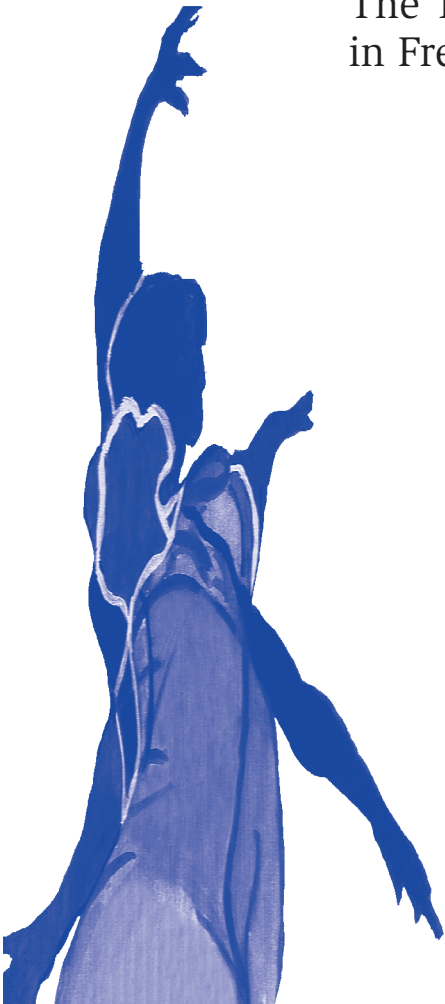


Charles Forsdick and  
Andy Stafford (eds)

*La Revue*

The Twentieth-Century Periodical  
in French

Peter Lang



# Modern French Identities

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The journal, periodical or *revue* has a long and largely unexplored history. The periodical has been recognized as a site of unexpected juxtapositions and unorthodox exchanges, a source of chance discoveries. It provides a unique insight into the uneven interactions that characterize any contemporary moment and is an invaluable archive in its own right. This volume aims, through a series of focused case studies, to explore the twentieth-century periodical publication in French, offering an overview of some of its most important manifestations and providing a general reflection on this complex textual form.

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*La Revue*

# **M**odern **F**rench **I**dentities

Edited by Peter Collier

Volume 66



PETER LANG

Oxford • Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Wien

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The Twentieth-Century Periodical  
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It is to our great regret that Pascal Mercier, who died on 16 September 2011, did not see the fruits of our collaboration. This volume is dedicated to his memory.



## Introduction

The journal, periodical or review, whether the idea of one enlightened individual or, as is more usual, the fruit of complex collaborative efforts, has a long and largely unexplored history. The pioneering work with new technologies by the Gallica team, the commitment of publishers such as Jean-Michel Place, and the endeavours of publications such as the *Revue des revues* have re-directed attention to – and, increasingly, made available once more – material long out-of-print or otherwise buried in library stacks. The periodical has been recognized as a site of unexpected juxtapositions and unorthodox exchanges, a source of chance discoveries for researchers increasingly used to the efficient yet selective precision of electronic resources; it provides a unique insight into the uneven exchanges of any contemporary moment. Yet although the review has been saved from the catalogues of pure bibliography, it often remains an elusive object of study, fleeting as a result of each title's periodic appearance, whilst at the same time (at least for successful examples) potentially substantial, with issue supplementing issue to form an invaluable archive in its own right.

Shifting the focus away from single authors or individual texts, the review emerges as a process of accumulation, with its regular publication playing a specific role in the formation of group identity and a more general one in relation to the socio-cultural context in which it is produced. With an often hazardous immediacy, which subsequent readers (benefiting from hindsight) are often too hasty to criticize, the journal offers a unique engagement with contemporary orthodoxy and ideology, often reflecting these (*La Grande France*), occasionally undermining them (*Sorcières*, *Cahiers du Griffon*). Still-born (*Menabo*), short-lived (appearing for several years, like the *Cahiers vaudois*, or simply for several issues, like *L'Étudiant noir*) or spanning several centuries (*Revue des Deux Mondes*), journals are to be seen as a central element in the literary, cultural and intellectual life

of their day, providing a forum for philosophical and political debate (*Les Temps modernes*) or for literary reflection (*Les Lettres nouvelles, Europe*). Depending on their editors' policy and temperament, the publication may aim for harmonious orthodoxy or depend on the creative energy of its contributors' constant feuding. Their contents are uneven, ranging from those ephemeral contributions that disappear without trace to seminal texts whose influence cannot be overestimated. They forge committed political positions (*Esprit, Nouvelle Revue Française*), or give a clear identity to both nascent literary movements (*Littérature, La Révolution surréaliste, Cahiers de géopoétique*) and emergent critical tendencies (*Les Cahiers du cinéma, Tel Quel, L'Infini, Communications, Poétique*). There is often interaction between reviews, ranging from collaboration to acrimonious disputes. They reflect unexpected, creative syntheses (*Minotaure, Documents*), and may even serve as the midwives of major epistemological shifts (*Annales, Cahiers de médiologie*). When literature is deemed to be in crisis, it is often the review that endeavours to offer new directions (*Quai Voltaire, Roman*).

As with our previous collection on the essay form, the present volume was inspired by what we felt was the urgent need for a study of the artistic and cultural revue in the modern and contemporary period. In gathering together the current collection of essays, we seek to recognize the revue's historically vast and varied contribution to French-language cultures, and also to explore the complex ways in which periodical publications more widely have engaged with and shaped the social, political and aesthetic sensibilities of readers and contributors alike. For there is, we believe, a quintessentially French and Francophone culture of the revue that frequently forms the backdrop to critical knowledge of literary landscapes, but has rarely been explored in any great depth. Such neglect is decidedly at odds with the prolific nature of French-language journal culture – according to one estimate (Safran 2007, 9) upwards of fifty revues were created in France in 2006 – and also with the considerable activity centred on a form that provides the focus for example an annual 'salon de la revue', the specialist *Revue des revues* (that celebrated its twenty-fifth year of work in 2012) and the dedicated association Ent'revues ([www.entrevues.org](http://www.entrevues.org)) that has organized a highly original set of *rencontres*, 'Revue en scène', where representatives from various publications gather for discussion and debate.

Needless to say, such vibrancy in the contemporary scene must also be seen as emerging from the historical context of revue culture in France. The longevity and symbolic capital associated with prestigious periodicals, such as the various incarnations of the *Mercure de France*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, *Études*, *Les Temps modernes* and *Tel Quel*, immediately spring to mind here. At the same time, it is crucial that any assessment of the intellectual and cultural impact of the revue avoids an approach that is reductively list-based and hierarchical. Gauging ‘success’ or ‘failure’ in the context of these publications can never be straightforward, and as several contributors to this volume demonstrate, many revues that were short-lived and/or victims of erratic distribution nonetheless proved as influential in their way as certain of their more established and relatively successful (in commercial terms) competitors. Unfortunately, the brief lives of many of these publications have often led to their unfair neglect, or even to their disappearance into literary-historical oblivion. On closer inspection, the longevity or ephemeral nature of any given revue reflects, of course, the very real material and financial conditions of their publication. Their particular ‘temporality’ (and periodicity) also sheds light on the ever-evolving cultural and intellectual niches in which solid French-language reviews are continually born (and in some cases reborn and/or rebranded) and seem able, in many cases, to maintain themselves as artistic and cultural publications. In a related way, this question of the longevity or ephemeral nature of the revue points to another vital, critical value of this form: whether it endures or fades quickly, whether it emerges as a response to the cultural and intellectual times of its production, or whether it is an instigator of changes and trends in those times, the revue’s singular value in recovering more fully the complexity of its context cannot be underestimated. In an echo of Michel Deguy’s view (see his interview with Meadow Dibble-Dieng in the present volume), Gerry Smyth explains more clearly this specific ‘engagement’ with time and space represented by the periodical publication: ‘whereas the major historical or literary treatise always risks being rendered *passé* by current events, the essay, the editorial, the work-in-progress and the review are present-oriented discourses, always provisional and placeable responses on the part of the subjects locatable in time and place’ (1998, 101).

The chapters in the present volume clearly reveal the fertile critical ground of the revue's particular relationship to time. Thus, alongside discussion of the 'longer view' offered by revues such as the Mauritian *L'Essor* (Furlong), the iconic *Cahiers du cinéma* (Garson), the avant-garde *Lettrisme* (Jubert) or the Quebec-based *Liberté* (Brouillette) that survived – not always easily – over several decades, are chapters that devote attention either to distinct moments in the lives of established revues (Esmaili on the *Nouvelle Revue Française*; Lupo on *Les Temps modernes*) or to publications whose short-lived runs offer unique perspectives on the revue's overlap between the individual, the societal and textual. Of particular interest in this respect are chapters here by Debra Kelly and Pascal Mercier on *SIC* and *Confluences*, both of which, respectively, suggest the complex interconnections between these publications and the cultural life of the World Wars that both produced and expired with them.<sup>1</sup>

It would be naive, however, to assume that a solid historical tradition and an apparently flourishing contemporary journal culture have been sufficient for protecting the revue from the vagaries of the marketplace and from the technological transformations that shape the ways in which knowledge is increasingly transferred. As is repeatedly stressed by the contributors to this volume, the revue exists at the intersection of the self, a community of like-minded thinkers – although harmony is by no means inevitable – and what is, after all, the commercial world of publishing. This fragile location no doubt goes some way towards explaining Gérard Lenclud's assertion (cited in Pluet-Despatin 1992, 125) that, like all cultures and societies, the journal is permanently and often creatively 'en crise'. Critics comparing the contemporary post-print era of communication with the past invariably assess the future of the revue negatively, and see the less technologically dominated past of publishing as somehow more conducive to a thriving revue culture. Indeed, growing competition from new

1 Other notable examples of short-lived success not discussed here include *Siècle* and *Perpendiculaire* and, from the other end of the twentieth century, Hugo Ball's single issue of *Cabaret Voltaire* (1916) that saw itself immortalized by the 1980s Sheffield-based avant-garde music ensemble of the same name.

forms of virtual media is consistently identified as the major cause of any perceived crisis or decline in the revue's fortunes. Citing the proliferation of the form during the *Belle Époque* – 257 publications in France between 1890 and 1914 described themselves as 'avant-garde' – Géraldi Leroy and Julie Bertrand-Sabiani (1998, 117) note how 'les conditions économiques ne nécessitaient pas non plus comme aujourd'hui de considérables investissements. Ceux qui étaient fermement décidés à se lancer dans l'aventure d'une revue pouvaient [...] y parvenir sans disposer de fonds importants'. From a purely statistical point of view, this notion of crisis in the present situation also appears to be corroborated by Alain Beuve-Méry (2006), who points out that of the current 2,000 or so 'revues culturelles' in France, 75 per cent of those supported by the Centre National du Livre (CNL) have a print run of less than 1,000. Beuve-Méry cites the growth of visual media, poor distribution and display in shops and a heavy photocopying culture ('photocopillage') as contributory factors to this fragility.

Nonetheless, against such fragility and crisis stands the relative success of established revues such as *Études* (monthly sales of 15,000) and *Esprit*, *Le Débat*, *Commentaire* and *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (more than 3,000 subscribers each, according to a recent census by the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique). Whilst the revue's relationship to its times may offer some explanation for the 'dating' and 'dated' nature of content unable to keep pace with the changing nature of trends and readers' tastes, this does not explain fully why a form that has hitherto used such conditions to reinvent itself should now be said to find itself in crisis. In their empirical study of American literary magazines produced online, Stephen Paling and Michael Nilan (2006) offer a more qualified optimism for the future that tends to refute Leroy and Bertrand-Sabiani's view of a contemporary demise of the revue. They also question the notion of a decline in the revue's privileging of artistic integrity over commercial expediency. Indeed, the Bourdieusian notion of 'negative regard for immediate financial gain' (863), that Paling and Nilan identify as an intrinsic creative value of small literary magazine editors, appears not only to have survived but to have strengthened amongst the online magazine editors they sample. Similarly, the literary magazine's inherent 'positive regard for avant-gardism' (864) is also suggested to have been intensified by the creative possibilities of

online technology, leading the authors to question any nostalgic, and in their view unsubstantiated, association between a decline in the values of this form and its online transformations and reinventions. Any perception of a crisis or demise of the form must also be questioned when the extent of existing research is taken into account. Whilst there is a clear lack of synchronic studies of revue form and culture, historical approaches have paid particular attention to nineteenth-century developments, and there have been a number of recent biographies on writers that have explored their involvement in revues.

Collectively, the chapters here also attest to the enduring collective health of a form that adapts and survives even when individual revues fail or simply decline with the times that produce them. It is important to stress, of course, that the survival of the revue is determined as much as anything by its ability to attract and maintain a readership. Writing to Valéry Larbaud on 12 March 1922 to solicit a contribution for a new quarterly he was to edit, T.S. Eliot bemoans the absence in England of a 'literary periodical [...] of cosmopolitan tendencies and international standards', and arrogantly if also somewhat amusingly proceeds to explain that he is consequently 'not at present aiming at a very large public, but at the most enlightened part of the British public – there are, I think, at least a thousand people in England who are aware of the low state of literary journalism here' (2009, 643). The subsequent success of Eliot's *Criterion* tells us much about the folly of hasty presumptions regarding readership, and how a revue can exceed or fail its own expectations. Eliot's clear editorial policy of publishing what he terms 'good stuff' (2009, 634) and a clear objective for his quarterly also underline the potential for the revue's future in a technological age as a form that presents itself as engaging with a wide readership that is already cosmopolitan and international, and that waits to be exploited for those who know how. It is striking that Michel Deguy, in his interview in the current volume, also speaks of the revue as being particularly suitable for contemporary ways of reading, providing a 'mode de lecture dispersé, même morcelé', and encouraging what might be seen as a kind of readerly 'multi-tasking', providing access to a variety of subjects from a multiplicity of perspectives at the same time.

## Questions of Form: Time and the Revue

Any critical approach to the revue runs the risk of over emphasizing its documentary value, and neglecting the issue of whether it should be read and interpreted as a distinctive form in its own right. However, identifying the formal features of a collective publication such as the revue is perhaps a more knotty problem than other textual categories. An initial issue concerns the distinctions emerging not just between rival periodical publications, but also within the content of individual revues. Equally problematic for the establishment of a stable, formal identity is the fact that the revue is most frequently a composite and serial publication. Where content is concerned, the widely acknowledged critical role of the revue means that essays and review articles can dominate. But the widespread inclusion of visual material and overall eclectic mixture of established forms ultimately suggest a general ‘bittiness’ or untidiness, rather than any formal coherence. Likewise, the question of terminology can muddy the waters: can the terms ‘journal’, ‘revue’ (review) and ‘periodical’ be used interchangeably, or do they suggest variations in content and approach? Imposing a strict taxonomy also seems counterintuitive when in so many cases the revue’s *raison d’être* appears to be as a half-way house or distribution channel for other less commercially viable literary forms such as poetry, the essay and the short story.

For the purposes of simplification, revue is the term we will use predominantly to describe the periodical publications studied in this volume, most of which appeared monthly, quarterly or bi-annually, not least to distinguish them from other forms of journalism whose production is characterized by a greater regularity. Without wishing to suggest arbitrary or misleading conclusions regarding the form of different periodical publications, comparisons with other more established genres and styles of writing can, however, provide a useful point of entry into the complex issue of the nature and taxonomies of the revue’s form. From a historical point of view, the novel’s fortunes reveal, for instance, certain similarities with the development of periodical publications. In her study of the evolution

of eighteenth-century British literary journalism, Iona Italia identifies key features shared by the novel and periodicals, all of which have cross-Channel resonance, and some of which are also relevant to the contemporary situation of the French-language revue. These features include 'historical youth, relatively low price, dubious respectability, widespread availability and particular association with female readers'. Italia goes on to argue that the popularity which the novel historically shared with the periodical also 'raises important questions about the transition from intensive to extensive reading, the growth of a non-aristocratic readership and the status of the professional writer in the eighteenth century' (2005, 7).

Given the nature of its content, the links between the revue and essayism are perhaps even more clearly marked. It may be argued that the essay is now increasingly invisible, not because it has been neglected, outmoded, ignored, obliterated or overtaken, but because it has achieved mainstream ubiquity as a result of its triumph (in journalism, for instance, or in blogging). It is for this reason that this volume now concentrates on one area in which the essay has predominated. The revue favours, by definition then, the *forme brève* (poem, essay, short story, fragment), to the detriment of the novel or novella. And if extracts are drawn from novels, these (unlike 'extracts' from the *formes brèves* listed above) tend to be edited and/or incomplete in relation to the text that they highlight. The periodical valorizes not only *formes brèves*, but also illustrations (drawings, photographs, images).

The contemporaneous, brief and ephemeral all define the revue then, and impact inevitably on its formal characteristics. From the more formal perspective that interests us here, however, any question of the revue's generic identity must necessarily engage with the significance of its periodicity. The relationship between the revue, manifesto and journalism reminds us again of the key issue of time, and helps to identify important similarities and distinctions that move us towards a clearer understanding of how the revue functions formally. The manifesto in particular appears to converge in several key respects with the project of the review. In his work on the manifesto form, Claude Abastado offers the following definition: 'tout texte qui prend violemment position et institue, entre un émetteur et ses allocutaires, une relation d'injonction flagrante' (1980a, 4). Describing the revue as 'un support privilégié' (4) of the manifesto, it is clear that Abastado

sees the two forms as complementary, suggesting that the manifesto in some ways functions as a 'programme', with the revue operating as 'sa mise en œuvre' (5). In the present volume, Katy Hindson and Charles Forsdick, Andy Stafford, Patrick Suter, Michael Kelly and Meadow Dibble-Dieng all highlight the importance of the inaugural issue and the statement of intent of the revue, and their arguments tend to support the idea of such publications converging with the manifesto and operating, in Abastado's terms, as 'textes de rupture et de fondation' (6). (The same is often true of final issues also, with such farewell statements summarizing objectives achieved and work left undone.) Abastado himself provides the publication of the *Manifeste Dada 1918* in the 1924 issue of *Dada 3* as an example of the revue-as-manifesto, but other iconic examples might include the inaugural and indeed only number of *Légitime défense* in 1932, Sartre's 'Présentation' in the first issue of *Les Temps modernes*, or the first issue of *Poétique* in 1970 often credited with setting out a new programme for studying literature and language. As with the manifesto, each of these examples clearly 'déconstruit et restructure un champ idéologique', implies at times a 'théâtralisation des idées', and 's'adresse tour à tour, à ceux qu'il combat à ceux qu'il veut persuader, et à l'émetteur lui-même' (Abastado 1980a, 10).

In other respects, however, the statement of intent of a revue's inaugural issue differs significantly from a manifesto delivered orally on a particular occasion or published as a text in its own right. Firstly, the context of the revue means that its relationship to its own aims and objectives is inherently reflexive given that, unlike the manifesto, its content can include opinions that challenge or dismiss it. Despite this emphasis, it is worth noting, however, that poetry revues such as *Le Grand Jeu* and *III<sup>me</sup> Convoi* reveal the ways in which initial statements of self-definition often prove impossible to live up to in practice. As contributions to the current collection reveal, in the case of the former, the desire to form a poetic community that transcends the individual ultimately revealed itself as flawed, and in the case of the latter, a posture that was firm in its opposition to all ideological and aesthetic movements also failed to sustain itself. More importantly, perhaps, the periodicity of the revue means that the relationship to any structuring ideology or philosophy is more obviously prospective than in the case of the manifesto. Whereas the manifesto presents its arguments as being

a radical rupture with the past that is occurring in the present of the text or of the oral delivery, the revue launches its 'project' into time with the distinct aim of seeing it evolve intellectually and creatively. This practical, pragmatic understanding of the revue also contrasts with the more aspirational qualities of the manifesto, and is clearly highlighted here in Katy Hindson and Charles Forsdick's analysis of *Gulliver's* role in exemplifying and disseminating literature that had been outlined more theoretically in manifestos preceding its publication. This more practical and thoughtful engagement with ideas appears, then, to distance the revue from what might be seen as the insurgent rhetorical qualities of the manifesto, given that both contributor and reader become engaged in the long-term (gentle?) conversation and dialogue that is one of the defining features of a 'revue'. Although practical issues contributed to the short-lived nature of a publication such as *Légitime défense*, the unquestionable violence of its rhetoric may indeed as a result be seen to have contributed to its failure to continue.

Moving from the manifesto to a very different form of serial publication, there is much that at first sight supports comparisons between the literary and cultural revue and aspects of newspaper journalism, not least the periodic nature of their production, their collective authorship, their tendency towards political positioning, and their reflection on the 'times' of their production. Moreover, given the precarious finances of many revues, contributors are often obliged to write for the daily or more popular press. Jean Maquet, editor of *III<sup>me</sup> Convoi*, contributed for instance to other revues, such as *Combat* and *Critique*, but eventually began work as a reporter with *Paris-Match* despite having once dismissed journalism as a 'sous-produit logique'. Other overlaps are evident in the special interest dimension of these publications, and the related approach to a targeted readership. In terms of style, newspaper journalism is not always immune to the more 'belle-lettriste' tendencies of literary writing and is able, too, to diversify its focus in the form of supplements and regular features as the tastes of its readers demand. As far as content is concerned, however, literary and artistic commentary constitutes a minority of the subjects covered in a newspaper. There are *cas-limites*, of course, hybrid examples which permit a testing of definitional boundaries. *Je suis partout*, the fascist periodical that first appeared in 1930, is such a case, and is presented

in this volume as a revue, although its weekly publication might suggest an identity closer to a newspaper (and Michel Deguy indeed argues in this volume that anything published on a weekly basis must be seen as ‘du journalisme’). Charlotte Garson’s chapter also draws attention to the particular example of *Les Cahiers du cinéma*, whose decision to report on the various European cinema festivals inevitably drew it into the commercial side of this cultural world, and also gave rise to new production pressures that saw this theory-driven publication adopt what she describes as more ‘journalistic’ tendencies including new collaborative methods of reporting and festival related special features.

Needless to say, political reporting of the kind associated with newspaper journalism also has a clear place in a publication such as the revue with its vital critical relationship to its context. However, whereas newspaper journalism tends to present the literary (or artistic) and political as distinct fields, many of the revues discussed here clearly see these categories as interdependent and coterminous. In her analysis of the fascist weekly, *Je suis partout*, Joan Tumblety’s chapter highlights the particular perils of contributors whose political engagement overrode the autonomy of artistic sensibility and eventually led to disgrace and even execution. David Steel’s chapter on the short-lived government-supported *Civilisation Française* offers a fascinating analysis of how this publication saw the promotion of French culture as a means of restoring and enhancing France’s intellectual reputation in post-First World War Britain. In very different but nonetheless related ways, postcolonial readings of the revue are also particularly attuned to the ways in which aesthetic concerns can refract the political. Andy Stafford, for example, focuses on the explicit ‘politics of literature and language’ and the ‘literature of politics’ that determined the radicalization – and ultimate demise – of the Moroccan revue *Souffles*. On the other hand, Robert Furlong’s study of the Mauritian review *L’Essor* reveals how its reactionary ‘politics of language’ nonetheless succeeded in presiding over a literary renaissance on the island during its forty-year incarnation. And in the case of the early years of *Présence Africaine*, Meadow Dibble-Dieng sees this influential publication as performing the work of cultural liberation by becoming the vital articulation of a common African voice in the years leading to independence.

The revue's general tendency to highlight the interdependency of the political and the artistic is also strikingly evident in chapters on avant-garde publications. For despite the tendency to associate the avant-garde with cutting-edge thinking in literature and the arts, it is fair to say that its links to radical politics never fully disappeared. In the case of the lavishly produced *VVV*, Stamatina Dimakopoulou explains how a content that included poetry, anthropology and psychology aimed to explain to its American readership the political context in which its Surrealist European artists and thinkers saw themselves operating. Patrick Suter's account of the short-lived periodical *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* also provides a helpful account of how this influential revue challenged a print media it viewed as largely reactionary, hypocritical and partisan in its reporting of cultural and political realities. Developing an alternative, unedited engagement with the times of its production, that included a visually striking page layout, *S.A.S.D.L.R.* both recalled and subverted conventional press practices. Suter's qualification of *S.A.S.D.L.R.* as an 'œuvre communautaire' – a point to which we return below – also serves to distinguish this periodical from the 'collective' identity of the newspapers it was so concerned with countering in both form and content. For the Surrealist 'community' of *S.A.S.D.L.R.*, the various contributions of newspapers did not invite association or comparison with the other articles printed within its pages. Consequently, the persuasive and 'perverse' force of the printed press was the result of the sheer volume of articles presented in isolation from opposing viewpoints. The final word, however, belongs to Géraldi Leroy and Julie Bertrand-Sabiani (1998, 118) whose analysis reminds us of the value of comparing the revue against other forms and reiterates the significance of the revue's relationship to time:

La revue n'est ni livre, ni journal. Elle rend compte du présent mais de manière moins éphémère, moins émotive, plus élaborée que le journal. Par sa périodicité plus ou moins large, elle instaure ce minimum de distance qui protège de la focalisation myope et laisse un espace à la réflexion. Mais à la différence du livre, rédigé plus ou moins longtemps après l'événement, elle rend mieux compte de l'actualité dans ses caractéristiques vécues et senties, dans sa complexité confuse.

## The Terrain of the Revue

If periodicity and the revue's relationship to time and its times are crucial for understanding formal issues, what might be said of the 'terrain' of the revue? In other words what is covered, where is covered in terms of content and targeted in terms of distribution, and in what spirit – for instance, political, revolutionary or avant-garde – are these elements addressed?

Though mainly 'literary' in scope, the revues covered here broadly fit Caroline Hoctan's definition of a 'revue culturelle' (2006, 7). They also fit broadly into the claims for the 'literary' made by Olivier Corpet in his *Encyclopedia universalis* entry, 'Revue littéraires' (cited by Hoctan 2006, 9; see also Clyde 2003, xiii) in relation to 'revues littéraires'; for Corpet the wider definition of the revue is within the 'para-literary', in which literature is seen to be able to touch upon everything studied in the human sciences. For Clyde, the literary in 'revues littéraires' refers to the manner in which a journal might well start out as literary, only then, in response to events, become political, a phenomenon that is evident in the (minor but) significant difference in title between Hoctan (2006) and Cariguel (2007), both covering the 1940s, that is, the word 'littéraire' in the latter.

Such broad understandings of the literary and creative fields are clearly evident in the content and approach of the revue examined in the following chapters. The overlap between the cultural and the political has already been highlighted as a crucial feature in the development of many key periodical publications. However, whether or not a revue is explicitly political from the outset or becomes politicized over time, it is also fair to say that many publications never intentionally seek this route but aim instead to intervene in their times in a more 'purely' artistic manner. This is frequently the case in revues that appear to be devoted to the promotion of a single artistic or literary activity such as the *Cahiers du cinéma* (see Garson) or *L'Éphémère* (see Wagstaff). Yet even when the political is ignored or underplayed, this is not to say that such publications are modest in their aims, or guided by a limited or limiting view of artistic creativity and its potential. *Cahiers du cinéma*, for example, is widely credited for

its part in the development of film theory and of criticism that led to the acceptance of film as an equal element alongside others in the creative arts. As Michel Deguy explains in his interview with Meadow Dibble-Dieng, the pursuit of a particular creative activity – in his case, poetry – invariably exposes one to the boundaries with related but different activities. What the revue allows, he argues, is a movement between these activities that allows a critical reflection on their affiliations. Thus, although ostensibly a ‘poetry’ revue, the content and production values of *L’Éphémère* are shown by Emma Wagstaff to underline a desire to unite poetry and the visual arts, and also to promote translation as a genuinely distinct and creative endeavour that reveals language in a new light. Indeed, this perception of synthesis between the arts can be said to be another key defining feature of the revue. Such an approach explains in the first instance the juxtaposition of different forms mentioned above, as well as the attention to the visual in the content and layout of many publications. It also explains the critical value of periodicals such as the *Revue Blanche* and the avant-garde *SIC*, publications that Alexandre Gefen and Debra Kelly respectively show in this volume to be underwritten by a broadmindedness that aimed to provide the fullest coverage possible of the cultural activity of their times.

Kim Wheatley (2003, 3) correctly identifies the growing tendency to study periodicals in their own right as evidence of the decentering of canonical texts, a tendency prompted by attention to issues of social class and gender. However, it is also fair to say that a decentering in terms of the geographic space of literary and artistic activity must also be taken into account when assessing how we might read the revue and understand its significance, particularly in a postcolonial context. Needless to say, the breadth of coverage associated with a genuinely synthetic view of the creative arts means that the geographical reach of the revue is already potentially very wide. As Garson makes clear in this volume, the *Cahiers du cinéma* ‘travelled’ to various locations to report on film festivals, and thereby actively provided a more international context for cinema. *SIC* was also notable for the variety of artistic fields it covers – music, sculpture, painting – and the various contexts in which it engaged with these. Allied with this is the also already international reach of the ‘Francosphere’ that allows for models of the French revue form to be expatriated in a complex

process that means they are shaped by very different linguistic and cultural contexts. From a purely hexagonal perspective, it is important to stress the role of revues such as the Lyon-based *Confluences* (see Mercier), the Marseilles-based *Cahiers du Sud*, or more recently *Gulliver* (see Hindson and Forsdick) in promoting and also carving out a literary and artistic space beyond what Benoît Tadié identifies as the 1920s and 30s Parisian centre of revue culture (2006, 6). At the same time, a European-wide Francophone perspective subsequently forces us to recognise contributions from Belgian and Switzerland, and Marc-André Brouillette's chapter on *Liberté* further broadens the geographical reach of the current volume by examining how this Quebec-based revue for over fifty years has managed to survive in the particular circumstances of a French Canadian revue culture with a disproportionately high number of literary reviews. The contribution of *Présence Africaine* and *Souffles*, and in its way the Mauritian *L'Essor*, to the structures and vocabularies of anti-colonial and postcolonial struggles has already been mentioned. These publications sought to make a way, via print, into literary spaces from which their founders and editors had previously been excluded. These revues, with their specific understandings of what this form can achieve and how it goes about it, also underline the ways in which the revue can only rarely and usually never simply be seen as 'belonging' to one culture or nation, and is as capable of adapting to different spaces and places as it is to different times. There are nationalist exceptions, but the cosmopolitan stance of so many of the revues studied here suggests a view of culture that is firmly transnational and constitutes an activity that depends heavily on cross-pollination from within a wide geographic and linguistic space.

At times, then, the willingness of the revue to cross geographic and linguistic boundaries arises from a desire to provide the fullest picture possible of creative activity and thereby satisfy the artistic tastes it shares with a 'cosmopolitan and international readership', to reprise the terms used by T.S. Eliot. Hence, for example the keen interest of *La Revue Blanche* (see Gefen) and Quebec-based *Liberté* (see Brouillette) to provide their readers with information on developments in the literary scenes of cultures in other languages. In other instances, the revue's travel outwards arises for very different reasons. As Katy Hindson and Charles Forsdick explain, the

British-based journal *Granta*, with its anti-establishment literary reputation and its successful role in launching new writing, served not as a source for content but as the model for Michel Le Bris's *Gulliver*, a publication he hoped would provide a similar break from what he perceived as traditional and restrictive ideologies in the French literary scene.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of Britain as a source of inspiration for *Gulliver* and as provider of the target readership for *Civilisation Française* (see the chapter by Steel in this volume) raises another dimension to the question of the revue's geographical scope: translation. *L'Éphémère's* innovative approach to translation as a creative activity in its own right has already been underlined, but many other revues use the inclusion of translated works (original literary work, but also essays and regular contributions by foreign contributors) to confirm their commitment to as broad a dialogue as possible with the creative arts and its actors. Although it did not strictly speaking present itself as a translation, *VVV*, the American publication of exiled French surrealists during the Second World War, also underlines the importance of this publication in conveying the principles and objectives of this exiled 'community' across the linguistic and geographical boundaries in which they found themselves. The French-Canadian *Liberté* and Moroccan *Souffles* (with its Arabic counterpart *Anfas*) also represent revues whose relationship to translation is defined by very specific geo-linguistic issues that shaped both the content and tone of these publications.

Overall, it is fair to say that the impact of French-language revues on English speaking readers has been limited due to the absence of translated publications. Apart from the rare example provided by the bilingual French

- 2 Le Bris's search for inspiration across the channel is an interesting contrast to French perceptions of English literary periodical culture in the late nineteenth century. In 1892, for example, Remy de Gourmont (founder of the *Mercure de France* and co-editor, with Alfred Jarry, of *L'Ymagier*), who was later to publish a survey of France's thriving 'petites revues' culture (de Gourmont 1910) complained that: 'en Angleterre, la "petite revue", la revue d'art, la revue sans préoccupations commerciales, n'existe pas' (cited in Binckes 2010, 71; Binckes' study offers a fascinating account of how cross Channel literary exchange influenced the development of avant-garde magazines in Britain).

and English *Revue du Monde Noir* (1931–1932), it is only a certain form of canonization or anthologization – such as a selection of key interventions in a periodical and their translation, as in *The ‘Tel Quel’ Reader* (French and Lack 1998), or *Encounter*, the Anglophone counterpart to *Preuves*, or *Gulliver*, which drew in part on material previously published in *Granta*. The *Tel Quel* example of translation into an anthology seems to tend to be also finite, in the sense that *Tel Quel* has a historic position because it no longer exists as a publication, in contradistinction to the *NRF*, *Esprit* or *Les Temps modernes*, which, by virtue of their continued existence, have yet to be immortalized in anthologies.

## The Revue, the Individual and the ‘Community’

A key part of the revue’s critical value is the contrast it provides with glossy, anthologies that tend to present literary and cultural movements – and their personalities – as well-organized, coherent and harmonious in the relationship with their times. For the truth is that any cultural period is a complex and often untidy entanglement of competing ideas, individuals and groups, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the fissured milieu of the revue. As the following chapters underline, many publications suggest what Michael G. Kelly here terms the ‘sociability’ of the revue, but also reveal what he sees as the ‘parallel solitudes’ of this composite form. The inevitable tension arising from this network of personal investment underpinning the collective project of the revue means its cooperative venture runs the decided risk of becoming either a series of fragmented relationships or of transforming into factionalism. Needless to say, this is a risk that can be greatly allayed or compounded by strong leadership – individual or collective – that is capable of facing up to setbacks and directing editorial policy with clarity and commitment.

Whatever the truth behind the relationships sustaining revues, most arise from and convey a sense of dynamic cooperation between individuals

with a shared approach to cultural production. Indeed, in his analysis of the avant-garde *Le Grand Jeu*, Kelly argues that it is the very dynamics of the revue form itself that impart a sense of unity and cohesion upon its founders and serves as a tool allowing them to carve out a distinctive space for themselves even when tensions between group and individual identity persisted. Indeed, more than others, it is often poetry revues such as *Le Grand Jeu* and also *III<sup>me</sup> Convoi* that seem to intensify the inherent contradiction of what Kelly identifies as the revue's principle of the 'group as union and of maximum eclecticism'. For whilst the collective nature of the revue may initially appear to unite the often solitary poet with others who share similar interests, the more long-term project can often expose the difficulty of abandoning the individual literary subject in favour of the group. Divergence of opinion within a revue's cover can also be encouraged in the name of cultural dialogue, an aim that all revues can be said to share regardless of how they achieve it or whom they choose to converse with or not. Other revues reveal the ways in which a range of different and even opposing opinion can be expressed in a manner that is harmonious and far from doctrinaire. Indeed, Alexandre Gefen attributes the success of the *Revue Blanche* to the absence of any real 'esprit de groupe', and sees its privileging of individual opinion, and the tensions this betokens, as the key to its success.

Other revues reinforce their sense of community by presenting themselves in strong opposition to other movements and publications. Here again, avant-garde publications provide a fascinating example of the revues ability to use 'shock tactics' in order to target their opponents and gain the attention of those who might be tempted to become part of their community. Patrick Suter's analysis of *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* demonstrates how, in content and layout, the revue can incite, provoke, share with and educate its readers in a project designed to create an 'œuvre communautaire' that stands in direct contrast to the hypocrisy and partisanship of what this publication dismissed as the 'collective' project of the print media. On the other hand, Roxane Jubert's presentation of the avant-garde *Lettrisme* shows how such provocation can cut itself off from any potential allies because of an overly aggressive rhetoric. Despite an almost twenty-year publishing record – albeit of erratic periodicity – and

a content that was both broad-ranging and plural in its focus, *Lettrisme* was only partially successful in drawing in others to its own Lettriste community. Jubert attributes this to a movement that did not shy away from using the revue to attack its opponents in a hostile and aggressive manner and whose publication of confidential correspondence from its opponents undermined in the most extreme manner the notion of the revue's collaborative project. Jubert also identifies the tendency to revert to a highly 'specific' and even 'hermetic' vocabulary as alienating readers and preventing a genuine expansion of its own 'community'.

Whilst Surrealism and its publications may appear to offer an easy association with the notions of 'rupture' and radical differentiation, feuds within the revue's community are, as examples such as *Tel Quel* suggest, nonetheless a common feature of this form. Soheila Esmaili's chapter, if not quite describing a spat, underlines nonetheless the power that established revues can wield in determining the longevity of any movement and the amount of critical reception it receives. Any conclusions regarding the influence of a revue upon its 'community' of readers must be treated cautiously in the absence of firm statistics. Nonetheless, Esmaili's discussion of the muted and ultimately belated interest of the iconic *Nouvelle Revue Française* in an already declining Surrealist project begs the question of how the fortunes of the latter might have been affected by more consistent support from this unquestionable purveyor of literary taste. The danger of an 'exclusive cliquishness' suggested by the mechanics of such powerful, established revues clearly has the potential for creating grievances, many of which are played out across the pages of the revue. The quarrel between Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus described in Virginie Lupo's chapter, for example, may appear appealing simply to those attracted by the sensationalist feuds or spats between canonical writers. However, this ostensibly literary disagreement shows the very uncertain boundaries between the individual writer's private sensibilities and the creative project to which he or she is committed in their publicly available writings. The revue form is ideally positioned to highlight this and the quarrel ultimately reveals how the highbrow creative pretensions of *Les Temps modernes* could not hide what Lupo sees as the class-based prejudices of its founder.

Within such considerations of the 'community' of writers and contributors that underpins the development of the revue, the role of the editor – or of an editorial team – is paramount. The tension between subordination of editorial ego to a greater cause or the confident (on occasion even arrogant) self-assurance required to undertake the task of editing such a potentially baroque publication is frequently in play. Debra Kelly's chapter on Albert-Birot discusses a striking example of an editor more comfortable with the revue as a personal than collective venture. Albert-Birot allowed himself to be constructed by the magazine he had constructed. As Steel suggests in the current volume, Desjardins devoted himself to the essentially personal project of a revue in the aftermath of his son's death. Where *Les Temps modernes* is concerned, however, Howard Davies disputes this idea of editorial dominance and argues that 'it is simply not appropriate to view *Les Temps modernes* as the vehicle of a corpus of ideas elaborated, either within or elsewhere, by one man. It has always been much more of a forum, in which Sartre moved between background and foreground, as indeed did many others' (1987, xi). Nonetheless it is important to stress that the revue is overwhelming a space that allows writers to come together and organize themselves. Often the organ of a community, its principal function is to fuel dialogues and wider conversations (and disputes) in print.

Given the anthological and often dispersed nature of the contents of any one periodical and any one issue, we wanted to avoid in this volume a simple, descriptive approach. Some form of presentation is inevitable (even for *les grandes revues*), but the contributions endeavor additionally to offer a micro-analysis combined with a more global overview. This involves a detailed focus that can track back and outwards to survey the terrain, avoiding a simple 'tableau' of any one journal or a list of contents. Comparison is crucial here, as are the generic issues, and the latter in both senses, that emerge in the chapters that follow: first, the periodical as genre (with its procedures, common approaches, rubrics, and exceptions); secondly, the micro-generic arena in which each particular example of a periodical operates.

There is enough scholarship on the journals featured here – or at least on the *types* of journal here – for a more comparative, generalized approach to emerge, but one which does not ignore specificities but acknowledges

that the revue form cannot be addressed in isolation. Do we then propose a hierarchy or hierarchies amongst French and French-language periodicals in the twentieth century? For example: is *Tel Quel* the avant-garde journal of this last century? The answer is yes and no. Yes, because *Tel Quel* contains, summarizes and may even be seen to propel the French intellectual culture of the second half of the twentieth century and, by its surrealist dialogue, throughout the century. That is, there is a deconstructive literary history (emerging itself out of *Tel Quel*) according to which one could argue that *Tel Quel* begets *NRF* for us: we look at, judge the *NRF* today with knowledge of, through the eyes (in some sense, or to some extent) of, *Tel Quel*. But also, no, for although *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* is, as a periodical, (long) dead and buried, it can come back to be reassessed and to continue its intellectual work.

This introduction has aimed not only to outline the rationale for the contributions that follow, but also to point out the *pistes* open to researchers and writers working on the revue. We conclude, however, by considering those areas that, in our view, merit further enquiry. A psychoanalytical reading of the revue is, for instance, possible, and Marthe Robert (1972, 115n1) proposes this for *Le Grand Jeu*, seeing it as the field of Gilbert-Lecomte's fight against 'le scandale d'être né', 'l'organe de ce pari tenu contre le monde', 'une transgression permanente des limitations de l'être'. There is a further area that is rarely touched in relation to the periodical, and that is its fictionalization. First, the openly referential, with a reference to a real revue, for example in Paul Nizan's novel *La Conspiration* (1968 [1938], 11), in which we find *La Revue de métaphysique et de morale* mentioned. Secondly, a purely invented journal, of which a good example is Julia Kristeva's (dreadful) novel *Les Samouraïs* (1990) in which the journal *Maintenant* is a thin disguise for *Tel Quel* (see 36, 119, 127). The question of gender and the revue, to which less attention is paid in this volume than we might have wished, also merits further reflection, not least because figures such as the Nardal sisters played such a key role in the emergence of early twentieth-century titles. Michel Deguy and Andy Stafford both note, however, the absence of women from the cultural milieu of the revue, and this reflects the wider area of what we might dub the sociology of the periodical publication. Related to this are issues of finance, for although

a number of the revues studied here have been financially sustainable as a result of subsidies or circulation, as Deguy notes, few people involved in the production of the revue are paid, meaning that the genre may in many cases be seen as a vocation.

The chapters that make up this volume are assembled into five sections, presenting 'Landmark periodicals: *les grandes revues*', exploring the trans-cultural and international dimensions of revue culture in 'Cross-cultural connections', studying avant-garde periodicals, examining the histories, politics and identities with which revues are associated and for which they serve as a vehicle, and finally analysing the privileged place of visual cultures in the periodical publication. Contributors study nineteen different journals, and this selection provides a sample of the variations in the genre that we have outlined in our preceding comments. These range from a title that straddles the late nineteenth century and early twentieth (*La Revue Blanche*) to a short-lived publication (*Gulliver*) that reflects the uncertainties of French literature in the past few decades. They include the 'grandes revues' that have acquired monumental status in the French intellectual landscape (*Les Temps modernes*; *La Nouvelle Revue Française*) as well as others that provide a privileged insight into the particular socio-cultural and historical niche from which they emerged (*Civilisation Française*; *Je suis partout*; *Confluences*). Many of the cases studied reveal the extent to which the journal has played a privileged role in the extension on artistic and intellectual boundaries (*Le Grand Jeu*; *III<sup>me</sup> Convoi*; *L'Éphémère*), have served as a vehicle for the transnational dissemination of ideas (*VVV*), or have played an explicitly interventionist role in the field to which they refer (*Cahiers du cinéma*). A number of the revues studied reflect the presence of the form in the wider 'Francosphere', suggesting the ways in which periodical publications have supported the emergence of national and regional literary production (*L'Essor*; *Liberté*) or have contributed to political interrogations of the asymmetries with which Francophone spaces have and often are still associated (*Souffles*; *Présence Africaine*). Finally, several chapters focus on the form and literariness of the revue, analyzing its role as a personal and collective space of experimentation (*SIC*; *Lettrisme*). Heterogeneous and uneven in form, however, it would nevertheless be difficult to talk of a poetics of the periodical; for its content

varies dramatically, from regular and extensive ‘chroniques’, offering a potted survey of contemporary intellectual life, to publications of which each issue is discretely themed. Similarly, since it is complex and fragmented in terms of genre, the journal cannot be defined in relation to a single textual form: it may be constituted by reviews, poems, essays, travel writing, short stories and other new writing, or, with its often anthological function, by any combination of these.

A collection such as the present one does not as a result aspire to comprehensiveness, but seeks instead through exemplification to provide an understanding of the revue as an autonomous publication but also of revues as interrelated networks of publications. At the same time, the emphasis is on this type of periodical publication as a privileged vehicle for political, literary and artistic movements as well as a means for understanding the shifts in ideas, ideologies and aesthetics across the twentieth century. Traditionally central to Parisian intellectual culture, revues have also often emerged in a regional context, or have endeavored to present alternative visions of metropolitan culture and identity. Moreover, as has been suggested, the periodical journal has played a central role in the emergence of Francophone literature and thought, as well as in the elaboration of Francophone postcolonial identities and sensibilities. The often subversive role of the review underlines the need to consider the material conditions of its production, which may range from the artisanal or clandestine to the sumptuous. The revue is an eclectic form that lends itself to often unusual juxtapositions of context; it serves strategic purposes, responding to the immediate demands of the moment, but at the same time remains programmatic, and is capable of projecting a long term vision through the accumulation of numbers. Increasingly, an economic agenda dictates a title’s fortunes: many periodicals have been compelled to close since the Second World War, many others have survived for only several issues. New technologies offer, however, new directions in periodical publishing, allowing a reduction of overheads and potentially unlimited distribution. As the twenty-first century revue adopts new forms and discovers fresh audiences, it remains a compelling, even essential object of study.



DAVID STEEL

## Une revue méconnue: Paul Desjardins et sa *Civilisation Française*

Il est rare qu'une revue naisse d'une mort. C'est le cas pourtant, en un sens, de *La Civilisation Française*. Le 18 juillet 1918, Michel, fils de Paul et Amélie Desjardins, est tué d'une balle au front au cours des derniers combats de la Grande Guerre. Une belle lettre à Jacques Copeau du 15 septembre 1918 décrit la réaction courageuse du père endeuillé :

La douleur m'éprouve autrement que je ne m'y attendais. Je m'y attendais, certes mais comme à une chute. Au lieu d'y tomber, je me redresse, je fais front, je ne cède pas [...] la mort consentie de Michel est un acte, le deuil de cette mort doit en être un [...] j'ai résolu de concentrer ce qui me reste de forces pour le vouer sans partage à la cause que la dépense de notre propre sang rend plus chère. Or que puis-je? – Quelque chose de faible qui pourtant n'est pas superflu. Veiller à ce que l'idée que la France offre d'elle-même soit nette et vraiment aimable. Cet objet sans doute est trop vaste. Je veux dire, pratiquement, organiser *une direction pour l'action universitaire française hors de France*. J'ai fait accepter cette idée à M. Klobukowski, commissaire général de l'information et de la propagande, au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Me voici donc posté dans un bureau affecté à ce service, 3, rue François 1<sup>er</sup>. Je dois, à partir d'octobre, faire paraître chaque mois un fascicule de 80 pages in-8: *Manuel de cette action universitaire française hors de France* contenant des directions, des suggestions et une documentation. J'ai groupé une équipe d'une vingtaine de collaborateurs, membres du haut enseignement, Lanson, Bédier, Andler, Baldensperger, Denis, Ch. V. Langlois, Jullian, Bergson, etc. Pour la musique je me suis adressé à notre ami Emmanuel. Vous permettrez bien que pour l'art dramatique je mette un seul nom: *M. Jacques Copeau, fondateur Directeur du Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier?* (reproduite dans Heurgon-Desjardins 1964, 352)<sup>1</sup>

1 Il semblerait que Copeau ait décliné l'invite, aucune contribution de lui ne paraissant dans les pages de la revue. Le 15 septembre 1918, Desjardins écrit une pareille lettre à Ferdinand Brunot, voir F. Chaubet, *La Politique culturelle française et la diplomatie de la langue: l'Alliance Française 1883-1940* (2006), 152.

La veille déjà, Desjardins avait écrit, dans à peu près les mêmes termes, à Hugh Fraser Stewart, *clergyman* britannique universitaire, spécialiste de Boèce et, comme lui-même, de Pascal, qui enseignait le français à Trinity College à Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> Il avait invité Stewart à ses Entretiens de Pontigny avant-guerre et les deux hommes, qui deviendront des amis, étaient maintenant en train d'éditer ensemble une anthologie de textes sur le patriotisme français, publication qui ne verra le jour, à la Cambridge University Press, sous le titre *French Patriotism in the Nineteenth Century 1814–1833*, qu'en 1923. A Stewart il présente son projet ainsi:

Voulant convertir ma douleur en énergie, je me suis chargé d'une mission patriotique d'ailleurs simple et sans péril, mais qui me paraît plus qu'utile. Il s'agit de coordonner et de diriger *l'action universitaire française hors de France*. Notre Ministère des Affaires Étrangères me confie un bureau dans son bâtiment avec le titre de secrétaire rédacteur, pour que je fasse paraître chaque mois un Guide-Manuel (80 pages in-8) de ladite action universitaire. Une vingtaine de collègues du Haut Enseignement français – sciences, lettres, histoire, droit, art – y contribuent; je ne suis que le metteur en oeuvre. Le premier numéro doit paraître le 25 octobre. Mais pour nouer les amarres de cette entreprise dans les universités britanniques, j'aurais besoin d'être piloté – par vous s'il vous plaît – et de faire quelques escales. Il s'agit ou de rassembler quelque part ou d'aller visiter à domicile les professeurs d'université amis de notre pays, ou plutôt partisans de la formation d'une grande république intellectuelle d'occident. Veuillez chercher dans votre livre d'adresses ou dans votre mémoire les noms des personnes disposées à favoriser cette tentative. Je sais qu'elle est selon votre Cœur.<sup>3</sup>

- 2 H.F. Stewart (1863–1948), Fellow et Dean de St John's College (1907–1918), Fellow et Praelector en Français à Trinity College (1918–1944), University Reader en Français à partir de 1922, joua un rôle primordial dans le développement de l'enseignement universitaire des langues vivantes en Angleterre. Il publia *The Holiness of Pascal* (1915), contribua d'une façon non négligeable à Boethius, *'The Theological Tractates' with an English translation by H.F. Stewart and E.K. Rand* and *'The Consolation of Philosophy' with the English translation of 'I.T.', 1609, revised by H.F. Stewart* (1918) et fut responsable d'une édition des *Provinciales* de Pascal (1920). Avec A. Tilley, il donna *The Romantic Movement in French Literature* (1913), *The French Romanticists. An Anthology of Verse and Prose* (1914), *The Classical Movement in French Literature, Traced by a Series of Texts* (1923) tous à la Cambridge University Press.
- 3 Lettre de Desjardins à Stewart, du 14 septembre 1918, inédite, citée ici, ainsi que les citations d'autres lettres plus loin, avec l'aimable permission de Katharine Thomson, de Catherine Peyrou et d'Edith Heurgon.

Il semblerait, d'après ces derniers propos, que cette *action universitaire française hors de France* est elle-même aussi une initiative de Desjardins, la revue étant l'un des instruments grâce auxquels il compte réaliser son dessein. Si tel est le cas, le fondateur des Entretiens de Pontigny se trouverait être également l'instigateur d'une politique gouvernementale culturelle importante et de portée lointaine. D'autres détails de la même lettre à Stewart démontrent en outre qu'il conçoit son projet comme une démarche patriotique en temps de guerre. La France temporairement lésée dans son intégrité géographique, doit, par une action transcendente et compensatoire, élargir ses frontières intellectuelles en répandant sa culture dans le monde, de même qu'à un niveau personnel, blessé dans son intégrité familiale par la même guerre, lui, père, domine sa douleur par un effort de l'esprit et une tâche culturelle. Il n'est du reste pas impossible que l'idée de la revue, sinon du projet entier, lui ait été inspirée, non seulement par la mort de son fils, mais aussi par sa quête de textes patriotiques pour Stewart, car dans sa lettre il ajoute que c'est pour son *Bulletin des missions universitaires françaises à l'étranger* (c'est l'un des titres provisoires qu'il emploie) que 'j'utiliserai les laissés pour compte du travail que je vous offre d'abord'.

Revue donc d'une genèse intimement personnelle, qui a la singularité d'être en même temps appuyée par une action et un financement gouvernementaux. La publication d'un périodique qui vise à nourrir l'enseignement universitaire du français à l'étranger incombe non pas au Ministère de l'Education Nationale, mais, dans le contexte d'une action culturelle hors de France, au quai d'Orsay. Il s'agit en quelque sorte d'un effort de propagande pendant une guerre dont la fin prochaine n'est pas encore nettement prévisible. L'image officielle que la France projette d'elle-même au-delà de ses frontières est du domaine des Affaires Etrangères. Au demeurant, le titre retenu pour la publication, et qui ne manque ni de punch, ni d'envergure, exprime, par son épithète même, un patriotisme, un prosélytisme francisant, assez prisés par des périodiques ou journaux de l'époque, du *Mercur de France* à *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, sans parler de la proprement nationaliste *Action française*. Et bien que les événements déterminent que le premier numéro de la revue paraît six mois après la cessation du conflit, donc en dehors du contexte d'un nationalisme ou d'un propagandisme guerriers, reste la question du degré de liberté éditoriale dont jouissait Desjardins et

de la nature et de l'intensité d'un regard sinon d'une surveillance exercée par ses commanditaires ministériels, pour éclairés (Philippe Berthelot n'y dominera qu'à partir de 1920) qu'ils fussent.

Cette confluence de deux intérêts, celui de l'homme, celui d'un grand département d'état, d'un pays même, vaut d'être examinée de manière plus détaillée. En 1918, Desjardins (1859–1940) approche de la soixantaine, âge tardif, pourrait-on penser, pour fonder une revue. Il est toujours en fonction comme professeur de lettres classiques et modernes (très modernes, il fait lire Gide, Claudel et Valéry à ses élèves) à l'ENS de Sèvres, au Lycée Condorcet ainsi que, de temps en temps, à l'ENS de St Cloud et ailleurs. Poète à ses heures, essayiste, fin critique, il a donné, voici longtemps déjà sa *Méthode des Classiques* (1904), tant admirée par Gide. Homme probe, catholique moderniste, mais dont la foi pivotait parfois vers l'incroyance, il a fondé, dans le sillage de son essai marquant *Le Devoir présent* (1891), l'Union pour l'Action Morale, rebaptisée en 1905 l'Union pour la Vérité, organisation œcuménique aux marges laïques, qui, rue Visconti, organise des débats, encourage la réforme de l'enseignement, fait pression pour une action sociale. Et, en 1910, sur le modèle des 'summer meetings' qu'animait Patrick Geddes à Edimbourg dans les années 1880, il fonde les Entretiens de Pontigny, colloques où se réunit discrètement, à son invite, bon nombre de l'élite intellectuelle de l'Europe et qui deviendront, avec leur reprise après-guerre en 1922, un véritable laboratoire de la pensée européenne. Desjardins en somme, patriote éclairé et pédagogue invétéré, conçoit une revue qui sera l'extension par un nouveau médium de ses activités et ses ambitions de toujours – discuter et disséminer, dans des cercles concentriques toujours grandissants: l'école, l'université, les intellectuels français, l'intelligentsia européenne, voire mondiale – la fine fleur de la culture française. *Civilisation Française*, le titre, aux yeux de son directeur du moins, se contente de refléter une évidence qui frôle le pléonasme.

En outre, et la conjoncture est d'importance, le projet de Desjardins coïncide avec, d'une part, l'essor de l'enseignement du français dans les universités étrangères, anglo-saxonnes notamment, d'autre part la stratégie ministérielle française vis-à-vis de cet enseignement. En fait, l'accueil accordé à la démarche de Desjardins constitue une tactique dans cette stratégie. La politique pédagogique de la Troisième République, vigoureuse dès ses