Rewriting the Twentieth-century French Literary Right: Translation, Ideology, and Literary History

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REWRITING THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERARY RIGHT: TRANSLATION, IDEOLOGY, AND LITERARY HISTORY

A Thesis Presented
by
MARCUS KHOURY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Comparative Literature Translation Studies Track Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
REWRITING THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERARY RIGHT: TRANSLATION, IDEOLOGY, AND LITERARY HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

REWRITING THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERARY RIGHT:
TRANSLATION,IDEOLOGY, AND LITERARY HISTORY

FEBRUARY 2017

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For English-language audiences, twentieth-century French literature is often identified with a variety of literary movements tied to the political left, from Surrealism to Existentialism. In spite of its lesser visibility and renown, especially in Anglophone contexts, the French literary right enjoyed considerable prestige and support during the twentieth century, especially from the years leading to World War I until the end of World War II. The purpose of this thesis is to employ methodologies from translation studies in order to study how the French literary right has been translated, or not translated, into English.

This thesis not only studies translated texts by representative figures of the French literary right including Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier, but also investigates which texts were chosen or not chosen for translation, when and under which circumstances translations were carried out, and how these instances of translation and non-translation contribute to constructing a particular image of French literature for English-language readers. Case studies devoted to the three aforementioned authors demonstrate that right-wing committed literature was a central mode of literary production from the 1910s to the 1950s and that this current of writing is
underrepresented in English-language translation and scholarship.

A number of literary and cultural asymmetries separating English-language literature from French literature have contributed to this situation, such as the phenomenon of literary engagement in French literature and France’s strong anti-liberal intellectual tradition dating to the French Revolution. Using systems theory this thesis argues that these differences between the French and Anglophone literary systems have contributed to the lack of attention and representation accorded to the French literary right, which is manifested in the selection, presentation, and translation of texts by seminal right-wing authors such as Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier.

The anti-liberal and often troubling ideological convictions of all three authors have also contributed to the scant attention they have received following World War II. When translations of texts by these authors do exist, a number of translation patterns emerge. In some cases, such as with Charles Maurras, translators and critics stress the ideological extremism of the author while failing to take into account the literary significance of the author and his influence in French literature. In other cases, an author like Pierre Drieu la Rochelle may be cast as an aesthete, or the work of an author such as Roger Nimier is deracinated from the rich tradition of right-wing writing the author drew upon. These patterns and distortions have ramifications not only for the construction of the French literary canon in an English-language context, but also for our understanding of twentieth-century literary history and the role ideology plays in influencing high- and low-level translation decisions.
FOREWORD

I first encountered the names of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier from my readings in French history and from the films of the filmmaker Louis Malle. When my initial research revealed networks of literary influence among these three writers of the right and some of my favorite literary figures, from Raymond Radiguet to André Malraux, I decided to further explore this domain of literary history. Most striking to me, it seemed undeniable that right-wing writing was important for understanding twentieth-century French literary history, but few works of literary criticism or history investigated this less visible current of thought and literature. Moreover, many of these texts were unavailable in English translation.

When taking a course in translation theory taught by my advisor Maria Tymoczko, I decided that researching and writing about French right-wing writing would allow me to combine my passion for literary history with my desire to study a topic related to canonicity, literary influence, and translation. I recognized that translation studies supplied theoretical methods for studying questions relevant to right-wing literature, such as translating culture and ideology and the construction of canon. It also provided models for analyzing overlooked texts in novel and productive ways. With encouragement from my advisor, what began as a short paper for the course later developed into this thesis.

This project is not an attempt to exonerate any of the writers studied in-depth for their often reprehensible words and actions, nor is it a defense of any of their ideas. Rather, it is my hope that this thesis makes a contribution to understanding a literary tradition that is largely unknown to English-language readers and that is relevant to
understanding the contemporary reemergence of European nationalism. I also hope that my project demonstrates the flexibility and power of theories and methodologies originating from translation studies for studying literary history and for conducting literary criticism.
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INTRODUCTION

Twentieth-century French literature and thought remains well-represented and respected in an English-language context. Texts originally written in French still remain the largest source of published literary translations in the United States (Sapiro 2015:320), and the works of twentieth-century French writers such as André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and others in English translation have proven influential, popular, and instrumental in helping to construct a particular image of French literature for English-language readers (Wittman 2013:442). Álvarez and Carmen-África Vidal note, however, “the idea that the non-professional reader of a given culture will form will be that provided by literary critics, translators and compliers” (1996:5). We cannot expect that every piece of foreign literature will be translated into English, nor can we expect a direct correlation between a text’s literary value and its likelihood for translation, but we can investigate what authors and texts are translated—or not translated—and how ideology and difference across literary cultures shape when a text is translated, and how it is translated.

The accomplishment and centrality of French writers broadly associated with the political left, including Sartre, de Beauvoir, and others, are undeniable, but to consider these authors, their works, and their ideological convictions as representative of twentieth-century French literature as a whole would be a mistake. Indeed, the political scientist and historian of fascism Zeev Sternhell remarks that “the France of Gide and Camus, Sartre and Malraux was also that of Maurras and Drieu La Rochelle, Brasillach and Céline” (Sternhell, Sznaider, and Asheri 1994:257). Sternhell’s assertion raises several important points I address in the rest of this work. First, the quote cited above
acknowledges the common equation of French literature with a series of writers identifying with the political left. Second, it recognizes that such an image of French literature and culture is incomplete, as it overlooks the cultural weight of figures attaching themselves to the right. Third, by citing two groups of writers as reference points for French culture in the first half of the twentieth century, Sternhell demonstrates the central role of writers in representing both political ideologies and French literature as a whole during important periods of the twentieth century.

Taking these observations as starting point, my thesis examines the translation and non-translation of the works of three twentieth-century French authors belonging to the French literary right: Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier. As much French-language and English-language scholarship has demonstrated, all three of these writers were important intellectual and cultural figures for the French political right in the first half of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, relatively little English-language scholarship addresses the literary works of these three writers, or their position in literary history. In addition, the majority of the writing of the three aforementioned authors is not represented in English translation. My research addresses this gap in translation while also studying existing translations of these French-language works into English.

As an interdisciplinary work of literary scholarship grounded in the methodologies of translation studies, my thesis addresses questions central to contemporary translation studies including ideology, power, and culture. Furthermore, my study examines an overlooked tradition in French literature that has only received increasing critical attention from scholars in French Studies in the past few decades. This
paper’s findings and arguments about the formation of canon, translation norms, and the reception of French literature in the English-speaking world contribute to existing research in literary and translation studies. The ongoing renewal of interest in Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier, as well as current political trends in Europe make this thesis a highly relevant piece of academic work. It does not support the ideological or political views espoused by any of the writers under study, and it is not intended to promote or advance the opinions of the writers in question or their texts. Rather, I claim that the writers and pieces of literature addressed are representative of a significant literary current that has not received sufficient critical attention.

The contemporary field of translation studies recognizes the importance of history and culture for literary production and for the practice of translation. The availability of both macro-level and micro-level analysis provides a researcher with powerful tools to analyze translations by considering both the linguistic and cultural contents of a text. Therefore, as an interdisciplinary work of literary scholarship grounded in the methodologies of translation studies, this thesis draws upon literary texts, works in political ideology and history, literary criticism, and translation theory. With respect to the various theoretical models informing this work, several approaches provide a basis for this thesis’s analysis and arguments. The works of Itamar Even-Zohar (1979, 1990), Gideon Toury (1995), and André Lefevere (1992, 2014) advocate a systems-based approach towards translation, in which translated texts are treated as a part of larger systems of literary and cultural production spanning linguistic and geographic borders. Also important for this thesis are the works of Maria Tymoczko (1999, 2009) that explore the relationship between translation and ideology, censorship, and translating culture. In
addition to theoretical frameworks furnished by these works, this thesis is also anchored in scholarship on French intellectual history, anti-liberalism and fascism, and twentieth-century French literature and culture.

This thesis offers case studies of three different authors belonging to this latter tradition: Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier. All of these writers can be considered twentieth-century literary partisans of anti-liberalism and different types of right-wing ideology. Furthermore, these three figures received just as much attention from the larger public and literary circles for their literary oeuvre as for their provocative ideological convictions, and these two elements were difficult to separate from one another. Although they may have championed artistic and political views that ran contrary to the dominant ideologies of their times, their work and literary impact were by no means marginal. Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier were artists and public intellectuals who engaged with the events, ideas, and other thinkers of their time. Significant for this study is the observation that the prominence of writers and intellectuals in French cultural life has had effects on French literature and thought resulting in a dynamic with no counterpart in the English-speaking world, as demonstrated by sociologists such as Sapiro (2002) and cultural studies scholars such as Mathy (1993, 2000). The 1900s witnessed the rise of the littérateur engagé, who explicitly responded to political and social issues. It is in this ideologically polarized context that the three writers in question must be read.

The first chapter of this work provides an overview of several significant aspects of French literature in the first half of the twentieth century, including the legacy of the French Revolution, the strong anti-liberal and counter-revolutionary intellectual tradition
in France, and the rise of the littérateur engagé, or politically engaged writer and intellectual. As demonstrated throughout the thesis, all of these factors have a bearing on translation from French into English and also reception by English-speaking audiences. Because every literature tradition is rooted within a broader context of history and culture, conceiving of a particular literature as a “system” allows for an approach that encompasses the relationship between different literary traditions, and the subsequent interface among literary production, historical events, and cultural specificities.

The first chapter also elaborates on how these historical and ideological factors have import for the practice of translating French literature into English. Notions such as patronage, rewriting, and translational norms are all subject to ideological constraints and can determine what is translated and how it is translated. When considering figures such as the littérateur engagé, the French Revolution, or the experience of Vichy France, it becomes apparent that differences between French culture and the cultures of the United States and the United Kingdom—especially within the fields of literature and culture—provide one persistent translation problem. Additionally, works of literature do not exist as atomized pieces of culture. As Tymoczko (1999:45) notes, many layers of metonymy exist within any literary text, and subsequently a text may contain any number of implicit or explicit references to other texts, events, or figures. This metonymic quality of literature becomes especially salient when dealing with works by Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier.

Because of the intertextual and metonymic nature of a literary work, any translator must confront difficulties such as translating meaning at the meta-level as well as the linguistic level. Although translation attempts to convey linguistic and non-
linguistic meaning, Lawrence Venuti argues that “this communication will always be partial, both incomplete and inevitably slanted towards the domestic scene” (2000:473). Because of the aesthetic and ideological content present in works by Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier, a consideration of how they have been translated, or not translated, into English provides an opportunity to study translation as a practice that shapes images of literature and also as a practice itself influenced by ideology, norms, and cultural and linguistic asymmetries.

The goal of the second chapter of this thesis is to furnish various literary, historical, and ideological frameworks for classifying and describing the works of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier, and to also situate them among a broader literary right. Positioning each author chronologically and ideologically establishes a basis for considering English-language translations addressed in the later chapters and comparisons between the authors’ works. Moreover, historical background helps to explain the roots and contexts of descriptions regularly appearing in criticism surrounding the three authors in question, from Maurras’s exaltation of the Greco-Latin tradition to Nimier’s image as a twentieth-century mousquetaire. Not only is literary history provided, but the writers’ respective main thematic concerns and their relation to the political right are also addressed in light of each author’s position as emblematic of different literary generations and political commitments.

All of these critical and historical frameworks identify key differences among the three in terms of both ideology and literary style, which contributes to the later critical readings of several translated texts. Furthermore, they justify my argument that such a counter-ideological literary tradition was not a historical aberration. Instead, it constituted
a veritable lineage of right-wing dissident writers who existed as important figures in French thought and letters, often extending their influence outside the borders of their home country. In accordance with methods for research in translation studies, reference to other French writers are also introduced with context provided by primary and secondary sources. Additionally, the comparisons and contrasts between Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier in this chapter serve as a transition into later comparative remarks made in the individual case studies contained in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters.

Chapter Three, Four, and Five of the thesis contain three case studies, each of which raises particular questions relevant to ongoing research in the discipline of translation studies. Linguistic analysis and translation criticism are also an integral part of each case study. In the first case study, the few English translations of the work of monarchist critic, poet, and essayist Charles Maurras are considered, along with the abundant secondary material about this writer and ideologue, in order to investigate the questions of gaps in translation, influence across literatures, and patronage. The second case study, concerning the fascist collaborator Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, addresses norms, ideology, and censorship among other sub-topics. The third case study is devoted to the post-World War II writer Roger Nimier, and primarily uses translation criticism as a means for addressing translation and intertextuality, and reception.

Each case study makes abundant use of critical material from both English-language and French sources. Comparative remarks regarding the individual authors and their respective relationships with English-language or international literature are also made when discussing translation and non-translation. The findings of each case study are briefly summarized in the conclusion, and I also address the likelihood of works by
Maurras, Drieu, or Nimier appearing in English translation in the future. Lastly, I make final remarks about these three authors in the context of contemporary France, where the political and literary climate suggests that this formerly marginalized literary tradition is becoming increasingly relevant.
CHAPTER 1
THE FRENCH LITERARY SYSTEM, IDEOLOGY, AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In *The Spectrum of Political Engagement: Mounier, Benda, Nizan, Brasillach, Sartre*, David L. Schalk acknowledges that *engagement* “is a French term which has been adopted into English because there is no precise equivalent in our language” (1979:ix). Schalk’s remark immediately raises the question of translation, and consequently differences between French literature and English-language literature. He opts to retain the original French term in his book on account of its use by Paul Nizan (1905-40), Emmanuel Mounier (1905-50), and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80) to describe a particular mode of cultural production. The place of *engagement* in French literature, as well as the term’s theorization and associations, are also evoked when Steven Ungar proposes “committed writing” as an alternative translation to “engaged literature” based upon his understanding of Jean-Paul Sartre’s definition of *littérature engagée* in *Qu’est-ce que la littérature ?* (1948) (1988:4).

The different translations or non-translations of *engagement* are accompanied by justification and discussion, but English-language scholars treating the theme of engagement such as Ungar (1997), Adereth (1967), and Schalk (1979) all acknowledge that the higher degree of visibility and theorization accorded to *engagement* in French literature in contrast to an English-language context makes this particular mode of writing less approachable and understandable to an English-language audience.¹ Thus, we can

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¹Although I will continue to use the original French term *engagement* throughout this thesis, I will occasionally employ “committed literature” and its derivatives because of its use by several scholars writing about *engagement* in a French context.
ask: what cultural and literary asymmetries make the concepts of *engagement* and *littérature engagée* foreign to English-language audiences and the broader tradition of English-language literature? How should they be understood? These are some of the questions I will focus on in this thesis.

The authors included in the title of Schalk’s study also raise a significant question. The ideological gap separating communist writer Paul Nizan from the fascist journalist and novelist Robert Brasillach (1909-45) may seem insurmountable, and the inclusion of the latter signals the significance of the less common, yet historically important, right-wing *engagement* of many French writers. When discussing the involvement of the French intelligentsia in society and politics, Lahouari Addi echoes a widely accepted view: “In general, the intellectual has been on the left” (1997:90). The fact that *engagement* is “virtually equated” with a number of noted leftist writers, publications, and organizations, obscures the broader phenomenon of *engagement* and has consequences for the image of French literature in an English-language context (Mazgaj 2002:27).

Literary figures such as Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier may be less well-known than their counterparts on the political left, but this fact does not erase their centrality to the “various overlapping and interlocking conjunctures of memory, history, and writing” that characterize twentieth-century French literature (Hewitt 2011:662). How should these writers be interpreted? How do translations and non-translation of their work present their ideologies, and how does this have an effect on the representation of French literature in English?
The purpose of this chapter is to address important contextual information relevant to twentieth-century French literature and its relation to ideology, as well as introduce the theoretical frameworks from translation studies I will use as the basis for my arguments and analysis. Although it is impossible to address the entire cultural landscape of France in the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1950s in a study of this size, historical and theoretical considerations will be provided to contextualize the objects of study and claims made in this work.

First, I will address the notion of engagement and provide relevant historical background regarding French history and literature in order to demonstrate some of the high-level cultural and historical particularities of French literature that become especially salient in the first half of the twentieth century. Second, I will explain how systems theory provides a theoretical basis appropriate for studying the translation of literary texts originating from 1900 to the 1950s from French into English. In addition to applying the model of the system, I will introduce several other theoretical constructs originating from a systems approach to translation, including rewriting, norms, and patronage, and explain their relevance to the writers and literary tradition presented in this work. Third, I discuss how the translation of certain texts can be shaped by the more limited understanding of literary engagement in an English-language context and how this shapes the representation of French literature and history. By introducing and applying these notions to my objects of study, I provide a basis for my later analyses and observations about the translation and non-translation of the authors in question.

1.1 Engagement, Ideology, Translation
Several features distinguish French literature from roughly 1900 to 1950. As Sarah Kay, Terrence Cave, and Malcolm Bowie note in *A Short History of French Literature*, the Dreyfus Affair set the stage for an especially politically charged literary culture in twentieth-century France (1997:251). This dialogue between left and right on the literary plane can be traced back to 1789, but the Dreyfus Affair marks the birth of the modern, politically involved intellectual (Schalk 1979:5, Ory and Sirinelli 2002:5-12). Benoît Denis offers a concise means of distinguishing the *littérateur engagé*, or committed writer, from the broader category of intellectual, by observing that “his *engagement* [appears] in literature itself,” rather than chiefly through social or political activities (2000:22).

In *What is Literature?* (1948) Jean-Paul Sartre outlined his vision of literature as a political activity. Prior to the advent of existentialism and Sartre’s influential conception of cultural and literary *engagement*, the notion *engagement* had been employed with similar meaning by Paul Nizan and Emmanuel Mounier (Schalk 1979:10-11). Decades prior to the activities of these writers, Émile Zola famously called for justice for the wrongfully convicted Albert Dreyfus in his open letter “J’accuse…!” in 1898. However, this public declaration was met with opposition as well as support. The conflict engendered by the Dreyfus Affair, and the relationship between writers and ideology

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2 From 1898 to 1906, liberal intellectuals and writers, known as *dreyfusards*, rallied against the wrongful imprisonment of the French Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus, who was accused of being a German spy in spite of scant evidence. Rallying behind Émile Zola were other noted figures including Anatole France and Léon Blum. The opposing faction, the anti-*dreyfusards*, was made up of reactionary intellectuals and conservative elements in the church and military who denounced what they perceived as treacherous, anti-military activities undertaken by a Jew. Literary anti-Dreyfusards included Charles Maurras, Maurice Barrès, and Paul Bourget.

3 Emmanuel Mounier was a Catholic philosopher and essayist who founded the review *Esprit* in 1932. His anti-materialist and anti-individualist personalism is considered by Jean-Louis del Bayle to be one of the main currents of thought identified in *Les Non-conformistes des années 30* (1969).
created a “paradigm” (Calle-Gruber 2001:55) for the following decades of French literature, which were marked by conflict and upheaval.

During the political scandal of the Dreyfus Affair, as well as during later social and political debates arising in the first half of the twentieth century, both the ideological left and right could count on the support of artists and intellectuals. As argued by Carroll (1995), even the most extreme manifestation of the twentieth-century French literary right—the various pro-Nazi collaborationists, Vichy sympathizers, and assorted anti-Republicans emerging during the 1930s and 1940s—did not constitute an aberration in French literary history, but rather a continuation of a lineage deeply rooted in French thought and letters. For some, the French Revolution of 1789 marked the triumph of “liberty, equality, and fraternity” as well as the birth of the Rights of Man. For others, the revolution and its ensuing events also provoked criticism, revulsion, and horror, with both contemporary observers of the French Revolution and later generations of historians and thinkers offering differing interpretations of its origins, events, and legacy.

The “historically enduring and recurring” French political right developed in tandem with an unbroken line of thinkers and artists whose “anti-modern” thematic concerns were shaped by an opposition to the French Revolution’s values (Goodliffe 2012:311; Compagnon 2005:15). Outside of the realms of fiction and poetry, figures such as Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), Hippolyte Taine (1828-93) and their heirs rejected or critiqued Republican principles by appealing to religious traditionalism, hierarchy, or by alternatively tracing the Revolution’s excesses to the anti-rational impulses of Romanticism or to the abstractions of Enlightenment-based

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4 Chapter 2 of this thesis will provide a more detailed discussion of this right-wing tradition and some of its twentieth-century representatives.
rationalism. The ideas of such figures proved instrumental in sustaining the right in France throughout the twentieth century.

In spite of the relationship between society and French *belles-lettres* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to speak of literary *engagement* prior to 1898 would be anachronistic. Nonetheless, several scholars note the indebtedness of committed writers to the practices of earlier intellectual generations. For Sapiro (2011), Denis (2000), and Collini (1993) distant predecessors to *engagé* writers can be found in the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, and more readily in a number of socially conscious writers from the nineteenth century. Significantly, the nineteenth century witnessed the growing social stature of artists and the development of a cult of “talent” surrounding the most celebrated writers (Sapiro 2012:146-64). Romantic figures including Victor Hugo conceived of a prophetic function for the poet, and stressed the responsibility of the writer (Sapiro 2012:165). However, Herbert Lottman highlights the ambiguity of many proto-committed writers by citing Zola’s aesthetic interest in the Dreyfus Affair, the reluctance of Victor Hugo to enter the fray of politics, and the apolitical nature of many of George Sands’ works (2003:9-11). Similarly, Denis (2000) recognizes the Naturalist and Romantic forays into politics and social observation, but otherwise reads the period from 1848 to 1898 as the rule of “art for art’s sake” in French literature, which culminated in Théophile Gautier’s (1811-72) famous dictum proclaiming the autonomy of art: “Il n’y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid” (1966:23).

When the dominant trend of pure aestheticism was contested in the final years of

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5 For further discussion of the “historic inscription” of *engagement*, see Denis 2000:17-29.
the nineteenth century and beyond, neither the political left nor right could be considered monolithic entities. As René Rémond (1969) demonstrates, to speak of a single French right would be to ignore the often antagonistic relationships between the different right-wing currents that evolved from the 1800s to the twentieth century. The three authors I will address are representative of different time periods and different strains of the French right. Indeed, Charles Maurras (1868-1952) gained notoriety when he emerged as one of the most outspoken anti-Dreyfusard intellectuals and became the chief ideologue of integral nationalism. Between the World Wars, the leftist sympathies of Louis Aragon and André Malraux found their counterpart in Drieu’s idiosyncratic brand of “fascist socialism.” After Sartre codified the central tenets of committed literature, Roger Nimier’s seemingly apolitical désinvolture was itself an ideologically loaded stance and form of engagement.

A systems approach to studying literature and translation as conceived by Itamar Even-Zohar (1979, 1990) and Gideon Toury (1980, 1995) takes into account the innumerable cultural, social, and historical factors that shape literary production. For Even-Zohar and other systems theorists, the “system” is a postulated construction for studying literature, and can be defined as “the network of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables” (1990:27). Using the systems approach as a theoretical base, André Lefevere asserts the importance of both poetics and ideology in shaping translation. Lefevere states that one element of poetics is “a concept

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6 Rémond (1969) identifies three main historical subgroups of the French right-wing: the royalist counter-revolutionary Legitimists, the liberal monarchist Orléanists backed by the bourgeoisie, and the Bonapartists, whose republicanism stressed strong leadership and popular support.

7 André Malraux (1901-76) is considered a paradigm for engagement owing to his representation of revolutionary events in Asia and his casts of heroic men of action in novels such as La Condition humaine (1933) and L’Espoir (1937).
of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole,” where the “social system” is synonymous with a given culture (1992:15,26). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the mode of writing known as littérature engagée reached its apogee with Jean-Paul Sartre and the review Les Temps Modernes, where Sartre declared, “our intention is to help effect certain changes in the Society that surrounds us” (1988:255). He thus assigns a political function to literature, which nonetheless rests upon the responsibility and high status of the writer. For Sartre, this position demands “that I become a man whom other men consider as a writer, that is, who has to respond to a certain demand and who has been invested, whether he likes it or not, with a certain social function” (1988:77).

When treating the question of engagement in French literature, and the right-wing writers who practiced this mode of writing, it is apparent that approaching “translation and literature through the overall context in which they occur (currents of ideas, political movements, world literature, commercial circuits, publishing mechanisms and so on)” is necessary because of the historical and cultural asymmetries separating the French literary tradition from English-language literature (Brisset 2010:73). Although this thesis will address authors active in the first half of the twentieth century, some observations about the history of intellectuals in France can highlight the disparities between engagement, or commitment, in the English-speaking tradition and French culture. For Ory and Sirinelli (2002), the grandeur of the philosophes, whose valorization of abstract rights and reason was so derided by Edmund Burke, is evidence of the continuous influence of intellectuals and French letters on society at large, especially in comparison to other national traditions (2002:11-12).
In comparing the different conceptions of the intellectual in France and Britain, Stefan Collini (1993) contrasts the low esteem accorded to the “Anglo-Saxon” intellectual with the high importance given to French intellectuals, beginning with the *philosophes* and culminating with the *littérateur engagé*. Collini argues that French intellectuals’ writing is respected by the public at large, and he can be certain “that there existed within that society a smaller, but still substantial, audience responsive to one’s public statements and disposed to try to exercise some collective impact on the nation’s political life” (1993:212). The disparity between French and English-language literatures highlighted by notions such as *engagement*, calls attention to ever-present high-level translation problems that must be addressed in a holistic manner, because cultural and sociological fields are inextricable from literary production.

Sociologist Gisèle Sapiro, who has published both about the sociology of French literature as well as translation studies, utilizes the Bourdieusian model of the field and Max Weber’s notion of prophecy to argue that the crises of French history, from the Dreyfus Affair to decolonization, “elicited a demand for prophecies, to which writers were to respond” (2003:638). Committed writers served as prophets, expressing visions about society and politics—found in their literary output—that “[broke] with the established order” (2003:638-89). Moreover, they derived their authority not from technical skill but from emotive appeal and personal charisma (2003:638-89). As a result of the series of crises marking twentieth-century France, the history of committed writing is the history of successive literary generations. This fact partially explains my choice of

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8 According to Pierre Bourdieu’s definition, a “field” is an abstract space occupied by individuals and institutions, together with norms and laws governing the production of “symbolic goods” in the case of the literary field. For further discussion of Bordieusian theory’s relation to systems theory and translation studies, see Hermans (2009:131-36).
objects of study, to be addressed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, Sapiro explores the politicization of the French literary field, a process that was taken to much greater extents than in English-language literatures. Unfettered by the constraints of specialization, French writers active during the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century did not limit themselves to one means of literary production. Instead, they seamlessly alternated between writing novels and poetry, *essais* and philosophical texts, and journalistic articles. They also frequently became involved in politics. Sapiro argues that the lack of “professionalization” or specialization found in the French literary field allowed writers to express their ideological convictions through several forms and genres. Significantly, Sapiro like Schalk, does not ignore the breadth of ideologies represented by committed literature.

The failed experiments of various authoritarian right-wing regimes in Europe have demonstrated the atrocities of differing currents of various fascisms, nationalisms, and Nazism, but prior to World War II the appeal of anti-liberal right-wing ideology for intellectuals was considerable (Hewitt 1996, Weber 1962, Sapiro 2003, Carroll 1995). Scholars of fascism and the far-right (Sternhell 1986, Weber 1962, Nolte 1966) have demonstrated that movements such as Action Française, Italian fascism, and French fascism were far from intellectually bankrupt. Rather, such ideologies mobilized literary voices of considerable talent and stature. How did French writers add their intellectual and symbolic weight to such ideologies? In addition to identifying with a particular ideology or political movement, writers could select a genre to demonstrate *engagement*.

In *Littérature et engagement* Benoît Denis (2000) identifies four principle literary genres of committed literature: theater, the novel, the essay, and the pamphlet or
manifesto (2000:75-99). The question of genre is relevant to the later case studies of the three authors to be discussed in this thesis: Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier. Drieu la Rochelle and Nimier were primarily novelists, and essayists second. Maurras was primarily an essayist and critic. In light of their most utilized genres, my thesis will primarily treat novels and essays. Moreover, a system’s vision or philosophy of literature, the “poetics” of a system includes “an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols” (Lefevere 1992:26).

Inquiry into the translation of *essai* reveals generic differences between the French and English-language literary systems. Although the French *essai* is often translated as “essay” into English, the French *essai* is not always discursively identical to the English essay. A definition based upon the etymology of *essai*, meaning an “attempt,” stands in contrast with an academic or journalistic exposition of a particular argument or thesis.\(^9\) When studying the evolution of the essay, Obaldia (1995:37) distinguishes the continental essay tradition originating with Montaigne from the form descended from Francis Bacon and the English essayistic tradition. Furthermore, examples of the genre informed by Montaigne’s model of the essay make their arguments and attempts at persuasion within a framework of subjectivity, employing a “rhétorique du moi” even when approaching broader social or political concerns (Denis 2000:89). The *essai* occupies an important place in committed literature, and therefore its utilization by Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier must take into account these generic details. In

\(^9\) In his *Essais*, the originator of the essay Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) clearly delineated his “attempts” or *essais* from the discursive and rhetorical strategies found in other genres of non-fiction prose (Klaus 2012:xv).
their essays, criticism, poetry, and fiction as well as their work as publishers, editors, and journalists, their position as littérature engagés was recognized.

The “intentions” of writers to have an impact on society were driven by ideology. Therefore, a distinguishing feature of the French literary field in the first half of the twentieth century was the importance of ideology. The ideologies expressed by writers and their texts were frequently elicited by the “crises” alluded to by Sapiro. However, even crises as far-reaching as World War II and the rise of totalitarianism did not engender easily comparable responses from the populations or writers living in different countries. Walzer supports the observation that commitment was relatively alien to English literature when he writes that “Orwell is the exception” in a tradition that “had produced no equivalent of Ignazio Silone, André Malraux, Gaetano Salvemini, Franz Borkenau, Victor Serge, or even Arthur Koestler” (1988:132-33).

When discussing the impact of engagement in English intellectual life, John Mander (1961) pronounces that it was “no more than a distant rumour,” due to the absence of a parallel tradition in English literature. To complement these pronouncements, George Orwell understood English literature’s lack of what he labeled “political writing” as a result of the country’s insulation from continental intellectual developments (1970:185). In an American context, André Muraire (1996) identifies the well-documented interwar trend of American “proletarian writing,” as a form of committed writing. However, such fiction was more monolithic in literary and ideological expression, and rarely ventured outside the boundaries of uncompromising realism or the dictates of the Communist Party USA. In the French literary field, committed writing was central and could be associated with both the political left and
If this mode of writing was not exclusive to the French tradition, it nonetheless enjoyed a prestige and centrality resulting from the history of French letters and thought, as well as from culturally significant historical events. The period from 1898 to the 1950s witnessed punctuated manifestations of this phenomenon whose roots could be traced to the political and cultural cleavage produced by the French Revolution. J.S. McLelland scarcely exaggerates the power of French literature and philosophy to make history when he restates the widely held opinion among French writers that: “books caused the revolution of 1789, books can undo it” (1970:15).

Such a notion may be alien to an English-speaking public, but it helps to underline an important cultural and historical difference. The tension present in McLelland’s formulation is not only binary in nature, but centered around a particular historic referent: the French Revolution of 1789. The existence of competing ideological camps within French literature and the positions of their respective texts in twentieth-century French literature as a whole demand a multi-faceted approach that can account for and understand the non-translation and translation of these texts into English.

1.2 Systems

In the same manner that Sapiro speaks of French literature as a field, encompassing practices and institutions as well as agents and texts, systems theory provides a means of analyzing texts and translation by taking into account extra-textual factors and texts themselves. A systems-based analysis of French literature is especially powerful for analyzing the intersection of translation, non-translation, and political
ideology. Under the umbrella of broader cultural systems, we may speak of the French literary system, the English-language literary system, or any number of literary systems defined by language or nationality. Central to the systems model is the observation that the positions and functions of literary texts shift. As Even-Zohar notes, every literary system experiences conflict between a canonized center, and a non-canonical periphery (1979:295). Furthermore, there is not just “one center and one periphery” within a literary system, or any cultural system, but a number of axes and strata (1979:293). As we have seen, political ideology constitutes one important dimension of French literary production in the twentieth century.

Subsequently, the political and ideological center of French literature since the Dreyfus Affair can best be described as comprising literary works either accepting or supporting the founding values of the French Republic. Intellectual and literary dissidence emerged as a counter-ideology beginning with Joseph de Maistre, who “fired the first shots” against liberté, égalité, and fraternité, and founded a literary tradition unbroken until the 1960s and arguably beyond (Davies 2002:15). I argue that this oppositional, right-wing literary tradition constitutes one of several peripheral traditions within French literature. At various periods of this political and cultural struggle, Republican values and ideology lost viability and cultural capital among both voters and intellectuals. Such periods witnessed the flourishing of radical political formations as well as literary works and publications attached to such movements. Although many

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10 Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821) was a writer and diplomat born in the Duchy of Savoy to a family of French noble extraction. As a writer and thinker, he exercised considerable literary and ideological influence long after the Revolution.
committed writers pledged support for the Republic or progressive values, no small amount of intellectuals embraced anti-liberalism.

Systems theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s constructions recognize the importance of both institutions and individuals such as critics, professors, and other individual agents collectively responsible for “patronage” in shaping literature and translation (Lefevere 1992:16-17). The notion of patronage can complement center-periphery relations when studying which texts are chosen or not chosen for translation. As André Lefevere explains, factors such as ideology, the dominant “poetics” of a literature, and support from critics, writers, and readers are all important in determining which texts are translated (1985: 226-29). Significantly, Lefevere also claims: “Patronage is usually more interested in the ideology of literature than in its poetics,” yet this claim is not necessarily a law (227).

Because I intend to study the translation and non-translation of French texts into English, both the English-language and French literary systems will be considered. At certain points, reference will also be made to the linguistic and national traditions. Noting which texts were translated into Spanish, and when, provides supplementary support for arguments made about translation from French into English. Importantly, the considerable amount of scholarship about literary translation in Francoist Spain and under other totalitarian regimes ensures that readers can refer to cited works when such comparisons are made.

In his *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* Israeli translation theorist Gideon Toury presents means of identifying translational norms and trends by studying translations and other texts. For Toury, the texts that surrounds a translated text, including
translation commentary, reviews, and other paratextual material, make up “extra-textual sources” (Toury 2005:87-88) that can also be approached as “rewritings” (Lefevere 1985:233). When conducting descriptive translation work, researchers can analyze these materials in order to shed further light on why something is translated, and how the translation is carried out. As a result, later sections will consider secondary texts as well as primary source texts. Interpretations, commentaries, and pieces of criticism exist in relationship to a translated text, but as Gideon Toury asserts, “non-translations comprise part of the context of translations, as well as vice versa” (2005:85). Secondary literature about the works of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier does exist in English, but only a fraction of each writer’s entire body of work has been translated from French into English. Considering gaps in translation can contribute to identifying and describing translational norms.

All further discussion of norms will employ Gideon Toury’s definitions of translational norms. Preliminary norms of translation, according to Toury, include both a systematic “policy” of translation, as well as the “directness” of the translations produced (53). A policy is made up of the myriad elements that dictate what is to be translated. For our purposes here, the systematic patterns of translation from French into English are of special interest because they determine which texts appear in English and subsequently how French literature is perceived and constructed in an Anglophone context. On a lower linguistic and aesthetic level, “operational norms” are also worthy of investigation. These norms direct how a text is translated (Toury 58). Norms can easily be assimilated with Lefevere’s definitions of poetics and patronage to provide tools to consider translation at the macro and micro levels.
1.3 Translation and Representation

In Jean-Philippe Mathy’s *French Resistance: The French-American Culture Wars* (2000), the author identifies the dehistoricization of French thought and “a highly specific kind of literary and linguistic culture” as being responsible for Anglo-American misunderstandings and occasional antagonism towards much of French literature and thought in the academy and beyond. Translation can serve to introduce or influence a literary system, and it can also create a false image of a literary tradition. Such representations need not be instituted by direct censorship or ideological resistance. The poetics of a source literature, in this case English-language literature, can shape the translation and image of a foreign-language text.

Is the image of France as “the land of Sartre, Voltaire, and Foucault” (Mathy 2000:44) a simplification that neglects to take into account a significant competing literary and intellectual tradition? To answer in the affirmative would not challenge the literary merits and importance of figures such as André Malraux, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. Importantly, these writers themselves were in frequent intellectual dialogue with Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier. As examples of highly translated writers writing from an ideologically central position, Sartre and others can also serve as controls for analyzing how translational norms and patronage operate. The mutual literary and intellectual exchanges between these two camps illustrate the utility of models from systems theory for approaching translation and non-translation.

In *The Translator’s Invisibility* (2008), Lawrence Venuti demonstrates that strategies of fluent and transparent translation have long prevailed in the Anglo-American
literary tradition. Readers expect fluent translations, and the dominance of transparent translation in the marketplace “influences publishing decisions to exclude foreign texts that preempt transparency” (Venuti 2008:97). Moreover, translated literature constitutes a small percentage of English-language publications in comparison with other national literatures including French (Assouline 2011:15). Market imperatives are also compounded with a series of choices and discourses that influence the translation of a text from one foreign language and a foreign culture into another. Often the source text is “rewritten in domestic dialects and discourses, registers and styles, and this results in the production of textual effects that signify only in the history of the domestic language and culture” (Venuti 2000: 471).

The assertions made above establish that the mode of littérature engagée is the product of traditions and events originating in France. Therefore, this literary tradition must be understood in relation to both social and historical phenomena as well as the formal elements of French modernism. The centrality of committed literature in France should not be ignored, nor should the visibility of those committed writers devoted to the political right. How does the absence of a parallel tradition in English-language literature affect the translation or non-translation of politically committed writers from the right? How does the absence of a robust literary right influence the translation of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier on both the low and high levels?

To translate a French right-wing author is not only to translate across languages,
but to attempt to traverse a gap of historical difference. France possesses an influential tradition of anti-liberal right-wing thought and culture. In contrast, the United States and the United Kingdom could not claim such a tradition. If a translation should seek to successfully communicate an understanding of a text to a target-audience that is similar to the experience of the source text as understood by the source community of readers, Venuti argues that “this communication will always be partial, both incomplete and inevitably slanted towards the domestic scene” (2000:473). The analysis of such slants constitutes an important tool for describing and explaining the translated texts addressed in the case studies presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

In addition to comparing a target text with a source text, the consideration of other texts in the source culture can also be a powerful means for investigating translation and representation. Within translation studies, the study of translated literature must take into account the ideological and cultural systems in dialogue with the source text as well as the target text. To do otherwise would be to “fail to pay attention to the systemic relations of the translated text to other texts within that system, treating it instead as if it were an isolated phenomenon” (Van den Broeck 1985:55). The position of a literary text in its domestic culture is not always the same in the source culture as its translation may be in the target culture. Tymoczko highlights the several layers of metonymy that exist in any literary text (1999). A piece of literature exists in relation to texts that precede it, and it also contains a wealth of references and allusions to values, concepts, and texts that are often bound by culture and time (Tymozcko 1999:45).

The cultural and ideological material inscribed in many of the works of the three authors treated in this paper all poses significant barriers to fluent translation for a
number of reasons. For example, Roger Nimier’s *Le Hussard bleu* can be read as a revisionist challenge to the Resistance myth. Furthermore, the coarse dialogue and cynical anti-hero of the novel channel both Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle. How should one understand and approach the vulgarity of the novel and the ambiguous treatment of both Vichy sympathizers and Resistance fighters?

The meditations upon the French resistance and the gestures made towards previous generations of right-wing writers found in *Le Hussard bleu* are just two possible considerations that pose translation problems on the high and low levels. How should such a text be translated? Why should it be translated? How is it read in an English-language context? When literary translation does occur, asymmetries in historical and cultural experience between domestic and foreign become prominent. Subsequently, both high-level and low-level translation problems arise and must be navigated by translators.

1.4 Conclusions

This chapter has touched upon the highly ideological nature of twentieth-century French literature by focusing on the literary and sociological phenomenon of *engagement*. In addition to constituting a major mode of writing in twentieth-century French letters, the origins and the development of the committed writer demonstrate how deeply rooted the *littérateur engagé* and *engagement* are in French literary culture. The visibility and prevalence of *engagement* never reach similar heights in most English-speaking cultures except Ireland. This asymmetry, as well as the historical and

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13 In *The Vichy Syndrome* (1991), Henry Rousso addresses the legacy of Vichy France and collaboration in collective memory and culture. Rousso explains that until the 1970s, myths of national unity and resistance during the German occupation of France held overwhelming influence and institutional support.
ideological context of literary works produced by writers identifying with one of the two competing ideological poles after the French Revolution, presents high-level translation concerns and makes a systems approach to studying the translation and non-translation of the French literary right particularly appropriate. A systems approach to translation also recognizes the significance of secondary literature and non-translation in addition to translations proper.

Even though the image of the leftist intellectual predominates in conventional Anglophone conceptions of French literature, the writers addressed in this thesis—Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier—are testament to the fact that the same culture that spawned the righteous anger of Zola’s “J’accuse…!” and Sartre’s littérateur engagé, also witnessed the prominence of writers for whom liberty, equality, and fraternity were, to quote D.H. Lawrence, a “three-fanged serpent” (as cited in Field 1991:216).
CHAPTER 2
CHARLES MAURRAS, PIERRE DRIEU LA ROCHELLE, AND ROGER NIMIER: THE LITERARY RIGHT IN CONTEXT

Charles Maurras (1868-1952), Pierre Drieu la Rochelle (1893-1945), and Roger Nimier (1925-62) all wrote during periods when contemporary social and political issues were at the forefront of French intellectual life. Implicit and explicit reactions to events such as the Dreyfus Affair, World War I, World War II, the French Resistance, and collaboration with the Nazis color the work of all three authors. All literary production may be considered to be grounded in particular historical moments, but for these writers history was instrumental in shaping their thought and literature. Interpreting and translating these three authors necessitate an understanding of French literature, culture, and history, perhaps even more so than less explicitly ideological authors.

Beyond championing right-wing ideology during three significant periods of twentieth-century French history, Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier also represented different aspects of the political right in France. Thus, we must ask about the different currents of right-wing thought and literature represented by these authors. To what extent was their work engagé, and how did they practice littérature engagée? What were some hallmarks of their literary production? Below I address these contextual questions in order to furnish background information relevant to the case studies included in Chapter 3-5, as well as to justify my selection of these particular writers for study.

An important question to address is whether or not a “right-wing literature” can be defined in terms beyond political identification. Existing scholarship in political typology and literary history makes it apparent that a continuous but diverse right-wing
literary tradition has existed in France since the years following the French Revolution. This chapter will first address the continuity of the literary right in France and the emergence of literary engagement. Second, I will survey existing academic work that seeks to define and classify the literary right. Third, I will investigate the convergence of ideology and poetics, with special reference to Antoine Compagnon’s category of the “anti-modern,” which helps us to identify thematic and stylistic similarities that unite Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier beyond the confines of mere political identification. Finally, I provide an overview of the positions of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier within the larger family of twentieth-century right-wing writers.

2.1 An Enduring and Multifaceted Literary Right

When Jean-Marie Le Pen (1928-), the founder of the Front National, recited the poem “L’Enfant Honneur” by the collaborationist writer Robert Brasillach at a political convention in 2012, his decision was more than an act of political theater. Recent studies (Davies 2002; Rémond 2005; Goodliffe 2012) have confirmed the continuity of the French right and far-right from the time of the French Revolution to the rise of the Front National in the latter parts of the twentieth century. Le Pen’s nod towards a fascist writer was emblematic of the close ties over time between rightist writers and the political formations sympathetic to their views.

The beginnings of intellectual resistance to French republicanism and its legacy can be traced to the counter-revolutionary Savoyard Joseph de Maistre (1753-1851), whose reactionary and theological understanding of the Revolution differed from the
conclusions drawn by Burkean conservatism and its descendants (Viereck 2006). The heirs of the counter-revolution could claim a number of writers as their own, but progressive nineteenth-century writers in France best anticipated some of the features that would define littérature engagée in the following century. David Coward observes that it was writers allied to progressive causes “who had helped unleash a revolution in 1830, acquired a social conscience by the 1840s, resisted the repressive Second Empire and thereafter threw themselves into religious, philosophical, political and social quarrels which lasted beyond 1900” (Coward 2004:215).

Nonetheless, a writer recognizing his or her political responsibility and social status does not equate directly with literary engagement. Scholars such as Benoît Denis (2000) and David L. Schalk (1979) stress the modern and total quality of such engagement. Denis observes that prior to the late nineteenth century, writers did not yet conceive of a “pure” literature that would stand in contrast to committed literature (2000:27). In other words, literary engagement emerged as a deliberate choice and an implicit theory or philosophy of literature. The committed writer possesses a “unified and unequivocal” vision of literature’s function and role in society, which opposes contending visions of literature such as “art for art’s sake” (Denis 2000:28).

Victor Hugo’s (1802-85) vision of the poet as a prophet and socially responsible figure led him to become increasingly sympathetic to liberal causes following the revolution of 1848. On the other side of the political spectrum, François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) transposed the counter-revolution’s pessimism and

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14 In contrast to Edmund Burke’s (1729-97) “conservative” and empirical defense of constitutional monarchy and tradition, de Maistre’s reactionary position defends monarchy, order, and religious traditionalism on religious and sociological premises. For further comparison of the two figures, see Lebrun 2001:153-72.
skepticism about progress onto the aesthetic plane, effectively providing the counter-revolutionary camp with a poetic inventory (Bercegol 2011:125-29). These are just two examples showing that a writer’s identification with the right or the left transcended mere political affiliation by often correlating with a set of themes, values, and ideas about the practice and role of literature.

Efforts to stamp out the populist and progressive impulses in the revolution of 1848 and the merciless repression of the socialist Paris Commune of 1871 elicited some responses among prominent artists and writers, but non-engagement remained the norm for the literary field. The barely suppressed conflict between left and right that had been developing over the final decades of the nineteenth century finally reemerged with renewed vigor in the Dreyfus Affair. Beyond mobilizing figures on the left to flock to Dreyfus’s defense and those on the right to defend his conviction, the Dreyfus Affair heralded a new social role for the writer and his writing. Émile Zola’s “J’accuse…” became a prototype for committed writing because its argument appealed to non-empirical values such as truth and justice. In a parallel fashion, anti-Dreyfusard writers such as Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) invoked the nation and “national security” in their defense of Dreyfus’s conviction (Winock 1997:44).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, nationalists influenced by the literary dictates of Maurras and Barrès equated the valorization of French Classicism with defense of the “French genius.” This camp of cultural nationalists deemed pure art, which was championed by the Nouvelle Revue Française (hereafter NRF), to be unpatriotic and

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15 Maurice Barrès was a politician and writer whose best-known novel Les Déracinés (1897) presents his organic brand of nationalism by celebrating “rooted” individuals and denigrating cosmopolitan influences. As a nationalist ideologue and novelist, his anti-Semitism, populism, ultra-nationalism and use of the roman à these were influential for many, including Pierre Drieu la Rochelle.
insufficiently French (Sapiro 2010:71). Whereas the Dreyfus Affair spurred writers to take action in the name of abstract values, the post-World War I period witnessed individuals rallying to political formations, especially the French Communist Party on the left and Maurras’s Action Française on the right (Denis 2000:232). The victory of France in the Great War emboldened the nationalist right, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 evoked a sense of revolutionary fervor, drawing World War I soldiers such as Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) to the causes of pacifism, socialism, and internationalism (Winock 1997:170-74).

Important institutions in the French literary field after the Great War such as the NRF defended the autonomy of literature against the right’s perceived abuse of writing as a tool for advancing nationalism, militarism, and xenophobia (Ziolkowski 2015:48). The NRF under André Gide (1869-1951) and later Jean Paulhan (1884-1968) strove to steer the publication into a non-partisan direction. Even after the mounting threats of fascism in Italy and Germany prompted many prominent intellectuals to support the Marxist left or a broader popular front against the far-right, the NRF continued to publish a variety of opinions, as illustrated by the inclusion of both Leon Trotsky’s and Drieu la Rochelle’s respective evaluations of National Socialism in 1934 (Winock 1997:223-33).

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16 Founded as a nationalist anti-Dreyfusard political group in 1899, Action Française became arguably the most influential right-wing nationalist group until the 1930s. Under the leadership of figures such as Maurras and Léon Daudet (1867-1942), the organization published the daily literary and political newspaper Action Française.

17 The author of the war novel Le Feu (1916), Henri Barbusse (1873-1945) joined the French Communist Party in 1923 and became a celebrated anti-fascist and pacifist literary figure until his death.

18 The Nobel Prize winner André Gide (1869-1951) was one of the most prestigious figures in interwar French literature. His novels L’Immoraliste (1902), and Les faux-monnayeurs (1925) were formally innovative and challenged conventional mores. Despite his initial ambivalence towards the trend of commitment, works such as Voyage au Congo (1927) condemned French colonial injustices (Calle-Gruber 2001: 38,92).
works spanning genres and ideologies, the NRF stood at the center of the French literary field.

In the cultural avant-garde following World War I, the Surrealists advanced a radical vision of committed artistic expression that contributed to the identification of French literature with leftist politics (Winock 1997:182-83). Major Surrealists such as André Breton (1896-1966) and Louis Aragon (1897-1982) had ties to the French Communist Party and sought to reconcile the bourgeois figure of the avant-garde artist with communist politics by assigning a revolutionary role to literary production (Jurt 1995:19-20). The partisanship of intellectuals across the political spectrum during the interwar period led Julien Benda (1867-1956) to defend the intellectual’s rightful role as an intransigent defender of values and ideas above temporal interest in his influential La Trahison des clercs (1927).

Major domestic and international events including the crisis of February 6, 1934, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, and the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), all provoked strong responses from intellectuals on the left and right. The rising threat of fascism and the instability of the Third Republic during the 1930s were accompanied by the increasing polarization of French literature and the growing trend of engagement. Exemplary pieces of committed writing such as André Malraux’s La Condition humaine (1933), Paul Nizan’s Le Cheval de Troie (1935), Georges Bernanos’s Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune (1938), and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle’s Gilles (1939) all advanced

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19 The February 6 crisis of 1934 refers to the mass anti-parliamentary protest staged in Paris by a number of right-wing political groups and parties. Charles Maurras’s Action Française contributed a significant amount of protesters to the demonstration, which turned violent and resulted in 15 deaths. The crisis alarmed both the political left and center, who saw in the protest the potential for a fascist coup.
particular ideologies and responded to both domestic and international conflict and upheaval.

The defeat and subsequent occupation of France by Nazi Germany brought further shifts in the French literary field and witnessed the apogee of littérature engagée. Major publishers were subjected to the German censor, and collaborationist publications received patronage. The literary résistants who opposed German occupation and Nazi ideology rallied around clandestine publishing efforts such as Les Éditions de Minuit (Atack 1989:30). Notable figures including Louis Aragon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and François Mauriac contributed to the foundation of Les Lettres Françaises, a literary review appearing from 1942 to 1944, which was associated with the Comité National des Ecrivains (hereafter CNE) and the French Communist Party (Atack 1989:34-35).

After the liberation of France in 1945, the CNE and other left-wing organizations began a process of purging collaborationist and Vichy intellectuals in a process known as the épuration (purge).20 In the case of a few high-profile figures such as Maurras and Brasillach, the two writers’ respective support of Vichy and collaboration led to trials. Others, namely Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Paul Morand, fled abroad to escape the consequences of their wartime activities. For those deemed ideologically suspect, the CNE blacklists served to morally discount authors themselves and exclude their work from publication or circulation. Writers who never publicly expressed sympathy with collaboration but had ties to right-wing circles, such as Marcel Aymé and Henry de

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20 The CNE was founded 1941 as an intellectual arm of the Resistance. Initially counting writers and academics from a wide range of backgrounds and affiliations, the group became progressively more subject to the dictates of the French Communist Party and its chief intellectuals. This polarization resulted in the resignation of many liberal and conservative Resistance figures from the group in the postwar years.
Montherlant (1895-1972), were also targeted by the CNE. Many rightist intellectuals and even résistance literary figures such as Jean Paulhan (1884-1968) criticized the intellectual épuration based upon their belief in the autonomy of literature, in the writer’s privileged status, and the condemnation of ideas as opposed to actions.

The moral and literary marginalization of French writers identifying with the political right remained uncontested until the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s when the unity of the postwar intelligentsia further dissolved and the dynamics of the Cold War influenced French discourse about communism (Dambre 2014:84). More significantly, a young group of writers unsullied by collaboration and later dubbed the Hussars, gathered around older right-wing writers to form publications and attempt a revitalization of the literary right. Marc Dambre explains that Nimier and his associates “would occupy the position of protest opposite the group at Sartre's Les Temps Modernes; and, with the prestige accorded to their lively early fiction, they would embody a possible renewal of inventiveness” (Dambre 2000:62).

2.2 Defining a Literary Right

Before proceeding to situate Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier in relation to the historical crises that shaped their engagement, a consideration of what constitutes a right-wing literature is due. Both American and French surveys of right-wing thought and literature (Rémond 1969; Carroll 1995; Hewitt 2005) have examined these writers and their work. However, few have addressed the defining characteristics of right-wing literature, its relationship to broader political movements, and its reception by a general audience.

Perhaps best known as a dramatist and author of La Reine morte (1942), Montherlant’s representation of women was famously targeted by Simone de Beauvoir in The Second Sex (1949). Although he was closely associated with the political right, his refusal to resolutely join the Resistance or become a collaborationist added to his notoriety during the postwar épuration.

Marcel Aymé (1902-67) was a celebrated novelist, short story writer, and children’s writer whose much-lauded style spanned a range of genres and themes, from humorous tales to the blatant criticism of the épuration found in Uranus (1948).
have demonstrated the utility of genealogical and typological methodologies for identifying political and literary groups and subgroups. Following the Liberation of France from German occupation by Allied armies, institutions and individuals on the left quickly condemned collaborationists, Vichy supporters, and opportunists for their “intelligence with the enemy.” Such efforts extended beyond just moral condemnation and sought to convict such writers and marginalize them in the literary field. The *épuration*, of right-wing intellectuals also prompted writers and critics to question whether a right-wing literary sensibility existed, or if “right-wing literature” was constituted by nothing more than those texts and writers inscribed on the CNE blacklists. Moreover, after the defeat of Nazism and international fascism, could a right-wing literature resurface in opposition to the leftist paradigm inaugurated by Jean-Paul Sartre and others (Cresciucci 2011:73-74)? To use André Lefevere’s definition, can a “poetics” of the French right be identified?

René Rémond’s contribution to the study of the French right employs a genealogical and cultural approach to identifying its different strains (1969:30). An entire chapter of Rémond’s classic study is devoted to Maurras’s Action Française, which bears testament to the centrality of writers and publications in creating and disseminating ideologies. Analyzing Maurras’s writings and the ideology of Action Française affirms Rémond’s (1969) and Weber’s (1962) observation that “Maurras himself had come to politics by way of esthetics, and that his theories of society and politics had grown out of his criticism of literature” (Weber 1962:77). The close relationship between right-wing ideologies and literature, together with the observation that the French right was far from monolithic, serve as points of departure for investigating features of French right-wing
writing beyond the self-identification of the author.

Literary critics have attempted to identify a uniquely rightist sensibility in French letters. Alain Gérard Slama (1992) presents several key traits of the right-wing “temperament,” citing authors as varied as Maurras, Barrès, and Roger Nimier as examples. These traits include the following: an aversion to conflict, pessimism regarding progressive conceptions of history, a fatalistic “organic” worldview, and a tendency to view man as innately guilty (Slama 1992:808-33). Luc-Olivier d’Algange stresses the “aristocratic” quality of right-wing literature, and argues that for the right-wing writer “the most important thing is to escape mediocrity” (2000:106). In addition, the ethos of their texts can be embodied in the belief that “existence is only human for the sake of surpassing the human” (D’Algange 2000:106). When citing Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Simone de Beauvoir offers a less appreciative, but powerful evaluation of what she views as “one of the aristocratic dogmas of the right wing: one must prefer Beauty to men” (2012:158).

Richard Golsan responds to several of Slama’s assertions and identifies affinities between Henry de Montherlant (1895-1972) and younger postwar rightist writers, including Roger Nimier and the Hussars. Slama and de Beauvoir argue that the solipsism of the right-wing writer has a tendency to manifest itself in aphoristic monologues and a bitingly confident style, but Golsan emphasizes the ways in which several right-wing writers departed from such solipsism and responded to history (1997:270-74). His primary criticisms are aimed at essentialist ideological readings that fail to recognize the ways in which the thought and literature of successive generations of right-wing writers
from Barrès and Montherlant to Nimier evolved and were profoundly marked by historical events.

In spite of Golsan’s reservations about selected efforts to define or describe the literary right, he accepts the existence of many shared themes and stylistic hallmarks that extend from de Maistre to the Hussars. For example, the French right’s valorization of a “higher” value, whether it be Beauty, the Nation, or God, as well as a proclivity for dandyism and pessimism, are all cited by several observers. Formal manifestations of these tendencies include irreverent tones, self-confident ideological pronouncements, and the depiction of solitary heroes and anti-heroes in fiction. In relation to engagement, Sapiro remarks upon the use of idealized or historic heroes and settings by right-wing committed writers (2003:645). The aforementioned traits may not be exclusive to the right, but Antoine Compagnon identifies the close relationship between a school or style of writing he labels “anti-modern” with the political right (2005:10-11). Compagnon’s definition of the “anti-modern” provides another means of identifying commonalities between Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier while locating them in dialogue with left-wing committed writers.

2.2.1 The Anti-Modern

In Les Antimodernes (2005) Antoine Compagnon identifies a literary current of “anti-moderns” encompassing writers as disparate as Joseph de Maistre and Roland Barthes (1915-80). Rather than being a literary school in the traditional sense, the “anti-modern” is defined by thematic and aesthetic concerns that stand in contrast to prevailing definitions of the “modern.” In a later essay, Compagnon attempts to offer condensed
definitions of the anti-modern, including statements such as this: “The anti-moderns are not conformists of anti-modernity, but non-conformists of modernity” (2011:13-14). In more concrete terms, anti-modern writers recognize their own modern nature while expressing deep pessimism about the modern condition as expressed through a number of topical and stylistic features.

Compagnon elaborates on several of these impulses, including counter-revolutionary sympathies, antagonism towards Enlightenment values, pessimism about progress, a religious or metaphysical adherence to the doctrine of original sin, and the exaltation of the sublime. The first two of these concerns are embedded within French culture and history: Compagnon cites a number of writers to demonstrate the resilience of the French intelligentsia’s elitism and anti-democratic tendencies since the French Revolution (2005:36-43), as well as the frequent suspicion of or disdain for Enlightenment philosophy and its valorization of human reason (2005:57). Even though Compagnon acknowledges the existence of non-French anti-moderns, namely Thomas Stearns Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Thomas Mann, he ultimately concludes that the anti-modern tradition nonetheless remains “closely tied to a meditation on the history of France, on the century of Revolutions” (2011:15). For the purposes of this study, the anti-modern furnishes an additional means of considering the works of Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier while simultaneously accounting for their ideological convictions and recognizing possible artistic commonalities and differences that exist between these three writers.

Compagnon himself alludes to Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier briefly when considering possible manifestations of the anti-modern outside of his main objects of study in his 2005 book. Although he argues that the death of Drieu la Rochelle marked
the end of the long tradition of anti-modern literary dandies (2005:12), writers such as the group of Hussars led by Roger Nimier constitute other possible examples of more recent anti-moderns (2005:441). In response to Compagnon’s appellation, some critics have contested or affirmed the position of certain writers within the “anti-modern” schema. Although Compagnon voices his own reservations about Charles Maurras’s relation to the anti-modern literary tradition, Jean-Yves Pranchère (2011) argues that Maurras’s vitriolic attacks on liberalism and democracy could only originate from a decidedly anti-modern writer rather than a mere nostalgic.

2.3 From Maurras to Nimier, from Dreyfus to the Period after World War II

Drawing on Rémond’s political typology, Hewitt identifies several distinguishable currents of France’s twentieth-century literary right. Alongside adherents of Maurassian Classicism stood the younger and more radical “semi-dissident Maurassians” attracted to fascism, including nationalists under the influence of novelist and politician Maurice Barrès, and the less politically active but still ideologically suspect “reactionary bohemians” represented by figures such as Marcel Aymé and Louis-Ferdinand Céline (1996:8). Irrespective of the many factions of the French political right, Charles Maurras and his Action Française were instrumental in shaping right-wing thought and writing for generations.

2.3.1 Maurras and Action Française

Together with associate Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), Maurras was the most prominent right-wing littérateur in the first decades of the twentieth century. Maurras’s
group Action Française and the movement’s newspaper, also named *Action Française*, served as the most important organ for nationalist and anti-liberal opinions from their inception in 1899 until the end of World War I. Central to Action Française’s ideology was Maurras’s Classicism and devotion to the values of order, good taste, and monarchy. Maurras advanced these concerns and his vision of a “Classical, Catholic, monarchist” (Thibaudet 1913:355) France primarily through essays and political journalism, but also wrote several collections of poetry. In his criticism, Maurras privileged his elitist concept of taste and also voiced his opinion that criticism carried the creative power of other genres. His poetry combined his early attachment to Symbolism with his highly personal enthusiasm for his native Provence. However, it was his literary-cum-political doctrine that made him the French right’s intellectual authority.

Maurassianism was founded on Maurras’s dual admiration for the French Classical tradition of Racine (1639-99) and the positivism of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). For adherents of Action Française, Classicism was also the antithesis to the Romantic tradition originating in Germany. Conflating national identities with literary movements leads Murat to note that “the question of classicism before being literary was therefore political and national” (Murat 2007:316). In contrast with Catholic writers such as Georges Bernanos or François Mauriac, Maurras’s support for Catholicism was less a religious stance than a nationalist stance, but religion would emerge as a theme in his later poems published shortly before his death.²² Action Française viewed Catholicism

²² Georges Bernanos (1888-1948) was a novelist and essayist whose Catholic and anti-liberal views were highly influential in right-wing culture. Initially an adherent of Maurras, Bernanos distanced himself from the far-right and became a conservative proponent of the Resistance.

François Mauriac (1885-1970) received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952, and was best known for his novel *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (1927). Like Bernanos, Mauriac broke with the right on account of the Spanish civil war, and later became a Resistance figure and an advocate for moderation and reconciliation during the *épuration.*
and the Church as a central part of French identity, opposed to both democratic “disorder” and Protestant Germany (Dard 2013:107-08). In a similar fashion to assimilating Catholicism into a modern nationalist doctrine, Maurras advocated a monarchist program that did not appeal to nostalgia but to reason and nationalism.

Among Maurras’s inner circle of devotees were several notable intellectuals including the journalist and novelist Léon Daudet (1867-1942), the literary critic Henri Massis (1886-1970), and the historian Jacques Bainville (1879-1936). Although they could claim little success in concrete politics, Maurras and his group effectively rejuvenated the French right—especially in terms of cultural vitality—and anticipated later forms of nationalism and fascism, as Sternhell (1978) has observed. Maurras’s prose, constant defense of French literature and culture, as well as the high quality of the newspaper Action Française won admiration from unlikely figures ranging from Marcel Proust to André Malraux. The master and his movement lamented the defeat of France in World War I to Maurras’s “Teutonic” enemies, and several of the movement’s younger intellectuals died in action during WWI.

Maurras and Action Française remained influential until the end of World War II, but the period after World War I represented a new stage in the convergence of literature and politics. Upon returning from the battlefields of Europe, “intellectuals and artists passed from witnessing to engagement, from memories of war to political action” (Touret 2000:193).

2.3.2 Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, the Rise of Commitment, and Fascism
In the midst of an inter-war France plagued by civil unrest stemming from economic depression and an unstable parliamentary system, the Surrealists were among the first to advance a politically revolutionary role for literature, taking their cue from the Dadaists in Switzerland. After earning recognition for his war poems, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle developed close ties with the Surrealists.\footnote{Drieu’s collection of poems \textit{Interrogations} (1917), was published in the \textit{Nouvelle Revue Française} and was positively received by a number of critics. It also provoked controversy for a number of poems expressing admiration for German soldiers.} He broke with the Surrealists due to their inefficacy and their rapprochement with the French Communist Party in 1927. Rejecting the perceived impotence of monarchism and traditional conservatism, Drieu lauded André Malraux’s adventurous literary commitment and sought to synthesize the latter’s \textit{engagement} with a radical form of “fascist socialism” that was more revolutionary than conservative.

In opposition to the older and more established literary figures surrounding Maurras—including several Académie Française members—writers including Drieu la Rochelle and Louis-Ferdinand Céline embraced the literary modernism of their contemporaries. Several of Drieu’s novels depict figures comparable to Malraux’s action heroes or explore twentieth-century decadence, albeit from an anti-democratic and elitist perspective. Perhaps the most significant of all inter-war writers identifying with the right-wing tradition, Louis-Ferdinand Céline gained acclaim for \textit{Journey to the End of the Night} (1932). Because of this milestone in twentieth-century French literature and his controversial pamphlets, much scholarly attention has been accorded to the man, his oeuvre, and his controversial anti-Semitism (Carroll 1995:86-87). In lieu of following the prescriptions of Classicism, Céline’s novel exploited all registers of the French language.
and offered uncompromising commentary on war and society, delivered with both humor and cynicism.

In both politics and literature, Céline, Drieu, and Brasillach strayed from the earlier generation of Maurrassian-influenced writers who became increasingly conservative and less committed to political action (Weber 1962:530). French fascists such as Drieu accepted Maurras’s anti-egalitarianism, fiery rhetoric, and disdain for democracy but eschewed monarchy, nation, and order in favor of anti-materialism, a cult of action, and ambitions for an anti-American and anti-Soviet Europe. This generational divide became concrete before World War II and after France’s fall to Nazi Germany. Most of the older intellectuals centered around Action Française opposed Nazi Germany during the 1930s and supported the Vichy regime following France’s defeat, while the younger generation of far-rightists sought rapprochement with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during the interwar period and subsequently favored collaboration. This latter group of French fascists rejected the “conservative” nationalism of Action Française and deemed it insufficiently revolutionary (Shields 2007:30-4). Maurras and his long-time associates including Léon Daudet and Henri Massis defended Vichy and Pétain on anti-German grounds. By contrast, the younger dissidents such as Brasillach or Rebabet advocated full collaboration with the Germans in anticipation of the projected Nazi New Order.

In spite of some similarities with his contemporaries, to group Céline with the other notorious literary anti-Semites even poses problems for David Carroll in his study of French Literary Fascism. Carroll acknowledges that unlike Drieu or Brasillach, Céline exhibited a “lack of political sophistication,” and possessed little personal or professional
investment in right-wing publishing and politics (1995:13). Moreover, Céline’s anti-Semiticism was “extreme” and acerbic enough to distinguish it from “the self-proclaimed ‘rationalism’ and ‘restraint’ of French literary fascists in general” (1995:13). For these reasons, Drieu is more readily identifiable as a littérateur engagé in the tradition of his left-wing counterparts than Céline. Furthermore, in comparison to the writers considered in my thesis, Céline’s reputation in French letters is undisputed. The marginal position of Drieu la Rochelle, especially in an English-language context, and his status as a committed writer both contribute to making Drieu an analogous figure to Maurras and Nimier. Therefore, in order to preserve congruence among the three case studies of this thesis, I have chosen the work of Drieu la Rochelle as being representative of French literary fascism.

Collaborators such as Robert Brasillach or Lucien Rebatet (1903-72) were primarily associated with journalistic activity, or with texts possessing “temporal capital” (Sapiro 2003:643), which denotes the accumulation of resources falling outside the strict limits of the literary field such as wide dissemination and support from political groups. Drieu, Maurras, and Nimier also produced such work, but gained attention for their works of symbolic capital. For Drieu and Nimier, the primary means of practicing engagement were the novel and essay. For Maurras it was the essay, and secondarily journalism and poetry. Moreover, Drieu la Rochelle’s own conception of literature and engagement made him a reference point for postwar writers who positioned themselves against the dominant literary and political paradigms. Marc Dambre explains that “for the Hussars, Drieu la Rochelle certainly symbolized a manner of being in literature” (1995:115). Rather than shaping later writers such as Nimier in terms of political identification, he
exercised influence through his mystique and status as a committed writer.

2.3.3 Roger Nimier, the Postwar Hussars

On account of his age, Roger Nimier only briefly participated in World War II, and did not begin his career as a writer until after the war, thereby distancing him from his chief literary influences: “Montherlant, Aymé and Bernanos, Drieu and Malraux” (Carroll 1996:108). In the same article where Bernard Frank deemed Nimier a “fascist,” the critic recognized the stylistic and thematic singularity of Nimier’s signature 1950 novel Le Hussard bleu, which subsequently lent its name to the literary group “The Hussars” (1993:52-4). This etiquette was rejected by the very writers deemed to belong to the school, but this did not deter critics and literary historians from labelling Nimier, Antoine Blondin (1922-91), and Jacques Laurent (1919-2000) as Hussars on account of their shared youth, irreverent style, and anti-leftist convictions.

In Nimier’s own words, he belonged to the generation of young men who “were twenty in 1945.” Coming of age in the aftermath of the war meant that this generation of youth would have to shoulder the political and social consequences of the war and German occupation, as well as wrestle with historical and spiritual uncertainties. Disillusionment and cynicism about both collaboration and the Resistance symbolized Nimier’s lack of nostalgia for collaboration and fascism proper. By recognizing as untenable the position of clinging to the collaborationist and fascist right, the idiosyncratic quality of Nimier and his fellow Hussars signaled the emergence of a “young right” that attempted to break with the extremist positions of the previous
generation as well as the dominant existentialist discourse of postwar French literature and ideology (Cresciucci 2011:83).

Margaret Atack (1989) views Nimier’s works of fiction such as *Les Épées* and *Le Hussard bleu* as more mimetic representations of Occupied France than later idealized visions of history. The *épuration*, the Resistance myth, and the ascendancy of Charles de Gaulle may have given the illusion that a unified France with morality on its side resisted both the Vichy and Nazi regimes, but the reality of occupation was much more complex. Following the controversies and divisions sparked by the war in Algeria, Rousso observes that “the time had come for Gaullism to leave its troubled past behind and to establish its legitimacy on a sublimated version of history” (1991:82). The “Gaullist myth” cemented De Gaulle’s status as the French Liberation personified and simultaneously ignored divisions within wartime France, obscured the culpability of Vichy France for complicity in genocide, and diverted attention from De Gaulle’s own political debacles and severe human rights abuses.

Blondin’s *L’Europe buissonnière* (1949), and Laurent’s *Les Corps tranquilles* (1948) also address the topics of collaboration, resistance, and history with similar daring but in different styles: Blondin opts for burlesque lightness, whereas Laurent adopts dizzying panorama. But what unites the three core “Hussars” is a clear resistance to official narratives, and works markedly different from the other major French literary currents of the 1950s and 1960s, existentialism and the *nouveau roman*. The year 1962 is an appropriate end date for the Hussars as a literary school because it coincides with both Nimier’s death and the publication of Alain Robbe-Grillet’s *Pour un nouveau roman* (1963). In his collection of writings, Robbe-Grillet adopts the term “nouveau roman” to
describe the novelistic experimentation that had first emerged in the 1950s, thereby providing the movement with a manifesto-like text (Robbe-Grillet 2013:8-10).

Significantly less scholarly attention has been given to Nimier in English than to Charles Maurras or Drieu la Rochelle. Indeed, the past three decades have witnessed a steady increase in the amount of academic research devoted to Nimier and the Hussars in France. After a fatal automobile accident in 1962, the leader of the French postwar literary right passed into history. His tragic and theatrical end prompted critics to draw one more parallel between Nimier and other major right-wing figures. Marc Dambre states that the “engagement of Drieu la Rochelle was the means through which the Hussars were schematically identified with fascism. Political bilateralism, one of the dominant characteristics of the intellectual landscape, led to this polemical radicalization” (1995:114). Despite Nimier’s rejection of Sartrean engagement, Gisèle Sapiro rightfully classifies the former’s pretense of “art for art’s sake” in his novels as a form of right-wing commitment (2000:335). Furthermore, Marc Dambre notes that the nouveau roman succeeded in separating literature from politics in a manner the Hussars only pretended to do.

2.4 Conclusions

From the immediate post-Dreyfus years when Charles Maurras began his career as a writer and political agitator to the death of Roger Nimier in a car crash in 1962, the French literary right could claim a number of committed writers as their own. Their allegiances ranged from the Catholic mysticism of Georges Bernanos to the unabashed fascism of Robert Brasillach. The crises of the Dreyfus Affair, the unstable democracy of
the Third Republic, World War II, and the Occupation spurred these writers to confront the social issues of their day with the same literary means as that of their ideological opponents. Rather than speaking of a unified French right, historians such as Rémond speak of either different French rights, or of the French right wing as a whole. Nevertheless, in spite of sectarian differences, a number of critics identify a shared thematic repertory that unites many members of the multifaceted French right. The following chapters will touch upon how a number of texts exhibiting these features have been translated or not translated as the case may be.

Scholars and critics recognize the continuity of the literary right and consider Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier to all be exemplary of their respective ideologies. The “Classical, Catholic, [and] monarchist” (Thibaudet 1913:355) prescriptions found in Charles Maurras’s writings were influential for decades of French nationalists. After witnessing the nightmare of trench warfare Pierre Drieu la Rochelle came to the opposite conclusions of the majority of his literary peers by embracing fascism as a solution to Europe’s disillusionment. The insolence of Roger Nimier’s characters not only challenged the prevailing existentialist model of engagement, but also influenced later works that reflected on the memory of the German Occupation, such as Patrick Modiano’s novel *La Place de l’Etoile* (1968) and Louis Malle’s 1976 film *Lacombe, Lucien*. Notably, all three of these writers became mythologized in their own ways to both admirers and detractors: Maurras was the incendiary but erudite paternal figure of the far-right; Drieu was the disaffected bourgeois dreaming of an anti-democratic “regeneration”; Nimier was the young dandy whose nostalgia and irreverence
masked a sense of disillusionment and resentment towards postwar France and its loss of prestige.

This chapter has identified some of the main themes of the respective œuvres of Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier while surveying their ideological positions and significance in twentieth-century French literary history. Both high-level considerations such as engagement and the French right-wing heritage converge with the features of the anti-modern tradition to make these writers signal in ways bound to historical and cultural particularities. These particularities exist as obstacles to the ready comprehension of these authors in an English-language context. This background information provides a foundation for understanding the slants and asymmetries that occur in the translation of their works from French into English, as well as for understanding why much of their work remains untranslated.
CHAPTER 3

CHARLES MAURRAS

The two previous chapters provided historical and theoretical grounding for discussing the translation of works by Charles Maurras (1868-1952), Pierre Drieu la Rochelle (1893-1945), and Roger Nimier (1925-62) into English. In addition to identifying the centrality of right-wing writers in twentieth-century French literature, the importance of literary engagement in French literature was contrasted with its lesser visibility in English-language literatures. As mentioned in chapter 1, a systems approach to translation is adapted to studying disparities relating to literary history and ideology. Within a systems model, the twentieth-century French literary right constitutes an ideological counter-tradition with no direct parallel in English-language literatures. Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrated however, that the French literary right is far from monolithic, and Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier are representative of three successive generations and ideological subgroups of this broader literary current.

Because the works of Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier have been translated into English to differing degrees, and because the resulting texts were inevitably translated at various times and under distinct circumstances, each case raises particular questions relevant to a number of subtopics within translation studies. As a work informed by contemporary translation studies research, this thesis attempts to incorporate both macro-level and micro-level analysis by taking into account history, culture, and linguistic manipulation.

The treatment of each particular writer contains information regarding the author’s corpus, as well as critical pronouncements made by both French and English-
language scholars. Reference to movements, writers, and works originating in English-language literature is made in order to provide context for comparative analyses between different literary traditions. Observations about Maurras’s poetics also serve as bases for comparison between his work and the work of Drieu la Rochelle and Nimier. Furthermore, incorporating such critical material sheds light on the reception of an individual work and can also explain how and why a text is translated or not translated. After these preliminary considerations, the primary texts of discussion are introduced, and relevant concepts from translation theory are incorporated in the analyses.

The first case study considers the few English translations of the work of monarchist essayist, poet, and critic Charles Maurras, along with the abundant secondary material about this writer and ideologue in order to investigate the questions of gaps in translation, influence across literary systems, and patronage. Because translations of Maurras’s essays and poetry exist in English, both genres are included in this chapter.

3.1 Charles Maurras: His Image and Works

Charles Maurras (1868-1952) represents an ideal point of departure for exploring a series of modern right-wing littérateurs because he belongs to the first generation of twentieth-century French committed writers. Best known as the de facto leader of the monarchist group Action Française, Maurras serves as a bridge between nineteenth-century reactionaries and twentieth-century nationalists. The Provençal writer first gained notoriety as an anti-Dreyfusard polemicist, later earned a seat in the Académie Française, and even received attention from Charles de Gaulle, who famously pardoned Maurras for his pro-Vichy sympathies because of the writer’s age.
As a young man holding ambitions of becoming a literary critic, Maurras frequented avant-garde circles in the late 1880s, but then attached himself to the école romane movement, founded by the disaffected Symbolist poet Jean Moréas (1856-1910) in 1891 as a reaction to the perceived anarchic social and poetic tendencies of other prominent Symbolists. The values of Moréas and his circle “were clearly stated from the beginning as anti-Romantic in temperament, nationalist in inspiration, and classically oriented and formal in poetic technique” (McGuinness 2015:189). The young Maurras readily embraced these positions, originating in a critique of Symbolism, and grafted on to them his enthusiasm for the positivism of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and the elitism of Ernest Renan (1823-92) in order to forge an ideology that resonated with the right-wing for generations after the Dreyfus Affair (Carroll 1995:96). The Dreyfus Affair furnished an ideal platform for Maurras’s monarchist, elitist, and xenophobic views, which later crystallized in the ideology of nationalisme intégral or “integral nationalism” propagated by Action Française.

In English-language scholarship on French political history, nationalism, and fascism, references to Maurras and Action Française abound. Surveys of general French literature and intellectual history, as well as works devoted to the French right, acknowledge Maurras’s influence as an organizer and figurehead but accord little attention to his writings. David Levy notes that “not a single study, in English, of Charles Maurras’ thought is yet to exist” (1974:108). Book-length works in English by Weber (1962) and Sutton (1982) provide a detailed history of Action Française and a study of the early relationship between Maurras and Catholic thinkers, respectively, but both lack in-depth discussion of Maurras’s essays or poetry. In his History of French Literature:
From Chanson de Geste to the Cinema, David Coward describes Maurras as “the leader of the intellectual French Right from the Dreyfus Affair to the end of the Second World War” (2002:318). He certainly was a public figure and polemicist, but both Rémond (1969) and Weber (1962) cite the undeniable “literary” foundation of Maurras’s ideas and Action Française as a movement.

To date, few translations of Maurras’s work exist in English even in light of his massive output and undeniable notoriety. What led to the small selection of translations of Maurras’s work into English? In what context were his works translated, and how were his ideas shaped and received? Inquiry into three different translations of Maurras’s work into English can answer these questions and also uncover overlooked intellectual exchanges from different periods of literary history. The first translation considered will be T.S. Eliot’s translation of Maurras’s “Prologue d’un essai sur la critique” as “An Essay on Criticism” in two parts for the January 1928 and March 1928 issues of The Monthly Criterion. Geoffrey Potocki’s translation of poems from La Musique intérieure (1925), titled Music Within Me (1946), is the second example of translation to be considered in this chapter. The last text to be considered, the anthology The French Right: From de Maistre to Maurras (1970), represents a much different instance of translation from the previous two examples, but offers insight into the reception and posterity of Maurras’s work in the English-speaking world.

3.2 Charles Maurras and English-language Modernism

The “aesthetic aloofness” of much early twentieth-century English-language high modernist literature remains recognized as one of the movement’s defining features
(Rainey 2005:xx-xxii). Charles Ferrall (2001) complicates this assumption by noting the tension between the modernist literary sensibilities of writers such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, and D.H. Lawrence and their “ambivalence” towards twentieth-century social and political developments (Ferrall 2001:2-4). As Ferrall notes, these same figures cloaked their misgivings about mass culture and increasing democratization behind the same “assertions of aesthetic autonomy” shared by other major modernist figures (2001:9). In contrast, Maurras and other representatives of the French literary right were far more transparent about the relationship between their literary output and political commitments. Despite this important difference, writers such as Maurras and Drieu la Rochelle were in contact and dialogue with leading English-language modernists, resulting in influences, critical essays, and occasionally translations.

In light of the formal experimentation of artists such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and others, it should come as no surprise that it was the core Symbolist poets who exercised significant influence upon Anglo-American modernism rather than the formally conservative poetry of Moréas or Maurras. However, the ideas developed in Maurras’s early critical essays did arouse interest and reflection. His essay *L’Avenir de l’intelligence* (1905) presents a radical rejection of Romanticism and the French Revolution, the vindication of literary activity against economic interests, and a call for action in the name of “Classical” values. To varying degrees, these cornerstones of Maurrassian thought informed the development of early English-language modernism and also contributed to the prevailing “Classicism” of the 1920s.

### 3.2.1 Maurras as Read by T.E. Hulme
The ideas of Charles Maurras proved to be one of the more unlikely foreign influences for the budding English modernist movement at the beginning of the twentieth-century by way of the English poet and essayist T.E. Hulme (1883-1917). In an essay from 1911, he cites Maurras’s distinction between Romanticism and Classicism as an inspiration behind his own conception of a Classicist literary modernism (1998:68). Hulme did not translate any of Maurras’s texts, but his distillation of Maurras’s ideas constitutes a major source for later discourse about modernist “Classicism.” Significantly, Hulme reduces Maurras’s historically inscribed conceptions of Classicism and Romanticism down to a more fundamental difference between these two artistic modes: Classicism entailed a belief in original sin and man’s limitations, while Romanticism was premised on man’s infinite possibilities. This reconfiguration reiterates Maurras’s identification of literary Romanticism with social chaos, but it does not trace its origins to the Germans and the Jews, nor does it make France and the French Revolution the sole points of reference.

By omitting the racial element of Maurras’s reading of culture, Hulme also mitigated the theory’s most blatant nationalist applications. And by freeing this model from the historic confines of France, Hulme anticipated the more radical “anti-humanism” that characterized his final philosophic writings. Nonetheless, his theoretical extrapolations engendered poems and poetic prescriptions more identifiable with the avant-garde than with the literary conservatism associated with Action Française.

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24 T.E. Hulme’s modest but influential output included some of the earliest Imagist poems in the English language. In addition to penning both poems and essays, Hulme sought to popularize French thinkers in English by lecturing on continental thought and translating works by philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and the revolutionary syndicalist theorist Georges Sorel (1847-1942).

25 Levenson (1984) shows that Hulme’s overlooked later texts espouse an even more radical critique of modernity and modern art by attacking the humanistic foundations of Classicism and Romanticism (80-102).
and its followers. The Englishman shares Maurras’s contempt for Romantic disorder and outlines what kind of poetry might combat the unfettered emotion of existing poetry. The rigor and linguistic precision required for the poetic transfer of images and impressions demand “dry, hard, classical verse” (1998:79). However, such “classical verse” does not necessarily equate to rigid formalism or the imitation of previous generations.

For Hulme, order and precision can exist in free verse poetry, and poems drawing from the experiences of modern life can convey aesthetic pleasure while simultaneously respecting man’s flawed, limited state. The carefully crafted free verse of Hulme’s brief poems bears little resemblance to Maurras’s poems cited below, but the case of Hulme exemplifies the reinterpretation of Maurras’s ideas in the service of an altered yet still related Classicism. Maurras and Action Française did not hold a monopoly on defining literary twentieth-century “Classicism,” but even after Hulme’s 1917 death, T.S. Eliot mobilized both men’s ideas in the service of his own Classicist program.

3.2.2 Maurras and T.S. Eliot

The writings and ideas of Charles Maurras most discernibly have an impact on English-language literature via the patronage of T.S. Eliot. In an American context, the critic and Harvard professor Irving Babbitt (1865-1933) recognized Maurras’s influence as a critic and applauded his condemnation of Romanticism. However, Babbitt criticized Maurras for “[mixing] up the whole question of classic and romantic art with politics” (1912:408). The French critic’s emphasis on tradition and artistic rigor later provided a fertile source of inspiration for the young Eliot, who read Maurras’s work at Babbitt’s behest. Asher (1993, 1998) and Scott (1995) both document Maurras’s influence on Eliot,
most readily recognizable in Eliot’s often cited identification as “classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic [sic] in religion” (1929:vii). This self-identification became increasingly important to the poet’s work as a critic and editor, especially in relation to *The Criterion*, which Eliot headed from 1922 to 1949. The translation “An Essay on Criticism” and various textual and extra-textual circumstances surrounding the essay reveal ways in which Maurras’s essay was employed and why it may have been chosen.

Eliot envisioned *The Criterion* as an outlet for the most important literary work originating in Europe and the United States, and therefore translations into English held a privileged position in the periodical’s pages (Ali 1984:11-12). Agha Shahid Ali (1984) documents how *The Criterion* went through several stages during its nearly 27 years of publication. The translations of Maurras’s text appear during the stage where Eliot attempted to devote increasing attention to ideology, as well as to advocate for a “classical revival,” echoing similar calls made by T.E. Hulme more than a decade earlier (1998:68).

For both Hulme and Eliot, Maurras’s work represented a model for politicizing aesthetics and steering English modernism’s ideological underpinnings. In essays such as “A Tory Philosophy,” Hulme mirrored Maurras’s call for right-wing literary engagement as found in *L’Avenir de l’intelligence*. For Eliot, however, “Classicism” indicates a less totalizing cultural politics ultimately aimed towards preserving art’s autonomy. Indeed, Rebecca Beasley observes that Eliot’s political and literary stances were consistently “conservative,” in contrast to his more radical peers; nonetheless Eliot played a much greater role in the institutionalization of English literary modernism and the solidification
of its relation with society (Beasley 2007:102).

3.3 “An Essay on Criticism”

In the same year as the posthumous publication of Hulme’s Speculations (1924), Eliot assimilated his predecessor’s vision of Classicism into that advanced by The Criterion. According to Levenson, “Eliot’s interpretation of Hulme amounts to a taming of Hulme” that reflects Eliot’s own opinions rather than those of Hulme (1984:209). Ostensibly part of The Criterion’s endeavor to propagate Classicism, Maurras’s “Prologue d’un essai sur la critique” appeared as “An Essay on Criticism” in two parts in 1928. Rather than providing an instance of a textual vacuum being filled by impersonal forces, Eliot’s translation of Maurras is an example of Edwin Gentzler’s observations that translators often “consciously select the texts they wish to translate because they want to use translations to affect certain changes in a culture” (Gentzler 1996:122).

The first half of Maurras’s essay displays notable affinities with Eliot’s own essay “The Function of Criticism” (1923). A statement such as “There is no good criticism which does not excel in both feeling and selecting,” express sentiments similar to those found in Eliot’s earlier essay. The first part of Eliot’s translation of Maurras’s essay closely follows the source text. Apart from minute stylistic embellishments, the most noticeable departures from the source text occur later and involve the use of pronouns, the implied audience of the text, and some of the polemical statements made in the original text.

When Maurras declares “Je n’admire pas de beaux vers pour l’effort qu’ils ont pu coûter à leur auteur. Je n’épargne point les mauvais pour la peine ou le temps qu’on a pris
à les faire.” (1968:22-3), Eliot converts the first-person singular into the first-person plural “we” (1928:12). Aside from expressing ambiguity about who is included in the collective first-person pronoun, the choice of “we” corresponds with its regular use in the “Commentaries” that preface many issues of The Criterion. These commentaries function as declarations of position and intent by remarking upon literary news or by making statements about The Criterion’s role and position in world literature. Although Eliot renders Maurras’s personal “je” into a telling “we” at several points of the text, elsewhere Eliot seems to emphasize the source text’s original audience and author. For example, he translates “Que cette tradition soit essentielle et naturelle à notre pays, c’est une opinion qui n’est guère contestable” (1968:41), as “That this tradition is essential and natural to France is an opinion which can hardly be contested” (1928:214). The “tradition” in question is the Classical tradition, which is an ideologically loaded term throughout Maurras’s writings.

Eliot preserves Maurras’s statements that equate France with Greco-Latin Classicism and those that uphold Racine and Corneille as models of the Classical spirit. In a translation that otherwise closely follows the source text, significant divergences between Eliot’s translation and the original only occur in the second half of the essay, whose content is more ideological in nature. Whereas the first part of Maurras’s essay seeks to defend the creative force of criticism, the later sections present a greater emphasis on the process of “selection” in evaluating literature, as well as Maurras’s essentialist belief that a nation’s literature arises from the innate makeup of a particular people. Eliot condemns this viewpoint in “The Function of Criticism,” (1923) and also seems to indirectly respond to it in “A Commentary,” (1928) which prefaces the March
1928 issue of The Criterion. In this brief introduction, he proclaims his vision of Britain as “the bridge between Latin culture and Germanic culture,” and also a bridge between Europe and the rest of the world (1928:194).

In the second half of the English translation of Maurras’s text, the translator elects to not translate the following:

Profondément nationales pour nos contrées, les lettres classiques exercent une très ferme séduction sur les étrangers : par leur grande ouverture de sentiment, elles peuvent être nommées cosmopolites, et elles le sont dans une forte mesure. On les goûte partout. Serait-il possible de les cultiver en tout lieu ? (1968:44-45)

Deeply national for our lands, Classical letters exercise a very firm seduction on foreigners; by the great openness of feeling, they can be named cosmopolitan, and they are so to a great extent. They are appreciated everywhere. Would it be possible to cultivate them anywhere? (My translation)

Maurras provides no clear answer to his question, but this passage displays one of the contradictory elements of his political and literary thought. Although he recognizes the universality of the Classical inheritance, he maintains that it remains organically tied to the descendants of Greco-Roman civilization. Maurras’s use of the first-person plural in this essay and others indicates either French people, or alternatively the Latin peoples of southern Europe. The translation of the text, its paratext, and the omission of this passage subtly shift Maurras’s profoundly national view of Classicism in order to provide a foreign example of the translator’s pan-European Classicist aspirations. Other passages from the essay, such as those alluding to “tradition,” bear a resemblance to ideas included in Eliot’s own essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) thereby giving voice to a critical stance aiming to resolve the tension between the individual writer and a given national literary tradition.
“An Essay on Criticism” may be the sole translated text by Maurras appearing in the context of English-language modernism, but it was more than a mere editorial caprice. In a letter to Maurras dated October 4, 1923, Eliot comments on the movement of texts and ideas from France to England several years before the publication of “An Essay on Criticism” in English. The letter expresses admiration for Maurras, but also comments on the relationship between ideology and reception.

Until now I believe that your astonishing body of works has been ignored and even suppressed in England. The reason being that the majority of the literary press is controlled by the Liberals, and effectively by groups that are on the political left and nearly openly republican. I even believe that the best-known and appreciated contemporary French writer among London’s intellectuals is – André Gide. That will give you an idea of the current situation. (2011:237 my translation)

Eliot’s lamentation over the English intelligentsia’s ignorance of Maurras also draws attention to the central—in relation to the periphery—position of André Gide in French literature, and the failure of English intellectuals to patronize Maurras because of their own beliefs.

By the late 1920s when Eliot published his translation “An Essay on Criticism,” Maurras’s ideas and works had not garnered any notable enthusiasm among English intellectuals, and it may even be argued that Eliot’s translation “An Essay on Criticism” appeared at an inopportune time. The cultural and political preeminence of Maurras and Action Française—the “Maurrassian Moment” (Jackson 2001:48-51)—was losing momentum in the final years of the 1920s.26 In an article immediately preceding the second half of the translated essay, Eliot assures his readers that Maurras’s “influence in

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26 A second surge in Maurras’s and Action Francaise’s stature occurred in 1934 and culminated in the mass right-wing anti-parliamentary protest known as the February 6 crisis. The violent demonstration, which took place in a major Parisian public square, galvanized anti-fascist vigilance and solidarity.
England has not yet begun” (1928:197) However, the very same text is a defense of Action Française against measures that damaged the group’s reputation, and that of its leader.

Eliot’s “The Action Française M. Maurras and Mr. Ward” responds to the priest Leo Ward’s misgivings related to Eliot’s enthusiasm for Maurras because of the latter’s inclusion on the Vatican’s list of prohibited books in 1926. The works of a number of other important French writers could also be found on the Church’s index, but unlike Maurras, figures such as Anatole France or André Gide were never viewed as Catholic intellectuals. The condemnation of Maurras by the church alienated the writer from two bastions of support in terms of both practical politics and ideological backing: Catholics who subscribed to Action Française and, more importantly, Catholic intellectuals (Dard 2011:358). Outside France the church’s verdict also had ramifications for the importation of Maurras’s writings. He could not be presented to audiences as a Catholic or Christian writer, as Eliot observed. These circumstances increased his misgivings about publishing more English-language versions of Maurras’s works that were planned to be translated by Eliot and other contributors to The Criterion.

Apart from Hulme and Eliot, no individual or institutional proponents of Maurrassian Classicism or criticism surfaced in the critical years of English-language modernism. And although Eliot did debate other figures regarding themes imported from Maurras, no parties were interested “in conducting an internecine ‘highbrow’ war” (Ayers 2004:383). Nonetheless, Maurras’s conception of Classicism clearly informed its adoption by Eliot, even though it was not the sole strain of “classicism” imported from
France. Frank Field argues that those writers and critics sympathetic to Eliot’s Classicism and anti-Romantic positions “were ultimately influenced by Maurras,” even if Eliot himself presents a “watered down” rewriting of Maurras’s ideas (1991:61).

For André Lefevere, patronage is one of the control factors determining what is written or rewritten within a literary system (1985:228). The case of Maurras’s appearance in The Criterion illustrates an instance of patronage operating in the service of a particular cultural goal. The prestige and support of T.S. Eliot, who referred to Maurras as “a kind of Virgil” (Eliot 2011:31), acted as a source of patronage, but the most readily transferrable aspects of Maurras’s thought and literature did not provoke wider interest outside Eliot’s own coterie. Further evaluation of a select number of Maurras’s translated and non-translated works can help to elucidate what aspects of Maurras’s life and work did attract attention among English-language audiences, and how these subsequent rewritings are presented.

### 3.4 Commitment and English-Language Literature

As central as T.S. Eliot is to the Anglo-American modernist tradition, his interest in Maurrassian literary criticism was not representative of all his contemporaries, and even Eliot’s cultural elitism remained distinct from Maurras’s support for a “reactionary version of the écrivain engagé” (Mazgaj 2002:210). Opposition to Romanticism and some representatives of Modernism surfaced in the United States and Britain, but the impetus behind this resistance was moral and puritanical rather than political in nature (Sapiro 2010:72-73). High modernism’s “obsession with the autonomy of art,” which

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27 For more information about debates over Classicism in twentieth-century French literature, see Murat (2007:313-30).
positioned the writer as “a kind of technician concerned with form and style rather than a social commentator” (Carter and Warren Friedman 2013:6), demanded that literature remain removed from society and politics. As the 1920s closed, Kohlmann argues that the nascent sense of committed literature practiced by English writers in the 1930s was a deliberate act of “writing against modernism” (Kohlmann 2014:12).

Mander (1962) notes the dearth of English writers easily comparable to the French committed writers of the interwar period and beyond. A few exceptions did exist, however. Corresponding with the “Marxist” period of the Criterion, the 1930s saw a number of English writers become increasingly vocal in their support for socialism, notably W.H. Auden (1907-73) and George Orwell (1903-50), and the Spanish Civil War roused the English intelligentsia from its relative isolation from the continent’s escalating tension (Mander 1962:59-61). Auden, Orwell, and others produced noteworthy works resulting from their experiences of the Spanish Civil War, and expressed their support for the Loyalists. Aside from the South African poet Roy Campbell (1901-57), support for the nationalists among English intellectuals and writers was marginal.28

In the Britain of the 1930s and 1940s, where Oswald Mosley’s negligibly small British Union of Fascists represented one of the few far-right political groups, the anti-liberal right similarly received scant support among English-language literary figures. Ezra Pound resided in Italy and enthusiastically supported the Italian Fascist experiment, but others were less active in the public sphere. Eliot refused to support the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, and his increasing interest in theology and Christianity

28 Campbell spent much of his career as a writer in England, and then in France and Spain. In spite of his conflict with other writers as a result of his political Catholicism and anti-communism, he was recognized for his poetry and translations of Lorca and Baudelaire into English.
coincided with his loss of literary influence. D.H. Lawrence had passed away in 1930, and other figures broadly associated with the literary right including Roy Campbell and Wyndham Lewis were more invested in attacking the perceived delusions of British leftists rather than championing Franco or the Falange. In short, no English parallels to the Nationalist-sympathizing fascists of Drieu la Rochelle’s and Brasillach’s novels materialized, nor did major right-wing literary circles or publications exist that supported the Nationalists and encouraged political action, as Action Française did in France.

3.5 Translation at the Margins: Geoffrey Potocki de Montalk and Maurras

Despite being responsible for the counter-revolutionary nationalist thrust of Action Française, Maurras never intended for his position as an ideologue to eclipse his image as a man of letters. Léon Daudet (1867-1942), arguably Action Française’s second most important personality, affirms: “Maurras is firstly and naturally a poet” (1928:6). Together with Maurras’s particular model of the Romantic-Classical divide, Field lists the “clarity and concision of his poetry” as the other enduring legacy of Maurras’s work (1991:54). Maurras’s influence as an essayist and polemicist is incontestable; nonetheless, Alain-Gérard Slama makes the biting comment that “Maurras claimed to be a writer and was not one” (1992:818). This deprecation of Maurras’s prose and poetry does not however prevent Slama from citing Maurras abundantly in order to pinpoint a rightist sensibility in literature. Belgian critic Pol Vandromme in turn asserts that for better or worse, the status of Maurras as a provocateur and guru of the French right obscures close consideration of his written work (1965:24). Such statements raise the question: what is the position of Maurras’s poetry in relation to the rest of his corpus?
What were the features of his poetry, and under what circumstances were his poems translated into English?

In a 1948 article published in *Aspects de la France*, T.S. Eliot still laments the invisibility of Maurras in the English-speaking world (2011:32). The English translation found in *The Criterion* appeared at a time when the stature of Maurras and *Action Française* experienced a period of decline, but the man and his movement still wielded authority in France and the other countries of Latin Europe (Dard 2011). Nonetheless, Eliot and his associates failed to consummate any plans for further translation of Maurras’s texts into English. As for *The Criterion*, the periodical subsequently witnessed a period dominated by poets loosely associated with the political left in the 1930s, and then entered into a stage of increasing irrelevancy until its dissolution. When Eliot wrote his praises in the Maurassian publication in 1948, none of Maurras’s prose pieces such as *Anthinéa* (1901) or *L’Avenir de l’intelligence* (1905) had been translated into English. Tellingly, Eliot makes no mention of a 1946 partial translation of the collection of poetry entitled *La Musique intérieure* (1925). The collection of poems was important as an example of Maurras putting his literary dictates into practice, and it also was the best-selling (Joseph 1962:11) and most visible work by the head of *Action Française*. By 1946 translations of Maurras into English had migrated from the eminent *Criterion* to the self-published *The Right Review*.

### 3.5.1 *La Musique intérieure*

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29 *Aspects de la France* was a weekly publication founded by several of Maurras’s disciples as the successor to *Action Française* after this latter publication was banned in 1944.
On the fringes of the British literary scene, Geoffrey Potocki de Montalk (1903-97) founded a self-published periodical entitled *The Right Review* in 1936, where he published poetry, translations, and his own extreme-right political pamphlets. Nonetheless, the flamboyant New Zealander attracted attention on account of his imprisonment for obscenity in 1932, ultimately receiving financial and moral support from several leading literary personalities (Ladenson 2013:120). At the time Potocki intended to publish several bawdy humorous poems as well as translations of Rabelais and Verlaine, all of which were deemed obscene and resulted in his serving six months in prison (Ladenson 2013:118-20).

After serving jail time Potocki continued to write, publish, and translate a variety of material, including several poems by Charles Maurras. The completely different natures of their imprisonments notwithstanding, Potocki compared himself to Maurras on account of the Frenchman’s imprisonment from 1945 to 1952 for high treason and *intelligence avec l’ennemi*. The two also shared an ardent support for monarchism and a disdain for democracy. In his foreword to a selection of Maurras’s poetry from *La Musique intérieure* (1925), entitled *Music Within Me* (1946), Potocki expresses an opinion shared by the French postwar right, as well as many not on the right: namely, that the purge of French writers was excessive and unwarranted. In the same foreword Potocki recognizes that the only translation of Maurras’s work up to that point was T.S. Eliot’s 1928 translation published in *The Criterion*. When the translator writes that “A ‘France’ which condemns [Maurras] is no France at all,” Potocki unabashedly expresses

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30 Born in New Zealand to a family descended from the Polish aristocracy, Potocki left New Zealand for London as a young man. Styling himself the Count de Montalk, he espoused rabidly anti-democratic and anti-Semitic opinions in his self-published writings.
his ideological support for this “Prophet, and a most significant Poet” (1946). Potocki stresses his ideological and personal affinities for Maurras, but his translation *Music Within Me* does not contain any of the original volume’s poems directly concerned with politics or events such as World War I.

Potocki omits such examples of committed poetry appearing in *La Musique intérieure* from his translation, but they nonetheless represent an important aspect of Maurras’s poetic output. By identifying Maurras as a poet first and foremost, Potocki assigns special significance to Maurras’s poems in relation to the rest of his oeuvre.

Roger Nimier, another admirer of Maurras, similarly attempts to vindicate the centrality of Maurras’s poetry in the author’s overall corpus against claims that his verse amounted to nothing more than the marginal whims of a polemicist (1965:203). While positively evaluating the Classical imagery and forms that appear in collections such as *La Balance intérieure* (1952) and *La Musique intérieure* (1925), Nimier does not refrain from plainly criticizing some pieces of Maurras’s “committed poetry” (*poésie engagée*), which do not surface in Potocki’s translation (1965:206-7). For example, *La Musique intérieure* contains pieces such “La Bataille de la Marne,” where Maurras writes:

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Toute la Gaule s’est ruée :
Mère des loix, mère des arts,
Notre Pallas est sœur d’Hercule,
Au double assaut déjà recule
Un germanique et faux César. (Maurras 1925:174)
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All of Gaul threw itself,
Mother of laws, mother of arts,
Our Pallas is sister to Hercules,
At the double assault already retreats,
A German and false Cesar. (My translation)
This exaltation of Antiquity and the conflation of France with Classical civilization are strikingly epigonic, especially if we recall that the Surrealist Manifesto had been published in 1924 just a year before Maurras’s poem. The heavy-handed allegory and transparency of the poem lead Nimier, who otherwise holds the essayist and poet in high esteem, to judge that “[w]hen he is a bad poet, Maurras knows no half-measure” (1965:207 my translation). In regards to the same poetic features, Julien Cohen reads the mythological figures and Classical heroes of La Musique intérieure as evoking “fundamental elements of the fascist mystique,” thereby acknowledging the political undertones of even his verse (Cohen 2014:560). Such an understanding stems from Maurras’s lifelong equation of Classicism with order, hierarchy, and France.31

Rather than approaching longer allegorical pieces such as “La Bataille de la Marne,” in his translation Potocki primarily chooses to translate Maurras’s short to mid-length poems and omits the author’s long introductory sections. The personal quality of several of these lyrics challenges characterizations of Maurras’s work as rigidly impersonal, and the prolix preface to La Musique intérieure proves revealing. Here, Maurras expounds his theories about poetry, which both complement and complicate the often reductive readings of the leader as the author of nothing but “cold militant neoclassicism” (Cohen 2014:109). Among the most significant pronouncements are those relating to versification and literary engagement. Maurras defends Classical French poetic practices, such as the retention of the e muet and alternating feminine and masculine rhymes, but acknowledges the exigencies of linguistic evolution and even concedes the validity of formal experimentation by poets such as Verlaine (1925:104).

31 Maurras clearly affirms the superiority of Classicism when he quotes Goethe’s dictum that “I call Classical what is healthy, and Romantic what is sickly” (qtd. in Maurras 1968:260).
Therefore, a consideration of Maurras’s poetry can help to undermine reductive caricatures of his personality and oeuvre that obscure his writing and its influence. What are some of the most salient features of the poems contained in *La Musique intérieure*? Analyzing Potocki’s translation strategies and the distortions that surface helps to bring the most defining features of Maurras’s poems to the forefront. In his prose work France represents Maurras’s chief political concern as well as the apex of literary achievement, but both his prose and poetry regularly invoke a broader *latinité* stretching across the real and imagined landscapes of Latin Europe. The writer’s attachment to his native Provence and his defense of Provençal culture informed both his political support for regionalism and his choice of poetic imagery. Many of the poems found in the 1925 collection are filled with images of cypress trees, sunlight, and olive groves, forming a poetic inventory that Stéphane Giocanti considers to be an oeuvre-spanning “Mediterranean poetic” (2011:61). In Potocki’s translation of “L’été ou l’Age d’Or,” several of the translator’s choices inscribe the poem in a British setting, thereby blunting this distinguishing feature.

A dialectic-specific term such as the Scottish “inglenook” is used for the French “âtre,” (Maurras 1925:224), and the medieval “Charles’s Wain” is used to render “l’Ourse” (1925:223). When Maurras writes “En quelque midi radieux” in the same poem, the polysemy of “midi” simultaneously evokes the geographic south of Latin Europe as well as noontime. This obligates Potocki to choose one of the meanings, but the preposition “en” indicates that the geographical meaning of the word takes precedence. The resulting translation of “some radiant noon” incorrectly ignores the most immediate semantic meaning of the source. In addition to dulling the Latin suggestions found in this poem
and others, Potocki translates Maurras’s use of poetic technique in a consistent but distorting manner.

The importance of form and order in Maurras’s political thought and literary sensibility subordinates individual elements to a larger whole. For Maurras, the “liberation” of the word in poetic utterance in Romanticism and Symbolism mirrors the chaotic atomism of democracy (Carroll 1995:79-81). Therefore, form can be identified as a distinguishing element of Maurras’s poems. Moreover, Maurras explains that verse forms and prosody exercise discipline on the personal and political impulses that inspire poets (1925:49-51). Potocki’s translation strategy is conservative and oriented towards the source text in terms of the rhyme schemes and forms employed. Priority is given to preserving lower orders of morphological and syntactical order; words and phrases generally appear in the same line in the target poem as in the source poem. Rarely are the stanzas of the target text significantly reordered from the source.

The English translation of the poem “Le Poète” shows the primacy of retaining rhyme in Potocki’s translations:

— Quel sens humain recevront ces paroles ?
Je ne les dis qu’aux amis anciens
Que j’ai connus sur les bancs de l’école :
Entre eux et moi la Mort est un lien. (Maurras 1925:248)

What human ears will hear these arabesques
I utter only to the fond
Friends whom I knew among school desks:
For between us, Death is a bond (Maurras 1946)

Potocki selects much more expressive “arabesques” where Maurras writes the more restrained “paroles,” allowing for a rhyme between “arabesques” and “desks” in the target English text. The use of “fond” in the second line and the addition of “for” in the
final line imbues the poem with a more antiquated poetics. The importance of rhyme and sonority in the source poems is highlighted by the volume’s title, as well as in the introduction to *La Musique intérieure* where Maurras explains, “I rhyme for the ear, it is for this reason that I do not write my verses, I say them, I sing them, I say them again, I sing them again” (1925:98). Whatever the veracity of this statement, Maurras’s poems do indeed display natural rhythms, constructions, and locutions.

As the poem continues with gestures towards the gods and a sense of Promethean longing, the language of Potocki’s translation raises a few notable features:

O toi que nous appelions Terre-Mère  
D’où vient ton vol contraire à mon amour ?  
Je suis né, je suis fait pour la lumière,  
Accorde-moi d’éterniser le jour

Tu le feras si ton cœur est le même  
Qui Prométhée, Icare et Dedalus  
A consumé de l’éternel problème  
D’une clarté qui ne s’éteigne plus ! (1925:250)

Whence, Mother Earth, thine adverse flight,  
Contrary to my love, my way?  
I was born—created—for the light:  
Let me create eternal day!

Thou’lt let me, if thy heart’s the same  
As drove Prometheus of yore,  
And Icarus, to seek the flame—  
And Dedalus—that fails no more. (Maurras 1946)

The use of archaic language such as “whence” and “thence” in this stanza, and in many other poems of the collection, diverges from the source text. The diction employed also casts the poem as more epigonic than Maurras’s original, such as Potocki’s “yore” and “adverse flight.” Although Maurras’s choice of imagery is often pastoral or Classical in nature and the language often lofty, few liberties are taken with punctuation, and archaic
diction is largely absent in Maurras’s collection. Difficulties in interpreting Maurras’s poems result from allusions to Greek and Latin culture or from the meaning of hermetic images. On the linguistic level, his verse is noticeably clear. Léon Roudiez (1951) notes that clichés about Maurras’s devotion to ossified Classicism do not always prove to be true when analyzing his poetry. Indeed, Maurras takes liberties with the Classical prescriptions regarding hemistiches, and also abandons Classical norms of prosody like other modern poets. Some of the best examples of such tendencies featured in *La Musique intérieure* are not included in *Music Within Me*, such as the irregular syllable counts found in “Paris” (1925:282-83).

Potocki’s translation of the short lyric “Beauté” as “Beauty” also distorts the modern Classicism running throughout Maurras’s verse:

Toi qui brille enfoncée au plus tendre du cœur,
Beauté fer éclatant, ne me sois que douceur
Ou si tu me devais être une chose amère
En aucun temps du moins ne me sois étrangère,
Brûle et consume-moi, mon unique soleil,
Que, ton dur javelot, ton javelot vermeil,
Dardant de jour en jour une plus pure flamme,
Je suis régénéré jusques au fond de l’âme
Et même ma raison folle de te sentir
Ne reconnaisse plus si c’est vivre ou mourir ! (1925:257)

O gleaming Beauty plunged like shining steel
Within my tenderest heart, be soft to feel,
Or if you must some day be bitter grown,
Never at least be distant or unknown—
Burn and consume me, O my only Sun,
That your vermillion javelin’s benison
With purer flame each day, your cruel dart,
Generate the marrow of my heart
Till even my Reason, mad to feel your breath
No longer know if it be Life or Death! (1946)
Maurras’s repeated imagery of light and brightness converges in the sixth line with symmetry and repetition. The end-rhyme and logical connection that unites “soleil” with “vermeil” does not appear in the translation. The sonoric quality of “dardant” and semantic content of “javelot” are reproduced in the translation through Potocki’s choice to render one of the original instances of “javelot” as “dart.” The archaic and more general definition of “dart” does not carry the same Classical connotations as “javelin,” but this compromise is made in order to render the English poem into closed heroic couplets. The iambic pentameter of Potocki’s translation evokes the same thematic gravity of Maurras’s alexandrines, but some features of the source text, including the alternating rhyme genders are not conveyed.

The insertion of “benison” where it does not occur in the source poem serves to underline the sacred or religious content of the poem and also adds an element of repetition that is otherwise sacrificed by omitting the two occurrences of “javelot.” Moreover, the substitution of “heart” for “âme,” or soul, removes an important image that sustains the collection’s predominant themes of transcendence, mortality, and religious feeling and instead adds the far more personal semantic connotations of “heart.”

Although the translator does prioritize form as a whole, instances throughout the collection demonstrate that Potocki subordinates nearly all elements to rhyme, such as occurs in the poem “Beauty.” Reproducing the traditional forms of the source poems is accorded a high priority, but liberties are taken with diction and syntax. At the same time these transformations occur strictly on the level of the line rather than of the stanza or poem as a whole. The translator often utilizes unusual lexical items or antiquated structures as solutions for preserving rhyme for Maurras’s repertoire of pastoral and
Classical flourishes. Potocki’s resulting translations exhibit a rather contrived folkloric sensibility that deracines the poems from Maurras’s post-symbolist inheritance, his affiliation with southern France and Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914), as well as from the “disciplined” tone which is intimately linked to Maurras’s literary and political thought. The effect proves ironic in light of Maurras’s emphasis on the organic body of the pays réel (real country) made up of individuals and communities tied to uniquely French traditions and lands. Overall, Maurras’s poetry as quaint and epigonic to dull “the dark and twisted flame” that Drieu la Rochelle considers to be the complementary balance to the “constraints” of traditional form (1992:100-01).

Above the textual level, the details surrounding the appearance of *Music Within Me* are telling about differences between English and French literature in the 1930s and ’40s. The translator states his admiration for the poet in the foreword to his translations, and the ideological convictions shared by the two is obvious. Yet aside from the disparity in fame between these two men, another historical fact must be considered. Whereas Maurras could claim to be a literary and political figure of notoriety in his native France, Potocki was correctly viewed as a “right-wing zealot” by his contemporaries (Ladenson 2013:118). The position of *The Criterion* had shifted, and no broadly right-wing English-language literary publication existed that could provide a ready-made outlet for the work of a writer like Maurras, even though *La Musique intérieure* elicited far more interest among the French reading public than did any of Maurras’s essays, which had been destined above all for Paris’s intelligentsia (Cohen 2014:453).

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32 Mistral was a French writer who received the Nobel Prize in 1904, and was also a leading figure of the Félibrige movement, which promoted Occitan language and culture. For Maurras, both Mistral’s poetic representation of their native Southern France and the Félibrige’s mission represented a means of resisting Republican centralization.
3.6 Anthologies and the “Afterlife” of Maurras

Count Geoffrey Potocki de Montalk’s translations of Maurras’s work were not the final English-language renditions of Maurras’s work. The function of Potocki’s rewritings, however, contrasts sharply with the later translations of Maurras’s work. André Lefevere distinguishes between translations that provide information, those that provide cultural capital, and ones existing for entertainment, as well as translations that “try to persuade the reader to adopt some course of action” (1998:41). Eliot’s 1928 translation of Maurras functions as an introduction to a significant French critic and possesses a clear ideological motivation. Therefore, it provided information as well as a persuasive element, and even a degree of cultural capital. In contrast, the 1970 anthology *The French Right: From de Maistre to Maurras* provides translated excerpts of several of Maurras’s essays.

The book’s general editor George Steiner explains that the book “[fills] an almost complete gap in the source material available to any serious student of modern history, psychology, politics and sociology (most of the texts have never been available in English and several have all but disappeared in their original language)” (1970:6). He thereby clearly articulates the function of these translations and also identifies them as belonging to Maurras’s political texts rather than his poetry or creative prose. *The French Right* contains the essays “Romanticism and Revolution” (1922), “Dictator and King” (1899), and “The Politics of Nature” (1937). Of these texts, “Romanticism and Revolution” stands out because of its abundant references to literature and culture as a basis for political arguments. Furthermore, it dates to the period when Maurras and
Action Française were at the forefront of political life. What features and ideas make the chosen texts ideal for inclusion in such a volume?

In the essay “Romanticism and Revolution,” Maurras attempts to establish what he sees as the direct genealogical link between Romanticism in European thought and revolutionary uprisings against established hierarchies. He writes:

> The traditions of Athens and Rome are as innocent of revolutionary content as was the inspiration of the medieval Catholic Church. The ancestors of the Revolution are to be found in Geneva, in Wittenberg – more distantly in Jerusalem. They spring from the Jewish spirit and from the varieties of independent Christianity that grow wild in the deserts of the East, or in the dark Teutonic forest, wherever barbarians meet.

(Maurras 1970:241)

In this illustrative example, Maurras combines his valorization of Classical civilization, and its direct descendant—Catholic France—with a xenophobic reading of history that targets Jews, Protestantism, and Rousseau as antithetical to the ideal of “Catholicism, counter-revolution, and Classicism” (Thibaudet 1920:101). Maurras’s narrow chauvinism and peculiar reading of history would likely seem extreme if not absurd to a 1920s British or American audience entrenched in both Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon liberalism. The radical pronouncements found in “Romanticism and Revolution” make the essay a foundational text within the anti-liberal tradition.

In the translation of the 1899 text “Dictator and King,” Maurras outlines the goals of a then-inchoate neo-royalism such as strong monarchical leadership, greater provincial autonomy, and recognition of the family as society’s foundational unit. The document is evidence of the practical aims and considerable visibility of the early Action Française before Maurras and his group lost their intellectual predominance among the literary
right. However, such manifesto-like texts are not representative of his massive body of work.

The selections found in *The French Right: From de Maistre to Maurras* (1970) are among Maurras’s most readily accessible, unlike works such as *L’Avenir de l’intelligence* (1905) which assumes a working knowledge of nineteenth-century French history and literature, or *Trois Idées Politiques: Chateaubriand, Michelet, Saint-Beuve* (1898). The significance of these essays lie in their manner of reading history as the natural outcome of dominant cultural currents and literary values. Such evaluations are representative of both Maurras and later committed writers of the right, all of whom were influenced by Maurras to varying degrees.

The essays contained in the anthology are among Maurras’s most pragmatic and political texts, but they reinforce the image of Maurras as primarily a political leader or theorist. This classification of Maurras fails to take into account his polygraphy. Denis affirms that any attempt to attach a committed writer to a single genre is often unproductive because the prototypical French committed writer does not limit himself to one means of expressing his ideas and positions. Maurras’s journalistic articles and manifesto-like works garnered considerable attention upon their publication, but it was Maurras’s critical methods and non-progressive conception of literature that survived to influence later literary generations. Even when the plausibility of a monarchic restoration became unrealistic, the literary “Hussars” of the 1950s continued to champion Classicism and to accord high esteem to France’s literary past.

3.7 Conclusion
The prescriptivism included in Maurras’s own criticism and reflections about literature engrossed some English and American intellectuals, but it was especially well-suited to the general milieu of the Académie Française, to which he was elected shortly before World War II. In her sociological inquiry into the Académie Française, Gisèle Sapiro remarks that “[a symbol of this French particularity that is the place literature has held in the definition of national identity, the Academy was an essential place of mediation between literature and politics” (2014:191). Moreover, the Academy remained a stronghold of conservatism in both poetics and politics (Sapiro 2014). Therefore, it is not surprising that Maurras was elected in 1938, despite having served a prison sentence only months prior as a result of calling for the assassination of government members he opposed (Weber 1962:210).

Much of Maurras’s work, as illustrated, can be described as existing narrowly within the French literary and cultural system. Despite his concern with the present, his main literary points of reference seldom advance beyond the end of the symbolist-dominated period. In the decades when Maurras and his Action Française enjoyed prominence, namely in the 1910s and 1920s, French literature was shaped by World War I, the precarious interwar period, and subsequent literary experimentation. These very same avant-garde currents also nourished English-language literature as Maurras’s work became increasingly outmoded in his native France. Many of his younger disciples abandoned the literary prescriptions of their master in favor of more forward-looking forms and even more radical ideological commitments. Whatever the interwar literary right inherited from Maurras in terms of ideology was overshadowed by the radical literary modernity embodied by Drieu la Rochelle, Céline, and others.
Consideration of Maurras’s reception provides support for the importance of relevant ideological and cultural systems in assimilating the works and ideas of an author. In “La recepción del pensamiento conservador-radical europeo en España (1913-1930),” Pedro Carlos González Cuevas illustrates how the political and literary culture of Spain was more accommodating of Maurras’s writings (2000). Conservative Spanish intellectuals lacked a literary and ideologically sophisticated form of nationalism, and a significant number were competent in French. González Cuevas also notes that Maurras’s texts were translated into Catalan, due to his defense of regionalism and frequent depictions of Provence in his prose and poetry. Catalan and Basque nationalists were highly receptive to arguments against a strong centralized Republicanism, clearly seeing the applicability of such arguments to the regional power dynamics in Spain. The mythic “Latinity” of Maurras’s writings cemented his reputation among nationalist intellectuals during the same period addressed by González in Romania and Portugal in addition to Spain (Weber 1962:482-86). Weber also remarks that translations were either not necessary or not produced because of the countries’ French-speaking intelligentsia.

In the English-speaking literary scene, even the enthusiastic patronage of one of the most important English-language poets of the twentieth century could not offset other important factors that inhibited the translation of Maurras’s work. His political texts were best suited to nations already possessing a history of monarchism. His concerns were “provincial in the narrowest sense,” by strictly treating French literature and politics while largely dismissing other national traditions (Curtis 1959:125). His amalgam of nationalist political stances with aesthetics was far removed from the innovating practices of most twentieth-century English-language modernism that relegated Maurassian literary
doctrine to a position of curiosity. Nonetheless, Asher (1993) argues that Maurras’s influence manifested itself in the New Criticism. The critical approach of the New Critics was heavily influenced by Eliot who himself refracted Maurras’s politicized anti-individualistic methodology.

The writings of Charles Maurras also raise the question of the roles that genre and physical medium play in translation. Charles Maurras himself selected which works would be included in his four-volume *Œuvres capitales*, with each volume spanning 400 to 500 pages. Yet, in his eulogistic study *Maurras: L’Église de l’ordre*, Belgian critic Pol Vandromme argues that the anthologies do not capture the “controversial violence drawn constantly during a half-century of daily combat” exhibited in his journalistic output (1965:11-14). His longer political texts may contain a part of the venom earning him the attention of Compagnon and a host of historians, but perhaps the most provocative pieces penned by Maurras were the most ephemeral. His numerous calls to violence and even incitements to murder appeared in *Action Française*.

Ivan Barko recognizes the importance of the physical format of texts when stating that “Maurras’ ideas, however powerful, original, and audacious they may be, are dispersed across a body of works too vast and too difficult to approach” (1961:225). In French only the *Œuvres capitales* chosen by Maurras himself constitute an authoritative grouping of his texts. Even for admirers like Vandromme, such a collection fails to be representative. In short an adequate source text that could introduce Maurras to an English-speaking audience or that could provide researchers with an overview of his work does not exist. The prominence of disparate short essays in his case suggests that
genre and form can be powerful norms when deciding what to translate. Genre also factors into what aspects of a text will have literary influence in a target literary system.
Outside of his native France, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle (1893-1945) is primarily regarded as “one of France’s highest profile intellectual collaborators with Nazism” (Griffin 2008:151). However reprehensible his political views may have been, to cast Drieu as little more than a collaborationist with Nazi Germany ignores his role in French literature from the interwar period to the end of World War II. Just as the Dreyfus Affair provided Charles Maurras a platform for his ideas and the Great War cemented his role as the intellectual leader of the French right, the impact of World War I and the interwar period are instrumental for understanding Drieu la Rochelle’s literary engagement and chief thematic concerns. In Reproductions of Banality, Alice Yaeger Kaplan makes the poignant observation that “At the most obvious level, Drieu is a writer who can’t get out of the trench” (1986:94). Whereas Maurras and his contemporaries championed order and reasoned restraint, the violent modernity of the Great War pushed Drieu la Rochelle to more radical positions in both literature and politics. In a highly representative instance, Drieu recounted that Maurras, having read the younger writer’s book of free verse Interrogation (1917), told his admirer that free verse was a “false genre” (1992:143).

In the 2003 A Short History of French Literature, Drieu La Rochelle is only mentioned once, as a “collaborationist” (Kay, Cave, and Bowie 2003:275), and Jean-Paul Sartre is referred to as “the twentieth century’s Voltaire” (2003:271). Similarly, Drieu’s friend André Malraux is also cited several times in the book, notably as the author of the “outstanding” La Condition humaine (1933) (2003:270). Other texts in English such as The Cambridge History of French Literature also pay little attention to Drieu, who may
better be understood as “the French right’s counterpart to Malraux, a cultivated advocate of heroic activism who fused his politics with metaphysical, aesthetic, and psychological concerns” (Soucy 1979:3). Such a reading of this controversial author does not necessarily entail that we disregard his collaborationism and anti-Semitism. Rather, it leads us to recognize Drieu’s reputation as a respected writer and critic during the interwar period, thereby providing a more complete vision of littérature engagée and the relation between politics and literature in twentieth-century France.

Critical attention to the man and his work has understandably focused on the questions of collaborationism and fascism. Nonetheless, the artistic and political trajectory of Drieu la Rochelle is also tied to the Surrealist movement, the interwar radicalization of society and literature, and the transnational response of literature to the crises and trauma of modernity. The writer’s fixation on decadence unites an otherwise varied literary career, and it is this central concern that shapes the ideological dimensions of his work. Overall, the considerable literary legacy and notoriety of Drieu remain largely invisible in the English-speaking world. In comparison to his other committed contemporaries such as Jean-Paul Sartre or André Malraux, who both have a considerable corpus of English translations, Drieu is underrepresented. Some texts by the author do however exist in translation. Why were these texts chosen for translation into English? How can we account for untranslated works by Drieu la Rochelle? How is Drieu presented in secondary materials, and what do existing translations reveal?

This chapter will not attempt to study every translation of Pierre Drieu la Rochelle’s work into English exhaustively, but will instead approach several translated and non-translated texts by relating them to particular subtopics in translation studies and
literary history. Similarly, references to critical works will be limited to those remarks most pertinent to questions pertaining to ideology and translation.

4.1 Drieu la Rochelle, his Translation into English, and the Question of Ideology

With more than 20 book-length publications to his name in French, Drieu has only five books translated into English, and all are currently out of print. Drieu first made an impact on the French literary scene with the controversial collection of poems *Interrogation* (1917). Written in free verse, the volume glorifies the redemptive aspect of war, and even expresses admiration for the virility of German soldiers fighting in the Great War. Already, Drieu was formulating his own model of commitment, by stressing the writer’s necessity to combine “le rêve et l’action” (dream and action), or art and real world deeds. The writer’s taste for English literature and experimental form breaks with Maurras’s literary and political conservatism, even though Drieu admired the older writer’s work and movement. Drieu’s early fiction from the 1920s, often bordering on autobiography or autofiction, provoked modest responses but nonetheless showcased the avant-garde influences of his early Surrealist and Dadaist tendencies.

4.1.1 The Early Drieu la Rochelle: From Avant-Gardist to *Le Feu follet*

What reception, if any, did Drieu la Rochelle garner in English in the 1920s? Perhaps expectedly, a translated excerpt of Drieu la Rochelle’s novel *Le Jeune Européen* appeared in the influential American expatriate review *transition* as *The Young European*. Founded by the American-born Eugene Jolas (1894-1952) in 1927, *transition* published leading English-language modernists from Joyce to Hemingway together with
the first English translations of Kafka, the French Surrealists, and others. The periodical “was true to its espousal of a revolution of the word as transnational, translational project [sic]” and filled its pages with translated material (Piette 2003:9). In the May 1927 issue of transition, American journalist Elliot Paul’s translation of Drieu la Rochelle appears alongside works by William Carlos Williams, Joyce, and others.

transition was just one of numerous “little magazines” founded by English speakers that aimed to promote “the idea of a transnational avant-garde” (Piette 2003:8). In 1927 Drieu la Rochelle had only recently parted ways with the Surrealists, and his work bears the traces of surrealist absurdity and style. In Paul’s translation the young narrator recounts:

Soon I got away furtively from the depot hospital in which I had been placed. In order to obtain a false passport I killed a man. I wished also to see what difference it would make when it chanced to be a civilian. I crossed France which, convulsive and all intent upon the enemy, did not turn aside to notice me, and embarked for America. (Drieu 1927:13)

The narrator’s nonchalant admission of murder and the rapid pace of narration present an early Drieu la Rochelle who has not yet declared his allegiance to fascism or joined the French fascist party, the Parti Populaire Français (PPF). With little intent of presenting a coherent political message, the narrator in Drieu’s text is more concerned with the overwhelming power of American skyscrapers and the speed of modern life. Where war is celebrated or democracy mentioned, the narrator approaches these topics with a youthful exuberance bearing little resemblance to the weightier attacks appearing in his later fiction:

I had already experienced automobile racing, cocaine, mountain climbing. I found in that desolate Champagne an abstraction, the sport of the abyss I had long looked forward to.
Patrols, mine warfare, bestial and savage comradeship, sordid glory. (Drieu 1927:11)

The Drieu la Rochelle appearing in *transition* was still heavily indebted to the experimental aestheticism of the early Surrealist period. When Drieu reproached the Surrealist turn towards communism, he did so in the defense of their earlier defense of absolute pure art.33 His own political ideas were inchoate, and the writer was more readily identifiable as an avant-garde figure in contrast to the polarizing figure he became in his more mature works. Such a translation choice proved to be in line with *transition*’s mission to publish the latest in pioneering international work. However, this neutral stance became increasingly difficult to maintain with mounting political tension in Europe. Jolas and Paul were “forced to counter the genuine political commitment of its contributors,” and they repeatedly affirmed the publication’s desire to transcend political divisions (Monk 1996:217).

*transition* may be just one little magazine, but its example proves instructive. First, the editors faced the challenge of confronting politically committed texts and authors while attempting to remain politically disinterested. Second, *Le Jeune Européen* appeared before Drieu was recognized as a fascist author, contrary to Craig Monk’s (1996:216-17) remarks, and the appearance of the text in *transition* seems both timely and understandable for a number of reasons. The mission of expatriate literary communities, the close relationship between English-language editors and writers with their French counterparts, and Drieu’s reputation as an emerging literary figure all converged to make *Le Jeune Européen* a sensible choice for translation into English. The

33 Jurt even compares Drieu la Rochelle’s early stance to that of the decidedly non-partisan Julien Benda (1995:23).
very direct literary contact between French and English-language literatures continued throughout the 1930s, but *The Young European* marked the final translation of a work by Drieu la Rochelle until after the end of World War II.

The author’s developing obsession with France’s decadence, his use of fragmented narration, and his transgressive inclinations all crystallize in *Le Feu follet* (1931). Significantly, two translations exist of this 1931 novel. Both Richard Howard’s 1965 translation *The Fire Within* and Robinson’s 1966 translation *Will O’ the Wisp* appeared after Louis Malle’s critically praised 1963 film adaptation of Drieu la Rochelle’s book, also titled *Le Feu follet*. Written before his formal engagement with fascism, Drieu’s novel is widely considered to be an artistic success. The “Pierre Drieu la Rochelle” entry in the *Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* (1980) states that *Le Feu follet* is “an exercise in style that is one or even two literary generations ahead of its time” (Hanrez 1980:212). Explicitly political content is not to be found within the pages of *Le Feu follet*, but Drieu’s regular thematic preoccupations such as decadence, suicide, and a Nietzschean elitism all surface. The narrator describes the thoughts of the story’s protagonist, the drug-addicted and self-destructive Alain:

*l’éloignement du temps l’aidait beaucoup à vanter des choses qui, à brûle-pourpoint, l’auraient déconcerté comme le troupeau vulgaire des contemporains d’alors.* (Drieu 1991:50)

In the two English translations, the above passage is translated as follows:

the perspective of time helped him praise things that at close range would have disconcerted him as they had the vulgar herd of Baudelaire’s contemporaries. (Drieu 1965:50)

distance in time helped him to speak highly of things which would have disconcerted him at close quarters, just as the vulgar herd of their contemporaries would have done. (Drieu 1966:37)
These passages reflect the dandified elitism exhibited by Alain and traceable to the author himself through its derisive stance toward what Baudelaire once labeled “le petit public.” The parallels between the attitude conveyed in this and other passages with the poet’s views are not lost on translator Richard Howard, whose translation inserts an allusion to Baudelaire. Such a decision places the main character, Alain, within the Baudelairean tradition of dandyism and also conjures up the poet’s trenchant anti-egalitarianism, recurring throughout the anti-modern tradition (Compagnon 2005:32). On the micro-level Le Feu follet mainly presents translation difficulties related to syntax; few passages resist ready comprehension. In one early scene of the book, a character speaks about Charles Maurras and the newspaper Action Française. This reference is preserved by both translators, but this gesture exists as a means of characterization rather than an overt reference to politics.

Nonetheless, themes such as suicide and decadence can be read as more ideological when the writer’s overall output is considered. As Frédéric Saenen states, “political discourse is absent from Le Feu follet, but the novel does have an ideological framework, to the extent that the concepts illustrated by Drieu in his narration echo his work as an essayist” (2015:92). Several critics, as well as Drieu la Rochelle himself, have called attention to the thematic unity of his entire body of work. When viewed as a reflection of a larger corpus of texts, fatalistic pronouncements made by Alain, such as “the rising tyrannies of communism and fascism promise to whip drug addicts” (Drieu 1991:48), are not just idiosyncratic reflections made by the drug-addicted main character,

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34 Drieu la Rochelle wrote in État civil: “I want to tell a story. Will I one day be able to tell anything other than my own story?” (“J’ai envie de raconter une histoire. Saurai-je un jour raconter autre chose que mon histoire ?”) (1921:7). A number of critics have cited this “confession” as means for reading his entire oeuvre as an autofictional project.
but are instead representative of the ideological asides that characterize the author’s body of fiction and his enthrallment with totalitarianism. This mixture of modes is a distinctive feature of Drieu’s output for Grover (1958) and is clearly discernible if the entirety of the author’s work is considered.

If the ideological underpinnings of Drieu’s work are taken into account, other seemingly insignificant lines in the novel become revealing and demand attention on the part of the translator. When Alain’s doctor, who owns the rehabilitation home where Alain lives, asks, “Vous ne m’avez pas l’air pourtant aussi angoissé qu’il y a quelques jours. Avez vous des angoisses?” and Alain replies, “Je n’ai pas des angoisses, je vis dans une angoisse perpétuelle” (Drieu 1991:47-48).

“You know, you don’t look as disturbed as you did a few days ago. Do you still have those anxiety attacks?”
“I don’t have anxiety attacks, I have anxiety. All the time.” (Drieu 1965:47)

“But you don’t look as much in pain as you were a few days ago. Do you still have any pains?”
“I do not have pains. I am in permanent pain.” (1966:35)

The meaning of the polysemous “angoisse” is used and interpreted here according to two different discourses: the materialist and clinical conception espoused by the doctor and Alain’s simultaneously spiritual and ideological understanding.

Howard’s translation conveys the two different understandings of “angoisse” presented in the original. His rendition contrasts the clinical “anxiety attack” with a general “anxiety.” Robinson employs the more general “pain,” to translate the French “angoisse,” which still suggests the disparity between a clinically defined physical pain and Alain’s existential pain. However, neither anxiety nor pain can be immediately understood as
“psychological anguish,” which may more accurately describe Alain’s condition. In both of these English translations, “anxiety” and “pain” preserve the symmetry and repetition of “angoisse” found in the original French source text. One notable linguistic disparity occurs with the English “anguish.” “Anguish” does not appear in any clinical English collocations, whereas “une crise d’angoisse” designates a panic attack in French. Lastly, the absoluteness of “perpétuelle,” surpasses the more quotidian “[all] the time” or “permanent” found in the English translations. The prevailing spiritual themes of Drieu’s oeuvre confirm the clear distinction being made between the doctor’s shallow “materialist” understanding of Alain’s illness and a deeper metaphysical diagnosis linked to civilizational decline.

Alain’s pain arises from his drug addiction and personal problems, but his character is firmly grounded in a France in decay. The topical nature of his “angoisse” does not stop him from more profound speculation.

Les drogués sont des mystiques d’une époque matérialiste qui, n’ayant plus la force d’animer les choses et de les sublimer dans le sens du symbole, entreprennent sur elles un travail inverse de réduction et les usent et les rongent jusqu’à atteindre en elles un noyau de néant. (Drieu 1991:91)

Addicts are the mystics of a materialist age who, no longer having the strength to animate objects, to sublimate them into symbols, undertake a converse labor of reduction—eroding them, wearing them down until the kernel of nothingness within each appears. (Drieu 1965:95)

In such passages, an anti-modern metaphysics of history emerges in a similar fashion to Drieu’s other works where ideology and politics proper are significantly more visible. Condemnations of materialism and the “modern world” recur in his fictional works, including La Comédie de Charleroi and Gilles.
As demonstrated by the selected passages above, certain particularities and references betray the ideological subtext of an otherwise non-political novel. The eccentric dwellers of the rest home who discuss Action Française give an indication of the general malaise, or decadence, of the post-World War I France that Drieu depicts. Brief references to communism and fascism also give an indication of the ongoing radicalization of both politics and literature in France during the 1930s. Neither of the two translations contains footnotes or an introduction that specify the novel’s original publication during the interwar period. Subsequently, questions regarding ideology are not raised.

It is noteworthy that Richard Howard also rendered works by Barthes, Beauvoir, Camus, and Breton into English. As a translator of canonical texts by ideologically central authors, Howard’s choice to translate Drieu can best be interpreted as a decision to translate an artistically accomplished work by an important twentieth-century French author. Moreover, the release and success of Louis Malle’s successful 1963 film adaptation of the text can also explain the existence of Howard’s rewrite of Drieu la Rochelle’s novel.35 Jean-Baptiste Bruneau remarks that the film not only led to increased sales and recognition of the author’s work, but also to a characterization of Drieu la Rochelle as a romantic “dandy,” in the same vein as the novel’s main character who was inspired by the Dadaist poet Jacques Rigaut (1898-1929) (Bruneau 2011:215-17). Therefore, the film gave birth to a new postwar reading of Drieu la Rochelle as an esthete; he became the L’Homme couvert de femmes (The Man Covered in Women) (1925) rather than committed writer of La Comédie de Charleroi (1934), or Gilles

35 Significantly the director Louis Malle asked Roger Nimier to write the screenplay for the film Le Feu follet, but Nimier died before the collaboration could begin (Frey 2006:28).
(1939). In this manner, market forces converged with a new reading of Drieu la Rochelle making *Le Feu follet* an attractive target for English-language translation.

The curious silence about politics is made more evident in paratextual material, such as Howard’s “A Note About the Author” in *The Fire Within*. His note strongly downplays the author’s political commitments by merely alluding to his involvement with the Vichy regime, which is not even entirely correct. Moreover, the translator mentions the author’s friendships with Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, and André Breton, and also mentions that he regularly contributed to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. These associations suggest the mutually exclusivity of being a writer of the far-right and being a mainstream literary figure. This framing has the dual effect of exerting patronage by assimilating the author into the same category as that of his real-life associates, and depoliticizes the text by not recognizing that political questions arose as early as 1927 in Drieu’ texts such as *Le Jeune Européen* (1927) and *Genève ou Moscou* (1928). Through Howard, Drieu is presented as belonging to the pantheon of popular and esteemed French writers, and is published in English by the prominent and mainstream Alfred A. Knopf publishers.

### 4.1.2 Drieu and *La Comédie de Charleroi*

In most French-language criticism about Drieu la Rochelle’s work, there is a consensus that the quality of his writing was consistently uneven throughout his career. *Le Feu follet* is generally considered to be a success, but some like Julien Hervier also

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36 For further discussion of Drieu la Rochelle’s relationship with the Vichy regime, see Soucy (1979:83-84).
37 Merlin (2009:192) identifies Alfred A. Knopf as one of the primary publishers of translated literature in the decades following World War II.
consider the 1934 collection of short stories *La Comédie de Charleroi* to represent a mid-career literary success (1982:12). As suggested by the title, the central thematic preoccupation of *La Comédie de Charleroi* is World War I. Translator Douglas Gallagher alludes to the importance of translating this collection when in the introduction to his 1973 English version of the collection he writes that *The Comedy of Charleroi* “[represents] an original contribution to the body of writing about the Great War” (viii).

Indeed, English-language criticism such as Frank Field’s *Three French Writers and the Great War* (1975) focus on Drieu’s representation of World War I as just one example of the uncertainty and disillusionment that led many to embrace radical politics in the interwar period. The translation and publication of *The Comedy* also coincided with another new development in French criticism of Drieu. In place of the romantic myth of the writer sustained by the Hussars or Louis Malle, increasing interest in French fascism colored articles treating the writer beginning in the 1970s (Bruneau 2011:249).

Appearing in the same year as Drieu’s “conversion” to fascism, *The Comedy of Charleroi* can be identified as an important evolution in Drieu’s literary engagement outside of his non-fiction writings (Jurt 1995:27). Characters in the collection curse the mechanical aspects of modern warfare and yearn for the holistic regeneration of man by employing images and language that valorize virility and spirituality, which are both judged unattainable in a mechanized democratic world. The soldiers and events featured in the stories condemn everything from American industry and bourgeois comfort to the fascist glorification of warfare with equal rancor. As such, casting the collection as a one-dimensional partisan piece of literature is less convincing than recognizing that the mobilization of World War I was a means of exploring both politics and aesthetics.
Douglas Gallagher’s introduction, as well as other works (Bevan 1990, Field 1975), compare the stories to other pieces of French war writing by authors such as Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) or Georges Duhamel (1884-1966). Rima Drell Reck (1987) argues that the collection deserves special attention on account of the dearth of French fiction directly treating the Great War, at least in comparison to English-language literature (1987:286). These studies all recognize the significance of the ideological asides that occur in dialogues or first-person passages, as well as an ideological exaltation of the male body.38 Such ideologically loaded passages are rendered into English by Gallagher without any omissions. The English translation of the collection did not appear until 1973, however, and was published by a small British press.

During the 1930s, the ideological content would likely have been deemed anti-American and politically radical. The general consensus of “high” Anglophone literature, addressed in Chapter 3, continued to relegate explicitly ideological writing to the level of “middle-brow” content.39 American writers and intellectuals were cognizant of the events unfolding in interwar Europe, but a general consensus on disengagement was facilitated by the comparatively small ideological divisions separating conservatives from liberals, the less immediate threat of European fascism, and the identification of artistic engagement with communism (Sapiro 2010:73-74).

La Comédie may have not received immediate attention in the United States, but it did provoke a response in the other country Drieu deemed a threat to the spiritual and

38 Kaplan (1986) addresses Drieu’s politicized treatment of sex, gender, and the body in relation to similar representations provided by Marinetti and Céline.
39 Janet G. Casey argues that “an academic establishment eager to distinguish itself as deeply and complexly intellectual” rejected explicitly ideological or socially conscious writing in the 1920s and early ‘30s primarily by rejecting the perceived outmodedness of literary realism (2015:174).
political rebirth of Europe. As Dimitri Tokarev (2015) shows, Drieu’s visit to Moscow in 1935 resulted in a 1936 Russian translation of *La Comédie*, featuring manipulations carried out by either the translator or Soviet censure. Why publish such a piece of literature in the Soviet Union? Shorn of details criticizing the Soviet Union and communism, the collection and its characters condemn the Western imperialist countries and the weakness of bourgeois democracy. Nonetheless, the representation of war as a regenerative phenomena presented in *La Comédie* remain antagonistic to both liberal and communist ideology.

In addition to the focus of other critics on the universal topic of war found in *La Comédie*, translator Gallagher stresses Drieu la Rochelle’s relationship with English literature and English writers in both the book’s introduction and an article that appeared in French (1982). In *La Comédie de Charleroi* heroic action provides spiritual satisfaction and restores the dignity of the body against what is viewed as the excessively material and rational modern world. Gallagher contextualizes this attack on rationality and intellectualization within an international context by noting Drieu’s affinities with D.H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley. The fact that Drieu translated *D.H. Lawrence’s The Escaped Cock* (1929) as *L’Homme qui était mort* serves to reinforce this link, and the recurring images of gods and mysticism throughout Drieu’s oeuvre recall Huxley’s preoccupation with alternative spirituality.⁴⁰

Through focusing on formal and thematic elements that transcend ideological concerns, taking into account the author’s links to English literature reinforces the opinion that Drieu’s writings fit into a broader modernist tradition. Rima Drell Reck

⁴⁰ Drieu la Rochelle’s translation *L’Homme qui était mort* remains in print by Gallimard.
(1990) offers a similar conclusion when she sets out to study “the other Drieu,” namely the aesthete interested in both the visual and literary arts. As she notes, “[the] French reading public was introduced to Hemingway, Huxley, and D.H. Lawrence through Drieu’s critical essays and prefaces” (1990:9). These comparisons are noteworthy for their recognition of Drieu as a cosmopolitan writer and as an artist whose fragmented narratives betray his close affinities with other writers whose work addresses World War I and the spiritual crisis emerging in its aftermath.

Richard Golsan makes the observation in “Drieu la Rochelle aux États-Unis: entre l’esthétique et le fascisme” (1995) that there is a reluctance on the part of American academics and readers to acknowledge any relationship other than an antithetical one between culture and fascism because of historical asymmetries. Golsan’s argument and Frédéric Grover’s (1958) observation that literary critics ignore Drieu’s primarily political texts while political scientists and historians ignore his fiction and poetry raise a question relevant to Maurras, Drieu, and Roger Nimier. When considering writers who contemplated and wrote about the question of literary engagement, the division between genres becomes less meaningful. Even when he wrote about politics, “Drieu shared a common concern with Maurras: an essentially aesthetic orientation” (Tucker 1965:158). Regardless of the personal inspirations or influences behind his fiction, the reappearing themes of decadence and the philosophy of history make it difficult to isolate a non-political Drieu, especially after La Comédie, as Rima Drell Reck (1990) proposes.

4.2 Drieu la Rochelle and Censorship
In *Censoring Translation* Michelle Woods writes, “Often, when we think of censorship and literature we think of overt forms of state-imposed censorship” (2012:3). As Woods and others demonstrate, however, censorship can operate under non-totalitarian regimes and can take a number of forms. Translation can be a means of circumventing censorship, and translators themselves can engage in self-censorship through their choices and strategies for translating (Tymoczko 2009). The censorship of a text in its source culture and language may also have an effect upon its translation into a foreign context. Several of these dimensions regarding literary censorship are relevant to the works of Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, especially in the cases of *L’Homme à cheval* and *Gilles*.

Drieu la Rochelle was no stranger to censorship, having the distinction of being the target of censors as well as having the power to exercise censorship during the Nazi occupation of Paris. Prior to the German occupation of France one of his most explicitly anti-Semitic and pro-fascist novels, *Gilles*, was published in censored form in 1939. During the German Occupation, the Nazi censor rejected the publication of several of Drieu’s articles that were deemed politically pessimistic or insufficiently pro-German. Even as an official collaborator, his artistic fixation on decadence eclipsed his real-world allegiance. At the same time, he was directing the pro-collaboration *NRF*, where anti-German content was prohibited.

The German censor was controlled by the German Propaganda-Abteilung and Paris’s German Embassy, which also produced the *liste Otto*, an extensive list of banned books named after the ambassador Otto Abetz. After becoming increasingly disillusioned with Nazism and having his journalistic work censored, Drieu la Rochelle began work on
*L’Homme à cheval*, which was published in 1943. In a campaign that mimicked the compilation of the *liste Otto*, efforts made in 1944 and 1945 following the liberation of France resulted in the blacklisting of works by Drieu and a host of other writers (Baert 2015:52). The confusion of this “writers’ war” was a microcosm of an overall schism in French society, and the act of writing itself could prove fatal. In 1945 the collaborationist journalist and critic Robert Brasillach was executed for his writing and editorial activities for the newspaper *Je suis partout*, despite the protestations of many writers including Albert Camus and François Mauriac, two of Brasillach’s political rivals.

Unlike France, neither the United States nor Great Britain had to come to terms with experiences comparable to the Vichy regime or collaboration. After the end of World War II and Drieu’s suicide in 1945, France and the French literary system underwent a massive change. Rightist writers were no longer opponents or rivals of leftist or liberal intellectuals, but were instead morally discounted enemies and traitors. Therefore, rather than being a less dominant current of the of the literary system’s center, the literary right–exemplified by committed authors such as Drieu and Brasillach–was morally and culturally repudiated and then censored. This massive change in the French literary system sparked by the Liberation and end of the war ushered in an era where, according to Nicholas Hewitt, existentialism and leftist paradigms for literature became quasi-official (1996:74).

Censorship undertaken by the Comité National des Écrivains, or CNE, complemented the moral and ideological marginalization of Drieu and others (Drake 2002:13). Reviews, newspapers, and other organs of publishing requested the CNE “blacklist,” resulting in a professional boycott of writers deemed guilty of collaboration.
or pro-Pétain sympathies (Sapiro 2014:455). Marginalized, blacklisted, and morally discounted, rightist or fascist authors scarcely had enough visibility to be noticed in the English-speaking world. Translations of works by Sartre and Camus appeared in English translation during the 1940s, and-English language works by writers such as Hemingway and George Orwell confronted war and totalitarianism in popular and well-received fictionalizations. New translations of Drieu la Rochelle into foreign languages, even into languages where some of the writer’s texts appeared before World War II, did not begin appearing again until the 1960s and 1970s. There may have been little desire to read the works of a “loser,” even if his works had not been suppressed in the years immediately following the end of World War II.

4.2.1 *L’Homme à cheval* as Pseudo-Translation

Studying the translations of Drieu la Rochelle’s work into English and the circumstances surrounding these translations offers insight into translation norms, and descriptive translation studies offers a novel means of approaching one of Drieu’s works in particular. In her essay “When is a Translation Not a Translation?” Susan Bassnett coins the term “fictitious translation” to describe a literary device falling under Gideon Toury’s broader category of pseudo-translation (Bassnett 1998:33; Toury 2012:47). Bassnett demonstrates that the status of many texts as pseudo-translations is not always readily apparent to readers or critics, in contrast to obvious pseudo-translations, such as literary forgeries. But prefaces, comments by the author, and other means of presentation

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41 For further discussion of the arguments surrounding the definition of “pseudotranslation,” see Hermans (1999:50-54).
underlining the translational qualities of a text distinguish fictitious translation from mere pastiche or imitation.

According to Bassnett’s (1998) flexible definition of pseudo-translation, Drieu la Rochelle’s novel *L’Homme à cheval* (1943) can be considered and studied as an instance of fictitious translation. Moreover, the work exists in English as *The Man on Horseback*, translated by Thomas Hines and published in 1978. Unlike the bulk of Drieu’s other work, *The Man on Horseback* takes place outside of France, in Bolivia, but the text’s translational quality is only openly presented in its final pages. In the novel’s epilogue, an unidentified voice declares that the preceding story was a “manuscript in my grandfather’s affairs, hidden away in his country home,” entitled *Fragments de mémoires sur Jaime Torrijos* and was written by a Spaniard, who was likely a political refugee (Drieu 1992:169). The epilogue is presented immediately after the end of the narrative, and it is uncertain whether the speaker is supposed to be Drieu la Rochelle himself or a previously unmentioned narrator. No explicit reference is made to the act of translation, but the text bears several marks of a pseudo-translation in addition to mentioning a fictitious found source text.

Gideon Toury states that pseudo-translations “often represent their pseudo-sources in a rather exaggerated manner” (1995:42). Drieu’s novel presents a hyperbolic representation of the Hispanic picaresque novel’s poetics. The narrative exhibits the main features of the picaresque novel according to Garrido Ardila’s overview of scholarship about the genre (2015:15-18). For example, *L’Homme à cheval* is narrated in the first-person by a sidekick guitarist who serves a dashing military hero. A romantic subplot also factors into the plotline, and the narrator recounts the intrigue and events leading to
the failure of his leader’s political and military ambitions. Other subtleties betray the
translational qualities of the novel, such as preserving the definite article in front of
names to mirror Spanish collocations, such “la Conchita” in lieu of “Conchita,” and
direct references to classic Latin American texts such as *Martin Fierro*.

The novel was written two years before Drieu’s suicide, and several French critics
remark upon the text’s position as a turning point in the author’s work. Martens and
Vanacker argue that “Dans nombre de pseudo-traductions, la traduction fictive de l’Autre
est indéniablement mise au service d’un reflet du Même” (“In many pseudo-translations,
fictitious translation of the Other is undeniably placed into the service of a reflection of
the Same”) (2013:487 my translation). What purpose may pseudo-translation have served
in the case of *L’Homme à cheval*? Although the author was still directing the *Nouvelle
Revue Française* at the time of writing and publication, and although he enjoyed relative
liberty under the German censor, the use of pseudo-translation and an exotic locale can
be understood as a means of accommodating censorship, if not an obvious strategy of
avoiding it. As evidenced in *Récit secret* (1951) and the author’s journals, Drieu had
begun to lose his faith in Nazism, Hitler, and the possibility of a German-led “new
Europe” by 1942. Gideon Toury’s (2005:5) assertion that fictitious translation acts as a
“disguise mechanism” provides support for reading this novel as a testament about
political disengagement and disillusionment. Moreover, J.A. Garrido Ardila observes that
the picaresque is a flexible genre that has often been used by non-Hispanic authors to
express social and political opinions (2015:15). In the novel the authoritarian would-be
caudillo (authoritarian military leader) and his followers abandon their hopes of gaining
political power. The guitarist and artist Felipe is left with little choice but to abandon his
leader. The allegorical and biographical dimensions of the novel are undeniable, above all in the themes of intellectual *engagement* and political disenchantment.

The relevance of pseudo-translation to *L’Homme à cheval*, combined with a recognition of the novel’s commentary about literary *engagement*, complicates readings of the text that focus on the figure of the dictator or the notion of the great leader in general.\(^{42}\) Although the author’s fascist commitments for at least some of his career are undeniable, the ideas presented in the novel make it a more complex and ideologically palatable novel than the flagrantly fascist *Gilles*. In the introduction to the English *The Man on Horseback*, translator Thomas Hines notes, “[the] author of our novel, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, is virtually unknown to the English-speaking public—with the notable exception of university scholars who specialize in modern French literature or political history” (1978:1). Hines provides information and critical assessment of Drieu la Rochelle and the author’s works, and he explains his decision to translate this particular work: “For the English-speaking reader, *The Man on Horseback* is undoubtedly one of Drieu’s most accessible novels” (1978:15).\(^{43}\) The action in *L’Homme à cheval* revolves around the adventures of “idealized figures,” who serve as mouthpieces for the author, a strategy of literary *engagement* that Sapiro identifies with Malraux as well as Drieu (2003:645). The narrative recounts the story of the guitarist Felipe and his patron, the mestizo captain Jaime. If the only recourse in the face of interwar malaise and decadence in *Le Feu follet* lies in suicide, *L’Homme à cheval* comes to the conclusion that abandoning politics and external struggle is the sole means of confronting history. In their

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\(^{42}\) Simone de Beauvoir singles out *L’Homme à cheval* for its representation of a dictator and considers it an allegorical tale praising directionless dictatorship (2012:168).

\(^{43}\) In addition to *Le Feu follet* and *La Comédie de Charleroi*, both French and English-language critics count *L’Homme à cheval* among the author’s most accomplished works.
quixotic quest to reestablish the Inca Empire, the two characters appeal to mysticism and religion after politics and actions fail:

Des voyageurs ont fait cette constatation en plusieurs endroits de la terre, au Mexique, aux Indes, au Tibet, en Chine, au Japon, chez les Musulmans, en Grèce, en Égypte. Celui qui a goûté ce sentiment n’entre plus dans une église chrétienne avec le même regard; il y entre avec un œil beaucoup plus religieux que celui qui ne connaît que sa paroisse et ignore les cinq ou six autres grandes visions qui assouvissent l’humanité. (Drieu 1992:226)

Travelers made this observation in several places of the earth, in Mexico, in the Indies, in Tibet, in China, in Japan, in the lands of the Muslims, in Greece, and in Egypt. Whoever has enjoyed this feeling no longer enters into a Christian church with the same eyes. He enters with a much more religious eye than he who only knows his parish and ignores the five or six other great visions that sate humanity. (My translation)

Events in the first parts of the book seem to laud Jaime’s martial courage as well as Felipe’s dedication to the cause as an artist and supporter. When their hopes fail to materialize, however, the thematic center of the story shifts from action and politics to religion and the pursuit of spiritual consolation. In contrast to Maurras’s Classical repertory of Greco-Roman figures, Drieu evokes non-Western religions in L’Homme à cheval as symbols of anti-materialism and spiritual renewal. Drieu’s retreat from political engagement was accompanied by an increased interest in religion, and passages such as the one above occur in a number of his later works. After Jaime, the titular man on horseback, abandons his political ambitions, he tells his companion, the guitarist Felipe, “You will bear witness.” The original French “Tu témoigneras,” is suggestive of littérature de témoignage, a term used to describe Resistance literary production that bore witness to the injustices and oppression of the German Occupation (1992:245). To include a work by a collaborator under this etiquette is not entirely baseless. If, as

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44 Drieu la Rochelle’s remarks about world religions share affinities with the views expressed by his friend Aldous Huxley in works such as The Perennial Philosophy (1945).
Margaret Atack notes, *littérature de témoignage* “[seeks] to place a specific historical moment on the platform of History,” then Drieu’s allegorical novel can be considered a form of *témoignage*, in spite of the form’s association with the Resistance (1989:25).

In the introduction to *The Man on Horseback*, the translator Thomas Hines notes that the novel is “more, however, than just a well-constructed adventure story” because it is simultaneously a sustained reflection on the relationship between spiritual and artistic contemplation and “action,” a thematic binary to which Drieu consistently refers as *le rêve et l’action* (dream and action) (1978:15-17).\(^45\) Once again, the translator stresses the accessibility of the text but also appeals to its literary value and novelty. For a discerning reader, layers of ambiguity, such as an epilogue that self-reflexively questions the veracity of the pseudo-translation itself are far removed from heavy-handed fascist allegory. The final line of the novel questions the veracity of the entire narrative: “En effet, il n’y avait pas eu de Jaime Torrijos selon l’histoire” (Drieu 1992:248), or in translation “In fact, there was no Jaime Torrijos according to history” (1978:169).

Whether or not the author chose the pseudo-translation form solely to evade the German censor cannot be determined, but this question is ultimately irrelevant. More significantly, the use of pseudo-translation highlights the constraints at the time of the work’s conception and also creates a distance between the ideological content of the novel and the author. Even though the story begins as one of commitment, it ultimately ends in disengagement, foreshadowing the demise of right-wing literary *engagement* within French literature. If *The Man on Horseback* is read as a statement about the artist

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\(^45\) In the poem “Chant de guerre,” Drieu succinctly formulates his conception of the complementary relationship between artistic activity and political activity when he declares that “l’action est rêve, et le rêve est action” (action is dreaming, and dreaming is action) (1917:70).
and commitment rather than a defense of collaborationism or dictators, then the author himself rather than the novel’s contents are controversial. Therefore, Hines’s rendition of L’Homme à cheval into English was not an instance of translating an ideologically radical text. Moreover, the novel’s military conflict, colorful cast of characters, and manageable length contrast markedly with Drieu’s Gilles.

4.2.2 Gilles

Drieu la Rochelle intended for Gilles (1939) to be his magnum opus. On this account most critics and Drieu himself considered it to be a failure. Nonetheless for Frédéric Grover, Gilles is “one of the important French novels of the first half of [the twentieth] century” (1958:179) and is also “the most widely read and the best known” work by the author. In spite of its shortcomings, critics including Alice Kaplan (1986), Julien Hervier (1978), and Grover (1958) recognize its significance as an ideological novel. Equal parts fiction and non-fiction, Gilles follows the titular protagonist through his romantic woes, his involvement with Surrealist circles, a conversion to fascism, and his ultimate participation in the Spanish Civil War. In “Drieu la Rochelle, or Self-Hatred,” Jean-Paul Sartre savagely criticizes the author and the novel by considering the book to be little more than an exercise in vanity featuring a “wretched hero” (1974:153). This article written by Sartre is available in English; however, the novel being addressed is not.

An extremely long novel, Gilles glorifies the Spanish Falange and received attention for its panoramic vision of French interwar culture rather than for stylistic excellence, contrary to Le Feu follet. The existence of Sartre’s article in translation about
the novel, together with the absence of the novel itself in translation, shows that the shadows of Drieu’s texts, including critical literature and judgments, are arguably more visible than the source texts themselves to an English-speaking public.

In Spain where a significant amount of Drieu la Rochelle’s work has been translated into Spanish, *Gilles* appeared in 1980. As Cristina Gómez Castro shows, after Franco’s death in 1975 an unexpected trend occurred. Publishers generally opted to publish a large amount of translated literature to the detriment of Spanish writing, and self-censorship was often practiced (2008). The translation of *Gilles* into Spanish reinforces Gómez Castro’s argument that the effects of the Franco regime’s censor persisted after the dictator’s death. The translation trends during the immediate post-Franco era may have contributed to the decision to translate *Gilles*, which was a piece of foreign literature positively depicting the Nationalists of the Spanish civil war.

Based on sheer notoriety, Drieu’s *Gilles* is more noteworthy than either *L’Homme à cheval* or *Récit secret*. The critical failure of the novel is one factor that may have impeded translation, but a more significant factor may be the blatantly anti-Semitic dialogue exchanged between Gilles and his mentor Carentan. The novel did not appear in translation until the 1960s, when it was translated into German, Italian, and Japanese. The appearance of *Gilles* in the languages of all three major Axis powers is curious given the potential controversy of issuing the work of a pro-Axis author. The translation of *Gilles* into German and its publication by the major publishing house Propyläen Ullstein Verlag in 1968 aligns with the observation that translation into German thrived from 1956 to 1986, making the Federal Republic of Germany a leader in sheer amount of translated books published (Kittel and Poltermann 2005:424-25). The vigorous tradition of literary
translation in postwar Italy also saw the translation of Gilles into Italian by the noteworthy and prolific translator Luciano Biancardi. Although Gilles was published by a mainstream publisher, several of Drieu’s other works were published in Italy by explicitly neofascist houses such as Giovanni Volpe Editore (Mammone 2015:156).

Despite the author’s close identification with English literature, he is thus better represented in both German and Italian translation. The majority of Drieu la Rochelle translations into German and Italian occurred after the film adaptation of Le Feu follet (1963) and the blossoming of critical works that centered on Drieu la Rochelle as a romantic dandy and esthete. The inclusion of an author like Drieu la Rochelle in the catalogues of German and Italian publishers is also testament to the variety of texts published and the absence of censorship, which had severely constrained literary translation under the Nazi and Fascist regimes.

4.3 Récit secret and Genre

Drieu’s last text to be considered, Secret Journal, stands out for several reasons. Appearing in English translation by Alastair Hamilton, Secret Journal (1973) is a translation of the brief Récit secret (1951), published posthumously in 1951. In this work the author expresses his political and metaphysical concerns in the period leading up to his suicide. In opposition to the abundant scholarly literature about Drieu, which paints him as a one-dimensional collaborator, Récit secret complicates this view with

46 Notably, the latest German translation of Drieu la Rochelle is the very recent Die Komödie von Charleroi (2016). In a case similar to other countries in Europe, the German political right has experienced increasing mainstream acceptability. The considerable number of recent French publications about the author has also undoubtedly generated greater exposure.

47 Published in French in 1951 as Récit secret suivi de Journal (1944-1945) et de Exorde, the text first appeared in Spanish in 1950 in the influential Argentine literary journal Sur.
lines such as “I was for Europe, and Europe has been spoilt by Hitler in 1940; I was for European socialism, and it does not exist any more, Europe being torn between the Saxons and the Russians” (1951:72). Most curiously, these lines in the French text were not written in French, but in English. Like the previously mentioned pseudo-translation, the choice of using a foreign language to make such pronouncements can be read as a form of estrangement or self-censorship. The English version notes the original language of such passages, but the reading experience does not convey an abrupt linguistic change.

The unusual afterlife of this text also warrants attention. Récit secret can be divided into two parts: an autobiographical reflection about death and suicide, followed by an equally melancholic section treating France, decadence, and religion. The first part of the text appeared in Spanish before appearing in French. Published in the eminent journal Sur and translated by Julio Cortázar in 1950, the appearance of Relato Secreto in Latin America’s foremost literary journal is no surprise given the network of patronage Drieu la Rochelle enjoyed. In addition to having a friendship with Victoria Ocampo and appearing in one of Borges’s stories, the Frenchman had also visited Argentina to deliver lectures and meet various literary figures in the 1930s. This network of patronage and the lively milieu of Argentine nationalism encouraged the reception of ideas originating from French and Spanish right-wing intellectuals (Finchelstein 2010:160-61). Drieu contributed a number of articles to the leading conservative Argentine daily newspaper La Nación in the 1930s (Grover 1958:45).

The seemingly minor Secret Journal provides English-language readers with evidence that the author’s relationship to Nazism was complex, but it fails to offer much in regards to political theorization on the part of the author. The intensely personal nature
of the text, which explores the author’s relationship to the temptation of suicide, does however pose a point of interest for translation. Patricia Willson (2011) comments on the ideological and stylistic gap existing between this text and its translator into Spanish, Julio Cortázar. Willson studies the text as a means of elucidating Cortázar’s own practice as a translator and she also raises the hypothetical question of how Cortázar would have translated the text if he had access to Drieu’s journals which were later published unaltered and were rife with anti-Semitic and misogynistic content.

In the French literary system, a text like Récit secret can complicate reductive readings of literary collaborators by displaying the disillusionment with Nazism that even former supporters felt. Such a work can serve as evidence to further rehabilitate or explore the legacy of the author. Conversely, without a substantial body of English-language translations to provide a context for the text, Secret Journal essentially exists in a textual vacuum in translation. More immediately, should the translator position himself as one translating a “journal” or a récit? As Gideon Toury explains, “there is no way a translation could share the same systemic space with its original” (26). In Sur, the text presents itself as a piece of fiction; Marc Dambre (1982) points out that no autobiographical pact surfaces.

4.3.1 Drieu Anthologized

As demonstrated, the majority of English-language publications either depoliticize the author’s texts or focus merely on his political activities. The two most visible texts by Drieu la Rochelle in English are The Fire Within, which can be read as a decidedly non-ideological narrative, and an excerpt from Notes pour comprendre le siècle.
(Notes for Understanding the Century) in an anthology titled Fascism (1995), edited by the notable historian of fascism Roger Griffin. The passages drawn from this essai are some of the writer’s most blatantly pro-fascist lines. The views expressed in the Notes are undeniably pro-Nazi, but the brief excerpt and introduction provided in the anthology miss the crucial convergence of literature and politics found in other passages of the work.

Like Maurras and other French essayists, Drieu la Rochelle attempts to trace the crisis of twentieth-century Europe and propose a solution by making ample reference to literature. Rather than employing political theorization, Drieu merges literary criticism with politics: “Le romantisme avait entrevu l’accord nécessaire de la raison et de l’intuition. Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny sont remplis d’un appel aux forces profondes de l’âme” (1941:106); or “Romanticism anticipated the necessary harmony between reason and intuition. Lamartine, Hugo, and Vigny are filled with a call to the deep powers of the soul” (my translation). The “deep powers of the soul” were those tapped into by fascism and drained by democracy in Drieu’s view. Drieu’s recourse to both the French Romantics and Nietzsche indicates a fundamental difference between the literary-political thought of Drieu and that of Maurras. For Drieu the force of intuition is central to forging a new elite capable of rejecting both bourgeois democracy and communism. He upholds the image of the medieval knight as an ideal in contrast to Maurras’s constant defense of the Classical world and the primacy of reason. Drieu’s obsession with the “soul” appears in the abundant asides pronounced by his novels’ heroes, who invoke the gods and yearn for a spiritual renewal that extends from the individual to all of society.
The short translated excerpt from *Notes* complements observations made about Charles Maurras in the previous chapter. The anthology *Fascism* supplies the reader or researcher with primary texts significant to the history of world fascism. Although constraints of length may have influenced the passages selected from *Notes*, several points of scholarly interest are omitted, and introductory material does not identify the text’s concerns with literature. For example, Drieu’s use of the term *new man* or *l’homme nouveau* is not rooted in National Socialist or communist doctrine, but surfaces much earlier in a 1930 critical essay describing the novels of André Malraux (Drieu la Rochelle 1982).

As a genre, the *essai* proves to be more resistant to translation than fiction. Aside from economic considerations and the question of readership, an important difference between French and English-language literary traditions contributes to this phenomenon. For example, Grover (1958:2-3) acknowledges the fact that Drieu la Rochelle’s essays possess a “literary” and discursive quality that distinguishes them from the systematic theorization expected from political essay writing. Terry Eagleton argues that social upheaval and the cult of creativity promoted by Romanticism changed eighteenth-century views about literature, relegating the essay and other less “creative” genres to a category of writing outside literature (1996:15-16). Eagleton’s conclusion, however, is primarily supported by the history of English society and literature. Eagleton observes that conceptions of literature were not only more accommodating of different genres, but the division between the writer of different genres was also more permeable. For Benoît Denis, a distinguishing feature of the committed writer is the practice of polygraphy (2000:77). Like the pre-modern *philosophes*, the twentieth-century committed writer
refuses to recognize clear demarcations between genres. Notably, Eagleton mentions George Orwell when suggesting the possible literary qualities of an essay (1996:7). The abundance of such essayistic work written by French authors shows that Eagleton’s argument about the essay is not entirely applicable to the modern French tradition.

Unlike many other authors included in the source book *Fascism*, Drieu was neither a politician nor a political theorist in the strict sense. As a result, the overlooked but central role of literary figures in propagating and developing French fascism is represented. The abundance of ideological content in his novels and short stories, however, could also warrant the inclusion of his fiction in such an anthology. A number of other factors may also shape such texts, but the features of an essay like *Notes pour comprendre le siècle* should not only be understood as the work of a novelist posing as a political theorist, but as an example of a larger tradition of committed essay writing.

4.4 Conclusion

Long marginalized by French intellectuals, Drieu la Rochelle’s complete fiction was recently collected and published by the prestigious Bibliothèque de la Pléiade collection in 2012. This symbolic canonization of Drieu represents an important milestone in the continued rehabilitation of this undeniably controversial author. Responses to Drieu’s entrance into the Pléiade appeared in several major French publications. In the *Nouvel Observateur*, writer and critic Philippe Sollers defends the purely literary value of the author’s work and labels him “a good bad writer” (Sollers). The ambiguity of the label “un bon mauvais écrivain” raises the question of his literary merit. Was he marginalized on account of his shortcomings as a writer, and are
translations of his fiction therefore unwarranted? The critical consensus remains that in
despite an oeuvre of inconsistent quality, Drieu la Rochelle did produce critically
respected and widely read works in addition to being one of the country’s foremost
proponents of fascism and eventually collaboration with Germany during World War II.

Recent discussion about the author has also provoked more ambivalent responses
than Sollers’s conclusions. The resurgence of the political far-right in France, evidenced
by the ascent of the Front National beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the present,
and its increased media and social visibility have also made right-wing writing a
contested topic. In his article “The Return of the Collaborators?” Grégoire Leménager
suggests that Drieu’s induction into the Pléiade signals a shift in attitudes towards the
“troublesome skeletons in French literature’s closet” and is part of a larger rehabilitation
trend, exhibited by the publication of the works and correspondence of Paul Morand,
Roger Nimier, Louis Ferdinand-Céline, and Lucien Rebatet. Such a “shift in attitudes”
may very well have implications for future literary production and translation from
French into other languages. In France this shift is evident in recent publications such as
Aude Terray’s Les Derniers jours de Drieu la Rochelle (2016), which explores the
political and personal circumstances prior to the writer’s death, and Gérard Guégan’s
Tout a une fin, Drieu (2016) which recounts a fictional alternate history where the author
stands trial. In short, writers and critics continue to contemplate the legacy of the Drieu la
Rochelle, and such recent publications adopt a less damning tone towards his person and
texts.

Michel Lacroix (2002) labels American scholarship about French fascism a
veritable “obsession” and recognizes a growing body of historical and literary research
about French fascism. As a standard-bearer of the French radical right from the 1930s until his death, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle is essential to the understanding of French fascism as well as *engagement*. For these reasons, studying the translation and non-translation of works by this writer reveals a number of trends. In the subsections above, each translation and non-translation addressed raises questions related to the intersection of translation and ideology. Further analysis provides comparisons with the authors and works treated in this study.

The mere existence of two translations of *Le Feu follet* into English demonstrates the power of rewriting. After the release of the film *Le Feu follet* by acclaimed director Louis Malle, two English translations of the novel appeared. Although the text is accessible and comprehensible as a tale of drug addiction and suicide, translation decisions and paratextual materials do not indicate the ideological framework of the narrative and the importance of engagement to the writer’s entire oeuvre. The texts surrounding a translated text are also of import when considering *La Comédie de Charleroi*. The fact that the text was translated during a wave of scholarship about Drieu la Rochelle in France is significant, as is recognition of his works by English-speaking scholars who assimilated *La Comédie* into the body of war literature. The recent republication of a significant amount of his work, with another Pléiade volume likely to appear in the future, signals another wave interest in Drieu la Rochelle in France. As the aversion to engaging with collaborationist writers dissolves along with the postwar consensus in politics and culture in France, more material about this controversial writer is likely to appear in French and English.  

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48 Gabriel Goodliffe argues that whereas the influence of the political radical right in Italy and Germany is checked by the countries’ recent memories of Fascism and Nazism, the postwar radical right in France has
Censorship is highly relevant to the case of Drieu la Rochelle, but not in terms of the direct censorship of translations of his writing from French into English. Instead, the translation of this author into English was likely hampered and delayed because of censorship in the source literary culture. His most ideologically inflammatory novel Gilles remains untranslated into English despite the attention accorded to it by many critics and historians. Caught in the great ideological conflict of World War II France, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle held the power to censor the writing of others during the German Occupation of France, but was censored by both the French Republican and German occupying regimes. The pseudo-translation L’Homme à cheval is a curiosity that confirms some of Gideon Toury’s assertions about pseudo-translation. Temporally and spatially removed from Occupied France, reading L’Homme à cheval in English mitigates the immediacy conjured by the pseudo-translation strategy. Translating a pseudo-translation, however, widens the gap between the author and translator even further.

The ideological gap between Julio Cortázar and Drieu la Rochelle was considerable, but the Spanish text Relato Secreto, translated from the first half of the confessional Récit secret also presents the problem of genre. The text exists in English, but in the absence of an entire corpus of the author’s writings, the continuity between this text presented as a “journal” and earlier autofictional works cannot exist. This generic ambiguity also arises when considering Notes pour comprendre le siècle and the translated excerpt in an anthology of fascist writings. The essay is manipulated and passages are omitted, but this is not done to twist the ideological content. Instead, it

possessed greater legitimacy and support (2012:327-32). The most recent surge of support for the Front National has been accompanied by attacks on the values of tolerance and equality that have characterized postwar French democracy (Goodliffe 2012:333).
serves to display the most readily comprehensible pro-fascist sentiments, which may not be the most revealing or academically interesting. This choice is probably explained by differences in poetics. The committed _essai_ does not form part of the generic repertoire of English-language literature, but the polygraphy characteristic of committed writing in French challenges Eagleton’s statements about the universal disappearance of the essay from literature (1996:15-19). This helps to explain the non-existence of translations for essays such as _Genève ou Moscou_ (1928), _L’Europe contre les patries_ (1931), and _Socialisme fasciste_ (1934) which are all important works in the author’s oeuvre and some of the foundational texts of French fascism.

Richard Golsan argues that “It is precisely due to the fact that Drieu was an artist, intellectual, and fascist that he poses a problem for American criticism, for whom, traditionally, there is an incompatibility, or even an unbridgeable gap, between art and culture on one side and fascism on the other” (1995:65). This problem also exists for English-language translation. The absence of literary _engagement_ in Anglophone literature, reshapes the selection of texts and their image in translation. Some, like _Le Feu follet_, are translated and presented as non-ideological, while others, like _Notes pour comprendre le siècle_, may seem like ideological excess with a literary gloss when in fact in French they are only remarkable in the ideological points being made rather than the discursive and rhetorical strategies being employed.

The fiction of Drieu la Rochelle displays many exemplary features of committed writing. In addition to their realism and focus on socially and historically meaningful settings, his _romans à thèse_ put forward conclusions by depicting intellectuals and artists who develop ideological commitments and positions. In this manner, unlike a figure such
as T.S. Eliot, ideology did not run parallel to Drieu la Rochelle’s literature, nor was it subordinated to his literature. Rather, several of his novels are exercises in attempting to reconcile artistic production with political action. The parameters for defining littérature engagée are highly variable because of the number of genres and means of expressing commitment available to the writer, particularly in France (Denis 2000:43, Ungar 2002:12). Nonetheless, the fiction of Drieu la Rochelle is as readily identifiable as committed literature as other clearly ideological works written by better-known writers such as Malraux and Sartre. Therefore, he is a central figure in the tradition of French committed writing whose combined political convictions and respected status during the interwar period are both instructive and disconcerting. Drieu la Rochelle was only one of many notable French writers who devoted his intellectual and artistic abilities to Nazi collaborationism. If French fascism is indeed an “American obsession,” then future scholarship must recognize this literary and cultural asymmetry and begin to include translations of Drieu’s works.
In 1953 critic Bernard Frank (1929-2006) wrote in the influential *Les Temps Modernes* (1993:53): “[Roger] Nimier est de loin le favori d'un groupe de jeunes écrivains que, par commodité, je nommerai fascistes” ([Roger] Nimier is by far the favorite of a group of young writers who, out of convenience, I will label fascists),” (my translation). In spite of Frank’s inaccuracy—Nimier never self-identified as a fascist and denounced the ideology on the same grounds as his mentor Georges Bernanos—the remark proves telling. The political atmosphere of postwar France assimilated the syncretic nationalism Nimier espoused as a cultural critic with the ideologies of the blacklisted writers he claimed as his literary predecessors (Hewitt 1996:107). The young writer’s controversial posturing was a reaction to two particularities of postwar French literature: the cumulative cultural rejection of the right and efforts to morally discount and censor the literary right. Condemned notably by Bernard Frank (1993) and later Simone de Beauvoir (2012:168-71) for the ideological implications of his novels and his public statements, Nimier was arguably the most prominent novelist to emerge from the postwar era and claim descent from previous generations of right-wing committed writers.

This chapter first briefly surveys the postwar literary field that was inherited from the immediate postwar years and continued to shape cultural life into the 1950s when Nimier and the other young writers dubbed “The Hussars” resisted the Sartrean paradigm.

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49 In *Le Grand d’Espagne*, Nimier bases his rejection of fascism on the ideology’s “bassesse” [lowness], which Bernanos expounded upon in his own writings (Nimier 1950:28).
of littérature engagée. Second, remarks about Nimier’s major works and style situate his body of work in relation to other French writers associated with both the right and the left. Additionally, potential points of comparison between Nimier and English-language writers are considered. The third and final section of this chapter considers two translations of Nimier’s Le Hussard bleu into English and identifies ways that these two rewritings of this 1950 novel transform some of the source text’s stylistic and ideological aspects, thereby effacing the novel’s inscription in both postwar France and a broader tradition of right-wing writing.

5.1 Postwar French Literature and the Literary Right

During the German occupation of France, artists and thinkers made their own contributions to resistance activities. Alongside a number of clandestine Resistance publications, high-profile intellectuals from a variety of backgrounds formed the Comité National des Écrivains or CNE in 1941 (Drake 2002:13). After the liberation of France by Allied forces, the group’s mounting ideological rapprochement with the PCF (French Communist Party) led to the harsh condemnation of intellectuals justifiably or mistakenly perceived as collaborators by the CNE commission. The widespread enthusiasm for the French Communist Party, which could rightfully claim to have actively resisted both Vichy France and Nazi Germany, added moral and political currency to the CNE’s efforts. In the postwar years, benefitting from the prestige of members such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Aragon, and others, the CNE was able to effectively censor right-wing writers by exerting “soft” censorship on publishing houses and press organs (Dambre
Maria Tymoczko explains that such means of control over textual production can assume numerous guises: “When the strength of informal social controls is backed up by other mechanisms of power and cultural dominance,…then the line between explicit and implicit censorship becomes blurred in the extreme” (2009:27). These censorship efforts blacklisted the work of collaborators like Pierre Drieu la Rochelle and journalist Robert Brasillach, but also of non-collaborators who supported the Vichy regime vocally or tacitly, such as Charles Maurras and Henry de Montherlant (Drake 2005:14).

The solidarity between various political groups, from Gaullists to communists—who were united in their condemnation of collaborators and Vichy supporters alike—dissolved after initial bursts of postwar fervor. On the cultural front, after immediate reprisals against intellectuals who were deemed guilty, the unity of the intellectual left may have weakened, but the moral authority and public visibility of Sartre, Aragon, and others were consolidated. The blacklists ceased to be updated by the beginning of the 1950s, and the CNE no longer enjoyed the same reputation as in the immediate postwar years, yet the residual effects of the marginalization enacted upon a host of writers endured. The horrors of Vichy France and Nazi Germany effectively rendered fascism and any right-wing ideology outside of Gaullism morally suspect in France.

The stigma of collaboration and questionable loyalties extended beyond the literary field and became more palpable in the conviction of literary collaborationists and Vichy supporters such as Charles Maurras, Paul Morand, Lucien Rebatet, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and Robert Brasillach for their wartime activities. The literary space

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50 Several noteworthy members of the CNE resigned from the group, citing the CNE’s subordination to the Communist Party and its uncompromising position towards non-Resistance intellectuals as reasons for their departure. Notable examples include Jean Paulhan, who left in 1944, and Albert Camus, who left in 1946 (Kaplan 2000:200,279).
dominated by the political left faced little reputable resistance or criticism, at least from the right. Former collaborators and Maurrassian intellectuals regrouped around select publications, but the message of cultural and intellectual reunification as advocated by Jean Paulhan represented the most substantial challenge to communist pretenses towards sole ownership of moral and cultural legitimacy (Winock 1997:471-75).

Paulhan founded his opposition to the broader left’s cultural stance by criticizing its divisiveness and by invoking the non-partisan intellectual ideal previously put forth by Julien Benda. Meanwhile, the cultural right resented their own marginalization, particularly in literature. The intellectual left’s conception of literature was often synonymous with the ideas voiced in Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Qu’est-ce que la littérature* (1948), where the author proclaims the responsibility of the writer and the necessity of literature to effect change. In a context where a right-wing *contre-engagement* was no longer viable, the right mounted criticisms against Sartre’s *littérature engagée* culminating in calls for art-for-art’s sake. Together with writing directly inspired by Sartrean existentialism, many postwar French novels depicted representations of the German Occupation and the French Resistance that conveniently fit into the cultural narratives being constructed during the time period (Braganca 2015:228-29). Several observers (Braganca 2015; Hewitt 1996; Atack 1989) consider the so-called “Hussars” to be among the first novelists who culturally challenged official narratives surrounding national unity, resistance, and collaboration, while denouncing the perceived leftist instrumentalization of literature by the left.

5.2 Nimier and the Hussars in French Literature
No mention of Roger Nimier’s place in French literary history is complete without mentioning “the Hussars” as a group. Overshadowed by Sartrean engagement and existentialism, and later the nouveau roman, in many respects, the Hussars represent an overlooked chapter in French literary history. Writing in *Les Temps Modernes*, Frank originally included the author of *Le Hussard bleu*, as well as Antoine Blondin (1922-1991) and Jacques Laurent (1919-2000), under his appellation for the group. After Frank’s label gained currency among critics, Michel Déon (1919-) and other novelists and critics were added to the original group of three who emerged as standard-bearers of the French postwar literary right. Their youth ensured that unlike the older generation of right-wing writers, the Hussars did not have to personally absolve themselves of questionable prewar or wartime activities. Moreover, the celebration of youth which permeated their novels underlined a search for novelty in the wake of World War II.

When Frank wrote his article identifying “the Hussars” (2003) as a new manifestation of the literary right, several publications and established right-wing intellectuals had already begun to critique both the épuration (purge) and left-wing engagement’s effect on literature. But this younger group of writers diverged from the transparent extreme-right engagement of a Drieu or Brasillach (Field 1975:63-64). Under the guise of non-engagement, the Hussars with Nimier as a standout figure practiced a form of “contre-engagement” or counter-engagement, first in journalism and most importantly in a series of novels appearing in the decade following the end of World War II (Dambre 2011:232).

Untainted by collaboration—Nimier briefly served in the French army, Blondin worked as a forced laborer for the Service du travail obligatoire (STO), but Laurent had
ties to the Vichy regime—these young novelists and polemicists nonetheless shared a common political and literary heritage. All three were shaped by the Maurrassian right and in accordance with this lineage were inspired by a range of primarily French authors stretching from Stendhal to Marcel Aymé (1902-67). The group also penned novels markedly different from those of their ideological opponents on the left. Their representations of wartime France portrayed the moral and personal complexities implicated in individuals’ wartime actions, and these same fictions displayed an interest in the individual’s relationship to history. Recent publications (Braganca 2015; Dambre 2014) regarding the Hussars as a literary school, as well as studies of the individual authors themselves, come to two significant conclusions. First, Nimier and related writers can justifiably be considered the postwar inheritors of right-wing intellectuals who practiced both literature and political journalism. Second, their relation to literary engagement amounts to an alternative form of literary commitment differing from both their leftist contemporaries and rightist forebears.

Alienated by existentialism and the committed writers of the left, the Hussars sought to rehabilitate the image of their literary predecessors under the auspices of older, ideologically sympathetic writers, including Marcel Aymé, Jacques Chardonne (1884-1968), and Paul Morand (1888-1976). Frank’s designation of Nimier as the group’s leader is understandable because of the writer’s criticism, defiant journalism, and novel *Le Hussard bleu*, which all embodied a revolt against existentialism, littérature engagée.

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51 Regarding the personal and literary relationships between the Hussars and Maurras, see (Dambre 2012:201-17).
and résistancialisme (resistancialism). This resentment of the intellectual left was partly political, but also generational and stylistic in nature. In Le Grand d’Espagne (1950) Nimier describes the malaise experienced by those “who were 20 in 1945.”

In addition to canonical French writers such as Alexandre Dumas and Stendhal, Nimier in particular cites Aymé, Maurras, and Bernanos as influences. The spirit of adventure and conflict-ridden settings contained in the works of André Malraux and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle also furnished a model for the author’s wartime novels Les Épées (1948) and Le Hussard bleu (1950). Despite plainly identifying with the right, the Hussars—and Nimier in particular—attacked the prevailing intellectual climate and literary trends under the banner of art-for-art’s sake. Nonetheless, several commentators (Dambre 1997; Sapiro 2010; Braganca 2015) acknowledge the essentially political quality of the Hussars’ “désengagement” (Vandromme 1960:124) and defense of literature for literature’s sake expressed in their journalistic work and editorial efforts with publications such as Arts and La Parisienne (Cresciucci 2011:152-56).

In the face of what he perceived as the complacency of leftists in the face of the Cold War, Nimier criticized Sartre, Camus, and Breton in 1949, several years before Frank’s 1953 article made him a controversial figure (Dambre 2014:84). Nimier and others extended their opposition to the existentialist paradigm of literature beyond the pages of their preferred periodicals. Critical works addressing Nimier’s fiction regularly employ the same inventory of descriptors to speak of his novels’ stylistic and ideological content. A consideration of these repeatedly cited traits—provocation, insolence, and

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52 Historian Henry Rousso defines “resistancialism” as a postwar phenomenon characterized by an attempt to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime in history, the construction of a mythical “Resistance,” and “the identification of this “Resistance” with the nation as a whole” (1991:10).
*désinvolture*— can help establish key features of the author’s work and can aid in uncovering the transformations that occur in the two English-language translations of *Le Hussard bleu*, the novel that lent its name to the literary school.

The provocative quality of Nimier’s work is regularly commented upon, such as when Marc Dambre (2000) treats the “politics of provocation” practiced by the Hussars. With respect to the thematic content of their fiction, provocation is an apt label for the graphic depiction of sex and violence, as well as moral ambiguities found in works including Nimier’s *Les Épées* (1948) and *Le Hussard bleu* (1950). The vigorous style and lighthearted treatment of ideological content found in these novels is more flippant than serious, befitting the age of their authors. This characteristic “insolence” leads Pol Vandromme (1960) to label the Hussars as *la droite buissonnière* (the truant right), alluding to both Antoine Blondin’s novel *L’Europe buissonnière* (*Playing Hooky in Europe*) (1949) and the French expression *faire l’école buissonnière* (to skip school). The anti-hero of *Le Hussard bleu*, Sanders, pithily expresses both the political and frivolous dimensions of Nimier’s style when he declares, “I protest against the modern world but love its slim women” (1999:123). For French writers like Maurras, Bernanos, or Drieu la Rochelle, “the modern world” is a recurring euphemism for describing a France blighted by democracy, materialism, liberalism, and capitalism.

Nimier’s aversion to the Sartrean model of *engagement* manifests itself in the imperative of *désinvolture* (lit. casualness), or a sense of defiant indifference cited by critics to describe the postwar French literary right’s relation to politics. In Nimier’s novels, his heroes adopt this same sense of political detachment, and their nonchalant demeanors convey a preoccupation with style. They confront the gravity of wartime and
postwar France with irreverence, naïveté, or cynicism, but never with mature or sincere conviction. This désinvolture itself coexists alongside the exaltation of values “clearly rooted in the right - masculine order, elitism, and nationalism,” which are also presented with youthful lightness (Ory and Sirinielli 2002:173).

Like Drieu la Rochelle, Nimier’s ideological allegiances may have elicited criticism from fellow writers and critics, but they did not prevent him from being a prominent personality in publishing and screenwriting. *Le Hussard bleu* and the essay *Le Grand d’Espagne* (1950) remain his most positively received works, yet the melancholy and moral transgressions of his signature novel can also be found in other works of fiction such as *Les Épées* (1948) and *Les Enfants tristes* (1951). In 1953 Nimier published the ill-received *Histoire d’un amour* (1953), and then began a nearly decade-long break from writing novels. In the meantime he served as an advisor at Gallimard and collaborated with filmmaker Louis Malle for the film *Elevator to the Gallows* (1958), among other editorial duties. The author of *Le Hussard bleu* returned to novel-writing with the ludic pastiche *D’Artagnan amoureux* (1962), ultimately published posthumously. The acclaim garnered by his early novels drew comparisons between Nimier and Raymond Radiguet (1903-23), whose controversial tale of adolescence and eroticism *Le Diable au corps* (1923) presented wartime as an extension of adolescent freedom. Such mythologizing comparisons were only strengthened by Nimier’s unexpected death in 1962, a year before the publication of Alain Robbe-Grillet’s collection of essays *Pour un nouveau roman* 1963. This collection outlined the defining features of the *nouveau roman* movement, which emerged in the mid-1950s and spawned
a number of recognized novels and considerable theoretical discussion. By contrast, 1962 marked the end of the Hussars as a distinguishable literary school.

5.3 Nimier in Translation

The existence of a 1952 British translation of *Le Hussard bleu* by John Russell and Anthony Rhodes and a 1953 American version translated by Jacques Le Clercq—both titled *The Blue Hussar* in English—is testament to Nimier’s visibility in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as to his success in at least partially shedding the image of his politically suspect influences. For Nicholas Hewitt, *Le Hussard bleu* is “probably one of the most successful Second World War novels to come out of France” (1996:119) for both its narrative techniques and panoramic insight into a varied cast of characters during World War II. As mentioned above, the novel’s relation to society and politics must be understood within the context of French postwar culture and as a direct response to politically committed left-wing writing. Studying the two translations of *Le Hussard bleu* aids in unveiling the means of the novel’s *contre-engagement*, and also reveals transformations occurring in the English renderings of the novel which dull or distort the novel’s most important features and ideologically significant content.

The dust jacket of the 1953 American version of *The Blue Hussar* refers to the author as “the most promising of the new French writers.” Prior to the appearance of the English translations of Nimier’s novel, however, a 1951 American review of *Le Hussard bleu* published in *Books Abroad* expressed a less enthusiastic evaluation of the novel. The review notes the “interesting” narrative technique of interior monologues but criticizes the inclusion of a “German nymphomaniac,” as well as the “hackneyed” characters...
(Corbett 1951:249). The former of these two criticisms is made on puritanical grounds, and the latter judgment is related to the reviewer’s repulsion towards the “defeatism” of the soldiers in the narrative (1951:249).

In the same publication later in 1951, another reviewer treats Nimier’s essay *Le Grand d’Espagne* in a more appreciative fashion. The reviewer astutely identifies the ideological content of the essay that makes it so provocative: “Our age, so claims the author, is godless and soulless. The traditional God has been replaced by new gods: the cinema, boxing, politics, money” (Vittorini 1951:42). Nimier’s anti-materialist and culturally elitist critique of mass culture firmly inscribes him in the broader current of the French literary right, from Drieu to Bernanos. The reviewer of *Le Grand d’Espagne* most significantly writes that Nimier’s book offers insight, from one point of view, into postwar France. Conversely, the reviewer of *Le Hussard bleu*, Hugh Corbett, declares “It is hoped that the publishers do not regard this novel as a notable example of postwar French literature (1951:249).

**5.3.1 Le Hussard bleu and Narratives**

Although these reviews of Nimier’s work are just two examples of American attention towards the author’s work, the reviewer of *Le Hussard bleu* in particular negatively evaluates the narrative’s unexpected ideological and cultural particularities. In fact, it was this very unrepresentative quality of Nimier’s novel, however, that generated both criticism and modest fame for the young writer. The “defeatism” decried by the reviewer is one of the most striking features of the novel, as well as the interchangeable characterizations of Vichy and Resistance fighters. Such content posed a direct challenge
to prevailing narratives about France and its citizens during World War II and the German Occupation.

Pieces of fiction are frequently involved in wider efforts to question dominant cultural narratives, and Mona Baker observes that the exportation or importation of these works through translation shapes cultural narratives across linguistic and national boundaries (2006:33-38). The dissident aspect of the novel—in accordance with the postwar right’s less overt means of literary engagement—is expressed through a number of techniques posing translation difficulties including polyphonic narration, colloquial speech, and ideologically loaded passages concerning or voiced by miliciens and maquisards.53

5.3.2 Nimier and English-Language Literature

If every piece of fiction exists on a continuum between the particular and the universal in themes and influences, Nimier’s novel certainly tends towards the particular. Scholars regularly classify Nimier and the other so-called Hussars as the primary postwar “inheritors” of Maurras (Besnard 2011:384). This association stems from the group’s affiliations with Action Française, its involvement with Maurrassian publications, and individual personal statements about Maurras and his group. Beyond these biographical details, a strictly textual consideration of Nimier’s novels gives at least some evidence corroborating the author’s indebtedness to the leader of Action Française. Unlike Drieu la Rochelle’s more cosmopolitan preference for English literature and Nietzsche over the

53 The Milice Française, or French Militia, was a paramilitary force created by the Vichy regime to combat the Maquis, or groups of Resistance fighters who were active throughout France during the period of German Occupation.
canon of his home country, Nimier’s entrenchment in canonical authors from Dumas to Stendhal becomes obvious in the allusions, aphoristic style, and restraint in his novels.54

It seems apparent that Nimier as a French writer should accord the French literary heritage a privileged position, but in the context of 1950s French literature, a Gallocentric stance is a vindication of Maurrassian ideas concerning the universal excellence of the French tradition.

By drawing from both Romantic and Classical greats, Nimier’s fiction and critical work eschew rigid Classicism but nonetheless politicize the question of literary influence and heritage. For example, *Le Hussard bleu* makes use of internal monologues narrated by several characters. Benoît Denis explains that Jean-Paul Sartre and others imported this means of narrative polyphony from American literature, and the form proved to be well-adapted for developing the ideological propositions characteristic of committed writing (2000:86-87). Nimier’s dialogue with English-language literature was negligible, but he denies filiation with the American writers championed by the French postwar left. In a typically polemical manner, he writes:

> One no longer had the right to read Céline, but there was Miller. Proust was accused of futility: Faulkner remained. They no longer liked Montherlant—and they swooned over the slightest line by Hemingway. I do not want to say that our cousins in America copied us, but only that we already possessed their techniques and their tastes for a long time. (1990:35 my translation)

This appraisal equates the choice to acknowledge the “originality” of either French or American writers with an extension of the wider cultural conflict in postwar France. As Marc Chénetier (1991) notes, the reception of twentieth-century American writers by

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54 For more information regarding Drieu’s personal relationships with English writers and literature, see Gallagher in *Drieu la Rochelle* (1982) ed. Hanrez.
French critics, translators, and writers was instrumental in their canonization in world literature. The transatlantic links forged from World War I onwards laid the foundations for the postwar French literary establishment to praise writers including Faulkner, Henry Miller, and Ernest Hemingway (Chénetier 1991:81-3). For writers positioning themselves at odds with the literary establishment, the attention Sartre, Beauvoir, and others accorded to American figures was ideologically motivated. When Nimier cites Céline and Montherlant, he is arguing that intellectuals complicit with “the system” only associated novel literary techniques with American writers because the true innovators were politically suspect.

We have seen that prior to the publication of Frank’s influential article in 1953, a British translation of Le Hussard bleu appeared in English in 1952 as The Blue Hussar, translated by John Russell and Anthony Rhodes. Nimier’s largely dismissive attitude towards various American writers notwithstanding, the American translation of Le Hussard bleu, translated by Jacques Le Clercq was published in 1953. In addition, John Russell and Robert Kee also translated parts of Nimier’s novels Les Enfants tristes (1951) and Histoire d’un amour (1953), published in one book as Children of Circumstance (1954).

5.4 The Blue Hussar in English Translation

Hewitt cites the appearance of The Blue Hussar in English translation as evidence for Nimier’s rising stature in French literature (1996:114). How did these two English-language translations of Le Hussard bleu succeed or fail in conveying the original text’s particularities? This section evaluates the strategies used to render Le Hussard bleu from
French into English in the two English-language versions of the novel. Both linguistic analysis and critical works are employed to help understand what changes occur in this translation because “even low level choices involving single clauses and even single words within them can have significant ideological effects” (Fairclough 1995:109). As discussed above, the contre-engagement of Le Hussard bleu is historically inscribed within the cultural politics of postwar France, yet a great deal of the narrative’s ideological content remains comprehensible without detailed knowledge of the literary field’s political divisions in the wake of World War II.

The manipulations resulting from such disparities partially distort many of Nimier’s stylistic hallmarks that make Le Hussard bleu an iconoclastic postwar novel. Overall, both translations of the novel into English flatten the discord between the numerous voices, such as those of the eloquent but cynical anti-hero Sanders, and the former communist partisan Los Anderos, whose coarseness is reminiscent of the dialogue contained in Céline’s Voyage au bout de la nuit. The earthy spoken language of the soldiers, casually treated violence, and value-free presentation of both Vichy and Resistance soldiers all contribute to the novel’s oft-cited “insolence.”

In the beginning of Le Hussard bleu, the anti-hero Sanders remarks upon France during World War II:

La guerre de 39 était idiote, la Résistance à moitié folle ; quant à la Milice, eh bien, c’était mal. (Nimier 1999:16)

The war of ’39 was absurd, the Resistance half-crazy; as for Pétain’s Militia, it was an out-and-out evil. (Nimier 1953:4)

The ’39 campaign was senseless, the Resistance insane, the Militia evil. (Nimier 1952:7)

Neither of the two English translations convey Sanders’s dismissive filler “eh bien,” prior
to labeling the Vichy Milice “evil,” and Le Clercq’s version inserts “out-and-out” to add additional condemnation to the soldier’s evaluation of the Vichy-aligned Milice. It is Sanders and his nonchalant withdrawal from the events and people surrounding him that leads Simone de Beauvoir to disparagingly group the young writer with Montherlant and Drieu la Rochelle in her essay “Right-wing Thought Today.”

The detached and disinvested conduct of characters presented by Montherlant, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier is described as existing “in order to give oneself subjective satisfactions: an impression of novelty, or motion, or courage” (Beauvoir 2008:168). This anti-humanist “contempt for objective ends” (Beauvoir 2008:168), manifests itself in many places in Le Hussard bleu, through both images and language. When Sanders reflects about seeing a former comrade hang himself on account of the latter’s guilt regarding the murder of civilians, he says:

À ma place, devant son ami étranglé, un type humain s’en serait très bien tiré. (Nimier 1999:401)

In my place, another, nicer man would have known what to do when he saw his dangling friend. (Nimier 1953:225)

Another and nicer man would have known what to do when he found that his friend hanged himself. (Nimier 1952:204)

Both English translations make the description “étranglé” less visceral by substituting “hanged himself” (204) in the case of Russell’s and Rhodes’s translation, and “dangling” (225) for Le Clercq’s version. More notable is the translation of “un type humain” as “nicer man” in both translations. Both of these translations can be deemed unsatisfactory if we acknowledge the recurring usage of “humain” in the novel and the resonance of the word in French literature. On the final page of the novel, Sanders remarks: “Tout ce qui est humain m’est étranger,” (Nimier 1999:434) or “Everything
human is alien to me,” thereby concluding a series of thoughts and declarations where he proclaims his inability and reluctance to identify with the rest of humanity and with the entire tradition of Enlightenment thought.55

A short chapter that displays hints of the “defeatism” decried by the American reviewer in Books Abroad is omitted in both translations. In one sequence of this chapter, Sanders listens to a fellow soldier’s news about the war. Sanders relates, “Mais je ne l’ai pas écouté longtemps et je me suis replongé dans Retz car ces nouvelles se réduisaient à peu de choses: les Américains et les Russes s’étaient rencontrés, mais ne s’étaient pas reconnus,” or “But I did not listen for long and I dove back into Retz because the news came down to very little: the Americans and Russians met, but they didn’t recognize each other (Nimier 1999:149 my translation). For Sanders, Allied advances are of little consequence, because “La guerre est une enfance prolongée” (“War is an extended childhood”) (1999:271 my translation). The omission of this chapter in both translations detracts from the full characterization of Sanders, who would rather read the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz (1613-79) than celebrate military successes over the Germans.

Similarly, a second chapter featuring the former Pétainist fighter Casse-Pompons does not appear in the British translation and is condensed in the American translation. Neither translation accurately conveys Casse-Pompons’s steady use of vulgarities, and the latter translation does not include declarations such as:

…à la même époque, mes obligations militaires me retenaient dans la garde à Pétain. Mais dans la garde à Pétain, on avait tout à fait l’esprit de maquis. (Nimier 1999:152)

55 Sanders’s declaration is a blatant negation of a famous quotation by the Roman playwright Terence. César Chesneau Dumarsais (1676-1756) later cited the phrase in the “Philosophe” entry of the Encyclopédie to encapsulate the position of the Enlightenment-era philosophe in society: “Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto” (I am human, and nothing of that which is human is alien to me) (1765:510).
...during the same time period, my military obligations kept me in Pétain’s guard. But in Pétain’s guard, we absolutely had the maquis spirit. (My translation)

The former cuirassier equates his service under the Vichy regime with that of his comrades who participated in the resistance. Through these statements and interior monologues, the novel depicts the Milice and the resistance as essentially the same, for both comprise individuals who take little interest in matters beyond their own self-interest. Much of Casse-Pompons’s interior monologue does not contribute to the novel’s plotlines, but it does present the opportunism and careerism of the character, and his indifference to questions of morality. In banter between Casse-Pompons and Saint-Anne, explicit references to masturbation, such as “se branler” (Nimier 1999:157), are rendered as “twiddling his life maker” (Nimier 1953:80), offering just one comedic example of the process Antoine Berman labels “ennoblement” (1999:57). 56

Both English-language renditions of the novel regularly ennoble, or seek to refine, the dialogue of several characters, and phrases or entire passages are occasionally omitted. A notable non-political instance of omission in both translations occurs in a chapter narrated by De Forjac, a homosexual captain with nationalist tendencies. When fantasizing about Saint-Anne, De Forjac’s interior monologue becomes graphic in its representation of homosexual desire:

… de son corps allongé sur le mien, de sa verge tendue, de ses mains sur mon ventre, animant cette plaine stérile, ou bien encore de son sexe tout entier dans ma bouche laissant couler en mon coeur son spermé brûlant comme des perles qu’un jeune prince mélancolique lancerait dans la mer. (Nimier 1999:201)

56 Although this particular example also trivializes the meaning of the source text, the global effect of such a strategy is one of ennoblement. Berman observes that translations tend to elevate the register of passages or words deemed substandard (Berman 1991:57-8).
Both translations omit this passage, as well as several other paragraphs before and after this particular passage where De Forjac reflects upon a number of topics, including his sexuality, in an interior monologue using stream-of-consciousness narration. The removal of these passages erases the frank depiction of same-sex desire, mitigates the text’s “insolence,” and also erases some of the stylistic features of De Forjac’s chapters. In an earlier section De Forjac directly alludes to Marcel Proust (Nimier 1999:84) in one of the novel’s several intertextual suggestions. It is more than just an inconsequential reference, because De Forjac’s long, flowing stream-of-consciousness narration owes much to Proust’s signature style.

Stylistic features and allusions also receive differing treatment in the two translations on other occasions. In chapters narrated by Los Anderos, the omission of some of the most vulgar passages in the British translation detract from the characterization of the resistance fighter as a dishonorable figure. In the American translation fewer omissions occur, but the intensity of expletives and suggestions towards sexual violence are frequently mitigated.

Comme Saint-Anne demandait si on violerait un peu les Fridolines, j’ai répondu:
—Tout juste. Faut ce qu’y faut. Ousque l’honneur du régiment est en jeu, y a pas de reculer. Quand les z’hussards y rentrent dans une ville, c’est p’têt’ pas pour saluer les dames en bas de leur balcon et leur-z-y faire des réverences. (Nimier 1999:74)

When Saint-Anne asked whether we would do a little raping of female Krauts, I told him: “Just a little. We’ll observe due moderation; a piece of
tail is a piece of tail, and when the honor of the regiment is at stake, dig deep, fellow. D’you think the Hussars go into a town to stand under balconies and play the balcony scene in *Cyrano*? (Nimier 1953:37)

And when Sainte-Anne asked me if we should rape the pretty little German girls, I said “We musn’t exaggerate. Of course if the honour of the regiment is at stake you can let it rip. When the Hussars come into a town it’s not to play *Romeo and Juliet*.” (Nimier 1952:31)

Neither Russell’s and Rhodes’s nor Le Clercq’s English translations emulate the source text’s regular use of phonetic spelling in Los Anderos’s chapter. The repetitive truncations and alternative spellings on the printed page viscerally distinguish Los Anderos’s dialogue, and they also reproduce the orality of his lines, which itself seems inspired by Céline’s *Voyage au bout de la nuit*. Le Clercq’s addition “piece of tail” has no parallel in the source text, but it attempts to compensate for the English passage’s less colloquial tone. “We’ll observe due moderation” is another questionable manipulation that adds a sense of grim humor to the passage. In comparison to other characters, however, Los Anderos’s voice is overall more explosive and urgent rather than ironic or understated.

The line “We musn’t exaggerate,” found in the Russell and Rhodes translation similarly fails to represent Los Anderos’s tone. The overtranslation of Los Anderos’s image of greeting women from below their balcony yields two direct allusions in both translations. The British translation domesticates the possible gesture towards *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897) by Edmond Rostand by mentioning a Shakespeare play. Le Clercq’s translation presents a direct reference to *Cyrano* while also partially conveying the non-standard idiolect. Direct allusions are more characteristic of Sanders or Saint-Anne—who both regularly talk about literature—than of Los Anderos. The latter’s characteristic non-standard speech, repetitive declarations, and unsophisticated pronouncements all serve to
paint the communist fighter as a vulgar, uncultivated, and loutish soldier. The translation patterns found in both the American and English versions of *The Blue Hussar* attenuate the sheer range of registers and imagery of the novel, particularly when rendering chapters featuring Los Anderos and De Forjac into English. These recurring translation strategies also blunt a broader commentary made by the author through the different voices: nearly every character displays deep personal flaws, and none live up to the ideal figure of a Resistance hero or honorable French soldier.

At several points in *Le Hussard bleu*, the novel addresses the relationship between soldiers who belonged to the Pétainist *Milice* and those who were Resistance partisans prior to joining enlisting in the group of hussars. Indeed, nearly every soldier offers opinions about one side or the other.

"Plusieurs eftépès, m’a-t-on dit. M’en fous, s’ils savent se battre. Ils iront à la messe et on leur fera une moralité. Par-ci, par-là, des mines de francs-baiseurs : à surveiller de près." (Nimier 1999:183)

"Heard there were several former Partisan Franc Tireurs—Communists all—among them. Don’t give a damn so long as they know how to fight. I’ll send them to Mass and have them given a good stiff sermon. Here and there, saw some men who looked pretty fast on the trigger—I mean the sexual trigger. Need close watching." (Nimier 1953:98)

"I’d been told there were a lot of old F.T.P.s. Much if I care if they know how to fight. Send them to Mass, and preach them a good strong sermon. Here and there, one or two faces of the sex-sharp-shooter type. Need watching." (Nimier 1952:81)

In this particular passage, the Pétainist Colonel de Fermendidier reflects on the soldiers under his command. The inclusion of both *s’en foutre* (lit. to not give a damn) and *baiseur* (lit. fucker) is typical of Nimier’s exploitation of even substandard registers. The allusion to the *francs-tireurs* evokes the narrative’s implicit comparison between the shared experiences of leftist *francs-tireurs* (lit. sharpshooters or irregular skirmishers)
and rightist *milicien* collaborators. Colonel de Fermendidier and other characters interchangeably refer to the FTP members as *efépés* or as *francs-tireurs* in reference to the Francs-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP) Resistance group. Both translations understate the vulgarity of the source text. “M’en fous” (I don’t give a damn) is more forceful than “Much if I care,” and *baiseur* (fucker) likewise is more intense than “sex” or “sexual.” The Russell and Rhodes translation of *franc-baiseurs* retains the immediate definition of *franc-tireur* as “sharp-shooter,” but the choice makes no suggestion towards the relationship between the FTP and the Colonel’s wordplay.

Importantly, both English formulations mitigate the associations Colonel de Fermendidier assigns to the *francs-tireurs*, whom he despises for political reasons. In a monologue where he recounts his grandiose and authoritarian fantasies, he entertains the idea of having Resistance fighters shot (Nimier 1999:285). The translation decisions highlighted above demonstrate the distortional tendency of “the destruction of networks of underlying meaning” as defined by Antoine Berman (1991:61).57 Moreover, the Colonel’s military discipline manifests itself in the terse rhythms of his interior dialogue where incomplete sentences abound. Both translations attempt to replicate these laconic rhythms, but in fact primarily adopt strategies of expansion and clarification. Just as in the case with the other characters, these small translation choices dull the myriad contrasts between the different characters.

Another means Nimier uses to characterize the soldiers is their reading choices. One secondary character is dubbed Karl Marx on account of his self-identification and

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57 According to Berman “traditional translation” often ignores the multiple networks of lexical items and semantic suggestions found in a literary text. These networks often go unperceived, but are inextricable from the source text’s tone and thematic content (1991:61-62).
taste for communist literature. By contrast, Colonel de Fermendidier muses about the relationship between language and nationalism and then thinks about Charles Maurras (1999:184). References to writers are used to betray the attitudes or beliefs of a character. Michel Zeraffa calls attention to the importance of the worldviews expressed through Nimier’s characters:

We do find characters in the novels of these young writers, but they are sketched rather than endowed with life. They are used by a man who employs them to express a conception of the world and more often than not they are of no interest to us except to the degree that they reflect the ideas of the narrator. (Zeraffa 1951:6)

We can contest Zeraffa’s harsh judgment by noting the abundance of styles represented by the different characters, and the different ideas the characters themselves express. The diverse cast of characters does not all seem to voice the ideas of Nimier the author, but their interior monologues and conversations frequently are of an explicitly ideological nature. When references to literature are not a means of ideological commentary, Nimier draws upon French letters for the sake of humor. In the following passage, the young hussar Saint-Anne thinks about a previous love.

J’avais joué une comédie passionnante, Isabelle n’était rien de plus qu’une sorte d’actrice. Tout cela, sans danger, les actrices n’existaient pas plus que Chimène. Et Chimène est encore une invention des typographes. Son vrai nom est Chimère. (Nimier 1999:264-65)

I had acted out a passionate drama, and Isabelle was nothing but a sort of actress. (Nimier 1953:146)

I’d acted out a most fascinating play, and Isabelle was no longer anything but an actress of a sort. It was quite harmless: actresses were no more real than Rosalind or Perdita. Even Juliet is an invention of the typographers. (Nimier 1952:125)

As showcased earlier in section 4.1.2 in the case of Drieu la Rochelle’s Le Feu follet, the treatment of allusions in translation can be a revealing comment on translation
processes. In the case of Nimier’s *Le Hussard bleu* appearing above, both English-language translations substantially reduce the length of the source text. British translators Russell and Rhodes attempt to transpose Nimier’s allusion to Corneille’s *Le Cid* by providing a target-text oriented allusion to Shakespeare, as done in Los Anderos’s passage treated above. The original allusion is not only more economical by only citing “Chimène” in lieu of three Shakespeare characters, it is also telling of Nimier’s own influences and Saint-Anne’s characters. By alluding to *Le Cid*, Nimier evokes the baroque-influenced Classicism of Corneille, but also strengthens Saint-Anne’s characterization as an adventure seeker and Sanders’s optimistic double. Moreover, the humor of the passage is completely effaced. Le Clercq omits the reference altogether and only partially communicate the source text’s theatrical suggestions. Such transformations obscure the tension between Nimier’s irreverent provocation and erudite detachment.

Consequently, English-language readers of these texts receive a fluent, accessible text that weakens the novel’s relationship with other works of French literature.

Sanders’s decision to immerse himself in literature amidst warfare and events of historical weight can be read as a transposition of Nimier’s own conviction that literature must remain autonomous. It is also a prime example of the fatalism attributed to the literary right by various critics. Reading and literature unite the novel’s protagonists, Sanders and Saint-Anne, and reading also constitutes a point of conversation between the two men and the German character Rita:

D’abord, ça n’a aucun sens de lire tous ces auteurs anciens. Pindare, Eschyle, c’était très bien de leur temps, mais maintenant ils sont complètement oubliés. D’ailleurs, on ne retient pas longtemps les vers. Je reconnais que c’est agréable. Sinon les chansons valent tout autant. Edith Piaf, Marlène Dietrich, c’est mille fois mieux qu’Hölderlin ou Stefan George. On relira peut-être Apollinaire parce que c’est facile. (Nimier
What's the sense in reading all those tired-out writers? Pindar and Aeschylus were good enough in their day, but they’re dead as mutton now. Besides, who can possibly remember poems five minutes after reading them? There are far too many of them around. Unless they’re easy to read, no one ever looks at them a second time. Hoelderlin, Milton, Stephan George… if it’s something pleasant you want take popular songs. Edith Piaf and Marlene Dietrich can run rings around the poets. (Nimier 1953:196)

Several disparities arise in Le Clercq’s translation of this passage. His phrasings include several expressions, such as “tired-out” and “dead as mutton,” that are instances of overtranslation. Sanders’s voice is colloquial in the original text, but within the polyphony of narrators in the novel Sanders distinguishes himself through understatement and aphoristic cynicism. The allusion to Apollinaire is also completely omitted. Le Clercq adds “Milton” into the lists of authors Sanders considers to be inferior to Marlene Dietrich and Edith Piaf. This choice can be interpreted as the result of a false parallel between Milton and the other two German writers mentioned. In this passage, Sanders is addressing his German lover. Judging by Sanders’s literary tastes, which include “Alexandre Dumas, Dickens, Marcel Aymé, Evelyn Waugh” (Nimier 1999:348), he protests against Hölderlin and George not because they are boring, but because both poets are exponents of German cultural nationalism.

A final small detail of Le Hussard bleu that nevertheless becomes meaningful in translation is the name of the only German male character in the novel. In the French source text, his chapters are presented as “Frédéric”; but his sister Rita refers to him as “Friedrich.” In a novel that displays great sensitivity towards foreign languages, including untranslated lines of German and phonetic spellings of foreign words—such as Angliche or Vèremarte—the gallicization of Friedrich’s name adds intentional ambiguity.
to the character. Both English-language translations render all occurrences of “Frédéric” as “Friedrich,” thereby clarifying any of the confusion that results from initially reading Frédéric as a Frenchman rather than a staunch Nazi. Judging by the conscious treatment of foreign languages, it is likely that referring to Friedrich as Frédéric is another of the author’s contrarian jabs against official narratives in the guise of a ludic gesture.

5.5 Conclusion

In the introduction to a collection of scholarly essays devoted to Nimier and his fellow Hussars, *Les Hussards: Une generation littéraire* (1997), Marc Dambre laments the detrimental effects that ideological marginalization has had on literary scholarship and history, but he also declares the collection to be a first step towards literary rehabilitation and towards prompting academic interest in Nimier and those associated with him (2000:7-9). Publications such as Alain Cresciucci’s historical and critical evaluation of the Hussars, *Les Désenchantés: Blondin, Déon, Laurent, Nimier* (2011), and the collection of critical articles and miscellanea *Nimier* (2012) edited by Marc Dambre represent examples of recent renewed French critical interest in the leader of the Hussars.

In English-language surveys of French literature such as the 2003 *A Short History of French Literature*, Nimier is not mentioned once. *The Cambridge History of French Literature* (2011) makes brief mention of Nimier when alluding to the memory of occupation in French literature, but the chapter is written by Nicholas Hewitt, the author of the only scholarly study of the Hussars in English. In a comparative essay between the Hussars and the “Angry Young Men” of 1950s and 1960s Britain, the same author’s
points of comparison between the two help to explain Nimier’s lack of recognition in English-language literature.

The Angry Young Men opposed themselves to any orthodox ideology—the British left included—but could not draw upon a long line of right-wing writers who experimented formally while retaining and performing their engagement. For Hewitt, the Angry Young Men “remained far removed from the richness of the Hussars’ ancestry … whether it be Céline, Bernanos, Drieu, Morand or Chardonne,” and instead remained alienated from much of twentieth-century English-language modernism (1997:66). In the social and historical contexts of their respective cultures, there was no British parallel to the “system” of postwar cultural consensus that was attacked by Nimier and others, and therefore his novels cannot be easily assimilated into any tendency or group existing in English-language literature (Hewitt 1997:67). The same argument can be made for Maurras, whose “principal inheritors” are arguably the Hussars, as well as for Drieu la Rochelle (Besnard 2011:384).

Because Roger Nimier produced a smaller corpus than either Maurras or Drieu la Rochelle, and even fewer translations of his work are available in English, this chapter uses close readings of the two English-language version of Le Hussard bleu as a means for investigating how Nimier’s writing is represented in these instances. Both translations appeared shortly after Nimier’s fast rise to literary fame. Since the initial reviews of the French original or the English translations, scant attention has been accorded to the most visible postwar writer of the right in English scholarship or criticism, aside from Hewitt’s (1996) study of the Hussars.
Analyzing both the 1952 and 1953 English-language versions of *The Blue Hussar* reveals patterns of distortion that have implications on several levels. For example, the omission of or changes in many short passages efface some of the ideological statements made in the novel, such as the unexpectedly even treatment of both resistance members and Vichy volunteers. Additionally, both translations obscure the book’s literary filiation through omissions or through leveling the uniqueness of each narrative voice. Engaging with Nimier as a committed writer paying tribute to the tradition of right-wing writing and French literature in general allows for a reading that recognizes Louis-Ferdinand Céline’s influence on the novel’s dialogue, Drieu la Rochelle’s presence in Sanders’s monologues, and countless other gestures and suggestions made towards writers as diverse as Marcel Proust and the Cardinal de Retz.

These stylistic particularities are also linked to the myth that emerged around Nimier and the Hussars following his accidental death in 1962. The binaries of competing forces such as irreverence and respect for the literary past, or erudition and vulgarity, are central in the writer’s work. The raw dialogue of *Le Hussard bleu* is often rendered inadequately in both English translations, and the humor of the original receives similar mitigation or omission. In this manner, the growing body of literary criticism on Roger Nimier can inform translation criticism by identifying shortcomings in the two English-language translations.

In Nobel Prize winner Patrick Modiano’s novel *La Place de l’Étoile* (1968), the mentally ill narrator makes reference to an unnamed right-wing writer who dies spectacularly in a car crash. Yet, Nimier’s impact extends beyond the ravings of Modiano’s character. Emmanuel Metz (1997) investigates the influence of Nimier’s body
of work and that of his fellow Hussars on more widely-known figures and novels such as Françoise Sagan’s *Bonjour tristesse* (1954), the contemporary French novelist Didier van Cauwelaert (1960-), or Patrick Modiano’s novelistic works (1997:255-58). Much like Modiano’s *La Place de l’Étoile*, Nimier’s *Le Hussard bleu* exists in a rich network of literary allusions, homages, and influences from the literary right and canonical writers.

Nimier’s influence is not only discernible in this novel and others by contemporary French writers, but his body of work constitutes a significant moment in postwar literature. Though Nimier is undoubtedly an author of the right, his legacy remains less controversial than that of Maurras or Drieu la Rochelle because he was neither an avowed anti-Semite nor fascist. Since 1963 a prize bearing his name has been awarded to works displaying the youthful spirit for which he is best known.

Both English versions of *The Blue Hussar* are long out of print, and his other novels including the first “Sanders novel,” *Les Épées*, have yet to be translated. To paint the author of *Le Hussard bleu* as a marginal writer would be a mistake, as shown by his regular inclusion in a number of French-language general surveys of French literature, and scholarship treating memory and culture in postwar France. Nonetheless, the reductive view that the French literary right, from “Drieu to Roger Nimier, were losers, aesthetic anarchists at war with themselves and the world,” remains influential in criticism (Judt 2011:244).

Just as Golsan (2003) cites the *nouveau roman* and its acceptance by English-language readers as being responsible for omitting Drieu from literary history, Metz also notes the sidelining effect the *nouveau roman* or “New Novel” has had on the Hussars (1997:251). Nonetheless, the consistent relevance of the French cultural right provides
evidence that Nimier and his literary ancestors offer a wealth of material for literary and cultural scholarship, as well as for interpreting and understanding contemporary phenomena. To translate these authors is not to translate an esoteric group of authors, but instead a means of inquiry into an often overlooked or silenced group of writers whose ideological commitments placed them at the forefront of literary culture.

The contemporary presence of Nimier’s work in France manifests itself in unexpected ways. On Facebook pages and blogs such as Club Roger Nimier, contemporary fans post digital images featuring quotes from Nimier himself or from other writers including Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Michel Houellebecq. Although such an instance is only one webpage, the group and its several thousand followers are proof that the writer retains his iconic status. Significantly, the mixture of quotations from literature and polemical statements against Islam and immigration posted across different blogging platforms is an example of individuals mobilizing the words and ideas of these writers—decades after their deaths—in order to express support for nationalist or right-wing opinions. Clearly, the current political climate and fading postwar ideological consensus in France and Western Europe makes such a phenomenon comprehensible and unsurprising. By centering digital content around these literary figures, these participants are drawing upon the rich literary heritage of the French right for adding intellectual weight to their views.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This thesis uses methodologies and theoretical constructs originating from the field of translation studies in order to study the representation and translation of twentieth-century French writers belonging to the literary right in an English-language context. The objects of study in this work—namely the works of Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier—have received little attention from English-language scholarship and many are not available in English translation, but the appearance of a number of recent French-language publications points to renewed interest in and the continued relevance of these writers and their texts. The major arguments and findings of this piece of research are presented below.

Because translation “wields enormous power in the construction of identities for foreign cultures” (Venuti 2008:14), studying the translation and non-translation of works by a selection of authors can serve as a means for identifying why the image of French literature as the domain of “Gide and Camus, Sartre and Malraux” is incomplete (Sternhell, Sznaider, and Asheri 1994:257). Beginning with the inevitable differences that exist between literary traditions and historic and cultural experience, the first two chapters of this thesis investigate several high-level distinguishing particularities of twentieth-century French literature that have no parallel in English-language literature.

The first chapter of this work introduces a systems theory approach to translation as a means of approaching the authors treated in this work. Chapter one also investigates some of the major asymmetries that distinguish French literature—or the French literary system—from English-language literature. The ideological bifurcation engendered by the
French Revolution of 1789 provided the basis for two broad, ideologically opposed intellectual traditions. After the French Revolution, the political left proclaimed themselves the inheritors of the Republican tradition and its founding values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In contrast, the counter-revolutionary tradition’s resistance to these same values continued to inform large segments of the political right. The enduring influence of these two strains of thought and the willingness of writers to attach themselves to a particular political camp contributed to the prominence of *littérature engagée*, or committed literature, in the first half of the twentieth-century. Other circumstances including the political instability of the French Third Republic, the sociological role of the writer in France (Sapiro 2003), and the long tradition of socially-conscious writing contributed to this phenomenon. Also important were historic developments including the Dreyfus Affair, the two World Wars, and the Spanish Civil War, which made committed literature a central mode of textual production from 1900 to the 1950s.58

If we accept the observation that translations are generally assimilated into existing literary models furnished by the target-language culture (Even-Zohar 1990:178), then the weaker tradition of “committed writing” in the English-language literary system presents a barrier to the reception and translation of texts by the writers in question. Anglophone criticism exhibits a pattern of ignoring the vitality of twentieth-century right-wing writing by associating committed writing with the political left, a tendency that represents an obstacle to reception, translation, and interpretation. When approaching the

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58 In *Littérature et engagement* Benoît Denis labels *littérature engagée* (committed literature) a “modern phenomenon,” but recognizes the influence that pre-twentieth-century French writing had on its development (2000:103).
work of Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier, the long tradition of right-wing thought and literature emerges as a major asymmetry that must be taken into consideration.

This thesis uses systems theory as a means of organizing and identifying different groups of writers and texts while taking into account some of the limitations of this approach. Criticisms regarding the excessively abstract formulations of systems theory and logically problematic binaries—such as the center-periphery dichotomy—are valid and significant. The use of systems theory in this study is moderated by these criticisms and by theoretical constructions seeking to compensate for the approach’s shortcomings. For example, Theo Hermans (1999:155) alludes to criticisms surrounding more formalist applications of systems theory to translation but also remarks that the inclusion of ideological, cultural, or historical factors can supplement these methodological shortcomings. By identifying the agents, institutions, and trends of the French literary field, the Bourdieusian-informed work of Gisèle Sapiro (2003; 2015) allows us to historicize the twentieth-century French literary system and recognize its politicization, most notably during the interwar period.

Although right-wing writing was a highly visible component of the French literary system prior to World War II, much of this literary tradition became marginalized in the postwar era. Maria Tymoczko (1995) remarks that translations of “marginalized” texts can create metonymic images of their source culture for foreign readers, and therefore the analysis of such translations can reveal a great deal about how such texts are selected and translated. Using Sapiro’s focus on the political dimension of twentieth-century French literature and French and English-language criticism surrounding numerous right-wing writers helps to define committed right-wing literature as a
“marginalized” component in the literary system, primarily after World War II. Chapters one and two provide historic and literary grounds for designating both committed writing, or littérature engagée, and right-wing writing as modes or currents of literature that have no close comparison in English-language literature and that are nonetheless historically important.

Steven Ungar states that the modern category of littérature engagée dates “back at least as far as the period between the wars” and suggests that a committed writer in the French tradition can be conceived of as a “public intellectual” even if he or she is primarily a novelist or poet (2002:120). By contrast, in the English-language modernist tradition discourse about literary engagement and a readily comparable tradition of such writing were largely absent. Even when critics recognize a group of “reactionary” (Ferrall:2009) writers associated with Anglophone modernism including T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and W.B. Yeats, an important distinction separates them from their French contemporaries. For Michael North these writers maintained that “the aesthetic can complete its assigned task and reconcile social and political contradictions only by remaining aloofly aesthetic; its political power rests in a way on its power to resist politics” (1991:187). Whereas high literature in the Anglophone tradition remained removed from the political, the most regularly cited French committed writers—Paul Nizan, André Malraux, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and others—figured among the most visible literary figures of the time and had their works published by the most prestigious publishers and periodicals.

As committed writers of the right, Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier therefore are estranged from English-language literature on two accounts.
First, their works are inscribed in a broader tradition of literary engagement, and second, they attached themselves to the anti-liberal political right. The second chapter of this thesis addresses the thematic concerns of this right-wing literary tradition, as well as the place of the three authors studied in depth. Maurras, Drieu, and Nimier represent successive generations of the literary right and also declared their allegiance to different ideological sub-currents of the French right-wing. These three literary currents include the neo-Classicist political and literary school of Action Française prominent immediately after World War I, the highly aestheticized literary fascism of the interwar period, and the postwar nationalist right.

What united these writers apart from right-wing convictions and their participation in broader cultural and political debates qua writers? Antoine Compagnon’s category of the “anti-modern” is one means of identifying commonalities in the literature of all three. Compagnon’s label is more aesthetic and thematic than political, but his prototype of the anti-modern remains “the opposite of a centrist” who often expresses sentiments and ideals more readily identifiable with the elitist and hierarchical tendencies of the political right (2011:19). Maurras’s invocation of order, Drieu’s fixation on decadence, and Nimier’s bitter cynicism all result from an anti-progressve conception of man and history that advances elitism, hierarchy, and spiritualism as antidotes to a deplorable “modern world” equated with twentieth-century France. The anti-progressive and anti-humanistic content of their oeuvre is simultaneously a response to twentieth-century events and an inheritance from the counter-revolutionary critics of the French Revolution of 1789.
Chapters 3, 4, and 5 examine Charles Maurras, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, and Roger Nimier as three key literary figures of the twentieth-century French right-wing lineage who are representative of different generations and different political affiliations. Chapter 3 studies the monarchist critic, poet, and leader of the integral nationalist group Action Française, Charles Maurras. The fourth chapter is devoted to one of the most significant French literary fascists, the novelist and essayist Pierre Drieu la Rochelle. Chapter 5 examines the postwar right-wing novelist and critic, Roger Nimier. Each case study is informed by research methods in translation studies and employs a variety of theoretical constructions in order to study translation and non-translation on the micro and macro levels. The case of each author provides examples of how asymmetries between literary systems manifest themselves in translation and non-translation, and also furnishes examples of historical and ideological particularities that translators and translation studies scholars must take into account.

Anthony Pym suggests that translation studies scholars must ask “who translated what, how, where, when, for whom, and with what effect?” (2014:5). Only a small amount number of texts by Charles Maurras have been translated into English, but answering these questions reveals much about the relationship between different literary systems and broader literary history. In spite of Maurras’s foundational role in steering the literary and political orientation of the French right for decades, few translations of Maurras’s prodigious output exist in English translation. A number of obvious reasons can explain this notable case of non-translation. Maurras formulated his models of integral nationalism and monarchism in the political and historical contexts of the French Third Republic. Therefore, the bulk of his ideas espoused in political texts was only
applicable in other countries possessing a strong monarchist tradition. The enthusiastic reception of Maurras in other Latin European countries such as Portugal and Spain confirms this observation.

The appearance of the English translation of Maurras’s critical essay “Prologue to an Essay on Criticism” in The Criterion merits attention for reasons beyond its status as one of the few English translations of a text by Maurras. An enthusiastic reader of Maurras, T.S Eliot himself translated the essay and also voiced plans to undertake and publish more translations of texts authored by preeminent figures of Action Française. As a rewriting, Eliot’s translation served a definite purpose. In Maurras’s neo-Classicism, exaltation of order and reason, and elitist tendencies, Eliot found parallels to his own critical and poetic stances. Therefore “Prologue to an Essay on Criticism” constitutes an example of a translation serving a defined ideological and aesthetic end. Furthermore, the translation of an eminent French critic reflected the self-purported role of The Criterion as a diffuser of European culture while simultaneously advancing a cultural politics of modernism as expressed by Eliot and his collaborators.

Eliot’s largely ideological motivation to translate Maurras corroborates Lefevere’s argument that translation often occurs under ideological imperatives rather than poetic ones (2014:227). This is not to deny the individual agency involved in the selection and translation of Maurras into English. The waxing and waning influence of Action Française in France had little discernible effect on the translation of Maurras’s texts into English. The declining authority of Eliot himself, the lack of an anti-liberal rightist tradition in the Anglosphere, and the vitality of the international avant-garde all
influenced translation norms enough to render Maurrassian Classicism a French curiosity with little to offer English-language thought and literature.

The comparison of translation and non-translation of works by Maurras and Drieu into English suggest that differences between literary traditions can help to explain why some texts were or were not chosen for translation. Ideology certainly facilitated translation, such as in Eliot’s translation of Maurras, or Drieu la Rochelle’s inclusion alongside other modernists in an American little magazine. In other cases, the strictly poetic dimensions of a work such as Drieu la Rochelle’s *Le Feu follet* (1931) overshadowed the author’s reputation as one of France’s most recognized fascist intellectuals and as a leading proponent of collaborationism with Nazi Germany, a position he promulgated in his fiction, journalism, and editorial duties. Such an example displays the ways in which rewriting can contribute or shape the reception and reading of an author’s work outside of the source culture. Reading Drieu la Rochelle as either an esthete or a purely political writer ignores the writer’s more complex trajectory in addition to the intertwined nature of politics and literature in interwar France. Similarly, casting Maurras as primarily a political agitator disregards his cultural and literary impact. In the two cases, analyzing translations and non-translations allows us to better understand the works of both writers and explains how and why the images of these authors constructed in an English-language context are either incomplete or inadequate.

Chapter 4 also addresses censorship and how marginalized texts are received and translated. When addressing writers associated with controversial opinions and political stances, questions of marginalization and censorship are unavoidable. Moreover, the relation of a figure like Drieu la Rochelle to censorship and marginalization is unique
because he opposed the values of liberal democracy. In terms of the asymmetries between literary traditions, the case of Drieu underscores the prevalence of right-wing committed writing and its absence in Anglophone tradition. Predictably, texts by a noted fascist and collaborator such as Drieu were not subject to translation or criticism until decades after the author’s death, but these later instances of translation and interpretation display identifiable patterns stemming from differences between literary traditions. The de-politicization or reductive readings of Drieu la Rochelle’s texts originate from a failure to recognize the acceptability and prominence of right-wing writing in the interwar period.

According to Susan Bassnett’s (1998) classifications of different forms a pseudo-translation, Drieu’s novel *L’Homme à cheval* provides an unexpected example of a fictitious translation, demonstrating the wide applicability of pseudo-translation for investigating the intersection of literature and ideology. Many issues raised in the first two cases studies relate to high-level problems addressed by translation studies, including the norms governing the selection of texts for translation and divergent features of two different literary traditions. The case study contained in the chapter 5 provides more low-level commentary and translation description as a means for displaying translational distortions resulting from a failure to address asymmetries mentioned in previous chapters.

Based upon the translation analyses in chapter 5, a new English-language translation of *Le Hussard bleu* would do much for providing a representative example of a literary current ignored in most English-language scholarship. Not only do Nimier’s texts exist in same family as those penned by more controversial right-wing writers like Maurras or Drieu la Rochelle, but his novels and essays stand in dialogue and marked
contrast with other canonical writers of the postwar period. The novels of Nimier and the other so-called Hussars deserve attention because they adapted their literary commitment to a postwar milieu and resisted the formal developments of the *nouveau roman*. As evidenced above, however, translating novels such as Nimier’s *Les Epées* (1948) or *Le Hussard bleu* (1950) demands recognition of both the conditions of postwar French literature and the writers whose ideas and styles informed these novels.

The writings of Nimier contain none of the unabashed racism of Maurras or Drieu la Rochelle, but they remain provocative by critiquing democracy, humanism, and progressive narratives of history. The less extreme ideological content of his work does not represent a strong ideological barrier to translation and assimilation into English-language literature as is the case for the other two writers. Moreover, Nimier’s writing is decidedly more modern in its language and form, and therefore more accessible. By contrast, a number of Drieu la Rochelle’s novels retain highly realist linear structures and a substantial number of pages, and Maurras’s prose and poetry are saturated with references to pre-modern literature and philosophy.

All three case studies demonstrate that texts by Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier remain underrepresented in English translation. Lawrence Venuti observes that translation shapes our conception of world literature and states that “we need to examine the canons developed by translation patterns within the receiving situation as well as the interpretations that translations inscribe in the source texts” (2012:191). When the works of a historically important strain of literary production are overlooked or underrepresented, an incomplete image of a national literature is constructed. Moreover, rendering a novel such as Roger Nimier’s *Le Hussard bleu* (1950) into English requires
knowledge of the text’s influences and its position in a literary system. In this manner, non-translation can exercise cumulative effects on a translated text.

Furthermore, the asymmetries separating literary systems have implications for our understanding of literary history from an Anglophone perspective. For example when introducing Drieu la Rochelle, Robert Soucy asserts: “It should come as no surprise to readers of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis or Louis-Ferdinand Céline that modernist aesthetics and reactionary politics were often comfortable bedfellows” (1980:922). A consideration of the French literary system demonstrates that a facile comparison between the two groups is hindered by an important difference between French and Anglophone literatures. Jean-Michel Rabaté states that modernism itself is “a loaded word when understood in a French context, whereas its meaning is relatively clear in an Anglo-Saxon context” because the label was devised and theorized by English-language scholars primarily commenting on English-language texts (2016:40-41). This comment demonstrates that categories prevalent in Anglophone literature such as modernism are not always directly applicable across linguistic and national boundaries. Consequently, a perspective that fails to consider the particularities of a foreign literary tradition, such as the prevalence of committed writing in French literature, limits our conception of French literature. These approaches ultimately distort a full understanding of both literary traditions and on comparative scholarship of the time period.

The question of literary commitment offers many possibilities for future research. Ungar remarks that in a French context “the question of whether the writer expresses commitment indirectly, by depicting issues of political involvement, or instead by a more personal involvement ranging from essay and/or editorial to the picket line,
demonstration and similar activism” remains unresolved (2002:12). Maurras’s politicized neo-Classicism and traditional critical approach differ from Drieu la Rochelle’s use of the roman à thèse in the Barrèsian tradition. The polyphony and irony found in Nimier’s novelistic work diverge from the formal models of both of his predecessors, but the inventory of images and ideas present in his texts clearly displays a thematic continuity firmly rooted in earlier examples of committed writing. All three writers practiced a number of common genres. Indeed, Benoît Denis argues that the practice of many specific genres is a trait of the committed writer, who exploits the features unique to the essay, novel, play or other genres to display literary engagement in different fashions. In this sense, not only does literary engagement exist on a political spectrum from left to right, but it also manifests itself through a variety of literary genres and to different degrees of explicitness.

Because of the unique features of the French literary field during the period examined in this work, the phenomenon of French littérature engagée remains closely tied to singularities present during a specific historical and cultural period. The relationship between the category of committed writing and less political literary production also provides fertile grounds for future research. Marcel Proust’s admiration for Maurras, comparisons between the “sincerity” of Drieu and the humanist André Gide, and Nimier’s appreciation for Valery Larbaud are all instances of the intertwined history of French writers frequently cited as “modernist” in the Anglophone sense of the term, and those whose political commitment poses a problem for ready classification. Future research in comparative literature concerning the relationship between political ideology,
literature, and translation can explore the ways in which writing comparable to *littérature engagée* has appeared across languages and cultures.

The existence of a larger family of French right-wing writing also presents a number of authors and texts to consider in regards to literary *engagement*, twentieth-century French literature, and influence across different national literatures. For example, writers affiliated with the literary right with less controversial writings and personal histories, such as Georges Bernanos, Paul Morand, and Marcel Aymé, are well-represented in English translation. Morand’s *L’Homme pressé* (1941) and Marcel Aymé’s *Le Passe-muraille* (1943) have both recently been translated and published by Pushkin Press.\(^5^9\) In the case of these writers, Morand’s modernism and Aymé’s light-hearted stylistic mastery do not reflect their authors’ wartime activities. For example, their importance in French interwar literature is undeniable, and both were personally involved in the renewal of postwar right-wing literature through their patronage and personal ties with the Hussars, the majority of whose own works remain untranslated.

Works by some of the most extreme fascist and anti-Semitic writers such as Robert Brasillach or Lucien Rebatet, remain untranslated. In France, however, the recent republication of Rebatet’s *Les Décombres* (1942), the entry of Drieu la Rochelle into the ranks of the prestigious Pléiade, and the appearance in print of letters exchanged between Roger Nimier and Paul Morand as *Correspondences 1950-1962* (2015) all point towards a renewed willingness to broach the legacy of these authors and their work. Controversy continues to surround the canonized Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and his flagrantly anti-
Semitic *Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937) was rendered into English by an anonymous translator in 2006 and published on a Holocaust denial webpage. Such examples raise questions relevant not only to Céline’s text, but also to works penned by Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and others. Under what circumstances should such texts be translated? Should scholars and literary translators translate and present ideologically and ethically troubling texts? Many examples of French right-wing writing represent historically significant texts. Recognizing the ideological content of such works rather than attempting to ignore or de-emphasize this significant dimension of these texts leads to a number of desirable results. First, the historical influence and widespread acceptability of such ideas and writing during the first half of the twentieth century is exposed. Second, ethically and technically sound translation provides researchers with translated material, ideally free from significant ideological manipulation. Treating and translating ideologically inflammatory, racist, and offensive content in this manner permits detached evaluation rather than allowing such translation and interpretation to occur as part of activism, where a text’s calls for political action, violence, or discrimination may be presented with enthusiasm.

This thesis has approached the right-wing current of literature and thought in twentieth-century France through investigating translation and non-translation, as well as by focusing on differences between literary traditions in a comparative context. The observation that “the texts available in translation in different countries at different moments can give very different ideas of what ‘French literature’ is,” is highly relevant to the authors studied in this work (Birkett and Kearns 1997:7). Even if close parallels to Maurras, Drieu la Rochelle, and Nimier do not exist in English-language literature, and a
robust tradition of right-wing literary *engagement* is absent as well, these authors should not be considered marginal. The lack of English translations of texts by these authors has inevitably been shaped by ideological questions regarding the texts’ contents and the views espoused by their authors. Nonetheless, continuing to overlook these authors would be an act of willfully ignoring both troubling ethical questions and an intellectual tradition of considerable influence that is currently on the rise. As evidenced above, these writers and their works continue to be relevant for academics, active writers, and individuals who sympathize with or even admire their literary creations. A more complete image of French literature as viewed from an English-language standpoint should recognize the historic importance of these writers. Criticism and translation can both contribute to this endeavor.
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