotes Virginie to role of linen-maid³² in his house, and provides her with enough care that she changes from being poor and thin into being "ronde, comme une pomme d'api" (70).

Thus, when the narrator spies upon a scene in which Le Vergier des Combes kicks Virginie out of his house, with Virginie cursing her employer and addressing him insultingly in the familiar "tu" form (65), he cannot understand what the nature of their relationship has become nor why his great-uncle has suddenly decided to fire her "au moment où la fortune de cette fille semblait si solidement assise" (70).

Along with Charles's very limited perspective on Le Vergier des Combes's dismissal of his linen-maid, the variable internal focalization (showing other various aspects of Le Vergier's relationship with Virginie) particularly emphasizes that perspectival truth is plural and contextual. According to abbé Trébuchet who sees Virginie and her mother at church every Sunday, La Chômél is a model Christian because she always receives communion (71). From Giboteau, the town notary's perspective, who often sees Virginie in the streets, she has recently appeared much too well dressed for a "villageoise" (71). He proceeds to share with the abbot and Rachel rumors he has heard from other locals concerning Virginie's fashion transformation: to her present appearance,

[Virginie] y joint, dit-on, des atours et des raffinements de luxe qui pourraient parfaitement annoncer chez cette jeune fille une réelle dépravation des mœurs. Que M. Le Vergier y prête une extrême attention! Madame Chaufard, la directrice des postes, se trouvant seule avec elle dans un endroit intime, lui a surpris des culottes garnies de dentelles et des jupons brodés. (71-2)

Thus, for Giboteau, Virginie is responsible for her growing taste, however immoral, for luxuries. Once relating this tertiary story from Madame Chaufard confirming that even Virginie's undergarments have undergone a very expensive and sophisticated transformation, in spite of the girl's poverty, Giboteau inspires his narratees to invent their own perspectives. The abbot agrees with Giboteau's opinion, suggesting that Virginie is to blame for overspending, and promising that he will talk to her mother about her imprudence while Rachel believes that her uncle alone is responsible for Virginie's embellishments, even for those of her undergarments (72). But Charles superimposes in the frame narrative a subtle but important interpretation of his aunt's perspective on Le Vergier's role in the change of intimate attire of his linen-maid: after Rachel exclaims, "Il se pourrait," referring to her uncle's probable involvement, the frame adds that this utterance was whispered by "Tante Rachel qui tenait à régler son compte à M. Le Vergier" (72). In this covert intrusion into his narrative, Charles hints that his aunt was motivated to insinuate Le Vergier's potentially scandalous conduct in managing his linen-maid's intimate attire in an effort to take revenge on him for the grudge she holds against him. Just as the abbot and Giboteau have knowledge that is limited and distorted, Charles points out that his aunt's is also subject to the same, due to her own interests.

Further, as Charles's similar intrusion in other stories demonstrates, narratives embed other narratives just as perspectives are laid on other perspectives. Narrators and narratees therefore once again work in conjunction as simultaneous creators, allowing stories to spawn others.

But the main narrator does not superimpose his interpretations as conclusions; he begins to learn the answers to his questions about Virginie only when multiple focalization on Virginie's dismissal from La Pervençère presents itself: in addition to Charles's eye-witness account, Virginie's mother offers her own version of the same event. La Chômél arrives unexpectedly to Charles's grandmother's house where she exposes her daughter's relationship to Le Vergier des Combes more fully. According to her narrative, it was Hélène who demanded that Le Vergier des Combes dismiss Virginie (75). She further explains to Rachel and her dinner guests that she is particularly angry that Le Vergier des Combes would fire her daughter, since he originally seduced and dishonored her. Threatening to call the *gendarmerie*, she explains, "Pour arrêté cettui-là [Le Vergier des Combes] qui m'a débauché m'n enfant et qui la jeute aujourd'hui dans le fossé, après qu'y s'en a servi à sa s'fiance. Savez-vous qu'a n'a pas son âge?" (76). But far from being the model of Christian virtue that the abbot would have everyone believe she is, La Chômél has not come to Rachel to defend her daughter's honor, but to threaten her that if she doesn't assist her daughter by persuading Le Vergier to rehire her: "j'le crierai à toutes les populations que Veurginie a été déshonorée par vot-onque" (76). La Chômél thus comes close to prostituting her daughter to Le Vergier des Combes. Rachel, now apparently interested in defending her uncle's respectable reputation in front of a peasant, is quick to deny these allegations about Le Vergier's sexual exploitation of his

linen-maid. And besides, she argues to La Chômel, “Vous n’avez aucune preuve de ce que vous avancez” (76). La Chômel may therefore not be completely reliable: although she partly teaches the truth about Le Vergier and her daughter, she may also have a motive to deliberately distort events, just as Rachel herself may sometimes have.

The narrative of Virginie’s mother, which incites more questions, is verified only by another narrative, offering a variable focalization, or a different event drawing upon Virginie’s relationship with Le Vergier. When Victor later reports that, during his last visit to La Pervençère, both he and Héléne had caught Le Vergier *in flagrante delicto* with Virginie, who sneaked back into the house, only then is the frame narrative able to confirm Virginie’s sexual relationship with her employer (97). The question, however, of whether Virginie was initially seduced by Le Vergier or was the one to seduce him remains unanswered in the novel, showing once again that truth is never complete. Moreover, Rebell illustrates through his characters’ variable and multiple focalizations of Le Vergier des Combes’s potentially scandalous affair with his linen-maid that truth depends on the employment of a variety of perspectives (and/or a variety of multiple metadiegetic narratives) reflecting various contexts which can then be contested and evaluated. Truth in Rebell’s narrative therefore coincides with Hatab’s claim that truth for Nietzsche is “agonistic, in that conflicting tensions animate the conditions of thought both within and between perspectives” (Hatab 162).

As the above two cases regarding the truth about Le Vergier des Combes’s sexual relationships illustrate, all perspectives are somewhat distorted, especially when characters choose to deny interpretations other than their own, because they wrongly believe that their interpretation is already complete, or because they have some need or

interest in rejecting other interpretations in favor of clinging to their own convictions, or, lastly, because no knowledge of a thing can consider all perspectives. Nietzsche thus explains how our judgments are products of our interpretations, which necessarily contain falsifications:

The falsity of human judgment derives firstly from the material to be judged, namely very incomplete, secondly, from the way in which the sum is arrived at on the basis of this material, and thirdly, from the fact that every individual piece of this material is in turn the outcome of false knowledge, and is so with absolute necessity. (HAH I: 1: 32)

This passage from *Human All Too Human* can serve to emphasize the main division I have made between Rebell's characters who are the good (perspectival) perspectivists, or those who use as many perspectives as there are available to them in order to ascertain the truth about themselves or another, and those anti-perspectival perspectivists, who are blind to the falsity of their judgment and closed to other possible interpretations. Aside from Victor, the two best perspectivists in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* are perhaps Henriette and Charles, since it is they who are ultimately responsible for unraveling much of the hermeneutic code³³ and helping to correct the illusions generated by the anti-perspectival perspectivists.

4. Approximating Perspectival Truth in Henriette and Charles's Narratives

Although Henriette's immediate reason for telling her story is to make her "confession," to reveal and to justify her identity against the prejudiced opinions about herself (*La Femme* 200), the real purpose of her narrative is ultimately to reveal the fundamental truth about Le Vergier des Combes's past life under the Second Empire. It

is not that Henriette's perspective alone, however, draws all conclusions concerning Le Vergier des Combes; rather, it is he who is inspired to create his own conclusions. In Henriette's narrative, he eventually recognizes important people in his former life in Paris and, moreover, himself as a principal character. He is able to both verify what Henriette tells him concerning the circumstances precipitating his retirement from his political career and to gain a new perspective on his life from her narrative. For her own part, Henriette helps the frame narrative to solve the identity of the woman who is the model of the mysterious bust by Carpeaux and also of the portrait which appears next to the one of in Le Vergier des Combes's drawing room. Although the main narrator discovers from Rosalie, Le Vergier des Combes's elderly housekeeper, that the bust is of the woman whom his great-uncle loved, a woman who was 's mistress and who died, no one knows her identity, nor the nature of her relationship to Le Vergier des Combes (100). The reason why he retires from Paris eventually leads directly to unraveling the identity of this woman in question who is somehow involved. The resolution of these questions comes about only after the narratorial exchange between Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes.

Yet the hermeneutic code of the frame narrative is even more complex, since an enigma related to the one of the identity of the woman represented by art in Le Vergier's home is the identity of the woman for whom the hero has the greatest love. Despite the questions that the diegetic narrators, (and, of course, the suspicions that H  l  ne and Virginie) have in regard to who this woman might be in the end, the frame narrative only offers multiple solutions rather than just one. The Rebellian narrative can be viewed, once again, this time in the main d  nouement, as employing an agonistic tension among

multiple competing perspectives and a capacity to perpetually invent others. Thus, as I will argue, the dénouement of Rebell's novel is neither completely closed nor completely open. In this, Rebell's narrative also once again builds upon perspectival truth in literature before perspectivism. According to Françoise Gevrey's "Les Dénouements des *Illustres Françaises*," (1993) "La fin des histoires [of the seven embedded narratives] n'est ni un achèvement complet, ni une fermeture... elle sollicite la lecture active du public qui peut juger d'un dénouement en le comparant à ceux qui suivent" (98). But moreover, Rebell's partially resolved hermeneutic code (taken as the sum of all enigmas posed in the novel) significantly employs Nietzsche's perspectival truth, which, as Hatab contends, is an "open-ended *process* of creative formings that can never itself become fixed or closed" (*A Nietzschean Defense* 149). In other words, for Nietzsche no ultimate reconciliation of perspectives exists, since this would mean an end of agon. He thus affirms that "'Truth' is... not something there, that might be found or discovered—but something that must be created... a will to overcome that has in itself no end—introducing truth, as a *processus in infinitum*, an active determining—not a becoming-conscious of something that is in itself firm and determined" (WP 552). As I will show, as much as both Henriette's and Charles's narratives function to correct perspectives and to bring about some closure in the dénouement of the novel, they suggest that even the best perspectives do not effect a complete and fixed resolution.

At the end of her autodiegesis, which includes what she knew of Jeanne La Flamme's death, Henriette is the one to finally recognize Jeanne as the model for the bust (415). Since Le Vergier des Combes knew Jeanne La Flamme only as the "baronne de Holz," he is in shock by Henriette's revelation. Only then is Le Vergier forced to

confront his inner agon, which, until that moment, he thought consisted of two mutually compatible passions, one for , and, the other for 's mistress, but which he now realizes were in fact opposing forces: "Ainsi donc, j'ai pu croire à l'amour, à la vertu, au dévouement d'une femme qui trahissait la France et l'Empereur" ("So then, I was able to believe in love, in virtue, in the devotion of a woman who betrayed France and "; 415).

Moreover, of all the narrator-narratee relationships between characters in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, the one between Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes becomes in the end the most dynamic and most significant: both narrator and narratee are able to compare perspectives on the narrative, and each modifies, and is in turn modified by the other's perspective. Since, for example, they both personally know 's mistress, each knew her in radically different contexts, Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes are able to correct their knowledge of Jeanne La Flamme. Besides, since Jeanne La Flamme exists as a character only in the metadiegesis and appears in the frame only in works of art, she is a purely focalized object who has the power to inspire narratives about her. In a sense, she is the narrative that Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes create in collaboration with each other.

This type of mutually symbiotic relationship between narrator and narratee, in which both actively work together to create the narrative and effect its dénouement is also evident in Challe's *Les Illustres Françaises*. As Anne De Sola confirms, "l'intervention du narrataire peut aussi contribuer à éclairer l'histoire et apporter un complément d'information au récit.... Ce type d'intervention modifie le point de vue du narrateur et le module; le narrataire fait, en intervenant, fonction de modérateur moral du narrateur" (De Sola 348). Although morality is not in question in Rebell's novel, the interaction

between his most important second-degree narrator and his protagonist in the main narrative finds its model not just within Nietzsche's philosophy of mutually challenging perspectives, but also within literature. Rebell's insight as a Nietzschean enthusiast and as a writer in the French literary tradition thus concur.

When Henriette unknowingly opens up her narrative about Jeanne La Flamme to include Le Vergier himself, the narrator-narratee relationship between characters particularly reveals its significance in making Rebell's novel a great work of literature as well as a great work of Nietzschean fiction. During the course of her story, she relates two narratives of which she was a narratee-auditor, narratives concerning Jeanne La Flamme's revenge against , who had abandoned her after losing her. These embedded narratives turn out to be second-person, as Le Vergier eventually realizes that he is the other principal character in them. The first of these narratives is embedded both in Henriette's story as well as in the one originally recounted to her: de Sourdis told it to Henriette, but he himself originally learned it from Jeanne La Flamme. It detailed the latter's co-conspiracy with Mosto's gang of Italian revolutionaries to assassinate (278). The other, which Henriette received from an anonymous party and which she related to de Sourdis, turns out to be a plot that Jeanne hatched to avenge herself on by using Le Vergier des Combes himself, a plot that had ended by causing the latter's disgrace and dismissal from the *Conseil d'Etat* (254). In order to make jealous, Jeanne would flaunt her new relationships with 's closest companions in front of him (254). Henriette recounted that once a "venerable minister of State" fought a duel against one of Napoleon III's guards, who had mocked "la vertu de 'l'amie de l'Empereur" but a little while after succeeding at the duel, "au Puits-du-Roi" (at Compiègne), "on vit le conseiller... se

promener avec cette amie, lui faire des déclarations d'amour... *platonique*, il est vrai, résister de corps seulement, aux provocations de la baronne et se mettre à ses genoux au moment où passait la voiture impériale!" (254; my emphasis).

Thus, Henriette's embedded stories reveal that Le Vergier's love for the woman revered in artwork in his home was never in reality a sexual affair, but rather a platonic devotion to Jeanne La Flamme, 's mistress whose honor he sought to defend on 's behalf. But when Napoleon III saw him in this submissive position that Jeanne La Flamme had deliberately requested of him to take before her, he wrongly accused Le Vergier of having betrayed him. Moreover, Henriette's version of events shows that even , believing as Le Vergier describes, in a "trahison imaginaire," acted unjustly based on his own limited knowledge of Le Vergier des Combes's relationship with Jeanne, revoking the status of one of his most dedicated members of government (416). Further, as I have given other examples of tertiary narratives embedded in metadiegeses, Henriette's recounting of the narratives of which she was a narratee illustrates the extent of the intricacy of the novel's embedding and the multiple times that a single story can travel orally from narrator to narratee.³⁴ The complex narrative construction in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* is no doubt significant as a literary project in dialogism: each character voice's contains its own polyphony at the same time that it also interacts with those of the other characters. Rebell thereby reinforces perspectivism within the narratorial structure itself in his novel.

The dynamic relationship between narrator and narratee reaches a climax when Le Vergier finally sees himself as a character in Henriette's embedded narratives. When Henriette recognizes the bust as a representation of Jeanne La Flamme, Le Vergier is able

to see her for the first time as a woman who, far from being a loyal mistress to , was a cruel *cocotte* who plotted against Napoleon III and deliberately exploited his own loyalty to to take revenge on him. Hence, it is also at this moment of recognizing Jeanne through Henriette's perspective that he recognizes himself in Henriette's narrative: "Et j'ai risqué ma vie pour elle... plus que cela! je me suis attiré la disgrâce de l'Empereur, je me suis couvert de ridicule à ses yeux..." (415-16). Reminding her about her story of the duel at Compiègne fought on Jeanne's behalf, he in turn reveals to Henriette, "Vous avez devant les yeux le héros de toutes ces belles aventures... Ah! Jocrisse... Ah! Don Quichotte, va!" (416).

Thus, Henriette's perspective on her own life, which includes multiple perspectives on others, ends by helping Le Vergier to gain more complete self-knowledge as well as by helping her to understand more completely her own story. Through Henriette's narrative, which overlaps with and interpenetrates many others, Rebell evidently demonstrates an understanding of Nietzsche's perspectival truth congruent to Hatab's claims about it being both "complex, in that most settings call for a multiplicity of perspectives and a certain overlapping and interpenetration of perspectives," and "dynamic, in that context is continually shifting, so that no one perspective can serve as a perpetual lens or panoptical vantage point" (Hatab 162).

Charles's narrative, in which all characters' narratives are embedded, can be seen in itself as a vast collection of multiple perspectives. Rebell's novel therefore ensures a), the interdependence of perspectives and b), that no one perspective, including Henriette's, possesses the ultimate truth. But as I will also show, even the frame narrative is in

keeping with Nietzsche's perspectivism, since it, too, does not provide absolute knowledge of all the perspectives it contains.

An understanding of how Charles's narrative highlights the limitedness of Henriette's perspective is first necessary. For instance, the frame includes a particularly wide variety of perspectives on H el ene, including Henriette's, offering a ground on which to compare all of them. The frame is able to provide such a basis of comparison, since Charles is an eye-witness to much of what he recounts or is present as a narratee-auditor of all the character narratives. First, Henriette's perspective on H el ene as a greedy prostitute is not just from her adoption of the Marquis de Trescalan's view of his sister; it also includes the views of H el ene's daughter, Agathe, and of Victor. When H el ene finally withdraws Agathe from a convent for girls, Henriette takes care of her at La Perven ch ere. During a conversation with Agathe, the child says that she no longer loves her mother "Pace que aut'fois, c'tait la maman d' a moi. A pr esent, al' e la maman des vieilles babes blanches" (343). Victor confirms what Agathe means: H el ene never visited her child in school and now that she withdrew her, instead of looking after her daughter, she is caring for her sick uncle, Du Tremblay. Victor thinks that H el ene only pulled her daughter out of the convent now because "les yeux innocents de cette enfant doivent inspirer   M. Du Tremblay de sages dispositions testamentaires" (344). Although the main narrator is for the most part covert during these accounts, he is either present at La Perven ch ere to record them as part of the narrative for which he is ultimately responsible, or, has transformed into a nondiegetic narrator.

In addition, Charles's narrative includes letters that H el ene wrote and that he was able to intercept. Hence, although he is not an intended narratee, as H el ene addressed

these letters to other people, never knowing that Le Vergier des Combes's great-nephew would be able to secretly read them, he nevertheless receives H el ene's first-person narratives about her life. In her letter to Le Vergier des Combes asking him for a reunion, H el ene explains that she decided to send Agathe away to school only as a way of protecting her from her brother, who used to beat her: "apr es des emportements, des discussions, presque des insultes, j'ai  et e l ache avec mon fr ere comme je l'avais  et e avec le comte" (38). And having nowhere to go outside of her brother's home, she finally decided, "sur ses conseils ...  a mettre Agathe chez sa tante de Junqu ere, aux Ursalines de Nantes" (39). In a letter to her brother, H el ene writes that she owes her unhappiness to him:

Vous n'avez pas  a intervenir dans ma conduite. Bonne ou mauvaise, elle ne vous regarde pas. M'avez-vous  et e de quelque secours quand notre p ere est mort? N'est-ce pas vous qui avez caus e mon malheur en conseillant  a notre m ere de me marier  a un homme qui m'a ruin e et m'a rendue la plus mis erable des femmes? Si, depuis, pour compenser tous les maux que je vous dois, vous avez voulu m'obliger de quelques services, vous me les avez fait payer assez cher, par toutes les humiliations dont vous m'avez accabl e (175-76).

Thus, according to H el ene, her brother could have taken care of her himself after their father's death but instead chose to help marry her off to the count, who caused her ultimate ruin. But for H el ene, even worse than her brother's neglect and bad advice was his mistreatment of her and her daughter when he allowed them to come live with him. She now also resents his present criticism of her decision to seek care from other men,

most especially, Le Vergier des Combes. H el ene thus defends herself against her brother's contempt: "je ne suis pas une servante, je ne suis pas une hyst erique, mais tout simplement une abandonn ee qui est all ee demander protection  a qui pouvait la lui donner; je suis une m ere qui a une enfant  a  lever,  a sauver, et vraiment cela m'importe plus que toutes les insultes que vous pouvez me dire" (176).

These letters written by H el ene that Charles reads challenge Henriette's view that H el ene "est n ee putain" since it appears that, like Henriette, H el ene, too, was forced to prostitute herself once abandoned by her husband so that she could take care of herself and her daughter (344). That she is interested in becoming the beneficiary of her uncle's will does not necessarily imply that she cares for money more than her daughter but that, as Rouillard observes, she cares for money as a means of better providing for her.

But Charles's perspective itself does not ever claim to be an ultimately superior vantage point from which all other perspectives can be definitively evaluated. After reading H el ene's letters, he does not conclude whether H el ene's view of herself as a beaten and abandoned wife and struggling mother is superior to any other view of her. Instead, he reflects to himself, "Qui dira la v erit e sur les  tres? Les  tres la savent-ils eux-m emes?" (176). Similarly, after reading his great-uncle's journal, Charles is careful to refrain from making conclusions: "M. Le Vergier avait-il raison? je n'en sais rien" (177). In these intrusions, Rebell's narrator takes into account that all perspectival knowledge is incomplete, especially in regard to knowledge of another person. Charles's commentary on the texts he reads and records also underlines his self-acknowledgment as a limited authority and that even his narrative, the primary one, is incapable of bringing an ultimate resolution to all perspectives. For instance, Jeanne La Flamme's true origins

remain unknown: as Henriette affirms to Le Vergier, “Elle était juive, allemande ou tzigane: personne n’a jamais su son origine” (415). Likewise, Nietzsche contends in *Human All Too Human*, “Our experience of another person... no matter how close he stands to us, can never be complete, so that we would have a logical right to a total evaluation of him; all evaluations are premature and are bound to be” (HAH I: 1:32). Rebell’s narrator can be characterized as the Nietzschean “free-spirit” for whom it is the task to adopt as many perspectives as possible in order to recognize that all “value-judgments,” including his own, are “unjust,” whereas everyone else tends to think that their value-judgment comes from an all-knowing standpoint (HAH P 6).

Yet while Charles copies narratives that he either reads or hears, he also must transform another narrative to which he is a narratee-auditor into his own words, since the second-degree narrator is a child who alone bore a direct eye-witness account to what she then describes to him. As Henriette tells more and more of her story, and as her listeners start to disappear, she and Le Vergier des Combes are left alone, with the significant exception of the six-year-old Agathe, who continues to stay at La Pervençère while her mother visits her uncle. It is Agathe who is responsible for detailing the exclusive exchange between Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes to Charles, allowing him to end much of his narrative.

After hearing Le Vergier discover the identity of Jeanne La Flamme from Henriette’s story and watching him cover up a full length statue representing Jeanne in a hidden bedroom, Agathe witnesses the two adults make love. Since the child was most probably ignorant of what she saw, and since, Charles has no way of confirming first-hand her report, he suggests rather than explicitly describes the love-making scene in his

version of the story, in an attempt perhaps to refrain from either verifying or denying what Agathe told him. According to Charles's account, as Le Vergier sobs, grieving over his political ruin due to Jeanne, Henriette offers him: "les consolations d'une jolie et tendre enfant... Elle voila les yeux attristés de sa soyeuse chevelure d'or, haussa jusqu'aux lèvres amères le parfum et la chaleur de sa jeune poitrine. Puis, elle le serrait étroitement, comme pour étouffer le douloureux passé qu'il gardait en lui. Lorsqu'ils se lèverent, Henriette arrangea sa robe, qui était un peu froissée" (418). It is only after this description given in the frame that Charles finally intrudes to acknowledge its source: "Cependant, la petite Agathe... avait surpris la scène de ses yeux curieux et indiscrets. Elle me la raconta dans tous ses détails; et, ce qui fut plus grave, elle en fit, sans songer à mal, le récit exact à sa mère" (418). Although no one can verify Agathe's perspective on Henriette and Le Vergier des Combes (except the couple), the effect that her perspective has is clear: both Charles, and as he suggests, Agathe's mother had no difficulty in interpreting the sexual meaning of it.

Thus, matters are even more complicated, since Charles's account also includes the perspective that the little girl's mother gains by her story. After listening to Agathe, Hélène believes that Le Vergier never loved her and that Henriette has now entirely replaced both her and his former true love, Jeanne La Flamme. Thus thinking herself betrayed yet again by Le Vergier des Combes, she accuses him of letting her daughter witness his libertinage (419). When he attempts to defend himself against the indiscretions of Agathe, claiming, "Vous n'avez pas à vous occuper des paroles d'une petite fille," Hélène still does not doubt her daughter, whatever details she gave: "Agathe ne ment jamais, monsieur" (419). Yet Le Vergier insists, "Je ne sais si elle ment jamais;

elle est, en tout cas, fort indiscreète: elle se mêle, sans qu'on l'en prie, à des entretiens qu'elle ne peut comprendre et qu'elle dénature, en les rapportant" (419). The similar distortions that other narrators make in restating their stories—whether unintentionally or deliberately from psychological motives, is emblematic of narratorial perspectivism in Rebell's novel. In this case, although Le Vergier does not attempt to directly defend himself against the accusation of sexually betraying Hélène with Henriette, he attempts to throw discredit on the particularly finite perspective of a child.

But his attempt is in vain. However limited Agathe's perspective may be, being that of a six-year-old girl who, though probably very curious about what she saw, has most likely little or no knowledge of sex, her narrative account told to two different narratees in succession is extraordinary in that it remains exactly the same, as Charles attests, and elicits exactly the same interpretation of it. As Prince's *Narratology: the Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982) contends, such a "narrative in which a narrator recounts the very same events in exactly the same way to two or more different narratees in succession" is much rarer than a "narrator who tells part of his story to one narratee, then another part to another narratee," which is rare in itself (24). Prince admits that he cannot even think of an "interesting example" of the former case (*Narratology* 24). Rebell's originality thus shows itself in Agathe's transmission of her embedded narrative.

That Agathe is able to accomplish precisely this rare task in her story-telling serves to emphasize her amazing credibility as a narrator. As the etymology of her name implies about her character, Agathe is good³⁵ and, as her mother affirms, honest.

The specific view that Nietzsche has of the child can help to illuminate the very critical role that Agathe plays as the narrator who alone is capable of precipitating the end

of the frame narrative in Rebell's novel. In Zarathustra's speech "On the Metamorphoses," the child represents the final stage of self-overcoming and the most advanced form of the human spirit: in the first stage, the "camel" is the creature that is able to find freedom from "what is most difficult" by learning to "exult in [its] strength" and then in the second stage, the camel is transformed into a "lion" "who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert," having gained an active autonomy as an end in itself (Z I). But to achieve what remains beyond the power of a lion-- "to find the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation"—the lion spirit must finally become a child, since "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes.' For the game of creation... a sacred 'Yes' is needed: the spirit now wills his own will and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world" (Z I: "On the Three Metamorphoses"). According to the analysis of this passage in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by David B. Allison's *Reading the New Nietzsche* (2001), the German philosopher is original in his evaluation of the child as the higher human being, since in contrast to traditional philosophy that posited the great individual of intellect as "old," "wise" and having a "good memory," he values "youth," "innocence" and "forgetting" (150). By being innocent instead of wise, the child is free from believing that her "value-judgement" is "just" or "unjust" (HAH P 6).

Thus, Agathe's ignorance is not a fault or a shortcoming but rather a significant advantage: she simply reports what she saw without proclaiming to express any ultimate truth, thereby allowing her narratees to trust her and also to feel free to create their own interpretations. These perspectives on her story in turn allow much of the novel to end. It is Agathe's narrative that decides H el ene to leave La Perven ch ere once and for all and

to reunite with her husband, who is now waiting for her (420). In a chain reaction, H el ene’s decision precipitates Le Vergier’s to challenge Mosto to a duel that then decides his ultimate fate: his death. Although Agathe does not share the Nietzschean child’s ability to forget, having an excellent memory in recounting her narrative in exactly the same way, she serves a function similar to the one that “forgetting”³⁶ has for Nietzsche: she is able to shift the novel’s focus on Le Vergier’s past (mainly in Henriette’s metadiegetic narrative) to his present and his future (in the frame). But Rebell’s child, most significantly like Nietzsche’s, can be thought of as a divine creator, since she is the narrator able to conquer the world of the diegetic narrator and to will the end of the main narrative. Her character also suggests that the child’s sacredness may stem precisely from her innocence. Innocent both from the meaning of her story and the harm she causes her mother by repeating it, Agathe affirms her own “sacred ‘Yes’” to the very act of narration.

Moreover, Rebell’s child as narrator- divine creator recalls Nietzsche’s image of the child based on the Heraclitan model: the child who spontaneously builds and then tramples down sandcastles at the shore, a game in which s/he “constructs and destroys, all in innocence” (PTA 62). This “self-renewing impulse to play calls new worlds into being” (PTA 62). For Nietzsche, then, youth signifies and is alone capable of the spontaneous and unpredictable game of creation. In such a scheme, perspectives are never completely reconciled but rather perpetually react with and against each other to form new ones. Although Agathe’s narratees do reduce her story to a single interpretation that leads to the novel’s conclusion, her story does not preclude the multiple possibilities of new perspectives that can be gained from Charles’s own

narrative. Charles thus prevents a completely closed dénouement by allowing his readers to imagine the truth of his great-uncle's life to be an open-ended process of infinitely playing opposites. *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* must therefore be considered to represent a major accomplishment in the French novel, entertaining a dialogic narrative that is "open" in the following sense that Umberto Eco's *Role of the Reader:*

Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts (1979) attributes to it: "the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood.... A work of art... is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity. Hence, every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself" (49). Notice that the translator's specific use of the word "perspective" to mean the infinite interpretations that can be laid over a work reinforces my thesis that Rebell's novel is both a great piece of literature and a great example of Nietzschean fiction.

In addition, Rebell's novel is a great Nietzschean work of fiction. As the German philosopher proposes in regard to the Heraclitan child at play, "Only aesthetic man can look thus at the world" and can understand "how the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time within his work, how necessity and random play, oppositional tension and harmony must pair to create a work of art" (PTA 62). Rebell, too, was able to view his novel in the same way as Nietzsche's aesthetic man: in terms of a child's spontaneous will to create from a world of contending opposites. It is therefore no

coincidence that the main narrator, at least as a character in his story is young himself, being a teenager and that his own most important perspective came from a child. Rebell also demonstrates how an artist can function perspectively, being at once outside and inside his own work, inhabiting the perspectives he creates and yet remaining apart from them.

Chapter 3

Rebell's Perspective on Politics in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

But aside from his narratorial perspective, Rebell also has a definite political one in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*. In particular, he deviates from his multiple-perspective narrative when he allows his personal perspective on the politics of the Second Empire to predominate: that Napoleon III was an able leader so long as he was a dictator but failed when he conceded to the liberal opposition. While Rebell's characters may contest each other's personal differences and truths about one another, they all tend to reflect Rebell's personal interpretation of the Second Empire's success and failure without acknowledging other possible interpretations that would serve to contest and evaluate it. In this, Rebell the novelist shows himself to be anti-perspectival. This chapter focuses on the "author's intrusion" as any "passage taken to betray the real author's hand" in the politics of his novel.³⁷

But even apart from his fictional writing, Rebell the extreme-right politician tends to deny other political perspectives that conflict with his own. Although Rebell may appreciate Nietzsche's conception of the "spiritualization of enmity" as a contest of opposite perspectives within the self as well as between selves, he is no doubt opposed to Nietzsche's view in *Twilight of the Idols* that, "In politics, too, enmity has become much more spiritual.... Almost every party grasps that it is in the interest of its own self-preservation that the opposing party should not decay in strength" (TI V:3). On the contrary, Rebell denies agonistic challenge from his opponents in that he sought an authoritarian ruler as a protector against the political parties that he, Rebell wanted to suppress and exclude from politics. Further, Rebell the politician infiltrates his fiction.

He does so in particular in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, where he defends his political perspective as the uncontested truth.

Yet I will also finally consider the possibility that for all of Rebell's resentful (slavish) discourse on his political enemies of the Second Empire, he does show some evidence of a willingness to acknowledge and to even adopt some other political perspectives that would be anathema to his own in the novel. He therefore may be considered to appreciate, at least to a certain degree, the "spiritualization" of political "enmity" within himself as he entertains a contest of conflicting political thoughts. Insofar as Rebell allows his characters to inhabit political perspectives that conflict with or even oppose his own, he exhibits a potential to maintain within himself an agon between the extreme royalist and the novelist who cannot aesthetically remain loyal to his political convictions.

1. Rebell's Allusion To Nietzsche in *Union des trois aristocraties*

In Part I, I argued that a pivotal difference between Rebell and Nietzsche is that while the latter has a political philosophy, he shies away from political politics and mistrusts any political authority from emerging as the ultimate, unconditional power whereas the former has a definite political position and craves for a very certain political authority, or for an absolute ruler, most especially a Bourbon monarch. I now study Rebell's single direct allusion to Nietzsche in *Union des trois aristocraties* that will ultimately reveal how the concept of agon applied to politics lies at the crux of this difference in their thinking.

In the *Union*, Rebell writes, "Nietzsche a dit que le mode de gouvernement importait peu à des intellectuels, pourvu qu'il fût stable, mais ce gouvernement [of The

Third Republic] des uns et des autres, cette continuelle petite secousse distrair l'esprit sans l'émouvoir, met l'âme dans un malaise sans fin et l'enlève aux fortes passions créatrices" (37). Rebell is referring to *Human All Too Human* (I: 5:224) in which Nietzsche quotes Machiavelli:

So far as the state is concerned, Machiavelli says that, 'the form of government signifies very little, even though semi-educated people [*halbgebildete Leute*] think otherwise. The great goal of statecraft should be duration [*Dauer*³⁸], which outweighs everything else, inasmuch as it is more valuable than freedom.' Only when there is securely founded and guaranteed long-term duration is a steady evolution and ennobling inoculation at all possible: though the dangerous companion of all duration, established authority, will, to be sure, usually resist it.

Many observations about Rebell's potentially faulty understanding of this complex and subtle passage from *Human All Too Human* are in order. First, Rebell wrongly attributes Nietzsche's quote from Machiavelli, to Nietzsche, rather than to Machiavelli, though Nietzsche is not exactly distancing himself from Machiavelli, either. Second, for Rebell, the type of government *does* matter, and so, careful not to call himself one of the *halbgebildete Leute*, he does not give an exact and complete translation of Nietzsche's sentence. Instead, in Rebell's clause starting with *but*, he offers a possible objection to Nietzsche/Machiavelli in order to emphatically express his disapproval of the type of government that the Third Republic has installed. This "government of some and others," possibly refers to the democratic rule of anybody and everybody and/or to parliamentarism. Rebell also describes this government as a "continual light jolting,"

probably referring to the constant shifts in power issuing from the rule of the people and from parliamentary debate that constantly challenge the executive power.³⁹ Third, in Rebell's paraphrase of Nietzsche's long quotation, he indirectly refers to the noun *Dauer*, meaning that which is *long-lasting* or *constant* by the French adjective, *stable*, which, in Rebell's context, means not only *permanent* but also *consistent*, since The Third Republic was the government in Rebell's view that did not allow for any lasting or consistent political authority. For Rebell, only an autocratic authority such as an emperor or king ensures duration as a stable/ consistent power since it does not allow itself to be challenged by the people as power is in a democracy. Contrary to Nietzsche, therefore, Rebell is claiming that it is only an established authority in the form of an absolute ruler that can last.

Rebell misreads Nietzsche's Machiavellian-inspired conception of a durable government, failing to understand that, for Nietzsche, it is the community that tests a government's ability to endure while authority is precisely what threatens it. In this same passage from *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche argues that the "firm-charactered individuals" who develop "a living sense of community" are responsible for the formation of a strong and lasting society (I: 5: 224). But "It is the more unfettered, uncertain and morally weaker individuals upon whom spiritual progress depends in such communities: it is these men who attempt new things" (HAH I: 5:224). It is these "morally weaker" and innovative individuals who "effect a loosening up and from time to time inflict an injury on the stable elements [*stabilen Elemente*]⁴⁰ of the community. It is precisely at this injured and weakened spot that the whole body is as it were inoculated with something new" (HAH I: 5:224). These inoculatory effects, (or "ennobling

inoculation”), which allow for creativity are accomplished by the community, not by the government. Nietzsche may desire a permanent government but one that can endure instabilities produced by the effects of the community. Thus, Nietzsche suggests that strength is needed for duration but moral weakness is needed to make progress possible. He distrusts “established authority” as the “dangerous companion of all duration” since established authority risks being inflexible, not allowing itself to be temporarily weakened (or made unstable) by “degenerate natures” that ultimately help to build its strength. Rebell cannot tolerate democracy precisely because it relies on the community to test its strength.

2. Defining Nietzsche’s Concept of a Political Agon

Human All Too Human (I: 5:224) is continuous with what Nietzsche writes in his earlier work, “Homer’s Contest,” in which he tries to find a sense of community fortified against any ultimately established authority. In the latter work, Nietzsche suggests that agon in the ancient Greek polis was meant to serve as a constant check on unchallenged power through political oppositions that, instead of promoting annihilation or subjugation of the other, depended on each other for mutual improvement and growth. Agon thus conceived can be considered to be the underlying concept that definitively separates and distances Rebell’s extreme-right politics from Nietzsche’s philosophy.

In “Homer’s Contest,” Nietzsche contends that agon or contest in the ancient Greek political arena was maintained through “ostracism,” or, as Nietzsche borrows from the ancient Greek, “*ostrakismos*⁴¹,” which was a “necessity for contest” and a “precondition for the well-being of the state” (HC 39). In Nietzsche’s specific use of “*ostrakismos*,” the Hellenic state banished its best citizen so that the contest for

excellence would not become exhausted (HC 39). Nietzsche explains in his application of the term that

[*Ostrakismos*] is employed when there is evident danger that one of the great politicians and party leaders battling in contest feels provoked, in the heat of battle, to use harmful and destructive methods and dubious *coups d'états*⁴². The original sense of this extraordinary device is, however, not one of an outlet, rather one of a stimulant: one does away with an outstanding individual, so that once again the competing game of strengths may awaken. (HC 39-40)

If affirmation of the other is needed to provide for an agon between opposing political parties, this agon in turn, requires the ostracism of the best in order to perpetuate itself. Ideally, by serving to do away with the exclusive rule of the best individual or genius, ostracism ensures that “there are always several geniuses, who mutually incite each other to act, as they also mutually hold themselves within the bounds of moderation” (HC 40). Such an oligarchy would therefore guarantee a check on the power of any one ruler. In summary, Nietzsche claims that the “core of the Hellenic concept of contest” is that it “abhors sovereign mastery, and fears its dangers; it desires, as protection against the one genius—a second genius” (HC 40). Thus, ostracism would necessarily prevent any capable contestant (genius) from becoming a tyrant.

Moreover, this concept of the agon in “Homer’s Contest” seems compatible with the “ennobling inoculation” that Nietzsche believes is the effect that morally weak individuals have on their community, since it is their “weak” faith in the community that challenges its strength. Accordingly then, agon strengthens a community and/or

government by destabilizing it through contest. In turn, as perpetual strife between opposing perspectives, agon is, by definition, an unstable force.

Further, agon can be applied to democracy.⁴³ According to Hatab, “Democracy in an agonistic sense can be understood not precisely as ‘rule by the people,’ [or even as egalitarianism], but as ‘agonarchy,’ or rule which is decided by a contest among the different perspectives within the political field” (*A Nietzschean Defense* 65). While Rebell detested the Third Republic as rule by the people, “agonarchy” is precisely what accounts for the “continuelle petite secousse” caused by the constant parliamentary challenges to the executive authority in the Third Republic which, for Rebell, distracts rather than inspires the spirit, robbing it of its creativity (*Union* 37). Hatab argues, “Political ‘authority’ in a democracy... is not something pre-established or fixed, but something continually earned, challenged and altered in civic debate” (*A Nietzschean Defense* 64). Therein lies Rebell’s fear, not just of democracy, but of any type of government that allows its representatives to question its authority.

3. Rebell’s Rejection of Agonistic Pluralism in Napoleon III’s Government

Although the Second Empire could never be considered to be a true democracy as rule by the people, its move toward liberalization was a move toward agonarchy, since the liberals were those in Napoleon III’s government who demanded more and more power in legislation and decision-making while creating new and competing perspectives that challenged the power of and his ability to endure.⁴⁴ I therefore argue that Rebell’s promotion of Napoleon III’s dictatorial years in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* can be viewed as a response to his fear of agonistic pluralism in the form of parliamentary government, which he blamed was the breeding ground for the dangerous political

oppositions that toppled the Second Empire. Thierry Rodange's dissertation describes how Rebell ultimately viewed Napoleon III's leadership as a disappointment in his novel:

Analysant les années de pouvoir de Napoléon III, Rebell se montre donc amer, parce que l'Empereur n'a pas su continuer ce qu'il avait si brillamment entrepris ... parce qu'il a trop pris le temps d'écouter [the opposition], perdant ainsi son pouvoir de décision ... parce qu'il s'est montré, lorsqu'il ne l'aurait pas fallu, trop proche du peuple.... [Rebell] rêve à une royauté totalitaire. (TR diss. 294)

The main characters of *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* who discuss the history of the Second Empire and its fall mirror Rebell's desire for an imperial tyrant to suppress conflict and opposition. As the only character who disagrees with the others, favoring Napoleon III's coup d'état, Du Tremblay serves, not to challenge the validity of the coup, but rather to allow the other characters the opportunity to justify it in their terms. As Rebell's main diegetic characters merge their views into the author's own in this discussion about 's power, the narrative becomes "monologic" in the sense that Rebell, the author, acts as the unifying voice dominating all fictional voices in the scope of politics (Prince 54). In response to Du Tremblay who objects to the coup as a violation of the Second Republic's Constitution, Le Vergier des Combes attempts at a defense of it:

Le prince Louis-Napoléon avait sans doute le droit de faire le coup d'Etat du 2 décembre puisqu'il l'a fait, puisqu'il a remplacé les séniles papotages d'une assemblée en enfance par un gouvernement.... Il me semble qu'il faut dans toute société ... une figure centrale sur laquelle se fixe d'abord

l'attention, et qui donne aux autres leur valeur. Croyez bien qu'un roi qui parle en maître, soutenu par l'intelligence, la force et le respect d'un pays, est un plus beau spectacle qu'une Chambre tumultueuse, où les paroles vides, les remarques saugrenues succèdent aux discours emphatiques, quand on ne s'y insulte, quand on ne s'y bat pas! (*La Femme* 240)

Le Vergier des Combes suggests that Louis-Napoleon, as president of the Second Republic, was justified in making his coup, first because it was his fate, and, second because a strong, central power was needed both to dissolve the National Assembly of May 1849,⁴⁵ which was fraught with conflicting parties and interests, and to restore political stability in France. Further, Le Vergier des Combes argues that Louis-Napoleon created his empire to curb a multi-party system: “Ce n'est qu'en limitant le rôle des représentants de la nation et même en les dirigeant comme le fit l'Empire, qu'on parvient à gouverner” (240).

Le Vergier des Combes also expresses the desire for Rebell's tyrant. When Du Tremblay insists on the illegality of Napoleon III's coup, Le Vergier des Combes responds that might makes right: “Un homme intelligent et résolu, . . . quand [la loi] s'oppose au droit, la viole; quand elle n'existe pas, l'invente” (*La Femme* 241). Du Tremblay reproaches him for advocating “tyranny” (241), which Le Vergier is proud to affirm, quoting Machiavelli, whom he claims should have served as a model for Napoleon III: “ ‘Avant tout,’ dit le grand Florentin, ‘un prince doit vivre avec ses sujets de telle façon que nul événement, bon ou mauvais, ne le fasse changer. Si les circonstances t'imposent ta conduite, le bien et le mal que tu fais alors ne te profite point, car on t'y voit contraint et l'on ne t'en sait aucun gré’ ” (242). Rouillard supports Le

Vergier des Combes in the latter's conversation with Du Tremblay: "Il ne faut reprocher à l'Empereur d'avoir été tyran, mais plutôt d'avoir cessé trop vite de l'être" (242). Rebell consistently goes beyond Nietzsche's Machiavellian-inspired philosophy by using, directly or indirectly, quotations from Machiavelli that justify autocracy as a means of controlling all elements of opposition.

Rebell thus proves to be diametrically opposed to Nietzsche, who desires not protection from, but a stimulus to, contest between political opponents. For instance, *The Gay Science* (174) can show that although Nietzsche, like Rebell, opposed parliamentarism, his reasons for doing so were contrary to Rebell's:

Parliamentarism—that is, public permission to choose between five basic political positions—flatters and wins the favor of all those who would like to *seem* independent and individual, as if they fought for their opinions.

Ultimately, however, it is indifferent whether the herd is permitted to have one opinion or five. Whoever deviates from the five public opinions and stands apart will have the whole herd against him.

If Nietzsche rejects parliamentarism, it is because he believes it to be only an illusion of independent thinking and that in reality it implies multi-party conformity. Nietzsche may therefore be rejecting parliamentarism because he is in favor of a multi-voiced government more radical than parliamentarism thus conceived so that individuals (the truly independent-minded) can emerge from the uniform and conformist herd. As he implies in this passage, independent thinking must prove itself through contest with other perspectives.

Further, Rebell's ultimate divergence from Nietzsche's political philosophy can be seen in Le Vergier des Combes's character, who objects to the democratic expression of universal male suffrage in the Second Empire: "Le prince qui attend ses décisions d'une foule ressemble à une tête où les pensées sont d'autant plus confuses, les résolutions d'autant plus vagues que les idées sont plus nombreuses" (*La Femme* 240). This view of become weak upon conceding to multiple opinions is consistent with Rouillard's. As I established, Rouillard believed that failed once he gave free reign to his inner agon, which reflected the agon between the conservatives and liberals in the empire itself. Thus, for Rouillard, agon within the leader is tolerated insofar as he is able to exploit it in the service of his highest priority, but agon within the government, i.e. agonarchy, allows unhealthy antagonisms to rule as evident in the divisions between political parties. As he expresses through his characters, Rebell cannot appreciate agon as beneficent contest but rather as disruptive dissonance among political opponents.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Rebell viewed the liberalization of the Second Empire, which sought to increase agonistic practices,⁴⁶ as disastrous. By referring to the decree of November 24, 1860, which gave the Senate and the Legislative Body the right to deliver an address annually in answer to the speech from , and the right to the press of reporting parliamentary debate,⁴⁷ Le Vergier des Combes saw a "commencement d'abdication" for because,

Dès lors l'idée que le gouvernement était faible ... va donner de l'audace aux libéraux et aux révolutionnaires: le corps législatif va se transformer, se retourner contre le maître, alors que jusque—là il n'a été qu'un instrument; les journaux répandront parmi la foule les mille billevesées de

ce qu'on appelle l'éloquence parlementaire, tous ces beaux discours qui n'ont l'air d'abord que de bulles de savon, et qui finissent peu à peu par empoisonner l'air... (*La Femme* 242)

Le Vergier des Combes is right in that the November 1860 decree was the beginning of the end of Napoleon III's dictatorship, as well as of a government based purely on privilege, since was to give increasingly more power to the deputies in the Legislative Body, to the dismay of the ministers of State who had served as the sole intermediaries in his government by which directed legislation.⁴⁸ Le Vergier des Combes exaggerates, however, that it was tantamount to the beginning of 's abdication.⁴⁹ These first concessions in November that made to the deputies, which allowed them to play a bigger role in publicity and in the discussion of laws, eventually led to others in the following years until the ultimate one was made on January 2, 1870, when Napoleon III named Emile Ollivier minister of the Liberal Empire in which finally agreed to share his power with the deputies, granting the Legislative Body the right to initiate laws, which had until then been exclusively the right of the Cabinet.⁵⁰

Napoleon III, the character presented through Henriette's story in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, is consistent with Le Vergier des Combes and Rouillard's⁵¹ views of who, out of weakness, yielded to his opponents. In Henriette's multiple encounters with Napoleon III after 1860, she repeatedly presents him as being overly concerned with the opinions of his enemies, the liberals, overly generous in pardoning the Italian count⁵² after she informs him about the plot on his life, and eventually too physically sick to impose his will against the war of 1870. According to Rodange's summary of Napoleon III as Rebell's character, "C'est l'image d'un empereur bien affaibli qui se dégage tout au

long du roman, un empereur qui semble fatigué par le pouvoir et qui n'a pas la force de réagir. Rebell nous le présente comme un homme las ... et qui n'a plus 'la foi' d'un chef d'état qui entend faire de son pays un des plus forts et des plus nobles" (TR diss 291).

But the historical Napoleon III's position was more complicated than *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* suggests. According to John Bierman, 's concession to liberals wasn't simply acquiescence due to physical or moral weakness (though was very ill during the last few years of his reign), but rather a deliberate act to maintain his power: "[Napoleon III] managed to strike a shrewed balance between conviction and opportunism" (Bierman 314). By this account, was a capable perspectivist who knew not to cling to his convictions, but rather to control his For and Against like a Nietzschean "free-spirit." Bierman quotes Napoleon III's writing⁵³: "March at the head of the ideas of your century, and these ideas will follow you and support you. March behind them and they will drag you after them. March against them and they will overthrow you" (Bierman 314). In this, Napoleon III was able to acknowledge his self-development and maintenance of his power through his opponents with whom he can be considered to entertain a "spiritualization of enmity." I argue that Rebell as an anti-perspectival perspectivist could not appreciate the historical Napoleon III in this way.

Moreover, the Second Empire's move toward liberalization is in accordance with Nietzsche's agonistic politics. Although Nietzsche opposes "liberal institutions" because, as he writes in *Twilight of the Idols*, "[they] immediately cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained," he does approve of liberalization since, "As long as they [liberal institutions] are still being fought for, these same institutions produce quite different effects; they then produce freedom mightily," considering "freedom" to be "measured by

the resistance which has to be overcome” (TI IX:38). Thus, it is not the Liberal Empire but the Second Empire in the process of liberalization that amounts to the freedom resulting from the productive struggle needed to overcome oppositions. Rebell, however, rejects this agon in Napoleon III’s regime.

4. The Liberals as Villains in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*

Rebell seems to show his anti-perspectival politics most strongly when he offers the unchallenged view in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* that the liberals deliberately conspired against Napoleon III. If Rebell wished that had been able to effectively suppress and eradicate the liberal opposition, it is because the Second Empire’s liberals represented particular critics of Rebell’s desire for an absolute ruler. According to J.P.T. Bury and R.P. Tombs’s *Thiers 1797-1877: a Political Life* (1986), in origin, the liberals of Restoration France, such as Adolphe Thiers, were “Politically... those who detested the *Ancien Régime*, and however much they differed about some of its phases, exalted the main principles of the Revolution of 1789”; they also tended to be middle-classmen who resented the return of the *émigré* aristocracy (18). Despite their differences, the majority of liberals, Bury and Tombs claim, shared a common belief in a constitutional government based on the Charter of 1814 (Bury and Tombs 18). In the Second Republic’s National Assembly of May 1849, Thiers sympathized with the majority who were July monarchists in favor of a moderate Republic (Bury and Tombs 104). Those who resisted Louis-Napoleon’s coup d’état did so because a Bonapartist dictatorship would be anathema either to the parliamentary system advocated by Thiers and some of his allies or to the socialist democracy advocated by radicals (Bury and Tombs 137). As Theodore Zeldin’s *The Political System of Napoleon III* (1958) claims, liberal elements

existed in the empire from the start in the form of Orléanist notables who supported the coup and who participated in the first legislative elections of the Second Empire in 1852 (45). These Orléanists wanted a limited executive power. When, by the decree of August 16, 1859, Napoleon III granted full amnesty to all individuals condemned of crimes against the empire, including those like Thiers who had been banished after revolting against the coup, many swore an allegiance to the empire and eventually became deputies in the Legislative Body. These liberals later accepted membership in Emile Ollivier's ministry.

As anti-absolutists, the liberals become the villains of the Second Empire in the novel. Rebell fails to deploy a variety of perspectives in considering French history and politics by painting the liberals simply as villains. When Rachel asks who the liberals are, Rouillard thus describes them: "Ce sont... des malfaiteurs qui demandent la liberté lorsqu'ils sont en prison pour l'enlever aux autres dès qu'ils en sont sortis. Ils se proposent, déclarent-ils hypocritement, de faire le bien du monde entier," since, in reality, Rouillard believes, they were determined to destroy the Empire's national order (*La Femme* 329). Henriette's story of her encounters with the liberals in Paris after 1860 confirms Rouillard's view of them: all became embittered after they were deported or imprisoned at the time of the coup. Upon their release and pardon, they pretended to declare loyalty to Napoleon III but had a vendetta against him, planning to overthrow the empire.

As I will show, although the Second Empire's critics, like Rebell, accused them of opportunism, the view in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* that the liberals deliberately orchestrated the fall of the Second Empire is exaggerated and largely unfounded. Besides,

even though some members of the liberal opposition, namely a minority of radical socialists and Republicans, did want to see an end to Napoleon III's reign, most accepted the Empire if it became liberal, and were therefore satisfied with the state of the French government in 1870.⁵⁴ Rebell, however, seems to ignore these nuances within the opposition, lumping all liberals, whether moderate or radical together. By identifying the distortions in Rebell's very limited perspective of the liberals in French history, one can see where the author intrudes in his fiction and reduces polyphony. One can identify three liberals in particular at whom Rebell's novel aims its attacks: Emile Ollivier, thinly disguised as the character, Aliboron; Jules Simon, appearing as himself; and Adolphe Thiers, who never appears in the novel but to whom the characters repeatedly make reference. While entertaining a distorted, one-sided view of his political enemies, Rebell shows himself to be a man of conviction incapable of achieving the perspectivism of Nietzsche's "free-spirits."

Aliboron, whose life resembles very nearly Ollivier's political career before becoming the minister of the Liberal Empire, is guilty of feigning loyalty to Napoleon III in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*. At a masked ball, Aliboron confesses to a disguised Jules Simon that for 20 years he has been a steadfast Republican, but after he was released from exile he professed his loyalty to , claiming to no longer be a radical in order to ingratiate himself with him: "Sire, ai-je dit, si je suis, si j'ai été libéral, je suis aussi profondément dévoué aux intérêts de votre dynastie. Je suis un modéré, sire, un homme du parti de l'ordre, et, du moment que mes confrères songent à la révolution, je dois me séparer d'eux'" (311). He also brags that since has accepted his apology, "Toutes les libertés que nous avons aujourd'hui, c'est à moi qu'on les doit" (310). But he

adds, “mon abandon momentané du parti républicain n’a pas une signification précise, et ma démarche auprès de l’Empereur ne m’a engagé à rien” (313). Like Ollivier, Aliboron was a radical Republican banished during the coup d’état who turned moderate after he was allowed to return to France. But unlike Rebell’s character, who hints that he was still not committed to , Ollivier, according to Zeldin, sincerely came to appreciate after he was expelled that gradual reform was the solution to help reinstall liberty in France, not violent revolution.⁵⁵

In contrast to Zeldin’s view, however, Aliboron, appears also as a secret ally of count Mosto and his Italian revolutionaries who planned to kill . He shows up at Mosto’s clandestine party of Italian criminals in order to congratulate him for being the most courageous defender of liberty (i.e., from the tyranny which Napoleon III’s reign represents for them) (269). When one of the guests, upon learning that Aliboron is a deputy, questions him whether he swore the oath of loyalty to as was required of all

deputies, he replies, clarifying his complex political role,

Oui... mais je ne pense pas que ce serment engage ma conscience. Tant que l’Empereur sera au pouvoir, j’estime qu’il y va de mon honneur de ne pas me prononcer contre lui. Sans doute je ne l’approuve pas, je le tolère seulement... Mais si un jour l’Empire devait tomber, si un gouvernement choisi par le pays avait besoin de mes services, mon devoir serait d’oublier des engagements qui, alors, n’auraient plus de valeur, et je me rappellerais mon devoir! (270)

Rebell would thus have his readers believe that Aliboron was not quite the reformed Ollivier once allowed to reenter France and to participate in the government of the

Second Empire. Instead, Aliboron, without admitting that he was still against Napoleon III, hints that he has no motive to openly declare himself an opponent as long as he is well disposed toward liberalism. But if the Second Empire should fall, Aliboron also suggests that he will resort to his Republicanism “of the first hour.”

By having Aliboron profess the truth about his political orientation to Mosto and his band of conspirators, Rebell associates his liberal character with Italian Republicans who attempted to kill Napoleon III to avenge Giuseppe Mazzini, whom Louis-Napoleon as President of the Second Republic had had kicked out of Rome after Mazzini and his men tried to overthrow the Pope in the fight for Italian unification. Although, as Zeldin claims, the historical Ollivier was friends with the republican Mazzini during the Second Republic, none of the French liberals had anything to do with the the Italians, who alone orchestrated the 1858 plot against (Zeldin 121). Yet Rebell portrays Ollivier, alias Aliboron, not as a mere moderate liberal who supported Napoleon III’s concessions, but as one of the few irreconcilables of the extreme-left outwardly professing support of while secretly sympathizing with his conspirators, and lying in wait for a defeat of the Second Empire in order to declare victory for himself.

Jules Simon, unlike Ollivier, was an unfaltering Republican, and, as a character in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, he, too, hopes for a radical coup d’état of the Second Empire. According to Philip A. Bertocci’s *Jules Simon* (1978),

In contrast with Emile Ollivier, who associated liberty primarily with a series of institutional arrangements that he felt could be grafted onto the institutions of the Second Empire, [Simon] identified liberty with a quality of civic awareness shared by a whole people. No people could truly be

free, he insisted, if it received its liberties piecemeal from an arbitrary regime. (140)

Simon, therefore, wanted a complete dismantling of the authoritarian structure of the Second Empire. In Rebell's novel, he tells Aliboron that Napoleon III's cousin, Pierre Bonaparte, has just killed the Republican journalist Victor Noir, and further predicts that Pierre's trial for murder, whatever the result, will ultimately have a negative impact on his popularity, since he, as the nation's leader, must assume the blame for any of his family's misconduct: "Qu'il [Prince Bonaparte] soit acquitté ou non, tout retombe sur le pauvre Empereur qui, dans les circonstances mauvaises, ne manque jamais de jouer le rôle du moine espagnol discipliné pour le compte des autres et qui expie sur ses épaules les fautes de tout un pays" (312-13). When Aliboron asks him if "cet événement va porter un coup à l'Empire," Simon reassures him, "N'en doutez pas. Les révolutionnaires vont prendre prétexte de cette aventure pour insulter toute la famille impériale. Ce sera un scandale énorme, plus qu'un scandale peut-être. Le jeu au cadavre a toujours réussi" (313). Rebell's novel is accurate in that, as Plessis maintains, some revolutionaries saw in Pierre Bonaparte's murder of Victor Noir an opportunity to disgrace the entire imperial family and an excuse to express their outrage at Napoleon III's government in a popular revolt that they led in Paris shortly after Noir's funeral (Plessis 220). But the suggestion in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* that Simon and Ollivier were hoping for, or were sympathetic to, just such a revolt is false. On the contrary, they were among the liberals who helped to suppress the rioting (Plessis 220). Neither Ollivier nor the more radical Simon ever supported Red Revolution.

Yet even more virulent than the novel's accusations of Ollivier and Simon as secret opponents of the Second Empire are its attacks on Adolphe Thiers. Le Vergier des Combes's remarks about him, which remain unchallenged by the other characters, represent Rebell's unsubstantiated view that Thiers was responsible for the fall of the Second Empire and deliberately exploited the French defeat in the war of 1870 to orchestrate his rise to presidency of the Third Republic. Le Vergier des Combes claims that, "De la coulisse et sans se compromettre jamais, [Thiers] a préparé de 1863 à 1870 la chute de l'Empire et la ruine de la France. Choyé à la fois des libéraux et des monarchistes, il a fait plus de mal, à lui seul, que les plus audacieux destructeurs réunis" (382). According to Bury and Tombs, Thiers, an Orléanist, was part of the non-Republican liberal opposition since his election to the Legislative Body in 1863, and he later supported the Ollivier Ministry, since the Republicans were too radical for him (Bury and Tombs 169). Thiers was thus willing to accept the empire as long as it became liberal. Le Vergier des Combes's claim that Thiers sought the complete destruction of the Second Empire is therefore unfounded.

Le Vergier further reproaches Thiers's conduct during the war of 1870: "Pendant la guerre, quand tous se rangent autour du drapeau, il refuse par deux fois son aide, à l'Impératrice d'abord... à la Défense nationale ensuite, dont il ne veut pas être" (382). Thiers did refuse to see the Empress who requested his visit in order to ask for his advice during the war, because, as Bury and Tombs claim, he didn't want to involve himself in the empire's war of which he had never approved (Bury and Tombs 181). He also refused to be part of the interim government of the newly declared Third Republic after the French defeat at Sedan, since it acted against his advice, prolonging the war until the

food stocks in Paris were exhausted. Thiers thought that the French would get a better peace deal with the Prussians if they surrendered immediately.⁵⁶

Although, as Rodange claims, Thiers's critics in general accused him of being a "fomentor" and "opportunist," Le Vergier's attacks on Thiers reflect Rebell's personal position as an "adversaire farouche de la république" who wanted to discredit not only Thiers, but more precisely "les chefs républicains dans leur ensemble" (TR diss. 269). Le Vergier des Combes's speculation that Thiers was entirely responsible for the Commune is especially hyperbolic. On their trip to Paris, Le Vergier says in reaction to Hélène who blames the destruction of Paris on the Communards, "N'accusez pas la Commune ... accusez toute la clique libérale du 4 Septembre. Ce sont ces canailles qui ont précipité l'Empereur à Sedan; oui, ce sont eux qui ont pétrolé Paris. Oui, le Thiers, le Simon, les voilà les vrais incendiaires!" (*La Femme* 164). According to Rodange, Rebell himself blamed not the Communards, but rather Thiers for manipulating them, yet "il est assez peu probable que [Thiers] ait connu, avant qu'il ne se produise, le déroulement de toute la Commune, où tant de sang fut versé" (TR diss 271).

Le Vergier des Combes finally echoes, almost word for word, Rebell's own view⁵⁷ that Thiers and his partisans destroyed everything in order to proclaim themselves the heroic founding fathers of the new government. Blaming him for the Commune and the bloodshed that ensued as well as for the humiliating peace terms that Thiers had no choice but to accept from the Franckfort Treaty of May 10, 1871, Le Vergier des Combes mocks Thiers's election to presidency of the Third Republic on August 31:

Enfin le mal qu'il a préparé sourdement est accompli; il n'a plus qu'à jouer son rôle de pilleur d'épaves et à repêcher les cadavres de ses

victimes pour en hériter. Aussi, tout à coup, le voit-on sauter vers nous, pareil à un vilain petit diable qui sort de sa boîte. A la vue du revenant, les mains se tendent, les applaudissements éclatent. Quoi qu'il puisse faire, maintenant qu'il n'y a plus rien à libérer, il sera le libérateur. (383)⁵⁸

5. Rebell's Perspectival Perspective on Politics, In Spite of Himself

While Rebell's anti-perspectivism is compatible with the slavish drive that propels him to seek the justification of his political perspective through his desire to see his political enemies destroyed in history as well as in his discourse, Rebell's good perspectivism is consistent with the noble effort he makes to overcome himself through the acknowledgement of and even limited respect for some political perspectives that would traditionally conflict with his extreme-rightism. As I argued in Part I, Rebell shows the mark of Nietzsche's "higher nature" that represents a "battleground" of master and slave moralities (GM I:16). As I have also contended in Part II thus far, Rebell's knack for creating a narratological perspectivism aligns him directly against the lack of perspectival capacity he has as an extremist political thinker. Yet I now turn toward the very real possibility that Rebell the novelist manages to unhinge himself from his political thinking within his fiction, which allows him to entertain agon with and against his politics, and which ultimately enables him to achieve the ideal perspectivist's superior ability for self-overcoming through adoption of new perspectives.

Despite his characters' unanimous support for an authoritarian regime as the only legitimate government, Rebell offers an agonistic debate between his characters' opinions about Napoleon III's legitimacy as a leader that may reflect Rebell's own struggle with and against his views. Thus, in this case, the author's intrusion would appear to favor a

political perspectivism. While Archbishop Rouillard strictly believes in rule by divine right despite his admiration for the Bonapartes, Le Vergier des Combes challenges him. Even though Rouillard compares Napoleon III's power to Julius Cesar's and further thinks that the former was superior to Napoleon I at the beginning of his reign (327), he also disapproves of Napoleon III's common roots: "L'Empereur... a mérité sa chute pour avoir donné à son pouvoir une base aussi fragile que le consentement des foules. Elevé par le peuple, il tombe par le peuple; cela est naturel" (334-5). But Le Vergier des Combes disagrees with the Archbishop's belief in rule by divine right and also signals another reason why Napoleon III is worthy of respect as a leader, even if he is a commoner, as Rouillard just emphasized:

Les peuples ne croient plus en Dieu ... on ne peut leur imposer de royauté surnaturelle. Il est facile au contraire de leur apprendre à reconnaître la force qui se manifeste dans certains élus, certaines races, et les sacre pour le pouvoir. La jeunesse et la maturité de Napoléon III, comme vous l'avouez vous-même, monseigneur, ont bien prouvé que le prince était de ceux qui viennent donner leur loi à une grande nation. (335)

Although Rouillard, like Rebell, does not believe in a democratic ruler, i.e., one elected by the people, Le Vergier des Combes's atheism also represents the author's dissatisfaction of rule by divine right, despite his preference for legitimism, or belief that the only legitimate power is that of a monarch, particularly a Bourbon who is selected by both birth and God to rule. Rebell did admire Napoleon III, however common his ancestry, believing as Le Vergier des Combes implies, that nobility is not necessarily based on birth right, but on acquired characteristics such as a demonstrated strength and

ability to dominate for which a family or race can become known. The latter conception of nobility is also in accordance with Nietzsche's *Vornheimheit*.⁵⁹ Perhaps it is the Marquis de Sourdis, a descendent of old nobles and a steadfast Bonapartist who best represents Rebell's perspective in the novel. De Sourdis tells Henriette, "L'Empereur, lorsqu'il a fait le coup d'Etat du 2 décembre, a prouvé qu'il était de sang royal et nous l'avons salué [he and his family], comme jadis nos ancêtres eussent salué un chef. La race se distingue à la volonté ambitieuse et toute-puissante" (289). As an agonistic perspectivist, Rebell thus contends with his desire for a king elected by birth.

Rebell's potential contest with his own politics expresses itself in yet another significant way. *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* offers a clearly sympathetic view of the Communards, a people whom Rebell and his family traditionally saw as their political enemy. According to Rodange's dissertation, "Qui sont ces communards qui mettent Paris à sac?—des communistes et des anarchistes pour la plupart. Il est clair que les Grassal ne peuvent éprouver qu'antipathie à l'égard de ces gens du peuple aux idées révolutionnaires" (TR diss. 22). Although Rebell was too young during the Commune to partake in family discussions, Rodange claims that his parents inbred in him their hatred of the Communards when the latter were given amnesty in 1880: "A l'âge de treize ans, lorsque l'on est presque jeune homme, il faut agir comme son père et tenir les mêmes propos que son père. C'est la raison pour laquelle Georges n'éprouve que mépris pour ces communards" (TR diss. 23). Yet Rebell as an adult did obviously deviate from his family's views of the Commune, as is evident from the positive way in which the movement is portrayed in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*.

Although Rodange acknowledges that Rebell in his writings puts the entire blame for the event and its bloodshed on Thiers as a master manipulator of the people, he does not fully take into account Rebell's applause for the Paris Commune as an expression of patriotism through the characters in his novel. The author's intrusion in his characters' discussions about the Commune therefore does not interfere with polyphony, but rather helps to generate it, especially since it multiplies the author's perspective. According to *Le Vergier des Combes*,

si [la Commune] fut dans son ensemble une révolte du prolétariat, à l'origine, du moins, elle eut un caractère de patriotisme qui doit la gracier à nos yeux. C'était le cri de colère d'une ville à laquelle les accusateurs de l'Empire avaient fait de si belles promesses et qui assistait au naufrage de toutes ses illusions. Cinq mois de résistance pour arriver à ce beau résultat. La perte de cinq milliards et de deux provinces! (384)

The Government of National Defense declared the Siege of Paris in which the Parisians, with the help of the *Garde Nationale* and the *Garde Mobile*, resisted the Prussian investment in their city in September 1870; but as *Le Vergier des Combes* explains, after five months of resistance proved futile (when the food supply became extremely scarce and many died), France had to surrender and accept Bismark's humiliating peace terms: the demand to annex Alsace and Lorraine and to have 5 billion francs paid in war indemnity. Rupert Christiansen's *Paris Babylon: The Story of the Paris Commune* (1994) confirms: "The Commune was more a furious instinctive response to this trail of humiliation than it was a calculated or conspiratorial political strategy" (297).

In addition, Le Vergier des Combes even expresses empathy for the Parisian working class that was forced to accept new laws that nearly amounted to their starvation. He says sarcastically,

Quelle surprise aussi quand ces ouvriers et cette petite bourgeoisie sur laquelle le compatissant Jules Simon avait versé tant de larmes d'encre, s'aperçurent que cette sensibilité s'était tout à coup tarie et que leurs bons, humanitaires, libéraux de députés venaient de voter la loi sur les échéances, qui ne laisse pas au débiteur ruiné par la guerre le temps de respirer et le livre à la merci du créancier! (*La Femme* 384-5)

As Christiansen explains, as one of the “Draconian” economic measures imposed by the Government of National Defense, after the Siege, “when tens of thousands had lost their livelihoods and before any level of ordinary activity had been given the chance to pick up, the government announced that landlords were entitled to demand full, immediate back-payment on all rents suspended during the Siege” (Christiansen 280). The same legislation was imposed on promissory notes and overdue credit. Rebell, through Le Vergier des Combes, expresses the opposite of his usual rancour and contempt for the masses. Instead of criticizing Jules Simon and other Republicans for being the defenders of the lower classes, he criticizes them for not defending the people enough through their apparent lack of compassion for their plight after the Siege.

This sympathetic view of the Communards pervades the viewpoints in Rebell's novel. After Le Vergier des Combes's observations, “Henriette fut heureuse que M. Le Vergier n'eût pas jeté l'anathème sur la Commune, parce que son ami l'avait défendue” (385). In effect, de Sourdis decided to become a Communard, when, as a national guard,

he was among those who refused to give up arms on March 18, 1871 when Thiers, in an attempt to cooperate with the Prussian demand, tried in vain to confiscate the artillery of the National Guard who brought it to Montmartre.⁶⁰ As a purely metadiegetic character, de Sourdis is the interesting product of Henriette's focalization. As an old aristocrat, a Bonapartist, and national guard turned Commune, de Sourdis reflects a multiple perspective that fought for both pre- and post-revolutionary values. In turn, this perspective is no doubt reflective, at least to a certain extent, of the author's own.

In summary, if *Rebell* functions as a perspectival perspectivist from a narratological standpoint in his novel, proliferating the number of perspectives each character represents and allowing all of them to enter into agon with each other, his perspective on perspectivism is more complex from the standpoint of the politics he represents in fiction. In one sense, he is anti-perspectival, greatly reducing the polyphony of his narrative by having his principal characters inhabit a single perspective, which is moreover his own on the politics of the Second Empire. But in another sense, *Rebell*, the novelist contends against *Rebell* the politician when he explores and even validates (via his characters) some political perspectives, such as the Commune from the Communards' view, that traditionally oppose his own. Thus, *Rebell* does favor perspectivism to a certain degree in the politics of his novel, and in so doing, is able to overcome some of his convictions, at least within the realm of the narrative structure he creates.

Chapter 4

Rebell's Perspective on History in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*

Rebell's perspective on politics during the rise and fall of the Second Empire in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can also be thought of as interpretation of history refracted through each of his characters. History is thus in itself perspectival in this novel. Nietzsche's "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History For Life" (1872) provides different approaches to history that Rebell can be seen to use in his larger project of creating an historical narrative. Nietzsche's essay on history not only would have been readily accessible to Rebell by the time he read his works two decades later, but also, as I will discuss, would predict how historians and writers in the second half of the 19th Century were rethinking history. And Rebell can certainly be associated with these new historical novelists. Further, as I will show, Rebell's novel entails, beyond Nietzsche's essay, a multiple perspective on the second half of the 19th Century by explaining History through the personal history of his characters. In this chapter, I concentrate on how Rebell's historical method becomes a major perspective in itself for literature, and not one that is necessarily related to the principle of agon. I therefore shift Part II's focus from Rebell's literary treatment of agono-perspectivism to that of history, which is significant in its special relationship to both Rebell's perspective on it and also as a perspective in itself within *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*.

1. Nietzsche and Rebell's Common View of History

Whether or not Rebell read and consciously decided to apply Nietzsche's concept of history to his novel, the particular perspective he fosters on history and how it should be practiced have undeniably much in common with Nietzsche's on these issues. Both

criticize the modern historian's pretensions to impartiality as self-illusory and even damaging to the present age's search for its own meaning. For Nietzsche in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History For Life," those who want to keep history "nice and objective" are "forever incapable of making history themselves" (UDH 86). Consistent with his rejection of "objectivity" as perfectly disinterested knowledge, Nietzsche believes that "objectivity" "means a condition in the historian which permits him to observe an event in all its motivations and consequences so purely that it has no effect at all on his own subjectivity," which he concludes is "pure superstition" (UDH 91). Since objectivity, always being a degree within the subjective, is relative to the number of perspectives it incorporates, the historian should approach his study like a good perspectivist, by using as many interpretations of the past as he has at his disposal while being aware that the collection of them is itself a subjective recreation of the past.

In his Preface to "La Littérature et l'esprit français (1850-1900)" (1900), entitled "Principes d'une histoire littéraire," Rebell also mocks the so-called impartial historians, or "ces chercheurs de documents" who, "par respect de la science," only succeed in destroying the spirit of the past rather than capturing it for humanity: "A mon sens, l'historien qui amasse des documents sans avoir la joie créatrice d'une époque, le désir d'agrandir la vie de son temps, de l'améliorer, de la préserver, soit en la faisant participer au passé, soit en l'en détournant; l'historien 'impartial,' en un mot, accomplit, sans le savoir, une oeuvre de destruction" (65). Rebell implies here that the true historian is a craftsman of the past, motivated by the desire to use history as a means to enrich the life of the present age.

This passage in Rebell's writing contains most significantly the core of Nietzsche's thesis in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History For Life:" that history as art serves an ultimate advantage to present humanity by providing a stimulation to life. Nietzsche affirms that, "We want to serve history only to the extent that history serves life" (59). But history can serve "life and action" (UDH 59) only if it is transformed into art, or for Rebell, only as it founds the basis of his Story (i.e. his narrative):

If the historical drive does not also contain a drive to construct, if the purpose of destroying and clearing is not to allow a future [to liberate itself]... then the instinct for creation will be enfeebled and discouraged... only if history can endure to be transformed into a work of art will it perhaps be able to preserve instincts or even evoke them. (UDH 95)

While Rebell does not address this aesthetic purpose of history, he nevertheless advances it as the driving force behind narrative creation that serves to improve and to preserve present life. With such a mission as a novelist, Rebell in fact reinforces Nietzsche on the subject of history. Nietzsche defines the "historical drive" as the drive to remember while the "unhistorical" is "the ability to forget" (UDH 62). If the historical drive becomes unconstrained, its effect will be to completely shatter the illusions that sustain us and that offer us hope for the future. An excessive will to remember thereby has the effect of defeating present life. The unhistorical drive is needed as a task to de- and re-construct the past so that present life can extract from it, not a reason to surrender, but a reason to continue, and even to triumph. Hence, a restriction on the drive to remember is required for the existence of the healthy instincts that affirm a productive life in the present. As Nietzsche explains, the past must be forgotten "to a certain degree" "if it is

not to become the gravedigger of the present,” or, in other words, if it is not to bring about a degenerate form of life in rejection and denial of the present (UDH 62). The unhistorical thus allows for history to become a creative task.

In particular, Nietzsche claims that, “... *the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of the individual, of a people, of a culture*” (UDH 63). In the passage quoted above from Rebell’s “La Littérature et l’esprit français,” the author also implicitly calls for a combination of the historical and unhistorical perspectives, since he claims that the preservation and improvement of the present life requires both participation in the past and turning away from it.

2. *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* as Rebell’s Ideal Historical Novel

Moreover, in his Preface to “La Littérature et l’esprit français,” Rebell envisions what the ideal historical work should entail:

Je rêve, pour ma part, d’un livre d’histoire fait avec amour, avec passion, même avec parti pris, dont les existences soient vécues et les paysages étudiés minutieusement, mais où les faits soient toujours considérés des sommets, dans leur ensemble et leur harmonie; d’un livre enfin qui n’ait pas pour but d’être agréable à cette froide déesse, la science, ou de servir aux hommes futurs, mais de donner à la raison de mes contemporains une force plus éclairée et comme le bénéfice des erreurs et du génie d’un demi-siècle. (“La Littérature et l’esprit français” 66)

Although *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* predates this article published in 1901, it may still very well constitute a worthy example of, or at least as an attempt at, this ideal historical book. The main characters, especially Georges Le Vergier des Combes and

Henriette Glyn, evoke the love and passion for an historical era and its most important figure. In particular, if Rebell, through his characters, as I discussed in Chapter 3, overwhelms the narrative with his personal slant on the Second Empire and Napoleon III, he thereby succeeds in conforming to his historical novel “avec parti pris.” In this, Rebell is loyal to historical facts, which serve as the “summits” of the narrative while at the same time betraying them through use of the unhistorical.⁶¹ Whence, for instance, the novel’s distorted view of the liberal opposition during Napoleon III’s regime. In *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, Rebell therefore rewrites the history of the Second Empire as his own story with a new meaning that he offers to his contemporaries.

Rebell’s novel is also thereby consistent with Georg Lukacs’s conception of the post-1848, anti-democratic historical novel, which extracts life lessons for the present from the recreation of past great individuals and events. A future study may well explore how Rebell’s other historical novels, such as *La Nichina* (which takes place during 16th-century Venice) and *Les Nuits chaudes du Cap français* (which describes Saint-Domingue on the eve of the slave revolution), also fit Lukacs’s description of the post-1848 historical novel, and further, how they incorporate Nietzsche’s historical and unhistorical modes. But *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* is the only novel Rebell devotes to 19th-century French history. I argue therefore that it is this novel in which Rebell directly deals with his society’s immediate past that he succeeds in writing history with a particular meaning and significance for his contemporaries. According to Lukacs’s *The Historical Novel* (1962), the French version of this subgenre that emerged after the revolution of 1848 posed a definitive rupture from realism: “What Engels described as the ‘triumph of realism’ in Balzac—the triumph of an honest and complete

reflection of the real facts and connections of life over the social, political or individual prejudices of a writer, is much more difficult in the new [post-1848] historical novel than in the contemporary social novel” (242). The modern writer of this “new” historical novel does not by any means value an exact reproduction of the past as his realist predecessors did. Instead, Lukacs claims, “Modern writers take from historiography and historical philosophy of their time not only the facts, but the theory that these facts may be freely and arbitrarily interpreted, the theory that historical development is unknowable and that therefore, it is necessary to ‘introject’ one’s own subjective problems into the ‘amorphousness’ of history” (Lukacs 244). Further, Lukacs contends that this theory proceeds from “the anti-democratic hero-cult and posits the lonely ‘great man’ as the focus of history,” this theory “sees the mass ... as raw material in the hands of ‘great men’” (244). Lukacs specifically cites Nietzsche’s influence on this new anti-democratic history.⁶²

But Lukacs’s anti-democratic conception of history is especially applicable to *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*. In Rebell’s novel, the celebrated “great man” is no doubt the dictatorial Napoleon III. A single metafictional passage in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur* reflects upon writing and offers an objection to the democratic conception of it. This passage comes from a conversation that Henriette claims she overheard among a group of clients at Mme Danglemont’s brothel: according to her, two novelists and friends, “l’un mondain, [M. de Cassive], l’autre ‘qui se dévouait aux classes laborieuses,’ [Joséphin Corvineau]” (370), represent no doubt democratic writers, both esteeming most highly what they call “la ‘réalité vraie,’” or “l’histoire d’un homme dont l’existence est si simple qu’elle peut se passer d’être contée” while a third individual,

Alexandre Dorlinière, a world-traveller and also coincidentally Victor's brother, intervenes in order to oppose this sort of writing (371). For democratic writers, Corvineau explains,

La démocratie n'a pas besoin d'actions d'éclat ni de grands hommes. Sa littérature doit donc s'inspirer des sentiments qui sont à l'usage de tous— d'émotions douces et attendrissantes. Pour ma part, je compte écrire l'histoire d'une pauvre femme qui passe son temps à laver et à étendre du linge, se reposant de ses travaux en arrosant, le soir, une petite plante qu'un vieillard charitable lui a donnée. Voilà tout mon sujet: il n'est pas compliqué, mais il peut prêter à la plus noble pitié, au plus précieux enseignement. J'ose prétendre qu'une telle oeuvre doit être d'une grande bienfaisance sociale. (371).

But Alexandre, who, according to Henriette has been listening, raises an objection to Corvineau:

Vous ne m'amusez pas... avec vos héros qui s'émeuvent de ne rien faire: croyez bien que le rapt d'une belle femme, la maîtrise d'un cheval de sang, le coup de fusil d'un soldat à la guerre ou d'un chasseur dans une forêt, sont des actes d'une si haute vertu humaine qu'il suffit de les avoir accomplis une fois pour en être enivré. Ceux-là mêmes qui sont privés de les accomplir par votre prétendue civilisation ont besoin de se les rappeler pour ne pas, de temps à autre, être absolument paralysés. (371-2)

Alexandre expresses a favorite theme of Rebell, which, as I've shown in Part I, is the objection to democratic art on the grounds that it reveres the average and the mundane,

whether humans or events, at the expense of the extraordinary. Through Alexandre Dorlinière's criticism of democratic writing as the glorification of the everyman's life, Rebell may be aiming another attack on such writers as Emile Zola, who famously reacted against the uncommon hero in favor of the average man living under the Second Empire. The characters in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, who include both a famous leader and politicians, as well as fictional individuals (especially aristocrats) who led extraordinary lives during the Second Empire, can be considered to represent the antithesis of the ordinary lives of the lower classes (e.g. workers and peasants) traced in *Les Rougon-Macquart*.

In contrast to the so-called "true reality" of these democratic writers, which Alexandre admits that he is not able to conceive, since, for him, "nos désirs d'action [as either memories of past actions or as hopes for future actions] ont autant d'existence que des actes accomplis," giving as possible examples of how our desires for actions yet to come, no matter how improbable or indeed, unrealistic, they may seem, can still be realized in the future:

Qui eût prévu Napoléon Ier en 1789 ou Napoléon III en 1830 eût passé pour un être chimérique. Cela n'a pas empêché l'Empire... Je ne sais pas, je vous répète, ce qu'est votre réalité vraie; si c'est un tableau de la vie commune et médiocre, l'esprit humain, qui aspire toujours à agir et à s'élever, doit s'en garder comme d'une humiliation, comme d'un abaissement" (372).

Alexandre thus rejects democratic writing because recounting the experiences of the everyperson fails to lend humans great inspiration or stimulation for life, which, as he

further suggests, should precisely be the effect of great writing on humanity. For Alexandre, only great individuals and events (e.g. Napoleon III's coup d'état) deserve to be remembered and recounted, because they alone are capable of elevating humanity by inspiring them. Besides, implicit in Alexandre's philosophy of writing, which places as great an emphasis on recalling past great events as on envisioning the possibility of new ones, is an appreciation for an equal balance of the historical and unhistorical modes in narration. By enacting the power of human memory with the recording of past great individuals and events, the ideal historical novel also helps to spawn a recreation of history for new hope in the future. This type of writing can be viewed in close alliance to Nietzsche's "monumental" mode of history in particular, which I now discuss as one of three approaches to history he claims are all equally needed, and of all of which, as I will argue, Rebell makes important use in his historical novel.

3. Le Vergier des Combes's Use of the Antiquarian, Monumental, and Critical Modes of History

As history transformed into anti-democratic art, *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can be considered to combine Nietzsche's historical and unhistorical modes by employing the three practices of history that he develops in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History For Life." The main characters in Rebell's novel each manifests one or ultimately all of these modes of history, namely, the monumental, antiquarian, and critical. According to Nietzsche, "History pertains to living man in three respects: it pertains to him as a being who acts and strives [monumental]; as a being who preserves and reveres [antiquarian]; as a being who suffers and seeks deliverance [critical]" (UDH 67). While the antiquarian mode is consonant to what Nietzsche

considers to be the modern historian's practice which seeks to preserve all that has passed, the critical mode of history acknowledges the past in order to call it into question and to overcome it. Finally, the monumental mode limits the critical by serving as a reconstructive, creative task, which may also be the very task of the historical novelist.

For Nietzsche, if humans use a combination of these practices, which complement and limit each other, without privileging any particular one of them, they will succeed in using history solely as an advantage to present life. If, however, any one of these historical modes prevails over the others, a person or a society will become overwhelmed by history and unable to live a productive life. Although *Le Vergier des Combes* as Rebell's principal character-historian manages to practice all three of Nietzsche's historical modes, he uses one or more of them in excess and as a result, cannot overcome the past.

As an antiquarian, *Le Vergier des Combes* preserves and reveres both his family heritage as well as his own past in his retirement at La Pervençère, which houses sacred artifacts that belonged to his ancestors as well as to his former life under the Second Empire. Charles describes the drawing room where his great-uncle keeps the bust of Jeanne La Flamme sculpted by Carpeaux and a portrait of himself wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, painted by Winterhalter (*La Femme* 28), as "un temple où l'on vient prier" (29). In his great-uncle's bedroom, Charles observes his bedtime custom of staring at the images of the "deux grandes passions de son existence," represented in a photograph, and Jeanne La Flamme, represented in a neighboring full-length portrait, for which he has "un long regard d'amour" (337). In other parts of the house, Charles discovers cherished family heirlooms that are two centuries old: "les chambres sont

encombrées de meubles, d'armes, de vases, de porcelaines, de statuettes. Cependant rien n'y rappelle le musée ni la collection, car on sent que ces objets sont vivants, ont en eux comme la caresse du regard qui les anima, de la main qui vint les apporter. Tous expriment une heure d'amour: nul ne dit le désœuvrement d'un amateur" (29). These heirlooms as living objects for *Le Vergier des Combes* show the extent to which his present life is bounded by the past. Insofar as he worships everything in his house that reminds him of the past in general, he can be considered to be antiquarian. As Nietzsche claims for this type of historian, "everything old and past that enters one's field of vision at all is in the end blandly taken to be equally worthy of reverence" (UDH 74). Since the antiquarian loves all that is past simply for the sake of it having passed, s/he necessarily lacks any appreciation for what is present. Nietzsche explains, "[Antiquarian history]... undervalues that which is becoming because it has no instinct for divining it... Thus it hinders any firm resolve to attempt something new, thus it paralyzes the man of action" (UDH 74).

Yet while *Le Vergier des Combes* rejects present life under the Third Republic in favor of the past, it becomes quickly evident that he is not entirely antiquarian, since he does discern among the things of the past that he reveres and preserves, dedicating himself most to his memories of and his mistress. In addition to the objects modeled after Jeanne La Flamme in the drawing room and her full-length portrait in *Le Vergier's* bedroom, the novel eventually uncovers the mysterious identity of the two swords that he used in his duel for Jeanne hidden behind doors and a full statue of her in a secret locked room that he forbids anyone to enter until he makes love to Henriette there. These objects of the past reveal themselves to be the most important to him.

Rebell's hero also adopts a monumental sense of history through his reverence for Napoleon III's authoritarian regime. If "history," Nietzsche contends, "belongs above all to the man...who needs models, teachers, comforters, but cannot find them among his contemporaries," this man will specifically require monumentalism, which allows for the extraordinary historical individuals and events to reveal lessons for the new age (UDH 67). For Nietzsche, the purpose of the monumental mode is that one learns from history that "the greatness that once existed was in any event *once* possible and may thus be possible again" (UDH 69). Le Vergier des Combes believes that the greatness of Napoleon III's dictatorship is as much a model of historical ages as it is of the present and future. He thus tells Rouillard, "L'oeuvre de Napoléon III incomplète, à demi ruinée" (since his absolute power was brought to an end) "reste pourtant en ce siècle de libéralisme et d'anarchie comme un précieux et fécond exemple, pareille à ces débris de la vieille Rome qui ont conservé dans le rude Moyen Age le souvenir de la beauté et instruit les grands statuaires. Si elle n'avait servi qu'à éveiller le génie du futur César, elle mériterait encore d'être admirée" (335). Le Vergier des Combes's monumentalism is therefore complementary to Alexandre Dorlinière's objections to democratic history.

Besides, the lesson that Le Vergier des Combes draws from the first decade of the Second Empire is no doubt the one that Rebell wishes to impart on his contemporaries, that only an authoritarian power can bring glory as well as peace and stability to France. With *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, Rebell already fulfills his dream, in "La Littérature et l'esprit français," to write an historical work that will offer "une force plus éclairée" to living humanity's intellect or reason. It is thus through Rebell's monumental

perspective of Napoleon III's regime that his novel succeeds in utilizing history as inspiration for the present.

Yet *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* risks incurring too much monumentalism through Le Vergier des Combes's distortion of history. Monumentalism necessarily entails distortions since it overlooks anything in the past that does not produce the effect of hope that the great individuals and events that once existed will reappear in the future. Nietzsche thus explains the disadvantage of the monumental mode: "as long as the past has to be described as worthy of imitation, as imitable and possible a second time, it, of course, incurs the danger of becoming somewhat distorted, beautified and coming close to free poetic invention" (UDH 70). In his effort to present the absolutist Napoleon III as an exemplary leader for the future, Le Vergier des Combes mythologizes the first years of his reign as a paradigm of every great age's expression of absolute power. After a long speech on his admiration of , Le Vergier des Combes concludes, "Tout peut recommencer, le passé des condottieri, comme le passé d'Alexandre, comme le passé de Louis XIV. Ce qui est glorieux, beau, humain, viril ne meurt pas" (326-7). In effect, Le Vergier des Combes sees Napoleon III's establishment of the Second Empire as the reincarnated spirit of absolutism that the Italian mercenary leaders during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Alexander the Great, and Louis XIV all once exemplified and enjoyed. Le Vergier des Combes thus invents for himself a past from which he would like to see all great elements of humanity descend while necessarily ignoring any other version of history. As an excessive monumentalist, Rebell's hero cannot appreciate, as Nietzsche, on the contrary does, that "the dice-game of chance and the future could never again produce anything exactly similar to what is produced in the past" (UDH 70).

Rouillard, however, capable of acknowledging both Napoleon III's strengths and weaknesses, serves as a good monumentalist who tries to widen Le Vergier des Combes's perspective limited to strict admiration for : "J'admire comme vous, Napoléon III... mais puisque nous cherchons aujourd'hui dans son histoire un enseignement, sachons, à côté de sa vertu, reconnaître ses faiblesses" (*La Femme* 327). Rouillard perhaps saves Rebell's historical novel from expressing itself as pure poetic invention of the Second Empire when he seeks to gain a lesson from the past by acknowledging a more complete view of it. His perspective on certainly fulfills Rebell's promise to give his contemporaries "le bénéfice des erreurs et du génie d'un demi-siècle" (66).

But Le Vergier des Combes does not remain restricted to the monumental mode of history. After he learns the truth about Jeanne La Flamme, he adopts critical history by destroying once and for all his dedication to her. For Nietzsche, critical history is needed to "break up and dissolve a part of the past" in order to examine and condemn it (UDH 76). According to Acampora, "Critical history is practiced only in order to purge ourselves of the needs demanded of us by the present" (Acampora diss. 74). These needs are often to eradicate present injustices. Nietzsche gives the example of how the existence of a thing such as a "privilege," a "caste," or a "dynasty" may be unjust to those living in the present and inspire them to consider "how greatly this thing deserves to perish" (UDH 76). For Le Vergier des Combes, this unjust thing is the early retirement from his political career that he was forced to take after his disgrace in front of and his dismissal from the Cabinet. Once he recognizes Jeanne La Flamme as the original instigator of the present injustice he must endure, his love for her turns to hatred. He affirms to Henriette, "Ce n'est pas d'avoir aimé cette femme qui m'afflige le plus. C'est

que l'Empereur me l'ait préférée, et qu'il se soit moqué, à cause d'une pareille misérable, d'un serviteur aussi fidèle, aussi dévoué que je l'étais à sa Dynastie" (*La Femme* 416).

When Le Vergier des Combes realizes that the sacrifice he once believed noble in its aim to protect the honor of 's mistress is in fact meaningless, his entire world crumbles.

While his hatred for 's mistress does not efface his love for , Le Vergier des Combes becomes so swept away by the drive to destroy the object of his present injustice that he can no longer bear his life as he once understood it, before he recognized Jeanne La Flamme as his undoer. Such is the effect of critical history's call to confront and annihilate the part of the past that impedes present life on Rebell's character: instead of delivering him from his suffering, it threatens to overtake him. Nietzsche describes that when critical history impels one to confront an injustice, "then one takes the knife to its roots, then one cruelly tramples over every kind of piety. It is always a dangerous process, especially so for life itself" (UDH 76). In an effort to purge himself of his former memories of Jeanne La Flamme, he destroys the bust modeled after her and covers her full length statue once and for all. Charles reports that his great-uncle's last look at Jeanne's statue definitively allowed him to confront and reject his illusions about her: "Pour la première fois, l'image créée par son esprit s'évanouissait. Il voyait, dans toute son horreur, l'être misérable qui lui avait inspiré une si grande passion. Il n'avait plus de colère, mais une affliction infinie" (*La Femme* 417-18). Even though Le Vergier des Combes succeeds in symbolically rejecting and destroying his past illusions about Jeanne La Flamme by blaspheming his once sacred monuments of her, he turns his critical mode of history against himself, believing his *raison d'être* to also be destroyed. Hence, he tells Henriette immediately after covering the statue, "Autant mourir..."

maintenant que je n'ai plus de beaux souvenirs pour orner ma vieillesse" (418). Critical history can indeed become dangerous to life itself, as Acampora also takes into account: "One of the dangers we face when we practice critical history is that we will be overwhelmed by the process, that we will become intoxicated by our destructive acts, that we will abandon the task of what is valuable in human life" (Acampora diss. 74). But what saves Le Vergier des Combes from finding his present completely worthless or intolerable is Henriette to whom he admits after she makes love to him, "Vous me rendez la joie perdue" (418).

Yet even if Henriette's affection for him enables him to continue to have a will to live, Le Vergier des Combes is not able to overcome his will to condemn what was. Thus overwhelmed by the process of critical history, Le Vergier des Combes's destruction of the past precipitates the destruction of his present. In the end, he can be considered to die of too much history, causing his death by insisting on a duel with count Mosto in which he believes he will take revenge upon one of the attempted killers of Napoleon III. Confined to an obliterated past, Le Vergier des Combes imagines he could avenge himself on a former enemy of the dead Emperor. As Charles reports, although Mosto, "trop insouciant de son honneur et de sa femme" and "trop soigneux de sa vie" to ask Le Vergier des Combes for a duel to repair the scandal he caused by living with his wife, Le Vergier is the one to insist upon it under the pretext that he was the offended one after Mosto appeared at his home (*La Femme* 423). Charles explains the real reason why his great-uncle desired the duel: "Il faut dire que M. Le Vergier ... voyait dans Césaire Mosto un dangereux révolutionnaire et un ennemi personnel de l'Empereur. En se battant avec un homme qui représentait à ses yeux le parti détesté, il satisfaisait sa haine pour ses pires

ennemis” (423-4). Unable to forgive and forget past resentment and obsessed with the need for revenge, Le Vergier des Combes allows the past to kill him when Mosto deals him a fatal injury.

Nietzsche’s description of how too much history can destroy life (in the present) is wholly applicable to the death of Rebell’s hero: “There are people who possess so little of this power [to forget] that they can perish from a single experience, from a single painful event, often from a single piece of injustice” (UDH 62). As proof that he never recovered from the first duel that caused his disgrace, Le Vergier des Combes, taking advantage of his last bit of strength on his deathbed, asks his sister to bring to him the portrait of Jeanne La Flamme, which he then violently destroys (427). His last words are: “Emperor! Emperor!” which Charles believes he uttered since, “à ce moment suprême, il avait besoin, pour soutenir son courage, de se rappeler l’amour réel, la pensée souveraine de sa vie” (430). Although Le Vergier’s last action and words signal his will to live in spite of his resentment, it suggests that he can *only* live in resentment of Jeanne and in praise of , his love of whom alone lent meaning to his life. In short, Le Vergier’s last moments indicate that he could no longer live in the present at all, but rather entirely in the past. Whether or not he hoped to finally compensate for his meaningless duel fought for Jeanne La Flamme by fighting with a former enemy of the Second Empire, this second duel is ironically no less futile in helping him to win back honor that has long been obsolete or to find personal satisfaction in his own life.

4. The Suprahistorical and Unhistorical in *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*

Le Vergier des Combes’s death is perhaps especially tragic since he was unable to learn the most important lesson that Henriette, as the novel’s Nietzschean suprahistorian,

tries to teach him, the lesson of overcoming history. In “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” Nietzsche calls “the antidote to the historical,” both the “unhistorical,” or the “power to forget and to enclose oneself in a bounded horizon” and the “suprahistorical” (120). The latter term can be thought of as just the right combination of the historical and unhistorical senses, and is therefore consistent with the proper widening of perspective needed to gain knowledge and a new meaning of life in the present. According to Nietzsche, from the “suprahistorical” vantage point, one is “cured forever of taking history too seriously, for [one] would have learned from all men and all experiences... to answer [one’s] own question as to how or to what end life is lived” (UDH 65). The suprahistorical person, unlike the historical one, sees each moment as an end in itself. Nietzsche thus explains the difference between the suprahistorical “man” and the historical: if asked whether each would want to relive the past, the suprahistorical man says no because he “sees no salvation in the process and for whom, rather, the world is complete and reaches its finality at every moment,” whereas the historical man says no, but because “looking back to the past impels him toward the future” since he believes in “progress” (UDH 65). For the suprahistorical man, the future has nothing to offer as “progress” or as a lesson because each moment already lived was exactly as it should be. The suprahistorian therefore has the power to bound him or herself as the unhistorical man does, that is, entirely within the present (UDH 61).

Henriette’s perspective on her own past is suprahistorical. Remembering the past does not make her unhappy or regretful as it does Le Vergier des Combes. After recalling many painful memories such as Jeanne La Flamme’s smile at her as de Sourdis dies, Jeanne triumphantly accompanying Thiers after the fall of the Commune, and her

failed attempt to kill her, “Henriette s’arrêta de parler et son visage, un instant troublé, recouvra sa douceur et sa grâce. Elle semblait déjà loin des orages qu’elle évoquait. Les pleurs qu’elle avait répandus n’étaient qu’une rosée d’aube qui avive et attendrit; au milieu de tous ses souvenirs, elle souriait à de nouveaux espoirs” (*La Femme* 413).

Henriette thus shows that she is not simply unhistorical, since she is able to remember everything that happened to her, both the good and the bad, but also that she is not simply historical, since she has the power to recall the past while feeling relieved from being a part of it, acknowledging and taking ultimate satisfaction in the present moment.

Although she may not offer an answer as to what end life is lived, she refrains from taking history too seriously, especially what was most painful to her. She is therefore able to make still new relationships after Le Vergier des Combes dies, getting remarried to Giboteau, giving up her inheritance from Le Vergier, and even reconciling with Mosto.

Henriette tries to impart her suprahistorical way of living to Le Vergier des Combes in an effort to help him to come to terms with his own lived experiences and to welcome the present. When Le Vergier des Combes, angry and sobbing, destroys the bust of Jeanne, Henriette knows that the physical destruction of his memory bound in the marble is completely futile in helping him to truly release his anger towards the past. She tells him,

A quoi bon vous acharner contre une image, et maudire un être qui ne peut plus rien en bien ni en mal dans le trou de terre où il repose? Moi aussi, je l’ai détestée, cette femme! Elle m’a causé plus de mal encore qu’à vous; elle m’a pris, elle m’a tué l’homme que j’ai le plus aimé dans mon existence. Je l’aurais assassinée.... Maintenant qu’elle est morte, je ne

pense plus à elle. Que voulez-vous faire à une morte? (416-17)

Henriette's suprahistorical message to Le Vergier des Combes is clear: the past should stay buried in the past. Believing that each lived moment is an end in itself does not necessarily imply one's happiness or satisfaction with all that was but rather, as Henriette suggests, the realization that one lacks the power to undo what was done. Yet this realization must not bring, as it does for Le Vergier, anger and ill-will towards the past. Instead, it should unfold, as it does for Henriette, an active willingness to confront the past but also to release it by ultimately forgetting it. Only in this way, can one truly overcome the past.⁶³ When Le Vergier tells her that he may as well die from his unhappy memories, Henriette reminds him that he has "amitiés réelles" in the present, and offers him the ultimate lesson from her suprahistorical vantage point: "Il faut aimer le présent et ne plus regarder en arrière" (418). Unfortunately, however, Le Vergier des Combes does not take her advice, since he can never forget his former enemies. He thus shows himself incapable of embracing the unhistorical power.

Like Le Vergier des Combes, other characters remain unhappily stuck in the past while those who, like Henriette, are able to overcome it through a triumphant affirmation of the present, are consistent with Nietzsche's ideal historian who employs history only to live life more fully. Rebell therefore succeeds in maintaining history as multiple perspective in his novel and especially in the dénouement where he entertains a contrast between the historical and unhistorical characters.

Two individuals who remain confined to the past by regrets and have difficulty overcoming them are Hélène and Rachel. After she insists on leaving Le Vergier des Combes to reconcile with her husband, Hélène returns much later to La Pervençère

when Le Vergier des Combes is dead. Accompanied by her daughter and her procuress, she sobs, “Je songe qu’ici j’aurais pu être heureuse si je l’avais voulu” (443). In this last image of Héléne, she appears to be a victim of the past, unhappy at being unable to undo her choices and to change her present since she finds herself once again, abandoned by her husband.

Rachel, too, remains historical in the Nietzschean sense. When her uncle dies, she, like him, still expresses regret at what his life might have been had the Second Empire never fallen: “Si l’Empire avait duré... mon oncle fût devenu l’une des gloires de la France” (431). Ironically, for her, however, is that another regret supercedes this one: she is later much more upset than she is for her uncle’s failed career when she learns that he has made Henriette sole beneficiary to his fortune. In an attempt to accept the present terms, Rachel suggests to Victor that he marry Henriette; but when he learns that she is already remarried, Rachel is disappointed. When she sees that her son doesn’t share her regret from this failure to win back the inheritance, she tells him, “je ne comprends vraiment pas ton insouciance, quand il s’agit d’une chose aussi sérieuse que ton avenir” (441). Similar to Nietzsche’s historical man who believes that the past has a direct impact on the future, Rachel worries that because her family was not made part of Le Vergier’s will, she and Victor will necessarily have a financially insecure future.

In contrast to Rachel, Victor is probably the most unhistorical of Rebell’s characters. After realizing that he can’t marry Henriette, after discovering that Rouillard cheated both Henriette and him out of Le Vergier’s inheritance, after he meets Virginie Chômél by chance on his way home from Henriette’s and realizes that he cannot marry her either, because she has become the mistress of another wealthy nobleman, he is not

depressed or angry. Instead, he convinces Virginie to have sex with him before going to her master. In conclusion, according to Charles, Victor realizes that he has no other purpose than to simply live life every moment: “Victor était de la race de ces bons satyres, race à peu près éteinte aujourd’hui, que l’odeur des bois, un rayon de soleil dans la rosée, un baiser pris à l’ombre, la fraîcheur d’une pêche et d’un raisin suffisent à rendre heureux. Il ne voyait pas d’autre but à la vie que de vivre” (441). In response to his mother scolding him for not thinking of his future, he tells her, “songer toujours à son avenir, n’est-ce pas travailler à bâtir son tombeau? J’aime mieux ma chair que mes cendres” (441). Of all the characters, Victor is most able to live entirely in the present. Consistent with his nature of a Heraclitan child, he understands the world only as “play [i.e., agon], play as artists and children engage in it, [which] exhibits coming-to-be and passing away ... with no moral additive” (PTA 62).

Finally, Rouillard and Mosto exhibit a similar unhistorical mode to Victor’s. Rouillard, for instance, fits Nietzsche’s description of those who completely overcome the past by their inability to feel any sense of guilt or regret. Contrary to those who lack so much the power to forget, “there are those who are so little affected by the worst and most dreadful disasters, and even by their own wicked acts, that they are able to feel tolerably well and be in possession of a clear conscience even in the midst of them or at any rate soon afterwards” (UDH 62). Such explains Rouillard’s delight in his extortion of Henriette’s inheritance. Similarly, once Mosto inherits Du Tremblay’s money by reconciling with his wife, Victor learns that he once again left her to serve as a personal tour guide for his ex-mistress, Henriette, and her groom on their honeymoon in Italy (437). Former resentment aside, Henriette is able to befriend the man who conspired

against , and Mosto offers his service to the woman who scorned him. Rebell's unhistorical characters not only triumph over the past, but are able to rejoice in their present. Their different fates serve as striking comical contrasts to those of Le Vergier des Combes, his girlfriend, and niece who stubbornly chose regret and anger towards the past over new hope for the future. In effect, the unhistorical characters save Rebell's novel from having a tragic dénouement for which those who are unable to realize their aspirations would have been responsible. Although Le Vergier des Combes ends life as a failure, unable to find happiness, Rebell does not end his novel there. Instead, he writes about Victor's failure, which can be thought of as an inverse parallel to his great-uncle's since Victor, despite and in spite of being unable to find either a wife or stable employment, finds joy, a joy which is moreover compatible with that of Nietzsche's "higher men" whom Zarathustra advises: "Learn how to laugh at yourselves as one must laugh," especially when one fails at life (Z IV: "On the Higher Man" 15). Rebell of course, encourages this laughter at life in the other, more successful characters. His novel thus ends as a victory over the tragic elements in life.

But most significantly, the novel ends as a victory of youth over old age with its regrets, and, over death, with the last paragraph centered on the image of the youngest narrator, Agathe who has accompanied her mother on her return to La Pervençère and whose presence once again summons the spontaneity of narration and of life itself. In the "Epilogue," Charles recalls that on a late September day, less than a year after his uncle's death, "j'aperçus deux femmes et une petite fille, vêtues de noir," or, who turn out to be Hélène, her procuress, and her daughter visiting the remnants of La Pervençère:

Les charmilles, tous ces réduits de fraîche verdure qui formaient le jardin de M. Le Vergier des Combes avaient disparu, ainsi que la maison enfouie sous les glycines.... Seul, un vieux châtaignier dépouillé, déjà marqué pour être abattu, et sous lequel mon oncle venait s’asseoir, tendait vers le ciel ses branches grises et tordues. Les yeux de l’une des dames allaient du châtaignier au petit perron, unique débris de l’ancienne villa” (*La Femme* 443).

Charles soon after recognizes the woman who starts to cry while regretting her decision to leave this place is Hélène with Agathe (443). Yet Charles does not close his narrative with this scene, which evokes death and decay through the image of the women dressed for mourning and one lamenting over her past while staring at a ruined and nearly deserted landscape toward the end of a seasonal cycle. He closes it rather by concentrating on Agathe, who “ennuyée de rester au même endroit, tirait sa mère par sa robe pour que l’on continuât la promenade” (443). By prodding her mother to leave this area of a regretted past for good, Agathe, like the Nietzschean child who represents “forgetting,” “a new beginning” and “a first movement” (Z I: “On the Metamorphoses”) literally enables her mother to move on, and, moreover, enables Charles to end his narrative with a new beginning: “Brusquement [Hélène] détournait ses yeux rouges, brillants de larmes, et je vis les deux femmes s’éloigner en silence, la tête baissée vers le sol, tandis que la petite Agathe courait, sautait, s’arrêtait, donnait de grands coups de pied dans les tas de feuilles mortes qui bordaient le chemin” (443). This last image of the child wandering aimlessly over dead leaves, over a buried past, suggests that where Le Vergier’s life ends, another story may begin. Agathe’s walk, which Charles describes

with a series of verbs, emphasizes the action of which youth alone is capable. This action, which can be likened to the spontaneous, self-perpetuating game that the Hericlitian child plays, knowing how to continually create after destroying, is the very process of narration. By concluding his novel with Agathe's movement, Rebell ensures that this process, which uses recollection and forgetting, is forever open.

Lastly, the mixture of the historical and unhistorical modes in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* reflects Rebell's own inner agon that propels him at once towards the past and away from it. As I concluded in Part I, Rebell's rebellion against his society depends as much upon destroying a part of history (i.e. postrevolutionary) as upon restoring another part of it (i.e. that of the Old Regime). While Le Vergier des Combes's monumentalism is reflective of Rebell's own monumental approach to history that underlies his hope for the future as a return to France's greatest absolute rulers, Henriette Glyn's suprahistory may well be reflective of Rebell's desire to overcome history, even and especially its most painful moments. For instance, although Rebell cursed both the old aristocracy for willingly giving up its status and privileges as well as the end of the Bourbon Restoration, he also welcomed the reign of the Bonapartes and the emergence of the new financial nobility. He was moreover even able to commiserate with some of his family's political adversaries, the Communards. Worthy of Nietzsche's use of history for life, as well as of Nietzsche's call to value one's enemies as a challenge to one's own development, *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* can be seen as the formation of Rebell's ideal historical work outlined in the Preface to "La Littérature et l'esprit français": "Puisse le grand amour que je ressens pour le génie, pour les lettres et la langue de mon pays, que j'aime même chez mes adversaires, me soutenir dans cette tâche et me

faire accomplir une oeuvre utile à la pensée et à la vie des hommes de ce temps” (66; my emphasis).

Conclusion to Part II

Rebell's novel indeed offers a multiple perspective on perspectivism. Through the use of what was contemporary 19th-century French history to Rebell, he contends with and against the concept of the agon as a possible force within the political arena and also presents a possible practice of history as multiple perspective. Through the development of various and unique character personalities, Rebell captures the essence of and questions the possibility of the exemplary Nietzschean perspectivist who actively struggles to maintain inner tensions while controlling them. Through dialogue as contention between conflicting characters and through the hermeneutics of character identity explored in the dynamic relationship between narrator and narratee characters, Rebell attempts to show that truth is perspectival and its attainment is never quite achieved, but is rather open to new contests among endlessly competing interpretations. Through his recreation of an open, dialogic narrative, Rebell contributes an important novel to the French literary tradition as well as an advance in narratorial perspectivism. Yet even if the novelist is a superior perspectivist to the man of political conviction, Rebell shows the greatest capacity for perspectivism within himself precisely when he challenges his politics by allowing his characters to appreciate the opposite perspectives.

Moreover, *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* in fact deserves a special place in the transformation of the French novel as a genre at the turn of the 19th-Century that many past studies have not taken into account. In particular, although Michel Raimond's *La Crise du roman* (1966) examines the transition of the French novel from the 19th- to the 20th-Centuries, noting for example from about 1891 through the years preceding the First World War: "De toutes les enquêtes, de tous les articles [concerning the status of the

novel as a genre], une chose ressort: l'absence d'école maîtresse. La crise procédait d'une surabondance non seulement de romans et de romanciers, mais encore de directions dans lesquelles on les voyait s'engager," (51), he mentions Rebell's *oeuvre* only in passing as one of the numerous examples during the period of the "extraordinaire confusion intellectuelle," which he claims evolved from *décadentisme* to literary nationalism (52). Raimond never attributes the significant role that Rebell played in the development of the 20th-century novel. Yet Rebell did indeed have a serious vision in mind for the future of the genre, as he indicates in *La Littérature contemporaine* (1905), a major literary survey which Georges Le Cardonnell and Charles Vellay conducted, asking fin-de-siècle novelists the following questions: "Quelle est, selon vous, la tendance dominante du roman actuel? Croyez-vous à la décadence du genre, ou ne pensez-vous pas qu'il évolue vers une transformation?" (Préface 2). In his response, Rebell claims, "Le roman est bien loin d'être en décadence. On pourrait même dire que c'est un genre à naître. Au XVI^e siècle, on faisait déjà des tragédies, mais c'est au XVII^e siècle que la tragédie est née. Le roman, à notre époque, est dans l'état de la tragédie au XVI^e siècle" (Le Cardonnell and Vellay 106).

I argue that *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* in particular, may well have helped to give birth to some 20th-century novels, such as those of Gide⁶⁴ or even of Proust. For instance, Rebell's novel anticipates the narrative among multiple, unresolvable viewpoints among the many narrator- and narratee- characters, such as one finds in Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (1925). In regard to "le progrès de Gide vers le grand roman" in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, Raimond writes: "Gide veut dépasser le récit, fondé sur un épisode, en faveur d'un roman à multiples personnages et à nombreux événements;

mais au lieu de présenter... le foisonnement d'épisodes dans l'éclairage unique d'un récit impersonnel, il entend organiser son histoire autour de plusieurs foyers. A la multiplicité des objets considérés s'ajoute la multiplicité des points de vue" (Raimond 343). The dialogism that I have explored in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* is certainly at work in Gide's novel, where truth develops an intersubjective dynamic, solely dependent on the multiple perspectives of characters that perpetually alter and challenge it. Further, Rebell's novel can be considered to make an important literary contribution toward an open work, such as Gide's, that calls for collaboration with its readers, who are invited to create their own perspective on characters and events. As Raimond explains Gide's active engagement with his readers in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, "L'optique gidienne n'est plus celle de l'exposé discursif: c'est celle du puzzle: au lecteur, et c'est pourquoi dès lors on sollicite sa collaboration, de réunir les morceaux et de reconstituer, s'il le veut, telle ou telle histoire, dans sa suite logique et chronologique" (Raimond 356). In addition, the Rebellian plural-self characters anticipate those in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, such as, to name only two, Charlus or Odette, whose psychological complexity stems from their development as composites of multiple competing and even opposing selves.

But *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* merits distinction not only within the history of the French narrative, but also from the *romans nietzschéens* at the turn to the 20th Century, middle-class literature that proclaimed to adopt Nietzschean thought as a result of its vulgarization,⁶⁵ a phenomenon that, as one must recall, Rebell deplored as "le nietzschisme" in *Le Culte des idoles*. As Luc Tirenne acknowledges,

Contrairement à l'attente de Rebell, Nietzsche est devenu 'populaire' à l'extrême fin du siècle et, en 1904, le philosophe Gustave Belot peut

qualifier Nietzsche d' 'immoraliste à la mode'. Cette philosophie aristocratique est devenue mondaine. Un nietzschéisme vulgaire, qui vante un individualisme féroce et sans scrupules, un appétit grossier de domination, se diffuse dans le roman, par exemple dans les romans de la comtesse de Noailles. (Tirenne 60)

Perhaps better termed *romans nietzschistes* by Rebell's standards, one such work by Anna de Noailles, *La Nouvelle espérance* (1904), reputedly often quotes Nietzsche out of context to fit the author's purposes. For instance, according to Verbaere's dissertation, Noailles's main character, a young woman of the world uses a quotation from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to affirm her own authority and independence from the norms of traditional society (Verbaere 450). In another such novel that Verbaere cites, Paul Adam's *Le Serpent noir* (1905), which was adapted into a popular stage-play, *Les Mouettes*, the hero, Chambalot was popularly identified as an *Übermensch* (Verbaere 450). In contrast, Rebell's *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, which pretends neither to make allusion to Nietzsche nor to illustrate any aspect of his philosophy but which instead, as I have shown, can be analyzed through the use of Nietzschean perspectivism as a tool to properly appreciate the development of the characters and narrative structures, belongs outside and above the other novels of the period either professing influence from Nietzsche or soliciting interpretations of such an influence that is at best doubtful.

One notable exception among the *romans nietzschéens* that is considered to have made a serious attempt at an intellectual appropriation of Nietzschean philosophy is Gide's *L'Immoraliste* (1902), which Christopher Forth claims "directly borrowed a term used by the philosopher which had by the turn of the century become virtually

synonymous with a certain school of thought” (Forth 139). The Nietzschean “immoralist” transformed by French intellectuals like Gide, Forth explains, cultivated “the image of the unjustly ignored writer—the *artiste maudit*” against “the commercial corruption of both art and Nietzsche in the marketplace” (Forth 139). But even though Rebell, like his friend Gide, associated Nietzsche with an intellectual elite diametrically opposed to democratic art, Rebell’s *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, as well as his last novel, *Le Diable est à table*, which I showed in Part I appears at least partly inspired by Nietzsche’s discourse on the Jews, (re)evaluates Nietzschean thought without professing to adopt so-called Nietzschean terms, themes, or affirmations.

By thus offering fiction that does not claim its very certain inspiration from Nietzsche, Rebell proves himself to be a perfect Zarathustran novelist, finding his own way, his own literature, unique among French writers and Nietzschean enthusiasts alike, all the while uncovering his literary appropriation of him.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all narratological vocabulary I use comes from Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology*.

² Since perspectivism implies agonism, I'll most often simply use the word "perspectivism" instead of the terms "agono-perspectivism" or "agonistic perspectivism".

³ For instance, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche boasts of having achieved such a controlled organization of perspectives within himself, having the "know-how" "to reverse perspectives" at will, such as those of sickness and health (EH I: 1).

⁴ I will henceforth refer to this first type of individual Nietzsche calls healthy in WP 788 as his "first healthy type."

⁵ I will refer to the third type of individual in WP 778 as Nietzsche's "second healthy type".

⁶ Perhaps the following example I have created will help to give a plausible psychological account of a drive as master, especially when it entails a self that is "eccentric and skewed" to that drive or complex of them. I love candy but I also want to lose weight. My desire to resist candy becomes master over my joy of eating it. Note, however, that my love of sweetmeats is not cancelled out or diminished but is simply outvoted by my opposite passion to lose weight. After I lose weight, however, I may sometimes indulge. Thus, in this case, my desire to control my weight, which is still greater does not outvote my passion to eat candy. The degree to which the lesser drives serve the dominant one at the risk of becoming annulled therefore varies.

⁷ In Chapter 2, I will discuss how Du Tremblay's military ambition prevents him from adopting other perspectives.

⁸ In Chapter 2, I will develop a more in-depth analysis of H el ene's multiple self-contradictions.

⁹ Although Jeanne La Flamme exists purely as a focalized, a character created by other characters, and is therefore never able to defend her perspective vis- a-vis the diegetic characters who appear "in person" at La Perven ch ere, an analysis of her perspective via Henriette's narrative/ perspective provides nevertheless a particularly interesting case of Nietzsche's second healthy type.

¹⁰ In Chapter 2, I will discuss how Rouillard might, at least to a certain extent, appreciate himself as a "battleground" of master morality and slave morality, as Nietzsche's suggests is the mark of the "higher type" (GM I:16). Of Rebell's characters exemplifying the second healthy type, Rouillard suggests the greatest capacity for cultivating a contest between his self-contradictions.

¹¹ Zarathustra's advice to the warrior supports my claim about Nietzschean peace: "You should love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long" (Z I:10).

¹² For instance, although Nietzsche affirms that "man has cultivated an abundance of contrary drives and impulses within himself" and that, "thanks to this synthesis, he is master of the earth," he warns that man "should not perish through contradictions" since "moralities are the expression of locally limited orders of rank" in the field of drives (WP 966). In this passage, Nietzsche advocates once again an organizationist self to keep its contradictions in check.

¹³ I discuss the liberal opposition to Napoleon III's regime in Chapter 3 of Part II.

¹⁴ In 1849, Louis Napoleon broke the Second Republic's Constitution by sending troops to drive Mazzini and his revolutionaries out of Rome, in the effort of restoring the Pope to the throne and of winning the

support of French Catholics (Bierman 82). After coming to an understanding with Mazzini's revolutionaries, who attempted on his life in 1858 for revenge of his meddling in their quest for the unification of Italy, Napoleon III promised to help their cause, a promise he kept when he sent the French army into Piedmont-Sardinia later that year to help King Victor Emmanuel to annex Lombardy and Venetia from the Austrians (Bierman 185). Napoleon was thus conflicted during his reign to please both devout French Catholics and supporters of Italian unification.

¹⁵ According to Bierman, it was this ability that Louis Napoleon demonstrated with his successful coup, appearing "to the workers, [as] the man to have socialist sympathies, who had locked up the hated Cavaignac and Changarnier . . . to the well-to-do, [as] the man who had crushed the Reds, preserved property and maintained public order; to the devout, [as] the man who would . . . defend the family and the Pope" (Bierman 185).

¹⁶ What I mean by "general dialogue" includes both "narratized" and "non-narratized" discourse. According to Prince, "narratized discourse" is "A type of discourse whereby a character's utterances or verbal thoughts are represented, in words that are the narrator's, as acts among other acts; a discourse about words uttered (or thoughts) equivalent to a discourse not about words. For example, should a character have said at one point, 'Well! that's settled then! I'll meet you at the station!,' narratized discourse might render it as "She made an appointment to meet her" (Prince 54). Thus, I term "non-narratized" discourse to mean that which does not involve a narration. In this chapter of Part II, I focus on interaction between characters sharing stories with each other as well as simply discussing viewpoints (which would be non-narratized dialogue).

¹⁷ For the interested reader, Michael Hart's "'Many Planes of Narrative': A Comparative Perspective on Sterne and Joyce" (1994), which specifically analyzes Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (completed in 1769), appreciates Tristram's search for identity through the narratives of other characters who ultimately teach him about himself. Similar to Sterne's construction of character identity based on multiple character perspectives is Le Vergier des Combes's: only by listening to the stories that his neighbors relate to him about their lives during the Second Empire (the most important of which, is Henriette's), is Rebell's hero able to discover the truth about himself from the past.

¹⁸ I refer the reader to Anne De Sola's "Ecriture neuve d'une structure ancienne: *Les Illustres Françaises* de Robert Challe" (1995), which explores the originality of Challe's narratorial structure. In particular, Challe's work consists of eight unities: with the exception of the first unity, which serves to introduce the frame narrative, the seven others, preceded by a title, "Histoire de . . . et de . . ." consist of a narrator telling a story followed by a general commentary of the narratees, one of whom is then inspired to narrate his/her own story. This rotation of orators allows the novel to resemble, according to De Sola, "un dialogue (oral) interne" (De Sola 339), which I argue underscores the relationships among the second-degree narrators in Rebell's work.

¹⁹ Notice that Michèle Weil-Bourgougnoux makes a distinction between "polyphony" and "dialogism," whereas Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology* takes them to be synonyms. The former's distinction helps to emphasize that truth is never a priori or fixed but constantly challenged in Challe's and in Rebell's works.

²⁰ While I'm not claiming that Rebell's narrative necessarily uses equivalent terms for both *erheben* and *herabdriken*, I argue that the concepts behind these words are at work among Rebell's characters.

²¹ Notice the particular resemblance in the use of irony to attack Christian dogmatism between Rebell's mockery of the general who refuses to eat chicken on Friday while his clergymen accept it and Voltaire's satire on the Inquisition when two Jews are burned during the *auto-da-fé* simply because they refused to eat bacon in chapter 6 of *Candide*. Rebell's skill as an ironist of Christianity thus follows from the tradition of Voltaire, the satirist of the Church.

²² According to Herbert Ingram Priestly's *France Overseas* (1938), in an attempt to spread French influence in the Mediterranean as well as to gather support from French Catholics, Napoleon III sent

80,000 French troops into Syria from 1859-61 in order to defend the Christian Maronites from being massacred by the Muslim Druses, at the instigation of Turkey (87).

²³ The language that Victor, Rouillard and Du Tremblay use to describe the people in Syria and Turkey in these passages is marked by disdain no doubt reflective of the élitist author's own attitude regarding foreigners.

²⁴ Rouillard admits in regard to the identity of those whom he saw being tortured, "Maronites or Druses, I don't know" (*La Femme* 154).

²⁵ I take "author's intrusion" in the first sense that Prince designates: "an intervention by the narrator in the form of a comment of the situations and events presented" (Prince 9).

²⁶ One must remember that Charles is present too. Thus, the young teen could have been physically able to save Henriette.

²⁷ The "narrative contract" is "the agreement between the narrator and the narratee, the teller and his or her audience, underlying the very existence of the narrative and affecting its very shape" (Prince 61).

²⁸ I take "distance" here in the second sense that Prince establishes it: "The metaphorical space between narrators, characters, situations and events narrated and narratees," which can be classified, for example, as "intellectual," "moral," or "emotional" (Prince 22).

²⁹ It is important to keep in mind, however, that a perspective, unlike a spatial viewpoint of an object, does not presuppose that the object in question has some knowledge-in-itself, independent of the views of it, to be uncovered.

³⁰ See Prince's definitions of "focalization" (Prince 31), "point of view" (73) and "vision" (102).

³¹ According to Cormier's analysis of truth in *Les Illustres Françaises*, "Il n'existe pas de vérité indépendante des acteurs impliqués dans une intrigue [in any one of the seven stories]; *ognuno la sua verità*, à chacun sa vérité, intuition étonnante de la part d'un écrivain des années 1700" (Cormier 34). But I argue that truth is not reducible to this sort of moral relativism in Rebell's novel; instead, it allows for "degrees" within the "subjective" to be ascertained through an agonistic interaction of character perspectives.

³² Virginie Chômél's work as a *lingère*, or most approximatively in English, a *linen-maid*, which included the responsibility of repairing, changing and maintaining the linen for Le Vergier's entire house, would allow her regular access to the home of her lover.

³³ I borrow this term from Roland Barthes's *S/Z* (1970) defined as "l'ensemble des unités qui ont pour fonction d'articuler, de diverses manières, une question, sa réponse, et les accidents variés qui peuvent ou préparer la question ou retarder la réponse ; ou encore : de formuler une énigme et d'amener son déchiffrement" (21).

³⁴ This complex embedding of narratives is also inherent in Balzac's *Conte drolatiques*, in which a series of extra-diegetic narrators take responsibility for transcribing narratives of which they were narratees.

³⁵ The French "Agathe" is a derivative of the original Greek "Agatha." The masculine form of the Greek name, "Agathon," is also an essential concept to Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Every art and every inquiry, and likewise every action and choice, seems to aim at some good [*agathon*], and hence it has been beautifully said that the good is that at which all things aim" (Book I 1094a). That Rebell should allow the character whose name attests to her goodness to be responsible for bringing about an ending to the drama at La Pervençère, is in harmony with both the purposes of art (in this case his writing) and of inquiry (or the

hermeneutic of Le Vergier's love life which is most approximately answered, thanks to Agathe's testimony).

³⁶ I elaborate on the significance of "forgetting" for Nietzsche in Chapter 4.

³⁷ In this chapter, I use Prince's term "author's intrusion" in the second sense he designates as the "real author's" self-expression and not the narrator's intervention (Prince 9). By studying passages in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* that are evident expressions of Rebell's own politics, I can pinpoint how Rebell inhabits just one perspective and not a multiplicity of them as the author.

³⁸ The word "duration" throughout this passage has been used to translate the German "*Dauer*," meaning "permanence, constance, longevity, continuance" as well as "duration".

³⁹ Recall from Part I that Rebell attacked the Third Republic for being politically very unstable. According to Raymond Recouly, the Chamber of deputies was dominated by divisions and lack of cohesion between parties and groups: "As soon as a majority is lacking on which the government depended, a ministerial crisis supervenes and a new combination is formed. But as similar causes produce exactly the same results, the new combination has no greater consistency or length of duration than its predecessors" (Recouly 82). Thus a period of continual ministerial changes made it impossible for either the minister or the President to count on a solid, lasting majority. Recouly notes that, on average, a ministry lasted eight months and that most governments under the Third Republic contained six or seven ministers (Recouly 83).

⁴⁰ Here Nietzsche uses the adjective "stabilen" meaning "steady, solid, sturdy, robust." Notice that for Nietzsche, the "stable elements" in the community are not threatened, but on the contrary, are effectively preserved by the inoculatory effects within the community.

⁴¹ According to Jordan Dieterich and Janet Lungstrum's note in their translation of "Homer's Contest" in *Agonistics: Arenas of Creative Contest* (1997), the version I am using, "*ostrakismos*," was a collective Athenian policy first introduced c.487 B.C.E. and was a "method of banning an unpopular prominent citizen for a ten-year period, after which he could return with no loss to his property, status or citizenship" and used as "an effective way of getting rid of political opponents" (45). But Nietzsche uses a later meaning of ostracism in which the most valued citizen was ostracized to prevent the emergence of an unbeatable best (Dieterich and Lungstrum 45).

⁴² Nietzsche thus seems to oppose coups d'état because, by allowing one political leader to take charge, the contest for political authority is necessarily brought to an end. This passage provides an interesting contrast to Rebell's approval of Napoleon III's coup d'état, which made the latter's power definitive.

⁴³ While Nietzsche's agon as an oligarchy of geniuses is compatible with his radical aristocratism since it prevents the rule of the mediocre by allowing only a few talented types to participate, as Hatab's *Nietzschean Defense of Democracy* acknowledges, it can equally be considered in terms of postmodern democracy (Hatab 62).

⁴⁴ I will fully identify who the Second Empire's liberals were and why they particularly represented Rebell's political enemies in the next subsection of Chapter 3.

⁴⁵ According to Bierman, in the elections held for the 750 seats of the new Assembly of the Second Republic in May 1849, royalists of both legitimist and Orléanist factions warring over the type of monarchy that should be restored to France won an overwhelming majority but they allied themselves against the 200 seats won by the *Montagnards* (republican radicals and socialists) who threatened Red Revolution (Bierman 80). Louis-Napoleon eventually decided on his coup, not only to crush the "Red Menace" but also after he realized that the conservatives, who restricted the franchise in 1850, were hoping to win a big enough majority to replace him in May 1852 when his constitutionally unrenovable office would expire (Bierman 84).

⁴⁶ Hatab gives examples of agonistic practices in politics including and not exclusive to, democratic features, such as “local debates”, “legislative disputations,” “election campaigns” and “judicial arguments” (Hatab 88).

⁴⁷ See Plessis 200.

⁴⁸ Ibid 30.

⁴⁹ It is very probable that a *conseiller d'état* like Le Vergier des Combes would deplore the November 1860 decree as the beginning of the end, not of the empire, but of his own privileged status vis-à-vis . If Rodange's claim is indeed true that Le Vergier des Combes represents Rebell's great-uncle, the aristocrat Anselme Fleury de Quiry, who served as a deputy in the *Corps législatif*, I argue that it is no accident that Rebell made his character, not a member of Napoleon III's government elected by the people, but one elected by himself. Rebell's choice of status for his character is certainly more in accordance with his ideal government representative, a privileged aristocrat.

⁵⁰ Plessis 219.

⁵¹ For instance, Rouillard affirms that in 1860, “[Napoleon III] n'était plus ... l'homme qui avait fondé l'Empire.... Epuisé par le grand effort passé, vieilli, malade, il aima mieux conspirer avec ses adversaires que les combattre” (*La Femme* 330).

⁵² Notice Rebell's anachronism, since Henriette's story of knowing doesn't begin until 1860 even though the historical Emperor was willing to pardon Felice Orsini for his plot on his life in 1858. Rebell thus overemphasizes Napoleon III's loss of dictatorial will after he begins to make concessions to the liberals.

⁵³ Bierman does not give the source or date of this quotation.

⁵⁴ According to Plessis, in the legislative elections of 1869, the opposition gained 1.3 million votes, the largest ever since the beginning of the Second Empire; but, of the 270 seats in the Legislative Body, only 25 were gained by irreconcilable Republicans at the extreme left, while the majority was a center, composed of “libéraux dynastiques” and “libéraux d'opposition,” “hostiles au régime autoritaire mais disposés à se rallier finalement si l'Empire se rapproche du parlementarisme” (Plessis 218). Moreover, Napoleon III famously bragged, “J'ai retrouvé mon chiffre,” after an overwhelming majority of the French people voted in favor of his second referendum supporting a liberal empire on May 8, 1870 (Plessis 224).

⁵⁵ “Ollivier's paramount aim was liberty, and since he could not establish it by revolution, he saw that he must accept the existing regime... he had personally preferred a republic, but, if the empire granted liberty... there was no reason why he should insist on the outward form” (Zeldin 122). He therefore accepted the decree of November 1860 as a first step toward the liberty he desired. He founded thereafter a new liberal party in which he sought, as Zeldin claims, “the end of absolute power and the return to the representative system—i.e. the system founded on free elections and an independent press” (Zeldin 123).

⁵⁶ See Bury and Tombs 194

⁵⁷ In “Les Patricides glorifiés” (1901), Rebell writes, “[Thiers] voulait bien être le sauveur [de la nation], mais lorsqu'il n'y a plus rien à sauver. M. Thiers a été comme le modèle de tous nos républicains au pouvoir. Ils ont été les pilliers d'épaves du grand naufrage qu'ils avaient préparé” (*Chroniques* 105).

⁵⁸ According to Rodange, since Rebell was only ten years old when Thiers died in 1877, it was his family that inculcated in him this hateful and distorted view of Adolphe Thiers because they felt betrayed by the Orléanist who increasingly came to accept the Third Republic, not as a temporary solution to an eventual restoration but as a lasting government (TR diss. 268).

⁵⁹ Such was Rebell's conflict in approving of post-revolutionary nobility in the *Union*, despite his admiration for the *ancienne noblesse*, which I already discussed in Part I.

⁶⁰ See Recouly 30.

⁶¹ Note that since Rebell wasn't born until 1867, writing a novel about the Second Empire would no doubt have to largely incorporate the unhistorical mode.

⁶² According to Lukacs, "What it ["Nietzsche's philosophy" on history] says in effect is that each unit, be it individual, race or nation can experience no more than itself... History is a chaos, in itself is no concern to us, but to which everyone may attribute a 'meaning' which suits him, according to his needs" (Lukacs 180).

⁶³ Henriette's suprahistorical perspective may be likened to Zarathustra's idea of redemption: "To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it'—that alone I call redemption" (Z II: "On Redemption"). As Acampora's "'The Contest Between Nietzsche and Homer': Revaluating the Homeric Question" (2003) explains, "Redemption for Zarathustra is a creative backward willing, such that one wills the past as if it were one's own responsibility, as if it were the result of one's own willing it to be so. It is not simply a reconciliation with suffering, not a passive acceptance of the past, but a passionate affirmation of the present and past" (105). Such is the redemption Henriette experiences in the catharsis she reaches at the end of her autobiographic narration.

⁶⁴ It would not at all be surprising if in view of his personal friendship to Rebell, Gide had read and even been inspired by *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*, which Rodange's biography brings to light. Upon the publication of his first novel, *Baisers d'ennemis* (1892), Rebell gave a copy to Gide with the inscription: "A M. André Gide, en témoignage de son amitié intellectuelle" (Rodange 117). While working for *La Revue Blanche*, Gide was one of the editors who published Rebell's *La Câlinese* (1899), a novel which Gide had reputedly complimented (Rodange 312). When Rebell became seriously sick and unable to pay his bills much later in 1904, he called upon Gide who gave him a loan of 100 francs (Rodange 312).

⁶⁵ Verbaere explains the appearance of these so-called "romans nietzschéens" from the late 1890's through the first decade of the 20th-Century: "D'un côté, Nietzsche n'est plus assez à la mode pour que les écrivains craignent de s'avouer influencé par ses oeuvres; d'un autre côté, les idées de Nietzsche sont assez bien connues du grand public pour que certaines affirmations et certains thèmes soient immédiatement identifiées comme des affirmations 'à la Nietzsche' ou comme des thèmes 'nietzschéens'" (Verbaere 450-1).

Epilogue

To recapitulate what this study has attempted to accomplish, Part I establishes that Rebell doesn't simply incorporate Nietzsche's philosophy in his politics but actively engages it in contest with the philosopher's political views and aspirations, while Part II shows that through his fiction, as illustrated in *La Femme qui a connu L'Empereur*, which innovates the contest among narrator-characters for a pluralized truth in the dialogic narrative, Rebell entertains an agon with Nietzsche that, in turn, opens Rebell up to a contest with his own perspectival and antiperspectival perspectives. I conclude that he is an exemplary reader of Nietzsche, according to the standard that Acampora imposes on herself as well as on all of Nietzsche's readers in general: "We will have to... prepare to struggle with this author, to hate and to love him as an enemy, to distinguish ourselves as we resist him" (Acampora diss. 219). As an admirer and critic of Nietzsche's philosophy, Rebell deserves to be considered a worthy enemy of Nietzsche, and thereby also a Zarathustran disciple in his writings, both fictional and nonfictional.

Rebell manifests that discipleship firstly in socio-political thinking that sharply distinguishes itself from both Nietzsche's and that of the majority of his French contemporaries. In the likeness of the Zarathustran type capable of a revaluation of values, and in the likeness of Nietzsche who viewed his philosophy "in contradiction to his today" and his "task" in "being the bad conscience of his time," Rebell called for a revaluation of his era's values (BGE 212). In rebellion against Third Republic France, he disapproved and devalued its government and leaders, its politics, and cultural representatives such as the democratic writers he so detested, and its growing trends toward socialism and cosmopolitanism at the turn of the century. Yet Rebell's inversion of his era's institutions and values did not entirely call for a simple restoration of past values, of the *Ancien Régime*, for he believed as much in reviving French traditions as he

did in recreating them for the present. Not exclusively an advocate for the birth nobility, he supported a financial as well as an intellectual nobility and even expressed empathy for the Communards through his hero in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur*. Neither absolutely nationalist nor xenophobic, Rebell abstained from the Dreyfus Affair when his friends were declared anti-Dreyfusards and expressed admiration for the Jewish people as well as for foreign literatures, cultures, and thinkers, certainly not least of which was the Prussian Nietzsche. Finally, not absolutely legitimist, Rebell preferred the return of a Bourbon monarch, but was ready to accept a Bonaparte so long as he reigned as an absolutist.

Moreover, as he admits toward the end of his life, he had even reconsidered his monarchism altogether, and was not so much concerned with the outward political form of his country but with its mission. In particular, Rebell had been willing to accept yet another alternative to his ideal autocrat, a contemporary politician whom he believed had great potential as a leader: Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau. He thus tells Georges Le Cardonnel and Charles Vellay in his interview with them in *La Littérature contemporaine* (1905):

Pour expliquer votre enquête [on the state of contemporary literature], vous avez parlé de la confusion qui règne dans le monde des lettres. J'en attribue la cause à l'absence d'un gouvernement central. Aussi suis-je monarchiste. J'estime qu'une monarchie est préférable pour les artistes. Je n'ai pas d'ailleurs d'autre raison d'être monarchiste, car rien, pour moi, ne vaut, hors l'art. (103)

For Rebell, a monarchy is the best government under which art can flourish, since it alone provides centralized order and discipline while protecting its artists, whom it sees as the mark of its cultural glory and who can therefore cultivate their genius without the concern of having to submit to the crude demands of a literary market. In contrast, he explains, “la République n'est

pas fondée sur la gloire d'un pays, mais sur l'intérêt général des citoyens, et il semble que les artistes n'y servent à rien" (Le Cardonnel and Vellay 103). Yet Rebell affirms, "Il y avait, dans la République, un homme dont j'attendais beaucoup: M. Waldeck-Rousseau. Il possédait une belle intelligence, et son esprit était averti. Avec un tel homme, la République serait peut-être devenue favorable aux artistes. Alors, sans doute, je n'aurais plus eu de motifs pour désirer une monarchie..." (Le Cardonnel and Vellay 103).

In this interview that Rebell had the same year he eventually died, he surprisingly suggests that his political orientation might have had very little to do with politics. Whether his response to Le Cardonnel and Vellay reveals a meaning of Rebell's royalism that he had never before so overtly expressed; or, rather, an incredible evolution in his political thinking near the end of his life, such as, perhaps, a willingness to accept a strong executive power, legitimate neither by birth nor divine right but simply by demonstration of a masterful will to lead and most especially, to provide a sanctuary for artists, he clearly remains loyal to his sole and ultimate passion: art. By admitting that a society in which the cultivation of art is the highest goal, (regardless of its political system) was the one constant aspiration he had for France, Rebell appears to be the most removed from his convictions bound up in a particular authority, party, or class ideology and from his absolute refusal of the present French government. Indeed, by expressing his hope for, and indirectly his disappointment in, the resignation of the Third Republic minister under Emile Loubet (known for his moderation between socialists and conservatives as well as for being the President of the Council who had Dreyfus pardoned), Rebell appears the most distant from his rightist camp, particularly the Action Française and, at the same time, the closest to affirming his present society.

Rebell thus ended his life as a true Zarathustran type, following no other socio-political “way” than his own. For this reason, he deserves to be recognized for the intellectual contribution that he made to his era. Past scholars such as Micheline Tison-Braun have not given any attention to Rebell’s role in the intellectual culture of Third Republic France, never mentioning his name, for instance, in *La Crise de l’humanisme* (1958), where she focuses on 19th-century literature “comme la conscience d’une société,” and studies both the intellectual Left and Right, including many authors from Rebell’s conservative associations, like Maurras and Barrès (11). Yet scholars today should come to know Rebell and to respect him not as a mere marginal figure in his society, but instead, one whose marginality attests to his mark of distinction and importance in late 19th-century France.

But Rebell’s greatest importance is no doubt as a literary artist. As I have argued through one of his masterpieces, *La Femme qui a connu l’Empereur*, Rebell is a “Zarathustran writer,” or what I characterize as a writer who follows past literary models while reinventing them and who, besides, reincorporates and reinvents Nietzschean philosophy into his literary aesthetic. In these respects, this study does not claim to be exhaustive; on the contrary, it is meant as a point of departure into the exploration of Rebell’s literary art and the possible connections it has with Nietzschean philosophy. For instance, in the future, one might focus on how Rebell can be viewed as a writer similarly to the way Nietzsche viewed himself: “Apart from the fact that I am a decadent, I am also the opposite” (EH I:2). Rebell can be considered to defy literary labels as much as socio-political ones.

Another possible major project of the future should consider how Rebell’s lifelong revolt against the Christian faith, especially as expressed in his fiction, is inspired by Nietzsche’s. Her *Zoom sur les décadents* (2002), Julia Przybos’s analysis of *La Saison à Baïa* (1901), a short

novel in which Rebell imagines the reception of Paul of Tarsus in pre-Christian Rome, already pioneers the topic of Rebell's treatment of Christianity and inspiration from Nietzsche by arguing that this work offers both a reaction against the international enthusiasm spurred on by Sienkiewicz's *Quo vadis?* and a profile of Saint Paul in the image of the Nietzschean Antichrist (193-201).

Yet a comparison of Rebell's perspective on the Judeo-Christian faith to Nietzsche's demands much more exploration. As Rodange has crucially acknowledged in his dissertation, "Rebell n'a jamais proclamé la mort de Dieu: mais Nietzsche encore l'a beaucoup influencé en matière de religion. Ils avaient tous deux pour la morale chrétienne, la même aversion" (TR diss 641). One would therefore need first to address the question why Rebell, a diligent reader of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and by Mazel's account, also an atheist, denying the existence of the Judeo-Christian god, never acknowledges in any of his writings the death of this god, which for Nietzsche meant not only such a denial but also a critical point of separation from and refusal of the entire Western religio-moral tradition (Mazel 484). That Rebell considered himself a Catholic at the same time that he refused the Christian faith begs an investigation of what Catholicism and Christianity meant for him and whether he was capable at all of the bold move required for the acceptance of the death of God, at least within the context of his writings that treat religion. In addition to *La Saison à Baïa*, in which Rebell favors what he imagines was the guilt-free, pleasure-seeking life of the Neronians over against the life that Pauline Christianity taught, *Chants de la pluie et du soleil* attempts to reject Christ as a symbol and signpost against guilt against the body and life on earth. In many of the poems in this work as well as in the epilogue, Rebell echoes Nietzsche's reaffirmation of a "de-deified nature" free of Christian metaphysics by his insistent call for a return to nature and to deities in diametrical opposition to

Christ, including Dionysus. Finally, Rebell's most widely received novel among his contemporaries, *La Nichina* (1897), in which the most famous courtesan in 16th-century Venice fights against the oppressive patriarchy of the Church and proclaims a victory through her reaffirmation of sexual love between man and woman, also deserves important attention in Rebell's rejection and overcoming of Christian morality.

In much of his fiction, in fact, Rebell seems to implement his own reevaluation of Christian values: he repeatedly negates and inverts the values of sin and guilt against the body and sex and of the need for atonement and redemption while restoring a sacred status to human sexuality and reaffirming terrestrial life over against Christian eschatology. I chose not to include such a study of Rebell's treatment of religion in this dissertation, since it would entail a focus on Rebellian literary aesthetics that deserves special attention separate from his politics and, to a certain degree, is beyond the scope of his inspiration from Nietzsche. In particular, Rebell's redivinization of sexuality, especially from its ban under Christianity in his writings, stems from what can be considered the core meaning and goal of art for Rebell, as he expresses in his article published in *L'Ermitage*, "L'érotisme et le mysticisme en art" (1894) which argues that literature must appeal to both human intellect and sensuality and that therefore, all art should ideally celebrate sex as the regenerative act of life and as life's highest glorification. This aesthetic may indeed concur with Rebell's admiration for "tout ce qu'il y a dans son oeuvre [de Nietzsche] d'encouragement à vivre," "son grand cantique à la nature," as he affirms in *Le Culte des idoles*, (84) and also with the conception of art as anti-ascetic in nature, as an expression of sublimated sexual desire that Nietzsche develops in *Twilight of the Idols* and in *The Will to Power*. Yet, Rebell's eroticism perfected through intellectualization goes well beyond his reading of Nietzsche who often shied away from sexuality, and strongly hints at a tribute to

Baudelaire and Sade, who, as Rebell often did, delighted in sex as a transgression from and within Christian morality.

Still other studies of Rebell's literature may devote themselves exclusively to his narrative. For example, the complex embedding and the multiple narrator-narratee relationships among characters that I analyzed in *La Femme qui a connu l'Empereur* are present in many of his other novels, including *La Nichina* and *La Saison à Baia*. In the first of these, the famous Venetian courtesan Nichina tells the story of her life that is already embedded in a frame whose characters dialogue with her throughout. In *La Saison à Baia*, the story of Saint Paul, told by the point of view of a Roman writing a letter to a friend, is embedded in an extradiegetic "Avant-Propos" in which a presumed editor pretends to have translated a letter written on an ancient papyrus originally recovered at the National Library of Naples. In yet another narratorial analysis, one could explore how *La Camorra* (1900), an account of the origins of the Neapolitan mafia, reads much like a detective novel of the 1950's with an unsolvable hermeneutic code.

Yet while a timeless audience can easily adapt to Rebell's literature, contemporary scholars may shy away from studying a man whose philosophy and politics are diametrically opposed to their society, especially to 21st-century America. For all those who might quickly dismiss Rebell on these grounds, I urge them to take a harder look at him. While, or, perhaps, *since*, we may not find him to be a champion of our own ideas, we have much to learn from a thinker who had the courage to distinguish himself from his generation, to entertain a contest with Nietzsche, with his contemporaries and with himself. Let us appreciate Rebell for a fundamental reason why he no doubt appreciated Nietzsche: that he exemplified the nobility of spirit that is able to use within itself "all that is rare, strange, and privileged" to think differently and independently (BGE 212).

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