"Whence Durkheim's Nietzschean Grandchildren?: A Closer Look at Robert Hertz's Place in the Durkheimian Genealogy,"
Archives européennes de sociologie/European Journal of Sociology, 40:2, 1999:110-137

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In recent years, a fair amount of scholarly work has emerged which points to a way of reading central strands in French post-structuralist thought as the offspring of two seemingly utterly incompatible sources of influence: Nietzschean philosophy and Durkheimian sociology.¹ This work indicates, or at least alludes to, the historical link in influence leading from Durkheim to his nephew and successor as chief of the Durkheimian school of French sociology, Marcel Mauss, to several fascinating intellectual figures from inter-war France who either studied with Mauss or studied his work with great interest, including Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, and Michel Leiris, and finally to the generation of French post-structuralists who were in their turn greatly influenced by Bataille, Caillois, et al. At least one of these works, though limited by its inattention to historical details of influence and intellectual networks, points directly to Durkheimian thought as the site of origin of a crucial dilemma in French intellectual identity, namely the two irreconcilable intellectual tasks which Barthes has labelled those of the 'writer' and the 'author', which is only really fully recognized and embodied later by perhaps the most Nietzschean of 20th century French thinkers, Georges Bataille.² In crucial ways, this work has laid the groundwork for a consideration of the intermingling of two such seemingly radically opposed intellectual projects--that of Durkheim, the rationalist and communitarian, and that of Nietzsche, the exponent of the will-to-power and a fierce despiser of the communitarian and collectivist philosophies and programs of his day.

But while these interrogations of streams of intellectual influence and inheritance go a long way toward making more palatable, or at least more comprehensible, such a juxtaposition, there remain significant roadblocks to a clear understanding of precisely how this historical mingling of intellectual seed could have taken place. It can too easily seem at first glance that the explanation for this odd intellectual genealogy rests in some tragic misreading of Durkheimian sociology by those students of Mauss, i.e., Bataille, Caillois, et al., who are responsible for the explicit injection of a variety of Nietzscheanism into their 'Durkheimianism' and who are sometimes simply dismissed by historians of sociology as having
failed to understand the true import of Durkheim and sociology. That is, even when this odd piece of French intellectual history is made clearer in terms of its constituent elements, it remains possible to argue that the emergence of a Durkheimian Nietzscheanism is less the product of any real coherence in the attempt to mingle Durkheimian thought and themes with those of Nietzsche than the result of gross liberties taken by a generation of sociological dilettantes with a body of thought which was considered by its creators (that is, Durkheim himself and the generation immediately following him) as something wholly apart from the crude concerns of such dilettantes and 'littératuers'.

The case I make here could thus perhaps be read as provocative in so far as I argue that in fact the couple Durkheim/Nietzsche is less improbable than it seems on its surface and, further, that we can find evidence for its roots even among thinkers directly associated with the founding of Durkheimian sociology. More specifically, I mean to suggest an historical point of connection between the two forms of thought represented by Durkheim and Nietzsche and their implications in worldly action which has been hitherto, to the best of my knowledge, unexamined and which I believe might help us gain a better grasp of precisely how it might have been possible for Bataille, Cailliois, Leiris and their fellow participants in the Collège de Sociologie and other avant-garde groups of the inter-war period to think these two thoughts at once. That point of connection is in fact the life and work of Robert Hertz, student and colleague of Durkheim and his collaborator on the Année sociologique who is, save among some anthropologists and historians of French ethnology, an almost completely forgotten but nonetheless powerfully important member of the Durkheimian équipe.

I explicitly indicate Hertz's "life and work" as the relevant point of connection between Durkheimian and Nietzschean themes because I think it clear that a narrow concentration on one or the other makes it quite impossible to understand his pivotal place in our narrative. Hertz was born near Paris in 1881 and, like a good number of Durkheim's other colleagues and collaborators on the Année, he was a normalien, that is, a graduate of the prestigious École Normale Supérieure, and an agrégé in philosophy. He was considerably younger (about 10 years) than the other central members of the Année's sociology of religion sub-group, Mauss and Henri Hubert, and did not begin contributing to the journal until 1904, his year of graduation from the ENS, but his presence and formidable intellectual contribution were noted by Mauss, with whom he worked closely, and Durkheim, who was the supervisor of the doctoral thesis he had not yet finished when the war took him away to his untimely death in April 1915. Indeed, it is clear that in this case the teachers, especially Mauss, who used Hertz's notes for his own courses after the latter's death, learned a significant amount from the work of the
pupil. Durkheim wrote a glowing obituary on Hertz's death in which he described at length Hertz's vigorous mind and sure moral courage, referring to him as both "mon élève et...mon ami".  

Robert Parkin, in his excellent study of Hertz's work, summarizes and synthesizes the contribution to the Durkheimian sociology of religion made by Hertz, carefully detailing the arguments in his main works and more peripheral public writings and making a case for Hertz's legacy to the discipline of anthropology, particularly in its structuralist varieties. A central theme running through the *oeuvre*, which amounts to both a debt to and a continuation and expansion of a theme found in Durkheim and Mauss, is that of the omnipresent cultural phenomenon of the sacred/profane opposition, which is revealed by Hertz to fundamentally structure social life and the very categories of human cognition and understanding. Parkin also briefly discusses some of the events in Hertz's life outside the work and shows how his work was received by ethnologists and other researchers working with categories of religious experience and myth, both in Hertz's own day and afterward. What I propose to add to his very informative interpretive study of Robert Hertz, the sociologist of religion writing as such and to others of the same 'species', is something of a reconstruction of Robert Hertz the man, of the ideas and the lived life in their totality and inevitable inseparability, the Hertz who was both intellectual and political radical, sociologist and soldier, rationalist reader of Durkheim and passionate reader of Nietzsche, objective analyst of and subjective participant in society at one and the same time, and who only later, in secondary works geared to an interpretation of intellectual endeavor in relative isolation from the lived experience of those intellectuals and from within an established disciplinary framework (works which are of course necessary, but insufficient), becomes classifiable in simple terms as 'sociologist'. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, I should say that what I have in mind is an attempt to persuade Hertz to say "Ecce Homo!", as Nietzsche does in the work bearing that title, via a re-reading of his intellectual project and of crucial elements of his life and death which seeks to intermingle his intellectual and personal quests and measure them not in isolation from but rather in intimate communication with one another.

**Hertz, Nietzsche and the sociology of morality**

The two short essays Hertz published, respectively, in 1907 and 1909, on the collective representation of death and the preference for the right hand as a manifestation of the larger phenomenon of religious polarity are perhaps his only works known outside the restricted sphere of historians of French ethnology. Generally read, especially by
anglophone audiences, as precursors of structuralist anthropology, they were intended by Hertz, as Mauss noted, as mere preludes and contributions to the larger work which fixed his attention: the study of sin and expiation which would have been his doctoral thesis had he lived to finish it. In this work, of which Hertz finished only a draft of the introduction and a rough outline of subsequent chapters, he intended to comparatively examine the religious practices by which states of moral impurity were determined, punished, and absolved. His argument was that the foundational notions of sin, or "transgression of a moral code, which is considered to involve, by virtue of itself, disastrous consequences for its author, and which concerns the religious society exclusively," and expiation, or the process by which the author of sin is reintegrated into the community and absolved of his guilt, are not, as is commonly thought, peculiar to the Judeo-Christian tradition but that they in fact exist in all, even the most primitive, societies. An understanding of these practices, Hertz recognized, was absolutely imperative for an understanding of the moral structures inherent in any given religious system. In examining the practices of sin and expiation as social institutions, Hertz hoped to shed light on the social nature and history of ideas of good and evil, of the ways in which individuals and groups are morally formed so as to adhere to the given moral structures of their societies through processes involving punishment of acts of transgression and complex rites designed to reintegrate those guilty of transgression and those otherwise beyond the pale of the moral community (e.g., the dead).

In the light of his unfinished thesis, we can more fully understand his interest in death and the right/left polarity explored in the two earlier studies. Death, far from being simply a physical, biological phenomenon affecting single individuals, is a unique moment for the observation of this powerful set of social mechanisms by which good and evil, healthy and sick, sacred and profane are distinguished and by which the distinctions are reinforced and reproduced via ritual acts and traditions. Indeed, let us recall that Hertz's title ("Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort") explicitly indicates that it is death as a "collective representation", that is, as something which derives from the social life of the community and which is in its essence something symbolic and shared, which interests him, and he will use this notion to complicate the misunderstanding of death as a simply biological phenomenon existing outside the symbolic. The newly dead actually occupy in primitive societies, for a period of time and under conditions which vary from society to society, a liminal space between the living and the dead which demonstrates precisely the construction and operation of this collective representation, that is, the complex social ways in which the dangerous pollution of the social body (via the death
of one of its members) is recognized and then corrected, or purified, through ritual acts and interdictions. The dead individual is initially violently rejected from the society of the living, often along with members of his family and other close associations. The horror of the dead body, Hertz argues, has its origin here, in the fear of a social body faced with the recognition of its own mortality in the mortality of one of its members, rather than in some simpler disgust for the corpse itself as a physical object. That is, it is true that Hertz finds generally that the deceased is treated (along with his close family members) as impure, even potentially malevolent, during the period in which the putrefaction and decay of the corpse takes place, but this is due to the nature of the collective representation of death as a liminal space through which an individual passes, at grave danger to himself and to the society from which he departs, from one stable community to another, and not to some purely material disdain for the state of decay. The fact that this liminal period between physical death and the final resolution in ritual ceremony and disposal of the remains of the corpse corresponds to a social process of recognizing social disintegration and effecting social reintegration is demonstrated by the lack of such a period for deaths of individuals (like newborns or those so elderly or infirm as to have ceased participating in communal ceremonial traditions) who essentially have no social self, but only a physical one. After this period of ritual interdiction and ostracism, and as a result of complex rites of reintegration and purification, the surviving relations of the deceased are eventually accepted back into the living community and the deceased is made a full member of the "mythical society of souls which every society constructs for itself from its own image". The ceremony or ceremonies (the event can be quite involved, calling for a saving of resources over an extended period in order to extravagantly consume them in a brief and intense period) which institutes this reparation and reaffirmation of the two societies is generally joyous and marked by every effort to rid participants of any shadow of the stain of pollution so that they can afterward rejoin profane society without danger. The most important fact to retain from this investigation of death, in Hertz's estimation, is that an individual death resounds socially as an aggression against the sacred body social, an aggression which is seen as caused by some impure or evil force and which must therefore be 'treated' almost as an illness would be treated.

Likewise, in "La Prééminence de la main droite", the polarity of right and left is read by Hertz as a signifier of this omnipresent and universal necessity for society to protect itself from infection and decay, to preserve purity, and to restore this state of purity in cases of pollution through specified and complicated rites of punishment and expiation. As
in the examination of death as collective representation, Hertz rejects as too simple biological attempts to explain a nearly universal valuation and sanctification of the right hand (and of the right generally) and a concomittant devaluation, even demonization, of the left. Although there might be some slight biological disposition toward assymetry, this cannot explain the overwhelming prevalence of this preference among almost all known societies. Hertz's case here is strikingly abrupt, perhaps even brazen. He invokes the omnipresence of the religious polarity sacred/profane in primitive societies, citing, among others, Durkheim and Mauss, and then proceeds to map the right/left opposition onto it along with numerous other such oppositions, such as that of inside/outside (of a particular totem and therefore of a particular social group), male/female, truth/falsity, life/death, good/evil, self/other, etc. He then provides numerous examples from ethnographic data gathered among various primitive societies and in the modern West as well to demonstrate the impure, polluting aspect of the left hand and the sanctifying, purifying aspect of the right; the ritual interdiction of eating with the left hand in some Nigerian tribes, the necessity of wielding weapons of hunt and war with the right hand for fear of pollution, even the Christian imagery of Christ sitting at the right hand of God and signalling at the end of the world the damnation of sinners with his left hand are invoked here. As in the case of death, it is a complicated set of social and moral distinctions and forms of classification which is at work in organizing the world in a particular way and in molding human behavior accordingly.

From the vantage point gained by this brief reappraisal of Hertz's work, it is somewhat less difficult than it might have been at the outset to see points of contact between this route of inquiry into what are at bottom moral questions and the route taken by Nietzsche. That the latter was concerned with questions of morality and its genealogy and history goes without saying, but his position is often seen incorrectly as that of simple dismissal of morality rather than as one of the most careful and elaborate existing investigations of its origins, history, and modes of functioning, coupled with but not simply reducible to stringent criticism of its central motivations and its effects on humanity. Indeed, in perhaps his most rigourously argued work, On the Genealogy of Morals, he sets for himself more or less the same task which is at the foundation of Hertz's inquiry into the primitive roots of the mechanisms of sin and expiation. Here, it is the very origin of our modern notions of good and evil, which, as we have seen, are equally the notions Hertz seeks to explore, that Nietzsche pursues. He makes clear that, while his intent is to provide a "critique", such an enterprise must be essentially empirical and historical rather than simply philosophical; the questions from which he starts include the following:
Under what conditions did man devise these value judgements good and evil? and what value do they themselves possess? Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plenitude, force and will of life, its courage, certainty, future? 

He goes on to say not that he concluded generally either one or the other of the two possibilities, but that he discovered "divers answers" depending upon the historical and sociological variables. Indeed, his entire project with respect to morality seems to lend itself easily to sociological categories of inquiry. Nietzsche argues that a dangerous misrecognition of what is harmful and what is beneficial to the social body emerges as a consequence of a particular cultural worldview (i.e., the Christian) and the practices which accompany it. This worldview and these practices are themselves founded on a particular way of organizing the world according to a set of moral categories. Nietzsche thus sets out to investigate the origins of these categories, in order to better demonstrate why they exercise the negative effect they do in our period. Historical and social explanations for the emergence of practices and institutions of guilt, punishment and asceticism follow from this starting point, and the end result is an attempt at a kind of therapeutic historical sociology.

Hertz himself explicitly recognizes Nietzsche as an interlocutor of importance on questions of morality in the introduction of his thesis on sin. In endeavoring to situate himself in the contemporary intellectual debate over the nature of sin and expiation, he begins by citing the opposition of Christian thinkers, who accept the metaphysical reality of sin and the spiritual efficacy of expiation, and newly emergent critical voices which treat these notions as mere delusions. The representative of the latter chosen by Hertz is Nietzsche, whose position is summarized as a radical rejection of the reality of sin and an interpretation of the very notion as itself a kind of moral sickness, stemming mostly from the will to domination of priests. Having set the stage in illustrating this interpretive conflict between the partisans of faith and those of reason, Hertz suggests he will construct a third position which will dialectically reconcile the two.

But, in fact, Hertz rather oversimplifies Nietzsche's position, and a fuller reading demonstrates how close on essentials the two of them actually are on this issue. For, the thrust of Hertz's 'middle way' between orthodoxy and rationalism was to remain skeptical as to the truth-value of the metaphysical grounds from which the religious explained sin and expiation while yet recognizing the crucial importance of such facts as
social phenomena, that is, as institutions which serve, under a religious mask, to integrate and reintegrate "the great mass of men" into the collectivity and to provide for them an explanation and justification of moral order and their need to submit to it. The utility, and even necessity, of such practices, properly understood in social terms, is thus defended from a position which is neither simply Christian nor anti-Christian. Similarly, Nietzsche, in the work which is, ironically, perhaps most responsible for his reputation among religious critics as one of the great modern enemies of religion, clearly sees and appreciates the sociological importance of religious belief and practice, arguing that religious law, by relying on revelation and tradition as its foundations and thereby causing "the way of life recognized as correct (that is demonstrated by a tremendous amount of finely-sifted experience)" to be accepted so fundamentally as to root itself in the social "unconscious", is a "precondition for any kind of [...] perfection in the art of living." If here he criticizes the specifically Christian method of fulfillment of this function, it is not because of the means of metaphysical masking of ultimately social realities but only because '"holy' ends are lacking" in Christianity. That is, unlike the Code of Manu, to which he affirmatively refers, Christian morality, in its egalitarianism, disrupts the deep, conventional nature and structure of society, which is frankly hierarchical and reserves different experiences of hygiene, mastery and perfection for different varieties of men. Elsewhere, however, Nietzsche even includes Christianity in his sociological appreciation of the legitimating functions of religious morality. In short, his position is far more complex than those who would read him as a purely rationalist demythologizer, much as that of the Durkheimians was more complex on this issue than that of many of their intellectual allies on the anti-clerical Republican left in France.

**Hertz: A Bergsonian Durkheimian?**

Let us endeavor now, having demonstrated general points of connection between the intellectual projects of Hertz and Nietzsche, to shed more light on Hertz's project by examining details of his intellectual formation and life which escape the published texts and which go a considerable way toward demonstrating the complexity of his position and of his role in the Durkheimian tradition. We know that it was while he was at the ENS that he became acquainted with and attracted to the work of Durkheim, who was by then teaching in Paris at the Sorbonne, but it is perhaps surprising to learn that it was during this same period that he attended the course of Henri Bergson, the vitalist philosopher at the Collège de France often considered by intellectual historians as the polar antipode to Durkheim. More than this, Hertz wrote excitedly
several times to Alice Bauer, his future wife and his close intellectual companion who would later pursue a career in experimental child pedagogy\textsuperscript{29}, about Bergson's ideas, calling him an "inventeur" whose thought was "subtile et hardie" and engaged in the exploration of problems Hertz saw as "aujourd'hui les plus aiguës et impérieux."\textsuperscript{30} He makes reference to Bergson's thought in other discussions with her, most tellingly in letters written during a short stay in Germany in the fall of 1902. Here, he describes trips to art museums and concert halls in a language saturated in the avant-garde modernist conceptions borrowed from the vitalist philosophical discourses of the day, most centrally those of Bergson and Nietzsche. In one particularly compelling passage, he speaks of music's power to reveal to man his inner profundities and, in purely Bergsonian language, talks of musical experience as far more directly linked to the essence of human consciousness than is mere rational discourse:

La musique a révélé à l'homme [...] que ce qui peut s'exprimer en mots n'est que la face extérieure de la conscience, n'est que la conscience réfractée à travers les exigences de l'action ou de la vie sociale, déformée par suite, mais que l'essence de notre vie est le spontané, le continu, ce qui ne s'exprime pas en mots, que son caractère est le rythme. C'est la musique qui seule exprime l'effort intérieur, qui reproduit l'écoulement continu et complexe de la vie intérieure. Aussi je crois que la musique a profondément influé sur la pensée des philosophes les plus hardis de la période moderne. Bergson [...] est en un sens le psychologue de la musique.\textsuperscript{31}

Later, while at the front during the war, he writes to her of reading Bergson's analysis of the warring sides\textsuperscript{32} and finding it essentially inaccurate in so far as it oversimplified the reality of the situation and failed to admit an element of spiritual and moral \textit{élan vital}, and not simply stagnant mechanicity, to be found even in the basically unjust German cause. It is interesting though that, even in disagreeing with Bergson's interpretation of events here, Hertz is not so much rejecting his categories as utilizing them in a more nuanced fashion than that of their inventor. He had written a previous letter to her, a mere five days prior to this one in which he criticizes Bergson and just after reading Bergson's speech for the first time, in which he acknowledges that "il y a du vrai tout de même" in Bergson's analysis, and accepts Bergsonian terminology in doing so:

N'oublions pas que déjà après Frédéric le Grand, l'admirable machine de l'Etat prussien avait perdu son âme. Cela me semble être
In fact, this earlier reading of German mechanical brutality and French spiritual spontaneity, which is so obviously indebted to a Bergsonian framework of understanding, rings rather clearly elsewhere in many of Hertz's discussions from the front of the two sides and their relative merits and demerits. In a letter written during the previous September, for example, he sounds almost euphorically Bergsonian:

Nous aurons la victoire et cette victoire sera celle de l'esprit sur la masse, de l'élan généreux sur la discipline brutale, de la liberté sur la domination étouffante. Les Prussiens [...] n'ont su ni assimiler (comme la France) ni tolérer et s'attacher des populations soumises et diverses (comme l'Angleterre). Leur écrasement, c'est la défaite de l'esprit de lourdeur au sens nietzschéen. 34

He also often invokes the image of an overly professionalized and essentially soulless German soldier in order to juxtapose him to a French counterpart who has the "souffle d'héroïsme inutile" in his lungs, a breath he perhaps first exhaled during the Crusades and which carried him to die energetically for a basically spiritual cause much later under Napoleon. Even in noting differences among French soldiers with whom he interacts on the front, he invokes this Bergsonian distinction: Parisian soldiers, and those from large cities generally, tend to be less saturated in the moral fervor of the war, less capable of sensing the life force coursing in the French cause, and less able to adjust themselves to the rude and pure life in the wilderness required at the front than are soldiers from the French countryside, of whom Hertz sometimes speaks in almost saintly language. This latter species turns the war into an occasion for a demonstration of camaraderie, joy in the face of disaster, and improvisational genius in addressing practical needs which is sometimes breathtaking in Hertz's recounting. They joke and play carefree, child-like games with one another while shells fall within hearing range, share selflessly even the most precious commodities with the entire unit, and are able to fix broken watches on the fly with a pencil and a rubber band.36 Hertz especially notices an anonymous "cher petit Breton aux yeux bleus" who becomes for him a sort of mythical rural Frenchman, the veritable embodiment of the native moral vivacity and purity, the vivacious and explosive life force which Hertz sees at bottom of the French nation and war effort.37

It is not an insignificant fact that Hertz took Bergson seriously, even considered him one of the most important thinkers of the modern period, and took up as his own in his consideration of certain social and psychological phenomena some of the key conceptual terms and notions...
we find in Bergson. The French intellectual field during this period is often characterized as consisting most fundamentally of two ideal typical polar positions and as thereby divided along a set of axes which includes not only basic intellectual worldview and theoretical position, but also political stance, social class of origin, and institutional affiliation. Terry Clark describes the opposition as that of "cartesianism" vs. "spontaneity", or champions of rationalism and disciplined order against champions of anti-authoritarianism and the free, creative passions. Jean-Louis Fabiani finds a similar binary equation at work in the more restricted field of philosophy. He sees a positivist, specialist philosopher ("le philosophe savant") facing off against a spiritualist, generalist opponent ("le philosophe artiste"), and constructs an argument which attempts to link each of these positions to a set of sociological predispositions, positions of origin, etc. In these and other attempts to make sense of the intellectual world of fin-de-siècle Paris, we find comparable mapping strategies, and it can easily be seen how one might assign locations in such a field to Bergson, Durkheim, and their intellectual allies and descendants. Indeed, the easy opposition of Durkheim the positivist and Bergson the irrationalist is one of the most common ways this abstract schema is moved from the realm of ideal types and given flesh by analysts.

I do not wish here to question the general accuracy of this schema of opposition. I limit myself to indicating the utter incongruity, in standard intellectual histories of the period, of a figure who could be, to whatever precise degree, in both of these camps at once. That is, to be Durkheimian and Bergsonian, in a meaningful sense, in this field is, minimally, counter-intuitive; for some, it would simply be impossible or a mark of some kind of real intellectual instability. My extended attempt to connect Hertz, a Durkheimian par excellence in so far as he dedicated himself completely to the sort of sociological exploration of religious themes which seemed so central to the sociological project in the view of Durkheim himself, to elements of Bergson's philosophy is intended to unveil a little of the complexity of his intellectual influences and the range of intellectual and political positions they allow him to take, and thereby to point to some of the limitations of efforts to make simple and general statements about the nature of the positions in such an intellectual field.

The Lived Nietzscheanism of Hertz

Turning back to Hertz's relation to Nietzsche, we can see that, in terms of intellectual history, it is not at all difficult to make the link between a thinker who displays signs of influence by Bergson and his possible
affinity for Nietzsche's ideas. Bergson, after all, fits into a stream of 19th
and early 20th century thought which is sometimes loosely referred to as
'vitalist', and Nietzsche, with his interest in the will as foundational force
of life, is often situated in this same stream. Indeed, Bergson's central
conceptual contribution to philosophy, the *élan vital*, is itself
distinguishable only with some difficulty from the Nietzschean notion of
the will to power. Both thinkers also clearly owed large intellectual debts
to Schopenhauer. Further, the connection between Nietzsche and
Bergson was obvious to many of the latter's most well-known disciples,
who made their own thought a testimony to the compatibility of the two,
as well as to his most trenchant and informed critics; Georges Sorel and
Julien Benda, respectively, are cases in point here. Benda, in his attack
on Bergson and his influence, would elaborate another point of
connection between the two thinkers, linking them both to pragmatism
and relativist theories of truth. That Hertz would be interested in
Bergson is thus far from inconsequential to a case for the influence of this
thought by Nietzsche, as Bergson and Nietzsche were a part (perhaps two
of the most important parts) of an intellectual movement in Europe,
dating roughly from the 1880s to at least the first world war, which
opposed itself to the kind of overly simple rationalism which was in
many ways in the ascendant in philosophy and in the nascent social
sciences, a movement which is indeed sometimes thought of as entirely
antithetical to the project of the social sciences.

But the Nietzschean influence on Hertz was not simply at this indirect
level. Elsewhere in Hertz's discussion of the German character in his
letters from the front, he speaks often of an archetypal German
professor who menaces Europe, a bookish and stagnant figure,
representing for Hertz all the negative aspects of a culture of over-
specialization, disembodied and despiritualized learning, and the
destruction of a holistic blending of intellectual reason and the passionate
will. In his "rêves d'avenir", he sees

\[
\text{une Europe émancipée du deutsche professor qui était notre horrible}
\text{archétype, une Europe échappé de la prison des grandes villes}
\text{mornes, résolue à se rajeunir et à rester maîtresse du mouvement, de}
\text{la vie, en se retrempant sans cesse à chaque génération dans une}
\text{sorte de sauvagerie voulue et méthodique.}
\]

We have already seen something of the schema Hertz used to distinguish
the stereotyped mechanical German soldier and his effervescent, life-
filled French counterpart, but Hertz is quite clear that this is nothing more
than a stereotype, however useful for thinking, and that it is not here
simply an issue of nationality, but of the status of the *will* in its
relationship to material and moral stagnancy. In this vein, he points in
this same letter to the necessity not to reduce this to an issue of mere national identity, precisely because there are German thinkers who represent for Hertz this ideal of the heroic and vital warrior-philosopher, most essentially a thinker with whom Hertz reveals a very deep and sympathetic relationship: "Nietzsche--à qui je pense souvent et que je ne puis associer à nos ennemis qu'il méprisait tant qu'il pouvait." This was an echo of a message repeated several times in his correspondence from the front, in which he was clear that, whatever propaganda might be propagated by anti-German intellectuals,

je ne consens pas à [...] haïr tout ce qui est allemand--et à vomir Wagner, Nietzsche, etc., sous le prétexte de cette guerre. Pourquoi chercher à dénigrer, à rabaisser son ennemi, qui, comme dit Nietzsche quelque part, est notre partenaire, notre camarade de lutte?47

Hertz had in fact maintained a vivid interest in Nietzsche throughout his adult intellectual life. This may perhaps be partially explained by his several sojourns in Germany and his interest in and study of the German language, but something else remains which is inexplicable in such terms. To be sure, Hertz considered Nietzsche one of those thinkers to whom one should turn "pour nous secouer", a thinker who "nous passionne, nous trouble et stimule l'intelligence", and he often refers to reading him for precisely these reasons, but this may hardly seem anything too out of the ordinary for an inquisitive French intellectual during a period when certain varieties of German philosophical thought were becoming more widely available and read in France. What is intriguing is the way in which Hertz makes use of Nietzschean conceptual categories and modes of analysis even when he is not explicitly referring to Nietzsche; it is the manner in which we can talk of Hertz's life as in many respects deeply Nietzschean, completely apart from any information about whether he had or had not read Nietzsche, which emerges from the correspondence and suggests the possibility of an altered understanding of the overall intellectual project and life in this new light.

Hertz's understanding and experience of the war, this central and world-historical event in the life of his generation, provides absolutely crucial insight into his worldview and into the way in which he lived his philosophical ideas. He was, to say the least, an enthusiastic soldier. Not unlike a significant number of his fellow intellectuals who participated in the fighting, he was to a considerable extent swept up into the state of almost euphoric effervescence which allowed many to speak of the war as a sort of necessary great trial which would determine the moral,
political, and spiritual future of Europe, and he often spoke in grateful
tones of his satisfaction at the opportunity to participate in such an event.
Durkheim would present a version of this effervescence in Hertz during
the action which cost him his life which coincides wholly with
Durkheim's own personal understanding of moral purity and selfless
service to ideas greater than the individual:

Le 13 [April 1915], l'attaque eut lieu. [...] Par avance,
les officiers comprirent qu'ils marchaient à la mort. Un
témoin nous a rapporté un dialogue qui eut lieu entre eux
au dernier moment, et qui prouve qu'ils ne se faisaient sur
leur sort aucune illusion. Le calme de Hertz ne se démentit
pas un instant. Quelques minutes avant l'heure fixée--deux
heures cinquante--il se promenait en souriant au milieu de
ses hommes, les encourageant, les plaisantant même
volontiers. [...] Sa pensée comme sa volonté n'allait
qu'à ce qui est grand et pur. Je suis sûr que jamais rien
de bas ou même de médiocre ne lui est entré dans l'esprit.\footnote{50}

But can we safely say that this seeming certainty of purpose and
vision in Hertz should be read from a simple Durkheimian moral
position, or does Durkheim's account perhaps tell us more about
Durkheim than about Hertz's actual understanding of the war and of his
own role in it as intellectual and soldier? I suggest that in fact we find in
Hertz's lived experience of the war something more troubled, more
radically problematic, which stems precisely from the fact that Hertz was
not so completely convinced of the consistency of the Durkheimian
project, in its intellectual, political, and personal facets, as was Durkheim
himself, or, at least, that he saw this project as complicated by a number
of other intellectual and personal concerns.\footnote{51}

Durkheim is certainly correct to note an element of self-sacrifice and
attachment to duty in Hertz's thought and behavior here, but this is only
part of the picture. Mingled with this selfless moral motivation lies
another thread, one which invokes a language more typical of late
Romantic or early expressionist, and even early existentialist,
philosophical voices. In this language, we hear the anguished struggle of
an individual groping his way to self-realization, searching desperately
for a way outside the mundane lived experience of the excessively
rational, excessively secure, excessively self-assured scholar and into
some radically different space which Hertz cannot explicitly name but
which bears remarkable likeness to the space pointed to by Nietzsche
throughout his own oeuvre. Hertz is often ecstatic in describing the
rarefied experience afforded by the danger of life at the front, the
purifying simplicity of purpose and will which emerges in this situation
of potential personal catastrophe. He is, one might say, even rendered capable of joy in the face of objective horror:

Tu ne peux imaginer la belle musique que j'entends en ce moment--la symphonie grave et terrible qui m'enveloppe. De toute part vers le nord, le canon tonne : grondements sourds, au loin, coups brefs et saccadés, péremptoires, plus près, des nappes de fer qui s'écrasent, fracas derrière nous, puis long siflement en fusée, de longs roulements de tonnerre et cela sans interruption depuis des heures. [...] Nous vivons dans la plus joyeuse excitation.52

In another letter dated shortly after this one, Hertz further describes the existential state of the individual at the front, using his fellow soldiers as ethnographic studies of a sort, but clearly meaning to refer also to the deep changes in his own state of being. Here, he points out again the bracing effect of the rude, simple life in the country, this "école merveilleuse d'observation aiguë, d'endurance, de poursuite tenace", while noting also, in reference to his current reading material, a telling mythic parallel to the lived experience of the war:

Je me suis mis à Antigone de Sophocle [...] Quelle grandeur, et quelle simplicité dans l'émotion, quelle puissance de dégager l'élément pathétique inclus dans le destin des hommes! La guerre présente m'aide à mieux sentir la tragédie et la vieille tragédie, toujours neuve, m'aide à saisir l'horreur et la sublité quasi divines des événements que nous vivons.53

It is perhaps not too heavy-handed here to indicate the intense interest in Greek tragedy, and the tragic more generally, and in the idea of living and philosophizing in the open air as the epitome of health which are commonly associated with Nietzsche. The shared interest of Hertz and Nietzsche in the use of the Greeks for contemporary moral and other questions goes further than this, though, as it seems clear that at least once Hertz seriously considered turning back to intensive study of classic Greek texts in order to philologically pursue precisely the issues of moral injunction and ritual which he examined in his essay on death.54 On the personal experience of the tragic, Hertz is even clearer in a letter dated December 5, 1914:

Mais, mon aimée, n'essayons pas de résoudre tous les problèmes, de classer toutes les notions--travaillons à bien remplir notre tout petit et obscur rôle dans ce grand drame où le personnage principal, je le sens bien comme toi, c'est la fatalité, la vieille connaissance des
tragiques grecs. Des forces aveugles nous mènent, nous poussent, nous emportent, mais l'homme vraiment homme, continue à marcher droit dans la tempête, heureux de servir la cité qui l'a nourri et élevé, pour qu'elle reste belle et fière parmi les autres--et quand le destin brutal le terrasse, il le domine encore par sa sérénité, par sa volonté de ne pas déchoir, par son acceptation des lois de la vie et de la société.55

Beyond this, we see in Hertz's letters an interest in the idea of self-realization as self-overcoming which parallels that in Nietzsche. In the latter, this takes the form of a mastering of self through the shrugging off of the debilitating effects of centuries of slave morality which have taught the supremacy of weakness and the hatred of life, a rejection of comforting myths which attempt to turn our gaze from the shattering truth of the tragic and from the crushing reality of the eternal return of the same, but a rejection which is nonetheless in the end not simply a negation of existing values but a triumphant yes-saying, an affirmation of the most energetic kind which will enable those who succeed in such an endeavor to again be fully human. In Hertz, this self-overcoming takes a more clearly ascetic form56, and in this it parallels certain ideas which emerge from mystical and religious traditions, particularly Christian ones, but its overall form is rather something of a meeting of these religious-mystical notions with the Nietzschean. The seeming incongruity, even impossibility, of such a mélange is precisely what makes Hertz here so compelling. We find, for example, in the war correspondence numerous references to the sense of self-transformation experienced as a result of the austerity of soldierly life. Concretely, he notes the purifying effect of the absence of alcohol and, even more tellingly, women in a language which is in all its essentials Christian:

Jamais je n'aurais supposé à quel point le prétendu “besoin” sexuel est affaire de régime, de milieu et d'imagination. [...] Une vie de plein air, un confort rudimentaire, de la fatigue, la société unisexe, le régime alimentaire, l'orientation différente des pensées, tout y contribue. [...] Oui, il y a une religion de la guerre. Une interruption de la vie profane, un reclassement de toutes nos valeurs, et la “sexualité” est bien à l'autre pôle.57

These arguments, and especially Hertz's position on alcohol, can clearly be linked to a project of self-transformation which is essentially renunciatory, ascetic, even Christian, and indeed we find more evidence of this position elsewhere in the correspondence.58 They are coupled, however, with observations on self-overcoming which simply do not fit this framework, and which I argue can be best compared to the praxis
articulated in Nietzsche. We have already noted the tragic element in Hertz's perspective here; to this, we might add a perhaps cruder Nietzschean celebration of the heroic and hero-making endeavor of war. Hertz in fact calls up one of the world historical figures Nietzsche often invoked in his own complicated discourse on the struggle of slave and master moralities and the possibility of the emergence of the heroic:

Comme nous comprenons mieux cela maintenant que nous avons eu le bonheur de vivre (à notre rang infime) des temps héroïques. Jadis quand nous pensions à Napoléon et à toutes les grandes, formidables choses du passé, cela nous apparaissait irréel--nous nous disions que ce n'était pas pour nous. Et nous voici en pleine épopée--et ce n'est pas un rêve.59

The "epic" which Hertz here sees as the condition and possibility of his existence and self-transformation is elsewhere likened to another struggle of mythical proportion, namely, the heroic narrative of the Old Testament. Here, France is seen by Hertz as another peuple élu--l'épouse d'un dieu jaloux qui la frappe terriblement quand elle s'éloigne de lui et court après les faux dieux--mais qui l'aime et la rétablit magnifiquement et la couvre de gloire dès qu'elle revient à lui--dès qu'elle redevient fidèle à elle-même et à son destin sublime.60

We cannot help but hear something in Hertz's discussion of France's heroic vigor of Nietzsche's own discussion of the ancient Israelite sense of their own health and power in their worship of the warrior god Yahweh. This is a vision of a people defined in struggle and by their vigorous capacity to rise to the occasion of great difficulty, all the while remaining so utterly self-assured as to define the very project of justice and of truth as the concern of their own personal, national god.61

This fascination with the epic, the grand mythological scale on which true transformative action should be enacted, is accompanied in Hertz's thoughts by the recognition of a fundamental motor for this action which, again, parallels Nietzsche. Hertz writes frequently of an almost mystical belief that victory can essentially be willed by the French, that success will be determined less by crude material considerations of firepower and troop strength than by the purity of will of the victor. This is a question for him both of a collective conviction and faith in their purpose, the superiority of their cause and civilization, and of an individual volonté, purified by the magnitude of the consequences, self-transformative in the extreme, allowing in its ascendance the pursuit of heroic self-realization
even unto certain death. To be sure, Hertz struggles between this notion of will, personally confident and cheerfully optimistic, and a more simply self-sacrificial understanding of duty, this tinged with a kind of bleak resignation in the face of the ultimate task to be accomplished and less than self-transcendent. So he can speak of both the "longue suite d'obscur et pénibles sacrifices"62 which is the necessary lot of the troops (he will indeed be at several points quite prepared to offer himself as one of these sacrifices in an obviously over-melodramatic manner, dissuaded in each case only by the combined influence of his more Nietzschean will and the protesting voice of his wife63) and of a more jubilant and transcendent "confidence" which makes it perfectly clear to him that "le vainqueur sera celui qui aura eu la foi la plus obstinée dans sa cause et en lui-même."64 It is with this latter confidence that he can celebrate without contradiction both the terrible music of cannon fire raining down on the Germans and the Dionysian revelry of the simple country soldiers in his regiment.65

One might perhaps initially think that the foregoing is explicable as simply the sort of blustering rhetoric characteristic of people in such situations, that is, that Hertz sounds like Nietzsche here only because he is here, at the front, in the war, in a situation in which, indeed, we might expect even the most timid or self-denying of men to start to sound a bit like Nietzsche or some poor imitation. However, the evidence for this parallel is not limited to the war letters, as I have indicated by referencing much earlier correspondence with his wife and friends. Allusions to Nietzschean themes of will, to the complex discourse of sacrifice and transcendence, and to a certain poetic and aesthetic sense of life seemingly rather untypical of a Durkheimian sociologist are to be found throughout Hertz’s adult life. If we find something of a separation of, on the one hand, Hertz's professional, academic demeanor as a Durkheimian sociologist and scholar and, on the other, his lived and private engagement with the thought of Nietzsche, this is perhaps attributable to the compulsion he doubtless would have felt as a participant in the respectable university world (indeed, as a colleague of the very representative in the Third Republic of the serious Sorbonnard, Durkheim) to be careful of too clearly acknowledging influence by a thinker who, as Louis Pinto has demonstrated in his study of Nietzsche's reception in France, was taken up most explicitly during this pre-World War I period by "profane", avant-garde and often literary figures outside the university.66 Nonetheless, the simple fact that Hertz was clearly intrigued by this shadowy figure, that he took him seriously and did not simply reject him in favor of his great respectable philosophical enemy Kant, as apparently did most other "lecteurs savants", points to the importance of le cas Hertz in understanding the nuances of intellectual influence in Third Republic France.67
The 'life-work' and l'intellectuel pathétique: the existential connection between the Durkheimian and Nietzschean projects

It seems clear then that our reading of Hertz cannot but lead to some reflection on the intersection of his scholarly work and these 'private' motivations and concerns. The letters and biographical details I have discussed indicate a man motivated by deep existential questions of personal meaning and identity, by a quest for inner and outer fulfillment. They indicate a man driven by an intense desire for self-realization, indeed, for self-creation. This act of creation, consisting of internal as well as external necessities, took place in a number of different realms: in the political, where Hertz agitated and organized for the socialist cause in a way characteristic of some of the other members of the Durkheimian team but at a unique level of intensity and commitment\textsuperscript{68}, fusing abstract political doctrine into rigorously concrete concerns for the ultimate ends of human society; in his relationship with his family, where he evinced an almost religious attachment to the institution of the family and took up questions of morality and the social bond in the most personal terms; in his internal life, where he posed over and over, and in often agonized tones, questions of the meaning of a life, of courage, of virtue, and of ultimate values, and reflected upon the various methods by which a man could and ought to go about making himself into the most complete human being possible.

In this light, we cannot but read his studies of the right/left, sacred/profane binary and of death and ritual and his incomplete work on sin and expiation as something more than contributions to a newly developing science of human society and culture. They take on as well the look of work motivated by the same ultimately personal questions Hertz interrogates in his correspondence. In examining distinctions of sacred and profane and death in various non-European societies, Hertz is in the end attempting to answer to his own personal questions as to the possible construction of a sanctified life and of a death which one might say, as Hertz himself does of the death of Charles Péguy in combat in the war, "justifie toute sa vie et le sacré."\textsuperscript{69} As for his attention to sin and expiation in the work which was intended to be his doctoral thesis, the points of connection to Hertz's eminently personal concerns about moral action and transgression, personal responsibility and guilt\textsuperscript{70}, and the possibility of integration (or reintegration) into the whole through trial and confession seem obvious enough. Mauss himself spoke of Hertz's lifelong obsession as a sociologist with "the dark side of humanity: crime and sin, punishment and pardon", which he (and arguably Mauss as well) saw as one of the two constituent elements of the sacred: this, the 'left
sacred', concerned with transgression and death, stood opposite the 'right sacred', which concerns itself with ritual and the observance of sacred rites and interdictions.71 This realm of the 'left sacred' we might well read as the logical meeting ground of the seemingly opposed Durkheimian and Nietzschean interrogations of morality.72

This provides us the way back to the point at which we began the essay. How is it that the Collège de Sociologie (which included Bataille, Leiris, Caillois and others) and other such avant-garde intellectual groups and individuals could arrive at the seemingly bizarre intellectual position they take up between the two wars, this tenuous position of a Durkheimian recognition of the place of the sacred in collective life and in the perpetual renewal of the community through collective effervescence in ritualistic ecstasy intermingled with a Nietzschean tweaking of the entire edifice so as, with the aid of the injection of the will to power and the radical revaluation of moral structures, to turn the ritualistic idea of the sacred into a celebration of the transgressive moment per se? How can men like Bataille, Caillois, Leiris, Klossowski, et al. have so horribly distorted Durkheim, or Nietzsche, or both as to imagine that they could coherently fit into the same intellectual and practical bag of tricks, and, in so doing, to influence a generation of French intellectuals (e.g., Foucault, Deleuze, Baudrillard) to follow to pursue similar paths?

I have made no case here that the members of the Collège were reading Hertz, and indeed I would be in a difficult situation if my case rested on that sort of explicit intellectual influence as they would have had to read his correspondence in addition to his published work to derive the full sense of the interpretation I have just presented.73 What I suggest, however, is that Hertz's life is an example of the same endeavor undertaken by the Collège, if in a more exaggerated manner. That is, it is an attempt to find a point of connection between the insights provided by this new social science into the nature and reality of human existence and the deep and personal existential yearnings gnawing internally at many intellectuals during this fateful moment in European cultural history, that is, the moment of the West's full entry into a modernity characterized most centrally by the disappearance of traditional cultural responses to deep questions of personal meaning and identity and the failure to locate adequate replacements for this lost symbolic treasury. Hertz is literally the closest thing we have to a precursor to the position taken up by Bataille and his colleagues a generation later which Jean-Michel Besnier characterizes as that of l'intellectuel pathétique, a phrase which we ought perhaps best translate as "the suffering intellectual."74 Why "suffering"? Precisely because of this seemingly radical contradiction between the scientific tools he has acquired for the exploration, and consequently the demystification, of some of the fundament of human social life and the
grave difficulties faced in attempting to constitute meaning himself in this demystified world.

In Hertz, we see the struggle between his commitment to the goals of objective social science and his desire to put this science, and indeed other intellectual currents, at the service of his own existential quest, but he manages yet to keep the combatants separated, if only with great difficulty and with more than occasional mutual intrusions. The members of the Collège are simply more willing for a number of reasons to allow these two realms, kept separated in any case only with considerable difficulty, to intermingle. This difference perhaps explains some of the clear distinctions in the projects of the Collège and those of Hertz while attesting at the same time to the parallel dilemmas they faced and the reasons they could use the same Durkheimian body of thought as a tool in facing them. We might wonder how much closer still the two might have been had Hertz, who died at 33, survived the war and taken up, as he was arguably poised to do, a position of authority in the Durkheimian school.

Notes


3 The lone source I have located which fleetingly suggests the possibility of the argument I make here is Donald Nielsen, "Robert Hertz and the Sociological Study of Sin, Expiation and Religion: A Neglected Chapter in the Durkheim School", in Richard Monk, ed., *Structures of Knowing* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 7-50, who, in an article devoted to explicating Hertz's thesis on sin, hints in a footnote that he "hears more than one echo of Nietzsche in Hertz" (p. 36).
Arpad Szakolczai, in his *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life-Works* (London: Routledge, 1998), uses this notion of the 'life-work', that is, an intellectual project which is intimately and dialectically intertwined in existential events and dilemmas in the thinker's life (see p. 33), as a methodological point of departure for understanding the oeuvres of Weber and Foucault.

Emile Durkheim, *Textes*, edited and introduced by Victor Karady (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1975), vol. 1, p. 439. This piece was originally written for the *Annaire de l’Association amicale des anciens élèves de l’École Normale Supérieure*.


Mauss, in his introduction to the published fragment of Hertz's thesis, indicates a different polarity which was increasingly developed in the work of Hertz; that is, the move from attention to the sacred/profane opposition to the binary right sacred/left sacred, or pure/impure sacred, in which the former consists of rites and regulations for participation in sacred spheres and the latter indicates the dangerous and mysterious liminal spaces incurred by transgressions of those rites and regulations (see Emile Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, introduction by Michel Maffesoli (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1991), pp. 681-690).

Hertz was, like many other Durkheimians, a committed socialist, affiliated with the Parti socialiste S.F.I.O. (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) and Jean Jaurès, greatly influenced by the British Fabian Society, and creator and secretary of the Groupe d'études socialistes, a collective of socialist intellectuals working to enhance the connections between militants, technicians, and intellectuals and contribute methodical research skills to the socialist project (see Parkin, *The Dark Side of Humanity*, pp. 4-8, 51-57 and Christophe Prochasson, *Les Intellectuels, le socialisme et la guerre, 1900-1938* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), pp. 122-129).

"Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort" was originally published in volume ten of *L'Année sociologique*, while "La Prééminence de la main droite, étude sur la polarité religieuse" first appeared in *Revue philosophique*. Both studies were included in the collection of Hertz's works published in 1928 by Mauss under the title *Mélanges de sociologie religieuse et de folklore* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France). The two works were translated and made available in one volume, *Death and the Right Hand* (Aberdeen: Cohen and West), by Rodney Needham in 1960, with an introduction by Evans-Pritchard.


"Only the former remains. Mauss apparently lost the chapter outlines and other notes, which he himself used to teach his own course on sin in the 1930s, although he did summarize their general thrust when he published Hertz's introduction. See Parkin, *Dark Side*, pp. 125-6.


Hertz distinguishes here this mode of treating death in primitive society and our modern, overly psychological and medical mode, in which death is instantaneous, a merely physical event, and the liminal period, if it exists at all, is significantly reduced (Hertz, *Sociologie religieuse et folklore* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), p. 2). His implication though, and this is along the same lines as Durkheim's argument on the elementary forms of religion, is that the real origins of
the institution are best observed in their pure forms in primitive societies and that, however different our understanding and treatment of these matters might seem, at root our own processes of thought and collective representation are profoundly shaped by these origins and in fact this complex sequence of social recognition of contamination and subsequent expiation makes up a "permanent social necessity" (ibid., p. 71).

Both are recognized as social spaces, that is, communities: the former, the visible society of the living; the latter, the invisible society of dead ancestors (ibid., p. 83).

ibid., pp. 79-81.

ibid., p. 73.

ibid., pp. 50-69. He notes as well that this joyous healing celebration sometimes also calls for a human sacrifice, for which prisoners of war and slaves are most often designated--the male relatives of the deceased generally act as the executors of the sacrifice, inasmuch as they stand to benefit significantly from its results (p. 52).

Hertz here cites Broca, who proposed that we are right-handed because we are left-brained (ibid., p. 85).

ibid., pp. 90-3. The brevity of his case here only adds to the difficulty of convincingly conglomerating all these very different varieties of binary conceptual schemas. Evans-Pritchard (in the preface), among numerous others who have commented on this essay, notes some of the main problems with Hertz's argument.

ibid., pp. 98-106.


One can hardly expect Hertz to have been exhaustive in the single paragraph he devotes to explication of Nietzsche's position, and Mauss indicates in a footnote to the text that Hertz fully intended to fill out his reading of Nietzsche (Hertz, "Sin and Expiation in Primitive Societies", p. 119); he also names specific texts which Hertz had consulted (e.g., *The Twilight of the Idols, The Anti-Christ, Human all too Human*).

Hertz, "Sin and Expiation in Primitive Societies", pp. 78-80. It is important to note that Hertz's position is thoroughly at odds with that of liberal Christian modernists who were at the same time endeavoring to construct their own middle way between orthodox faith and secular reason, as he makes clear in his vigorous attack of them (pp. 64, 76, 80; see also W.S.F. Pickering's preface to this same document, pp. 5-14). In an unpublished letter of 2 July 1911 to an English friend, Hertz made clear which side of the modernist/orthodox debate in Christianity he found more attractive: "I think more and more that if one has to be religious, it is better to take it all in--I mean, no rationalism, no secularization of the divine, no mean adaptation of the grand absurdity of true religion to our petty intellectualist scruples. If I was a Roman Catholic, I would certainly be with Pie X against the modernists. Those people are ashamed of having a religion--they try to beg their pardon from the intellectual people and the freethinkers--they take as humble and 'reasonable' an attitude as they can--and they lose what is the essence of religion, the emotional power, without winning intelligibility (original letter in English, Fonds Robert Hertz, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, Paris, see note 29 below).


ibid., pp. 187, 189.

Parkin, *Dark Side*, pp. 2-3.

Parkin, *Dark Side*, pp. 9-10. Alice Hertz née Bauer was, from 1910 until her death in 1927, a professor at the Collège Sévigné in Paris where she was a member of the Union froebélienne française (named for the German pedagogical theorist Friedrich Froebel), which had established the first French program of pedagogical training for pre-primary (kindergarten) teachers (the Collège Sévigné was the *de facto* École normale for such instructors). A large collection of letters Hertz wrote her, both before and during his period on the war front, is maintained in Paris in the Fonds Robert Hertz at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, and the majority of these letters read as intellectual correspondence; that is, Hertz speaks to her not simply as a husband to a wife, but as an intellectual speaking to another intellectual, discussing his own work and asking for commentary and criticism, commenting on books of philosophy or literary works, engaging in dialogues on music, art, politics, religion, etc. Hertz, in this and other ways, seems something of a man of the future in a fin-de-siècle France still very much imbedded in more traditional notions of gender roles.

I take the opportunity here to profoundly thank Françoise Héritier, who gave me permission to view the contents of the Fonds Robert Hertz; Marion Abélès, the head archivist at the Laboratoire who went to great lengths to aid my research; and Philippe Besnard, who alerted me to the existence of the collection in the first place and helped me in innumerable other ways, both intellectually and logistically.

Hertz, undated letter to Alice Hertz (FRH). The phrase "le psychologue de la musique" was originally "le psychologue de l'émotion", but Hertz crossed out the latter.

This is the famous speech Bergson delivered in December 1914 at the public meeting of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques (of which he was president), in which he equates French and German civilization to his own philosophical categories of life and matter, respectively, in order to argue for the moral vibrancy of the former and the static brutality of the latter. Hertz read it in the French newspaper *Le Temps*.

Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 15 December 1914 (FRH).

Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 16 September 1914 (FRH), underlining in original.

The precise phrase is Alice's, from a letter of 2 January 1915 (FRH).

Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 3 January 1915 (FRH).

He discusses him frequently enough in the letters that his widow would try, unsuccessfully, to contact him on Hertz's death in order to inform him of the fact, and perhaps also in order to meet this man for whom her husband had such a glowing admiration.

In addition to the correspondence cited, there are notes Hertz took on Bergson's course and writings among the papers in the Fonds Robert Hertz.

"Fabiani, *Les Philosophes de la république* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1988), pp. 91-97. We should note that, although Fabiani only claims to be speaking of the structure of the *philosophical* field, his analysis clearly resonates with efforts to schematize the intellectual field generally in the Third Republic, including that of Clark.

"On Nietzsche's connection to Schopenhauer, see, e.g., "Schopenhauer as Educator" in *Untimely Meditations*; on Bergson's, see, e.g., Alexandre Baillot, who in discussing Schopenhauer's influence on French thought, describes Bergson as one of the most careful French readers of Schopenhauer (see Alexandre Baillot, *L'Influence de la philosophie de Schopenhauer en France, 1860-1900* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1927), p. 117).

"Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1975), p. 171, note 63. Interestingly, Benda classes Durkheim with the 'bad clerks' in so far as he, like Maurras and Barrès, rejects universal and eternal morality in favor of cultural and moral relativism (pp. 162-3). Durkheim himself addressed pragmatism in a series of lectures given in 1913-14 and similarly observed the connection of Bergson to Anglo-Saxon pragmatism (e.g., James, Dewey), but placed Nietzsche apart, noting that the latter actually has a deeper metaphysical force, the will to power, to undergird a theory of truth while the pragmatists simply rest on an equation of truth and utility (Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), translated by J. C. Whitehouse, edited by John Allcock, p. 4).

"Louis Pinto (*Les Neveux de Zarathoustra. La réception de Nietzsche en France* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995)) argues that, while both figures appealed to roughly the same kind of French intellectual reader, Bergson was clearly seen as significantly more respectable, especially within the increasingly professionalized ranks of philosophy itself (pp. 38-45).

"It is difficult, in what follows, to avoid thinking of Nietzsche's discussion of the *Kulturphilister* (see, for example, "David Strauss, the confessor and the writer", in *Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), translated by R. J. Hollingdale, pp. 7-9).

"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 15 January 1915 (FRH).

"ibid.

"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 28 November 1914 (FRH). For details on the concerted effort during the war to condemn Nietzsche and others as part of the "la pensée pangermaniste" seen as responsible for German militarism, see Christophe Prochasson et Anne Rasmussen, *Au Nom de la Patrie, les intellectuels et la Première guerre mondiale 1910-1919* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996). Hertz's reference is perhaps to the section "Of the Adder's Bite" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ("When, however, you have an enemy, do not requite him good for evil: for that would make him ashamed. But prove that he has done something good to you", p. 93 of the translation by R. J. Hollingdale, (London: Penguin, 1961)), or to *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am so Wise" ("Equality before the enemy: the first presupposition of an honest duel. Where one feels contempt, one cannot wage war; where one commands, where one sees something beneath oneself, one has no business waging war", p. 232 of Kaufmann's translation of *On the Genealogy of Morals/Ecce Homo*, (New York: Vintage, 1969)).

"Hertz's father was a native German-speaker, and we know Hertz's German was good enough for him to interview for a position as interpreter during the war (although he was not given the position, a failure due, in Hertz's opinion, to his relatively weak knowledge of technical and military German, which he discusses in his letter of 29 December 1914 (FRH) to Alice). There are also many references to Wagner, Goethe,
and other great figures of the German cultural world in his correspondence both
before and during the war.
"Hertz, letter to Alice Bauer, 4 September 1903 (FRH). In this same letter, he gives a
very critical reading of none other than John Stuart Mill, one of Nietzsche's own foils,
concluding that he had succeeded in rousing himself from the slumber induced by
Mill by turning to Nietzsche.
"Durkheim, Textes, vol. 1, pp. 444-5.
"François Isambert ("At the frontier of folklore and sociology: Hubert, Hertz and
Czarnowski, founders of a sociology of folk religion", in Philippe Besnard, ed., The
sociological domain: The Durkheimians and the founding of French sociology
(Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des
Sciences de l'Homme, 1983)) notes this complexity in Hertz ("his personality was
many-sided, even contradictory", p. 166), as does Parkin in citing Isambert (Parkin,
Dark Side, p. 14), but neither really explores it in any detail.
"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 16 September 1914 (FRH).
"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 3 October 1914 (FRH).
"This is discussed in a letter from Hertz to Pierre Roussel, dated 27 April 1907
(FRH). Roussel, an old friend from ENS days, was himself a specialist in Greek
antiquity who spent a number of years in Athens.
"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 5 December 1914 (FRH).
"We should add here that there are competing interpretations of Nietzsche on the
question of asceticism (see, for example, the accounts by Camus (L'Homme révolté
(Paris: Gallimard, 1951)), Deleuze (Nietzsche et la philosophie (Paris: Presses
Universitaires de France, 1962)), and Kaufmann (Nietzsche: Philosopher,
Psychologist, Antichrist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), for an idea of
the variation on this issue), and in fact his position here is significantly more complex
than is sometimes acknowledged. In On the Genealogy of Morals, he refuses a
categorical condemnation of ascetic practice, finding it healthy in a certain
(philosophical) constitution, harmful in others (the priestly, the artistic), and,
although his attack on Christian morality and its emphasis on mortification and
asceticism is devastatingly fervent in works written after the Genealogy, he
nonetheless connects the capacity to suffer, to experience "painful tragedy", to
greatness in man (see Twilight of the Idols/The Antichrist (London: Penguin, 1968),
translation by R. J. Hollingdale, p. 88, and Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a
Philosophy of the Future (London: Penguin, 1973), translation by R. J. Hollingdale,
p. 209) .
"Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 24 November 1914 (FRH). Despite the renunciatory
imagery of Hertz's position, we can find here again a startling parallel in Nietzsche;
see, for example, the latter's consistent line on the irreconcilability of the
philosophical life and marriage (e.g., "Woman and Child", 426, in Human, All Too
Human) and his frequent derogatory remarks on the 'beer hall' thinking of too many
of his German contemporaries and German 'beeriness' generally (e.g., "Why I am so
Clever", section 1, in Ecce Homo).
"Hertz frequently alluded to the social evils of alcoholism from a position informed
by his radical politics. He saw the abuse of alcohol as an unhealthy manifestation of
a natural impulse to recreation on the part of the working man and saw it as an
important part of a socialist movement to provide "healthier and purer" alternatives to
alcoholism. Marcel Granet (another socialist member of the Année sociologique
team) presented an action paper to the Groupe d'Études Socialistes in 1911 on the
"problem of alcohol" which in all essentials echoed Hertz's position.
“Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 2 February 1915 (FRH), underlining in original. In this same letter, Hertz says he has been reading Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington', and he celebrates their "bel et grand lyrisme."

“Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 18 December 1914 (FRH).


“Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 19 September 1914 (FRH).

“For example, his letter to Alice of 28 March 1915 (FRH), only a few weeks before his death. As Parkin indicates, we can be less than certain of whether or not his death was the culmination of a deliberate plan of self-sacrifice, as we simply do not know enough about the events leading up to the action of April 13 in which he lost his life along with 21 other members of his unit (see Parkin, Dark Side, pp. 13-16).

“Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 28 September 1914 (FRH).

“His letter to Alice of 14 February 1915 (FRH) is exemplary here. He recounts an episode in which he encamped at a deserted farm with three enlisted men who proceeded, in the midst of a rather dismal and less than secure situation, to pass the time in amusing themselves in the most riotous manner, seemingly above the objective difficulty and danger of their circumstances. Hertz, in glowing terms, points to the admirable capacity to "saisir le côté drôle des choses, les travers des gens et rire, rire, parce que c'est sain et que ça fait du bien et qu'on est au monde pour ça."


“The correspondence contained in the Fonds Robert Hertz is indeed a rich source not only into Hertz's thought and life and thereby into the origins of French Durkheimian sociology, but in a certain sense into a particular and much broader French and even European intellectual moment just before and during the Great War.

“Indeed, Hertz sometimes spoke of his socialism in decidedly religious, even mystical terms; in a letter to Roussel (11 February 1906, FRH), for example, he characterized his socialism as a "mysticisme de la <<foule>>."

“Hertz, letter to Alice Hertz, 22 September 1914 (FRH). We might note in passing that Péguy, a Catholic socialist, had once been a political ally of the Durkheimians, during the heated period of the Dreyfus Affair, but had turned against the Dreyfusards because of their anti-clericalism; after this break, it is nearly impossible to find any remarks from the Durkheimian group on Péguy which are not condemnatory (Mauss, for example, spoke of him as "un fou dangereux" (Marcel Fournier, Marcel Mauss (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 205)), save this one from Hertz.

"Here we note Hertz's numerous references in the war correspondence to his Jewish identity and his perceived need to prove himself authentically French through exemplary service in the war; e.g., in a letter to Alice dated 3 November 1914 (FRH), he writes that "Il n'y aura jamais assez de dévouement juif dans cette guerre, jamais trop de sang juif versé sur la terre de France", and in another letter of 2 April 1915, he speaks of his great desire to "être Français, mériter de l'être, prouver que je l'étais, et je rêvais d'actions d'éclat à la guerre contre Guillaume. Puis ce désir "d'intégration" a pris une autre forme, car mon socialisme procédait de là pour une large part."


"See, for example, Jean Jamin, "Un Sacré collège, ou les apprentis sorciers de la sociologie", Cahiers internationaux de sociologie 67 (1980), pp. 20-24, where we see
clearly the manner in which the members of the Collège explicitly set about an investigation of the left or impure sacred.

7It is clear though that they knew Hertz's work through Mauss, as the latter, who assumed possession of Hertz's manuscripts at Hertz's death, utilized Hertz's work as a basis for seminars at the EPHE from 1932 to 1937 (see Mauss, *Oeuvres*, vol. 3, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969), pp. 513-516). There are also explicit references in the work of all the central members of the Collège (Bataille, Caillois, Michel Leiris) to Hertz, so they clearly were aware of his published work as well.