

Republicanism and ‘The Jewish Question’

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The Jew as Model:

Anti-Semitism, Aesthetics, and Epistemology in the Goncourt Brothers’ *Manette Salomon*

With an anti-Semitic relish notable even for a work of nineteenth-century French literature, the Goncourt brothers’ 1867 novel *Manette Salomon* chronicles the destruction of an artist at the hands of the Jewish model who becomes his mistress and wife. Critics have long isolated *Manette Salomon*’s anti-Semitism from its ruminations about art and *la bohème*. Yet the novel’s anti-Semitism proves no coarse veneer easily stripped away to reveal the natural beauty of the grain beneath. More like a painter’s glaze, the Goncourts’ fascination with Jews is the binding medium that permanently fixes and refracts the colors of *Manette Salomon*’s aesthetic and social tableau. In this paper, I argue that Jewishness inflects the novel’s every aspect by figuring a central metaphysical anxiety to which the novel’s various postures—from its embrace of a sensorial mode of aesthetic transcendence to the final, idyllic communion the character Anatole achieves with nature—represent so many coordinated responses. That anxiety stems from the Goncourts’ conflicted relation to a neoclassical cult of the absolute whose means they deride but whose epistemological ambitions they less successfully reject. A founding moment, I propose, for the Goncourts’ disingenuous embrace of modernity as well as for the literary naturalism they helped invent, this ambivalence achieves its defining expression in the Jew, whose fraught incarnation in *Manette Salomon* of both venal modernity and a timeless Oriental absolute reveals fissures in the Goncourts’ own attempts to reconcile bourgeois culture with their nostalgia for a lost aristocratic ideal.

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Belgitude et race de Sem: l’influence d’Edmond Picard sur les lettres belges

Avocat de renom, mécène et défenseur des lettres belges, fondateur de *L’Art Moderne*, l’une des principales revues artistiques à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle en Belgique, Edmond Picard est aussi un ardent colonialiste et un antisémite enthousiaste. Son voyage au Maroc en 1887 constitue une étape décisive dans le développement de sa pensée raciste. Ethnologue improvisé, Picard voit surtout dans ce voyage, censé être un voyage d’affaires, l’occasion de saisir dans son milieu d’origine, autrement dit dépouillé du masque de civilisé qu’il revêt en occident, le dangereux Sémite de la branche juive. Il s’agit pour Picard de vérifier sur le terrain les thèses de Gustave Le Bon sur les différences essentielles entre les races et d’observer le Juif dans sa forme authentique tel l’entomologiste examinant les larves des futurs insectes porteurs de germes infectieux. Au terme de ce voyage, Picard se sent plus que jamais le devoir d’avertir les élites d’Europe de la gravité du péril juif. Outre son journal de voyage, Picard publie l’année suivante dans *L’Art Moderne* une série d’articles sur la Bible et le Coran, suivis en 1889 d’articles sur les Sémites et sur l’art arabe. L’Asie, terre de Sem, est selon lui le berceau d’une race centripète, repliée sur elle-même, inerte et sans idéal. L’irréductible antagonisme des races,

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leur opposition systématique, dicte à Picard une vision strictement contraire de la race aryenne comme inépuisablement perfectible et centrifuge. A la duplicité du Juif, Picard oppose la sincérité, le naturel de l'Aryen, qualité que seul le Belge, parmi les Européens, a su garder intacte. Si le Français, par exemple, est esclave des apparences, le Belge quant à lui est un être foncièrement libre, fort et sain. Cette force, qui fait des Belges le noyau, le "bataillon sacré" de la race aryenne, invite, on le devine, à l'idée d'expansion. Nous attachant à dégager les fondements idéologiques du fameux mot d'ordre des artistes et intellectuels belges de l'époque, ce "Soyons nous" jeté en résistance à l'imitation servile, nous examinerons l'influence du discours raciste et nationaliste de Picard sur les deux principaux romanciers belges de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, Camille Lemonnier et Georges Eekhoud, poursuivant dans leurs oeuvres l'application d'une volonté de migration et de puissance.

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La Juive au Vatican and the "Liberal Question"

When Joseph Méry published the first volume of *La Juive au Vatican* in 1851, the "Roman Question" had occupied center stage in world politics for five years, since the election of the liberal Pius IX in 1846. Would the papal government enact the considerable legal and social reforms required to carry the papal kingdom into the progressive order of "civilized" nations? Would Italy be united by a confederacy headed by a progressive pope? Would a Republican revolution threaten or overturn the papal kingdom? These questions mattered greatly to France, both as a Catholic nation and as a country engaged in a delicate balance of power with Austria, which governed much of northern Italy. By 1851, the first act in the Italian drama had just been played: the Roman Republic, headed by Mazzini and Garibaldi, had forced Pius IX into exile, but Republican France had then brought down its Italian counterpart and carried the pope -- no longer liberal -- back to power. French soldiers had even laid siege to the Jewish ghetto, abetting a reactionary backlash against the Jews for having aligned themselves, however tentatively, with the Republic that had "liberated" them. Méry's extraordinary novel ends just before the founding of the Roman Republic and represents these recent historical events, surprisingly, without following the standard Risorgimento script -- without even mentioning Mazzini and Garibaldi. Rather, Méry focuses on the "Jewish Question" that he and much of the world increasingly viewed as central to the "Roman Question."

Against a highly accurate backdrop of real historical figures and events, Méry weaves a Romantic and melodramatic tale of a liberal cardinal and a wandering Jewish family. His heroes, fighting fearlessly with both arms and intellect -- terribly unlikely beyond the bounds of the novel -- are, indeed, a cardinal and a Jewess, who together become principal agents of reform. Despite the novel's adherence to a literary genre hardly characterized by its subtlety, *La Juive au Vatican* is remarkable for its deeply nuanced and well-informed representation of the plight of liberal reform in a deeply complex political, social and even metaphysical context. It is equally compelling for its rare portrait of a young Jewess -- in reactionary Rome -- as an intelligent, compassionate and effective agent of change on the world stage. In this paper, I will concentrate on three scenes: the discovery by the Jewess, in the Vatican archives, of a lost 15th-century papal

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bull liberating and valorizing the Jews (*The Name of the Rose* and *The Da Vinci Code avant la lettre*); her aborted crucifixion at the hands of reactionaries; and ultimately the rejection of her, as a Jew, by the liberal peasant and Italian Everyman she loves, upon his discovery of her true identity. These reflections will be located at the crossroads of Republicanism and Empire, Liberalism and Reaction, and religious and national identities.

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A (Jewish) Mission to Civilize: The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and the Development of French-Jewish Colonialism

Alice Conklin entitled her well-known study of the French colonial politics of assimilation in West Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, “A Mission to Civilize”, playing off the French euphemism for colonialism, “la mission civilisatrice”. The centerpiece of the various civilizing missions, whether in Algeria, Vietnam or Martinique was the educational system (backed up by police and the army). Yet the French colonial civilizing mission under the Third Republic (1871-1939) was accompanied by another mission to civilize, one undertaken by French Jews who were themselves in the midst of assimilation. Through the formation of a private, philanthropic organization, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, French Jews participated in the French colonial project by focusing their efforts on the education of “Oriental” Jews in the Mediterranean basin (including Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia).

The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* promoted the French language and culture, as well as French Jewish forms of religious practice through its vast network of schools. Not only did the *Alliance* aim to civilize North African and Levantine Jews through French education, it also intervened on behalf of local Jewish populations’ legal and political rights. In my analysis, I will attempt to show how the *Alliance* reproduced colonialist and Orientalist discourses and suppressed indigenous Jewish cultures, helping create a “modern” Jewish community in the colonies that would look to Europe for its future. I also aim to show how the *Alliance*’s interventions affected Jewish communities’ relationships with other indigenous populations as well as how the *Alliance*’s program mirrored that of the Zionist movement which would emerge at the end of the nineteenth century.