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ALFRED FOUILLÉE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALISM

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This essay examines the rapprochement between science and metaphysics that the French philosopher Alfred Fouillée staged in his writings from 1872 up until his death in 1912. Amidst the influx of new research in scientific psychology inundating France in the late nineteenth century, Fouillée's thought stands out for its creative effort to advance a new spiritualist philosophy on the basis of positive scientific advancements. Fouillée's work is significant for intellectual historians of thought in the fin de siècle *because it challenges the common historiographical narrative, initially presented in H. Stuart Hughes's* Consciousness and Society*, which erroneously frames spiritualist thinkers, Henri Bergson chief among them, as leading a "revolt against positivism." Fouillée throws into stark relief a new spiritualist current that incorporated research in the natural and human sciences from across Europe in order to craft an updated understanding of consciousness. This essay treats Fouillée's work as a historical window onto a distinctly new spiritualism whose proponents sought to overcome the old spiritualism of Victor Cousin's eclectic school, which shunned any naturalist underpinning of metaphysics. While Fouillée has already been widely historicized as a social and political thinker, this essay introduces original archival materials that help to resituate Fouillée as a leading figure of the new spiritualism animating French philosophy in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.*

Reflecting on the crisis facing French philosophy following the rapid influx of scientific psychological research into Paris, Alfred Fouillée opened an 1888 essay "there exists during our era, among many minds, a tendency to strip metaphysics of all its value as a kind of *knowledge*, and to transform it into either a superior poetry, a simple consequence of morals, or an individual religion for which myths are replaced by abstract symbols."[1] The crisis pitted the international new scientific psychology against the French tradition of spiritualist philosophy. At stake was whether the methods of experimentation and medical physiology, on the one hand, or introspection and speculation, on the other, were best suited to

[1] Alfred Fouillée, "La crise actuelle de la métaphysique. I—La métaphysique et la poésie de l'idéal," *Revue des deux mondes*, 86 (1888), 110–40, 110, original emphasis. All translations from the original French are my own unless otherwise noted.

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the study of consciousness (what was called *esprit* in modern French philosophy, and is today often called "mind"). Fouillée, however, saw no contradiction between the two. In his essay, as well as in a hundred others that spanned his career, Fouillée inventively made use of advances across the natural and human sciences as the basis for a new spiritualism.

Fouillée's corpus is significant for intellectual historians of thought in the *fin de siècle* as well as of philosophy under the French Third Republic for the expansive window that its sheer volume opens onto the period. But, more importantly, it stands out against the historiographical narrative, first advanced by H. Stuart Hughes in Consciousness *and Society* and still widely embraced today, which frames spiritualist thinkers as staging a "revolt against positivism."[2] Fouillée, however, saw the crisis in metaphysics as an opportunity to appropriate evolutionary theory and experimental psychology in order to articulate a new, scientifically revamped spiritualist philosophy. This essay documents how Fouillée's work gave shape to an elevated and dynamic metaphysics, and was representative of an often neglected period of new spiritualism animating French philosophy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

What made the spiritualism of Fouillée's generation *new* was its emergence as a reaction against the old spiritualism of Victor Cousin. Cousin oversaw the official philosophy curriculum from 1815 to 1851 and also served intermittently as education minister under the July Monarchy. Jan Goldstein has brought renewed attention to Cousin's brand of eclectic spiritualism, the proponents of which "constructed their psychology around an immaterial self, or *moi*, that (they insisted) was given to its possessor whole and a priori."[3] The centrality of psychology to Fouillée's thought placed him in Cousin's spiritualist lineage, yet Fouillée self-consciously strove to overcome Cousin's antiscientific vision of a purely rational psychology. Fouillée would develop his ideas in an intellectual climate freed from Cousin's monopoly following the latter's death in 1867. Nonetheless, Cousin's influence persisted thanks to his disciples in the faculty of the Sorbonne. The most powerful among them was Paul Janet, who discerned that Cousin's spiritualism gave way to a "new phase of spiritualist philosophy" under the Third Republic.[4] Janet cited Fouillée as the leading thinker of this new spiritualism.

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2 H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890–1930* (New York, 1958), 33–66. Hughes uses the term "positivism" in a loose sense "to characterize the whole tendency to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural science." Ibid., 37.

3 Jan Goldstein, *The Post-revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 6.

4 Paul Janet, "Une nouvelle phase de la philosophie spiritualiste," *Revue des deux mondes*, 108 (1873), 383.

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Fouillée's lifelong effort to stage a rapprochement, or what he called a "conciliation," between science and metaphysics spanned four decades of unremitting productivity, beginning in 1872 with the publication of his doctoral thesis, *La liberté et le déterminisme*, until his death in 1912. Throughout, Fouillée developed his thought around the principle of *idées-forces* (awkwardly translated as "idea-forces"). The principle holds that consciousness is not a self-enclosed ensemble of ideas that represent the external world; rather, ideas are powerful forms of action in the social and natural world. The flood of new scientific advancements inundating Paris found its way into the conceptual mosaic supporting *idées-forces*. Fouillée integrated the evolutionary theory of Herbert Spencer and the neurology of Henry Maudsley from Britain; the physiological psychology and quantitative methods of Wilhelm Wundt and Theodor Fechner from Germany; and the homegrown psychopathology of amnesiacs, somnambulists, and hysterics of Théodule Ribot and Pierre Janet. Fouillée synthesized these scientific advancements with the metaphysical commitments of the French spiritualist tradition beginning with his first article on *idées-forces* in 1879.[5]

Fouillée's new spiritualism exposes the cracks in the historiographical narrative that French spiritualists of the *fin de siècle*, Henri Bergson chief among them, led what H. Stuart Hughes called in *Consciousness and Society* a "revolt against positivism."[6] According to Hughes, the explosion of scientific methods used to experiment on a new class of psychological facts, coupled with the legacy of Auguste Comte's positivism, lent urgency to the spiritualist project of defending the mystical depths of inner experience against its impending irrelevance. Although now half a century old, vestiges of Hughes's narrative continue to shape historiographies of the *fin de siècle* which frame spiritualism as a "revolt against mechanism,"[7] a "reaction against materialism,"[8] a "rejection of positivism,"[9] or a "revolt against rationality."[10]

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5 Alfred Fouillée, "La philosophie des idées-forces: comme conciliation du naturalisme et de l'idéalisme," *Revue philosophique*, 8 (1879), 1–32.

6 David Lindenfeld critiques Hughes on similar grounds, though he does not mention French spiritualism, in *The Transformation of Positivism: Alexius Meinong and European Thought, 1880–1920* (Berkeley, CA, 1980), 7.

7 R. C. Gronin depicts the spiritualist period as a religious revival in *The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900–1914* (Calgary, 1988), 1–20.

8 J. W. Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848–191* (New Haven, 2000), 56–67.

9 James A. Winders, *European Culture since 1848, from Modern to Postmodern and Beyond* (New York, 2001), 94.

10 Thomas Laqueur, "Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity," *Modern Intellectual History*, 3/1 (2006), 112.

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James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory* offers the most probing intellectual-historical study of Fouillée. Kloppenberg situates Fouillée as part of a transatlantic intellectual movement promoting a "radical theory of knowledge" that sought to reconcile the era's competing poles into a *via media* between metaphysics and science.[11] In addition to highlighting Fouillée's significance for his contributions to the study of consciousness, Kloppenberg rightly contextualizes his thought as part of a revolt against Kant's legacy, and not against positivism.[12] Kant's strict separation between the natural realm of scientific causes and the transcendental realm of the understanding's categories was antithetical to Fouillée's effort to set consciousness within a naturalist framework. Kantian philosophy exerted a strong influence in France thanks to Cousin's incorporation of German thinkers into the official curriculum. It was also promoted in the work of self-identified neo-Kantians like Charles Renouvier and Léon Brunschvicg. I see this essay as building upon Kloppenberg's study: Fouillée's resistance to French neo-Kantianism helps to explain the conceptual stakes that motivated his conciliation of science and metaphysics. But the distinctly spiritualist dimension of Fouillée's thought deserves to be understood less in Kloppenberg's diverse transatlantic intellectual context, and more in the context of the tightly woven debates between scientific psychologists and new spiritualist thinkers in the young Third Republic.

These debates bring Fouillée into new focus since he has already received ample attention as a social and political thinker. For example, William Logue in *From Philosophy to Sociology* presents Fouillée among a group of liberal thinkers under the fragile Third Republic who "took the first steps toward the conversion of liberalism from a doctrine of hostility to governmental action in social life toward the welfare-state liberalism which has characterized the Western world in the twentieth century."[13] Logue's study expands the limited picture of Fouillée that John A. Scott provides in his *Republican Ideas and the Liberal Tradition in France, 1870–1914*.[14] According to Logue, the merit of Fouillée's politics, which he entitled *libéralisme réformiste* in *Le socialisme et la sociologie réformiste* (1909), was the prescience with which he discerned the proclivity of Marxism to lapse into totalitarianism. At the heart of Fouillée's liberal politics was his concept of "solidarity," which he conceived as the political principle synthesizing the

[11] The thinkers that Kloppenberg identifies in his configuration are Alfred Fouillée, Wilhelm Dilthey, Thomas Hill Green, Henry Sidgwick, William James, John Dewey. and James Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York, 1988).

[12] Ibid., 26.

[13] William Logue, *From Philosophy to Sociology: The Evolution of French Liberalism, 1870–1914* (Dekalb, IL, 1983), 10.

[14] John A. Scott, *Republican Ideas and the Liberal Tradition in France, 1870–1914* (New York, 1966), 159–69.

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particularity of individual freedom and the universality of a common ethical project.[15] Despite the wide interest in Fouillée's political thought, it largely depended on the conciliatory project at the center of his metaphysical and psychological thought. As Laurent Fedi rightly points out, in the concept of "solidarity," "we again find the thesis of *idées-forces*: for it is total adhesion to the idea of justice and to our social bonds that alone effectively makes the ethical–social constitution of any community."[16]

Renewed attention to Fouillée's engagements with evolutionary theory and scientific psychology can help to complement the extensive literature on his political thought, and to recognize that Fouillée never wanted to be remembered as a primarily political thinker. In a letter to the historian Ferdinand Brunetière, Fouillée expressed that he "could serve liberty more seriously by taking its defense in purely philosophical books."[17] During his lifetime, Fouillée was recognized above all as the philosopher of conciliation. Unlike Victor Cousin, whose eclecticism blended together a pastiche of history's ideas without orientation toward the future, Fouillée's conciliatory project aimed at uniting the apparently irreconcilable systems of metaphysics and science into a new spiritualism.

THE PHILOSOPHER PRODIGY

Born 18 October 1838 in the small community of La Pouëze, France, the young Alfred Fouillée grew up under his bourgeois father who ran a slate quarry.[18] Saddled by financial hardship after the quarry went under, the precocious Fouillée moved away to attend *lycée* in Laval. He taught rhetoric courses in a *collège* at the young age of nineteen immediately following his graduation. He soon after relocated to Paris. Fouillée did not have enough money to attend

[15] Among American historians, J. E. S. Hayward has pursued the most sustained analysis of "solidarity" in Fouillée: "Solidarity: The Social History of an Idea in Nineteenth Century France," *International Review of Social History*, 4 (1959), 261–84; Hayward , "'Solidarity' and the Reformist Sociology of Alfred Fouillée I," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 22/1 (January 1963), 205–22; Hayward , "'Solidarity' and the Reformist Sociology of Alfred Fouillée II," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 22/2 (March 1963), 303–12; also see Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le modèle politique français: Société civile contre la jacobinisme de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris, 2004); Jean-Fabien Spitz, *Le moment républicain en France* (Paris, 2005); Marie-Claude Blais, *La solidarité: Histoire d'une idée* (Paris, 2007).

[16] Laurent Fedi, "Entre organicisme et individualisme, la concurrence des philosophes sociales, en France, vers 1900," Frédéric Worms, ed., in *Le moment 1900 en philosophie* (Lille, 2004), 370.

[17] Fouillée to Ferdinand Brunetière, 22 Aug. 1902, Fonds Brunetière, Bibliothèque nationale de France, NAF 25038.

[18] My biography draws from Augustin Guyau, *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée* (Paris, 1913).

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the prestigious Ecole normale supérieure, the principal avenue for entering the French professoriate. Instead, he worked for the *Dictionnaire des contemporains*, a collection of contemporary thinkers' work run by Gustave Vapereau. Among Vapereau's editors, Charles Glachant, a former rhetoric professor himself at the elite lycée Louis-le-Grand, noticed the young Fouillée and helped him prepare for the *agrégation* in letters, the French academic licensing examination.

After the Second Empire suppressed public philosophy instruction in its early years, Victor Duruy, the minister of public instruction, reinstalled the discipline in 1863. Fouillée seized the opportunity to pursue his first passion. He took a position teaching philosophy at Carcassonne while studying for the reopened *agrégation* in philosophy. Glachant proved no longer helpful, so, not knowing other philosophy *agrégés*, Fouillée prepared for the exam as an autodidact. He owned only a few tawdry Greek editions of philosophy, a book of Descartes, a book of Leibniz, and one of Kant.

The unknown Fouillée took first place in the 1864 *agrégation*. He immediately drew the attention of the Parisian philosophical establishment. Fouillée soon met Victor Cousin, who counseled him to enter the essay competitions organized by the Académie des sciences morales et politiques. Fouillée submitted *Théorie des idées de Platon* for the Bordin prize, and *Philosophie de Socrate* for the Victor Cousin prize. While hopping between teaching posts in Douai, Montpellier, and then Bordeaux, Fouillée received word in 1867 that he had won both prizes in, ironically, the year of Cousin's death—for Fouillée's later work would mark a radical departure from Cousin's spiritualism.

In the conclusion of his book on Plato, Fouillée described his belief "that all oppositions among diverse philosophical schools, diminishing bit by bit with the progress of analysis, tend to disappear into a comprehensive and synthetic doctrine."[19] The germ of his conciliatory project had been planted, and Fouillée would dedicate the next five years to cultivating it into a thesis, *La liberté et le déterminisme*.

Although Cousin's tenure atop the Parisian philosophy establishment had come to an end, his influence had not. Fouillée would spend seven excruciating hours defending his thesis before the faculty of the Sorbonne in a crowded lecture hall on 23 December 1872. Two of the jury members, Elme-Maire Caro and Adolphe Franck, still carried the Cousinian banner. They made their contempt explicit for the materialism into which they thought Fouillée's account of liberty lapsed once dipped into the natural order of determinism. He exhibited poise in the face of the jury's skepticism. But unbeknownst to Fouillée, his defense would become the center of a public imbroglio for other reasons.

[19] Alfred Fouillée, *La philosophie de Platon: Exposition, histoire et critique de la théorie des idées* (Paris, 1869), 728.

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Prior to becoming prime minister, then assembly member Léon Gambetta got word of Fouillée's respectable performance. Gambetta's journal, *La République française*, published an article three days after the defense praising Fouillée at the expense of what the author portrayed as the curmudgeonly Sorbonne establishment.[20] Right-wing critics seized the article as evidence of Fouillée's support for Gambetta. The accusation went so far that some misconstrued "determinism" to mean that Fouillée endorsed the ideas of a government *determined* to suppress liberty.[21] Gambetta requested a copy of the thesis to make sense of the affair. Delighted by what he read, Gambetta offered Fouillée a deputy seat in the government. "Politics is not my path," the philosopher humbly replied.[22]

Fouillée was not without help preparing his thesis. In 1857, Fouillée began to care for his older cousin, Augustine Tuillerie. Augustine sought refuge in Fouillée's home after fleeing her abusive husband, whose surname—Guyau—she kept. There was no doubt about Fouillée's love for Augustine, but the two kept their relationship secretive for thirty years until they could finally marry in 1885, after the *loi-Naquet* reformed French conjugal law, relegalizing divorce.

The two were not alone. Augustine brought along her son, Jean-Marie Guyau, who would grow up under Fouillée's tutelage to become a notable philosopher in his own right, heralded in many quarters as the French Nietzsche.[23] Fouillée suffered from a detached retina and relied on the young Guyau not only to edit his thesis, but also to expose the holes in its arguments. The precocious fifteen-year-old would regularly challenge *La liberté et le déterminisme* during mock thesis defenses with his stepfather.[24] The philosophical work paid off. Jean-Marie Guyau won an essay prize from the Académie des sciences morales et politiques in 1878 for his tome published in two volumes, *La morale d'Epicure et ses rapports avec les doctrines contemporaines* (1878) and *La morale anglaise contemporaine* (1879). Jean-Marie Guyau was quickly following in Fouillée's footsteps.

Jules Simon, then minister of public instruction, awarded Fouillée a teaching position at the Ecole normale supérieure in 1872. Guyau soon followed as a student, receiving his license there at the age of seventeen. He went on to teach at lycée Condorcet in Paris where Bergson was among his students. In the meantime, Fouillé's health deteriorated. Migraines made it difficult to lecture, pressuring him

[20] *La République française*, 26 Dec. 1872, article not signed.

[21] Guyau, *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée*, xii.

[22] Ibid., xiii.

[23] See most recently Michel Onfray, *La construction du surhomme: Jean-Marie Guyau, Friedrich Nietzsche* (Paris, 2011).

[24] John A. Michon, Viviane Pouthas, and Janet L. Jackson, *Guyau and the Idea of Time* (Amsterdam and New York, 1988), 19–22.

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to leave teaching in 1875. His time at the university that he had set his sight on as a youth was limited to a mere three years.

In 1879, Fouillée moved to the hills of Menton overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. He brought Augustine Tuillerie, the young Guyau, and Guyau's fiancée, Barbe Marguerite André. Together, they transformed their villa into a literary factory, churning out books at a prolific pace. André wrote children's' stories under the pseudonym Pierre Ulric. Augustine Tuillerie took on the pseudonym G. Bruno, for fear that the conservative press might expose her books as the work of a *divorcée*.[25] In addition to writing school manuals, her most famous literary achievement was *Le tour de la France par deux enfants* (1877).

Although they lived nearly six hundred miles away from Paris, Guyau and Fouillée would spend a decade engaging the philosophical and scientific debates whirling there. One might wonder whether their perspicacity and incessant productivity could be attributed to their distance, as if their tranquil position on the Mediterranean coast afforded them a vantage point from which to survey the conceptual landscape of the intellectual capital. The two regularly read and contributed to *La revue des deux mondes* as well as to the *Revue philosophique*, France's first journal dedicated to academic philosophy.

The founder and editor of the *Revue philosophique* was Théodule Ribot, a pioneering psychologist who filled the pages of his journal with articles dedicated to the new scientific psychology alongside what he thought to be outdated metaphysical philosophy. Ribot was an outspoken opponent of spiritualist philosophy. Yet Ribot held a reserved respect for what he called "spiritualistic realism," and for Fouillée, "the most brilliant mind of the school."[26] It was in the *Revue philosophique* that Jean-Marie Guyau and Fouillée would read French translations of research in experimental psychology transported from Britain and Germany.

The two philosophers enjoyed a prolific collaborative publishing career in the decade following their move to Menton. Fouillée wrote on developments in the nascent sociology, captured most clearly in his *La science sociale contemporaine* (1880). He further devoted himself to the development of his master principle of *idées-forces* in dialogue with the happenings in the *Revue philosophique*. Published first as a series of articles, Fouillée would eventually compile his work in a trilogy, *L'évolutionnisme des idées-forces* (1890), *La psychologie des idées-forces* (1893), and *La morale des idées-forces* (1907). Jean-Marie Guyau would engage developments in the new science of consciousness in *La genèse de l'idée de temps*, which caught Henri Bergson's attention in the preparatory stages of his writing

[25] Jacques Ozouf and Mona Ozouf, "Le tour de la France par deux enfants," in Pierre Nora and David P. Jordan, eds., *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1997), 290.

[26] Théodolue Ribot, "Philosophy in France," *Mind*, 2/7 (1877), 372, 369.

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Matière et mémoire (1896). The young Guyau would also write poetry, published as *Vers d'un philosophe* (1881). But he would be remembered above all for his moral thought. In *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction* (1885), Guyau advanced a vision of a post-Christian morality suited to the future. His method was to follow the natural sciences up to their limit, and proceed beyond their reach by metaphysical speculation. The result was to find in the laws of evolution what Guyau called "moral fecundity," the surge of moral feeling rooted in his vital conception of life. The book found an admirer in Nietzsche, whose copious marginalia demonstrates the impact of Guyau on his own late thought.[27]

Tuberculosis caused Jean-Marie Guyau's premature death at the age of thirty-three in 1888. The episode was traumatic for Fouillée. "I don't remember a day in the last forty years of my life without some suffering, without some anxiety."[28] His stepson's memory, however, impassioned his determination to write: "I published one and sometimes two volumes per year. I didn't have the time to cut short, since I feel that there remains plenty of things to do and to say, that my life ... will be too short for my task."[29] Amidst his convalescent productivity, Fouillée's chief preoccupation late in life, as the sociologist Gabriel Tarde characterized it, was as "a discrete hagiographer" of Jean-Marie Guyau.[30] Fouillée dedicated himself to republishing his nephew's works, as well as promoting Guyau's image as France's Nietzsche. Fouillée's *Nietzsche et l'immoralisme* (1902) made the point clear that Guyau's work was a formidable influence on the German thinker. And Guyau even found himself published alongside Rabelais and Rousseau in the Grands écrivains literary series thanks to Fouillée's tireless stamina for publishing.

It is easy to reproach Fouillée for turning out pulp philosophy toward the end of his life, what one reviewer described as a "bona fide shower" of publications.[31] His work included a series of politically conservative reflections on society, among which a cringeworthy survey of the essential characteristics of European races stands out.[32] During the decades of the 1870s and 1880s, however, Fouillée, alongside Guyau, led a radical philosophical formation that would redirect the inherited spiritualism in French philosophy.

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27 See Nietzsche's copy, *Zweistimmigkeit–Einstimmigkeit: Friedrich Nietzsche und Jean-Marie Guyau*, ed. Hans Erich Lampl (Cuxhaven, 1990).

28 Quoted in Guyau, *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée*, xv.

29 Ibid.

30 Gabriel Tarde, "Compte rendu de A. Fouillée, *La morale, l'art et la religion d'àpres M. Guyau*," *Revue philosophique*, 28 (1889), 183.

31 Jean Petrovici, "Le centenaire d'Alfred Fouillée," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 46/4 (1939), 662.

32 See Alfred Fouillée, *Esquisse psychologique des peuples européens* (Paris, 1903).

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LIBERTY, DETERMINISM, AND KANTIANISM IN FRANCE

Kant found a foothold in France as early as 1797 thanks to the affable Wilhelm von Humboldt, who made his way into the philosophical circle at the recently created Institut de France.[33] Germaine de Staël promoted Kantian philosophy in *De l'Allemagne* (1810), a book quickly censored for allegedly adding fuel to the fire of France's perpetual conflicts beyond the Rhine. It was in the *salon* of de Staël that Cousin came to learn the names Kant, Jacobi, Herder and Fichte. Following his voyage to Leipzig in 1817, Victor Cousin championed Kant's thought in his lectures on transcendental philosophy in the 1820s at the Sorbonne.[34] Throughout the articulation of his eclectic philosophy, which nominally aimed at bringing together divergent schools, Cousin made it clear that "[t]he examination of the system of Kant would introduce us into the depths of a problem which has escaped the other schools."[35]

The influence of Kant on French philosophers left many to situate liberty and determinism in separate realities, the noumenal and the phenomenal. Fouillée aimed to unite the two within the reality in his thesis, *La liberté et le déterminisme*. Fouillée's conciliatory project took off with his endeavor to inventively transform the spiritualist commitment to human freedom by setting it within a naturalist framework. Liberty, Fouillée argued, is not only compatible with determinist laws of nature, but depends on them.

The conceptual resistance that Fouillée encountered in neo-Kantianism stemmed from the chasm originally introduced between the *Critiques* of pure and practical reason; that is, between the phenomenal realm of science and the noumenal realm of freedom. The sciences were supposed to study the determinate laws of physical nature while metaphysics preoccupied itself with consciousness, morality, and the will. Nature was the object of causal laws, and the natural sciences determined the laws that natural phenomena obey. Freedom, however, did not obey a causal order. The noumenal realm accommodated humans' moral consciousness that they are responsible for their own actions independent of external causes. By situating the conditions of freedom *within* the natural realm of causes, Fouillée confronted Kant's legacy head-on.

French philosophers took the phenomenal realm to be composed of the mechanistic laws originally articulated in Descartes's *Principia philosophiae* (1644). The mechanist world view reduced natural events to physical and

[33] François Azouvi and Dominique Bourel, "Avant Propos," in François Azouvi and Dominique Bourel, eds., *De Königsberg à Paris: La reception de Kant en France (1788–1804)* (Paris, 1991), 10–11.

[34] See Victor Cousin, "Souvenirs d'Allemagne," *Revue des deux mondes*, 64 (1866), 594–620.

[35] Victor Cousin, *Elements of Psychology*, trans. C. S. Henry (Hartford, CT, 1834), 406.

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chemical processes, whereby the occurrence of the same physical and chemical causes necessarily produces the same physical and chemical effects. The positive commitment of mechanistic science to decompose nature into objective elements led most philosophers to understand it in terms of a negative commitment: mechanism excluded occult forces, internal principles, or teleological forces, including liberty. Jules Lachelier, an avowed Kantian thinker who defended his thesis at the Sorbonne in 1871 just a year before Fouillée, argued that the mechanistic principle of efficient causality and the ideal principle of final causality constitute two overlapping, yet fully distinct, orders of reality.[36] Lachelier's view reflected the conceptual division that Adolphe Franck drew in his six-volume *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, which defined *mécanique* in opposition to vitalism.[37] According to the mechanist world view, "matter is composed of atoms or at least a homogeneous substance . . . and all the changes, diversity of bodies, and phenomena that one observes in it are due to different movements imprinted on elementary parts."[38] The mechanistic world view, and its Kantian conceptual buttress, was at the center of Fouillée's criticism in *La liberté et le déterminisme*.

On its face, determinism would appear to preclude liberty. But for Fouillée, liberty follows a distinct causal order. Nature, Fouillée asserted, endows humans with the idea of liberty. It is by choosing to endorse this idea that humans make themselves free. That is, when humans posit liberty as the goal of their actions, "the *self* [*moi*] is determined to determine itself."[39] Humans, Fouillée thought, are creatures who possess the capacity to press the determinate laws of nature into the service of freedom, so that the laws of mechanics, as it were, fold back on themselves and render liberty necessary. By construing freedom as the determination of one's actions, Fouillée thought that it could be conciliated with determinist bent of mechanism.

For contemporary readers, it likely seems odd to think of free will as obeying a causal order. But Fouillée's attempt to articulate a causal structure appropriate to freedom reflected his effort to articulate a unique causal order for consciousness that was irreducible to crude mechanical causality and equally unexplainable in terms of teleological causality. If mechanics could explain the workings of consciousness, then the material processes of the nervous system would suffice to explain the causal basis of psychology. Yet psychology would operate outside the natural domain if it relied on the final causes that Kantians secured in transcendental categories. Fouillée took it as his task to develop a determinate

36 Jules Lachelier, *Sur le fondement de l'induction*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1896).

37 Adolphe Frank, *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1875), 1071.

38 Ibid., 422.

39 Alfred Fouillée, *La liberté et le déterminisme* (Paris, 1884), 232.

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order of consciousness operating between these two orders. It would have to be rigorous enough to rival the causal laws of natural science and sufficiently normative to preserve freedom.

Fouillée's endeavor to ground free will in nature marked a radical step among French philosophers' efforts to come to terms with the categories inherited from Kant. Fouillée's thesis toiled with a French spiritualist tradition that aspired, in the words of Cousin, "to seize the torch bequeathed to us by the eighteenth century, but to carry it into all the parts of the edifice we set about studying."[40] Cousin meant that spiritualism should mend the antinomies that Kant had erected, and Cousin claimed to resolve those between theoretical and practical reason. Reason need not take its limitations for granted, Cousin believed: it is possible to comprehend the rational kernel uniting Christianity. What made Fouillée stand out was his endeavor to overcome the still impermeable antinomy between freedom and nature.

It was a project shared with Charles Renouvier, who, as Fouillée acknowledged, "rejects [the division] and brings Kantianism down from the sky and onto the earth."[41] Renouvier's school of "criticism" framed the causal order of mechanics as the basis of phenomenal laws, according to which all events follow necessarily from others in space and time.[42] Liberty, Renouvier claimed, need not find refuge in the noumenal realm. He instead carved out a space for it within nature by situating liberty as an exception to mechanics. Yet in so doing, Fouillée charged, Renouvier remained wedded to the very dualism that he sought to overcome, since he still conceived liberty as separate from nature. Renouvier's brand of neo-Kantianism treated liberty as a miracle—that is, as an effect unconditioned by a cause. This vision of liberty, according to Fouillée, remained indeterminate, and thus outside the determinist laws of nature.

La liberté et le déterminisme argued that liberty is determinate because the idea of liberty imparts necessity to one's actions. Yet the picture of freedom that Fouillée promoted was reminiscent of the Kantian schema that he claimed to overcome. "It goes without saying that Mr Fouillée's solution differs from that of Kant," Alphonse Darlu pointed out in his review of the book. "But it seems one can conclude that the basis of his philosophy is principally Kantian."[43] According to critics like Darlu, Fouillée understood liberty in the terms that Kant

[40] Victor Cousin, *Cours de philosophie sur le fondement des idées absolue du vrai, du beau et du bien*, ed. Adolphe Garnier (Paris, 1836), 12.

[41] Alfred Fouillée, "Le néo-Kantisme en France: I—le moral criticiste," *Revue philosophique*, 11 (1881), 3.

[42] See William Logue, *Charles Renouvier, Philosopher of Liberty* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992).

[43] Alphonse Darlu, "La liberté et le déterminisme selon M. Fouillée," *Revue philosophique*, 23 (1887), 563.

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established in the Second *Critique*: I am free when I bind my will to a universal, and thus necessary, law. Fouillée, however, saw himself as struggling to untether his concept of freedom from the Kantian doctrine.

* * *

The naturalist orientation of Fouillée's thesis drove him to conceive ideas as, at bottom, oriented toward action, and not toward knowledge. In assigning consciousness a pragmatic role, Fouillée broke with the Kantian account of consciousness as an intellectual act of representing concepts:

> Going to the bottom of [Kant's definition of the will], we could say to the idealists, since my ideas have . . . the capacity to produce the objects of these ideas, I must also have the capacity to produce, by the subjective idea of my own free power [*puissance*], the at least partial reality of this very power.[44]

Ideas actualize their power in the natural world alongside other mechanistic causes. Fouillé thought that his dynamic account of consciousness proved that "from Kant's subjective point of departure it is not absolutely impossible to pass to objective effects."[45] Fouillée's early thought evinced a dual break with French Kantianism: the first break turned on the naturalist orientation of ideas, the second on their power and efficacy. *La liberté et le déterminisme* thus laid the groundwork for a fuller elaboration of the principle of *idées-forces* several years later.

Fouillée's account of freedom merits comparison with Emile Boutroux's thesis, *De la contingence des lois de la nature* (1873), submitted before the Sorbonne a year after Fouillée's. Boutroux also wrestled with the French neo-Kantian trend.[46] Like Renouvier, he reconciled mechanics and freedom: Boutroux argued that freedom is inherent in the indeterminacy, what he called "contingency," that seeps into the cracks of the sciences' determinate laws. Here Boutroux parted with Renouvier by situating indeterminacy within the very structure of natural laws. First, contingency follows from the inadequacy of humans' conceptual structures to completely comprehend the complexities of nature. Second, contingency also inheres in natural processes themselves. The physical, chemical, biological, and psychological orders of nature evince progressively more complex causal relations. Boutroux argued that in each order effects advance in exceeding their causes, not by dint of exceptions to the laws of nature, as Renouvier held, but

44 Fouillée, *La liberté et le déterminisme*, 245.

45 Ibid.

46 See Joel Revill, "Emile Boutroux, Redefining Science and Faith in the Third Republic," *Modern Intellectual History*, 6 (2009), 485–512.

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rather because natural laws are built up from contingent processes. Contingency reaches its apex in psychology since consciousness is the order of nature that exhibits the highest degree of freedom. Against Boutroux, the young Fouillée affirmed the determinate, rather than contingent, nature of freedom, which he thought provided the only ground for an analysis of ideas' causal power that could rival the rigor of mechanical analysis.

Launched amidst the trend of French neo-Kantianism, Fouillée's intellectual itinerary powerfully demonstrates against the hackneyed belief that French spiritualism revolted against positivism. Rather, as I have tried to show, Fouillée's project of setting freedom within a naturalist framework and establishing the pragmatic orientation of consciousness was part of a wave of new spiritualist thought that found its greatest difficulty in reconciling the categories inherited from Kant. This is not to say that Fouillée's spiritualism was neatly defined against French neo-Kantianism. Rather, his early work wrestled with an inherited Kantian philosophical vocabulary. "In *La Liberté et le déterminisme*," Fouillée later wrote to Renouvier, "I admit that *mechanical* equivalence, the law of the material world, is perhaps not exclusive from mental and moral progress, which could take place *from within* without disturbing external mechanism and the equilibrium of the cosmic balance."[47] French neo-Kantianism, as Fouillée's letter evinces, was an intellectual current that traversed even his own effort to reconcile metaphysics and sciences.

Reflecting on the period following the defense of his thesis, Fouillée wrote, "The War of 1870 seemed to have definitively sanctified the triumph of force over right, of fact over idea. In literature, positive realism had triumphed with the Zolas and the Goncourts; contemporary poetry [*le Parnassus*] laboriously polished its cold silversmith's trade; painting became realist with Courbet and Manet."[48] Fouillée would sharpen his philosophical concepts to engage more critically with the scientific advancements inundating Paris.

THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT OF THE NEW SPIRITUALISM

The rapprochement between science and metaphysics that Fouillée spent his early work articulating stood out against a well-documented trend among philosophers of the Third Republic to deprecate metaphysics as subservient to science. Hyppolite Taine published his widely popular *De l'intelligence* (1870) in the wake of France's defeat in the Prussian War. Like many pessimistic

47 Fouillée to Renouvier, 4 June 1888, in *Corpus: Revue de philosophie*, 53, ed. Jean Lawruszenko and Jordi Riba (2008), 261, original emphasis.

48 Alfred Fouillée, *Le mouvement idéaliste et la réaction contre la science positive*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1896), xvii.

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intellectuals, Taine thought that France had lost the war for its failure to keep up with the scientific progress of its German as well as British rivals. Ernest Renan expressed the view in his *La réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1871), which envisioned a rejuvenated scientific French spirit adhering to the model that he would later publish in *L'avenir de la science* (1890). Taine and Renan have been characterized as part of "the stifling intellectual atmosphere of the early Second Empire."[49] It persisted beyond the election of Adolphe Thiers. Emile Littré evinced the scientific spirit in his exhaustive *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1873), the largest lexicography of the French language published until then. Although Littré was one of the last thinkers to self-consciously promote Comte's "positivism" in the complete sense of a conception of man and the world, it was the nascent scientific psychology, above other domains of knowledge, which buttressed the scientism of the early Third Republic.[50]

When Ribot founded the *Revue philosophique* in 1876, a new forum opened in which spiritualist philosophers and scientific psychologists staked out their intellectual territory around their respective positions, philosophical psychology versus physiological psychology. Ribot arranged a lively series of exchanges between the young spiritualist Victor Egger, and the physiologist and future Nobel-prize winner in medicine Charles Richet. Egger argued, "Explaining psychological facts by physiological facts supposes an inconceivable middle term, half-extended, half-unextended."[51] Egger aimed his critique of reductionism squarely at Jules Bernard Luys who, in his *Le cerveau et ses fonctions* (1876), construed consciousness as an epiphenomenon of the brain. The upshot, Egger concluded, was that "no discovery could establish a connection between the extended brain and its function, and unextended thought.[52] Richet, however, expressed his complete trust in the future progress of scientific psychology: "Leaving the human sciences [*la science de l'homme*] to logicians who disdain the experimental method is contrary to progress."[53] The wedge that Egger drove between physiology and psychology carried forth Cousin's defense of the autonomy of consciousness.

In a rare letter that survived the destruction of the bulk of his archive, Fouillée described what distinguished his new spiritualism from the old. Whereas the old spiritualists often assumed a defensive posture in response to scientific advances,

49 Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason*, 54.

50 W. M. Simon argues that Comtian positivism had found few adherents in France by the 1880s in *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1963).

51 Victor Egger, "La psychologie physiologique," *Revue philosophique*, 5 (1878), 233.

52 Ibid.

53 Charles Richet, "Sur la méthode de la psychologie physiologique," *Revue philosophique*, 5 (1878), 33.

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Fouillée seized hold of them as the point of departure for a higher metaphysics. The antinomy that the natural sciences opened up between a metaphysical understanding of freedom and the natural order of mechanical causes called for a new philosophy that could overcome their gulf: "There you have why the positive sciences alone appear to me to be in great danger of not being able to entirely revamp the antimony. At this moment, and only this moment, I believe that fundamental metaphysical hypotheses must take action."[54] Herein lies the novelty of Fouillée's spiritualism: philosophy would leap beyond, rather than retreat before, scientific advancements. Fouillée found a curious ally in scientific psychologists' effort to apply physiological methods to the study of consciousness. Yet he would temper their reductionism by arguing that the results of the new psychology pointed to a new understanding of consciousness.

Too often French spiritualism is understood as an undifferentiated philosophical lineage. Dominique Janicaud, for example, situates Bergson as the culmination of a conceptually rich yet narrow filiation of French spiritualism beginning with the early nineteenth-century philosopher Maine de Biran (1766–1824).[55] American historians have for some time treated Bergson as the singular spiritualist influence on modernist thought, drawing on his prestige as a canonized thinker.[56] Fouillée's work can help intellectual historians better appreciate the historical and conceptual division between two spiritualisms of the nineteenth century: the new, scientifically adept spiritualism, and the old, eclectic spiritualism. Jerrold Seigel is one historian who duly situates Bergson's brand of spiritualism in "spiritualist positivism."[57] Fouillée, I want to suggest, was at its center. He was well aware that Bergson's fame eclipsed his own, and, near the end of his life, Fouillée went so far as to impugn Bergson's thought

54 Fouillée to Ernest Havet, 8 March 1883, Fonds Havet, Bibliothèque nationale de France, NAF 24474, original emphasis.

55 Dominique Janicaud, *Une genealogie du spiritualisme français. Aux sources du bergsonisme: Ravaisson et la métaphysique* (Le Haye, 1969); later re-edited and published as *Ravaisson et la métaphysique: Une généalogie du spiritualisme français* (Paris, 1998).

56 See Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, NY, 1993); Mary Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (Montreal, 1996); S. E. Gontarski, Paul Ardoin, and Laci Marrison, eds., *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism* (New York, 2012).

57 Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 2005), 251. Henri Gouhier originally used the term "spiritualist positivism" to characterize French spiritualism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. See the "Introduction" to *Oeuvres choisies de Maine de Biran* (Paris, 1942), 22.

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as derivative (with ever so slight resentment) in *La pensée et les nouvelles écoles anti-intellectualistes* (1911).[58]

Revisiting Fouillée's engagement with the emergent sciences of the late nineteenth century can help to shed light on the new spiritualist formation of which Bergson was a part. "The *new spiritualism*," the philosopher Etienne Vacherot wrote in his 1884 book by the same title, "is not a new doctrine: it is spiritualism renewed by science."[59]

THE EVOLUTION OF *IDÉES-FORCES*

During his brief tenure at the Ecole normale, Fouillée delved into the evolutionary thought of Herbert Spencer. The university's library records indicate that Fouillée began borrowing Spencer's books in 1872, the same year that Théodule Ribot translated *Principles of Psychology* (originally published in 1855). Spencer's evolutionary thought would be a formative influence on Fouillée's "La philosophie des idées-forces" (1879), which he published, it deserves noting, in Ribot's *Revue Philosophique*.

Spencer's *First Principles* (1862) presented an evolutionary system according to which all natural processes, from the cosmos to consciousness, pass from a diffused and imperceptible state to a concentrated and perceptible state following the redistribution of matter and motion. Whatever exists either undergoes evolution by the aggregation of matter and dissipation of motion, or it undergoes dissolution by the disintegration of matter and absorption of motion. Spencer posited these dual processes as the basis of his evolutionary theory, from which it followed that everything including life, from polyps through animals and even human languages, progresses from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous form. On the basis of these all-embracing laws, Spencer explained the development of all sensible events in materialist and mechanistic terms.

First Principles formalized the evolutionary thought already contained in Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*. It was with thanks to Ribot's translation that French interest in evolutionary thought found greater inspiration in Spencer's work than in Darwin's. The fact has been widely attributed to the lingering influence of their own evolutionist, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, and his theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.[60] More importantly, French philosophers and psychologists found a malleable evolutionary theory, more easily adaptable to a science of consciousness, in *Principles of Psychology*. The book's aim was to

58 Alfred Fouillée, *La pensée et les nouvelles écoles anti-intellectualistes* (Paris, 1911), 347.

59 Étienne Vacherot, *Le nouveau spiritualisme* (Paris, 1884), i, original emphasis.

60 For a discussion of France's exception from European interest in Darwin see H. Graham Cannon, *The Evolution of Living Things* (Manchester, 1958), 17–20.

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show that consciousness evolved out of increasing complexity of the physiological domain. From the body's organs to its nervous system, ideas mark the highest degree of the body's heterogeneity. Spencer's thesis followed from his application of the principle of associationism to the entirety of human development.

Associationism, or what Spencer called the "law of intelligence," holds "that the strength of the tendency which the antecedent of any psychical change has to be followed by its consequent, is proportionate to the persistency of the union between the external things they symbolize."[61] The principle belongs to an empiricist tradition of rational psychology, according to which the repetition of basic sensations generates higher-order ideas. David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749) first presented the association of ideas on the model of neuronal vibrations, or "vibratiuncules," the circulation of which fortify associative bonds between sensations and ideas. The ensuing century saw an intensifying elaboration of Hartley's theory by philosophers like John and James Stuart Mill, as well as a deepened understanding of the nervous system inaugurated by James Bell's research on the reflex function. Spencer presented his *Principles* as synthesizing both lineages: associationism explained the continuity of mental phenomena from the deepest biological strata to the most evolved social communities, set within a physiology of the brain framing consciousness as a progressive adaptation to the environment.

It might seem odd that Fouillée would advance the spiritualist commitment to human freedom by drawing on a thinker who concluded *Principles of Psychology* by arguing that if laws apply to psychology, then "there cannot be any such thing as free will."[62] Fouillée took as his objective to refine Spencer's evolutionary theory by preserving its dynamic and adaptive picture of consciousness while trimming the scope of the principle of associationism. Fouillée reproached associationism for "imagining ideas as distinct forces and even as distinct atoms."[63] Like fellow spiritualists, Fouillée identified associationism with a mechanist model that "ends up in *series* of *discrete* ideas."[64] Fouillée found the model suitable to represent ideas as they are observed from a third-person perspective. But he criticized the model for occluding the first-person, phenomenal experience of consciousness. From the latter perspective, ideas are not reducible to static points whose motion is reconstructed out of their repetition: "life and even the will are constant, without real intermittences."[65]

The principle of *idées-forces* restored the fluidity of psychic experience undermined by the mechanist bent of associationism. To Fouillée's mind, this

61 Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Psychology* (London, 1855), 517.
62 Ibid., 620.
63 Alfred Fouillée, *L'evolutionnisme des idées-forces* (Paris, 1890), xxxii.
64 Ibid., original emphasis.
65 Ibid., xliv.

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required uniting thinking and willing. Thinking ought not be understood as a contemplative and purely ideal exercise anterior to volitional actions. For Fouillée, the principle of *idées-forces* demonstrated that willing is immanent to thought, which is to say that the first-person experience of consciousness involves the physiological tension felt when putting one's body in motion. This is what Spencer neglected in construing ideas' primary function as knowledge. For Fouillée, to the contrary, ideas' primary function is action. The motor determination of *idées-forces* stood in marked contrast to the reflective determination of what Fouillée called *idées-reflet* (idea-reflections).

If Fouillée could demonstrate that ideas constitute a causal trigger for evolutionary transformation that is distinct from purely physiological causes, then *idées-forces* would embrace a naturalist, yet non-reductionist, account of consciousness, thus advancing the project of *La liberté et le déterminisme*. Fouillée defined *idées-forces* as "all the possible modes of influence that an idea can have as a *factor, cause, and condition of change for all other phenomena*."[66] Ideas, the definition held, are not only the result of evolution, as Spencer claimed, but also a factor within evolution.

Interestingly, it was Darwin whom Fouillée believed to hold the key to a new account of consciousness since he was "more philosophical than Spencer when he considered evolution as a phenomenon *to be explained* by more fundamental relations, such as the natural selection resulting from the competition for life."[67] What Darwin saw and Spencer didn't was that a non-associative, internal principle pushes a living being toward action in view of satisfying its needs and desires. The name that Fouillée gave to that principle was *appétition*: "the passage from a mode of energy to another, from the force of tension to the force of translation."[68] Although evident in Darwin's evolutionary biology, *appétition* was also central to Leibniz's understanding of consciousness as an ensemble of percepts and appetites. Yet while Leibniz took "appetites" to constitute the inclinations and tendencies that link perceptions together, Fouillée treated *appétition* as a physiologically credible concept designating an organism's basic appetites and desires. Following one contemporary commentator, *appétition* should be understood as "a force in the sense that the science of the time attributed to the term, a relation between the body's initial movement and its following movement, an impulsion that, if nothing stands in the way, tends to continue its movement."[69] *Appétition* would play a guiding role in later psychologists' efforts to connect the biological to the mental. Freud's libido designated the

66 Ibid., xi, original emphasis.

67 Ibid., liv, original emphasis.

68 Ibid., 196.

69 Annamaria Contini, "L'intelligence créatrice: Puissance et volonté de conscience dans la philosophie d'Alfred Fouillée," *Corpus*, 53 (2008), 43.

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mental representations evoked by various bodily drives. And contemporary neurobiologists still deploy "appetites" to designate similar connections between regular somatic processes and the mental activity that they induce.[70]

For Fouillée, *appétition* furnished this connection. He conceived it as the internal dimension of consciousness that complemented associationism as the external dimension. Together they constituted the dyad *idée-force*. Fouillée presented their unity in both naturalist and conceptual terms. On the one hand, *idées-forces* respond to the sensory–motor structure of the nervous system: centripetal sensory movement accompanies centrifugal motor movement. Fouillée's project was thus part of what Robert Young describes as "the progressive extension of the concept [of the sensory–motor system] as the fundamental explanatory principle in both physiology and psychology" preoccupying nineteenth-century analysis.[71] On the other hand, the logics of associationism and *appétition* envelop the two dimensions of consciousness. From an external perspective, ideas appear as discrete, intellectual units that obey the laws of association; from an internal perspective, ideas appear as indivisible forces that interpenetrate the body's motor actions. Herein lay Fouillée's key to capturing the fluidity of psychic experience.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE IN THE OLD AND NEW SPIRITUALISMS

The conciliation at the heart of *idées-forces* was made possible by uniting evolutionary psychology with the spiritualist tradition and its emphasis on the first-person experience of freedom. Maine de Biran initially presented the distinction between the first-person and third-person perspectives in terms of the internal and external dimensions of consciousness. Following from the empiricist tradition, Biran affirmed that all ideas are produced from sensations. But unlike traditional empiricist thinkers such as Locke and Condillac, Biran dedicated his *Influence de l'habitude sur la faculté de pensée* (1803) to distinguishing the sensations passively received from the external world from those actively felt within one's own body. Biran argued that the unique sensation of effort, which involves the voluntary exercise of the muscles' energy, generates ideas, because, first, unlike the sensations received through the external sense organs, effort incorporates the sensation of willing felt in the body's internal organs, and, second, effort makes use of the body's energy in its totality. Unlike the discrete sensations of particular external sense organs, effort is the holistic sensation of

[70] See Mark Solms and Oliver Turnbull, *The Brain and the Inner World: An Introduction to the Neuroscience of Subjective Experience* (New York, 2002), 116.

[71] Robert Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1990), 93.

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the will in action. Biran's spiritualism posited the singular sensation of effort as the ground of the unity and freedom of consciousness.

Fouillée similarly divided consciousness into its interior and exterior dimensions on the basis of effort:

> However unrepresentable and unimaginable being active [*l'agir*] is, we distinguish it neatly from being passive [*pâtir*] by an immediate consciousness that, not having the forms of representation, is no less a very real consciousness and is even the basis of all representation, the living flame of this spectacle lit up from within. Representation, additionally, has for its first condition a certain discontinuity or intermittence between states of consciousness, which differentiates them into *moments* and even into *parts*, which thus gives to each their individuality and distinctive form.[72]

The will, which Fouillée, following the spiritualist tradition, understood as a unitary phenomenon, expresses itself under two modalities. Biran's philosophical anthropology, with its account of the riven nature of experience, provided Fouillée with a useful conceptual distinction to configure associationism and *appétition* as the respective external and internal dimensions of consciousness.

Fouillée's approach, as Daniel Becquemont and Laurent Mucchielli affirm, was shared with a generation of "young philosophers who stood out in the years of the 1880s successively trying to complete, to amend and often, as it were, to "re-spiritualize" Spencer's apparently materialist evolutionism."[73] The best-known of those young philosophers was Henri Bergson, whose concept of lived duration (*durée*) merits comparison with Fouillée's concept of *appétition*. At the heart of Bergson's first book, *L'essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, was his distinction between the quantitative measurement of conscious states (advanced by the German psychologists Gustav Fechner and Wilhelm Wundt) and the qualitative experience of deep psychic feelings. These two kinds of conscious state were objects of the experimental method of psychophysics, on the one hand, and the speculative method of metaphysics, on the other. But, at bottom, Bergson diagnosed them as expressions of the two dimensions inhering in a unified consciousness:

> Below homogeneous duration, which is the extensive symbol of true duration, a close psychological analysis distinguishes a duration whose heterogeneous moments permeate one another; below the numerical multiplicity of conscious states, a qualitative

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72 Fouillée, *L'evolutionnisme des idées-forces*, xliv, original emphasis. The standard translation of *pâtir* is "to suffer from," but I have translated it as "being passive" in order to better capture the obverse active and passive modalities of the will.

73 Daniel Becquemont and Laurent Mucchielli, *Le cas Spencer* (Paris, 1998), 273.

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multiplicity; below the self with well-defined states, a self in which *succeeding each other* means *melting into one another* and forming an organic whole."[74]

The homogeneous, extensive, and quantitative aspects of psychic states accord with the methods by which psychophysics, according to Bergson, measures the superficial dimension of consciousness most closely in contact with external stimuli. The deeper dimension requires a distinct method, what Bergson called intuition, to probe lived duration.

My point is that Fouillée and Bergson shared the same spiritualist commitment to the existence of multiple dimensions of consciousness with which competing scientific and introspective psychological methods accord. Both thinkers framed the dual dimensions of consciousness in terms of the inside and the outside. And the philosophical purchase of their work was to diagnose the distortions that follow from employing scientific methods suited to the external dimension of consciousness to understand the internal dimension. Fouillée and Bergson, in short, both set science and metaphysics in the same division of labor.

Fouillé's initial essay on *idées-forces* is significant because it not only preceded Bergson's 1889 *L'essai* by a decade; it also capitalized on the initial wave of French enthusiasm for Spencer that Bergson felt as a youth at the Ecole normale. "We felt the weakness of *The First Principles*," Bergson reflected, "But this weakness appeared to us to come from what the author, insufficiently prepared, could not deepen in the 'last ideas' of mechanics. We had wanted to take back this part of his work, complete it, and strengthen it."[75] It was in response to Spencer's evolutionary thought that both Fouillée and Bergson sought to restore the fluidity of conscious experience. Anticipating the Bergsonian maxim that "we forget that states of consciousness are processes and not things,"[76] Fouillée reproached Spencer in similar terms: "Spencer takes the consequence for the principle, the result of the crisscrossing of laws for the primordial law."[77]

More importantly, Fouillée put his conciliatory method in service of resolving a conceptual problem that would linger in Bergson's *L'essai*: what is the relation between the external and internal, or superficial and deep, dimensions of consciousness? The novelty of Fouillée's conciliation was to conceive *appétition* and association not as two opposed poles, but as two dimensions of the same conscious experience. In this light, Fouillée contributed to what Frédéric Worms calls the problem of *spirit* (*esprit*) that preoccupied late nineteenth-century French philosophy:

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74 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (New York, 2001), 128, original emphasis.

75 Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant* (Paris, 1934), 8.

76 Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 196.

77 Fouillée, *L'evolutionnisme des idées-forces*, liv.

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That *what we take as a simple experience* of the world, of men, of ourselves, is in reality *a double experience*, altered by our spirit, but also capable of being found again, by another act of our spirit, itself double, and also along *this duality* that not only our thought, *but our life*, must together find its bearings.[78]

Worms contends that the opposition Bergson drew between quantitative extensive duration and qualitative lived duration in *L'essai* was meant to tackle this very problem: quantitative concepts, although they adulterate the deeper, lived duration, are only one dimension of consciousness. There is also a complimentary dimension better suited to immediate experience, and together the two dimensions correspond to the twin tendencies along which consciousness diverges. Bergson would develop the novel insight in his later work, which, according to Worms, was to conceive the dual nature of consciousness "not as an opposition between reality and consciousness, or between the object and the mind, but as an opposition that takes place *in* reality (and possibly in each reality) as well as in *spirit* (including and before all in our spirit)."[79]

The dyadic principle of *idées-forces*, I want to suggest, anticipated the Bergsonian dualism in "showing us at once the *mechanical process* [of associationism] and the *conscious process of appétition*."[80] Fouillée affirmed,

> These are not two disparate realities that could be indifferent toward one another, nor are they two "aspects" of which one, the mental, would be the epiphenomenon of a phenomenon; rather it is *a same* reality in the process of development along which it branches out through the diversity of means by which to grasp it.[81]

The dualism that Fouillée diagnosed *within* conscious experience reflected what he called "the fundamental law of our consciousness to double its form."[82] In this light, Fouillée offered a significant contribution to the problem of spirit that Worms attributes to Bergson.

The similarity between Fouillée and Bergson was not lost on Augustin Guyau, the son of Jean-Marie Guyau (and step-grandson of Fouillée): "in opposing the dynamic to the static, time to space, both want to safeguard liberty and novelty in the world."[83] In a comically hostile manner, Fouillée's biographer hastened to note the lone difference: "Fouillée stays in the domain of experience; Mr Bergson, believing to stay there, returns to the conception of an elusive and incomprehensible liberty, analogous, despite his intentions, to Kant's noumenon

78 Frédéric Worms, *La philosophie en France au XXe siècle* (Paris, 2011), 37, original emphasis.
79 Ibid., 39, original emphasis.
80 Fouillée, *L'evolutionnisme des idées-forces*, lix, original emphasis.
81 Ibid., original emphasis.
82 Ibid.
83 Guyau, *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée*, 88.

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or Schopenhauer's thing in itself."[84] Whether or not Fouillée got the better of Bergson, their work shared in the new spiritualism that renewed the duality of consciousness integral to French spiritualism since Maine de Biran.

TIME, MEMORY, AND THE EMERGENCE OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Through the decade of the 1880s the *Revue philosophique* provided a forum where scientific psychologists published research in the bourgeoning psychopathology. The 1880 reform in French *lycée* instruction added "experimentation in psychology" and "comparative psychology" as mandatory philosophy lessons. Pathologies such as somnambulism, hallucinations, and hysteria found their way into the official program. At the same time, Jean-Marie Charcot began treating hysterics in his celebrated weekly demonstrations at the Salpêtrière. By the end of the decade, Pierre Janet ran his own laboratory in Le Havre where he too gathered abnormal patients. And Ribot claimed the first chair in experimental psychology at the Collège de France in 1888 after overcoming the no-votes of spiritualist thinkers on the nominating committee.[85]

In May 1880, Ribot published his first in a series of articles in the *Revue philosophique* that he would compile the next year as *Les maladies de la mémoire.* Ribot drew on experiments on amnesiac patients, beginning with Paul Broca's early identification of the inferior frontal gyrus as the seat of language memory in the brain, and extending through the scattered cases that Hyppolite Taine had presented in *De l'intelligence.* Ribot ushered in what has often been described as the golden decade of memory studies in France. It was a time when, according to Michael S. Roth, "the discourse about conserving and reproducing the past was also a discourse about what it meant to be normal in the present."[86]

At stake was the scope and reach of the psychopathological method. Ribot turned to Britain, where Henry Maudsley (1835–1918) and John Hughlings Jackson (1835–1911) applied experimental procedures to the analysis of mental illness. Their goal was to discern the causes of maladies in order to deduce the laws of the healthy psyche. Ribot's interest was to use the method to localize higher-order conscious phenomena in their respective cerebral regions. This involved matching lesions to neural tissue with the corresponding cognitive functions impaired. In this case of memory, Ribot took up Maudsley's work on the localization of

[84] Ibid.

[85] Serge Nicolas and Agnès Charvillat, "Introducing Psychology as an Academic Discipline in France: Théodule Ribot and the Collège de France (1888–1901)," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 37/2 (2001), 151.

[86] Michael S. Roth, "Remembering Forgetting: Maladies de la Mémoire in Nineteenth-Century France," *Representations*, 26 (1989), 50.

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bodily memories in what he called the "motor residue"—the permanent trace of the associations on which the smooth execution of motor functions relies. Ribot's interest in memory brought him to apply the psychopathological method to aphasiacs, who, he noticed lost the ability to form words, both spoken and written, in the same order: descending from proper names to common names, adjectives, and finally verbs. The order of language loss revealed the logic of language construction—what is still known today as Ribot's law, or the law of regression.

A rich dialogue between Ribot, Fouillée, and Guyau unfolded throughout the decade around the science of memory. Fouillée invested his hope for the future of philosophy in Ribot's study of memory, but he aimed to nuance the reductionism of Ribot's method, epitomized on the opening page of *Les maladies de la mémoire*: "memory is, by its essence, a biological fact; by accident a psychological fact."[87] Fouillée argued that there remains an irreducibly conscious dimension to the experience of time. And he took as his point of departure what he saw as the outmoded picture of time that Ribot's study of memory presupposed.

The picture was borrowed from Kant. According to Kant, time constitutes an a priori form that all conscious experiences assume. Ribot, to be sure, rejected the notion of a priori categories. He saw time as a composite notion that humans progressively acquire as the body interacts with the world.[88] Fouillée agreed. He described the familiarity with time as an *experimental* intuition rather than a *transcendental* intuition.[89] Nonetheless, Fouillée charged that Ribot held onto the Kantian picture of time as a linear form in space. In the Transcendental Analytic of the First *Critique* Kant described time as "a line progressing to infinity, in which the manifold constitutes a series of one dimension only."[90] Consciousness organizes events along this line as if they occupy sequential points in time. Even though Ribot did not treat time as a condition prior to experience, his account was outmoded, according to Fouillée, because it failed to jettison the linear, spatial, picture of time. Kantians, Fouillée claimed, "always gather together time and space on the same line, as if what applies to one would also apply to the other."[91]

87 Théodule Ribot, *Les maladies de la mémoire* (Paris, 1880), 1.

88 Ibid., 83.

89 Alfred Fouillée, "Introduction," in Jean Marie Guyau, *La genèse de l'idée du temps* (Paris, 1890), xxxii.

90 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke, 1933), 77.

91 Alfred Fouillée, "La mémoire et la reconnaissance des idées," *Revue des deux mondes*, 70 (1885), 146.

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Ribot acknowledged that the spatial picture of time was central to his theory of recollection. In order to recall a memory, we depart on "a regressive march which, leaving from the present, travels a series of terms more or less long."[92] Traversing the entire associative chain of memories, as if reading the dossier of every past event, would be exhausting, if not impossible. So consciousness naturally identifies "landmarks" in the form of significant past events, facilitating the recollection of certain episodes. It was in spatial terms that Ribot appealed to his readers to reflect on "how much this mechanism resembles that by which we locate ourselves in space. There we also have landmarks, abbreviating processes, perfectly familiar distances that we employ as units of measure."[93]

This picture, Fouillée charged, suited the external dimension of consciousness. But when understood from the internal dimension, temporal experience demands a different picture since memories do not occupy an archive; they are instead coextensive with the present, actively influencing consciousness. For Fouillée, *appétition* held the key to unlocking this alternative picture: "Time alone is the essential form of memory, and memory, ultimately being the consciousness of appetite, effort, and motor action, is as fundamental as life itself, for life is only appetite tending toward its satisfaction by a series of degrees and moments."[94]

Fouillée's next step was to bring his alternative picture of time to bear on Ribot's research. Since time, according to Fouillée, is experienced in two distinct dimensions, Ribot was wrong to treat the conservation and recollection of memories as identical processes. Fouillée saw them as distinct.

Fouillée analyzed the distinct processes in two separate essays. In the first essay, Fouillée argued that conservation is basically a neuronal process: "each organ is a memory; the eye is a memory of luminous waves and the ear is a memory of sonorous waves."[95] Neuronal vibrations are the material that conserves memories, and the law of association can readily explain the process. Fouillée invoked a favorite example of Ribot's: if I fix my eyes on a red disc and then turn them away, I will momentarily perceive the illusory image of a green disc. This is because the fatigue of optical nerves that register red leaves those that register green to vibrate alone under a white light.[96] Fouillée took the example to demonstrate that the conservation of memory amounts to the prolongation of neuronal

92 Ribot, *Les maladies de la mémoire*, 36.

93 Ibid., 39.

94 Fouillée, "La mémoire et la reconnaissance des idées," 146.

95 Alfred Fouillée, "La survivance et la sélection des idées dans la mémoire," *Revue des deux mondes*, 69 (1885), 367.

96 Ibid., 362–3.

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vibrations. Memory conservation is thus a purely physical, and not intellectual, process.

Conversely, recollection depends on an irreducibly free, intellectual act. To make the point, Fouillée drew on another favorite example to highlight the distinction between conservation and recollection. Toward the end of his life, Linnaeus took pleasure in sitting by the fire in the evening and reading the writings of his youth. Afflicted with amnesia, he would revel in his memory lapses, "How brilliant! How I would like to have written that!"[97] Although Linnaeus automatically recognized ideas with which he was once familiar, he failed to actively recall that they were *his* ideas. For Fouillée, the moral was that amnesia impaired Linnaeus's ability to activate memories.

As a consequence, associationism can successfully explain the conservation of memories, but Ribot went wrong, Fouilée held, in believing that it can also explain recollection. A spatial picture is appropriate to express the former, since associationism treats memories as localizable units that can be conserved in the associative bonds between neuronal cells. Fouillée agreed that the brain could provide a physical platform for memories. But since recollection is a nonspatial *act*, it cannot be neatly localized. Fouillée argued that recollection adhered to a distinctly nonspatial, appetitive logic.

Fouillée conceived his account in memory alongside Guyau, whose *La genèse de l'idée du temps* (1890) was published posthumously. Guyau agreed that the archival picture is unsuitable to the recollection of memories since "generally taking the brain in a state of rest, the images it has are considered as fixed, *clichés*."[98] Memories, Guyau observed, are not ready-made. "There is nothing like that in the brain, not real images, but only virtual images, potentials, that only wait for a sign to pass into an action."[99] Recollection, according to Guyau, transforms memories into forms of action.

As for the nature of this transformation, Fouillée and Guyau subtly diverged. For Guyau, recollection amounts to a practical skill, "nothing but the art of evoking and organizing these representations."[100] That is to say that our mnemonic strategies suffice to explain how we organize memories in spatial terms. For Fouillée, however, there is a vital logic immanent to *appétition* that actively transforms memories into forms of action. The key to recollection turns on forgetting: what requires explanation, according to Fouillée, is how consciousness comes to eliminate the trail of memories that ideas carry

97 Fouillée, "La mémoire et la reconnaissance des idées," 147; Ribot, *Les maladies de la mémoire*, 41.

98 Guyau, *La genèse de l'idée du temps*, 50.

99 Ibid., 50.

100 Ibid., 117.

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with them. The effort we undergo to overcome the blank befuddlement felt when trying to recall a forgotten memory consists of accommodating the memory to the demands in the present.[101] True to his Darwinian understanding of *appétition*, Fouillée conceived recollection as act of resisting other sensations that monopolize one's attention. *Idées-forces* intervene in the constant struggle among memories by suppressing those that are not immediately useful.[102]

Fouillée's account of memory, first presented in 1885, contributed a new spiritualist position to the debates in which Bergson would intervene eleven years later with *Matière et mémoire*. The book drew on Fouillée's pragmatic account of recollection as a process that transforms memories into forms of action. Bergson first noted in his review of Guyau's treatise, "Mr Fouillée appears to us to have pushed the analysis of Mr Guyau further."[103] Fouillée identified, as Bergson saw it, the seamless "process of *changing*" that memory effectuates between the virtual conservation of the past and its actual recollection in the present. Bergson's lone reference to Fouillée in *Matière et mémoire* acknowledged this insight.[104] Despite their conceptual differences, it is clear that both thinkers critiqued the same limitations of psychopathological research.

Aware that Bergson's fame occluded his own, Fouillée nonetheless maintained an amicable relationship. The two just missed each other at the Ecole normale, where Bergson entered as a student in 1878, three years after Fouillée's departure. But they did share many conversations later outside the university: "What a philosopher, Bergson, entirely into science and philosophy," Fouillée reflected, "working with such an upstanding awareness and never set back by fatigue!"[105] As part of the new spiritualist formation, Fouillée and Bergson endeavored to set metaphysics and science in a newfound dialogue.

The new spiritualism of Alfred Fouillée throws into relief a vibrant intellectual period under the French Third Republic. Fouillée's commitment to staging a rapprochement between metaphysics and the emergent sciences of the late nineteenth century can help to refine intellectual historians' appreciation of the nuances within French spiritualism. Fouillée self-consciously distinguished his intellectual project from the old spiritualism of Victor Cousin, but Fouillée also

[101] Fouillée, "La mémoire et la reconnaissance des idées," 148.

[102] Ibid., 160

[103] Henri Bergson, "Analyse de l'ouvrage de Guyau: *La genèse de l'idée de temps* avec un introduction par Albert [*sic*] Fouillée," *Revue philosophique*, 31 (1891), 187.

[104] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London, 1911), 112, original emphasis.

[105] Guyau, *La philosophie et la sociologie d'Alfred Fouillée*, 88.

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sought to renew his predecessor's commitment to the conscious experience of freedom by drawing on evolutionary biology and scientific psychology. Rather than stage a revolt against these positive sciences, as historiography of the *fin de siècle* continues to maintain, Fouillée integrated them into a new spiritualism. The work of Herbert Spencer and Théodule Ribot, as I have highlighted, provided Fouillée with the intellectual resources to forge the concepts of *idées-forces* and *appétition* into the pillars of his scientifically updated account of consciousness. In the face of wide-reaching advancements in cognitive science and the neurosciences today, Fouillée's thought remains relevant for its forceful defense of the conscious experience of freedom on the basis of the very sciences that threatened its reduction.

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