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Visual Anxiety:
Deviant gender and depictions of the Jewish male during the Dreyfus Affair

“What do you think the truth can be in an affair such as this, which is shaking an entire venerable organization to its very foundations?” - Emile Zola Le Figaro 5 December 1897

In this erudite question, Zola articulates, though the Dreyfus Affair, the primary desire in *fin de siècle* France: truth in the face of doubt. This sense of uncertainty was subconsciously initiated in France from the tenuous foundations of the Third Republic’s “venerable organization” upon ruins of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War (a crushing French military defeat), and the suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871. Uncertainty became manifest through the perceived decline of France that crossed lines of economy, politics, and society. Decline was felt economically from the 1880s onward, as “France was affected for more than fifteen years by one of the most serious depressions that ever marked the history of an industrial nation.”¹ In the final decade of the Nineteenth Century there was a dramatic disillusionment with French industrial development and its promise to revitalize France’s economy and society.² It is through the emergence and public preoccupation with the “affair” referred to by Zola that France came to articulate its anxieties about the uncertain health of French society.

The arrest of the artillery officer Alfred Dreyfus in November 1894 sparked a series of events that would command the attention of the entire French public and ultimately be known as the Dreyfus Affair. Charged with treason, Dreyfus was accused of passing the contents of a confidential French military *bordereau* (memorandum) to the German embassy. His military tribunal in December of 1894 was swift and resulted in his exile to the penal colony of Devil’s Island in January of 1895. The incident was not taken up in earnest by French society until nearly two years later, when evidence came to light which implicated the high ranking General Esterhazy as the guilty party. Debate to retry Dreyfus or uphold his initial conviction dominated the French press dividing the French society into two camps: the Dreyfusards, who tended to be

¹ Mayeur & Reberiooux; *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War 1871-1914*; Cambridge Press; pg 46

² Silverman; *Art Nouveau in Fin de Siècle France*; University of California Press; London, 1992; pg. 5

leftist leaning and supported the retrial and exoneration of Dreyfus, and the anti-Dreyfusards, those who were generally rightist and did not support a legal revision because they believed strongly in Dreyfus's guilt. Most emblematic of the overwhelming investment felt on both sides was Emile Zola's 1898 letter *J'accuse*, published in the widely read daily paper *Le Figaro*, and addressed to the then president of the Republic. Ultimately, Dreyfus was granted a retrial in 1899 and General Esterhazy was tried for the forgery of the original *bordereau*. While the general was acquitted, Dreyfus was again found guilty by military tribunal, to the chagrin of many Frenchmen. For fear of his health in prison and due to overwhelming public protest, Dreyfus was pardoned in September of 1899 and officially exonerated seven years later.

Arguably the most significant factor of the Affair was not the miscarriage of justice by the French military, but rather the public opinion it inspired. Writings on and depictions of the Dreyfus Affair dominated pamphlets, daily newspapers, special interest journals, and even the avant-garde engravings of Vallotton, a member of the Nabis. As a result of its prominence and divisiveness, the Dreyfus Affaire was ultimately the conduit through which the French articulated their social and political anxieties, and the identity of Alfred Dreyfus as a Jewish man was used to reinforce these anxieties. A form of "nationalistic anti-Semitism" emerged largely in the 1880s, and it was during this period that the image of the Jew as "the banker who produced nothing and grew fat on the labor of others," was reborn.³ Because of his Jewish identity, the accusation of Dreyfus as a traitor to the French nation confirmed the fear of the Jew as a subversive parasite on the body of France held by anti-Semites who spearheaded the anti-Dreyfusard as a fight for the national health and preservation of France. In the lithographs of the anti-Dreyfusard journal *Psst...!*, the derogatory depiction of the Jew was repeated visually demonstrates the prevalence of anti-Semitic sentiment in fin de siècle France.

³ Mayeur & Reberieux; *The Third Republic from its Origins to the Great War 1871-1914*; Cambridge Press; pg 200

Over the course of the Dreyfus Affair, the social anxieties imposed on the Jewish body took on a scope wider than anti-Semitism alone. By virtue of Alfred Dreyfus's Jewishness, the depicted Jewish male became the scapegoat for existing social anxieties (associated or not with the Affair). In their visual depictions of the Jewish male, lithographic images attempted to efface his cultural, individual, and gender identity. Instead, he is made to be the signified cause of *fin de siècle* anxieties that were rooted in the fear of French societal degeneration.

Anytime but the present

The fear of France's degeneration at the end of the century took form indirectly as many looked to the glorified military past of Napoleon as the height of the French identity. In order to understand the Dreyfus Affair and its relation to the prevalent social anxieties (as analyzed through gender definition), it is necessary to contextualize these anxieties within contemporary intellectual and popular thought. *Fin de siècle* French society was fraught with concerns for the health of the nation and was held together tenuously by increasingly archaizing definitions of social normalcy. This was communicated in a simultaneous desired return to the glorious French past (largely defined by the contemporary author's politics) as well as an almost obsessive hope in the *Exposition Universelle* of 1900. The expressed desire to escape the present reinforces the perception of contemporary French society as in decline or stagnation. As previously noted, decline was economically felt as France recovered from the depression of the 1880s. Mayeur rightfully notes that, "contemporaries were more sensitive to the changes affecting the world in which they lived..."⁴ and any significant depression would elicit the anxious writings of journalists. Additionally there were the recent historical memories of the political crisis during which Third Republic was founded. The crisis of the Dreyfus Affair was perceived as a threat the republican system internally through the treason of a Frenchman. The identity of Dreyfus

⁴ Ibid. pg 47

himself brought this question of French societal degradation to the forefront for a number of reasons. Firstly, because he was a military officer, and the military was an obvious source of anxiety after the Franco-Prussian War, his purported charge of treason necessarily warranted comparison to the defeat of the French. Furthermore, Dreyfus was often portrayed as a foreigner in France. The foreignness of Dreyfus was twofold; first, he was an Alsatian (Alsace being the province lost in the Franco-Prussian War), and, he was Jewish (a minority in an increasingly anti-Semitic French Society). In my research, these factors of the Dreyfus Affair were at the root of the *fin de siècle* desire to be in anytime but the present.

Soon after the appearance of “*Une affaire du trahison*,” the first announcement of Dreyfus’s arrest, in the moderate rightist newspaper *Le Figaro* on November fifth 1894, two editorials were published in near sequence that romanticized the First Empire or drew comparisons between it and the Third Republic.⁵ In the editorial “18 Brumaire Judged by a Contemporary: after a previously unpublished document,” the author vilified the Directory by saying “The greedy politicians came together, and with good reason to do so, to fabricate the promises of the Revolution.”⁶ The choice of the terms fabrication and untruth (*mentir* in the original) was uncannily similar to language used to describe the Dreyfus’s recently announced crime of treason and appeared to be an undoubtedly intentional choice of the author. It was also significant to note that it was the Directory being criticized; there was, then, a correlation made by the editorial’s author, Dutens, between the supposed corruption of First Republic and the contemporary republican government. The Directory is again mentioned as Dutens paraphrased the letter as having traced “a lamentable picture of the state in which the misappropriations of

⁵ The first “Le 18 Brumaire jugé par un contemporain jugé par un contemporain d’après un document inédit” appears on November tenth, and the second “Une Affaire Dreyfus en 1812” was published two days later on November twelfth.

⁶ *Le Figaro* 10 Novembre 1894: “Ils rapprochaient à bon droit d’avoir fait mentir les promesses de la révolution.”

the Directory and its agents had to reduce our armies.”⁷ In this instance, Dutens explicitly linked the Third and First Republics by his use of the first person plural in “our armies.” While disguised in the discussion of the Eighteenth Brumaire, Dutens metaphorically voices his own anxieties towards the health of the French Military in 1894. Dutens culminated his article by subsuming the Directory under the First Empire by saying that “the first author of the Eighteen Brumaire [Napoleon], was in reality the Directory himself.”⁸ Here Dutens posited Napoleon as a crucial figure to the development of the French republic even before his coup and autocratic rule. Created in this editorial was a mixed metaphor in which the Directory was representative of the corrupt Third Republic and the inevitable 18th Brumaire, stood as the rightist coup d’état needed to reform the government. In his editorial Dutens provided solace for those dissatisfied with the Third Republic, by employing France’s historical legacy in his call for a return to the politics of Napoleon.

This rightist, or what became anti-Dreyfusard in 1896, call for a return to the political stability of First Empire would have appeared to be coincidental if viewed as a single occurrence, but the editorial “A Dreyfus Affair in 1812” published two days later reiterated this desire. This editorial recounted an event of espionage that the author found strikingly similar to the Dreyfus Affair. As Napoleon was on the verge of war with Russia, French tensions regarding the security of the nation were high. The colonel Tchernicheff, who was working as a Russian ambassador to France, rose quickly in Napoleon’s social sphere and became a confidant to the Emperor. Tchernicheff made the acquaintance of Michel, a relatively low ranking military official in the French War Office with longstanding ties to the Russian Embassy. They gained access to

⁷ Ibid. “...il trace un tableau lamentable de l’état auquel les malversation du Directoire et de ses agents avaient réduit nos armées.”

⁸ Ibid. “Succombant sous les poid de sa propre chute, le premier auteur du 18 Brumaire, ce fur en réalité le Directoire lui-même.”

important dossiers on the situation of the army and began an attempt to pass the information onto the Russian government. This plot was, however, uncovered before it was undertaken, as Tchernicheff's apartment was searched in February 1812. Many of his conspirators were executed, but the most significant is Michel, who was quickly publicly tried and executed in the same year⁹.

In this editorial the history of the event was recounted with meticulous detail, but other than the title, no mention was made to the Dreyfus Affair. It is then necessary to ask, to whom and who is the Dreyfus Affair implied in this editorial? If the rightist political slant of *Le Figaro* and the previous editorial are kept in mind, the answer seems apparent. Who else could it be except the low ranking official Michel? Undoubtedly, a large portion of *Le Figaro*'s readership would agree with the execution Michel, the traitor who physically passed on the confidential dossiers, and consequently desire the execution of the traitorous Dreyfus. However, what are the implications of executing a Frenchman for the deed of the Russian Tchernicheff? The issue which fundamentally linked these two events of treason was that of a foreign entity subverting French security. Just as Dreyfus was conceived as the foreign Alsatian from enemy country, as well as the foreign otherness of his Jewish heritage, Tchernicheff was also a foreigner invading and degrading France. This complication leads me to believe that the analogy being made between this event in 1812 and the Dreyfus Affair is a conflation between the action and position of Michel, and the xenophobic fear inspired by Tchernicheff who is ultimately considered, "the officer who had had the mind to not recognize [the affair of treason].¹⁰" Here the trend of the retrospective gaze is articulated in the successful execution (Michel) and expelling (Tchernicheff)

⁹ *Le Figaro*, 12 November 1894; "Une Affaire Dreyfus en 1812": "Parmi les pièces relatives à cette affaire, conservées aux Archives nationales, on ne trouve rien que nous fasse connaître quelle condamnation subit Michel. D'après Marbot, il aurait été fusillé."

¹⁰ *Ibid.* "l'officier qui avait eu l'esprit de ne pas le reconnaître"

of the traitorous cancer on the French body politic. This is made relevant to the Dreyfus Affair as he himself is expelled from France, convicted of treason by military tribunal in December of 1894 and exiled in January 1895. By implicating the Affair in the title of the editorial, the reader was expected to assume Dreyfus's guilt and embodied in him was the treacherousness of a society in decline.

I have discussed at length these two articles not only because of their related subject matter, but also because of their remarkably proximate dates of publication. They serve to articulate the specific *fin de siècle* anxieties of couvert foreign infiltration into French society and the far-reaching desire for governmental reform (articulated through the desire to 'return' to the heavy-handed policies of Napoleon). Historians like Forth, Mayeur, and Reberieux have also asserted that it was not the Dreyfus Affair per se that engendered the intense societal preoccupation, rather the Affair was the conduit upon which the pent up anxieties of the Third Republic were imposed. Zola articulated this concisely in his 1897 article "The Syndicate" by saying that "[Dreyfus] stands not only for present treason and future treason, but for past treason as well, for our old defeat is blamed on him by those who stubbornly cling to the notion that only because we were betrayed were we beaten."¹¹

In the anti-Dreyfusard, and consequently anti-Semitic, journal *Psst...!* it was not Dreyfus himself who embodied treason, but the xenophobic anxiety was imposed on the depicted body of the male Jew *ad nauseam* in the cartoons of Caran d'Arche. In one lithograph, entitled "The Dreyfus Affair," (see image 1) a racially caricatured Jew meets a German officer (depicted with pickelhaube) along a dilapidated fence, read as the French-German border, to exchange information. The German asks "And so, Father Solomon, where are we then?"¹² Because the

¹¹ *Dreyfus Affair: J'accuse & Other Writings*; Zola, Emile; edited by Alain Pagès, Yale University Press 1996; page 14

¹² *Psst...!*; August 1898; Caran d'Ache; "Eh bien, père Salomon, où en sommes-nous?"

Jewish man is depicted in profile, his identity is non-specific, we read him not as any specific “Father Solomon,” but as a Jew in general. Thus imposed on the physical body of the Jewish male is the entire degradation of French society and the treachery of its people. In contemporary newspapers, the projection of anxieties upon the illustrated Jewish body also manifested itself as journalists looked toward the Universal Exposition of 1900 questioning the ability of the organizing officials to combat the contemporary distrust and fear of the crowd.

The Crowd, the Future, and Passivity

The ideological significance of the 1900 Universal Exposition, in comparison to the 1889 Exposition, was striking. As enunciated by the diplomat, Vicomte de Vogüé, “the iron architecture of 1889,” was not “a point of departure on an ever-ascending ladder,” but “more like the culminating point of a descending curve.”¹³ Representative of France’s industrial prowess, iron architecture refers to the 1889 construction of the Eiffel Tower. The French sense of societal degeneration extended even to their development as an industrial power. In addition to French fears towards industrial development, as *Le Figaro* covered the initial developments of the Exposition in 1894 it expressed anxiety towards the control of the crowd in attendance. Appearing in conjunction with both the previously discussed editorials, and with updates of the Dreyfus Affair, were numerous articles that are fixated on the planning of the *Exposition Universelle* and the doubts of its success. The editorial “The *Highlights* of 1900,” [Original Italics] opens with imaginably the most ambivalent opinion of the exposition, stating simply that “the exposition of 1900 will be entertaining, or it will not be.”¹⁴ From his lackadaisical opening, Emile Berr (the journalist) rather conventionally recounted each of the sub-committees created to create displays to the French developments in geology, electricity, and Egyptology. However, amid this

¹³ Silverman; *Art Nouveau in Fin de Siècle France*; University of California Press; London, 1992; pg. 5

¹⁴ “Les «clous» de 1900”; *Le Figaro*, 16 November 1894

discussion of scientific displays emerged a sub-committee devoted exclusively to “the transport and circulation of visitors.”¹⁵ This is significant because unlike de Vogüé, Berr describes the issue of the crowd as, “one of those which most [preoccupied] the general commissioner,” and that he had, “the intention to create...a special committee which will submit all propositions on this subject.”¹⁶ In its relationship to the discussion of scientific highlights (*clous* in the original), this quote was particularly relevant because, by the late nineteenth century, French anxieties toward masses of people were longstanding. Under the Second Empire, Baron Haussmann had attempted to prevent future violent uprisings by widening the streets of Paris, and the rise in anarchist “propaganda by deed” throughout the 1890s were within the collective consciousness of the French. Berr mobilizes this anxiety simply in this article with the mention of a “special committee” to deal solely with issues of the crowd. While it may be coincidental that the publication of this article is contiguous to an article in which “Dreyfus is definitively accused to have delivered certain secret documents...¹⁷,” the placement is symbolic of the larger relationship between the crowd and the Dreyfus affair. As the Affair came to dominate the attention of the entire French population, both pro and anti-Dreyfusards manipulated contemporary social theory of the crowd to vilify the other faction in their propaganda.

In *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895), Gustave LeBon emphasized his era as the “era of crowds,” and that a shift had occurred so that “the traditions which used to obtain in politics...the destinies of nations [were] elaborated at present in the hearts of the masses.”¹⁸ In addition to the deviant political implications of the crowd, LeBon also insisted on the deviant

¹⁵ Ibid. “Cette question du transport et de la circulation des visiteurs à l’intérieur de l’Exposition est une de celles dont se préoccupe le plus le commissaire général. M. Picard a même, croyons-nous, l’intention de créer... un comité spécial auquel seront soumises toutes les propositions du genre de celle...”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. “Dreyfus est définitivement accusé d’avoir livré certains documents secrets...”

¹⁸ Harrison & Wood; *Art in Theory 1815-1900*; 1998 Blackwell Publishers; pg. 813

gender identification of the crowd as feminine “even when it was composed entirely of men.”¹⁹ Feminine crowd identity emerged psychologically, according to social scientists of the time; members of a crowd were perceived to be prone to hysteria, and were highly suggestible, both almost exclusively feminine disorders in contemporary *fin de siècle* psychology.

This trope of the feminine (hysterical) crowd of men was taken up by multiple visual artists, but Vallotton’s lithograph *Le Couplet Patriotique* (see image 2) captured this anxiety best. Most apparently, the crowd was indelibly conjoined as one entity by the mass of black garments through which only heads and hands emerged. Compositionally, the crowd was pushed to the front of the picture plane as the viewer was positioned to see the dramatic sweep of the balustrade. Vallotton’s choice here emphasized the frenetic claustrophobia of the scene as the faces grew feverishly contorted with shouts and howls. This singular male mass of furrowed eyebrows and active hands was made feminine not only through the psychological theory of LeBon, but also literally by the presence of a lone female dressed in a poka-dots. Set off by her dress, this figure was an omen of the potential feminine hysteria to which the crowd was subject. Hysteria, by extension, became violence enacted by the crowd, and even the viewer’s potential vulnerability to the persuasiveness of the entity. Thus in *Le Couplet Patriotique*, Vallotton demonstrated the frenzy to which crowds were prone and emphasized the degradation of masculinity when exposed to the feminine disorder of hysteria.

The threat of the crowd was also an explicitly stated anxiety in its relation to the Dreyfus Affair. As the demand for a revision of the Dreyfus case was building to a fevered pitch in 1898, a small tract was published titled “Public Opinion and the Dreyfus Affair,” in which the pro-Dreyfus Villane offered a psychological explanation for the development of public opinion, specifically in the Dreyfus Affair. According to Villane’s terms, public opinion is formed by “the

¹⁹ Forth; *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*; 2004 Johns Hopkins University Press; pg. 114

part of the individual himself...that is essentially passive, unless he will make the effort to combat his natural predisposition.²⁰” This document was foremost an attack on the anti-Dreyfusards and directed his critique on the purported blindness of the anti-Dreyfusards, arguing that the anti-Revisionist position (against the retrial of Dreyfus) was simply the result of blind compliance to the rightist press. The historian Forth affirmed this by citing multiple Dreyfusard condemnations of the crowd as an anti-Dreyfusard organ.²¹ Villane’s even questioned the ability of the public to change its opinion over time, arguing that “it was unfavorable for the public to accept truth when it revealed itself.²²” Here, Villane referred to the evidence for Dreyfus’s innocence that had emerged over the course of his exile and had been denied legitimacy by anti-Dreyfusard’s. Strongly pro-Revisionist, this tract calls for the self-consciousness of the public in forming their opinion of the Dreyfus Affair, and critiques the anti-Dreyfusard blinding of the French public behind the genesis of all public opinion, the press.²³

Public Opinion and the Dreyfus Affair also aligned itself with LeBon’s feminine nature of the crowd by using the terms ‘passive’ and ‘natural predisposition’ to assert the root of public opinion. To have imagined the formation of public opinion as a passive process was particularly interesting when compared to *fin de siècle* psychology in France. In his book *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, Nye eruditely traced the development of French psychology and its separate spheres for the sexes. From the first revolution in 1789, Nye cited the etymology of *citoyen* and *citoyenne* to demonstrate female (*citoyenne*) passivity in a time of “male monopoly on

²⁰ Villane, E; *L’Opinion Publique et L’Affaire Dreyfus*; 1898 Palais-Royal; pg 9-10 “La parte d’aciton de l’individu sur soi, en tant que partie de l’opinion publique, est donc essentiellement passive, à moins qu’il ne passe un effort pour combattre sa prédisposition naturelle...”

²¹ Forth; *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*; 2004 Johns Hopkins University Press; pg. 104

²² Villane, E; *L’Opinion Publique et L’Affaire Dreyfus*; 1898 Palais-Royal; pg 15 “Le predisposition naturelles du public actuel étaient défavorables à l’acceptation de la vérité dans les conditions où elle se révélait.”

²³ Ibid; pg. 12

political rights.²⁴ Female passivity was integrated into legal and scientific thought over the course of the Nineteenth Century, first with the institutionalized sublimation of women under the Napoleonic Code. Scientifically, it was tied explicitly to the female body through Sabatier, a professor of anatomy and zoology, who conceived the natures of the “sexed” cells as the “active” sperm and the “passive” egg.²⁵ While Villane’s use of ‘passive’ may have been intended to connote a lack of consciousness in the formation of public opinion, the concept was fraught in this historical moment, as it was applied scientifically to both the crowd and the female sexual body. In this context, passivity in *Public Opinion and the Dreyfus Affair* became a discussion of the deviant gender manifestations with the discussion of the Dreyfus Affair.

For men, passivity within public opinion, or the crowd, inspires fear in two levels: first within the previously discussed destructive potential of the crowd due to their passive tendency towards suggestibility, and secondly toward the degradation of French masculinity. Within the Dreyfus Affair, both pro and anti-Dreyfusards use groups, or the public, to illustrate the societal fear of French men losing their masculinity. Vallotton, an active and open Dreyfusard, uses imagery of the crowd to assert both its dangers (as in *Le Couplet Patriotique*) and the oppression of public opinion by the rightist press. Unlike *Le Couplet Patriotique*, in which masculinity is made primal and without reason, Vallotton’s woodblock *La Manifestation* (see image 3) depicts the crowd defeated. An empty foreground removes the claustrophobia of a group of bodies, and the attention is given to the white bearded old man and the fleeing wet nurse. Here the Dreyfusard crowd is the feeble and the feminine, suppressed by an implied anti-Dreyfusard authority.

In contrast to Vallotton’s Dreyfusard crowd, the anti-Dreyfusard lithographer Caran d’Ache utilized the visual trope of the Jewish intellectual in conjunction with imagery of the

²⁴ Nye, R; *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*; Oxford University Press 1993; pg. 53

²⁵ Ibid; pg 92

crowd, which functioned to illustrate the concept of passivity as it related to the degradation of French masculinity. Employed endlessly to demonstrate the frailty of the Jew, the caricatural type of the Jewish ‘intellectual’ is predicated upon the stereotype of the Jewish male as being entirely cerebral while ignoring the health of his physical body. Forth goes as far as saying that “among certain sectors of the population becoming an intellectual was tantamount to becoming Jewish.”²⁶ The cartoon “Noble disgust” (see image 4) serves to exemplify the caricature of *l’intellectuel*. Here his black hair and beard demarcate this intellectual in particular as a Jew. His grotesquely large head indicates his intellectual prowess, and his exposed back reveals his frailty as d’Ache marks the visibility of his ribs. The accompanying quote reinforces the lack of physical vigor in the body of the intellectual, and his self-consciousness of the fact.²⁷ Therefore, during this period intellectuality comes to stand for frailty of the male body, which is in turn coded as the degeneration of French society. All of this coded meaning is imposed upon the body of the Jewish male in these images, and the Jewish male is the prime target due to the coincidence of Dreyfus’s Jewishness. The trope of the weak Jewish intellectual, however, becomes subversive when depicted in a group.

Forth mobilizes the famous cartoon “Intellectual Baptism” (see image 5) to demonstrate only to the “virtually interchangeable categories²⁸” inhabited by the Jew. Although one can read this image as addressing only the variable manifestations of the “Jew” (meaning a figurative derogative), this image speaks to issues far more complex. As one reads this image mindful of the prevalent anxiety of French degeneration and the anti-Dreyfusard anti-Semitism, it becomes much more charged. The pre-baptismal line of characters, including a German and Rough Rider-esque figure, is extremely *diverse*. But rather than Jewishness imposing itself upon the men,

²⁶ Forth; *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*; 2004 Johns Hopkins University Press; pg. 82

²⁷ Caran d’Arche; *Psst...!* 1898; “Noble dégoût”; “: “I do not want to swim in the same sea as a general.”

²⁸ Forth; *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*; 2004 Johns Hopkins University Press; pg. 83

these figures resolutely sign the so-called “Manifesto of the Intellectuals,”²⁹ choosing the resulting Jewish transformation. The text below the image, “Only...it’s all the opposite,” is equally cryptic. What exactly is the opposite? The opposite here not the fact of conversion to ‘intellectualism’ (read: Jewishness), but between the visibility or invisibility of conversion. It is at this point that subversion manifests itself. By virtue of this baptism being visible, “the opposite” would then be the undercover Jewish conversion of the world. This subversive conversion story is even named; in 1897, Zola published an article condemning the propagation by anti-Semites of a Jewish ‘Syndicate’ with “mercantile rapacity,”³⁰ and desire to “exploit the gullibility of the public...[in this] vast and sinister undertaking.”³¹ Zola concludes with a redefinition of the ‘syndicate’ as all Dreyfusards who will demonstrate that “any miscarriage of justice [the Affaire] can be corrected.”³² Published in the widely read *Le Figaro* only one year before d’Arche’s cartoon “Intellectual Baptism,” the anti-Dreyfusard anxiety of a far reaching and multiplicitous ‘Syndicate’ is undoubtedly informed by Zola’s article.

The visual trope of the frail Jewish ‘intellectual’ has already been explained to embody a complex and multi-layered signification. In addition to these individual signifiers of masculine (and consequently French) degeneration, the depiction of these types within the context of the group or ‘crowd’ further confounds the visual representation of the Jewish male by imbuing his body with the political sedition of the Syndicate (which implies both Jewishness and the Dreyfusard mission as established by Zola). Complex and nuanced, this rhetoric of the Jewish male has often been overlooked in the reading of these cartoons, and it is not belaboring the point to do so. Upon these etched figures is transcribed the anxieties of the French polity and

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Baffier, Jean; *Objections sur la medaille*; 1898 preface pg. 1

³¹ *Dreyfus Affair: J'accuse & Other Writings*; Zola, Emile; edited by Alain Pagès, Yale University Press 1996; page 15

³² Ibid. Pg.19

ultimately their Jewishness is simply the consequent of Dreyfus's own identity as a Jew. As a result of the Affair, the depicted body of the Jewish male is effaced of his identity as a man and becomes the *tabula rasa* upon which the all fears of the 'crowd' as feminine, hysteric, suggestible, and passive can be inscribed.

Representing male homosexuality: the dog and the Jew

All of the signifiers imposed on the male Jewish body to signify the degradation of French masculinity boil down to a simple binary: to be virilely fecund or to be impotent. Population demographics of the time demonstrate that, at a higher rate to the rest of Europe, the ratio of live male to female births was becoming disproportionate. Nye cites the change over the Nineteenth Century, with 107 male births to 100 female births at the beginning of the century, and only 104/100 in 1890, with even lower ratios recorded in the urban centers of France.³³ Published in contemporary papers as the 'masculinity' index, these statistics were used by many scientific fields in attempts to cure the French man of his sexual exhaustion, and theorize what had caused this lack of male virility. It is important to note that scientific discourse regarding reproductive intercourse was focused entirely on male virility, this is because the sperm is the 'active' sex cell.³⁴ Therefore, if it is the male who fails to generate conception, he is degenerating as the ratio of the 'masculinity' index declines. Thulié, editor of the hygiene journal *Revue philanthropique*, looks back to cite the beginning of this degeneration in the sexual depravity of the Second Empire that feminized men and made "women into coarse 'viragos'."³⁵ French scientists hoped to correct the birth rate and homogenize reproduction during this perceived crisis of depopulation through their theorization of male degeneration. Consequently, any non-normative form of sexuality was vilified as subversive to the French race.

³³ Nye, R; *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*; Oxford University Press 1993; pg. 83

³⁴ as quoted by Sebatiér on page 9

³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 91

Deviant sex came in a number of guises for French theorists, but all “[vilified] nonreproductive, nonmarital forms of sexuality that threatened...patriarchy.³⁶” Thus, any form of sexuality that could not result in reproduction was a threat to society, and this began with masturbation. Dr. Jules Christian wrote that masturbation led necessarily to a sexual exhaustion in the male that would prevent future procreative sex. He also theorized that onanism treated itself with an intrinsic feeling of shame and repulsion experienced after the act.³⁷ Masturbation as a form of sexual deviance was considered an exclusively male vice, because the active sexual participant, the male, expended his sexual energy to non-reproductive ends by masturbating. This then reinforces the almost exclusively male-centric research of contemporary scientific theorists towards curing French degeneration. The French further developed an extensive identity of sexual deviance including fetishists, to which necrophiliacs belong, but the most extensively discussed was the homosexual, referred to as the ‘invert’ by contemporaries. Similarly the ‘invert’ was also overwhelmingly a male identity, as evidenced by the lack of prosecution for lesbian sexual intercourse, as opposed to the arrest for gay or sodomitic sex, during this period.³⁸ Through the perception of sexual deviance as “the degrading consequences of a weakening of morals in a profoundly vitiated society,” the seminal work of Charcot specifically states the correlation between homosexuality and the degradation of France.

Despite the intensive theorization of homosexuality as a sexual deviance, France was unlike the rest of Europe during the late nineteenth century due to the ambiguous legal provision for the punishment for gay intercourse that resulted in a primarily ‘social’ punishment, in which the masculine quality of the purportedly homosexual male was judged. Under the Napoleonic Code, homosexual acts were not specifically punishable sexual crimes. It was only Article 330,

³⁶ Ibid pg. 98

³⁷ Ibid. Pg. 101

³⁸ Ibid. Pg.105

the outrage to public decency, that was used to deter homosexual prostitution.³⁹ Because of this provision, to be legally punished for homosexuality one must publicly engage in the act. Coinciding with the increased publicity of the Dreyfus Affair, the 1895 English trial of Oscar Wilde was demonstrative of France's divergent policy at the *fin de siècle*. Unlike the Napoleonic Code, sodomy was made explicitly illegal under English Common Law, and it was because of this legal provision that Wilde's private sexual activity was put on trial, ultimately leading to his conviction reinforced by the stringent morals of Victorian England. In France, a case like Wilde's could not have been tried due to the legal limitations, allowing arrest only for acts committed in public. Because of this limitation, arrests for homosexual activity during this period were overwhelmingly made during police raids on public urinals, thus affording legal protection to bourgeois homosexuals who engaged behind closed doors.⁴⁰ Thus, a dichotomy was created in France between public and private sexuality. As a consequence of these legal limitations, the homosexual punishment took on a largely social, rather than legal role. "For the discreet [French] homosexual male, there was little need to fear direct police intervention...he had much more to fear, however, from the judgments of his fellow citizens about the *quality* of his masculinity."⁴¹ Here, masculine "quality" directly refers to the omnipresent *fin de siècle* anxiety of male degradation that manifested itself literally in the sexual health of the male, as well as the perceived male degeneration into feminine hysteria through the conduit of the crowd. Even amid the legal and scientific discussion, public anxieties remain crucial as the male homosexual comes to embody masculine degeneration as a result of his inherently nonreproductive sexual desires.

The logical root of French anxiety towards the homosexual can be explained through Freud's codification of "invert" behavior in his 1905 publication of *The Sexual Aberrations*. Here

³⁹ Ibid. Pg. 106

⁴⁰ Ibid. Pg.107

⁴¹ Ibid.

Freud divided the general category of the invert into three simple subdivisions: the “*absolute* invert” whose “sexual objects are exclusively of their own sex,” the “*amphigenic* invert” who is a “psychosexual hermaphrodite,” and the “*contingent* invert” who was, “capable of taking as their sexual object someone of their own sex and deriving satisfaction...from him,” when “any normal sexual object and imitation” was inaccessible.⁴² Although each was a threat to masculinity in *fin de siècle* France, the fluidity and potential anonymity of the contingent invert inspired anxiety. As a man who could have oscillated between normative heterosexual urges and deviant homosexuality, the contingent invert stood antithetically to the desire for transparency that pervaded France during the Dreyfus Affair. Taking multiple forms, transparency was desired, foremost, in the government by Dreyfusards who wished to expose the corruption of his trial, and anti-Dreyfusards who feared a continued treasonous exchange between Germany and France. As illustrated in the lithographs of Caran d’Ache, it was also demanded by anti-Dreyfusards that the Jew exert a level of candor within French society. This demand was pictorially articulated through cartoons like *During the Strike* (image 6) in which the Jewish male revealed his subversive and intellectual frailty, subjugating himself to the virilely constructed Frenchman, as the bourgeois woman exclaims, “give me peace...I’m a French woman!”⁴³ In addition to the degenerative depiction of the Jewish male as physically weak and feminine in his passive suggestibility (in relation to the crowd) there were also highly coded assertions of the Jewish male as homosexual.

To impose the societal anxiety of homosexuality upon the body of the Jewish male, d’Ache employed a symbol that becomes apparent when considering multiple images in conjunction. After examining the cartoons *Grandfather’s Party*, *Tomorrow*, and *Time to go* (images 7-

⁴² Nye, *Sexuality*; Oxford University Press, 1999, Oxford; “The Sexual Aberrations” pg. 185-86 Villane, E; *L’Opinion Publique et L’Affaire Dreyfus*; 1898 Palais-Royal;

⁴³ *Psst...!*; Caran d’Ache, November 1898, “Fiche-moi la paix...Je suis Française.”

9) two distinct visual trends emerge, the typically caricatured Jewish male and the unusual rear-facing dog with an exposed anus placed in the lower left quadrant of each image. Although the rear-facing dog was a pictorial trope employed repeatedly in the *Psst...!* images by Caran d'Ache, the specific visibility of the anus was incontrovertibly intentional for a number of reasons. The preeminent reason was developed from the inherent process of lithography. On a lithographic print, the original plate must have been carved away in order for a mark to be printed as black on the still smooth surface of the plate. Therefore, every black mark that was visually read as positive space was the result of intentional and conscious choices, on the part of the artist, to compose what is depicted. The amount of effort expended by d'Ache on etching the minute, and anatomically correct, detail of a dogs' anus was indicative of his artistic intention. Repetition of this peculiar trope over the course of multiple images also reinforces the conscious choice of the lithographer in making these details. It is also necessary to note that the anus is not always depicted on similarly positioned dogs in d'Ache's lithography. In *A White Lie* (image 10), the characteristic rear-facing dog is positioned in the same lower left corner, but conspicuously absent is the etched anus. His choice to include this detail appears all the more cognizant in its absence, leading one to question the intended significance of this "hidden in plain sight" visual metaphor.

The dog himself and his specific rear facing depiction was an imagery charged with connotations of homosexuality in *fin de siècle* France. Within his medical discourse, Ambroise Tardieu, physician of the Paris police prefecture, "claimed in 1857 that the pederasts picked up from public urinals possessed penises shaped like those of dogs, while their passive partners had the rounded and soft contours of women."⁴⁴ Making analogous gay sex and the anatomy of the dog relates homosexual intercourse to the bestial, corporeal, and uncivilized. Additionally the

⁴⁴ Nye, R; *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*; Oxford University Press 1993; pg. 109

reference to a passive and female partner evokes the feminine and passive conception of the crowd by Le Bon, d'Ache, and Vallotton. The use of "pederast" here does not appear to have been used to indicate actual pederasty due to Tardieu's description of the "passive parter" as a woman not a girl. Rather, the term "pederast" was synonymous with specifically gay intercourse during this period, and embodied the connotations of deviance and molestation that were described in the aforementioned contemporary scientific discourse.⁴⁵ The image of the dog, therefore, became indicative of the perversion associated with homosexual activity. Amid the perceived crisis of depopulation and masculine degeneration the anus specifically etched by d'Ache comes to stand for something equally vulgar. Due to its conscious disregard for procreation, anal sex became the most flagrant and onanistic expenditure of sexual energy in comparison to the reproductive sex glorified during the *fin de siècle*. The cartoons of *Psst...!* were intended for mass consumption at the time of their publication, and the conservative anti-Dreyfusard audience may have salaciously received this particular articulation of the rear-facing dog simply as ribald humor. However, when considered in conjunction with scientific *fin de siècle* thought specifically towards the homosexual male, this pictorial trope employed by d'Ache is fraught with social anxieties when presented in conjunction with the Jewish body.

When he appears, the rear-facing dog with his specifically etched anus takes on specific roles within the larger meaning of the cartoon. In *Grandfather's Party* (image 7), a father presents his son to the patriarchal authority, as a group of male family members looks on, saying, "He did this all on his own!"⁴⁶ What the son did exactly is indicated by the note held up which reads "*bordereau*," translated as something similar to a memorandum, the word specifically employed when discussing the documents which Dreyfus was accused of passing to German authorities.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Pg. 108

⁴⁶ *Psst...!*, Caran d'Ache, February 1898; "Il fait ça tout seul!"

Implied was that this Jewish boy was coached by his family to commit treason and he is consequently praised by his family for this action. The coinciding background painting in which depicts decidedly German figures (as indicated again by the *picklehaube*), further clarifies the message. Similar to the news story “A Dreyfus Affair in 1812” this cartoon made the identity of the Jewish male one that is inherently treasonous and detrimental to French Society. Although one may have read the head directly above that of the bearded grandfather as female, the absent body gave no indicators and the features were so similar to the other distinctly male figures that one could easily argue for its maleness. Knowing that this is an all male group, the presence of the dog (and his embedded associations) appears in relation to the more evident message indicated by the text. Believing this dog to have stood as a symbol for deviant and non-procreative connotations of homosexuality, and believing the etching of its anus to have been intended by d’Ache, the presence of this dog in a scene of all Jewish males imposed on their caricatural bodies the French anxiety that masculinity would have been further degenerated by subversive homosexual activity. Subversion here is the sense that homosexuality, like the espionage of Dreyfus, would be perpetuated within the Jewish family. It this sense of deviance and traitorousness that was imposed on the depiction of the Jewish male by the anti-Semitic d’Ache that condemned him as the cause of French male degeneration, which was ultimately the root of French fear toward the crowd as well as treason both internally and externally.

The other two cartoons with the rear-facing dog, *Tomorrow* and *Time to Go*, speak similarly to the depicted Jewish male as the *tabula rasa* upon which every French societal fear is inscribed. In *Tomorrow* (image 8), this idea is expressly linked to the French preoccupation with the Napoleonic past, as evidenced by the editorials “18 Brumaire Judged by a Contemporary...” and “A Dreyfus Affair in 1812.” This link is made by the “high baron” who holds the tricolor upon which was listed the major battles of Napoleon and Napoleon III (Arcole, Eylau,

Iéna...Magenta, and Bac-Ninh). The high baron holds up the flag saying to the Intellectual, “Look at this gift from the Minister...I am going to decorate my cabinets...this will be very original,” to which the Intellectual replies “...and very modern!”⁴⁷ Although indicated as German by the imperial insignia on the high baron’s kerchief, the two men are physiognomically Jewish by caricatural standards. The surface issue addressed here was the xenophobic French fear of foreign (Jewish) cultural appropriation of the glorious Napoleonic military victories. As in *Grandfather’s Party*, the inclusion of the dog, now placed nearer to the center, imposed the same homosexual anxieties but to a different effect. Here, the Jewish male has been entirely removed of his French identity, and made wholly a foreign, German, agent. In *Tomorrow*, the connotations of homosexuality imbued by the rear-facing dog took the form of a xenophobic warning; allowing foreign appropriation of French patrilineal military history would complete the degradation of French manhood, as indicated by the homosexuality foisted upon the purportedly German, but visually Jewish, figures.

Time to Go made explicit the perceived threat of Jewish homosexuality influencing the Frenchman. In *Time to Go* it is the Jewish wife who speaks, saying to her husband, “Moses, I told you that he needed to take the same express train as the Reinachs.”⁴⁸ Her reference to “the Reinachs” asserted their Dreyfusard position because Joseph Reinach was an outspoken Dreyfusard who demanded a public hearing in 1894 and was a major proponent of its revision in 1897. However, the significance of text here is literally pushed to the background of the lithograph, where the wife and son are positioned, as the husband (Moses), a French laborer (as indicated by the comparative smallness of his nose), and the recurrent rear-facing dog are pushed to the foreground. Moses was indelibly tied to this dog, by d’Ache, though the tension of the

⁴⁷ *Psst...!*, April 1898, Caporal Poiré, “Voyez donc le cadeau du Ministre...Je vais en tapisser mes cabinets...ce sera très original.” “...et très moderne!...”

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, January 1899, Caran d’Ache “Je le disais bien, Moïse, qu’il fallait prendre le même express que les Reinach!

negative space separating them. The leash trailing the foreground followed the shape of Moses's right shoe, pictorially reinforcing the established link between deviant homosexuality and the body of the Jewish male. Presented with the inclusion of a markedly masculine French laborer, the anti-Dreyfusard anxiety of Jewish homosexual subversion is made explicit in the directed gaze of Moses toward him. Constructed along a diagonal, the visual relationship of the dog, Moses, and the laborer was easy to comprehend. Therefore, by having deconstructed each pictorial signifier, the anxiety encapsulated in the gaze of Moses was the subversive degradation of French masculinity by the Jewish male through his ties to homosexual activity. In *Time to Go*, *Tomorrow*, and *Grandfather's Party*, each of the Jewish men became the archetypal "contingent invert" who engaged in heterosexual intercourse to further the Jewish race, but also undermined French masculinity in the perceived threat of homosexual intercourse.

Just as the Dreyfus Affair came to signify cultural issues far larger than itself, so did the depiction of the Jewish male during this period. Ultimately, the Jewishness of these figures is a consequential result of Dreyfus's own identity as Jewish as well as the continued development of a nationalistic anti-Semitism amidst the *fin de siècle* anxiety of societal degeneration. Those issues feared by the anti-Dreyfusards were articulated in the cartoons of *Psst...!*. Although intended for popular consumption as humorous political cartoons, the anxieties coded within these cartoons take on an air of seriousness when read in conjunction with the contemporary scientific thought related to them. In these cartoons the Jewish male was scapegoated and made to be the atlas holding the ills of French society on his shoulders. He stood for the past, present and future; the feminine hysteria of the crowd; and at root the contingent homosexual who degraded French masculinity. While each of these complicated issues produced masses of written research and opinion, they are visually distilled as highly coded signifiers inscribed upon the depicted Jewish male body. The Jewish male effaced of his own cultural identity as well as his identity as a

Frenchman and he is anonymized and demeaned through racial caricature. In his anonymity, the Jewish male is made the vessel onto which the signifiers of degeneration, passivity, and sexual deviance are indelibly transcribed. It is during this period of 1898-99 that public sentiment towards the Dreyfus Affair came to a head, and the signs of anxiety imposed on the body of the Jewish male represented the nuanced and multiplicitous issues that the Affair came to stand for.

1. *L'Affaire Dreyfus*; Caran D'ache; Psst...!
August 1898



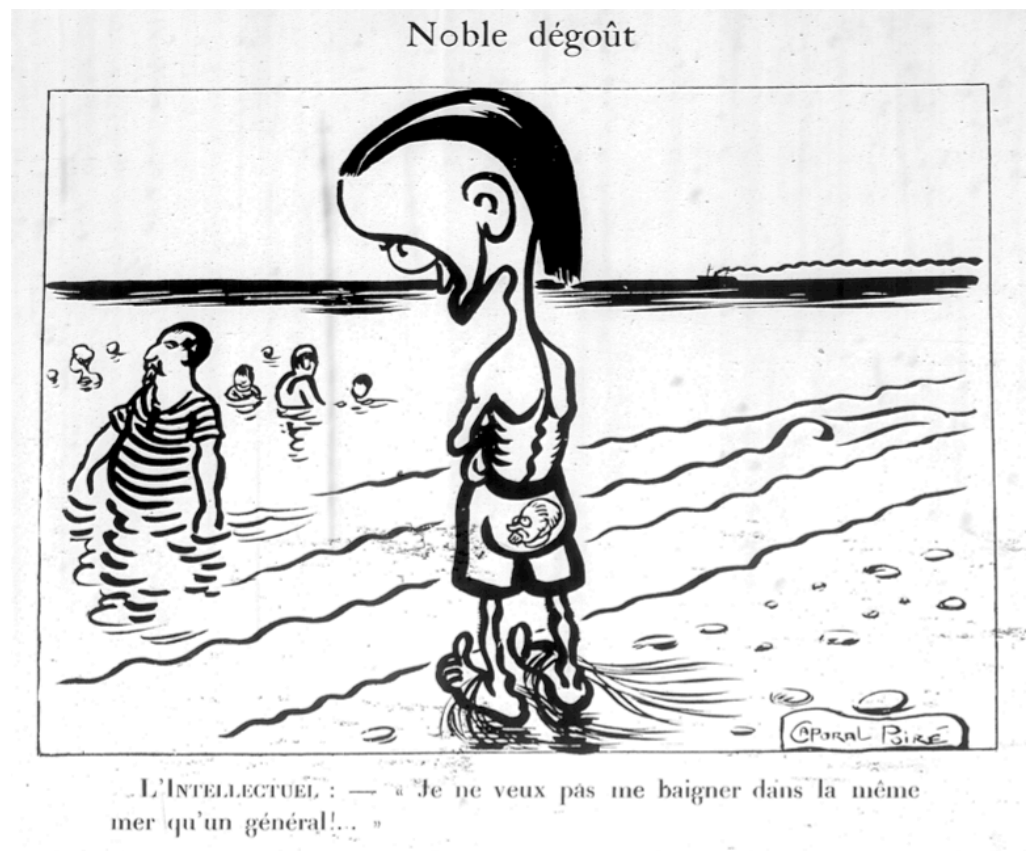
2. *Le Couplet Patriotique*; Felix Vallotton, 1893



3. *La Manifestation*; Vallotton; 1893



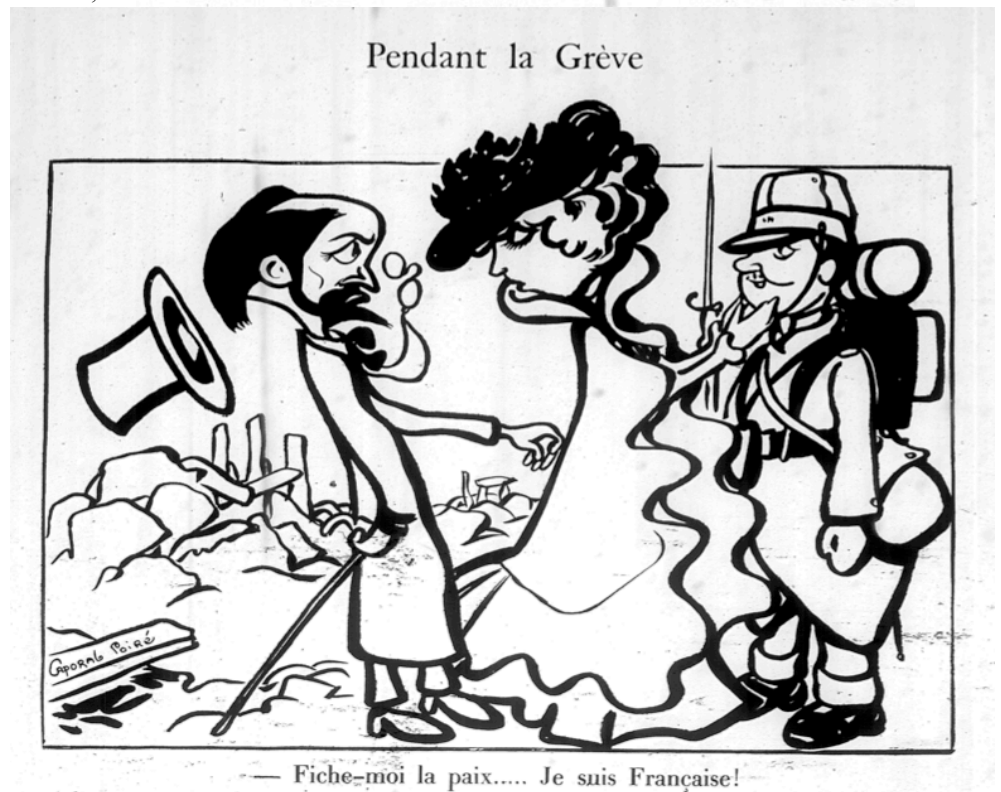
4. *Noble dégoût*;
Caran d'Arche;
Psst...! 1898



5. *Baptême intellectuel*; Caran d'Arche; *Psst...!* 1898



6. *Pendant la Grève*; Caran d'Arche,
Psst...!, 1898

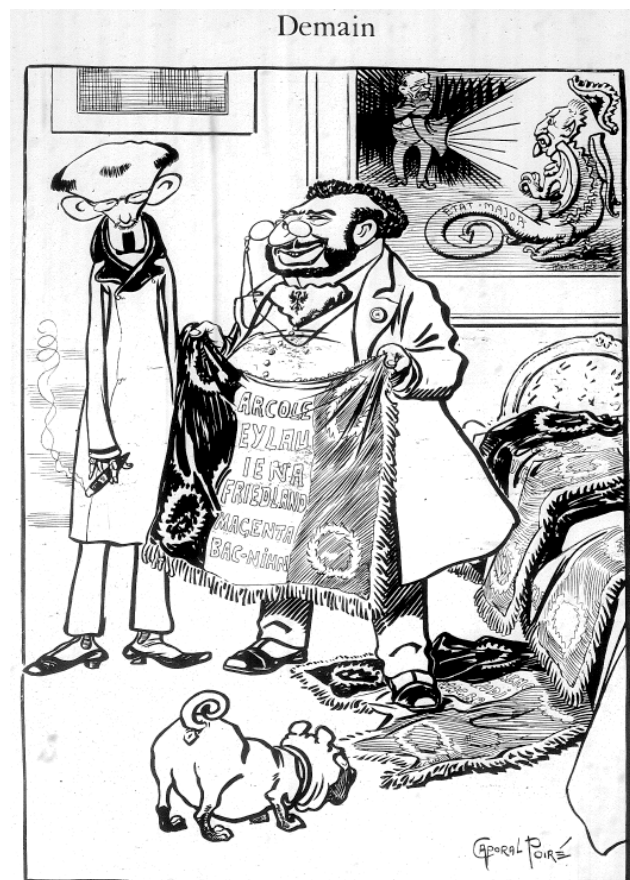


7. Grandfather's Party; Caran d'Arche, *Psst...!*, 1898



— Il a fait ça tout seul!

8. Tomorrow; Caran d'Arche, *Psst...!*, 1898



LE HAUT BARON : — « Voyez donc le cadeau du Ministre... Je vais en tapisser mes cabinets... ce sera très original. »

9. Time to Go; Caran d'Arche, *Psst....!*, 1899



MADAME : — « Je le disais bien, Moïse, qu'il fallait prendre le même express que les Reinach! »

10. A White Lie; Caran d'Arche, *Psst....!*, 1899



— Docteur, ne le détrompez pas... Je lui ai fait croire que le nouveau ministre de la guerre, c'était Reinach.