

**The project of Liberation and the projection of national identity. Calvo, Aragon,
Jouhandeau, 1944-1945**

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2006

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

ARTS AND SCIENCES

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IDENTITY. ARAGON, CALVO, JOUHANDEAU, 1944-45

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This dissertation focuses on the months of liberation of France, June 1944 to May 1945. It analyzes three under-studied works taken as samples of texts that touch upon the question of contested identities. The texts are chosen from the main divisions of the political spectrum, namely Gaullist, far right, and far left. Although the focus is on the texts themselves, I trace the arguments found in these works to the larger discourses in which they are inscribed. In particular, I address the questions of guilt and innocence, justice and vengeance, past and future in the given historical circumstances.

The first chapter examines “Le droit romain n’est plus” by Louis Aragon. I focus on the discussion of justice, vengeance, and punishment as they emerge from the text, notions that are embedded in the broader polemics among the intellectuals of the Resistance. I discuss the importance of music in this story where it plays the role of a structuring device. Finally, I examine the associations that can be made between writing, music and nationalism in the larger context of national identity.

The second chapter deals with La Bête est morte! La guerre mondiale chez les animaux by Calvo. It is an allegory using animals as protagonists and is in comic book format. I discern three loci in the narration that work together in order to re-inscribe the national identity in the values of the republic, thereby providing its young readers with a grammar of good and evil, patriotism and treason, guilt and absolution.

The third chapter is a discussion of Journal sous l’Occupation by Marcel Jouhandeau who flirted with Fascism in the 1930s and manifested his anti-Semitism in articles and a book. I read his Journal sous l’Occupation as a public testimony in writing of his purge trial that never happened. I investigate the question of fear, the process of self-exoneration in his reasoning, the question of the journal as instrument of self-definition, and discuss personal and national identity.

The conclusion focuses on Guy Kohen's Retour d'Auschwitz and ties the different works and contemporary journalistic discourses together.

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PREFACE

In the course of writing this dissertation, I received much encouragement and support from the members of my committee; I would like to thank all of them for their continued interest in my work. I am also appreciative of the encouragement received in the course of the years from all my professors in Pittsburgh, Bombay, and Paris. Sincere thanks also to all my friends. I would never have been able to bring this project to term without the support of my parents and parents-in-law to whom I owe heartfelt thanks. Above all, the material, intellectual, moral support of my husband Salvo were instrumental in keeping me on track and I could never thank him enough. Last but not least, I thank my son Valerio for always reminding me that there is life outside graduate school. This dissertation is dedicated to my parents.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

World War II was a time of division, equivocation and even civil war in France. Not only was the country divided geographically into the Occupied Zone and the Free Zone, it also had two governing bodies that contended for power, one legitimated by the Germans and present on French soil, the other a self-proclaimed “Free France”, exiled in London and recognized by the English.

The question of national identity in France at the moment of Liberation remains a delicate issue. Indeed, from the Armistice of June 1940 onwards, there was a deep schism in French society. The Vichy regime which was in power collaborated with the German occupying force, while the Resistance movement opposed both the occupiers and the regime in power. This seemingly simple dichotomy becomes further complicated when considering the differences of political opinion within these two larger factions. Not only were there Resistance groups from the whole political spectrum with their differences and dissidences, the Vichy regime too was “a pluralist dictatorship” (Hoffmann, 4). Within the far right divergent tendencies surfaced as well, some endorsing Nazism, others gravitating toward a fascism anchored in the French tradition.

The impending defeat of Germany, the urgent need for political, economic and social reconstruction, the above-mentioned multiplicity of factions and ideologies, the impact of foreign influences, namely the reality of the Occupation and the possibility of a future Allied occupation in France, the purge and punishment of traitors: all of these factors contributed to a

refracted image of the national community. Out of the reality of a nation in flux marked by competing political, literary, journalistic discourses came the need to rearticulate a cohesive sense of national community. In my dissertation, I analyze the function of experience, event, memory, affect, politics, and narration in transforming such a recent past into history and in using the distance thus created to define national identity. The focus is specifically on literature as a tool that constructs this distance through the act of elaborating a vision of the event.

I have selected three under-studied, under-represented works which are taken as samples of texts that touch upon the question of contested identities. My reflections are based upon close readings of three texts written between June 1944 and May 1945, and are taken from the three main divisions of the political spectrum, namely Gaullist, far right, and far left. Although the focus is on the texts themselves, I trace the arguments found in these works to the larger discourses in which they are inscribed. In making links between the texts chosen and the ideologies which inform them, I address the questions of guilt and innocence, justice and vengeance, and past and future in the given historical circumstances. I also underscore the types of identificatory symbolism each of the three texts promotes both in terms of integration as well as exclusion.

This dissertation defines its subject according to precise chronological parameters, that is to say from the Normandy landings on 6 June, 1944 to the capitulation of Germany on 8 May, 1945. At a given critical moment, which historical memories was public discourse choosing to underscore and how? How is this turbulent and divisive period in France reflected in writing? These are two of the questions I keep in the forefront in this introduction whose goal is to introduce readers to the perspectives that guide the case studies.

* * * * *

I will first chart out four works that investigate literature in the context of the war through approaches that are different the one adopted here: one is historical in orientation, one is sociological, one theoretical, and the last one is literary but focuses on the purge. My dissertation was most directly inspired by Henry Rousso's distinctions of the fields of history, memory, and the history of memory in The Vichy Syndrome. He defines this new field as "the study of the evolution of various social practices and, more specifically, of the form and content of social practices whose purpose or effect is the representation of the past and the perpetuation of its memory within a particular group or the society as a whole¹." This original and highly influential history of the memory of Vichy in postwar France covers the period from the Liberation of France to the mid-seventies, precisely because what interests him is to understand the phenomenon of the persistence over time of a given event in public memory and discourse. Rousso uses terminology from the fields of medicine and psychology such as "syndrome", "repression", "obsessional phase", or "trauma"; this terminology is not used literally but as a means to underscore the compulsive nature of certain types of public memories.

The documents upon which Rousso bases his observations are diverse: not only does he use cultural products like films or the media, but also presidential campaigns, public speeches, commemorations and anniversaries such as the fortieth anniversary of Pétain's trial. However, he does not limit himself to this kind of source. For instance, he analyzes the contribution of de Gaulle's Mémoires de guerre or Aron's Histoire de Vichy, both of which were published in the 1950s, to the synthesis of a particular view of the 1940s in France. He also pays great attention to public reaction to some of these through reader-responses to scholarly studies like that of Robert

¹ Rousso, Henry. The Vichy Syndrome. History and memory in France since 1944. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA : Harvard University Press, 1991. p. 3.

Paxton, through letters to editors, or polls of public opinion on relevant topics such as Pétain's sentence.

Rousso identifies four stages in the evolution of the Vichy Syndrome. The first of these was the period between 1944 and 1954 which he terms the "mourning phase" (Rousso, 10) when France had to deal with the repercussions and ramifications of the civil war. My own work is situated in this phase of the Vichy syndrome and identifies how these repercussions are reflected in the literary works I have chosen. The second phase included the years 1954 to 1971 when, on the one hand, Vichy became a less contentious issue and, on the other hand, the myth of "resistentialism"² came to be dominant. The third stage of evolution is the short period between 1971 and 1974, when the myth of resistencialism was debunked. He designates this phase as the "return of the repressed"³ and identifies with precision the moment of its inception: the release of Marcel Ophuls' film *Le chagrin et la pitié* in April 1971. This stage in turn induced the last phase, from 1974 to the moment of writing, which was characterized by both the resurgence of Jewish memory and by the role played by the memory of the Occupation in French political debates.

By studying the memory of Vichy, Rousso shows us that a memory about which there seems to be a consensus evolves over time. As Robert Paxton has pointed out, "Rousso's book has the merit of reminding us that public memory is neither stable nor automatic⁴." His project is

² Rousso differentiates between the acceptance of this term as used by the opponents of the purge, and his own understanding of it in the following terms: "By resistentialism I mean, first, a process that sought to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime and its impact on French society, *including its most negative aspects*; second, the construction of an object of memory, the "Resistance", whose significance transcended by far the sum of its active parts (...) and whose existence was embodied chiefly in certain sites and groups, such as the Gaullists and Communists, associated with fully elaborated ideologies; and third, the identification of this "Resistance" with the nation as a whole, a characteristic feature of the Gaullist version of the myth." Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 10.

³ Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 10.

⁴ Robert Paxton. "Trick of memory" in *The New York Review of Books* 7 November 1991. Copyright © 1963-2005 NYREV, Inc. 28 September 2005. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/3110>

a vast enterprise, covering several decades and a variety of sources. Like Rousso, I study the types of memories the text or image wants to perpetuate or forget in the three works I analyze in my dissertation. What differentiates my project from Rousso's is mainly the brief period it focuses upon and the limited number of documents it analyzes. Furthermore, Rousso considers the way in which these memories evolved, whereas this dissertation focuses on the context in which these works were written, giving more weight to the original intent and the way they would have been understood at the time of publication.

Gisèle Sapiro's La guerre des écrivains, 1940 – 1953 is an extensive investigation of the role of the writer in France during and immediately after World War II. Sapiro charts the paths taken by 185 writers who active wrote and published during the years 1940 - 1944. Being a sociologist by training, she factors into her analysis a number of variables: she identifies a total of 128 variables such as age, social origins, geographical provenance, level of education, political positions, literary prizes won, just to name a few. From the outset, Sapiro sets off from the premise that the Occupation marked “une crise de l'identité nationale” (a crisis of national identity) (Sapiro, 11).

Sapiro's study is divided into three parts. The first section entitled “Logiques littéraires de l'engagement” is devoted to an analysis of the role of literary logic in the political choices made by writers in 1940. Her focus is not so much on the decisions made by these writers as on the social factors that affected these decisions. Based upon the analysis of these factors, Sapiro identifies the principles upon which the literary field of 1940 is based. These principles underscore the attitudes and political commitments of the writers during the Occupation. The second section of La guerre des écrivains, namely “Institutions littéraires et crise nationale”, focuses on four literary institutions: the Académie Française, the Académie Goncourt, the

Nouvelle Revue Française, and the Comité National des Écrivains. Sapiro identifies the underlying oppositions which divided the world of letters during the Occupation, and the way in which these oppositions manifested themselves in the above-mentioned institutions. She takes these institutions both as agents with a specific objective and identity, and as groups with codified positions; Sapiro thereby demonstrates the different types of logics (state, media, esthetics, and politics) which determine the literary field. The third section, entitled “La justice littéraire”, explores the restructuring of the literary field after Liberation. The internecine conflict over the purge and the notion of the writers’ responsibility were determining factors in the post-war evolution of these institutions. Sapiro traces the various elements of discord within these institutions through which, over time, they “[s’amorcent] le processus de normalisation” (initiate the process of normalization)⁵. She establishes the end of her study in the year 1953 when “sans pour autant disparaître, les enjeux nés de la crise cessent de dominer la vie littéraire” (without having disappeared, the stakes born of the crisis cease to dominate literary life)⁶.

Sapiro’s project is superbly accomplished and monumental both in scope and size. Her analyses of literary institutions are insightful and were tremendously helpful to me in understanding the inception and role of the CNE. Rooted in the social sciences, though, La guerre des écrivains is a sociological study of the literary field of a given period. Sapiro charts the political and ideological itineraries of the writers she studies but pays less heed to their actual writings. Contrary to La guerre des écrivains, this dissertation has a much more restricted focus; it proposes a detailed literary analysis of three under-studied works which are deeply anchored in

⁵ Sapiro, Gisèle. La guerre des écrivains. 1940-1953. Paris: Fayard, 1999. p. 17. All translations, unless otherwise mentioned, are mine.

⁶ Sapiro, 17.

the historical circumstances in which they were composed. Furthermore, the approach is fundamentally different, one being a sociological study, the other a literary one.

The third scholarly work I will discuss here is a theoretical inspection of fascism in France, namely Reproductions of Banality by Alice Yaeger Kaplan. Kaplan's book begins with an overview of theories of fascism with the aim of understanding the appeal of fascism to intellectuals of the pre-World War II period. Kaplan establishes the cultural context in which fascism developed by underscoring the progressively fragmentary nature of both representation and perception as a corollary of technological advance of the early 20th century. Using a variety of psychoanalytic theories such as Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler, D. W. Winnicott, or Micheline Veaux, Kaplan sets the background against which to define fascism. One such example would be the correlation she determines between the Kleinian concept of "projective identification" and the manner in which the fascist leader comes to represent the ideal man, "rooted, omniscient, and beneficent" who offers protection from the "bad object", or in the context, the Jew⁷. Kaplan does not limit her theoretical grounding to psychoanalysis, however. She fruitfully draws from philosophy and literary criticism, to accentuate both the fascist worldview and its cultural manifestations. Other similar factors she highlights are the role of the voice and the relationship to language. Kaplan also addresses the problems of the critics who confronted fascism, specifically Sartre and Wilhelm Reich.

As the title of her book suggests, Kaplan wants the reader to bear in mind two strikingly different versions of the inception and establishment of fascism: on the one hand, Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil, and Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". Following the theoretical grounding of the

⁷ Kaplan, Alice Yaeger. Reproductions of Banality. Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. p. 6

first chapter, Kaplan draws on these two texts to underline the fundamental differences between Arendt's and Benjamin's understanding of the word "banal", and then goes on to define the way in which she uses the term. The ensuing chapters are case studies which focus on a number of fascist writers: Sorel, Marinetti, Drieu la Rochelle, Céline, Rebatet, Bardèche, and Brasillach. This charged and influential book corroborates the idea that "aesthetic modernization in the age of mechanical reproduction incites cultural intellectuals to an anti-intellectual heroism that never escapes banality as the refusal of speech, while this banality culminates in a tragedy that leaves us speechless⁸."

Another work which investigates postwar France and, more specifically the purge, is Philip Watts' Allegories of the Purge. Watts studies a central, defining event in postwar France, that is to say the purge of writers, from the point of view of four writers, Sartre, Blanchot, Eluard, and Céline. The idea of the purge and the debates around it, far from being topical, had a lasting influence on the concept of the role of the intellectual and the role of literature. Beyond being an unprecedented juridical event that put a whole professional category (of a certain political persuasion) on trial, the purge had larger implications: it simultaneously had a function of identity and of the legitimization of the Resistance. Watts begins his study by establishing the political climate in which the purge began and by identifying what was at stake in these trials, above and beyond the life of the writer in the courtroom. In order to do this, Watts charts the different positions available to intellectuals (using the specific example of Camus) when confronted with the plight of colleagues on trial, be they at the opposite pole of the ideological spectrum. Following this contextualization, Watts clarifies his use of the trope in the title of the study and how it informs his reading of the works he analyzes. He argues that the works by the

⁸ Berman, Russell. "Foreword". Kaplan, p. xxiii

four authors he studies can be read literally, but perhaps more fruitfully in light of the purge archives, because “Allegory allows writers not only to speak indirectly about the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of putting in place a system of moral and legal precepts about the roles and responsibilities of literature. Allegory speaks to us of the crisis of the purge⁹.” After laying out his premises for the reading of the texts, Watts begins the corpus of his study with a more detailed mapping out of the position and role of language, and thereby of literature, in the purge. This is done on the basis of debates, arguments, and petitions through documents such as pamphlets, articles, essays, and covers a wide range of political positions in order to highlight the intricate, disparate, and antithetical nature of arguments both literally at the juridical level and figuratively at the linguistic and literary levels. The following chapters are case studies of the four above-mentioned authors which close with a reflection on the long-term ramifications of the debates around the purge on postwar literary studies.

This dissertation has a great intellectual debt to the four works discussed above. They all analyze aspects of the Second World War in France and of the literature coming out of this tumultuous period. All the works I have mentioned hone in on important yet different aspects of France and World War II: one deals with the history of memory, one is a sociological study of the literary field during the Occupation, one focuses on fascism, and one on literature and the purge. Although my work belongs to the same larger context, it is much more narrowly defined, both in terms of time-frame and in terms of number of works studied. None of the books mentioned above defines its subject according to the precise chronological parameters I have chosen for my study. Furthermore, I use contemporaneous and not posterior documents which bring to bear their own sort of evidence. Being rooted in the moment, their topicality is not

⁹ Watts, Philip. Allegories of the Purge. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. p. 11

adventitious. I therefore imposed the criterion of contemporaneity of event and testimony in the choice of texts, thereby excluding considerations engendered by hindsight.

* * * * *

A survey of the themes that are frequently treated in the newspaper articles of the months of liberation reveal that there are certain ideas that haunt both the journalists and the intellectuals writing for these publications. Some of these ideas recur directly or indirectly in the three works which will be analyzed in this dissertation. What does it mean when Jouhandeau refers to the purge of writers and intellectuals as the Terror? Does Aragon's discussion of legality reflect the larger question of the legality of the GPRF? Is there a precedent to Calvo's appropriation of La liberté guidant le peuple in order to depict the Parisian insurrection of August 1944? We could say, in the case of Jouhandeau, that it was his monarchist conviction that made him compare the purge to the most violent aspect of the Revolution of 1789. Similarly, in the case of "Le droit romain n'est plus", the question of legality was a bone of contention among the *résistants* and was a particularly sensitive issue, whence the important place it occupies in Aragon's narrative. Beyond reinforcing the writer or artist's own arguments, contemporary newspapers reveal that these works do not exist in a void. They are in dialogue with many contemporary topics of discussion and debate. For reasons of relevance to the discussion at hand, I will leave aside event-driven articles that are journalistic and descriptive in nature, and look at articles that are more analytically oriented in order to see what allusions and tropes are used, and to what effect.

I will limit this discussion of journalistic themes to the ones that are directly reflected in the three works chosen for this dissertation. There are many others of great interest such as the effacement of Jewish specificity in articles on deportation, women's vote, demographics, the colonies, just to name a few; it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address all of these

topics. I focus mainly on a sample of clandestine sheets such as L'Action or newspapers coming out of the Resistance, such as Défense de la France, Carrefour, La France Libre.

During the months of liberation, the principal issues of discussion and debate in newspapers changed as the question at hand changed. For instance, those newspapers and tracts dating from June, July, and early August 1944, that is to say between the Normandy landing and the liberation of Paris when a large part of the newspapers were still clandestine, wrote mainly with the goal of inciting the masses to insurrection. This was done in a variety of ways; for example, the June 1944 issue of Action¹⁰ declares:

La bataille de la France est engagée, il faut la gagner. (...) Tous les Français veulent se battre. Ils ont parfaitement conscience de la vérité de la formule militaire: “De toutes les fautes, une seule est infamante: l’inaction.” S’ils assistaient en spectateurs à la bataille en cours, ils subiraient, région par région, l’action de deux formidables armées, et le meilleur moyen de diminuer les destructions et les pertes françaises est encore de frapper l’ennemi. (The battle of France has been undertaken, it has to be won. (...) All the French want to fight. They are perfectly conscious of the truth of the military locution: “Of all faults / mistakes, only one is dishonorable / ignominious: inaction.” If they were to watch the ongoing battle as spectators, they would endure, region by region, the action of two formidable armies, and the best means to diminish destruction and French losses is / remains to strike the enemy.)

This call is clearly an emotional appeal to the readers: in psychological terms, it plays on the patriotic feelings of readers (“bataille de la France”, “infamante”); at the same time, it appeals to their material and practical side by alluding to the reduction of French losses, surely a sound tactical move at a time of great penury on the one hand, and loss of life on the other. At

¹⁰ The cover page of the newspaper Action, clarified which group it belonged to: “Organe Social du M.L.N. et des Corps-Francis de la Libération”. I was only able to locate Numbers 6 and 7 (June and July 1944), but there are indications that this newspaper continued until at least December 1944. “Fonds Geneviève Delmas. Archives du MUR et du MLN, 1941-1945”. Inventory by Philippe Mezzasalma. 2003. BDIC. 16 Oct 2005. <http://www.bdic.fr/pdf/GDelmas.pdf>

the same time, it goads the reader to move from the role of the spectator to the position of the agent through whom emancipation can be reached. This same rhetoric can be found in Avant-Garde, a mimeographed newspaper distributed by and for Communist youth in the Southern Zone:

Nos Alliés ont enfin débarqué! Les Français ne sauraient rester de simples spectateurs de la bataille qui vient de s'engager, ils doivent y prendre part. Avec raison, le Général de Gaulle a proclamé que le devoir simple et sacré de tous les fils de France est de combattre par tous les moyens pour faire repasser le Rhin au plus tôt à l'ennemi, qui il y a 4 ans, submergeait notre pays grâce à sa cinquième colonne." (Our Allies have finally landed! The French could not remain simple spectators of the battle that has just begun, they have to participate in it. With good reason, the General de Gaulle has proclaimed that the simple and sacred duty of all the sons of France is to combat with all means in order to make the enemy cross back across the Rhine as soon as possible, [the enemy] who, 4 years ago, submerged our country thanks to his fifth column¹¹.)

Here, once again, the role of the spectator is demeaned through the use of the adjective "simple" which stresses the insignificance of this position. On the contrary, this same idea is reinforced by the both the command and the obligation conveyed by the verb "doivent", which in turn is mirrored by the noun form of the same verb, "devoir". Once again, the adjective "simple" is used to qualify the noun "devoir", but this time in a different sense: simple as opposed to complex or multiple, or as synonymous with pure and unqualified. Pairing "simple" with "sacré" adds the religious register to the notion of duty. Furthermore, the use of the expression "fils de France" and not simply "Français" adds yet another facet: that of filial obligation. The rhetoric is evidently meant not merely to coax but to inflame the readers as sons whose mother(land) is under attack.

¹¹ "Jeunes Français aux armes!" in L'Avant-Garde. Zone Sud, 8 June, 1944

The feeling that the article is both trying to inspire and provoke the readers is reinforced by the title of the article, which also serves as the headlines, stenciled by hand in capital letters. It reads: “Jeunes Français aux armes! Tous au combat pour délivrer la France!” (To arms, French youth! Everyone to the combat to deliver France!). “Aux armes” most naturally makes the link with the Marseillaise, just as the above-mentioned “fils de France” evokes “enfants de la patrie”. Similar examples can be found in other clandestine newspapers such as L’Aurore which quotes “nos bras vengeurs¹²” in italics from the Marseillaise, or L’Avenir which glorifies the Normandy landings with the headlines: “Le jour de gloire est arrivé¹³” and develops the allusion to the Marseillaise even further when it foresees the destiny of collaborators: “Qu’un sang impur abreuve nos sillons” (Let impure blood soak the furrows (of our fields)). Alluding to the Marseillaise indirectly or invoking it directly both participate in a move to inscribe the meaning of this call to arms in the tradition of the Revolution of 1789, however violent this uprising may be.

After the exaltation of the Normandy landings as seen in some of the newspapers from June 1944, the July newspapers attempted even more to galvanize the population into action. The co-incident of the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille was exploited fully. To this effect, the Conseil National de la Résistance published an “Appel” in the July issue of l’Aurore¹⁴. This long “Appel” takes up one half of the cover page, and is visually divided by lines in uppercase print which make it appear subdivided into sections. These apparent sub-sections are entitled “14 JUILLET DE COMBAT” and “14 JUILLET: JOUR DE PREPARATION DE L’INSURRECTION NATIONALE”. Under the first section, the CNR declares:

¹² “Etre digne des morts...” in L’Aurore. No. 12, June 1944. L’Aurore carried a subtitle immediately below the title of the newspaper: “Organe de la Résistance Républicaine”. The more Gaullist newspapers such as Défense de la France bore de Gaulle’s insignia, the Lorraine cross, somewhere near the title banner.

¹³ “Le Jour de gloire est arrivé” in L’Avenir, No. 15, 10 June, 1944

¹⁴ “Appel du Conseil National de la Résistance pour le 14 juillet 1944” in L’Aurore. No. 13, July 1944

(...) Que chaque Français fasse ce jour-là un acte de patriotisme, un acte de guerre contre l'envahisseur. Que pas un Français ne travaille ce jour-là pour l'ennemi.

Que tous, de Paris au plus petit village de France, manifestent leur exécration de l'occupant, leur volonté de conquérir la liberté par l'insurrection nationale.

((...) May every Frenchman, on that day, carry out an act of patriotism, an act of war against the invader. May not a single Frenchman work on that day for the enemy.

May everyone, from Paris to the smallest village in France, manifest their loathing for the occupier, their will to conquest liberty through national insurrection)

This rather vague proposition is followed by very precise instructions, some continuing in the vein of allegiance, such as “Portez les trois couleurs nationales” (Wear the three national colors) and “Hissez les drapeaux tricolores sur les bâtiments publics, sur les clochers et les cheminées d'usines” (Hoist the tricolor flag on public buildings, on spires and factory chimneys). Others, however, are much more explicit and openly incite the readers to

hâter cette victoire en harcelant l'ennemi, en faisant dérailler ses trains, en coupant ses communications, en lui barrant les routes, en lui tendant des pièges et des embuscades, en sabotant et en arrêtant sa production de guerre, en bloquant son ravitaillement.” (to speed up this victory by harassing the enemy, by derailing his trains, by blocking off his roads, by laying traps and ambushes for him, by sabotaging and stopping his war production, by blocking his supplies.)

These instructions are precise and clear, yet there is no consideration of any possible (and realistically probable) punitive retaliation by the Germans. Instead, the article proclaims: “L'heure est venue d'exterminer les tueurs de la milice(…)” (The hour has come to exterminate the killers of the Milice)¹⁵. The choice of verb here is striking: the CNR is not calling for the arrest of the Milice in order for them to be put on trial for their misdeed; exterminating would signify eradicating this entire category from the population. This statement is indicative of the

¹⁵ The Milice, Vichy's paramilitary organization that worked closely with the Gestapo, was responsible for, among other things, the repression of the résistants and the rounding up of Jews.

desire to define who can continue to belong to the national community after the end of the occupation. On the contrary, towards the end of the “Appel” a collective wish is spelled out:

Que l’audace de nos aïeux, aux grands jours de notre histoire, nous inspire à nouveau! Que l’élan qui jeta le peuple de Paris sur la Bastille au 14 juillet 1789, que l’esprit de Valmy et le souffle de la Marseillaise soulève à nouveau la Nation! (May the courage of our ancestors inspire us once more in the great days of our history! May the ardor which threw the people of Paris on the Bastille on the fourteenth of July 1789, may the spirit of Valmy and the breath of the Marseillaise lift the nation up again!)

Yet again, the mythology of the Revolution is exploited to the fullest, from the direct invocation of the storming of the Bastille, to that of the Battle of Valmy which marked the withdrawal of the anti-revolutionary allied armies in 1792, and true victory of the Revolutionary forces. Like the words Bastille and Marseillaise, Valmy too is part of the revolutionary iconography and represents the victory of a nascent Republic over anti-republican forces.

Similar to the article in L’Aurore, the main article in Action too aims at inspiring its readers and bringing them to action, and it also ends with a quote from the Marseillaise: “Aux armes, citoyens. Formez vos bataillons!”¹⁶. Although this article exalts military formations of the Resistance such as the FTPF or the Corps-Francis de la Libération, and also outlines specific actions the rebels need to take (sabotage, recuperation of arms from the Germans), it does not call for murder. On the other hand, the Bulletin d’information du Front national de lutte pour la libération de la France¹⁷ does not mince its words. Among the list of instructions it gives the militants such as committing acts of sabotage and taking control of German food or arms reserves, one of the items on the list reads: “Abats les boches, les miliciens de Darnand, les

¹⁶ “Pour gagner la bataille de France” in Action. No. 7, July 1944

¹⁷ “Après ce 14 juillet de combat, en avant pour de nouvelles victoires!” in Bulletin d’information du Front National de lutte pour la libération de la France. No. II. July 1944

traîtres!” (shoot down the Krauts, the members of Darnand’s Milice, the traitors!). The targets to be brought down seem to be mentioned in order of priority: first the Germans, then the Milice, then the collaborators. This exhortation is followed by an underlined sentence which spells the previous sentence out even more clearly: “En ce jour anniversaire de la prise de la Bastille, chaque Patriote doit, par tous les moyens, abattre un boche, un milicien, un traître! (On this anniversary [day] of the storming of the Bastille, every Patriot must, by every possible means, bring down a Kraut, a member of the Milice, a traitor!). This is much more than a mere call to arms to free the nation of the occupier, it openly advocates murder for treason as well. By the same token, it excludes members of the Milice and the so-called traitors from the future national community.

Given the calls for lynching cited from the newspapers, especially since they are coupled with analogies to the Revolution, Jouhandeau’s allusion to “les excès de la Terreur” (Jouhandeau, 154) seem to offer a different perspective on the situation. It is true that he was a monarchist by persuasion and would naturally underscore the more negative aspects of the Revolution, but the comparison is not chosen in a void. Given the overwhelming number of references to revolutionary imagery evoked in the press, Jouhandeau’s choice of comparison is an attempt at countering the imagery used in the dominant discourse and shows his dissent to its more positive connotations.

The attempts on the part of the newspapers to reinscribe the insurrection against the Germans in the tradition of the French Revolution ran parallel to another polemical issue of the early months of liberation was that of the status of de Gaulle in liberated France. The French waited and watched to see whether the Comité français du Libération nationale (CFLN) headed by de Gaulle and which declared itself the Gouvernement Provisoire de la République française

(GPRF: Provisional Government of the French Republic) in Algiers on June 3, 1944, would be recognized by the Allies as the sole, legitimate government of France. The point of contention, for the French, was whether this government would be recognized *de jure* or *de facto*. The former type of recognition, according to international law, is irrevocable. That is to say, *de jure* recognition of a nation, once accorded, continues in spite of internal changes such as social or political organization. Were the Allies not to recognize *de jure* this GPRF, it would have logically made them impose an Allied Military Government of the Occupied Territories (AMGOT) in France, at least until national elections could be held. This can be seen, for instance, in the June issue of L'Aurore:

Alors, vraiment, Londres et Washington discutent encore autour de la reconnaissance “de jure” du Comité d’Alger? Mais oui, et savez-vous quelles raisons M. Winston Churchill vient de donner pour ne pas le considérer comme l’authentique gouvernement de la France? Ne cherchez pas, vous perdriez votre temps. Aux Communes, le premier britannique a déclaré: “*qu’il ne veut pas imposer un gouvernement à notre patrie libérée et qu’il n’est pas certain que le C.F.L.N. présidé par le général de Gaulle exprime réellement la majorité de notre peuple.*” Ce sont des phrases que nous entendons d’ordinaire aux micros de Radio-Paris. (...) Mais qui donc renseigne les Anglo-Saxons?¹⁸

(So, really, London and Washington are still discussing the “de jure” recognition of the Committee of Algiers? Yes, of course, and do you know what reasons Mr. Winston Churchill has just given for not considering it the authentic government of France? Do not look [for the answer], you would waste your time. The British premier declared to the [House of] Commons: “*that he does not want to impose a government to our liberated country and that he is not sure that the C.F.L.N. presided by the General de Gaulle really [gives] voice to the majority of our people.*” These are statements that we normally hear from the microphones of Radio-Paris. (...) So who is it that informs the Anglo-Saxons?)

¹⁸ “La France, alliée souveraine” in L'Aurore. No. 12, June 1944

The Allied discussion of the *de jure* recognition of the CFLN is mocked right from the outset, first and foremost through the “Alors, vraiment,” that opens the article. It introduces a sense of incredulity which is later reinforced by the ridicule obvious in “Ne cherchez pas, vous perdriez votre temps”. By stating that the readers would waste their time in looking for an answer, the article underscores the preposterousness of such an idea. The reference to Radio-Paris further accentuates this by pointing out that the idea of the illegitimacy of the CFLN is something collaborationist propaganda propagates. The final “Mais qui donc...” has the effect of rendering the supposition of the Allies completely absurd and groundless.

This debate of *de jure* recognition went beyond the immediate issue of who would govern liberated territories and into the realm of the post-war position of France in Europe, whence the title, “La France, alliée souveraine”. Not being granted *de jure* recognition would automatically undermine the sovereignty of the nation and introduce yet another occupation of the country. The overarching issue at stake is that of national identity. First and foremost, this is with respect to the position of France in post-war Europe as can be seen in one of the concluding statements of the article:

L'Europe qui depuis deux millénaires prodigue au monde entier les merveilles de sa civilisation est marquée de notre empreinte. C'est la révolution française qui fit resplendir sur l'univers ébloui les principes de liberté publique et de respect de la personne humaine qui dressent la passion populaire contre la tyrannie hitlérienne. *En proscrivant la France même exsangue d'un comité pour l'organisation de l'Europe on en proscrit l'esprit.*

(Europe which, since two millennia, has lavished the marvels of its civilization on the whole world is marked by our imprint. It was the French Revolution which made the principles of public liberty and respect of the human person shine on the bedazzled universe, and which made popular passion rise against Hitler's tyranny.

By proscribing France, even [as she is] battered, from a committee for the organization of Europe, one proscribes the spirit [of France].)

Clearly, the heritage of the French Revolution is posited as the foundation of the nation; furthermore, Europe itself is shown to be irrevocably bound to France through its cultural influence. The specificity of the immediate past is thus effaced by evoking a glorious past in order to find a position on the side of the winners in the future.

The notion of *de jure* recognition is also linked to the notion of self-definition in terms of inclusion and exclusion from the national community:

L'autorité du gouvernement d'Alger déborde largement la masse de notre peuple en guerre contre l'Allemagne (...). Si l'on excepte la poignée de repris de justice et de traîtres embauchés par l'ennemi, on constate que la nation, d'un même élan, se retrouve dans le gouvernement d'Alger. Quel sortilège cache cette évidence à Roosevelt et Churchill? (...) notre peuple tendu vers son relèvement retrouve son âme dans la lutte et dans le sacrifice, [il] voit dans le général de Gaulle l'instrument de sa rédemption (...) dans la rude épreuve de force que la Patrie soutient victorieusement contre l'ennemi et les traîtres ...

(The authority of the Algiers government goes largely beyond the mass of our people at war against Germany. If one makes an exception of the handful of habitual offenders and traitors hired by the enemy, one notices that the nation, in a simultaneous / united movement of ardor, finds itself in the government of Algiers. What [magical] spell hides this evidence from Roosevelt and Churchill? (...) our people, reaching for its recovery, finds its soul once again in struggle and in sacrifice, in General de Gaulle [it] sees the instrument of its redemption (...) in the harsh test of strength that the Fatherland is victoriously leading against the enemy and the traitors ...)

The CFLN is thus shown to govern much more than just active *résistants* (“déborde la masse de notre peuple en guerre”). This is an inclusive gesture that also embraces the common man who occupied his time trying to survive. At the same time, it is a gesture that repudiates the

“repris de justice” and “traîtres embauchés par l’ennemi”; indeed, in the last sentence, the “traîtres” are merged with the “ennemi”, thereby automatically making them outsiders¹⁹.

Carrefour, a daily publication which was very Gaullist in inspiration, carried an article as late as September 1944 which still dealt with the same concern. The article begins in the following manner:

Constatant que les meilleurs éléments de la nation, unis sans distinction de classe ni d’opinion *dans la mystique de la patrie* avaient enfin réalisé la souveraineté française, nous demandons ici que tout soit mis en œuvre pour sauvegarder cette souveraineté.

Elle seule permet de sauver la France et d’éviter la révolution sanglante. Elle seule permettra d’affronter les tâches qui attendent: reconnaissance “de jure” du gouvernement, participation aux négociations de la paix, reconstruction et rénovation dans tous les domaines²⁰.

(Noting that the best elements of the nation, united *in a mystics of the fatherland* with no distinctions of class nor of opinion, had finally actualized French sovereignty, we ask here that everything should be put into place to protect this sovereignty.

It alone allowed [us] to save France and to avoid a sanguinary revolution. It alone will allow [us] to face the tasks which await [us]: “de jure” recognition of the government, participation in the peace negotiations, reconstruction and renovation in all domains.)

Once again, the *de jure* recognition is the top priority, and it is through sovereignty, the article states, that France will achieve this coveted recognition. The journalist does not define the term sovereignty; he does, however, state that this sovereignty has been achieved through “la mystique de la patrie”. The use of the term “mystique”, beyond implying a certain passion, also

¹⁹ Vichy’s politics were also exclusionary, though they were based upon race or nationality. In the case of its continued repression of communists, exclusion was based upon political convictions.

²⁰ Helleu, Yves. “Les honnêtes gens” in Carrefour. 6 September, 1944. Emphasis added.

brings in the concept of transcendence. By proposing an ontological definition of the “patrie”, this article posits an idea of nation that exists above and independent of real, concrete elements. The nation is thus implied to be more than the territory, people, language, traditions, and institutions it includes, it is an abstract but absolute reality capable of uniting “les meilleurs éléments”. Furthermore, the received meaning of the term sovereignty, in its modern usage, implies complete independence and self-government (in communities not under monarchical government). According to this article, however, this sovereignty which was already attained (although not all of the territory was liberated at that point) would be the instrument through which *de jure* recognition would be achieved.

As the territory was progressively liberated and the focus shifted from driving out the occupiers to economic reconstruction on the one hand, and the purge on the other, another immediate, overarching problem had to be addressed: that of national unity, or lack thereof. The purportedly unanimous support of the government was exploited to this end by a variety of newspapers. The journalist Robert Salmon begins by stating that he is writing in response to an accusation by François Mauriac that there really was only one newspaper in France, that of the Resistance. He goes on to give his opinion:

Certes, la Résistance a été une minorité; parce que la majorité préfère toujours ses pantoufles à la mort. Mais on a vu de quel côté étaient les sympathies de la Nation. (...) Si [les journaux] se taisent ce n'est pas par lâcheté. Mais ils savent ce que l'unité acquise a coûté de sang. (...) Voici pourquoi ils disent la même chose. Parce que selon vos propres paroles, ils pensent que « ce qui nous unit est plus fort que ce qui nous divise ». Parce que tous sont spontanément unanimes pour réclamer un châtement plus prompt, une rénovation plus profonde, parce que tous désirent que le gouvernement gouverne en accord avec la Résistance et gouverne

*hardiment sans se soucier si les Alliés le reconnaissent de jure ou de facto, parce que le peuple français, lui, le reconnaît sans conditions*²¹.

(Certainly, the Resistance was a minority; because the majority prefers its carpet slippers to death. But we have seen on which side the sympathies of the Nation were. (...) If [the newspapers] remain silent, it is not out of cowardice. But they know how much blood this unity we have acquired cost us. (...) This is why they keep silent. Because, in your own words, they think that “what unites us is stronger than what divides us”. Because they are all spontaneously unanimous in demanding swifter punishment, deeper renovation, because they all want the government to govern in accord with the Resistance and do so boldly *without worrying whether the Allies recognize it de jure or de facto, because the French people recognize it without conditions.*)

Défense de la France was one among numerous Gaullist publications that thrived during the months of liberation. Alongside the title, it bore a *croix de Lorraine*, de Gaulle’s insignia, bigger than the font of the title. For an openly Gaullist paper to admit that “la Résistance était une minorité” was odd, because de Gaulle unfailingly advocated the image of a France collectively liberated by her own people. If the journalist admits that the majority of the population “préfère toujours ses pantoufles à la mort”, he does so in order to reinforce the unconditional support of the government by the population, “sans se soucier si les Alliés le reconnaissent *de jure* ou *de facto*.” The main point of the article is to underscore the unity of the various factions, but the question of Allied recognition is not far removed from the main concern.

The question of national unity raised by this article was a sensitive issue, especially after the liberation of Paris. Indeed, the closing words of the article are: “Les divisions reviendront, Monsieur Mauriac. Elles reviendront même trop vite.” (The divisions will return, Mr. Mauriac.

²¹ Salmon, Robert. “Journal unique” in Défense de la France. 22-23 October, 1944. Emphasis added.

And they will return one bit too soon.). Initially, many newspapers portray the French as having unanimously rallied around an idea. For instance, on August 31, 1944, Défense de la France carried an article entitled “L’Union des Français” which states that “Les Français (...) refusaient de s’unir derrière [le Maréchal]. Ils s’étaient unis contre lui. Contre l’occupant, contre Vichy, l’union des Français s’était faite²²” (The French refused to unite behind [Marshall Pétain]. They had united against him. Against the occupier, against Vichy, the union of the French had been created). The depiction of a majority of the population forming a united front against Marshall Pétain is an outright distortion of facts. The acclaim Pétain enjoyed at least until 1942, before the whole country was occupied, entirely disproves this statement. Yet what concerns this study is the portrayal of this unity, real or imagined.

Just as Défense de la France focuses on the rejection of Pétain as motive for unity, Carrefour distinguishes yet another motive. On September 16, 1944 the essayist and playwright Armand Salacrou writes in Carrefour: “l’union de tous les Français (...) s’est faite dans la volonté d’écarter de la vie nationale ceux qui vécurent heureux pendant ces quatre années terribles²³” (the union of all Frenchmen created itself in the desire to remove from national life those who lived happily during these four terrible years). This was written barely three weeks after the liberation of Paris, whence the insistence on the word “union”. Significantly, this union is based upon the idea of inclusion and exclusion too (“écarter de la vie nationale”). Having lived happily during the German occupation is sufficient to be grounds for exclusion²⁴. Thus, logically, those who had suffered rightfully belonged to the nation.

²² “L’Union des Français” in Défense de la France. 31 August 1944

²³ Salacrou, Armand. “La dernière colonne” in Carrefour. 16 September, 1944

²⁴ A few months later, on 24 November, 1944, France-Soir carried an article on Jean-Hérolf Paquis, the broadcaster for Radio-Paris, who always concluded his transmission with “car l’Angleterre comme Carthage sera détruite”. The article listed the monetary transactions between Paquis and the Germans, some in francs, others in marks. In Journal

The consensus portrayed by a variety of newspapers was not translated into the political reality of the period. France Libre presciently acknowledges this as early as July 1944:

Les résistants seront les chefs de la France de demain, mais ils ne seront pas des dictateurs. Ils apporteront au pays un programme de relèvement, de réformes profondes. (...) L'œuvre sera dure. D'aucuns commencent dans l'ombre leur action néfaste de désunion; les autres émettent des doutes sur la puissance future de la Résistance²⁵.

(The *résistants* will be the leaders of the France of tomorrow, but they will not be dictators. They will bring a program of recovery, of profound reforms to the country. (...) The work will be hard. In the shadows, some have begun their fatal action of disunion; others broadcast doubts on the future power of the Resistance.)

Although this article also groups all *résistants* together, without making any concessions for the different political tendencies that were represented within the umbrella term “la Résistance”, it does predict the future circumstances fairly accurately.

After the liberation of capital, the date of liberation of the city itself was used metaphorically by some newspapers as yet another element of cohesion. Carrefour, for instance, carried an article entitled “La vraie mission de la Résistance: rallier le pays autour d'elle” (The true mission of the Resistance: to rally the country around it) which states that

(...) le 25 août la France fut unanime. Des millions de Français avaient souhaité cette journée dans le fond de son cœur. (...) L'unanimité. C'était peut-être là, après quatre rudes années, la plus grande victoire française. (...) Il ne faut pas que la France soit à la merci d'un parti politique qui l'accapare, ni de plusieurs partis politiques qui la divisent. C'est l'esprit de résistance qui doit sonner le ralliement de la France entière. Voilà la vraie mission de la Résistance²⁶.

sous l'Occupation, Jouhandeau stresses his destitution as self-defense, in order to emphasize that whatever his sympathies may have been, he made no pecuniary gains during the Occupation.

²⁵ “La prise du pouvoir par la Résistance” in France Libre, 24 July, 1944

²⁶ Derosne, Jean-Bernard. “La vraie mission de la Résistance” in Carrefour, 13 January, 1945

((...) on the 25th of August France was unanimous. Millions of French [people] had hoped for this day in the bottom of their hearts. (...) Unanimity. That was perhaps, after four difficult years, the biggest of French victories. (...) France must not be at the mercy of a political party that monopolizes it, nor of several political parties that divide it. It is the spirit of resistance that has to sound the rallying of all of France. That is the true mission of the Resistance.)

Instead of using the word “task” or “duty”, the journalist’s choice, “mission”, is noteworthy. The article proposes a deontological definition of the Resistance, thereby reifying what was in reality a heterogeneous assemblage. It also capitalizes most interestingly on a date (25 August 1944) as a defining moment of national unity and unanimity. Indeed, in the very next issue of Carrefour²⁷, there is an article which begins in the following manner:

Après quatre années d’oppression, de contrainte physique et plus encore de contrainte morale, le Français, autant que de pain et de charbon, a besoin de vérité. La libération n’a pas seulement été celle des corps, elle a été aussi et surtout celle des âmes.

Le 26 août dernier, [la France a retrouvé] un gouvernement démocratique²⁸ (...) (After four years of oppression, of physical constraints and, what’s worse, moral constraints, the Frenchman needs truth as much as he needs bread and coals. The liberation has not only been that of bodies, it has been one also and above all of souls.

On last August 26th, [France found] a democratic government (...))

Once again, the allusion to the liberation of “corps” and “âmes” belongs to the religious register, and this is reinforced by the miraculous appearance of a democratic government from one day to the next. And yet again, the exploitation of this calendarian mnemonic site is striking due to the way in which it reinforces the link between a date and the fact of being liberated.

²⁷ Carrefour was a weekly publication.

²⁸ Frégnier, Robert. “Savoir... pour comprendre” in Carrefour, 20 January 1945

The popular insurrection in Paris with barricades at street corners was quickly assimilated to Delacroix' Liberté Guidant le peuple. Indeed, on the very next day of the liberation of Paris, Carrefour carried a cover-page article by François Mauriac entitled "Servir la France ressuscitée" with a photograph of de Gaulle on the right and a one-third page hand-drawn sketch of Liberté guidant le peuple on the bottom²⁹. This image dominates the front-page physically and the symbolism of this sketch is not lost upon the leader. A few months later, Le Monde made a similar assimilation between this painting and popular insurrection in France:

Quel tableau apporte l'image intense des luttes intenses d'hier? Il n'en est qu'un, dans notre passé, qui reste de brûlante actualité. *La Liberté guidant le peuple* sur les barricades date de 1831. L'œuvre de Delacroix exprime, mieux qu'aucune autre, les heures proches où l'espoir nous revint. C'est le privilège du génie d'incarner ainsi, pour toujours, l'âme d'un peuple (...) ³⁰.

(Which painting evokes the intense struggles of yesterday? There is only one, in our past, which remains burningly topical. *Liberté guidant le peuple* on the barricades dates from 1831. Delacroix' work expresses better than any other the approaching hours when hope returned to us. It is the privilege of genius to be able to incarnate in this manner, for always, the soul of a people.)

This paean to Delacroix' painting underscores the identification of a work of art with the whole nation. Popular revolt and barricades thus become a flexible metaphor applied to similar yet different historical contexts. The article refers the whole population ("l'âme d'un peuple") without making any specific reference to Parisians in particular. Yet, in the given circumstances, that was not the case. The historian Philippe Buton has pointed out that only five French cities, namely Paris, Lille, Marseille, Limoges, and Thiers were liberated through popular insurrections. In the rest of France, "la participation populaire aux événements libérateurs fut négligeable. Pour

²⁹ Carrefour, 26 August 1944

³⁰ René-Jean. "Au 56^e salon des Indépendants" in Le Monde. 4 March, 1945

l'essentiel, le peuple resta témoin, limitant ainsi fortement la marge de manœuvre du courant révolutionnaire³¹.” (popular participation in liberating events was negligible. For the most part, the people remained witnesses, thereby greatly limiting the margin of maneuver of the revolutionary current). In spite of all the calls to action that we have noted above, a large part of the population chose to wait and watch, yet only a few months after the liberation of Paris Liberté guidant le peuple becomes part of the identificatory symbolism of the resistance of the entire population. Indeed, Buton asserts that

Paris ne résume pas toutefois la France, et la réussite du soulèvement parisien n'induit pas *ipso facto* celui de la France toute entière. Certes, la mémoire collective a longtemps confondu les deux. (...) A l'échelle de la France, l'insurrection nationale fut un échec³².

(Paris does not however sum up France, and the success of the Parisian uprising does not lead *ipso facto* to that of all of France. Certainly, collective memory confused the two for a long time. (...) On the scale of [all of] France, the national insurrection was a failure.)

Whatever the historical accuracy of mass uprising might have been, what concerns this study mainly is how the events were portrayed, and in this case an obvious generalization can be noted: the unanimity of revolt that the newspapers so strongly desire is translated into the representations. This same kind of generalization can be discerned in La Bête est morte, where Delacroix' painting is re-interpreted for the same purpose, only with animal insurgents.

The purge was undoubtedly among the top concerns for all newspapers during the months of liberation. It is not the intention of this study to address all the debates around the purge in France; I will limit myself to a discussion of only those aspects that are directly

³¹ Buton, Philippe. La Joie douloureuse. La Libération de la France. Brussels: Editions Complexe, Collection IHTP, 2004. pp. 93-94

³² Buton, 93

reflected in the three works studied in this dissertation³³. The last recurrent journalistic theme that I will address here will be the calls for the carrying out of justice in the context of the purge³⁴. The purge as a political move had begun to be planned as early as 1941 and began formally with the trial of Pierre Pucheu, Pétain's Secretary of State for the Interior, in 1943. Pucheu was also the first French person to be executed by the Resistance on the charge of treason in 1944. Within the time-frame set by this dissertation, Operation Overlord generated fervent calls in the newspapers to incite civilians to action; these were often accompanied by threats to collaborators. Some of the terminology used to word these threats are inscribed in the ideals of the French Revolution; for instance, we have already noted references to the Marseillaise and, more specifically, to the line "Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons." In one instance, this line appears under a sub-heading called "Les traîtres vont payer" and the journalist clarifies whose blood is being referred to:

Le sang impur, après le sang boche, ce sera celui de tous les traîtres et de tous les vendus qui pendant quatre ans ont trahi et ont vendu le corps et l'âme de la France éternelle. L'heure de la justice et du châtement, l'heure de la délivrance a sonné³⁵.
(The impure blood, after the blood of Krauts, will be that of all the traitors and all the profit-making traitors who, for four years, betrayed and sold the body and soul

³³ There are several excellent historical studies of the purge in France. *L'Épuration des intellectuels* by Pierre Assouline covers the purge of writers and journalists, and also gives a detailed discussion of the debate between Albert Camus and François Mauriac on justice or Christian charity and the purge. Although Lottman's *The Purge* is an overview and analysis of the phenomenon of the postwar purge, it also proposes a discussion of the same debates between Camus and Mauriac. Camus' editorials can be found in *Camus à Combat*. Peter Novicks' *L'épuration française* gives the most accurate statistics as to the numbers of purge cases and executions.

Assouline, Pierre. *L'épuration des intellectuels 1944-1946*. Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1999

Camus, Albert. *Camus à Combat*. Ed. Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi. Paris: Gallimard, 2002

Lottman, Herbert. *The Purge*. New York: Morrow, 1986

Novick, Peter. *L'épuration française 1944-1949*. trans. Hélène Ternois. Paris: Balland, 1985

³⁴ Two contiguous themes, namely the writer's right to err and the notion of taking responsibility for one's writing became dominant around January 1945, contemporaneously with Brasillach's trial. Assouline has discussed both these themes in great detail. Assouline, 80-95. The writer's responsibility has also been discussed by Laurence Brisset in *La NRF de Paulhan*. Paris: Gallimard, 2003: 99-109

³⁵ "Le jour de gloire est arrivé" in *L'Avenir*, No. 15. 10 June, 1944

of eternal France. The hour of justice and of punishment, the hour of deliverance has struck.)

After the top priority of expelling the Germans, it is made clear that the traitors will be brought to judgment. A dichotomy is established: “le sang boche” and that of “les traîtres et les vendus” are proposed as impure elements, and contrasted to the personification of “la France éternelle” whose very soul was sold by those who “[prononçaient] cette suite ininterrompue d’appels à la trahison, à la peur, à la passivité, à la lâcheté” (pronounced that uninterrupted series of calls to treason, to fear, to passivity, to cowardice).

The tone of these calls changes drastically from July to August 1944, when liberation becomes an increasingly concrete possibility. Indeed, during the week-long insurrection of Paris from August 19 to 25, 1944 when most clandestine newspapers began to publish openly, with no fear of censorship, these calls for justice assumed a new urgency. For instance, on August 23, 1944, Défense de la France carries an article which begins with a statement about the order which reigned during “le changement de régime” when no lynching or summary executions took place³⁶. Once again, it is not my goal to comment on the inaccuracy proposed by this article.

What interests this discussion is the appeal that follows:

Nous n’en sommes que mieux placés aujourd’hui pour demander que ces criminels soient jugés rapidement et châtiés sans faiblesse. (...) La France est aujourd’hui trop misérable, elle est trop pauvre matériellement, elle a trop souffert dans sa chair et dans son esprit pour se permettre le luxe d’être indulgente. *Une justice impitoyable est une nécessité de salut public*. On nous objectera sans doute les bienfaits de l’oubli. Mais il n’y aura pas de paix sans justice. On tentera d’exploiter la généreuse sensibilité du peuple français, cet éternel défenseur des faibles et des causes perdues. Craignons aussi sa colère, ce que le général de

³⁶ M.D. “Les châtiments nécessaires” in Défense de la France. 23 August, 1944

Gaule a appelé sa “sainte colère”. Le peuple français veut d’abord la justice (...) ³⁷.

(We are [therefore] better placed today to demand that these criminals be judged swiftly and punished without weakness. (...) France today is too miserable, she is materially too poor, she has suffered too much in her flesh and in her spirit to be able to allow herself the luxury of being indulgent. *Merciless justice is a necessity for public well-being*. One will doubtlessly argue the benefits of forgetting. But there will not be peace without justice. One will try to take advantage of the generous sensitivity of the French people, that eternal defender of the weak and of lost causes. Let us also fear [their] anger, what General de Gaulle has called [their] “holy anger”. The French people want justice first of all...)

This demand is made clearly and openly to the new authorities even though they are not yet in place. As in the previous excerpt, here too France is personified, marked by the suffering of “sa chair” and “son esprit”. The nation itself is proposed as the supreme victim who has borne loss and misfortune; in her name, justice has to be “impitoyable”. This adjective can be translated as pitiless or merciless, but also refers to the quality of being without indulgence. This is underscored in the preceding sentence which clearly proposes the future lack of indulgence as the logical corollary to the current state of affliction. Indeed, the necessary prerequisite for both “salut public” and “paix” is this “justice impitoyable”. In addition to making demands for swift justice, this article also warns against potential pitfalls: the therapeutic effects of forgetting and, not least, yielding to emotional appeal, whence the insistence on the adjective “impitoyable”. The national community is portrayed monolithically as champion of the underdog (“éternel défenseur des faibles et des causes perdues”), even though the underdogs in question are fellow citizens. By highlighting the sensitivity of the French and their propensity to support the loser, and at the same time by stating that the cause of the traitors is not one worth being upheld, the

³⁷ Emphasis added.

journalist places these traitors in the category of the unredeemable, even beyond that of “les causes perdues”. It seems that the article solicits the French to make reason dominate over emotion, all the while appealing to the readers’ emotions.

As historian Henry Rousso has pointed out, among the various functions of the purge, one was “une fonction identitaire et de reconstruction nationale³⁸”. This function of identity-creation or self-definition fulfilled by the purge can be discerned in the terminology used by various newspapers to speak about it. Soon after the liberation of Paris, La France Libre carried an editorial by Aymé Guérin which states that

Les défaillances seront châtiées; les hommes qui ont accepté la défaite, ceux qui ont pris leur parti de la pire humiliation de notre histoire, puis de la collaboration avec l’ennemi, seront *éliminés de la vie nationale*; c’était pour la plupart des affairistes; la France tenait peu de part dans leur préoccupations intimes, ils l’ont oubliée; elle les oublie aujourd’hui. (...) celui qui tenterait de troubler l’ordre public, qu’il soit de droite ou de gauche, *serait vomé par le pays tout entier*³⁹.

(Weakness will be punished; those who accepted defeat those who took the position / side of the worst humiliation in our history, and then of collaboration with the enemy, will be *eliminated from national life*; they were for the most part profiteers; France held only a small part in their most intimate concerns; they forgot her; she forgets them today. (...) He who would try to disturb public order, whether he be from the right or the left, *would be vomited by the whole country*.)

In this excerpt, clearly the question of who can or cannot belong to and participate in public life is being defined. It is a journalistic translation of the ordinance of “indignité nationale”, a juridical category of punishment created in August 1944 for treason. A person who received this sentence was subject to the loss of all civil rights and excluded from a number of public functions such as being a teacher, a banker, an insurance agent, standing for elections, or

³⁸ Rousso, Henry. “L’Épuration en France. Une histoire inachevée” in Vingtième Siècle. 33 (Jan-Mar 1992) : 105

³⁹ Guérin, Aymé. “Toute la France” in La France Libre. 5 September, 1944. Emphasis added.

belonging to a labor union: in short, he was “éliminé de la vie nationale”. Defining who can or cannot belong to “la vie nationale” as if it were a homogeneous and absolute entity participates in the act of national self-definition. Postwar French identity is being posited in terms of negations: not weak and not profiteering. The violence of the last image is striking: he who shall try to disrupt the proper social order will be “vomi” by the whole country. The act of vomiting is also a purge of sorts; the disruptor will therefore be doubly purged, legally and socially⁴⁰.

The following day, Défense de la France published an article which proposed the purge as the panacea for all problems facing liberated France:

De tous les problèmes posés par la libération, il en est un qui prime tous les autres, c’est celui de l’épuration. Lorsque les quelques milliers de Français qui ont collaboré activement avec l’ennemi seront sous les verrous, les autres problèmes se résoudre d’eux-mêmes. L’épuration, c’est en somme le problème préliminaire au relèvement de la France⁴¹.

(Of all the problems the liberation poses, there is one which takes precedence above all others, it is that of the purge. Once the few thousand French who actively collaborated with the enemy will be locked up, all other problems will solve themselves. The purge is in sum the preliminary [obstacle] to the recovery of France).

There was no lack of problems facing free France, from reinstating the machinery of administrative structures like the police, judiciary, municipal offices, postal and railway services among others, to economic reconstruction, food distribution, reconstruction of bombed cities and so on. It is of course rather simplistic to subsume all problems facing free France under the

⁴⁰ The newspaper in which Aymé Guérin published his editorials, namely La France Libre was particularly committed to the question of justice. This is confirmed by the sheer number of editorials that discuss justice and the purge, for instance “Epuré, c’est jugé” (28 September 1944), “Justice expéditive” (1 November 1944), “L’injustice dans la justice” (17 November 1944), “Nous serons justes ou nous périrons” (14 December 1944), “Justice populaire” (3 January 1945), “Justice quand même” (11 January 1945), “Pleine Justice” (22 February 1945), just to name those that carried the words just or justice in the titles.

⁴¹ “Le problème de l’épuration” in Défense de la France, 6 September, 1944

umbrella category of the purge, but it is important to note that newspapers were propagating this kind of reduction. The article simply states that putting collaborators behind bars would remove all problems without explicitly stating how this would happen. This article also speaks of “collaborateurs d’opinion” (collaborators of opinion) and “collaborateurs de bonne foi” (collaborators in good faith), and addresses the notion of “délit d’opinion” (an opinion-related offense), a notion supported by Jean Paulhan during the purge. As we shall see in the last chapter, Jouhandeau proposes “délit d’opinion” as one of the arguments in his line of defense and insists on his “bonne foi” as the motivation behind his deeds⁴².

The articles of La France Libre, especially the editorials, relentlessly make appeals for implacable justice, and especially for not forgiving and forgetting⁴³. What is at stake here is largely a question of inclusion and exclusion from the national community. A few days after the previous excerpt appeared, another editorial by Aymé Guerrin proposed a link between punishment and the national unity based on exclusion:

(...) quelques-uns (...) proposent un geste d’oubli qui, à les entendre, rétablirait l’unité française. Notre sentiment est clair et nous avons le devoir de l’exprimer sans ambages: IL FAUT CHATIER TOUS CEUX QUI ONT TRAHI; et d’un châtiment proportionné à la culpabilité de chacun. (...). Chacun devra payer sa dette (...) Il faut payer, messieurs, payer d’abord. Après quoi nous referons – sans vous – L’UNITE FRANCAISE⁴⁴.

(some [people] propose a gesture of forgetting which, if one is to believe them, will reestablish French unity. Our feelings are clear and it is our duty to express it plainly: ALL THOSE WHO BETRAYED MUST BE PUNISHED; and with a punishment proportionate to each person’s guilt. (...) Each one will have to pay

⁴² This same newspaper carried the list of writers who were blacklisted by the CNE among which Jouhandeau’s name appeared. Anon. “Épuration chez les écrivains” in La France Libre, 20 September 1944

⁴³ A sample of article titles alone are extremely revealing: “Passer l’éponge”, “

⁴⁴ Guerrin, Aymé. “Passer l’éponge?” in La France Libre, 11 September 1944

his debts (...). You must pay, sirs, pay first. Then we will recreate FRENCH UNITY – without you).

The words in capital letters clearly indicate the point the journalist is trying to underscore: punishment and unity, where punishment seems to be the prerequisite for national unity. The specification, “sans vous”, is noteworthy: those who will be tried are forewarned that even after they pay for their misdeeds, they will not be able to belong to the national community.

In the same week as the previous excerpt, Armand Salacrou who wrote for Carrefour articulated yet another idea in relation to the purge, this time specifically about the purge of intellectuals. The article is an appeal for “une épuration profonde de notre profession” (a deep / thorough purge of our profession). Salacrou sees collaborationist intellectuals as dead weight which “[alourdit] la marche” (encumbers the march) of France towards recovery⁴⁵. He then goes on to state: “Je ne demande pas qu’on les arrête tous. Je demande qu’ils se taisent tous.” (I don’t ask for all of them to be arrested. I ask that they all be silent). The idea of speaking versus remaining silent is articulated several times in the course of the article and, for the journalist, it is clearly a question of who can or cannot speak in the name of the nation at the given historical juncture. Having spoken or, in this case published, during four years of occupation, Salacrou seems to be asking collaborationist intellectuals to keep silent out of propriety, “jusqu’à la guérison de la France” (until the recovery of France). He also enunciates the ideal of the purge after four years of occupation:

Emergeant de l’abîme et réapparaissant au milieu d’un monde en reconstruction, la France doit être un pays d’hommes forts, une nation de citoyens résolus, éperdument passionnés de liberté et de justice, de toutes les justices, et qui ne cherchent pas (...) les voies les plus faciles, - mais marchent coûte que coûte sur la

⁴⁵ Salacrou, Armand. “La dernière colonne” in Carrefour. 16 September 1944

route qu'ils ont décidé de suivre. Le pays doit se débarasser des pleutres, des lâches, des filles à soldat, et des hommes courbés.

(Emerging from the abyss and reappearing in the midst of the world in reconstruction, France must be a country of strong men, a nation of determined citizens, impassioned enthusiasts of liberty and of justice, of all justices, and who do not seek (...) the easy path – but who march at any cost on the road they have decided to follow. The country must be rid of cads, of cowards, of soldiers' whores and of men who bowed down).

Just as in the previous excerpts, this article too defines the composition of the national community and, more importantly, who will be excluded from this national community. At the same time, it indicates the traits that constitute national character: virility (“hommes forts”, “ne cherchent pas (...) les voies les plus faciles”) and determination (“résolus”, “éperdument passionnés de justice”). These are the two traits of character that are obviously lacking in “[les] pleutres, [les] lâches, [les] filles à soldat, et [les] hommes courbés”, and therefore those to be excluded.

The purge of intellectuals was a theme to which many journalists and newspapers were particularly attached. Indeed, the first big purge trial of an intellectual, Georges Suarez, took place on October 23, 1944, barely two weeks after the purge courts were officially established in Paris. Member of the fascist Parti Populaire Français, Suarez' journalism was marked by sensationalism on the one hand and virulent anti-Semitism and anti-Communism on the other. In the 1930s, he never lost an opportunity to berate Léon Blum⁴⁶. In this respect, his trajectory was very similar to that of Marcel Jouhandeau, as we shall see in Chapter 3. Suarez' trial was closely followed by the newspapers, reported in great detail, and when his death sentence was delivered on 28 October, 1944, Carrefour reported that he had been “reconnu coupable de la pire forme du

⁴⁶Kestel, Laurent. “The emergence of anti-Semitism within the Parti Populaire Français”. Copyright 2005. Society for the study of French history. November 3, 2005 <http://fh.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/19/3/364.pdf>

parricide: la trahison envers la mère patrie” (recognized guilty of the worst form of parricide: treason towards the motherland”. Yet again, the nation is personified, murdered by some of her own children who collaborated, but in a sense resuscitated by others who followed the right path.

The purge of intellectuals soon gave way to two larger debates. One of these, namely the one between Albert Camus and François Mauriac on charity and reconciliation has been previously alluded to and has been analyzed by other scholars. I would, however, like to mention something that neither Assouline nor Lottman mention. Canard Enchaîné, the satirical weekly, relentlessly attacked Mauriac for his stance on Christian charity; the tone changed drastically, however, from a more parodical one in January 1945 where he was addressed as “François Mauriac: le Saint François des Assises”, an appellation that plays on the double-entendre in the “Assise” as in the name of the saint, “St. François d’Assise”, and “assises” as in the court session⁴⁷. The designation “Saint” clearly draws upon Mauriac’s appeals for charity rooted in his strong catholic faith. This large headline is followed by three shorter articles, each one dealing with the same topic, but under a different light. They are entitled “On ne comprend plus” (We no longer understand), “Parce qu’on est charitable” (Because we are charitable), and “La Cour de justice est remplacée par la Cour de charité” (The Court of Justice is replaced by the Court of Charity). An example of the farce created by this article is the “verdict de charité. L’accusé est condamné à réciter trois *ave* et quatre *pater*.” (verdict of charity. The accused is sentenced to reciting three *Ave Maria* and four *Our Fathers*). The caricatural and disparaging tone changes drastically when, after Drieu’s death, Mauriac continues to make the same appeals for Christian charity and writes an article dedicated to Drieu in Le Figaro⁴⁸. In an article dated 21 March,

⁴⁷ Bénard, Pierre. “François Mauriac: le Saint François des Assises” in Le Canard Enchaîné. 3 January 1945.

⁴⁸ Mentioned by Pierre Bénard in “Monsieur Mauriac, ayez aussi un peu de pitié des autres” in Le Canard Enchaîné. 21 March 1945

1945, Bénard reproaches Mauriac in a tone that is uncharacteristically serious for the Canard Enchaîné:

Nous n'avons aucune joie, monsieur Mauriac, à entendre prononcer de dures sentences. Mais si nous nous refusons de participer à votre charitable enthousiasme, c'est que nous pensons soudain à ceux que nous avons aimés et qui ne sont plus là. (...) Les déportés vont rentrer (...) C'est à eux qu'il conviendra de dire: "Le moment de pardonner est venu." Avec quelle joie alors, monsieur Mauriac, nous tendrons les mains, nous ouvrirons les bras. Seuls ceux qui ont souffert dans leur chair, dans leur liberté ont le droit de prononcer, les premiers, les mots de pitié. En attendant, nous ne pouvons que nous taire.

(It gives us no joy, Mr. Mauriac, to hear harsh sentences being delivered. But if we refuse to participate in your charitable enthusiasm, it is because we suddenly think of those who we loved and who are no longer among us. (...) The deportees are going to return (...) It is to them that it will be fitting to say: "The time to forgive has arrived." With such joy we will hold out our hands, we will open our arms then, Mr. Mauriac. Only those who have suffered in the flesh, in their freedom have the right to be the first to pronounce the words of pity. Until then, we can only keep silent).

For a newspaper that never treated any topic seriously, the solemn tone assumed by the editor-in-chief is striking. Here again, the question of who can speak is elaborated: not just the resisters, since Mauriac himself actively participated in the Resistance from a very early stage; it is those who suffered physically in the name of the country who have the right to say the words of forgiveness.

There are a number of specific references in the works studied in this dissertation that can be traced back to contemporary newspapers. For example, L'Aurore mentions in its July issue that Nazi propaganda had put up posters all over Paris stating "La route était longue jusqu'à Rome", an imitation of which we find in La Bête est morte where Calvo depicts the Allied

landing in Italy as a snail crawling up a sketch of Italy with the same caption; similarly, Calvo includes a series of frames on the contribution of British, Russian, and French women in the war which was also covered by a series of articles in Carrefour in September and October 1944. There are many such examples which are included in the chapters that follow.

In the works analyzed in this dissertation, all of these journalistic themes are reflected to a greater or lesser extent. The ideals of the Revolution and the revolutionary nature of the members of the national community are exalted most obviously in the animal that represent the French in La Bête est morte. Jouhandeau, on the other hand, draws upon the analogy of the purge as the time of Terror during the Revolution. The unconditional support of de Gaulle by all the animals belonging to the nation is depicted La Bête est morte where, in pure resistencialist vein, the nation is shown to have been composed principally of *résistants* and the country is said to have liberated itself⁴⁹. The theme of unity is tied in with this discourse of unconditional support of de Gaulle. The notions of inclusion and exclusion are treated both by Calvo and by Jouhandeau, the former through the way he defines national character, thereby making it uniform and excluding those who do not conform; the latter through his anti-Americanism and anti-Bolshevism. Finally, the question of justice is one of the two main themes in Aragon's "Le droit romain n'est plus".

* * * * *

Each of the three texts selected in this study are exemplary of different political ideologies and of different forms of representation. Each one is a specimen chosen from minor genres: the comic book, the short-story, the journal. Poetry was the privileged genre of the

⁴⁹ There is a passing reference to collaborators in La Bête est morte but they are said to have been "emboché" by the enemy.

period and has been extensively examined by a number of scholars⁵⁰. A majority of the novels published during the months of interest to this study, on the other hand, have to do with the experience of World War II and the relationship between the novelistic genre and the writing of history. The historical novel vehicles a fictional shaping of historical experience and would merit an entirely separate study. The three genres represented here, namely the short-story, the comic book, and the journal, all communicate a sense of immediacy.

The first chapter of my dissertation focuses on “Le droit romain n’est plus”, a short story by Louis Aragon, published in the collection Servitude et Grandeur des Français. The writer played an active role in the Resistance with the French Communist Party as well as through his help in creating the National Committee of Writers.

“Le droit romain n’est plus” is a complex and well-developed narrative about a Nazi military judge, von Lüttwitz-Randau, and his secretary, Lotte; their capture, trial and execution by members of the Resistance. After situating Aragon’s political commitments in the pre-war years, I begin by analyzing the different narrating voices in the story, and the construction of the narrative, since the first reading is a destabilizing experience due to the multiple sections and narrators. The geographical space is an important element of the story, associated strongly with the historical aspects of the region and the consciousness of history in the discourse. I then address the commentary of the notions of justice, vengeance, and punishment as they emerge from the text, notions that are embedded in the broader polemics among the intellectuals of the Resistance. The last part of this chapter explores the significance of cultural politics both for the

⁵⁰ See Pierre Seghers. La Résistance et ses poètes. Paris: Seghers, 1974. Similarly, Ann Smock writes about poets of the Resistance in “1940-1944 The Honor of Poets” in A New History of French Literature. Ed. Denis Hollier. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989. More recently, Jean Starobinski has published La poésie et la guerre. Geneva: Zoe, 1999.

occupiers and for the members of the Resistance, and especially of music which plays the role of a structuring device in this story.

My second chapter deals with a text for children called La Bête est morte! La guerre mondiale chez les animaux by Edmond-François Calvo, Victor Dancette and Jacques Zimmermann. Having published a pro-Pétain and pro-National Revolution text in 1943, La Bête est morte! is also an attempted act of Resistance – at the eleventh hour – for Dancette as well as for the publishing house. The story is a thinly veiled allegory using animals as protagonists. It is in comic book format, and was published in two parts, the first of which was released in November 1944 and the second in May 1945.

In La Bête est morte! an old rabbit narrates the events of World War II to his grandchildren although, at the time of publication, the beast in question is certainly not dead and the war far from over. My interpretation of this comic book is based on close readings of both the text and the images in order to see how they function together to create meaning. My chapter begins with a detailed analysis of the choice of animal for each national community (e.g. Polar Bears for Russians, Bisons for Americans, Hyenas for Italians etc) as compared to the variety of animals used to represent France. The fact of defining the Other so categorically implies that an unequivocal definition of the Self exists, or is at any rate possible. In the case of this album, the definition of the Other implies by elimination what the Self is not, namely barbarian, sadistic, beastly, greedy, and so forth. There is an economy of representation which resides in this portrait of the Other: the narrator indirectly underscores who “we” are by distinguishing “them”⁵¹.

⁵¹ The pronoun “we” is constantly used as an all-encompassing term to refer to the French.

The third chapter is a study of Marcel Jouhandeau's diary from 1944-45, *La Courbe de nos angoisses*. This is only a part of the diary that the author kept during the war years, a more personal account of the war experience than the rest of the Journal.

The premise of my reading of the Journal sous l'Occupation is the following: for Jouhandeau to prepare this book for publication at age 91, just before his death, and to choose specifically this part of his diary for publication out of a lifetime of journal entries is not a neutral gesture. In a period when holocaust negationism was rife in France, the fact that Jouhandeau should focus on the Occupation and the Purge to depict his version of the events underlines the presence of an agenda. That this should happen in the 1970s, a period which, according to Henry Rousso, represents the phase of the broken mirror is even more significant⁵².

I begin with historical and biographical considerations, and then use the implicit narrative to demonstrate what comes across at the level of representation as a defense plea. This is based upon both a vague admission of guilt on the one hand and a tangible presence of fear on the other, a fear which is never named but makes itself felt through self-justifying discourses. The next section focuses upon his arguments and reasoning in order to illustrate the rhetorical means through which Jouhandeau arrives at self-exoneration.

I then address the question of self-perception. The underlying discourse of indifference attests to what can be perceived as a cleavage. This cleavage exists not only between Jouhandeau and his environment, but also between himself and what he does, what he believes, indeed within himself. This section of my chapter underscores the attempt of the text to reunify the scattered sense of self: the passage from alterity to unity.

⁵² Rousso, The Vichy Syndrome, 10

The final section of my third chapter examines two related aspects of this work, namely the imbrications of rewriting the self and rewriting History, his attitude towards history and historicism, which leads him to conclude that a Nazi Europe would have been a glorious Europe. In the case of the Journal sous l'Occupation, the (re)writing of History and the writing as well as re-writing of the self are closely connected; the latter explicates and modifies the former. Indeed, the act of writing his version of the event allows him to make a space for himself in this History and to choose his spot in the scheme of things. Also, through writing, he enacts the purge trial that never happened, giving it an outcome which for him is logical, namely “not guilty”. In reading the text closely, one realizes that there is a political and ideological continuity in his discourse and in the type of national identity this text proposes. Through his Journal sous l'Occupation, Jouhandeau achieves a creative revision of his political engagement and his acts.

The order of the chapters in this dissertation has been placed in the chronological order in which the work they analyze was composed. Aragon's short story was written at the peak of the various battles for liberation in the different regions of France. The narrative reflects the larger stakes at hand: justice, retribution, cultural resistance. Likewise, La Bête est morte was written and illustrated contemporaneously with the progressive liberation of Europe; it focuses on individual events with exegetical remarks made by the narrator for the young audience. Finally, Jouhandeau's Journal sous l'Occupation was written during the period of interest to this study: the reason it is relegated to the last place is due to its moment of publication in 1980⁵³. As Rousso has remarked, the 1970s were marked by the resurgence of Jewish memory on the one hand, and the debunking of the resistencialist myth on the other. Furthermore, these years were marked by holocaust negationism in France, culminating in the legal proceedings and

⁵³ Jouhandeau prepared the Journal for publication before his death in 1979 based upon his manuscript diaries. He died before the release of the published version.

condemnation of Robert Faurisson in 1978. For Jouhandeau to prepare his diaries for publication at such a conjecture is proof of the political motivation of his act.

2.0 “LE DROIT ROMAIN N’EST PLUS”: ARAGON ON JUSTICE AND VENGEANCE

Je ne crois pas qu’on puisse comprendre quoi que ce soit de moi, si l’on omet de dater mes pensées ou mes écrits.

- Aragon⁵⁴

Ce que je voudrais faire, comprenez-moi, c’est quelque chose qui serait comme l’*Art de la fugue*. Et je ne vois pas pourquoi ce qui fut possible en musique serait impossible en littérature...”

- Gide⁵⁵

In a literary career that spanned over six decades, Louis Aragon availed of practically every literary genre, from novels and poetry to short stories, essays and journalism. Similarly, he experimented with various styles from surrealism to socialist realism, and back to a refusal of socialist realism. This, along with the fact of his pluri-decennial commitment to the PCF (the Parti Communiste Français) clarifies the first of the two quotes I have used as epigraphs. In this chapter, I will focus on “Le droit romain n’est plus”, a short-story from the collection entitled

⁵⁴ Quoted by Pierre Daix in his biography *Aragon. Une vie à changer*. Paris: Flammarion, 1975, 1994: 7. A close associate of Aragon, when Daix first published this biography, he had left the PCF whereas Aragon was still a member of the party. This information is stated by Pierre Daix in an interview published in *Le Figaro magazine*. Nay, Catherine and Patrice de Néritys. “Pierre Daix, de l’autobiographie à l’autocritique” in *Le Figaro Magazine* 24 February 2001: 39. 22 September 2004 <http://s.huët.free.fr/kairos/aletheia/pdaix.htm>

⁵⁵ Gide, André. *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. Paris: Gallimard, 1925. p. 243

Servitude et grandeur des Français first published in May 1945. The collection includes several short-stories Aragon wrote during the Occupation, but I will analyze only the very last narrative, since it was completed in August 1944, the period of interest to this study. Through close readings, I will address the discussion of the notions of justice, vengeance, and punishment as they emerge from the text, notions that are embedded in the broader polemics among the intellectuals of the Resistance. Last but not least, I will examine the importance of music in this story where it plays the role of a structuring device. I will discuss the questions of cultural propaganda and cultural resistance, and the associations that can be made between writing, music, nationalism, and identity.

2.1 THE WRITER AND THE CONTEXT

Aragon's writings are intimately tied to the socio-political circumstances of their enunciation. He was never removed from the larger picture of politics and the years leading up to the war were marked not only by literary commitment, but also concrete actions. I will begin this chapter by historically contextualizing his literary career, with a few details that I believe are essential in understanding his commitment to the Resistance as well as some of the issues discussed in "Le droit romain n'est plus".

Louis Aragon was born in Paris in 1897⁵⁶. He was conscripted in 1917, while studying to be a physician. That was also the year of his first meeting with Breton, and later with Philippe Soupault, decisive co-founders of the future surrealist movement. He continued to study

⁵⁶ Biographical details have been taken from Daix, op. cit.; Aragon, Aragon parle, conversations with Dominique Arban, Paris: Seghers, 1968; Bougnoux, Daniel. "Introduction" in Aragon. Œuvres romanesques complètes. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, vol. 2. Paris: Gallimard, 2000.

medicine while in the army, was sent to the front in June 1918 as the only physician for an entire battalion, was buried thrice under enemy bombs, and before the end of the war he was awarded the *croix de guerre*.

Aragon began his literary career as an active supporter and participant of Dadaism which was born as a refusal of those social and moral values and conservatism that led Europe to the devastation wreaked by World War I. The followers of Dada created artworks that defied intellectual analysis. Nihilism was a central concept and ethic of Dadaism. The revolt against the barbarities of war manifested itself in art and literature as a revolt against the icons of high culture. It was in this spirit that in 1917 Marcel Duchamp put a moustache to Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. The following poem is a telling example of Aragon's work from his Dada phase:

Suicide

A b c d e f
g h i j k l
m n o p q r
s t u v w
x y z⁵⁷

The signification of this poem might certainly seem elusive but, as Daix points out, “de la typographie [naît] une certaine prosodie” (a certain prosody is born out of the typography) (Daix, 125). The suicide referred to might well indicate poetic suicide by using language in conventional modes. The nihilism inherent to Dada can be seen here in the questioning and emptying out of the traditional understanding of what a poem is. In a short work entitled Pour expliquer ce que j'étais which Aragon wrote in 1943 but which was only published posthumously, he comments upon that phase of his career, explaining that

⁵⁷ Aragon. Le Mouvement Perpétuel précédé de Feu de Joie et suivi de Écritures automatiques. Paris: Gallimard, 1970. ©1920 & 1925. p. 83

Si nous avons eu un système du monde, peut-être y aurions-nous, comme c'est l'habitude des philosophes, cherché à redonner un sens selon ce système à ces mots usurpés et dénaturés. Mais encore une fois nous n'avions pas d'idéologie cohérente, nous étions les fils de familles qui avaient perdu toute autorité sur nous, tout prestige à nos yeux (...) ⁵⁸ (If we had had a system [for understanding] the world, perhaps we might have, as is the custom of philosophers, tried to give some meaning to these usurped and denatured words. But once again, we did not have a coherent ideology, we were the sons of families that had lost all authority over us, [had lost] all prestige in our eyes...)

Aragon later became one of the principal members of the Surrealist group, along with Breton and Soupault. Surrealism was a literary and artistic movement that emphasized the irrational and the unconscious. This movement aimed at reaching a higher reality (*sur-réalisme*) through various means, only one of which was spontaneous writing (*écriture automatique*). Aragon's poems and prose of the 1920s are all strongly surrealist. The collections Feu de joie (1920) and Mouvement perpétuel (1926) show not only the verbal gratuity that surrealism advocated but the lyrical transformation of the mundane, as we can see in the extract from the poem "Secousse" (dated August 1918) which appears in his very first published collection, Feu de joie (1919) ⁵⁹:

[...]
Je donne un nom meilleur aux merveilles du jour
J'invente à nouveau le vent tape-joie
le vent tapageur
Le monde à bas je le bâtis plus beau
[...]

⁵⁸ Aragon. Pour expliquer ce que j'étais. Paris: Gallimard, 1989. p. 64.

⁵⁹ Aragon. Le Mouvement Perpétuel 38-39

Unlike for Dadaism, renewal as well as revolution are essential elements of this poetry, a reawakening and an expression of interior landscapes and mental states.

Aragon joined the Communist Party in 1927 and broke with the Surrealists in 1931. He moved away from poetry for a while and focused on a series entitled *Le Monde réel*, a critique of the bourgeoisie set in the years between 1880 and the end of the 1920s. This series of novels included Les Cloches de Bâle (1934), Les Beaux quartiers (1936) followed by Les Voyageurs de l'Impériale which Paulhan started publishing in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* as a serial in 1940⁶⁰. Its publication in the NRF was stopped when Paulhan had to hand the direction of this journal over to Drieu. It was published in a heavily censored version by Gallimard in 1942. During the Occupation, Aragon wrote the fourth volume of the series, Aurélien (written in 1942-43, published in 1946). The final tome of this series was entitled Les Communistes, first published in 1949 and then entirely reworked in 1967.

During the pre-war years, Aragon also turned to journalism by contributing to the Communist daily, l'Humanité. He then worked with Paul Nizan on the journal Commune, and while he was there he collaborated with Gide, Malraux, Nizan and Jean-Richard Bloch to organize the “Congrès international des écrivains pour la défense de la culture” (International Congress of Writers for the defense of culture). This was an attempt on the part of the intellectuals to mobilize themselves in an organized manner against rising fascism, and the meeting took place in Paris in June 1935.

The 1930s in Aragon's literary career are marked by political engagement, a move away from poetry and towards socialist realism. To this end, he wrote an apologia, Pour un réalisme socialiste, published by Denoël in 1935. With the start of the Civil War in Spain, he went to

⁶⁰ Aragon in Aragon parle avec Dominique Arban. Paris: Seghers, 1968. p. 150

Spain in October 1936 on board a truck carrying donations sent by the International Association of Writers, accompanied by Elsa Triolet and the German writers, Gustav Regler and Kurt Stern. Upon his return, he accepted Maurice Thorez' proposition to create a new newspaper, Ce soir, in order to contrast the nefarious influence of the daily Paris-Soir on the public opinion of the Front Populaire. This responsibility was in addition to his previous tasks as copy editor at Commune and the General Secretary of the Maison de la culture. In the Spring of 1939, Aragon was invited to the congress of the League of American Writers in New York and his speech was transmitted by radio. In the course of this same trip to the United States, he was received by Roosevelt at the White House.

During these pre-war years, Aragon was a prolific writer of articles for all three above-mentioned publications; he also published frequently in the journal, Europe. His few poetry collections from the 1930s, Persécuté persécuté (1931), Aux enfants rouges éclairez votre religion (1932) and Hourra l'Oural (1934) are all manifestations of his political conversion to communism. 1934 to 1939 marked a period away from poetry for Aragon. In March 1939, Paulhan wrote to Elsa Triolet: "Je suis ennuyé qu'Aragon n'écrit plus de poèmes. Il doit absolument en écrire."⁶¹. In the interim, Aragon had undertaken the study of medieval French poetry which greatly influenced his own wartime poetry. With the declaration of war, Aragon was conscripted in September 1939. For him, this moment marks a return to poetry, a medium better suited to express his grief over his separation from his beloved, Elsa Triolet, as well as his rejection of the Phony war and then the Armistice. Poetry also allowed him to express his fidelity to his homeland as well as to the Communist Party, internally strife-stricken since the signing of

⁶¹ Quoted in Sapiro, La guerre des écrivains 400

the Russo-German pact of non-aggression of August 1939⁶². Prevented from publishing editorials and articles⁶³, Aragon started once again to compose poems. After a break of five years, he wrote his first three wartime poems, “Le temps des mots croisés” (Time for crosswords), “J’attends sa lettre au crépuscule” (I await her letter at dusk) and “Vingt ans après” (Twenty years later), which were published on December 1, 1939 in the Nouvelle Revue Française. These poems, recited at the Comédie Française by Madeleine Renaud in December 1939, became tremendously popular. They were also published as the first three poems of his 1941 collection, Le Crève-cœur, which was sold out in a few days. Until the middle of 1943, Aragon was able to publish under his own name. The successive collections, Les Yeux d’Elsa (1942), Brocéliande (1942) and En français dans le texte (1943), also published legally, were similar triumphs. After these, Aragon published his poems in the clandestine press under various pseudonyms, for example Jacques Destaing, François la Colère, Arnaud de St-Roman, Paul Wattelet and Georges Meyzargues. In 1944, he also published Le crime contre l’esprit (1944) under the pseudonym Le Témoin des martyrs. This last book is a collection of essays on members of the Resistance killed by the Nazis, for example, Georges Dudach, Gabriel Péri, Guy Môquet, Maïe and Georges Politzer, Danielle Casanova and so on. As the title suggests, this book is written and published with the manifest desire to bear testimony; each chapter describes the lives, intellectual and professional activities of the *résistants* and extracts from their last letters or notes before being executed by the Nazis. As the pseudonym suggests, this book was written as an act of witnessing, but it may also be read as a kind of hagiography of Communist *résistants*. In the words of Daniel Bournoux, “S’il fallait (...) résumer d’un mot l’esthétique et la

⁶² See page 54

⁶³ A decree passed on 26 August, 1939 suppressed 158 Communist publications as a potential threat to national defense. Bournoux, “Introduction” xliv

politique d'Aragon durant ces années, nous avancerions celui d'*altruisme*'⁶⁴ (If we had to summarize the aesthetics and politics of Aragon during these years in one word, we would propose *altruism*).

I would like to open a parenthesis here in order to discuss briefly the stance taken by both Aragon and the PCF before the onset of the war. After the annexation of Austria by Hitler in March 1938, the Association Internationale des Écrivains pour la Défense de la Culture (International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture) mobilized for peace. To this end, a "Rassemblement pour la paix" (Gathering for Peace) was organized in Paris, where Aragon spoke, first as the International Secretary of the Association, and then delivered a speech in his personal capacity, entitled "La Victoire du réel" (Victory of the real). In September 1938, when Daladier, Chamberlain, and Hitler signed the Munich accords, the French Communists staunchly opposed them because both Czechoslovakia and the USSR were excluded from the deliberations; they considered this treaty a form of capitulation to Hitler. They were thrown off balance by the signing of the Russo-German Pact of non-aggression with no forewarning from Stalin. Bernard Pudal states:

"En effet, le pacte germano-soviétique est un fait diplomatiquement susceptible de s'intégrer à des systèmes d'interprétation antinomiques: là où il constitue, pour les uns, une raison de prendre ses distances avec le PCF, il peut représenter, pour d'autres, une épreuve où se mesure la qualité de leur attachement au PCF. (Indeed, the Pact of non-aggression is a fact [that is] diplomatically susceptible to antinomic systems of interpretation: where it constitutes, for some, a reason to

⁶⁴ Bougnoux, "Introduction" xxx

distance themselves from the PCF, for others it can represent a test whereby one can measure their attachment to the PCF).⁶⁵

This observation is confirmed when we note that a total of 25 parliamentary deputies, that is to say a third of the communist group, resigned as a direct impact of the signing of the Pact (Pudal, 84). Among intellectuals too, the same trend can be observed, where, the signing of the Pact and the Russian annexation of Poland made Nizan resign, whereas for Aragon the Pact was a step towards more lasting peace, as demonstrated by his editorial “Vive la paix” in Ce Soir dated August 21, 1939.

In spite of the Pact, the line of the PCF as elaborated by Maurice Thorez ostensibly remained nationalist in orientation. This had been affirmed at the VIIth Congress of the PCF in January 1936; Thorez reconfirmed through a *communiqué* released on August 25, 1939 that should Hitler start war, the communists would collaborate for national defense. But after the Armistice, as Tiersky points out, “while the underground Communist publications of 1940-41 continued to criticize details of the German occupation, the French Communist Party faithfully carried out the Comintern pose of neutrality. This had proved utterly counterproductive for itself, but it was a course of action the remaining French Communists were willing to justify on the basis of a stubborn and unrelenting faith in the Russian Bolshevik revolutionary myth”⁶⁶. This contradiction came to an end with the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 when the PCF could officially give up its stance of neutrality.

⁶⁵ Pudal, Bernard. Prendre Parti. Pour une sociologie historique du PCF. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1989. p. 84

⁶⁶ Tiersky, Ronald. French Communism 1920 – 1972. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974. p. 108

Returning to our discussion of Aragon, his military division, the 3ème DLM (division légère mécanique) fought from the first to the last day of the 1940 military campaign; Aragon was awarded two citations, a military medal and the *croix de guerre avec palme*. After the French signed the Armistice (June 22, 1940), Aragon joined Elsa and they took refuge in Carcassonne, a city which was safe haven to others like Gallimard, Paulhan, and Seghers at the same time. After spending several months in poverty in Carcassonne and then in Nice, Aragon and Elsa moved back to Paris in March 1941. He was arrested by the Gestapo on May 6, 1941⁶⁷ and once again along with Elsa in June, when they were imprisoned for three weeks at a jail in Tours. Upon returning to Paris, Aragon was introduced to Georges Politzer⁶⁸, a psychologist and philosopher of renown who strongly opposed any legal publication under the Occupation as an act of treason. Aragon tried to convince him of his own line of thought: he believed that legal publication under the Occupation amounted to contraband, and advocated the use of the national myth to oppose the racial myths propagated by the Nazis. In addition, he proposed the use of coded language to pass censorship, specifically “le trobar clus ou l’art de la poésie courtoise des troubadours”⁶⁹ (the *trobar clus* or the art of the courtly poetry of the troubadours) as a means to be understood by the French but not the Germans. Aragon persuaded Politzer and his comrades of the clandestine Parti Communiste to add a literary section to La Pensée libre, which was

⁶⁷ In the Introduction to the Œuvres romanesques complètes, op. cit, p. lii, Bougnoux states that Aragon was released due to the intervention of Drieu, whereas Jacques Lecarme states that Aragon blamed Drieu for having denounced him to the Vichy police in 1941. Lecarme, J. “Drieu et Aragon” in Les Engagements d’Aragon. Itinéraires et Contacts de Culture. Vol. 24. Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997. p. 69. I have not yet located any documentation that confirms either claim.

⁶⁸ Georges Politzer, 1903-1942. Hungarian by birth, settled in France in 1921 after the defeat of Bela Kun’s abortive Soviet Republic. His Critique des fondements de la psychologie was to greatly influence Vygotsky. Under the Occupation, he founded two clandestine journals, L’Université libre and La Pensée libre. Vichy legislation passed in August 1941 decreed that communist propaganda would merit the death penalty; Politzer was arrested along with his wife Maïe and Marie-Claude Vaillant Couturier for Communist activities. He was tortured and executed by the Nazis in May 1942, and his wife died in Auschwitz in March 1943. Aragon writes about them in Le Crime contre l’esprit, mentioned above.

⁶⁹ Sapiro, “Les conditions professionnelles d’une mobilisation réussie: le Comité national des écrivains” 186

transformed in 1942 into the renowned Les Lettres françaises. Aragon convinced Jacques Decour⁷⁰ and Jean Paulhan to collaborate both on this undertaking as well as on the project of the creation of the Comité National d'Écrivains (CNE) as attempts at a professionalization of sorts of the resistance by writers. To this end, Paulhan was to be instrumental in attracting writers of the Gallimard and pre-Drieu NRF to the Lettres françaises.

In a letter dated September 25, 1941, Aragon responded to Matthew Josephson on the question of emigration:

Dans les conditions actuelles, nous n'y songeons pas, malgré les difficultés de la vie, malgré ses dangers. Vous le savez, je vous l'ai déjà écrit, nous regardons l'émigration (...) comme de la désertion. Ce pays, mon pays, ne doit pas être abandonné dans une heure pareille, et croyez-moi, la vie y est intense, profonde, et pour rien au monde je ne voudrais un jour pouvoir me reprocher de n'y avoir pas participé⁷¹.

(In the present conditions, we do not think of [emigration], in spite of the difficulties of life, in spite of its dangers. You know, I have written this to you before, we see emigration (...) as desertion. This country, my country, must not be abandoned at such an hour, and believe me, life here is intense, profound, and for nothing in the world would I one day want to have the opportunity to reproach myself for not having participated in it.)

Aragon's deep attachment to his homeland and the strong will to act in order to change the given circumstances is evident in this excerpt and from the list of his afore-mentioned activities. Throughout the rest of the Occupation, Aragon worked tirelessly in his mission of resistance to the Nazis. Apart from his numerous contributions to various clandestine journals or

⁷⁰ Jacques Decour, 1910-1942. He was an ardent germanist as well as an ardent *résistant*. He collaborated with Politzer on both journals, and was shot to death by the Nazis a week after Politzer's execution.

⁷¹ Quoted in Bognoux, "Introduction" lv

pamphlets which were distributed by the “star system”⁷², he ceaselessly tried to convert writers to the cause of the Resistance, advocating unity and solidarity by overlooking religious, philosophical or political differences between members⁷³. This stance is pushed to the point of rejecting “listes d’écrivains et de journalistes désignés à la vindicte nationale” (lists of writers and journalists designated for national vengeance) in an article entitled “La confusion sert les traîtres” in the November 1943 issue of Les Étoiles⁷⁴.

After various hideouts in Dieulefit, Lyons, and various trips around the country, Aragon and Elsa took up residence in St-Donat-sur-l’Herbasse in the Drôme region of Southern France. They lived there under the names of Louis-Lucien Andrieux and Élisabeth-Marie née Le Brasidech from July 1943 through September 1944. During these months, they continued their underground resistance activities, which went beyond intellectual resistance to work on the terrain. Elsa was sent around the entire Lot region to get in touch with the *maquis* in a car stolen from the Gestapo. During one of their train trips to Paris in March 1944, they missed being arrested by the police who were conducting a search in the belongings of the passengers, and who miraculously stopped at the person before them; Elsa was carrying a bagful of documents meant for the Resistance the discovery of which could have compromised both their lives.

In St-Donat, the couple was recognized by a person posing as a pharmacy preparer in the Chancel pharmacy; Jean and Mady Chancel, the pharmacists, thus got to know Elsa and Louis Aragon. The Chancel couple, although Catholic, were in close collaboration with the Franc-Tireurs et Partisans Français (FTP or armed section of Communist resistance). These were the only people in St-Donat to know the real identity of the so-called Andrieux couple. In June 1944,

⁷² Each recipient was requested to copy the text and forward it to five recipients. Auban, op. cit. p. 148

⁷³ See Sapiro for a study of the sociological factors behind resistance and collaboration among intellectuals.

⁷⁴ Bougnoux, “Introduction” lxiii

after the Normandy landings, Elsa and Aragon founded the paper La Drôme en armes; the first issue dated June 10 was handwritten by Elsa and reproduced on a roneograph. On June 14th, the couple participated in receiving supplies parachuted over St-Donat. The following day, the Germans retaliated to the parachute drop with a punitive expedition. The reprisal consisted of looting, raping several dozen women, and killing. Among these was the 13 year old daughter of Jean and Mady Chancel who was raped and died due to the injuries sustained⁷⁵.

These episodes are contemporaneous to the writing of “Le Droit romain n’est plus”, composed in July-August 1944⁷⁶. Although they do not appear in the text, we must keep them in mind as we read the short story, since these events may explain the emotional charge of this text. These incidents are certainly connected to the issues which Aragon raises through his writing, namely the questions of law, justice and vengeance.

2.2 LAW AND JUSTICE

Having situated the author in the spheres of his literary and political commitments, we can now turn to the text itself. I will begin with some general remarks on the narrative discourse (narrative voices, focalization, narrative situation, style); I will then explore the signification and choice of the title in order to understand the debate around justice and vengeance as staged in this narrative.

⁷⁵ Louis Aragon et Elsa Triolet, Jean et Mady Chancel, de vrais amis. Entretiens entre Mady Chancel et Jean Sauvageon. 20 October 2004.

http://etudesdromoises.free.fr/pages/pages_revue/resumes_d_articles/special_aragon.htm#Lapierre

⁷⁶ Bounoux, “Notes et variantes du <<Droit romain...>>” 1460

2.2.1 Form

“Le droit romain n’est plus” is the last story in a collection of short stories entitled Servitude et grandeur des Français. The subtitle, “Scènes des années terribles”, situates the collection in the years of the German occupation and the Vichy regime, as those four years have since come to be known. This collection was first published by La Bibliothèque Française in May 1945. In the first edition, the story is 60 pages long⁷⁷. This chapter will analyze only the last short story of the collection since it is the only one written in the period of interest to this study, namely the months of liberation, whereas the preceding stories were all written during the “années terribles”. As far as the manuscript is concerned, Bougnoux notes that all the stories appear in a notebook, except “Le droit romain”, which is written on separate sheets of paper. Since the action is situated in the mon

“Le droit romain” is a complex and well-developed narrative about a German military judge (“commandant von Lüttwitz-Randau”) and his secretary (“Lotte Müller”), and their capture, trial and execution by members of the *maquis*. It is divided into ten distinct sections, each narrated from a different perspective. The first reading is a destabilizing experience, since there is a proliferation of “I”s, and it is initially unclear who these subject pronouns refer to. In two of these ten sections, the first and the fifth, we have Lotte’s perspective using the technique of the interior monologue, two more as interior monologues of the commandant (the third and the seventh), and the remaining six are narrated by an unidentified narrator. It is difficult to define this narrator in formal terms: using Genette’s terminology, we might say s/he is heterodiegetic⁷⁸; the narration is principally in the third person, but the narrator slips in various

⁷⁷ Due to the poor state of the copy of the original edition, I will henceforth cite the story from the Pléiade edition edited by Daniel Bougnoux, 1219 – 1252.

⁷⁸ In very simple terms, Genette distinguishes between the “heterodiegetic” (parallel with what is commonly referred to as “third-person” narration, “with the narrator absent from the story he tells”) and “homodiegetic” (parallel with

“on”, “nous”, and even a pair of “je”. We cannot use yet another literary critical term, namely “omniscient narrator” for although this is largely true in that s/he has the ability to move in time and space and know the thoughts, feelings, words and actions of the characters, when we are faced with a statement like “Je ne suis pas bien sûr qu’il ait froncé le sourcil (...)” (I am not very sure that he frowned), the omniscience of the narrator becomes questionable. This interspersing of the first-person pronouns among principally third-person narrative sections is puzzling and ambiguous. Last but not least, in the second section, where the tribunal building is being described, we find yet another surprising statement: “Une demeure des temps passes, dont, n’ayant pas son Baedeker, *l’auteur* ne peut dire l’histoire”⁷⁹ (A residence of time past, of which, not having his Baedeker at hand, *the author* cannot recount the history). This appearance of the author in the text itself is a singular phenomenon, making the narrative conscious of being one and at the same time emphasizing the narration as testimony. As Käte Hamburger points out:

The intrusion of the author into his narrative, (...) the appearance of the first-person narrative form in pure fiction, in the third-person narrative, evokes for that moment the appearance of the fictive figures’ being real persons. The creative narrative function is occasionally interrupted by a statement of form, (...) this signifies a play on the narrative function, and in turn therefore on fiction itself. For in cases like these the reader nevertheless knows that he is reading a novel and, precisely because of this, even ever so impetuous first-person capriccios of the “narrator” will not only not disrupt the illusion of fiction for him, but will first make him smile to himself in awareness of this illusion – just as the narrator, in the moment he appears as the author, smiles to himself in awareness of this role.⁸⁰

"first-person" narration, "with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells"). Gérard Genette. Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Trans. Jane E. Lewin.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1972. pp. 244-245

⁷⁹ Emphasis added

⁸⁰ Hamburger, Käte. The Logic of Literature. Trans.: Marilyn Rose. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. p. 155

As far as the focalization is concerned, in the four sections of interior monologue the focalization is internal, and the language abilities and style (idiolects) of the focalizer are realistically reproduced. For instance, in the case of Lotte, this is seen in the repetition of certain words: one example would be the repetition of the word “genre”, which she uses in different ways and contexts ten times in the first section and nine times in the fifth. In the case of von Lüttwitz-Randau, it is not vocabulary choices, but syntax that reveals the idiolect of the speaker: he transfers the German sentence structure to French, carrying the verb over to the end of the subordinate clause: “Il avait encore un de ces téléphones qu’avec une manivelle on tourne” (He still had one of those phones that, with a handle, one cranked) (1238). Bougnoux notes that Aragon had systematically used this syntax for every sentence in the two sections of von Lüttwitz’ interior monologue initially, but he later changed some of them in the manuscript⁸¹. In the final version, there are still enough of these types of sentences that they become immediately noticeable to the reader. As far as the remaining sections are concerned, there is external focalization from the perspective of the narrator. This phenomenon of multiple focalizations brings an element of variety to the narration, making each section characteristic of the respective narrator. In these sections of interior monologues, we know nothing about where Lotte or von Lüttwitz-Randau happen to be, nor what they are doing while they elaborate their respective thoughts.

The narrative situation as we see it from the multiple narrators and focalizations is mixed: it is a combination of both authorial and figural narrative situations, as distinguished by Franz

⁸¹ Aragon, *Œuvres Romanèssques Complètes*, 1461, endnote to page 1224.

Stanzel in A Theory of Narrative⁸². By the same token, the modes of narration are mixed as well, the interior monologues being mimetic, and the third-person narrations being diegetic.

The action takes place in and around Valence, a town in the Rhône-Alpes region in South-Eastern France. Valence is the capital of the Drôme *département* where Aragon and Elsa took refuge. The geographical space is an important element of the story, associated strongly with the historical aspects of the region and the consciousness of history in the discourse. The link between the history and the geography of the terrain accentuates the link between the history of the land and the people. Thus, there are references to historical personalities such as César Borgia, Diane de Poitiers (who was named Duchess of Valentinois by king Henri II), and Louis Mandrin, a mid-18th century smuggler who enjoyed Robin Hood-like popularity in the region, especially after he was captured and tortured to death publicly. Similarly, there are references to historical events (the Spanish occupation, the Wars of Religion, and the states of the Dauphinois that demanded the Convocation of the *États Généraux*, prelude to the Revolution of 1789). Finally, in various descriptive passages, the reader perceives the sense of history conveyed linguistically. For example, returning to the description of the tribunal building, we read: “Un mélange de poutres à la pierre révèle la survivance du Moyen Âge dans cette Renaissance, la tradition locale plus forte que les architectes italiens (...)” (1222) (A mix of beams and stones reveals the survival of the Middle Ages in this Renaissance, local tradition stronger than Italian architects...); a building which harbors “des souvenirs accrochés de drames anciens” (1222) (memories hooked on to ancient dramas). This sense of the passage of time is reinforced through the aforementioned events and personalities, as also through the lesser known “peuple bâtard tout mélangé de Suisses et de Maures, de montagnards et de soldats, [qui] faisait les frais de

⁸² Stanzel, Franz. A Theory of Narration. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984: 194-196

l'expérience de celui qui s'appelait César (...) elle n'avait ici que la valeur d'une répétition sanglante, dont jamais l'histoire ne serait écrite." (1223) (a bastard population, a mix of Swiss and Moors, mountain-dwellers and soldiers, [who] paid the costs of the experiments of one who called himself Caesar (...) here it only represented a bloody rehearsal whose history will never be written). The descriptions of the countryside further strengthen the close link between the geographical and historical aspects; out of the many instances, I will chose one telling example: in section four, the narrator describes the area surrounding the café where Lotte and von Lüttwitz-Randau are frolicking around, and which happens to be amid hills. He states:

Depuis les temps glaciaires, ces pentes décharnées ont vu passer des catastrophes, ont éprouvé des séismes, assisté aux batailles du ciel et de l'homme. Elles ont connu les avalanches de peuplades, les invasions, les fuites des tribus paisibles (...). Quelles chansons sont mortes dans la vallée de siècle en siècle? (...) Par ici, par ces hauteurs arides et blanches, a retenti la clameur d'un peuple contre la tyrannie (...). Un immense paysage aveugle comme l'histoire (...) (1228)

(Since the ice age, these bare / barren slopes have seen catastrophes, have experienced earthquakes, witnessed the battles of the skies and of man. They have known avalanches of peoples, of invasions, of flights of peaceful tribes (...). What songs have died in these valleys from one century to the next? (...) Here, in these arid, white heights, the clamor of a people has rung out against tyranny (...). An immense landscape, as blind as history (...)

The space where the action takes place (the hills of the Drôme region) is presented as a witness to the passage of time, of people and things, of values, emotions and even songs; yet, it is at the same time antithetically qualified "as blind as history". What could have been a mere geographical description thus takes on the dimensions of a politico-historical landscape.

Although the region where the action takes place is clear, the reader is given few clear indications as to the specific time when the action is situated. Lotte mentions that her fiancé

“Bubi (...) m’a envoyé de très jolies choses d’Odessa” (1221) (Bubi (...) sent me very pretty things from Odessa). Soviet forces liberated Odessa on April 10, 1944; if her fiancé still happened to be in that city, and to be in a position to buy her “pretty things”, it was very probably before its liberation. The progression of indications of the weather from “Il faisait encore froid ce matin” (1224) (It was still cold this morning) to “Il faisait très chaud” (1238) (It was very hot) combined with the remarks on the loud songs of the cicadas place the action from its beginning in Spring to the capture, trial, and execution in mid-Summer⁸³.

2.2.2 *Droit, loi, justice*

Our first contact with any literary work is through the medium of the title; it informs our reading of the given work. It creates a certain expectation on the part of the reader, thereby orienting the interpretation. In the case of this short story, we first come into contact with the words “Droit romain”. The concept of *droit* or law is a recurrent motif in this story, but specifically Roman law is mentioned in the title as something that no longer exists. In this section, I will examine the notions of law as discussed in “Le Droit romain n’est plus” and interpret the title in this light. Before we begin, we need to distinguish between *droit* which might be defined as the system of judicial administration, as well as the science and study of law (jurisprudence), and *loi* or the body of rules and principles which govern the affairs of a community and which are enforced by a political authority. Both *droit* and *loi* are translated into English as “law”.

The discussion of the concept of law is presented throughout the story through the character of von Lüttwitz-Randau. His first reflections on law are about an article he read and particularly liked. This article is on the evolution of German law and is stated to have appeared

⁸³ Cicadas do not “sing” when the temperature is below 22 degrees Celsius.

in the Völkische Beobachter, the official Nazi newspaper: von Lüttwitz-Randau appreciates this article especially because it reflects his personal views as propounded in his thesis, *De jure germanico*, dated 1925. This similarity is proof for him that although he is merely a political convert, “il n’y a pas moins entre le national-socialisme et moi de très anciennes et profondément troublantes affinités” (1224) (there are nevertheless, between national-socialism and me, very ancient and profoundly troubling affinities). This statement serves to situate the judge with respect to national-socialism by drawing an analogy between his views and the official party views. Returning to the question of his political conversion, he does clarify his move in the following terms: “Je suis entré dans la parti [*sic*], au lendemain de l’exécution de Röhm et de ses complices” (1240) (I entered the party immediately following the execution of Röhm and of his accomplices). This is a reference to what came to be known as the Night of the Long Knives, when Hitler carried out the purge of his opposition, when many SA (Sturmabteilung) leaders were arrested. The most influential of these, Ernst Röhm, was executed on July 1, 1934 without trial, on the pretext that he was preparing a putsch against Hitler. Von Lüttwitz-Randau clarifies that his adhesion to the Nazi party was not a move of astuteness to ensure his personal safety; rather, he explains that “j’ai alors tout de suite compris qu’il fallait des juristes pour, à la lumière de ce fait d’une importance historique... *wie sagt man?* réviser entièrement, *wiederaufbauen*... réédifier le droit allemand.” (1240) (I then understood right away that jurists were needed in order to, in the light of this event of historic importance... how does one say? entirely revise, rebuild... re-edify German law). His is portrayed as a real conversion, inasmuch as he qualifies Hitler’s Enabling Act, the legislation that sanctioned his dictatorship, as “inspiré” (1225) (inspired): “La suppression de toutes les lois au bénéfice de l’intérêt national tel qu’à la minute du jugement le juge en dernière analyse le conçoit, c’est une audace vraiment allemande!”

(1225) (The suppression of all laws for the benefit of the national interest such that, at the moment of judgment, the judge conceives it in the final analysis, that's a truly German audacity!)⁸⁴. His admiration of Nazi legislation is manifest.

The idea of rebuilding German law is a lasting preoccupation of von Lüttwitz-Randau: in the past, it was what motivated him to join the party; at the so-called present time in the story, it is something he ponders in case of future defeat. He states his contention plainly:

Il s'agit maintenant d'élaborer un vocabulaire juridique, permettant aux seuls Allemands d'appliquer les règles favorables à notre patrie, qui, le cas échéant, pourraient se retourner contre elle. C'est là notre tâche, à nous, juristes de la vieille école, ralliés aux idées nouvelles.⁸⁵ (1225) (It is now a question of elaborating a juridical vocabulary, allowing only Germans to apply those rules that are favorable to the homeland, which, if the case arises, could turn against it [the homeland]. That is our task, for us, jurists of the old school who have come around to [these] new ideas.).

The idea of elaborating a new juridical vocabulary is an interesting and significant one: it shows an understanding of the importance of words, of language and definitions; the judge points out the difference between himself and those Nazis who “*ne savent pas le pouvoir des mots et la nécessité de les détourner au profit de la cause allemande*”⁸⁶.” (1225) (do not know the power of words and the necessity of diverting [their meaning] to the advantage of the German cause). Von Lüttwitz-Randau demonstrates that he is very conscious of the power of language as a tool. Furthermore, this is already a reflection on the post-war, a preempting of future

⁸⁴ “On March 23, 1933, the Reichstag (...) voted in favor of the Enabling Act that allowed Hitler to ignore the Constitution and to give his decrees the power of law. (...) The decree powers were the pseudolegal base from which Hitler carried out the first steps of the Nazi revolution.” “Germany.” Encyclopædia Britannica. 2004. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 31 Aug. 2004
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=109160>

⁸⁵ Emphasis added.

⁸⁶ Emphasis added.

prosecution or accusations through the creation of particular type of juridical vocabulary that would serve the German cause even in case of defeat.

As a military judge, von Lüttwitz-Randau is called upon to apply Nazi statutes to the occupied territory. In this position, he does not falter in meting out the death penalty to the “terrorists”, as the members of the Resistance came to be known among the occupiers as well as among supporters of Vichy. He is nonchalantly unconcerned at his judgments to the point of being inured: “Séance tout à fait banale. Deux condamnations à mort” (1236) (An entirely banal session. Two death sentences). Indeed, when he himself is being tried and the *résistants* list the numerous cases in which he pronounced the death sentence, the narrator discloses: “Lüttwitz-Randau ne se souvenait pas d’avoir autant condamné à mort tant d’hommes, des femmes, et encore d’autres, d’autres.” (1245) (Lüttwitz-Randau did not recall having so often sentenced to death so many men, [so many] women, yet others, others).

The German judge’s musings on the question of law also take the direction of the title of the story, namely Roman law. He specifies that he had formerly been a professor of Roman law (1237). In a long article entitled “Roman law”, the Encyclopædia Britannica defines the term in the following words:

The law of ancient Rome from the time of the founding of the city in 753 BC until the fall of the Western Empire in the 5th century AD. (...) As a legal system, Roman law has affected the development of law in most of Western civilization (...). It forms the basis of the law codes of most countries of continental Europe and derivative systems elsewhere.

The term Roman law today often refers to more than the laws of Roman society. The legal institutions evolved by the Romans had influence on the laws of other peoples in times long after the disappearance of the Roman Empire and in countries that were never subject to Roman rule. To take the most striking example, in a large part of Germany, until the adoption of a common code for the

whole empire in 1900, the Roman law was in force as “subsidiary law”; that is, it was applied unless excluded by contrary local provisions. (...)

In literal terms, Roman law has ceased to exist since the fall of the Roman Empire; it has however continued to exist through its influence in occidental legalistic developments. It is precisely this influence that von Lüttwitz-Randau deems nefarious, so much so that “pour faire primer dans le monde le droit germanique, il faut, c’est mon point de vue, effacer dans le mode moderne toute trace du droit romain.” (1237) (in order to make Germanic law prevail in the world, it is necessary, in my point of view, to erase every trace of Roman law from the modern world.). His use of the term ‘Germanic law’, the so called *Leges Barbarorum*,⁸⁷ does not refer to that body of law the first written collections of which date back to the 5th century AD, for the simple reason that they themselves were “written in Latin and show Roman influence by their use of the technical terms of Roman law”⁸⁸. Since, in his opinion, “le droit romain comme base des lois modernes, c’est une absurdité révoltante et contraire à l’esprit allemande” (1237) (Roman law as the basis for modern laws, that is a revolting absurdity and [is] contrary to the German spirit), the ancient Germanic law could not plausibly be the object of what he fancies to be visionary reveries. He is not thinking of something resembling the Napoleonic Code either, since he speaks of ante-Nazi German law, the same one that found Dimitrov not guilty of arson in the case of the Reichstag fire of 1933, in the following terms: “en ce temps-là nos tribunaux étaient encore infectés par le droit romain, le Code Napoléon, les lois juives... Aujourd’hui, jamais nous n’aurions laissé repartir Dimitrov, il aurait été condamné selon le droit allemand.” (1241) (at that time, our tribunals were infected by Roman law, the Napoleonic Code, Jewish laws... [Nowadays], we would never have let him leave; he would be condemned as per German

⁸⁷ “Germanic Law.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2004. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 24 Aug. 2004
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=115344>

⁸⁸ “Germanic Law”

law.). In von Lüttwitz-Randau's mental landscape, Roman law, the Napoleonic Code, and so-called 'Jewish laws' are equated, with no clarification as to what exactly these 'Jewish laws' might be. The putative powers of contamination of these three legal systems are what he wants to divert from his conception of future German law, "[rebâtie] dans des conditions vraiment allemandes un droit qui n'a pas besoin de code. Il n'y aura jamais de Code Hitler. Parce que la pensée du Führer ne peut être codifiée, elle" (1237) (rebuilt in truly German conditions, a law which has no need for a code. There will never be a Hitlerian Code. Because the Führer's thought cannot be codified.). The point of culmination of this 'evolution' of German law, in his mind, rests in a sort of Nazi idyll, purged of outside influences, notably those of the Roman kind.

Why this insistence on Roman law, we might safely ask. And what links might there be in von Lüttwitz-Randau's desire to eradicate the legacy of Roman law and the title of the story? To answer these questions, it will be necessary to make a detour to the trial of the judge by the *maquisards*. I will firstly briefly outline the events leading up to the trial, and then discuss the trial itself.

"Le droit romain n'est plus" begins with Lotte Müller's incessant boredom in this small town in southern France. The incipit is revealing: "Ah! quel ennui, pour une fille de mon genre..." (1219). The words "ennui" (boredom) and "s'ennuyer" (to be bored), shibboleths of Lotte, distinguish her sections from the others. Although the judge is having an illicit love-affair with her, he will not escort her in public for fear of the affair being reported to his wife in Germany. Lotte's boredom and the judge's fear are the motives that drive them to leave the town in order to spend a night together in a hotel in the countryside. The judge is shown to constantly

drop his “lorgnon” and unflinchingly does so upon his arrival at the station⁸⁹. His shortsightedness may be seen both as literal, since he is myopic, and symbolic, as a premonition of the events that are about to take place. This gesture may also be seen as the caricature of the so-called cultured Nazi. Having been delayed at the tribunal, the judge and Lotte arrive at the station rather late, and it is she who unwittingly directs him to the wrong train. The station they were to get off at therefore never arrives, and they end up at the terminus in a town denoted in the story only as “N****”. Due to the most recent restrictions imposed by the Nazis, the next train they can take out of N**** runs only two days later; to keep their absence from being noticed by their co-workers, von Lüttwitz-Randau asks the stationmaster to call the German authorities and request a car to take them back. Using the pretext that he can only reach the German authorities via the French authorities, the stationmaster puts a call through to the *maquis*, although the reader understands this only retrospectively while reading the next section, where it becomes clear that the *maquisards* have arrested both the judge and “la souris” as German secretaries came to be known under the occupation.

As mentioned before, the author gives us little indication of the precise moment when the action takes place. Based upon various incidental remarks, we can infer that the duration of the action is from late spring through early summer. In section six of the story, before the train journey of the judge and his secretary, the narrator tells us: “Le soleil de mai déjà fait bourdonner le grand paysage paisible, des insectes sortent avec les fleurs, et les mouches, invinciblement attirées par les êtres humains *comme si déjà elles en sentaient le cadavre...*”⁹⁰ (1233) (The May sun already makes the great, peaceful landscape buzz, insects consort with flowers, and flies

⁸⁹ A “lorgnon”, like a pince-nez, has no temples or sidepieces of the frame for eyeglasses that extends along the temple and over the ear; unlike the pince-nez, though, it does not have a spring to keep it clipped to the bridge of the nose.

⁹⁰ Emphasis added.

[are] invincibly attracted by human beings as though they already smell [them as future] cadavers). Further on in the story, both while they are on the train as well as while they are waiting in the station for the car to take them away, we are told, “Il faisait chaud. (...) Les mouches tournaient autour de nous” (1237) (It was hot. (...) Flies circled around us) and “Il faisait très chaud. Il y avait des mouches” (1238) (It was very hot. There were flies). The indication of the presence of flies, rather than just to convey the stifling heat, may also be read as a premonitory gesture.

Immediately following their capture, the *maquisards* transport the German couple to an abandoned farmhouse, which turns out to be the scene of the trial. The sections depicting the trial, sentence and execution (sections eight, nine and ten) are the terminating sections of the short-story and are all recounted by the narrator. Furthermore, in these three sections, along with reporting, dialogues are also used. We are given little information about the three *maquisards*: other than a brief physical description, the reader is told that one of them is “le chef” and used to be a teacher of Latin and Greek in his civil life, another is a priest wearing a cassock and a cross⁹¹; the third member is simply referred to as “le grand brun” (the tall, brown-haired [person]). This type of depiction of the *maquisards*, a kind of depersonalization, serves to accentuate their role as *résistants* specifically, and not as yet other protagonists in a story, going about their daily existence.

The enactment of this trial opens section eight, but once again, the reader realizes only retrospectively that a trial is taking place, that the judge himself is in a situation of being judged.

⁹¹ The inclusion of a priest in this group of *maquisards* is representative, I believe, of Aragon’s desire for a unified resistance but not necessarily a reflection of his own beliefs. In his clandestine period in St-Donat, Aragon himself closely worked with Catholic *résistants* among whom Jean and Mady Chancel. The refrain of his 1943 poem, “La rose et le réséda”, bears witness to the same, with its famous refrain, “Celui qui croyait au ciel / Celui qui n’y croyait pas” (The one who believed in heaven / [And] the one who did not). Aragon, “La rose et le réséda” in La Diane française, Paris: Seghers, 1946, 1997. p. 19

I use the term ‘trial’ here deliberately, since in these sections von Lüttwitz-Randau is often referred to as “l’accusé” (the accused or the defendant) and the *maquisards* are designated as “ses juges” (his judges). This trial takes place in two stages: first, what could be called a preliminary interrogation, and then the trial proper. The preliminary interrogation begins with direct examination of the accused by one of the three captors who is immediately told by “le grand brun” to let the defendant, von Lüttwitz-Randau, speak for himself. The latter, playing simultaneously the role of defendant and lawyer, sets out describing his affiliation with the Nazi party. His captors often interrupt him, either to question his assumptions, for example:

« Peut-être ceci n’a-t-il pas d’importance pour des terroristes... mais le droit est le droit... »

- Qui sont les terroristes ? demanda Jean-Pierre (...) « Je suis le capitaine Jean-Pierre, de l’armée française, (...) (1240)

(“Perhaps this is of no importance to terrorists... but the law is the law...”

- Who are the terrorists? asked Jean-Pierre (...) “I am Captain Jean-Pierre, of the French Army, (...)”

or simply for clarifications, for instance:

« Mon commandant, (...) combien avez-vous fait mourir d’êtres humains selon votre droit allemand ? »

Le commandant détourna la tête et ne répondit pas. (...)

« Je n’ai jamais tué personne... protesta-t-il, à la réflexion... Je suis un magistrat qui applique les lois... »

- Quelles lois ? rugit Jean-Pierre. Votre Führer a aboli toutes les lois...

- Notre Führer, dit l’accusé, considère comme la loi l’intérêt de l’Allemagne... (1241)

(“My commander, (...) how many human beings have you caused to be killed based upon your German law?”

The commander turned his head away and did not reply. (...)

“I have never killed anybody... he protested upon reflection... I am a judge who applies the law...

- Which laws? roared Jean-Pierre. Your Führer abolished all laws...

- Our Führer, answered the accused, considers as law the interest of Germany...)

Through the staging of this preliminary interrogation, the three captors seek a specific response from von Lüttwitz-Randau, but he is fundamentally unaware of what they are after, whence this remark by the narrator: “il y avait entre cet homme et ses juges un mécompte fondamentale” (1241) (there was between this man and his judges a fundamental misunderstanding / misjudgment). To begin with, the accused cannot even begin to comprehend that he is in actuality being tried, since “lui considérait l’obéissance et la fidélité à son Führer comme la justification de tous ses actes, comme le point de droit qui le soustrayait à l’examen de toute justice” (1242) (he considered obedience and fidelity to his Führer as the justification of all his acts, as the legal point that shielded him from [being] examined by any [kind of] justice). The three *résistants* on the other hand have a dual objective: to try the judge and to have him deny his commitment to the Nazi cause, if only mendaciously:

(...) eux considéraient cette inféodation, cette passivité, cette aggravation de cas, comme une preuve de culpabilité. (...) au fond, ils lui donnaient sa chance en lui permettant de dire que tout cela, tout ce qu’on pouvait reprocher non pas seulement à lui, commandant von Machin Chouette, mais aux Allemands, tous les Allemands, c’était en fait leur Führer et, comme il disait, la parti, qui en étaient responsables, tous les crimes, tous les otages fusillés... Ils le lui permettaient d’une façon sans doute abusive, cela aurait été si simple pour lui s’il avait seulement compris de quoi il s’agissait, de s’en tirer simplement d’une mensonge. (...) Il ne pouvait pas comprendre qu’il aurait sauvé sa peau en désavouant le national-socialisme. (1242)

(They considered this allegiance, this passivity, as an aggravation of the case, a proof of guilt. (...) basically, they were giving him a chance by allowing him to

say that all of this, all that for which one could reproach not only him, commander von Thingumajig, but [reproach] the Germans, all Germans, was their Führer and, as he put it, the party, who were responsible for all the crimes, all the executed hostages... They allowed him [to do so] in an abusive manner, without a doubt, it would have been so simple for him had he only understood what it was all about, to get out [of the quandary] simply with the means of a lie. (...) He could not understand that he would have saved his skin by abjuring national-socialism.).

Von Lüttwitz-Randau however does not comprehend the quasi-symbolic nature of his trial and continues to flaunt his allegiance to the German cause. While all of this unfolds, his secretary Lotte is being questioned in the adjoining room and, although he cannot decipher what she is saying, he can distinctly hear her speak. To him, the unknown that is represented by the imagined danger of her denunciations is a greater source of apprehension than the real threat of his own words. His thoughts come full circle to his former considerations on a possible line of defense for Germany, and he finds that he has the ideal opportunity to try it out:

Sa défense. Ce système juridique qu'il préparait pour les mauvais jours, pour sortir l'Allemagne d'affaire dans les mauvais jours. (...) Le système qui donnerait à l'Allemagne vaincue l'allure qui en impose au vainqueur, la dignité du combattant qui n'abdique pas. Etc.

Pour l'instant, seul, Lüttwitz-Randau était dans un mauvais cas, et il faisait l'essai de son système. (1242)

(His defense. That juridical system which he was preparing for the bad days, to save Germany from the mess during the bad days. (...) The system which would give vanquished Germany the bearing which imposes [itself] on the winner, the dignity of the combatant who does not abdicate. Etc.

For the moment, alone, Lüttwitz-Randau was in a mess, and he was trying out his system.).

Von Lüttwitz-Randau misinterprets the whole situation and whilst his judges want to enlarge the personal case to the national level, he tries out his national defense at the personal level. The resulting preliminary verdict is unanimous: “Inguérissable” (1242) (Incurable).

For the trial proper, a much more dramatic setting is prepared. Von Lüttwitz-Randau is brought outdoors after dusk and placed in a “cercle éclairé assez théâtralement avec des flambeaux de résine, placés bas, qui jetaient une bizarre clarté sur tous les hommes du maquis, debout.” (1244) (circle lit quite theatrically with resin flaming- torches, placed low, which threw a strange glow on all the men from the *maquis*, [who were] standing). The total number of “all the men” present is not specified. The affectedly dramatic setting created by Jean-Pierre, the chief of this group, aims not so much to intimidate the accused as to “frapper l’imagination de ses hommes. Satisfaire aussi leur passion de justice.” (1244) (strike the imagination of his men. Also, to satisfy their passion for justice.)

This quest for justice is the only point of intersection between von Lüttwitz-Randau and this group of *résistants*, albeit in very different acceptations of the concept. In his understanding, the term denotes *the judicial administration of law or equity*⁹² and, as we have seen, he is either pre-occupied with meditating upon a kind of legal system that is purged of Roman influences, or with the definition of a new judicial vocabulary in a new kind of legal system which would save his country’s face. They on the other hand understand it as the *exercise of authority or power in maintenance of right; vindication of right by assignment of reward or punishment; infliction of punishment, legal vengeance on an offender*⁹³. We shall return shortly to a discussion of this aspect of the term justice.

⁹² “Justice”. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2004. Oxford English Dictionary Online. 8 Dec 2004
<http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/oed/oed-idx.pl?type=entry&byte=217763221>

⁹³ “Justice”. Emphasis added.

This phase of the trial of von Lüttwitz-Randau is much shorter and swifter than the previous one. It opens with the charges against the defendant (“Il y avait un acte d’accusation”, 1244) based upon the disclosures of Lotte Müller. These disclosures have to do with the sheer magnitude of cases judged by him that resulted in death sentences. Most of these death sentences were meted out to members of the resistance, communist or otherwise. Since, as we have seen above, “von Lüttwitz-Randau ne se souvenait pas d’avoir autant condamné à mort” (1245), he is surprised at her power of recollection: “Quelle mémoire, cette Lotte. Quel besoin avait-elle d’en dire tant?” (1245) (What a memory, that Lotte. What need did she feel to say so much?). As his secretary, there is no reason for them to question her credibility, and therefore, the charges they make are based upon her information. Once more, von Lüttwitz-Randau is given the opportunity to contest the charges: “Qu’avez-vous à dire pour votre défense?” (1245) (What do you have to say in your defense?) and yet again, his own words condemn him:

“L’homme était pris de court. Il n’avait pas imaginé cela. Sa défense. La défense de l’Allemagne... Une vieille phrase qui lui avait, qui leur avait à tous beaucoup servi en 1940-41 lui revint seule aux lèvres comme un hoquet: Wir sind doch keinen Barbaren...” (1245) (The man was taken by surprise. He had not imagined this. His defense. The defense of Germany... An old phrase which had served him, had served all of them in 1940-41 rose by itself to his lips, like a hiccough: We are not Barbarians after all...).

Instead of arguing his case, von Lüttwitz-Randau’s involuntary response has a largely provocative effect, resulting in a tirade by Jean-Pierre:

“Ah! vous osez, vous osez encore dire que vous n’êtes pas des barbares? Après ce que nous avons vu et que vous avez fait? (...) vous pourriez, là-dessus, mourir, et mourir après tout comme les nôtres, fusillé, en soldat, sur cette petite phrase (...) Ce serait trop simple, ce serait trop beau! Avant de mourir, commandant von Lüttwitz, il vous faudra voir, il vous faudra avouer...” (1245) (Ah! You dare, you

still dare say that you are not barbarians? After what we have seen and what you have done? (...) You could, on that alone, die, and die after all like our [people], shot, like a soldier, for this little phrase (...). That would be too easy, it would be too fine! Before dying, commander von Lüttwitz, you will have to see, you will have to admit / confess...)

This rebuttal of von Lüttwitz-Randau's defense works at the same time as the verdict: the German judge will have to witness for himself in order to correct the statement about not being Barbarians. And yet one more time, the symbolism of this verdict escapes von Lüttwitz-Randau. For the rest of the night, he is driven around the countryside in a kind of pilgrimage, from one site of execution to another, with details of violent deaths caused for little or no reason by the occupiers. Instead of the repentance his judges expect to see, the only answer von Lüttwitz-Randau repeats for them like a litany is "c'est la guerre" (1248-1249). There is only one instance where he reacts not with indifference but with fear: it is not as much because they show him the barn where a six-year old was nailed to the door in front of his mother as when he realizes that the little boy was the priest's brother⁹⁴. There is no remorse or pity in him, there is only fear for himself: "Alors le prisonnier eut très peur, et il dit, la gorge serré: "Tuez-moi tout de suite." (1250) (Then the prisoner felt very afraid, and he said, with a tightening of his throat: "Kill me immediately").

Von Lüttwitz-Randau for the first time realizes that he is about to pay not as much for the death sentences given out in his court as symbolically for what his co-members of the Nazi party have perpetrated in the name of war. And yet, what is uppermost in his mind is not the fear of death, but that of pain: "Il avait peur de la torture" (1251) (He was afraid of torture); whence the request to be killed instantly. Jean-Pierre's answer is as forceful as it is eloquent: "Pour que tu

⁹⁴ In "Six tapisseries inachevées", one of his few poems written between the beginning of Operation Overlord and the publication of the collection *La Diane française* in December 1944, there is yet another mention of "enfants cloués aux portes". Aragon. "Six tapisseries inachevées" in *La Diane française*. Paris: Seghers, 1946, 1997. p. 17

crèves en pensant que nous nous vengeons? Ah non, par exemple!” (1250) (So that you die thinking that we are avenging ourselves? Oh no, you won’t!)

This statement by Jean-Pierre represents the crux of the matter: is von Lüttwitz-Randau’s trial being held with the aim of doing justice at a personal level, or is it to seek vengeance at a symbolic, collective level? To answer this question, we must now turn to the issue of Roman law: “As early as the 6th and 5th centuries BC, Roman law was experiencing a transition from a system of private vengeance to one in which the state insisted that the person wronged accept compensation instead of vengeance”⁹⁵. This Roman law which has influenced almost all subsequent national legal systems either directly or indirectly, and which once upon a time allowed for vengeance but has not done so for over two and a half millennia, this is the same Roman law that the title tells us is no more.

The German judge is not being tried for having killed Frenchmen literally, but for having been the medium through which their deaths occurred. Von Lüttwitz-Randau is shown to believe that Lotte’s other escort and cavalier, the *Oberleutnant* Willi of the Gestapo “a la main heureuse avec les juifs” (1236) (is rather successful with [getting rid of] the Jews); the same could be said of himself vis-à-vis the *résistants*. Many of his verdicts are alluded to, but we are also given a few cases with grisly details; a pertinent example would be the case of Lotte who repeatedly complains of boredom, and whose only daily source of “amusement décidément, c’est le tribunal” (1232). The case she remembers immediately after this statement is telling:

On avait amené une femme. (...) Quand Kätzchen⁹⁶ l’interrogeait, elle ne répondait pas. Elle avait été arrêtée en liaison avec un sabotage (...). A la fin,

⁹⁵ “Roman Law”. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2004. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 24 Aug. 2004 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu+115342>. NB : Justinian’s Corpus Juris Civilis dates to 529 BC and incorporates the following categories: i. the law of persons; ii. Family; iii. Corporations; iv. Delict and contract ; and v. the law of succession.

⁹⁶ Lotte’s diminutive for von Lüttwitz-Randau.

Kätzchen s'est fâché. Alors elle a ouvert la bouche et elle nous a montré sa langue. Au cours d'un interrogatoire, elle se l'était coupée pour ne pas parler. Je ne comprenais pas pourquoi elle n'en était pas morte, ça saigne affreusement une langue. (...) [Elle a été] très bien fait soigner tout de suite (...) pour la punir, qu'elle vive avec sa langue coupée. Cet imbécile de Kätzchen l'a fait fusiller. (1232). (A woman had been brought in. (...) When Kätzchen interrogated her she didn't answer. She had been arrested in connection with sabotage. (...) In the end, Kätzchen got angry, so she opened her mouth and showed us her tongue. In the course of an interrogation, she had cut it off in order not to speak. I couldn't understand why she did not die of it, the tongue bleeds frightfully. (...) [She had been] treated immediately (...) in order to punish her, so that she may live with her cut-off tongue. Kätzchen, the imbecile, had her shot).

Lotte seems to get sadistic pleasure from the idea of the woman having to live with her tongue cut off, whence her displeasure at the execution of this woman. The German judge's impassivity and indifference while giving verdicts is mirrored in his apathetic reactions to the scenes the *maquisards* make him witness.

Returning to Roman law and Justinian's decree that instead of private vengeance compensation was to be accepted, in the given situation of von Lüttwitz-Randau's trial this is no longer a viable option. The meager compensation the *maquisards* expect from von Lüttwitz-Randau is, initially, the abjuration of national-socialism and a disavowal of his political engagement, and later, the acknowledgement of the barbarity of German acts of violence. His adamant refusal to do either leaves them with the only other option of executing him: "Alors ils l'entraînèrent et, (...) au bord du chemin, comme une poule, il l'abbatirent" (1252) (So they dragged him and, (...) at the edge of the path, like a hen, they put him down / slaughtered him). This, I believe, is the source of the title of the short-story: the lack of any self-questioning on part of the German judge leads his judges to revert to the principle of personal vengeance; whence,

“le Droit romain n’est plus” (Roman law is no more). In so doing, von Lüttwitz-Randau’s dream of doing away with Roman law is actualized, but not in the way he desired it.

2.3 MUSIC, CULTURAL POLITICS, NATIONALISM

Von Lüttwitz-Randau’s reply and his only line of defense, namely “*Wir sind doch keinen Barbaren*” opens up this discussion to the related topic of culture. Cultural politics played an important role in the agenda of the occupying power, especially to refute the image of Germans as barbarians and to portray Germany as a civilized and refined nation. Music proved to play a key role to this end. In this section, I will analyze the role of music in Aragon’s resistance writings in general and in “Le droit romain n’est plus” in particular. I will examine the recurrent theme of music and explore the question of the musicality of the text itself as reflected in its polyphony and in the central section of the story. Finally, I will discuss the importance of culture both as an instrument of propaganda as well as an instrument of resistance, and the associations that can be made between writing, music and nationalism.

2.3.1 Culture: instrument of propaganda and of resistance

On the 17th of June, 1944, Pétain conceded to an armistice; the very next day, the BBC broadcast the famous “Appel du 18 juin, 1940” by Charles de Gaulle, where his penultimate sentence was: “Quoi qu’il arrive, la flamme de la résistance française ne doit pas s’éteindre et ne s’éteindra pas⁹⁷.” (Whatever happens, the flame of the French resistance must not die down and

⁹⁷ <http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=25>

will not die down). This is traditionally seen as the beginning of the French resistance to the German Occupation of France. The term “la résistance” generally evokes an amorphous amalgam that denotes mainly military resistance; it is in reality an all-encompassing word that includes the most disparate elements, from “la France libre” or “la France combattante” that had its governing bodies overseas, to armed units of military resistance, guerilla warfare units, and organized resistance groups within almost every organized profession, for example “Résistance-fer”, the resistance unit of railway workers epitomized in René Clément’s 1946 film, *La Bataille du rail* or the “Front national des musiciens”, which was the resistance group of musicians ⁹⁸.

A wide variety of activities could be termed “resistance”: active resistance might have included combat, recon activities, sabotage, making false papers, hiding individuals, helping them cross the borders or emigrate, blowing up railway lines, going underground to avoid the STO, providing the maquisards with food supplies, publication of newspapers which were often only mimeographed sheets but effective in countering Vichy / German propaganda, acting as “mailbox” to transmit messages, and so on. “Passive resistance” on the other hand could include listening to the BBC, wearing black for mourning or wearing the colors of the French flag, drawing the Croix de Lorraine and “V” for victory on walls, or even whistling the beginning of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony because “...-” stands for V in Morse code⁹⁹.

Among the various types of resistance activities carried on by individuals or groups to oppose the occupiers, cultural resistance played a significant role. Indeed, after de Gaulle’s 1940 call to resistance, the minority who were able to or who felt strongly enough either began to participate clandestinely in the resistance or went overseas to do so. This was evidently not a

⁹⁸ Clément, René. *La Bataille du rail*. Gaillon : Fil à film [distrib.], 1990, 1946.

⁹⁹ Nettlebeck, Colin. ed. *War and Identity: The French and the Second World War*. An anthology of texts. London: Methuen, 1987. p. 55

feasible option for the large majority who, for a variety of personal, family, ideological, or logistical reasons were impelled to remain where they were¹⁰⁰. Sustaining the morale of those who stayed in France was an essential task, and culture played an important role to this end.

On the other hand, for the Nazi regime, occupation implied more than just taking over the political and economic reins of a country: there was a clear, focused understanding of the importance of cultural products and a concerted effort to control them. Indeed, after the Armistice was signed on June 22, 1940, Hitler visited the Paris Opera the very next day¹⁰¹. Less than a month after the start of the Occupation, the need for well-defined cultural politics was proposed¹⁰². Not long after, a report drafted by Karl Wimmer of the *Propaganda Abteilung* on September 14, 1940 states:

Pour l'Allemagne victorieuse, le problème franco-allemand reste, malgré tout [...] un problème de psychologie des peuples. Si l'Appel à la nation française veut susciter un infléchissement *durable* de la volonté française par le biais d'une politique culturelle, celle-ci doit avant tout et en tout renoncer à être (trop) importune. Au-delà d'un cadre temporel trop étroit, c'est précisément la volonté d'inscrire la politique culturelle dans la durée qui justifie des mesures générales et spécifiques¹⁰³. (For victorious Germany, the Franco-German problem remains, in spite of everything [...] a problem of psychology of the people. If the call to the French nation wants to arouse a durable shift in the French will by means of cultural politics, it [the cultural politics] should, firstly and in everything, renounce being bothersome. Beyond an excessively narrow temporal framework,

¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed study of the reasons for entering or not entering the resistance at the early, middle, and later stages of the occupation, see Douzou, Laurent. "L'entrée en résistance" in *La Résistance, une histoire sociale*. Ed. Antoine Prost. Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 1997. pp. 9-20

¹⁰¹ Porcile, 28

¹⁰² Schwartz, Manuela. "La Musique, outil majeur de la propagande culturelle des Nazis" in *La Vie musicale sous Vichy*. Ed. Myriam Chimènes. Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 2001. p. 89

¹⁰³ Quoted by Manuela Schwartz in "La musique, outil majeur de la propagande culturelle des Nazis" in *La Vie musicale sous Vichy*. Ed. Myriam Chimènes. Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 2001. p. 90

it is precisely the will to inscribe this cultural politics in duration that justifies the general and specific measures)

Four different organizations, namely the *Propaganda Staffel* under Heinz Schmidtke, the *Propaganda Abteilung* as a military institution, the German Embassy under the ambassador Otto Abetz, and the *Institut allemand* under Karl Epting, all vied for the control of the cultural politics; furthermore, in the Fall of 1942 a representative for culture and music was sent to the German Embassy in Paris by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda¹⁰⁴. Other parties interested in the specific question of music included the *Deutsche Akademie* of Munich, the group *Collaboration*, and the section entitled “France” of the NSDAP (the Nazi party)¹⁰⁵. This fact quite clearly underscores the importance of the question of culture. Cultural propaganda served to project an image of Germany as a cultivated nation, to belie the violence that accompanied the military offensive. Manuela Schwartz adds:

“La musique occupe, au sein de ce (...) programme, une place importante (...) soit par sa position prioritaire dans les différents documents de planification, soit par l’ampleur et le mode de sa représentation. (...) la musique a été utilisée, par ses organisateurs et les hommes de pouvoir, comme l’un des moyens de propaganda les plus efficaces”¹⁰⁶ (Music occupies, at the core of this (...) program, an important place, both through the vastness and the mode of its representation. (...) Music was used by its organizers and by the men of power as one of the most efficient means of propaganda)

To this end, the *Institut allemand* quickly proliferated throughout the country, opening eleven big branches in larger cities like Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Marseille, and over fifty smaller branches, all closely affiliated to the *Deutsche Akademie* in Munich¹⁰⁷. In the activity report for the period May 1942 to July 1943, Karl Epting notes: “Il ressort du grand nombre de

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed explanation of the differences between these various organizations, see Schwartz, 90 footnote 3

¹⁰⁵ Schwartz, 93

¹⁰⁶ Schwartz, 91

¹⁰⁷ Schwartz, 95

rapports soumis à l'Institut allemand que les concerts allemands sont presque les seules manifestations qui ont lieu dans certaines villes de province. Il est prévu d'intensifier spécialement ce champ d'activité l'année suivante (...)”¹⁰⁸ (From the great number of reports submitted to the German Institute, it emerges that German concerts are almost the only events that take place in certain towns outside the capital. We foresee intensifying especially this field of activity next year...). Music, then, played a fundamental role in the cultural politics of the occupiers.

Just as culture was an essential part of the German occupation of France, so also was it a fundamental issue in the resistance. Vercors' Le Silence de la mer, undoubtedly one of the most popular works of clandestine literature of the resistance first published in 1942, also has music as its leitmotiv. As for Aragon, as we have seen above, with the outbreak of the civil war in Spain in 1936 he mobilized the Association Internationale des Écrivains pour la Défense de la Culture to bring help to the Republicans. He also wrote an article entitled “Pour la défense de la culture”¹⁰⁹ where he condemns the assassination of poets like Federico Garcia Lorca and lauds the efforts of the common man to protect national museums and works of art against the attacks of the fascists. Although I have not located any piece written by Aragon during the war that deals specifically with the defense of culture, both his pre-war and resistance activities certainly demonstrate an awareness of the significance of culture in politics. In the following section, we shall analyze the use of music in Aragon's wartime writing in general and in “Le droit romain n'est plus” in particular.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Schwartz, 98

¹⁰⁹ Aragon. “Pour la défense de la culture”. Commune, December 1936. pp. 418-423

2.3.2 Music, musicality and politics in “Le droit remain n’est plus”

Music has been the object of philosophical reflection through the ages, from Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Adorno. Few philosophers have been as well versed in music as Theodor Adorno, and fewer have written so extensively about it. In The Philosophy of Music, he advances the proposition that “All forms of music (...) are sedimented contents. In them survives what is otherwise forgotten and can no longer speak in a direct manner”¹¹⁰. These “sedimented contents” are understood affectively, both at the personal level and at the collective level, be it in the form of popular or folkloric music or in “high” forms. “Music *places* us, *locates* us, within time and within a culture”, explains Simon Critchley¹¹¹. Beyond the artistic, aesthetic, and philosophical realms, then, music can also be seen as a cultural marker of national belonging.

The boundary between poetry and music, between the linguistic and the musical has never been decisive, given that they each affect and modify each other. In “Adorno, Heidegger, and the Meaning of Music”, Andrew Bowie affirms that

If one makes the hermeneutic assumption that what we understand is the living, changing historical world that we articulate in language and not just statements that are supposed to represent that world, the distinction between metaphor and literal meaning ceases to be absolute, and we also become able to understand how music can affect our understanding of verbal language¹¹².

Music not only has an effect on our comprehension of language, but it can also be used in language, literally as well as metaphorically, in order to articulate through language “the living, changing historical world”. “Le droit remain n’est plus” is the prime example of such an attempt,

¹¹⁰ Cited by Andrew Bowie in “Adorno, Heidegger, and the Meaning of Music” in The Cambridge Companion to Adorno. Tom Huhn. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 256

¹¹¹ Critchley, Simon. “Music” in Glossalalia. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. New York: Routledge, 2003. p. 192

¹¹² Critchley, 265

and it can be read as a moment of transition between Aragon's Resistance poetry and his immediate post-war work, music being the link between the two¹¹³. As we shall see further on in this section, music plays a quintessential role in Aragon's literary creations of the 1940s. The importance of music for Aragon would be hard to prove biographically; what is more significant, to my mind, is the fact that it is certainly part of his semantic field as manifested by his literary texts.

As mentioned earlier in the bio-bibliographical conspectus, after a five-year long estrangement from poetry, Aragon returned to it in his months of waiting at the front during the Phony war. The years of the German occupation were marked in his career by intense poetic creation which was celebrated not only in France, but also in England as demonstrated by this excerpt from an Introduction written by Cyril Connolly to Le Crève-cœur, dated 1943:

For Aragon is the first poet of the United Nations to make music out of the war (...) though Auden is Aragon's equal in intellectual power and gift for musical and memorable phrase, the point is surely that the war has produced no comparable poetry elsewhere. Nowhere else has (...) the intellectual poet (...) been able to liberate in himself the music for which so many are waiting. (...) Now let our poets give us, from their own design, a music as lucid, as moving, and as largely conceived.

What is remarkable about this introduction, written at the height of the war, is its insistence upon the musicality of Aragon's verse. Poetry as a literary genre is, by definition, bound by rules of prosody; the words chosen to evoke an experience, their arrangement for

¹¹³ Among the myriads of articles and books devoted to the interpretation of Aragon's works, only one addresses the question of music: the work she analyzes, Les Communistes, incidentally also happened to be the first novel Aragon wrote after the end of the war. Grenouillet analyzes the range of musical references in Les Communistes, from popular music like "Boum" or "Blonde, ma blonde" to classical music (Shostakovich, Grieg) and political music ("L'Internationale" and "La Marseillaise"), and discusses the various significations of these musical references (political, diegetic, etc). Grenouillet, Corinne. "L'univers sonore des *Communistes*: chansons et références musicales" in Recherches croisées Aragon-Elsa Triolet No. 7, Besançon: Presses universitaires franc-comtoises, 2001. pp. 125-152

meaning, sound, and rhythm, their tone and their pace endows poetry with a musicality which is inherent to the genre. After having himself practiced and produced Dadaist and Surrealist works and turned away from traditional prosody and especially from rhyme, in 1940 Aragon denounced “la décomposition du vers” (the decomposition of verse) brought about by free verse, since

Jamais peut-être faire chanter les choses n’a été plus urgente et noble mission à l’homme, qu’à cette heure où il est plus profondément humilié, plus entièrement dégradé que jamais. Et nous sommes sans doute plusieurs à en avoir conscience, qui aurons le courage de maintenir, même dans le fracas de l’indignité, la véritable parole humaine, et son orchestre à faire pâlir les rossignols. A cette heure où la déraisonnable rime redevient la seule raison. Réconciliée avec le sens. (Never perhaps has making things sing been a more urgent and noble mission for man than at this moment when he is profoundly humiliated, more completely degraded than ever. And we are undoubtedly several to be aware of this, [and] will have the courage to maintain, even in the din of indignity, the true human word, [as well as] its orchestra to make the nightingales seem inadequate . At this moment when unreasonable rhyme becomes, once again, the only reason. Reconciled with meaning.)¹¹⁴

Music and musicality are, then, apt to convey the humiliation, distress and discomfiture of a defeated France. In all, Aragon wrote six collections of poetry during the war, published in France and Switzerland, and “Cantique à Elsa” published in Algiers and subsequently incorporated into Les Yeux d’Elsa. In “Poet of this war”, a 1945 introduction to a collection of English translations of Aragon’s war-time poems, Malcolm Cowley states:

(...) his six volumes of wartime poetry became a month-by-month record of the struggle: the boredom and loneliness of the “phony war”; the grotesque horror of the German invasion, like Brueghel’s conception of hell; the utter weight of

¹¹⁴ Aragon. “La rime en 40”. This short essay, originally published on April 20, 1940 in a literary journal, Les Poètes Casqués, also appears in the 2000 Gallimard reprint of Le Crève-cœur and Le Nouveau Crève-cœur, placed as an appendix of the former collection. pp. 61-71. The journal, Les Poètes Casqués was an Army publication with contributions by the soldiers, and was directed by Pierre Seghers.

defeat, under which Aragon was among the first to stand erect; then the impulse for reexamining French history, to find the real strength of the nation; and the growing power of the Resistance, which at first he merely suggested in his poems, but later mirrored frankly, (...).¹¹⁵

Many Resistance poems were learned by heart and recited by campfires both as poems and songs. The composer Francis Poulenc, also a *résistant*, put poems by Aragon and Eluard, among others, to music¹¹⁶. Of those by Aragon, Poulenc composed the music for two poems, “Fêtes galantes” and “C” from Les Yeux d’Elsa, to music¹¹⁷. These were known beyond the restricted sphere of the clandestine Resistance: François Porcile tells us that Roger Désormière, (director of the orchestra of l’Opéra comique during the war and later of the Paris Opera as well as co-founder of the “Front national des musiciens”, the organized Resistance group of musicians) played Poulenc’s compositions at the Salle Gaveau in Paris on 8 December, 1943; Porcile quotes the soprano Irène Joachim: “Poésie et musique y sont aussi magnifiques l’une que l’autre: c’est sur un poème d’Aragon (“C”) une mélodie bouleversante. De fait, le public, surpris, est devenu tellement fou de bonheur que les interprètes [l’]ont dû redonner” (Poetry and music are both equally magnificent in it: it is on a poem by Aragon (“C”) a moving melody. In fact the audience, surprised, was so impassioned with happiness that the artists had to repeat it)¹¹⁸. Along with Poulenc, other well known composers were also inspired to put some of Aragon’s poems to music during the occupation: Georges Auric composed music for “Richard II Quarante” and “La rose et le réséda”, and Joseph Kosma was inspired by “Ballade de celui qui chanta dans les

¹¹⁵ Cowley, Malcolm. “Poet of this war”. in Aragon Poet of the French Resistance. Eds. Hannah Josephson and Malcolm Cowley. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1945. pp. 3-18

¹¹⁶ Resistance poetry did not inspire only musical compositions: Jean Lurçat, a master tapestry maker and active member of the resistance clandestinely created the tapestry “Liberté” in 1943, inspired by a poem by Eluard. “Communication.” Ville de Vénissieux Online publication. August 2004. 14 Jan. 2005. < <http://www.ville-venissieux.fr/pages/Voix.pdf>>. Similarly, Boris Taslitzky drew a poster “Je te salue ma France!” inspired by Aragon’s poem with the same title. It is reprinted in La Résistance, une histoire sociale. Ed. Antoine Prost. Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 1997. p. 183

¹¹⁷ Poulenc, Francis. “Deux poèmes de Louis Aragon” in Voyage à Paris. Sound recording. London: Hyperion, 1988

¹¹⁸ Porcile, François. Les Conflits de la musique française 1940-1965. Paris: Fayard, 2001. p. 49

supplices”. Porcile underlines that “C’est précisément autour de ces deux poètes [Aragon et Eluard] que s’est construite la musique de la résistance (...)” (It is precisely around these two poets [Aragon and Eluard] that the music of the resistance constructed itself)¹¹⁹. I believe it is fair to say that in the milieu of the resistance music was closely associated with Aragon and, more specifically, with his poetry.

Aragon’s Resistance poems mark a return to traditional devices in French prosody, especially the privileged use of the alexandrine. His compositions are entitled ballads, odes, sonnets, “plaintes” and “complaintes”, “romances”, “chants”, “chansons”, one “valse” (waltz) and one “marche” (march)¹²⁰. As the etymology of these names suggests, they are all forms used both in literature as well as in music. From the reader’s point of view, then, music characterizes Aragon’s poems from this period. It would be pertinent to note here that in “Arma virumque cano”, his preface to Les Yeux d’Elsa (1942) where Aragon addresses the critics who firstly see his collection Le Crève-cœur as music, and then criticize some of the poems as not lending themselves sufficiently to being put to music. He warns the reader that

Si j’ai cherché dans le langage de la poésie populaire, des chansons anciennes, quelque lueur que la poésie savante ne donne pas, c’était pour en faire un profit tout métaphorique; (...) On dit chanson, on dit complainte, cela n’est après tout qu’une image, (...). “Je chante l’homme et les armes...” et en ce sens oui, je chante, et je suis prêt à reprendre pour notre temps et mon pays ce programme par quoi débute l’épopée romaine, (...). Je chante l’homme et les armes, c’est plus que jamais le moment, (...) Et mon chant ne se peut refuser d’être; parce qu’il est une arme lui aussi pour l’homme désarmé, (...). Je chante parce que l’orage n’est

¹¹⁹ Porcile, 48

¹²⁰ Among his pre-war poetry, several collections contain poems with similar titles: “Fugue” in Feu de joie (1920); “Nocturne”, “Pastorale”, and three poems entitled “Chanson” in Le Mouvement Perpétuel (1926); a “Tango” and a “Chanson” in La Grande Gaîté (1929); “Valse”, “Hymne”, “Chanson” and “Ballade” in Hourra l’Oural (1934).

pas assez fort pour couvrir mon chant, et que quoi que demain l'on fasse, on pourra m'ôter cette vie, mais on n'éteindra pas mon chant.

(If, in the language of popular poetry and of ancient songs, I have looked for some light that learned / erudite poetry does not send forth, [I did so] to take advantage of it by making metaphoric use [of it]; (...) One says 'song', one says 'complainte', it is after all only an image, (...). "Of arms and the man I sing..." and in this sense, yes, I sing, and I am willing to take up for our times and my country this program with which the roman epic begins, (...). I sing of man and of arms, it is more than ever the moment [to do so] (...). And my song cannot be denied its existence; because it is itself an arm for a disarmed man, (...) I sing because the storm is not strong enough to silence my song, and what ever one may do tomorrow, one can take away this life from me, but will not smother my song.¹²¹

At the level of authorial intention, then, Aragon insists that music is only used symbolically in these poems. Be it literally or symbolically or both, music is certainly omnipresent in all of his Resistance poems. The reference to the incipit of Virgil's Aeneid is interesting, since "Hatred and fear of civil war is powerfully expressed" in it¹²².

As we have noted above, the period of the occupation marks a return to traditional prosody for Aragon; with Liberation, he turns back to prose: the first piece he wrote during the months of liberation was the short story "Le Droit romain n'est plus". He also wrote prose about poetry through the prefaces: other than the preface to La Diane française entitled "O mares sur la terre au soir de mon pays", and the preface to En étrange pays dans mon pays lui-même entitled "De l'exactitude historique en poésie" I could trace three more published by Aragon during the months which interest this study: the preface to Léon Moussinac's collection Poèmes impurs

¹²¹ Aragon, Louis. "Arma virumque cano" in Les Yeux d'Elsa. New York: Pantheon Books, 1945. pp. 20-21

¹²² "Virgil." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online 13 Jan. 2005 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=24448>>.

1939-1944 entitled “Les mots sont lourds...”¹²³; he republished the preface he had published using the pseudonym François La Colère to 33 sonnets composés au secret by Jean Noir, pseudonym of Jean Cassou (the original version had been published in February 1944)¹²⁴; and finally, the preface to Contribution au cycle de Gabriel Péri entitled “Pendant les dernières années...”, published in December 1944¹²⁵.

Just as in the passage cited above from “Arma virumque cano” from Les Yeux d’Elsa, in “O mares sur la terre”, the prefatorial piece which opens La Diane française and which was written for the December 1944 publication of this collection, Aragon develops the theme of music. After discussing the defeat of France and the reasons of this defeat, Aragon speaks of the resistance in the following terms:

Alors nous chantions tout bas à notre manière. Les refrains murmurés se propagent fort bien. (...) Notre chanson s’enfla, reprise et multipliée. (...) Notre chanson montait aux lèvres sans qu’on sût presque qu’on chantait. (...) Mon pays devenait le chant même du monde, la musique où se résumait enfin tout l’espoir et tout le désespoir, mais qui grandit de la volonté de vaincre de l’homme sur la nature et sur lui-même. Mon pays arrivait dans la nuit vers les régions où commence la lumière, il pressentait l’aurore, il savait qu’elle est un combat, (...). Mon pays qui chantait abordait la lumière!...

Alors la diane française sonna¹²⁶.

(Then we sang softly in our own way. Murmured refrains spread easily. (...) Our song swelled, taken up [once again / by others] and multiplied. (...) Our song rose

¹²³ Moussinac, Léon. Poèmes impurs 1939-1944. Paris: Editions du Sagittaire, 1945. pp. 7-16

¹²⁴ Noir, Jean. 33 sonnets composés au secrets présentés par François La Colère. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1944. pp. 9-41. Significantly enough, while discussing this collection of poems, Aragon states: “je ne pourrais l’expliquer, mon Jean Noir, que par des comparaisons avec la musique, (...)” (I could only explain him, my Jean Noir, with comparisons with music). p. 28

¹²⁵ Date established by Geoghegan. Aragon. Contribution au cycle de Gabriel Péri. Toulouse: CNE, no date. No pag.

¹²⁶ “*vx* ou *littér*. Batterie de tambour, sonnerie de clairon ou de trompette exécutée à la pointe du jour pour réveiller les soldats, les marins. *Battre, sonner la diane; être réveillé par la diane*. Synon. *Réveil*. “Diane.” Trésor de la Langue Française. 2005. TLF Online. 18 Jan. 2005.

< <http://atilf.atilf.fr/Dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?91;s=3943996515;r=3;nat=;sol=0;>>

to [our] lips without us realizing that we were singing. (...) My country was becoming the song / chant of the world itself, the music where finally all hope and despair are condensed, but which grows out of man's will to conquer / prevail over nature and himself. In the night, my country was reaching the regions where light begins, it sensed [the approach of] dawn, it knew that it [the dawn] is a combat, (...) My country which sang was approaching light!...

Then the wake-up call rang [out]!

This text, written in November-December 1944, allegorically refers to all of the resistance in musical terms, as a tune or melody that is contagious and passed from person to person. Music, then, is quintessential to Aragon's resistance poetry and to his understanding of the Resistance itself.

I believe that "Le Droit romain n'est plus" is a moment of transition from Aragon's resistance works to his immediate post-war writing. In this short story music plays the role of a structuring device. The shift from the musicality of odes, sonnets, alexandrines and perfect rhymes to the theme of music as the axis around which the story revolves is the locus of this transition.

Having underscored the importance of music (on the literal or symbolic plane) in Aragon's resistance poetry, we can now address the question of music in the short story, "Le Droit romain n'est plus". Music is the backdrop against which the discussion of justice is staged; it is the element that binds the various parts of the story together while being the instrument which vehicles the discussion of violence into the story.

We are first introduced to music qua music directly in the incipit via the second opening sentence in Lotte's internal monologue: "Nulle part où entendre de la musique!" (1219) (No place where [one can] listen to music!). Her repeated exclamations of boredom are always

conjoined with remarks lamenting the lack of music: “S’il y avait seulement un peu de musique...” (1221) (If only there were some music...), “Mais tout ici manque terriblement de musique. Musique, musique, musique!” (1231) (But everything here terribly lacks music. Music, music, music!), “Mais il n’y a pas d’endroit où aller écouter la musique dans ce pays mortel, mortel.” (1232) (But there is no place where [one can] go to listen to music in this mortal[ly boring] country.), “Tout cela ne donne pas de musique. J’ai besoin de musique.” (1232) (All of this does not give us music. I need music.), “(...) un peu de musique ne me ferait pas de mal.” (1232) (some music will not hurt me.). As these sample statements confirm, Lotte associates boredom with lack of music, and this lack of music to the place she happens to find herself in. Music (in the literal sense) appears in the text through other means as well. While von Lüttwitz-Randau is in captivity, he hears both the songs of the cicadas as well as “une voix jeune [qui] chanta une chanson en provençal” (1243) (a young voice [which] sang a song in Provençal).

An important musical reference is conveyed through the musings on justice by von Lüttwitz-Randau. In his reflections on the evolution of justice, and more specifically on Hitler’s “suppression de toutes les lois au bénéfice de l’intérêt national” (1225) (suppression of all laws for the benefit of national interest), the judge compares this measure to “la justice au temps de Siegmund et Sieglinde, quand pour sauver la race l’inceste était conforme à la morale.” (1225) (justice at the time of Siegmund and Sieglinde when, to save the race, incest conformed to morality). Siegmund is the Germanic equivalent of Sigmund, a hero and direct descendant of Odin in Norse mythology. The reference to the story of Siegmund and Sieglinde is noteworthy, since Richard Wagner developed this theme in the tetralogy, Der Ring des Nibelungen (1869-1876), and more specifically in the third opera of the Ring cycle, Siegfried, the son begotten by the twins Siegmund and Sieglinde. The Ring cycle is overtly concerned with German

nationalism¹²⁷, and anti-Semitism was central to Wagner's vision of revolution and redemption. The allusion to Wagner does not operate innocently: its nature and relevance is not explicitly explained in the text, but relies on the reader's familiarity with the reference. The alert reader would hardly fail to make the link between von Lüttwitz –Randau's thoughts on justice, Wagner's music, and the influence of Wagner both on German nationalism in general and on Hitler and National-Socialism in particular.

At a more symbolic and metaphoric level, music appears in the text through the medium of the narrator: the nexus of the discussion of music, and more importantly, of violence through the use of musical tropes takes place in the centrally situated sixth section of the story. The incipit of this section is an echo, quasi-anadiplosis, of Lotte's last statement of the preceding paragraph: "...un peu de musique ne me ferait pas de mal." (a little music would not hurt me). This sixth section begins with an apostrophe by the narrator to Lotte: "*Fraülein* Lotte Müller, un peu de musique ne vous ferait pas de mal... *Fraülein* Lotte Müller, êtes-vous sourde que vous n'entendez pas la musique?" (1232). What follows is a rather poetic text where musical references vehicle violence, specifically the violence of the occupiers towards the French, into the narrative. It begins with the anaphoric repetition of the words "Il y a des jours où (...)" (There are days when ...): the examples he uses start with what might seem innocuous elements but are slowly accumulated and intensified. For instance, the first example speaks of the music "[qui] se lève de la terre et parcourt la ville et le ciel comme un grand vent" (1232) (which rises from the earth and crosses the town and the sky like a great wind), but the following one is already more unsettling: "Il y a des jours où c'est un simple filet de chant, une corde pincée qui vibre, un souvenir qui meurt" (1233) (There are days when it is a simple gasp of a tune, a

¹²⁷ "Wagner, Richard." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online 8 Sept. 2004 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=7747>>

plucked cord that vibrates, a memory that dies). From the music of a dying memory, we are taken to the music of insects and flies that “murmurent les premiers accords d’une marche funèbre” (murmur the first chords of a funeral march). The final sentence of the first paragraph of this section which ends aposiopetically in ellipsis (as do the following three paragraphs) as though the narrator were unwilling or unable to continue out of emotion or modesty: “On ne fait encore qu’accorder les violons dans la fosse...” (One / we are only tuning the violins in the pit yet). It is noteworthy that Aragon chose to leave the word “fosse” without qualifier: this word, in the musical sphere, is used to denote the orchestra pit in a theater or opera and is specified as “une fosse d’orchestre”. By itself, the term fosse could be interpreted in the multiple ways the word is used in French, to signify a ditch, hole, trench, pit, or even grave, and which evokes, intentionally or inadvertently, the term “fosse commune” or mass grave¹²⁸. Who the “on” represents in this sentence is ambiguous, and “accorder les violons dans la fosse” is also open to interpretation: it could denote, literally, that the insects that sing are only “tuning their instruments” while they wait for the living beings they fly around to turn into cadavers¹²⁹; or it could represent, once again literally, the extension of the musical imagery whence the musicians who are tuning their violins; furthermore, it could allude to the narrator himself, at this point merely tuning his instrument before developing the musical metaphor more fully; finally, it could be read as a metaphor of the resistance with its members “tuning their instruments” while awaiting the right moment to use them. I would like to open a parenthesis here to point out that this sentence is also an allusion to a line from one of Aragon’s own earlier resistance poems, “La

¹²⁸ The 30 September 1943 edition of *Défense de la France* published the first photographs in occupied France to give notice of Nazi barbarism in Russia. The cover page carries five photographs of naked, starving adults and children reduced to skin and bones, and two photographs of starved, naked prisoners being “jetés à la fosse”. Emphasis added. Peschanski, Denis ... [et al.]. *Collaboration and resistance : images of life in Vichy France, 1940-1944*. New York : Harry N. Abrams, 2000. p. 192

¹²⁹ “les mouches, invinciblement attirées par les êtres humains comme si elle en sentaient déjà le cadavre...” (1233 (flies, invincibly attracted by human beings as if they already smelt of [the] cadavers [they were to become]

nuit d'exil" from Les Yeux d'Elsa: "J'entends le violon préluder dans la fosse"¹³⁰ (I hear the violin [being tuned] in the pit), where, once again, it could be taken as a metaphor for the resistance, ready and waiting in the trenches¹³¹.

This prefatory section where the narrator seems to be adjusting the tone of the narration as musicians would adjust their instruments to the correct pitch prior to a performance is followed by the critical point of this section. The narrator exhorts Lotte, "(...) écoutez, écoutez la musique..." (1233) (listen, listen to the music):

Il y a d'abord le *lamento* sourd des prisons d'où s'élèvent les plaintes déchirées d'instruments inconnus qu'on appelait des hommes... Il y a le bruit des os broyés, le grésillement noir des chairs, le concert des tortures, les cris de la douleur morale si différents de ceux de la douleur physique, la basse rythmée des coups, le chant du sang clair qui jaillit, les larmes, les larmes, les larmes...

(the muffled *lamento* of the prisons from where rise the piercing moans of unknown instruments once called men... There is the sound of crushed bones, the black sputtering of flesh, the concert of tortures, the cries of moral pain [which are] so different from those of physical pain, the rhythmic bass of blows, the song of clear blood which gushes forth, tears, tears, tears...)

The "music" in question is no longer the aesthetically pleasing harmony of sounds that the term evokes. What began initially as something that was merely unsettling develops into something profoundly disturbing: violence, torture, pain and suffering are channeled through musical terminology with an effect that is intensely disquieting. Although this is only a verbal evocation of the intense suffering of millions of "instruments inconnus qu'on appelait des

¹³⁰ Aragon, Louis. "La nuit d'exil" in Les Yeux d'Elsa, op. cit. p. 29

¹³¹ In this section of the story, there is yet another image similar to one in the same poem: it is that of the orchestra, but in the poem "L'orchestre au grand complet contrefait mes sanglots" conveys the sadness felt due to defeat and the Armistice, whereas the last words of this section, "le grand orchestre ailleurs exercé se rassemble et la musique, la musique va jaillir!" (the great orchestra trained elsewhere is assembling and music, music will gush forth!) are more triumphant in their tone.

hommes", it is one that is excruciatingly real to the reader. This *lamento* is followed by a *nocturne* which is less graphic in its evocation of suffering, but which is also perturbing:

C'est un nocturne maintenant, le nocturne de l'inquiétude, où dans les demeures noires on n'ose pas même raviver les brasiers, on écoute les pas des rondes dans la rue, les craquements dans l'escalier, on attend, à chaque bruit de la porte, la police. Un nocturne où les battements du cœur sont l'accompagnement mal éteint de l'attente... Que va-t-il se passer, que va-t-il sourdre de ce nocturne sourd, quel chant qui ne se décide pas?...

(It is now a *nocturne*, the *nocturne* of disquiet / apprehension, where in darkened abodes one does not even dare to revive [the embers in] the brazier, one listens to the steps of the patrol in the street, the creaking of the steps, at every sound of the door one awaits the police. A *nocturne* where the beats of the heart are the ill-extinguished accompaniment to the [act of] waiting... What is going to happen, what is going to well up from this muffled *nocturne*, which song that cannot make up its mind? ...)

The anguish portrayed in this *nocturne* is quite different from that in the *lamento* where it was the result of real suffering, of inconceivable pain inflicted and borne to the point of rendering inhuman both the torturers and those tortured. Here, it is the hiding and the waiting that is the source of anguish as well as that of the "music" of accelerated heartbeats. This *nocturne* whence he awaits a "chant qui ne se décide pas" symbolizes the nocturnal activities of the *maquisards*, always alert to the sound of approaching footsteps, but who carry within them this song "qui ne se décide pas".

The two passages cited above form the crux of this section; it is further developed with examples of both acts of violence, of collaboration and of resistance, alternated with apostrophes to Lotte, principally some variation of "n'entendez-vous pas la musique?" (don't you hear the music?). There is even an allusion to Allied parachuting, much like the one Aragon had participated in receiving:

Vers 1 heure du matin, dans des prés choisis, de grands oiseaux noirs ont lâché des paquets et de petits hommes soutenus sous les épaules par de grands parapluies de soie rose, verte, bleue, rouge ou blanche. L'aube trouvera sur les maisons des traîtres une potence dessinée, et des phrases aux carrefours que les musiciens n'avaient pas prévues dans la douce, vieille musique allemande... (1234)

(Near 1 o'clock in the morning, in meadows chosen [beforehand], great black birds dropped packages and little men supported under the shoulders by big umbrellas of pink, green, blue, red or white silk. Dawn will bring / find a noose drawn on the houses of the traitors, and phrases at the crossroads which musicians had not foreseen in sweet, old German music...)

Once again, the retaliation that apodictically occurred on the part of the German occupiers to any acts of resistance by the occupied, including the parachute drops, is alluded to as a musical phrase, yet one that was not “prévue dans la douce, vieille musique allemande”. The proximity of this musical phrase to the mention of the noose in the text makes the type of music alluded to amply clear.

Music, as we have seen, is associated both with pain and torture, as well as with the *résistants* and the time they spent waiting and hiding. The two concluding paragraphs of this section oppose a different kind of music to the types enumerated above. The imagery of the song the *résistants* carry within them is further developed, and this music evolves, expands, metamorphoses and proliferates through the countryside as something tangible like pollen would:

La musique, la musique, *Fräulein* Lotte Müller, ne fait que commencer dans cette ville bourrée de soldats verts et gris (...). Mais déjà elle emplît tout autour de la ville le vaste paysage immobile et muet, elle y tourne, elle y monte, elle s'y déverse, avec les vents subitements levés d'un printemps tardif, elle ébouriffe la campagne où s'éveillent les maisons abandonnées, où les ruines se peuplent de

jeunes fantômes (...), où les pylônes sautent par miracle, les voies sont à tout instant coupées, (...) déjà vos gens n'osent plus aller chercher les bœufs chez les paysans (...) ils n'osent pas de peur d'entendre la musique... la musique... la musique...

*Allez, allez, ce n'est qu'un petit prélude encore... le grand orchestre ailleurs exercé se rassemble et la musique, la musique va jaillir!*¹³² (1235)

(Music, music, *Fräulein* Lotte Müller, is only beginning in this city full of green and brown [clad] soldiers (...)) But already it fills the immobile and silent landscape all around the city, it turns there, it rises, it pours itself forth, with the winds that suddenly rise in a late spring, it ruffles up the countryside where it awakens abandoned houses, where ruins populate themselves with young ghosts (...), where pylons explode miraculously, the roads are constantly blocked, (...) already your people do not dare any more to go fetch the oxen at the farmers' (...) they don't dare for fear of hearing the music... music... music...

Come on, come on, it is only a prelude yet... the great orchestra trained elsewhere is (re)assembling and music, music will burst forth!

Music, then, is associated not only with the past and the present; it is also used metaphorically for the future: the “grand orchestre exercé ailleurs” whose music is about to burst forth could be taken to designate either liberation by the Allies or, in the context of justice, the bringing to justice of the Nazi occupiers by making them “face the music” in some way or other¹³³.

Finally, music is not only a recurrent theme in the text, the point of intersection of the discussion of violence and justice, and a leitmotiv in Lotte's internal monologue; music is the very structuring device of the narrative. Indeed, the repeated appearance of music in this story,

¹³² Emphasis added.

¹³³ It is unlikely that this is a reference to the International Military Tribunal convened at Nuremberg to judge surviving Nazi officials for war crimes, since it was only in August 1944 that Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau submitted his plan for post-war treatment of Nazi leaders to President Roosevelt, and the Charter of the IMT was only signed a year later, on August 8, 1945.

“The Nuremberg Trials: Chronology.” *Famous World Trials. Nuremberg Trials. 1945- 1949* (c) 2000. Feb 9, 2005 <<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/nuremberg/NurembergChronology.html>>

the musicality of the text itself as reflected in its polyphony and in the central section of the story can be used to liken the structure of this story to that of a fugue. The “fugue” is defined as a polyphonic composition

for instruments or voices, characterized by the systematic imitation of a principal theme in simultaneously sounding melodic lines (...) which make up its texture. (...) the fugue is the most complex and highly developed type of composition in Western music. (...) based on a generating theme, in which different parts, or voices, enter successively in imitation, as if in pursuit of each other. The heir of all the compositional techniques that had developed earlier, it differs from its ancestors (the motet, the ricercare, the canzona) in having a more specifically tonal character, unity of form, and a greater economy¹³⁴.

As one of the two prologues to this chapter, I have cited an excerpt from Gide’s Les Faux-Monnayeurs where Edouard explains his desire in trying to do in the novel what Bach had managed to achieve: to do in literature what can be done in music, and more specifically to write a novel using the structure of a fugue. The structure of “Le Droit romain n’est plus” seems to follow a similar pattern: it is polyphonic, like the fugue, with different voices which “enter successively (...) as if in pursuit of each other”, and with two simple motifs or themes, namely justice and music, which are interlinked and developed in the most complex way possible.

In conclusion, we have seen how, in this text, music is understood not merely from the philosophical or aesthetic perspective but, more importantly, in its historical and political intentions. Music appears both literally and symbolically in the narrative. The references to Wagner and to “la douce, vieille musique allemande” clearly indicate how skillfully Aragon uses

¹³⁴ "fugue." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Online 17 Jan. 2005 <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=9110133>>.

the theme of music to counter the image of the “civilized” Germany of classical music. The use of musical tropes to bring in the violence of the occupiers into the story works towards the same effect; in addition, this links the theme of music to the other predominant theme in the story, that of justice. This “douce vieille musique allemande” is opposed to a more local, southern French tradition through allusions to the “chant des cigales” and the “chanson en provençal”. Unlike La Bête est morte and La Courbe de nos angoisses, “Le droit romain n’est plus” is not an attempt at redefining or re-positing of identity. It is less of a locus of identity struggle, and more of one of cultural resistance, where music is understood as a historically determined cultural vector, invested by political and historical signification.

3.0 *D'OU VENONS-NOUS ? QUE SOMMES-NOUS ?... REPRESENTATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF IDENTITY CREATION. THE CASE OF LA BETE EST MORTE!*

“L'apparence [des fables] est puérole, je le confesse; mais ces puérolités servent d'enveloppe à des vérités importantes”
- Jean de la Fontaine¹³⁵

The education and indoctrination of children and youth during the occupation of France by Germany during World War II was an important goal for the political right as well as the left. Molding a young, malleable mind at an impressionable age was a guarantee for the continuity of a certain way of thinking. Indeed, the Vichy regime began to implement its policy of education very early on, aiming at creating a healthy and disciplined society for the future. To this end, the school program was revised in order to lay more stress on moral lessons, manual work and physical exercise, and various new organizations like the École d'Uriage and the Chantiers de la Jeunesse were established. The official regime, however, was far from being the only group that tried to capitalize on young minds, this virgin matter in which it would be so easy to inculcate certain values. For instance, in February 1942, *l'Humanité*, the official newspaper of the Parti Communiste Français (the French Communist Party), exhorts educators to refuse to “se faire les complices du monstrueux plan d'abrutissement et d'asservissement” (become accomplices to the monstrous plan of [reducing them to the state of] degradation and enslavement) and to develop “l'amour de la Patrie, la haine des oppresseurs et de leurs valets” (love for the fatherland, hatred toward the oppressors and their lackeys).

¹³⁵ de La Fontaine, Jean. *Fables*. Paris: Hachette, 1984. p. 7

Apart from the political Right and Left capitalizing on the efficaciousness of ingraining ideas at a young age, the Resistance took advantage of the same possibility as well. Needless to say, it could only do so toward the end of the war, when German defeat seemed more or less assured and it became easier to defy censorship. There are a number of Liberation narratives for children that are extremely rich but almost totally ignored by scholars in both the literary as well as the historical fields. In this chapter I will focus on one such example of a Liberation narrative for children in cartoon format, namely La Bête est morte! La guerre mondiale chez les animaux (The Beast is dead! World War among the animals) by Victor Dancette and Jacques Zimmermann, illustrated by Edmond-François Calvo. It is an allegorical representation of the war using animals as protagonists. It consists of two volumes, the first of which was published “in the third month of Liberation”¹³⁶ and the second in 1945.

A first reading of the comic book gives the impression of a catalog transposing fairly faithfully the progression of the war. The omniscient narrator – or heterodiegetic narrator¹³⁷ – tells the reader about Patenmoins (homonym of “patte en moins” or Missing Leg), the intradiegetic narrator, who in turn relates the story of the war to the narratees, namely his grandchildren, and through them to the readers. Patenmoins, himself a veteran who lost a limb during the bombings which caused the fall of the Maginot line (June 1940), leads his grandchildren (and the reader) through the manifold turns taken by the war. All the major events are included, though not always in chronological order, which may be due in part to the large number of battles and political incidents which were occurring simultaneously in so many

¹³⁶ Dancette, Victor and Jacques Zimmermann. La Bête est morte! La Guerre mondiale chez les animaux. Illustrations by Edmond-François Calvo. Artistic direction by William Péra. Paris: Editions de la Générale Publicité, 1944, 1945. n.pag. Also published as a single album by Générale Publicité in 1946, Futuropolis in 1977 and Gallimard in 1995.

¹³⁷ Genette, Gérard. Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method. Trans. J. E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980. pp. 243-262. I use his term to distinguish between the heterodiegetic narrator who begins the narration about the homodiegetic narrator, Patenmoins who is part of the story he is telling.

different parts of the world, as also to the proximity in time: indeed, the first part of the book was published barely three months after the Liberation of Paris, in November 1944, which may account for the difficulty in apprehending and synthesizing so many facts, given the magnitude of the war and the number of fronts on which it was being fought. The audience, that is to say the three baby rabbits and the objects in the room which are equally enthralled, as well as the readers, are guided through the story that the children want to hear – that of their grandfather’s wooden leg – which, as he puts it, is merely “un petit, tout petit accident dans la formidable tourmente qui a secoué notre pauvre monde pendant plus de cinq ans” (“a tiny little accident in the frightening torment which shook our poor world for more than five years”). The story covers a time span of about five years, and includes the salient events of the period, from the worry-free life of the Third Republic, to the lack of preparedness of the French army and the meager attempts at reinforcing the Maginot line, the German attack and Occupation of France as also the Occupation of Belgium and Denmark, the Non-aggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union (1939), various battles (Flanders, Alexandria, El Alamein, Stalingrad among others), the German advances in Central and Eastern Europe, the Italian attack on France and Greece, the entry of Japan and the US into the fray, the fighting in Northern Africa and in the Pacific, various conferences (Casablanca, Teheran), the rounding-up and deportation of Jews, the *Service du travail obligatoire* (Forced labor draft) instituted by Laval, the Milice, the Maquis and the various Resistance movements shown as a single body, the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane, the Allied landing in Normandy and the Liberation of Paris.

Other than the harmless rabbits for the French and the big bad wolf for the Germans, Calvo uses animals that represent a stereotype, a geographical or historical reference or homophones for other nationalities. For instance, Churchill is a Bulldog with a cigar, Stalin a

polar bear with a hammer and sickle (ours / URSS), Mussolini a hyena disguised as a she-wolf and the Shah of Iran a Persian cat (Shah / chat). There are more obvious choices, for instance bison, Great Danes, kangaroos and elephants, as well as more obscure ones such as a pockmarked pig for Goering or a polecat for Goebbels.

Less subtle than this simplistic outline are the underlying politico-historical considerations and the manner in which these are inscribed in the prevailing discourse. It is this underlying ideology that is the object of our study in this chapter. My reading of this text will focus on the portrayal of France and the French in this particular representation of the war. At a time of social, political and economic reconstruction, what kind of French identity are the authors trying to construct? How is the power exercised by de Gaulle legitimized in this text? What part does this legitimization of de Gaulle's power play in the meanings attached to the collective group and the creation of marginalized identities? Vichy France and Pétain are totally absent from this work. How does this omission participate in what Rousso has called the Vichy Syndrome? These are some of the questions I will address in my discussion of La Bête est morte to demonstrate the equivocal nature of the message.

3.1.1 Children and reading

That a child be considered a potential reader, and indeed that works for children even be denominated as literature is a relatively recent phenomenon¹³⁸. Tales that most children are familiar with today once belonged to repertoires of folktales from different cultures and

¹³⁸ This can be attested by studies of children's literature from the 1960s and 1970s, most of which tend to be apologias trying to convince the reader that these works do indeed merit the name "literature", even though they are not part of the literary canon. For examples of such studies, see Jan, Isabelle. Essai sur la littérature enfantine. Paris: les Editions Ouvrières, 1969. Also Caradec, François. Histoire de la littérature enfantine en France. Paris: Albin Michel, 1977.

participated within the folklore and collective wisdom of the group. A pertinent example would be that of Red Riding Hood: as both Shavit and Proud point out¹³⁹, various elements of the tale were once rooted in reality, for instance that wolves roamed freely even into the Middle Ages and hence one had to be careful not to stray alone into the woods. Perrault, in his version of the tale, accentuated the sexual aspect as a warning to innocent maidens against “wolf” like men who might take advantage of them. The notion of the suitability of a text for children became an issue only in the early nineteenth century, principally with the works of the Grimm brothers where “punishment and morality were an integral part of the learning process”¹⁴⁰.

Inculcating values, entertaining, educating have since remained a constant in children’s literature. Apart from this genre of texts which were self-conscious of the primacy of instruction and specifically aimed at children, the nineteenth century also saw the birth of what has since been called the ninth art, namely comic books. This “mass-produced art, the art of reproduction”¹⁴¹ was born in Switzerland in 1827 at the hands of Rodolphe Töpffer with *Histoire de M. Jabot*. Historians of comic books also mention *Les Travaux d’Hercule* (1847) by Gustave Doré and *La vie de Mōssieu Réac* (1848) by Nadar as precursors of the genre. The album format of this genre received its boost in France at the turn of the century with humorous classics such as *La Famille Fenouillard* (1893) and *Sapeur Camember* (1896). Cartoon animal stories in the tradition of fables and moral tales were created by Benjamin Rabier from 1890 onwards in France and in 1893 in the United States by James Swinnerton. The turn of the century saw the development of the children’s press as well as the comic industry. The twenties brought the use of the speech bubble, imported from the United States, and the thirties were marked by the

¹³⁹ Shavit, Zohar. *Poetics of children’s literature*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986. pp. 13 – 29.

Proud, Judith. *Children and Propaganda*. Oxford: Intellect, 1995. pp. 30 – 31.

¹⁴⁰ Shavit, 22

¹⁴¹ Mercier, Jean-Pierre. “Children’s Comic Books” in *The Changing face of children’s literature in France*. ed. A. Renonciat. trans. Paul Gould. Paris: Hachette, 1998. p. 101

triumph of American comic strips in France, notably *Mickey Mouse*, *Flash Gordon* and *Mandrake the Magician*. At the same time, there was a conscious effort in France to publish French comic strips, for instance *Jumbo* and *Robinson*, in children's periodicals such as *Junior*, *Boum*, *Pierrot* and *Lisette*. With the occupation of Northern France, most of these periodicals moved to the Southern Zone and managed to survive until early 1942 and then disappeared until Liberation. The period of the occupation did however see the birth of children's periodicals of collaborationist tendencies such as *Le Mérinos* and *Le Téméraire*, the latter – also called *le petit nazi illustré* by historian Pascal Ory¹⁴² - rife with articles of anti-Semitic content.

As we have already noted, the printed text for children – including cartoons - has proven to be an effective vehicle for entertainment as well as education. Furthermore, cartoons are not merely mass produced, but also mass diffused, making them potentially accessible to readers from very different backgrounds. Last but not least, the cartoon as a mode of expression is a documentary treasure-trove, as political scientist Carbonell¹⁴³ affirms while explaining why the living myths of a society are reflected in cartoons:

“Parce que le message que délivrent les adultes à la jeunesse s’y trouve décanté, réduit à l’essentiel et en quelque sorte, purifié; parce que [la bande dessinée] cherche à atteindre un vaste public et en conséquence reflète le *consensus* de l’opinion; parce que le dessin contraint le narrateur à prendre parti (...) à ne rien cacher du décor, (...) parce que le genre du récit d’aventure exige une intrigue passionnante et que l’actualité est un élément capable de passionner le lecteur; pour toutes ces raisons, la bande dessinée (...) [porte] témoignage de la façon dont une société se voit et veut qu’on la voie...” (Because the message which

¹⁴² Ory, P. *Le Petit Nazi illustré. Le Téméraire (1943 – 1944)*. Paris : Editions Albatross, 1979

¹⁴³ Carbonell, Charles-Olivier. *Le message politique et social de la bande dessinée*. Toulouse: Institut d’Études Politiques, 1975. pp. 7-8

adults deliver to children is clarified in them, [the message] is reduced to the essentials and, in a way, purified; because [cartoons] try to reach a vast public and consequently reflect the consensus [of public opinion]; because the drawing forces the narrator to take sides; (...) because the genre of adventure stories demands an enthralling plot and current (contemporary?) events are (...) capable of enthralling the reader; for all of these reasons, the cartoon (...) bears witness to the way in which a society sees itself and wants to be seen).

This mirror, then, created by adults for children, which makes for effortless and pleasant reading, can be manipulated all the more easily for this very reason – presenting information in a form that is pleasing makes it easier to manipulate this information and to influence the minds of readers. This understanding of the documentary importance of cartoons as a historically and politically produced phenomenon has not been exploited enough by scholars. This chapter proposes this kind of reading of La Bête est morte.

3.1.2 The illustrator and the authors

Before we begin to discuss the work itself, the creators of this album merit our attention, principally due to the fact that all three had very disparate careers and affiliations and yet collaborated on this project.

Calvo, also known as the French Walt Disney¹⁴⁴, had a long and illustrious career in the French cartoon industry in the first half of the twentieth century. He began as a caricaturist for the newspaper *Canard Enchaîné* (1919 – 1920) and after a detour as proprietor of a clog factory and then restaurant owner came back to illustration only in 1938 to create comic strips for children's magazines as well as albums for the Offenstadt press (which was one of the

¹⁴⁴ Gaumer, Patrick, Moliterni, Claude. Dictionnaire mondiale de la bande dessinée. Paris: Larousse, 1994.

publishing houses that fell victim to the German process of aryanisation¹⁴⁵). His strips appeared in *Epatant* (1938) *Fillette* (1938 – 1941), *l'As* (1938 - 1940), *Junior* (1938 – 1942) among others. Apart from editions of well-known stories, for instance Robin des bois (1939), Le Chevalier Chantecler and d'Artagnan in *Junior* (1938 – 1942) les Voyages de Gulliver (1941), he also created albums such as Les Aventures de Rosalie (1946) and Patamousse (1943 – 46). The illustrations for La Bête est morte (1944-45) by Dancette and Zimmermann are his only politically and historically committed creations.

Acclaimed in various dictionaries of the cartoon industry as “a prodigiously voluble animal artist, a graphic designer of considerable talent and an inspired colourist”¹⁴⁶, Calvo is said to have influenced later artists such as Albert Uderzo. He is also said to have turned down a job offer from Walt Disney due to the anonymity of working in such a large enterprise. He was sued by the latter for plagiarism of the noses of the wolves in La Bête est morte and had to scratch them out, which makes the wolves appear more “hargneux (...) inquiétants, affreux” (fierce (...) disturbing, hideous) (Rosset, 80)¹⁴⁷.

As for Victor Dancette and Jacques Zimmermann, the other two contributors to La Bête est morte, in my research I found very little information about either writer – neither about their activities during the war nor about them in general. Zimmermann is not known to have worked on any other children’s book, although he did publish two other prose works: Bleds (Villages) in 1945, a collection of short stories about partisan warfare in the 1920s and 1930s in villages in Syria, Algeria and Morocco, and En revenant des kommandos (On returning from the kommandos), published in early 1945. This latter work was written as a gesture of testimony of

¹⁴⁵ Proud, Children and Propaganda, 13

¹⁴⁶ Mercier, Jean-Pierre, 102

¹⁴⁷ Rosset, Christian. “Calvo: Fêtes de la patience” in Animaux en cases. Une histoire critique de la bande dessinée animalière. Paris: Futuropolis, 1987. pp 78-85.

the sufferings of French soldiers taken as prisoners of war after the debacle of June 1940 and used as forced laborers in Germany. The author, who was himself taken prisoner of war, wrote these pages “parce que je les dois à mes camarades que j’ai laissés là-bas”¹⁴⁸ (because I owe them to my comrades whom I left there). His writing is more of a witnessing than an analysis except in the last paragraph where he exhorts the readers to be careful in judging the soldiers who were made to feel responsible for the defeat of June 1940:

Je crois pourtant que nous avons fait notre devoir (...) puisque, pour l’immense majorité, nous ne nous sommes pas rendus. On l’oublie trop. Ni tous martyrs, ni tous héros, mettons que les prisonniers soient tous des victimes – des victimes de la plus colossale injustice du siècle, (...) soyez prêts à les comprendre(...). La victime a toujours raison de ne plus vouloir être victime. Et c’est pourquoi j’ai commencé à dire quelque chose dès que j’ai pu.¹⁴⁹ (I do think, however, that we did our duty (...), since the great majority did not surrender. One tends to forget that too often. Neither all martyrs, nor all heroes, let’s say that the prisoners were all victims – victims of the most colossal injustice of the century(...) be ready to understand them (...) The victim is always right in not wanting to be a victim. And that is why I began to speak out as soon as I could.)

Finally, Zimmermann wrote a play in 1975, a “tragi-comédie en 7 actes en vers” (tragic-comedy in 7 acts, in verse) entitled Le Tableau.

Victor Dancette, on the other hand, did publish three other children’s books, namely Il était une fois un pays heureux (Once upon a time, there was a happy country) in 1943, Les malheurs de Caramel (The misfortunes of Caramel) and Le livre de Zoupette (Zoupette’s book), both in 1948. All three were published by the same publishing house as for La Bête est morte, namely Editions de la Générale Publicité (currently nonexistent).

¹⁴⁸ Zimmermann, Jacques. En Revenant des Kommandos. Paris: Editions G.P. 1945. p. 222

¹⁴⁹ Zimmermann, 222

It is the first of these works that is of interest to us: the anti-collaborationist discourse in La Bête est morte can only be appreciated when contrasted with Il était une fois un pays heureux: the latter was written for the Bureau de Documentation du Chef de l'État (Pétain's Research Department) and 50 deluxe copies were made for him. I was not able to find any indication or information as to whether this book was written under Dancette's own initiative or under request or duress from the Bureau de Documentation.

Comparing Il était une fois un pays heureux and La Bête est morte, the proximity of the subjects of the two books is striking – they are both attempts at explaining the reasons for the current situation to children – and yet, on the other hand, there is a total reversal of political ideology. The aim of Il était une fois, indeed, is to point out the decadence of society brought about by “la vie moderne”¹⁵⁰ (modern life) and by “étrangers” (foreigners) who bring so called progress by building great big cities and turning them into the seat of vice. What's worse, artisans and laborers give up their traditional professions in order to go in quest for pleasure and this newly developed selfishness turns them away from having children, “et ce fut l'étape decisive de son malheur” (and that was the decisive moment of its misfortune). Fortunately, the divine retribution which befalls them is forestalled thanks to the “patriarche à l'âme sereine qui parlait un langage simple que les plus humbles pouvaient comprendre” (the patriarch with a serene soul who spoke a simple language that even the most humble could understand). This simple language, which is also used to address the reader, consists of a series of statements of advice – twenty-one to be precise - which endorse the ideas of Pétain's National Revolution; the people, having understood this simple language, follow him and find themselves, once again, on the road to happiness.

¹⁵⁰ Dancette, Victor. Il était une fois un pays heureux. Illustrations by Paul Baudier. Paris: Editions G.P. 1943. n. pag.

In my research on Dancette, I found no indication as to his professional activities during the war. As I have mentioned before, Il était une fois un pays heureux and La Bête est morte were both published by the publishing house Editions de la Générale Publicité (G.P.), as was Zimmermann's book En revenant des kommandos. It is, in my opinion, more than a mere coincidence that these three artists, whose careers and affiliations were so different, should jointly produce this very pro-Resistance work. What unites them is, indeed, the publishing house: if it published Il était une fois in 1943 – a moment when most children publishing houses had already had to move to southern France and subsequently close down - its existence would certainly have been compromised at Liberation. For the Editions G.P., then, works like En revenant des kommandos and La Bête est morte, the latter published “dans la gueule du Grand Loup, au groin du Cochon décoré, et sans l'autorisation du Putois Bavard” (right in the face of the Big Wolf, in the snout of the decorated Pig, and without the authorization of the Screaming Polecat)¹⁵¹ would plausibly qualify as acts of resistance, albeit of the eleventh hour. In the only article I found which discusses the literary and propaganda value of La Bête est morte, Judith Proud discusses “elements of continuity in choice of form, theme, expression and authorship/production”¹⁵², and addresses the issue of similarities in Il était une fois and La Bête est morte. Her analysis, which is also based on her previous work on propaganda for children in Vichy France, clumps together the writers, the illustrator and the publishing house in her judgement of them as “résistants de la dernière heure” (resistants of the eleventh hour), without taking into account the individual differences between everyone involved.

¹⁵¹ Indicated on the last page of the first volume.

¹⁵² See Proud, J., “ Plus ça change... ? Propaganda fiction for children, 1940 – 1945” in The Liberation of France. Image and Event. Eds H. R. Kedward and N. Wood. Oxford and Washington D.C.: Berg Publishers, 1995. pp. 57 – 74..

Be that as it may, the fact stands that Dancette, Zimmermann and Calvo came from very different political backgrounds. The relation between the three is perhaps best defined as opposed between the former two and non-conflictual with the latter. This, however, is not the only discrepancy between the creators of this album: Calvo was well known by the public at large, and the same can certainly not be said of the former two. This is probably why only Calvo's name appears on the cover of the album. Indeed, the names of the other collaborators appears only at the end of part 1, and does not appear at all in part 2.

Once again, I did not find any indications as to whether these three artists chose to work together or whether it was the publishing house that brought them together to create this album as an act of resistance on its own part. However, if we keep in mind the fact that a book for children is addressed first of all to the adults who are susceptible to buy the book, it seems logical that the publishers would choose to put Calvo's name on the cover, not merely due to his fame but also because he comes across as the most apolitical of the three, whereas it would be a contradiction to put the two authors on the front cover, one of whom was pro-Vichy and the other anti-German.

3.2 LA BÊTE EST MORTE

As we have seen in the previous section, already at the level of the first visual impact with the book there is a glaring discrepancy, namely that the authors are not even mentioned on the cover page of the album. This is not the only point of interest in the cover - in this section we shall discuss other elements with which we come into contact when we first pick up the book. To

begin with, we will discuss general aspects of layout, namely the title, cover and image, followed by remarks on the genre of this narrative and lastly the narrator himself.

3.2.1 General layout and structure

3.2.1.1 The front cover

The initial visual contact with La Bête est morte is striking: it is a large album (13.75 by 10.5 inches), with a bright, yellow background and an imposing wolf taking up most of the cover. There are the title and subtitle below the wolf and the titles of the individual sections in the upper right hand corner, below which, in larger font, appears “Images de Calvo” (images by Calvo) with the name printed in large, bold, capital letters.

The wolf in the center of the cover is recognizably Hitler. It has the tell-tale mesh of hair and moustache that leave no doubt as to its identity. If that were not enough, it has a swastika on an armband on the upper left arm which is resting on its hip, and the right arm is raised in the typical Nazi form of hailing Hitler, also adorned with a swastika, but this time in the palm. It has a mean expression and all claws drawn.

Below this image of the wolf appears the title, La Bête est morte! in large capital letters followed by the subtitle, La guerre mondiale chez les animaux in small capitals. It becomes immediately obvious that the link between the word “beast” and the image is specious at best: the choice of the word seems to have no relation to the image of the so-called beast. The very choice itself is unclear, since the big bad wolf “was already a part of the fairy-tale inventory and thus an almost ready-made solution”¹⁵³ even in the early 19th century and certainly so in the 20th. Going by the title, the story should be about the beast but having read it, one realizes that the beast is not the subject of the narrative. The tale the narrator recounts is that of the “formidable

¹⁵³ Shavit, 22

tourmente qui a secoué notre pauvre monde” (the formidable torment which shook our poor world), focused mainly on France. This is however only referred to in the subtitle and France itself is completely occulted from the front cover.

Furthermore, the definite article, “*the* beast” seems to be used with a specific referent, as if it evoked something which is known by everyone, yet remains in the domain of the unsaid. Had the book been entitled “The Wolf is dead”, the use of the definite article might have been justified, since every child knows who *the* big bad wolf is; the same cannot be said of the beast. In addition, the three references to the beast on the front cover, viz. “La Bête est morte”, “Quand la bête est déchaînée” (when the beast is unleashed / unchained) and “Quand la bête est terrassée” (when the beast is floored / routed) are all phrases, all used with the verb “to be” + attribute, namely in the passive voice. There is however no mention of an agent. Also, although the title proclaims that the beast is dead, he is shown alive and kicking not merely on the front cover, but also within the story. Indeed, at the end of the story that the grandfather narrates to his grandchildren, the “beast” is not yet dead. This might be explained by the early date of publication of this book. This notwithstanding, the overall effect of this so-called beast on the cover is familiar, yet mysterious; human, yet allegorical; living, yet dead.

How then might we read the relationship between the word and the image? Although the linguistic message and the iconic message¹⁵⁴ were not created by the same person, they cannot be dissociated since, in the finished product, they do function together to create meaning. In his article, “Rhétorique de l’image” (Rhetoric of the image), Roland Barthes discusses the meanings created by the global functioning of image and text mainly in modern mass culture (his specific references are to advertisements and cartoons). He explains:

¹⁵⁴ cf. Barthes, Roland. “Rhétorique de l’image” in Communications. Centre d’Etudes des communications de masse (Paris). 6 (1964) : 40 - 51

Au niveau du message littéral, la parole répond, d'une façon plus ou moins directe, plus ou moins partielle, à la question: *qu'est-ce que c'est ?* Elle aide à identifier purement et simplement les éléments de la scène et la scène elle-même. (...) Au niveau du message « symbolique », le message linguistique guide non plus l'identification, mais l'interprétation, il constitue une sorte d'étau qui empêche les sens connotés de proliférer soit vers des régions trop individuelles (c'est-à-dire qu'il limite le pouvoir projectif de l'image), soit vers des valeurs dysphoriques¹⁵⁵. (At the level of the literal message, the word answers, in a more or less direct manner, more or less partially, the question: *what is it?* It helps to purely and simply identify the elements of the scene and the scene itself. (...) At the level of the “symbolic” message, the linguistic message does not guide identification anymore; instead it guides interpretation, it constitutes a sort of noose / clamp which keeps the connoted meanings to proliferate either towards areas which are too individual (that is to say, it limits the projective power of the image), or towards dysphoric values.)

The title and image, then, might be said to complement each other: the sight of the wolf, leaving no doubt as to the identity of its human counterpart, is further explicated by the term “beast”. This differentiates it from the traditional big bad wolf, implying that it is even worse and cannot just be nominated “wolf” but needs to be further qualified as “beast”. As Barthes further explains,

Bien entendu, ailleurs que dans la publicité, l'ancrage peut être idéologique, et c'est même, sans doute, sa fonction principale; le texte *dirige* le lecteur entre les signifiés de l'image, lui en fait éviter certains et en recevoir d'autres ; à travers un *dispatching* souvent subtil, il le téléguide vers un sens choisi à l'avance¹⁵⁶. (Evidently, elsewhere than in advertising, the anchoring can be ideological, and it is doubtless its principle function; the text *directs* the reader between the [different] signifieds of the image, makes him avoid some of them and receive

¹⁵⁵ Barthes, 44

¹⁵⁶ Barthes, 44

others; by means of a *dispatching* which is often subtle, it teleguides him toward a meaning [which has been] chosen in advance.)

This chain of meaning, namely Wolf / Hitler / Beast has yet one more link one could add to it, namely the community to which this beast belongs. Indeed, as we shall see further on, this extension of signification does apply to all wolves.

3.2.1.2 The genre

Before beginning to address details of the text itself, I would like to make a few remarks on the genre. The story depicted in this album is presented in cartoon format. It cannot be called a comic book because comics, by definition, are said to narrate “les instants privilégiés de l’existence d’un personnage imaginaire condamné à vivre un éternel présent”¹⁵⁷ (the privileged moments of the existence of an imaginary character [who is] condemned to live an eternal present.) This would apply, for example, to comics like *Snoopy*. Here, instead, the story narrated is limited in time. La Bête est morte may be said to be an illustrated story, but what distinguishes it from a traditional illustrated story are the drawings which are rendered with humor which is not always present in the text, which may stem from the fact that the illustrator and the writer is not the same person. For example, early on in the first part, there is a frame which describes the propaganda activities of the Putois Bavard (the Screaming Polecat which represents Goebbels): the text in the frame merely speaks of how he used “la voie de la presse et des ondes” (the means of the press and the waves) to convince “us”, namely the French animals, that it was to their benefit that the Big Wolf invaded their land. The image, instead, shows a rabbit selling a newspaper called Bobard Déchaîné. This name is a reference to the French satirical newspaper *Canard Enchaîné* (for which Calvo had worked earlier on in his career): the words “canard” and

¹⁵⁷ Lacassin, Francis. Pour un neuvième art. Geneva : Slatkine, 1982. p. 13

“bobard” both mean lies / untruths in slang; the “enchaîné” of the latter signifies chained up / tied up. The change to “déchaîné” (unchained / let loose), however, is a satirical reference to the propagandistic activities of the occupier, a wink that the illustrator addresses to the viewer. Indeed, scattered throughout the book, there are many such instances where the illustration speaks, so to say, more than the text does.

The narration takes on the form of the parable – or the figure of classical rhetoric, the *exemplum* which, as Susan Suleiman defines it, is “an example offered by the orator to his public; it took, most often, the form of a comparison or a historical allusion from which the orator drew conclusions relative to the present.”¹⁵⁸ The comparison or historical allusion is quite obvious right from the beginning with the subtitle, World War among the animals, and as we shall see in the part on the protagonists, the actors of this war are also quite easily identifiable.

An “exemplary” narrative, namely the parable and the fable, Suleiman further explains,

is organized along three hierarchically related levels: the narrative, the interpretive, and the pragmatic. To each level, there corresponds a specific type of discourse: the narrative discourse tells a story; the interpretive discourse comments on the story in order to expose its meaning, which takes the form of a generalization; the pragmatic discourse derives from that meaning a rule of action, which takes the form of an imperative addressed to the receiver (reader or listener) of the text¹⁵⁹.

In La Bête est morte, the first two levels are interwoven, the latter complementing the former. This is probably because it is such a long text (the actual story-telling lasts for seventy-five pages). As the narrator unfolds the story, he explicates it with asides. For instance, early on in the book, even before the war begins, when the Big Wolf and his cohorts are still busy training

¹⁵⁸ Suleiman, Susan. Authoritarian Fictions. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. p. 27

¹⁵⁹ Suleiman, 35

the wolves in their land, Barbary, to be soldiers, the French animals are shown to be incredulous of the will of the wolves to interfere in their business or do them any real harm, since they themselves don't interfere in the lives of the wolves. Following which, the text reads: "Mais hélas! le bonheur rend insouciant... et nous devons payer cher notre insouciance." (But alas ! happiness makes one carefree... and we were to pay a dear price for this insouciance.) This theme is taken up again, right at the end of the book, where Patenmoins exhorts his grandchildren, and through them the reader or listener: "...ne relâchez pas votre méfiance, tendez l'oreille au moindre bruit, demeurez vigilants à tout ce qui se passe autour de vous..." (...don't slacken your distrust, prick up your ears at the slightest sound, be vigilant toward everything that happens around you...). In this example, at the narrative level, the text establishes that the French animals were not militarily prepared for war, at the interpretive level, the reader is told that this happened because happiness made them become credulous, and at the pragmatic level, the reader is warned to always remain alert.

The conclusions the orator (here, the narrator) draws certainly are relative to the moment of writing. Indeed, the story ends quite abruptly (all of France is not yet liberated at the end of the story), but conclusions are drawn. These conclusions once again pertain to the moment of publication, a moment which is filled with uncertainties as to the immediate future – uncertainties of national reconstruction, of the purge of collaborators, of the availability of foodstuffs and so forth. In this moment of confusion, the text offers the reader conclusions at the end of the book which might help in getting rid of these uncertainties: here the stress is laid on various aspects, for example, to be always vigilant, to love the nation, work hard, strive for unity, but above and beyond everything else, it is the army which is shown to be the keystone of the nation's future. The very last sentence of the album attests to this: "Une armée bien entraînée

dans une nation unie, travaillant d'un même cœur et dans la même foi, c'est non seulement la certitude de la Grandeur, mais aussi l'assurance que nous pourrons enfin vivre heureux, entourés du respect des autres, dans la Paix et la Prospérité d'un monde renouvelé." (A well trained army in a united nation, working together and with the same faith; this is not only the certainty of Greatness, but also the assurance that we can finally live happily, respectful of others, in the Peace and Prosperity of a renewed world.) This could be said to represent the conclusion or moral of the story; this fact is also inscribed in the print itself, since this statement is rendered in a larger font in bold letters.

According to Judith Proud this narrative is organized in fairy tale format. For her, the story is set in

the enchanted woodland space of fairy tales where anything can happen. As in all the best fairy tales (...), nature is both abundant and perfect in this magic world, an image enhanced by the explicit use of the vocabulary of enchantment ('marvelous', 'enchanted' etc), references to 'purity', and a high proportion of hyperbolic adjectives ('in the shade of enormous mushrooms' etc.).¹⁶⁰

While this might well be the case, the most obvious element of a fairy tale is glaringly absent from this story: there is no 'fantastic' figure, no fairy godmother who gets rid of the wolves and restores France to normalcy with a wave of her magic wand, no prince who saves the day for innocent little civilian rabbits who get hung, shot or burnt to death at Tulle and at Oradour-sur-Glane (two of the most violent scenes depicted in this album). As we shall see further on when we discuss the protagonists, it is indeed hard to pinpoint one single hero figure in this story.

¹⁶⁰ Proud. "Plus ça change...?", 64

3.2.1.3 The narrator

Coming to the text itself, the first element we need to consider is the voice that speaks. “Grand-père, raconte-nous une histoire?...celle de ta jambe de bois” (Grandfather, tell us a story ?...[The story] of your wooden leg). Thus begins La bête est morte, with an entreaty for a story by young baby rabbits to their grandfather, Patenmoins. He is the intradiegetic narrator, recounting the story within the story. The extradiegetic narrator, only a non-personified voice, speaks but once, reporting the above request by the baby rabbits to Patenmoins, and then introducing him as the “glorieux Patenmoins, qui avait vu maintes batailles et qu’un boulet malencontreux avait amputé d’un mollet encore alerte” (glorious Patenmoins, who had seen many a battle and who had a leg amputated due to a stray bullet in his calf). However, he refers to this incident as “un tout petit accident dans la formidable tourmente secoué notre pauvre monde pendant plus de cinq ans” (a tiny little accident in the qui a formidable torment which shook our poor world for more than five years). Yet, it is this accident that is the origin of the story that the children want to hear, that carries the story in a sense.

Describing the narratorial voice in children’s literature, Shavit says, “the tone is not only authoritative, but also superior and condescending. This becomes eminently clear when the narrator explains those points he presumes the child is incapable of understanding by himself. (...) The same narrator also explains the craftiness of the wolf, assuming a child cannot comprehend such sophisticated behaviour...”¹⁶¹. This is also true of Patenmoins, who goes ahead and explains what Barbary is, the behavior of wolves as well as of the other animals and so forth. Also, he does not give the actors of the story he is narrating their own

¹⁶¹ Shavit, 28

voice – the whole story is narrated in the third person and Patenmoins never relinquishes his hold on the monopoly to speak. There is no dialogue apart from his exchanges with his grandchildren.

Since he is given the voice which bears events of such historical significance to the reader / listener, it is relevant to see from where he derives his authority. First of all, the quality of being a grandfather – as well as *the* grandfather of the listeners in the story – bestows upon him the authority of age, usually associated with experience and wisdom. Then, the fact of having been not merely a witness, but an actual participant further bolsters his authority. This fact of him having been a war veteran is an important factor in legitimizing his authority – first hand experience increases his credibility immensely. In terms of classical rhetoric, in the text itself, he draws literary *auctoritas* from La Fontaine. Indeed, there are several references to La Fontaine’s *Fables* with which every French child of school-going age is familiar. For instance, in the beginning of the album, there is an old cat named Raminagrobis, the very same name, and not a very common one at that, which La Fontaine uses in “Le vieux chat et la jeune souris”¹⁶² (The old cat and the young mouse) and in “La ligue des rats”¹⁶³ (The league of rats). He also uses the phrase “la gent trotte-menu”, from “Le chat et un vieux rat”¹⁶⁴, a phrase which has been out of use in modern French. The word “la gent”, in old French, refers to a people, a race or a nation; “trotte-menu”, an adjective which has also fallen into misuse, refers to someone who walks with small steps. In La Fontaine’s work, the phrase “la gent trotte-menu” refers to mice. Yet another reference to La Fontaine is an entire sentence, “Mais quelqu’un troubla la fête!” from “Le rat de ville et le

¹⁶² La Fontaine, 296

¹⁶³ La Fontaine, 325

¹⁶⁴ La Fontaine, 78-9

rat des champs” (The city rat and the country rat). All of these references to La Fontaine occur in the first five pages of the album. Why this proliferation of references to the fables of La Fontaine, one might legitimately ask. As already mentioned before, La Fontaine’s fables are familiar to French children. A recognizable reference therefore acts to reinforce the writers’ literary *auctoritas* since these references function within an established literary tradition and align the story with a particularly French literary source in their attempt to claim a Resistance-bound post-war identity. Also, they serve to reassure the readers right from the beginning since the story narrated is not a particularly pleasant one, at least not until the end when the wolves start facing defeat.

The narrator’s link to history is also an important one. He speaks of the Ligne Livarot, a reference to the Maginot line, which was to be a system of fortifications along the franco-german border, conceived after the first World War but constructed 1930 onwards. In La Bête est morte the narrator notes: “il avait été décidé de mettre [le pays] à l’abri une fois pour toutes en édifiant un grand mur qui formerait une barrière” (it had been decided to shelter [the country] by constructing a big wall which would form a barrier). This barrier, as we now know, proved to be quite ineffective: in 1940, the Germans swept around it from the rear to attack France through Belgium. But, according to Patenmoins, “comme la bête ne s’était jamais déchaîné de ce côté-ci, on avait fini par s’endormir paisiblement derrière ce mur confortable” (since the beast had never unleashed itself / sprung from that direction, we had ended up falling asleep peacefully behind this comfortable wall). Now, Patenmoins is said to have lost his limb at the Livarot line. It is not a gratuitous reference, since the Maginot line, the physical manifestation of the link between the two World Wars, represents the defeat of France and of its generals in 1940. Patenmoins “fell”, in a manner of speaking, with

France. This lack of a limb, also indicated by his name, prevents him from moving forward, yet it is the existence of this lack that brings the story the children want to hear into existence. Like the nation, “amputated” into two zones, he represents potential disequilibrium and at the same time successful continuity. He thus stands for more than just a speaking voice.

3.2.2 The protagonists

In La Bête est morte all the world is literally put on stage. The actors on this stage are numerous and varied, from the domestic dog, cat, cow and sheep to wild animals like the wolf, the hyena, and the lion; animals associated with a geographical space like the kangaroo, the elephant, the polar bear and the bison; to less common animals like the lizard. The story being meant for children, there is a distinct moral aspect and the characters in the story are painted in terms of pure black or white. This, as we shall see, is as true of the qualifiers used by the narrator to describe them as of the physical aspect of the animals as represented by the cartoonist.

3.2.2.1 The bad guys: the Axis

As we have seen, the cover is dominated by the Big Wolf (Hitler). He is said to come from a nation called Barbary, a name which is quite expressive in and of itself. He is also called “la Bête de l’Apocalypse” (the Beast of the Apocalypse). His countrymen, the other wolves – indifferently called Barbarians or “carnassiers” (carnivores) or rapaces (raptors) – are depicted as uniformly bad, with “instincts sanguinaires (...) de bêtes sauvages” (sanguineous instincts (...) of savage beasts). In general the entire nation is spoken of as a “race [qui] naît sans cœur

normalement” (a race [which] is normally born without a heart), “d’une férocité calme, froide, ordonnée” (of a calm, cold, methodical ferocity), a people who has been “toujours hanté de dominer le monde” (always haunted [by the idea of] dominating the world) and who “employaient les procédés les plus déloyaux et même les plus cruels” (used the most disloyal and even the most cruel means), to whom “les lois de la chevalerie ont toujours été étrangères” (the laws of chivalry have always been foreign). They are said to act with “machiavélique hypocrisie” (machiavellian hypocrisy). Other qualifiers used for them are “perfides” (perfidious), “lâches” (craven) and “traîtres” (traitors).

This verbal description is translated in the drawings as well: the wolves are depicted with claws drawn, sharp teeth that are visible, a fierce expression of the muzzle and a mean and sly look in the eyes, stiff ears, ramrod straight backs. The only traits that distinguish the Big Wolf from the others are his mesh of hair across his forehead and his moustache.

The closest accomplices of the Big Wolf are the *Cochon décoré* (Decorated Pig) who is the “grand maître des armements” (big chief of armament) in Barbary, and the *Putois bavard* (Talkative Polecat) who is “hargneux et contrefait, plus bavard qu’une pie” (a runt of a polecat, belligerent and deformed, a real gasbag¹⁶⁵). The former, who represents Goering, President of the Council for Defense of the Reich, is said to pass “ses journées à aiguiser son sabre qu’il brandissait de temps en temps” (his days sharpening his sabre which he brandished from time to time). The latter represents Goebbels, Minister of Information and Propaganda of the Reich, and is often shown spitting – literally as well as figuratively – into the microphone. This probably explains the choice of animal: in French, the expression “crier comme un putois” is used for someone who protests with shrill cries (Grand Larousse). He is shown to be responsible for

¹⁶⁵ Translation by Proud, “Plus ça change...?”, 64

“embocher” people – a play on words between the homonyms “embaucher” (to hire / take on for a job) and “embocher” from Boche (to turn into a Boche). There is only one explicit reference to someone he turns into a Boche: “on ne sait « pas qui »”, (one doesn’t know who), once again a play of words, an allusion to the journalist and military chronicler Jean Hérold-Paquis.

The wolves, the pig and the polecat have a few other animals for fellow countrymen. The pilots bombarding London and various parts of France are sparrow hawks or are indifferently termed “oiseaux de proie” (birds of prey). The drawings of the “poisson-torpilles” (torpedo fish) or submarines resemble sharks and are also said to launch bombs. There are also termites, locusts and Colorado beetles that destroy the potato crops. Lastly there is a bird that is supposed to be a “vampire ailé” (winged vampire) which resembles a bat and represents a surface to surface missile which the wolves were to have used against the land of the Bulldogs (England).

As far as the Germans are concerned, they are repeatedly characterized, as we have seen, as a bellicose people, as the aggressors without a cause. This characterization is of course not an innovation – it was used in World War I as well. In 1917, the French Ministry of Public Instruction published a 39-page booklet, Après trois ans de guerre¹⁶⁶ (After three years of war), handed out to schoolchildren at the end of the school year. It served to explain the origins and progression of the war, as well as to maintain a strong sense of patriotism among the children. In it, there is the same characterization of Germany as the “digne héritière des Molochs barbares” (“worthy inheritors of barbarian Molochs”) (11) who uses means that are “brutales” (9) (“brutal”) in order to “détruire non seulement les armées d’un pays, mais toutes ses ressources matérielles et morales” (14) (“destroy not only the armies of a country, but all its material and moral resources”), because “dans le livre de l’Allemagne [il y a] volonté de domination, de

¹⁶⁶ France. Ministère de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts. Après trois ans de guerre. Paris : [Ministère de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts], 1917

conquête, de guerre” (13) (“in Germany’s book there is the will to dominate, to conquer, to wage war”). Furthermore, according to the author, “les autres races, à ses yeux, restent des races inférieures”¹⁶⁷ (18) (“in its eyes, other races remain inferior”). In much the same vein, and with much of the same terminology, Patenmoins exhorts his grandchildren:

Mes chers petits enfants, n’oubliez jamais ceci : ces Loups qui ont accompli ces horreurs, étaient des Loups normaux, je veux dire des Loups comme les autres. [...] Ils avaient reçu simplement l’ordre de tuer. Ne croyez pas ceux qui vous diront que c’étaient des Loups d’une secte spéciale. C’est faux! Croyez-moi, mes enfants, je vous le répéterai jusqu’à mon dernier soupir, il n’y a pas de bons et de mauvais Loups; il y a la Barbarie qui est un tout, et ne comporte qu’une seule race, celle des monstres, des bourreaux, des sadiques, des tueurs.

[...] Mais cette race-là naît sans cœur normalement. Le plus doux est capable de vous ouvrir le ventre avec le sourire.

(“My dear little children, never forget this: these wolves who accomplished these horrors were normal wolves, I mean just like any other wolf. [...] They had simply received the order to kill. Don’t believe those who will tell you that these wolves belonged to a special sect. That’s not true! Believe me, my children, I will repeat it to you until my last breath, there are no good and bad wolves; there is Barbary which is whole unto itself, and is made up of only one race/species, namely that of monsters, tormentors, sadists, killers.

[...] But this species is normally born without a heart. The mildest one of them is capable of slitting your guts with a smile on his face”)

The similarity of the descriptions of Germans from the two wars is striking, and the latter draws on pre-existing imagery to a large extent, as much for reasons of familiarity as with the aim of reinforcement. This is done overtly, as we have seen, and covertly as can be seen from the description of the situation of the Danes, a people “que nous aimons tous” (“whom we all love”): the narrator relates the occupation of that country and the subsequent arrest of the King and

¹⁶⁷ The term “race” in French signifies not only “race”, but also, in the context of animals, signifies “species”.

deportation of thousands, and ends with: “La haine des Danois était désormais bien ancrée et c’est pourquoi aujourd’hui les plus polis d’entre eux ne peuvent s’empêcher de grogner terriblement quand un Loup, même inoffensif¹⁶⁸, passe à portée de leur flair” (“The hatred of the Danes was now well anchored and that is why, even today, the most polite one among them cannot stop himself from growling terribly when even an inoffensive wolf passes close by”). Underlining the hatred of the Danes in this manner serves to make his argument more forcible.

In the same vein, Mussolini is described as “l’Hyène à peau de Louve”, a cowardly hyena clothed in the garb of the she-wolf who suckled Romulus and Remus, thereby claiming false glory. This figure is inscribed in a false historical continuity and authority. The physical traits of the animal are exploited in this representation: hyenas have low hindquarters, and in the “Hyena disguised as a she-wolf”, this trait is exaggerated, making it appear always bent over, almost spineless. Although it “était habituée à imiter ridiculement tous ses gestes” (was used to imitate all its movements in a ridiculous manner), the Big Wolf is said to “se méfier [d’elle]” (be wary of it). Also, it is always depicted with its tail between his legs, classic sign of cowardice, and is qualified as “infecte” (revolting).

This Hyena is supported by his fellow countrymen, hyenas with no initiative of their own (hyenas feed on carrion). Indeed, when the Hyenas attack the land of the rabbits whilst the Wolves are also attacking at another end (Italy attacked France on June 10, 1940), they do so because “[elles] nous [prenaient] déjà pour un cadaver” (they already took us for a cadaver). Besides, according to the narrator, “la couardise [de ce peuple] était plus grande que son orgueil” (the cowardice [of this people] was greater than its pride). The king Vittorio Emanuele III, “roitelet de cette tribu où la fourberie est reine” (kinglet of this tribe where deceit reigns) is also

¹⁶⁸ The picture in this frame is of two wolf cubs playing and a chained Great Dane growling at them. This is the solitary instance where wolves are not depicted as potentially evil.

included, although not as a hyena. He is represented by a rat of exceedingly small stature, standing on stilts to seem imposing, but to no avail.

The Japanese, finally, are depicted as monkeys, “petits et jaunes, aussi laids que vaniteux” (little and yellow, as ugly as they were vain). They too have “l’ambition de dominer l’autre moitié du monde” (the ambition of dominating the other half of the world) and hence “singeaient littéralement les méthodes des barbares” (literally monkeyed the methods of the barbarians). The narrator denounces “l’agression perfide” (the perfidious aggression) of this “race malfaisante” (wicked race) who commits “atrocités” (atrocities) and “actes abominables” (abominable acts) using “méthodes barbares” (barbarian methods). The text often speaks of “leur orgueil” (their pride) which made them “nourrir de grandes illusions” (nourish great illusions). What stands out in their pictorial depiction is their short stature, mean, fierce expression and constant scowl.

3.2.2.2 The good guys: the Allies

As we have mentioned before, the animals are depicted solely in terms of black or white. We have just seen one extreme of this Manichean dichotomy. We can now move on to the good animals, that is to say the Allies – also called “les peuples pacifiques” (pacific peoples) – who are depicted with solely positive qualities.

The British are introduced into the text as “nos fidèles allies les Bulldogs” (our faithful allies the Bulldogs) and thereafter repeatedly called “nos amis les Dogs” (our friends the Dogs). They are said to “[defendre] notre sol comme s’il avait été le leur” (defend our land as if it had been theirs). The text speaks of their “ténacité” (tenacity), their “farouche résolution” (unflinching resolve), their “puissance” (strength), their “prouesse” (prowess) and their willingness to sacrifice “tout ce qu’ils avaient de plus cher, liberté, traditions, confort, au seul

but: la victoire” (everything that was dearest to them, liberty, traditions, comfort, for one sole goal: victory). Besides being strong, tenacious, determined, and helpful, they are also said to be “malins et patients” (shrewd and patient). Physically, they are sturdy looking, squat and bordering on podgy, almost always smiling and, unlike the wolves, their claws and teeth are not visible, thereby making them appear harmless. The only distinguishing elements of Churchill are his cigar and bowler hat. Apart from Churchill, there is one other dog who can be recognized: he is part of “les Dogs maigres” (slim dogs), Field Marshall Montgomery, who is lauded for his “tactique manœvrière” (maneuvering tactics).

As for the Polar Bears are also underlined, it is their “travail acharné de tous les jours et de tous les instants, un travail obstiné poussé jusqu’à l’héroïsme” (“relentless work of every day and of every moment, an obstinacy for work pushed to the limits of heroism”) which is above all glorified. They are depicted in the likeness of the animal: tall, big and able bodied. Although the polar bears are the only “good” animals shown with claws: a bear could potentially be a violent animal, but here this possibly negative attribute is rebutted by their almost constant smiles and soft, furry appearance and, not least, their color.

The Big Bear, Stalin, is repeatedly depicted as a very shrewd animal: when the Big Wolf, before occupying what would be the equivalent of Poland and then France, goes to “lécher les pattes du Grand Ours” (to lick the Big Bear’s feet) - a reference to the Non-aggression Pact signed by Hitler and Stalin – the latter receives him and hears him out “sans se méprendre le moins du monde sur les intentions du Grand Loup” (without misunderstanding for a moment the real intentions of the Big Wolf). Similarly, in the military sphere, when the Big Wolf attacks the land of the Bears, while at first it seems to the world that the Bears are losing, “le Grand Ours veillait! A tous il parut céder, mais il savait, lui, qu’il ne cédaient en fait que du vent et de l’espace,

pour se donner le temps de préparer la riposte” (the Big Bear was vigilant / on his guard ??! It seemed to everybody that he was giving up, but he knew that he was only parting with wind and a little space to give himself the time to prepare the counter-attack).

Whilst the “sagacité” (sagacity) and “sagesse” (wisdom) of the Big Bear are lauded, the other Bears are praised for being “audacieux” (audacious) and “héroïques” (heroic), whose “actes de bravoure touchèrent au sublime” (acts of bravura bordered on the sublime). The Big Bear always carries a hammer and a sickle with him, even when he is shown to make his peace with the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, whereas the other bears carry them whenever possible, that is to say when they are not working in factories or constructing or fighting. It is important to note that, unlike in the case of Churchill or Roosevelt, in the pictorial representation of Stalin there is no physical attribute to differentiate him from the other bears or to indicate his stature at the head of the existing political structure in Russia. This uniformity, in my opinion, does not operate innocently, and is perhaps meant to designate, in simple terms, the absence of class antagonisms.

“Nos amis les Bisons” (our friends the Bison) are the object of many a superlative since their “puissance (...) était connue et leur renommée formidable” (power was well-known and their fame [was] tremendous). Their mere entry into the war “avait définitivement fixé tous les espoirs chez nous” (had definitively fixed all hopes in us). This is because “déjà dans un vaste conflit, qui avait ensanglanté la terre plusieurs lustres auparavant, son glaive avait fait pencher le sort en faveur des animaux opprimés” (already, in a vast conflict a few decades ago, it’s sword had made destiny lean in favor of the oppressed animals). Right from the outset, then, the Bison are characterized as champions of freedom of the oppressed. Besides, they are “parfaitement entraînés et supérieurement équipés” (perfectly trained and superiorly equipped), so much so that

after the attack by the Yellow Monkeys (Pearl Harbor) “il fallait être Bison pour avoir l’espoir de s’en remettre” (one had to be Bison in order to have any hope of recovering). If that were not enough, “ces Bisons magnifiques” (these magnificent Bison) are “solides” (solid), “pratiques” (practical) and “la mort ne leur fait pas peur” (death does not scare them). They are said to work and fight with “audace” (audacity) and “ardeur” (ardor). Physically, they are depicted as being well built, muscular and broad shouldered, and are endowed with a friendly and jovial expression. Roosevelt is characterized by his suit, glasses and walking stick and qualified as “sage” (wise).

In spite of all these positive attributes, there is one remark made by the narrator that is quite equivocal: according to him, although they had the habit of “remâcher leurs pensées toute la journée avec un mouvement de mâchoires régulier comme un pendule” (ruminating their thoughts all day long, the movement of their jaws as regular as a pendulum) and they “écrasaient un peu nos plates-bandes lorsqu’ils traversaient nos jardins” (crushed our flowerbeds when they crossed our gardens), “au demeurant ils étaient sympathiques et nous les aimions bien” (all in all they were friendly and we liked them quite well). This statement borders on condescension, almost as if to show that even the Bison were not perfect, as opposed to the French, as we shall soon see.

The use of the possessive adjective in “*nos* fidèles alliés” (*our* faithful allies) and “*nos* amis les Bisons” (*our* friends the Bison) is an important one: although the reader is never told who “we” represents, these adjectives designate a center and make it clear that there is a point of reference against which everyone else is compared, overtly or covertly. We finally come to this “we”, the national community to which the narrator belongs. As we have said, the reader is never told what this land is called, in the first few pages there is a proliferation of the national colors of

France which makes the allusion quite obvious. Also, we are told that on the other side of the torrent is the neighboring land of Barbary, “un grand pays aussi, mais pas privilégié comme le nôtre et où les animaux n’ont pas la même tête que nous” (also a big country, but not privileged like ours and where the animals do not resemble us) – this land then is civilized, unlike Barbary, as implied by elimination.

While most other countries are depicted as possessing a single species of animals each, (with the exception of Germany), France is shown to be made up of a wide variety of animals. There are rabbits, lambs, bees, ducks, cocks, squirrels, grasshoppers, chamois, izards (also a kind of chamois living in the Pyrenees), dogs, storks, larks, swallows, doves, pigeons, and frogs. The choice of these animals cannot be gratuitous: they are almost all of small build and are animals that are usually not aggressive. Furthermore, they are lower down in the food chain and therefore are also potential prey. There are also panthers and leopards, but they are part of the “faune coloniale” (colonial fauna). Hence the potentially aggressive animals that fight for them are not exactly French. This diversity of species united for one cause is used astutely to show that whatever the individual differences that there might be between them, the French are united in their fight against the enemy. By the same token, whatever their individual differences, it is implied that the Germans are uniformly bad.

These animals are described as “naïves” (naïve) and credulous since they don’t believe the wolves really want to harm them whilst amassing all those arms. They are also described as “héroïques” (heroic) and “vaillants” (valiant). They are shown to have “l’expérience” (experience), “audace” (audacity) and show a “magnifique solidarité” (magnificent solidarity) towards the other animals from their national community. This is seen from the fact that whilst the wolves are exacting great amounts of edibles, these animals still manage to survive. This is

done in two ways: firstly, “nous nous étions tous découvert des cousins à la campagne, et nous recevions des colis qui nous permettaient (...) de résister physiquement” (we had all discovered cousins in the country, and we received packages which permitted us (...) to resist physically). The other system is through “vieilles qualités de notre race” (the old qualities of our race): “notre système D nous permit de subsister et en vérité, nous sauva pendant quatre ans” (our resourcefulness allowed us to survive and in reality saved us during those four years). The image in this frame depicts wolves carting away foodstuffs and rabbits stealing up from behind and helping themselves.

As soldiers and *résistants*, these animals are said to be “héros” (heroes) and “géants” (giants) who fight with “bravoure” (bravura) and are “unis dans leur volonté de lutte contre les Barbares oppresseurs” (united in their will to fight against the oppressing Barbarians). In their dealings with these “animaux pacifiques” (pacific animals), although the wolves are “barbares, brutaux et sournois” (barbarian, brutal, sly), this helps them “[retrouver] notre vrai moral, celui d’un peuple libre qui n’accepte jamais aucun joug d’aucun oppresseur, fut-il le plus cruel” ([to find once again] our true moral, that of a free people, one that never accepts any yoke from any oppressor, though he be the most cruel one). Most importantly, they are all designated as rebellious, which is the cause of the “insoumission de tout notre peuple” (insubordination of our whole population), and as being willing to make the supreme sacrifice of their lives for the fatherland. This last element of the so-called national character described by Patenmoins may be said to be a reference to the heritage of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It thereby helps to designate a sense of belonging as well as of continuity.

In the drawings of the French animals too there is undisputedly a conscious attempt at representing their peace-loving and carefree nature. This is seen, as we have mentioned, in their

small physical stature as also in their attitudes: as opposed to the tense posture of the wolves, these are animals that have a relaxed bearing. It is even more striking early on in the book where one finds, on the left hand side, a single-frame page depicting the untroubled life of pre-war France. There are a number of animals, all enjoying themselves with various activities; for instance swimming, fishing, playing golf, picnicking, dancing, enjoying the sun, and above all having fun. On the right hand side is another single frame page showing wolves being trained in the army. As mentioned before, they all have rigid postures and malicious expressions. This juxtaposition serves to reinforce the contrasting nature of the two neighboring countries.

Last but not least, there is the one animal that might be said to represent a leader figure, “notre Grande Cigogne nationale” (our national Stork) – once again, without saying which nation is referred to. The qualifier “our”, which denotes possession, serves to make the reader / listener feel closer to de Gaulle. The choice of animal for de Gaulle is not a very obvious one. He was not originally from Alsace, a region which is known for its stork population (more so than others). When the war began he was posted in Alsace which, though specious, seems the only link between the two. The choice of the stork may also be due to the common physical traits: the stork, like de Gaulle, is thin and tall. This bird represents birth, implying renewal and hope as well, which might be another reason for the choice.

When the wolves occupy their land, the Stork is said to be borne away by “le vent de la résistance” (the wind of resistance), but he does address them by means of “les ondes bibici” (the beebesee waves). The Stork is said to have “des antennes de grand conducteur” (antennae of a great conductor???) . Its presence at the Casablanca Conference “non plus comme le chef clandestin d’une fraction de notre pays, mais comme l’âme même de notre pays tout entier, comme le chef autour duquel devait se reformer l’unanimité de nos volontés” (no more as the

clandestine chief of a part of our country, but as the very soul of our entire country, as the chief around whom the unanimity of our will was to be formed) is seen as a very important sign: “Sa présence entre l’élus des Bisons et le premier des Dogs nous était une assurance que nos cœurs ne s’étaient pas trompés” (His presence amidst the elected one of the Bison and the premier of the Dogs was, for us, an assurance that our hearts had not been mistaken).

Finally, the attitude toward de Gaulle is apparent in his pictorial representation as well: although he appears only a few times (he is referred to several times but his picture appears only four times) in the whole book, he is usually featured alone or placed higher than others. Indeed, in one instance when he is surrounded by his co-nationals he is portrayed as being so tall that only the lower half of his body is seen, surrounded by a host of smaller animals. De Gaulle was physically thin and tall, and this is exploited to portray him as “grand”, the French qualifier which signifies both tall as well as great. It is only with Roosevelt that he is represented at the same level, that is to say they are both seated.

Lastly, we need to see whether there is an equivalent of the concept of the “hero” in this story. As we have seen, the word is used only in reference to the French people – not necessarily de Gaulle or those in the army, but ordinary people. The only common animals that are represented are the French, those of the other nations being occulted almost entirely. It is these common animals that might be said to be the “hero”, that are celebrated as heroes at any rate, who “[subissent] avec résignation” (bear with resignation) all that is thrown their way. Ironically enough, although the people are celebrated like a hero, they are absent from a major part of the book. Of these ordinary citizens, the ones that are most often referred to verbally are “les mamans et leurs petits” (mommies and their little ones). This childish allusion to “mamans” is a

significant one: the only roles French women are shown to play are that of wives, mothers and, at best, nurses.

This particularity becomes even more striking when one compares the portrayal of French women to that of Russian and British women – the only others of the female species represented here. The latter are shown at all kinds of jobs: making bombs, driving trains, working as nurses as well, but also as miners, policewomen, firewomen, and even in the army. In one single instance, the French female animals are said to participate in post-bombing rescue squads. However, the drawing, which depicts a female rabbit driving a truck, is striking: unlike the female Bears and Dogs who are stodgy and not particularly attractive, this rabbit is slim, pretty, well dressed and made up and has a coquettish expression. It is thus shown as an object of desire, thereby negating any possibility of seeing a possible role of emancipation in its person. A few frames later, at the moment of the Normandy landings, we are told that “des millions de petits animaux pacifiques guidés par leurs mamans faisaient monter vers le ciel un prière ardente” (millions of little pacific animals, guided by their mommies, sent ardent prayers up to the skies) and the drawing shows a mother and baby rabbit praying. This, combined with the role of caregiver (wife, mother, nurse) implicitly endorse the *kinder, küche, kirche* (children, kitchen, church) ideal for women that was common to nazism and the Vichy agenda of National Revolution.

As we read La Bête est morte, the fact that this type of characterization of the animals is not gratuitous becomes evident not only in the deeds of the actors, but also in moral lessons given by the narrator, Patenmoins. A first, more obvious function of this type of representation of the animals is didactic. It is for this reason that the characteristics of a given people are simplified, to the point of falling into stereotypes.

The good animals are made to represent a norm, a continuity which, at least in the case of France, is inscribed in the heritage of the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Everything that is outside the norm therefore represents a rupture in this continuity. The Dogs and Bison too represent a continuity, that of the ideal of freedom. As for the Bears, nothing is said explicitly.

I would like to open a parenthesis here to mention that the British, like the French, are portrayed as staunch believers in the concept of freedom. That is to say, their own freedom and that of their allies. There is never any reference in this book to the freedom of the colonies, be they British or French. The indignation of the French rabbits at being oppressed and exploited by the barbarian wolves as compared to what had been and was being done in the colonies is an aspect which, although peripheral to this discussion, needs to be mentioned due to its conspicuous absence in the prevailing discourse, given the fact that at the time the freedom movements, at least in the British colonies, were ongoing.

As for the Wolves, they too are made to represent a continuity from the “sinistre duperie de l’autre guerre” (sinister dupery of the other war), but this time a continuity of evil and violence. In this respect, the Big Wolf is made to depict the center and the Hyenas and Monkeys are made to position themselves in respect to him, in that they are said to imitate him in their wish to “élargir [leur] espace vital” (enlarge their vital space).

The fact of defining the Other so categorically in and of itself implies that a categorical definition of the Self exists or is at any rate possible. In this case, the definition of the Other, by elimination implies what the Self is not, namely barbarian, sadistic etc. There is an economy of representation which resides in this portrait of the Other: the narrator indirectly says who “we” are by distinguishing “them”.

We have analyzed the depiction of what we might, for the purpose of this book, call the “real” French, those who believe in the concepts of fatherland, freedom, sacrifice and so forth. This set up which we have just discussed, the dichotomy of good versus evil, of barbarianism versus civilization which operates at an international level also operates at the national level. The “fake” French, this marginal group which is so blatantly underplayed, does exist in La Bête est morte, as we shall see in our next part. The fact of having such a diversity of animal species in France helps to dissociate the good from the bad, the real from the fake within a French identity.

3.3 LOCI OF IDENTITY CREATION

Having discussed some of the important points at the level of representational choices, I would now like to address the question of the type of national identity the authors are trying to construct with this particular representation of the war. In France, this is an especially sensitive issue at the moment of Liberation for various reasons. Indeed, from the Armistice of June 1940 onwards, there is a deep schism in French society. On the one hand, there is the Vichy regime in power, which collaborates with the occupying power “for reasons of state”¹⁶⁹, and on the other is the Resistance movement, opposing itself to the occupiers as well as the regime in power. This seemingly simple dichotomy gets further complicated as we consider the differences of political opinion within these two larger factions. In fact, not only were there Resistance groups from the whole political spectrum, separated from each other by ideological differences, the Vichy regime too was “a pluralist dictatorship” (Hoffmann, 4). Within the far right there were divergent tendencies as well, some endorsing nazism, others gravitating toward a fascism anchored in the French tradition¹⁷⁰.

The impending defeat of Germany, the urgent need for the political, economic and social reconstruction of the country, the afore-mentioned multiplicity of factions, ideas and ideologies, the impact of foreign influences, that is to say, the reality of the Occupation and the possibility of a future AMGOT (Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories) in France, the purge and the punishment of traitors: all of these factors contributed to the need to re-establish a sense of national identity. Literature is a medium that represents a particularly apt forum for this, especially in France where it has long enjoyed a privileged position.

¹⁶⁹ Hoffmann, Stanley. *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s*. New York: The Viking Press, 1974. p. 27.

¹⁷⁰ For details, see Rémond, R. *Les droites en France*. Paris: Aubier, 1982.

In La Bête est morte, this will to create a sense of national identity is manifest as we shall see in the discussion that follows. We can discern three loci in the narration that work together in order to re-inscribe the national identity in the values of the republic, thereby providing its young readers with a grammar of good and evil, right and wrong, patriotism and treason, guilt and absolution. I will analyze these three loci, namely the incipit, one frame which appears twice in the second part of the book and is an animal version of the painting Liberté guidant le peuple by Delacroix, and finally the omissions and distortion of historical details; in studying these three elements we will see that in spite of the plurality of political positions incorporated in the closure, the reader is left with the undeniable impression of a sense of continuity.

3.3.1 An euphoric remembrance: the incipit

In studying the incipit, we shall focus on the four opening pages of the book, namely between the very first line, “Grand-père, raconte-nous une histoire” (Grandfather, tell us a story” and, on the fifth page: “Mais quelqu’un troubla la fête” (But someone disturbed the peace)¹⁷¹. These fifteen frames represent a cohesive unit broken only by “But someone...”. These pages present the background: they set the stage for the story that is to be narrated. They also examine the cultural past of the community discussed, which is the first step toward inscribing the discourse in a given cultural and literary tradition. Let us note in passing that since the story the grandfather narrates does not resemble any traditional fable or story for children, every so often are included elements that would be familiar to them. “Grandfather, tell us a story”, a request made by most children, is one such example. There are others in these opening frames that most French children would be familiar with, for instance the proverb “Quand le bâtiment va, tout va” (when

¹⁷¹ La Fontaine, 25-26

the building industry works, everything works) on the second page or various references to La Fontaine's fables, as we have already seen. These are used in order not to destabilize the young reader excessively. It is what lies between these two familiar sentences that is relevant to our discussion.

Having acquiesced to his grandchildren's desires, the old rabbit begins his story. To start with, the heterodiegetic narrator refers to him as "glorieux Patenmoins" (glorious Patenmoins), an allusion to the circumstances in which he lost a leg. The latter takes over the narration immediately, and the impact of the references he makes to the war in this frame alone is extremely forceful. There is a strong sense of living through a historic moment. In this opening frame, he mentions the war three times: "la formidable tourmente qui a secoué notre pauvre monde" (the formidable turmoil / tempest which shook our poor world), "cette fantastique aventure où bien des nôtres, et des meilleurs, ont laissé leur vie" (this fantastic adventure in which many of our people, even those among the best, lost their lives) "un terrible orage s'amoncelait sur nos têtes" (a terrible storm was gathering above our heads). This trenchant beginning, or more specifically this entry *in medias res* into the heart of the action, serves a dual purpose: to grab the reader or listener's attention as well as to intimate them to the gravity of the situation, almost to intimidate them. This heroic and sublime tone of the epic is maintained throughout the story.

Furthermore, the three pairs of nouns and qualifiers we have just mentioned, "formidable tourmente", "fantastique aventure" and "terrible orage", are noteworthy because this is the terminology used to represent the rupture. The adjectives, "formidable", "fantastique" and "terrible" all refer to that which is out of the ordinary. In addition, "formidable" also means imposing or enormous; "fantastique" refers to the imaginary and "terrible" is something that

inspires terror or brings misfortune. The noun “tourmente” has two meanings: it can refer to violent upheaval or, in literary usage, can represent a tempest, which, like “orage”, is also a phenomenon which is out of the ordinary, a temporary atmospheric disturbance. “Aventure” also denotes something unforeseen of which the outcome is uncertain. These pairs are all used within one frame, and as can be seen, are pleonastic. More important than the fact that they are redundant, they are also very similar to the imagery used in Il était une fois by Dancette: as we have seen above, foreigners are said to have brought corruption to “ce peuple privilégié” (this privileged people), the same terminology used in La Bête est morte to denote the French.

Once they fall into the trap set by the foreigners, “ce peuple (...) ne vit même pas le ciel s’obscurcir, les nuages s’amonceler annonçant une tempête prochaine” (this people (...) did not even see the sky darkening, the storm clouds gathering, which announced the impending storm). This use of a natural disaster to exemplify the putting to rout of the French nation is, as Proud has pointed out, a phenomenon which appears in many Vichy narratives for children. “Not only, then, do the Germans appear to be exonerated of any blame in the fall of France, but another section of the population, the Jews (and by extension the Freemasons and Bolsheviks) are designated as the real enemy”¹⁷². Although this does not operate in the same manner in La Bête est morte, the similarity of imagery appears not to be gratuitous.

The description that follows this first frame is a tableau representing the pre-war years. It has elements that refer to a memory and thus to a certain temporal distance; the tone that expresses this temporal distance bears a distinct tone of nostalgia, of a yearning for days gone by. The architecture of this descriptive tableau and the path that is traced by memory is of capital importance. One of the most immediately apparent features lies in the opening words of next

¹⁷² Proud. “Plus ça change... ?”, 59

fourteen frames: indeed, every single one of them starts with “au temps où” (at a time when) or a variation thereof. The rhythmic repetition, like a litany, of the key phrase “au temps où” serves to define a nostalgic vision of a past which was glorious but which has certainly gone by. The sense of nostalgia is reinforced by the punctuation as well. In each of the intermediary frames that begin with “au temps où”, the sentence trails off, ending in ellipsis points resembling a trailing off brought on by reminiscence. Furthermore, this sense of nostalgia in the text is corroborated by phrases like “nous vivions heureux” (we lived happily) and “ce temps béni” (that blessed era) which appear in the first frame, the former being repeated in the fourteenth as well, followed by the exclamations “comme on vivait bien au bon vieux temps!” (How well we lived in the good old days!) and “Ah! la belle époque!” (Ah! those good times!).

The sense of continuity is corroborated by the tenses as well. In French, written narratives use the *passé simple* (past historic) tense. It is a tense which expresses a completed action. Unlike the imperfect tense, the past historic does not imply duration. The latter tense is used further on in La Bête est morte . In these first fourteen frames where the narrator describes life before the war, he uses the imperfect tense, which conveys a sense of duration. The past conditional in the last sentence of this section, “Ah! quelle belle vie nous aurions pu vivre!” (Ah! What a wonderful life we could have had) reinforces idea that this past is definitely gone by. The tense used as well as the exclamation underline the feeling of nostalgia and regret. The sentence that marks the break in this sequence, “Mais quelqu’un troubla la fête” (But someone disturbed the peace) uses the past historic tense.

If we move from this surface structure to the deeper structure, we can begin to discern elements that allow us to understand the writers’ attitude toward the subject, that is to say life in pre-war France (in this part of the book). This subject has a dialectic relation to the political,

economic and social history of the country, a relation not only with the history it describes but also in which it is inscribed. We shall now move on to a closer examination of some of these elements in order to see how the pictorial representation and the written word participate together in the construction of a glorified past.

Throughout the book, the relation between the written word and the drawings is one of parallelism: the pictures usually illustrate what the text describes and develops. This may be for younger readers who cannot read but follow the story through the drawings. In this part, as in the rest of the book, the narration is conscious of being one. Indeed, at no point does the narrator let the characters speak for themselves. As for the register of the language used, standard usage is favored over a more infantile parlance.

The drawings in this section are significant in and of themselves. Since the book was published before the liberation of the whole country and since the conflict is represented allegorically in terms of aggression between animals in nature, no country is explicitly named. Although the French flag does not appear anywhere in the first part of the book, in each of these first fifteen frames the colors of the French flag appear at least once, in the guise of clothing, the feathers of certain birds, festoons or flowers. This proliferation of the national colors unmistakably alludes to the heritage of the Revolution, especially the Revolution of 1830. Indeed, after Napoleon's abdication, once the Bourbon monarchy was restored, the tricolor of the Revolution was replaced by the white flag of the monarchy and was only reinstated after the popular uprising of 1830. We shall discuss the heritage of the Revolution of 1830 in the next subpart, when we discuss the animal version of Liberté guidant le peuple.

In addition to these colors are present bright shades of yellow, orange and green. Lemon yellows are mainly used for flowers and clothing, and ochre and tan for the animals, giving them

a healthy mien (as opposed to the more brindled shades of the wolves). The verdant landscape is proof of the generosity of nature, which makes theirs a “pays d’abondance” (land of abundance). The shades of green used in this part of the book are those of new leaves of springtime, recalling freshness and youth. These colors, namely blue, white, red, yellow, orange, green and brown, participate together to create the image of a land of plenty and a people that are happy and healthy.

The play on the shades of green becomes more striking when juxtaposed with the shades used for the German countryside. On the one hand, the green that permeates the French countryside, those of pea-green, apple-green and reseda, in combination with the brightness it diffuses, evokes an atmosphere that is vernal, fresh and full of vigor. The darker shades of olive-green and fir-green, and the crepuscular atmosphere used for the German countryside on the other hand suggest gloom and dreariness. This is in keeping with the “vert-de-gris” or grayish green color of the uniforms of the German soldiers with which they were associated in occupied France. This opposition of light and dark colors, of brightness and obscurity functions hand in hand with the expressions on the faces of the animals: the French animals appear relaxed and happy whereas the German animals are scowling and tense.

France, then, is shown to be a “pays d’abondance” because “les moins riches pouvaient se nourrir à bon marché” (even the poorest could nourish themselves at very little cost) it is a “contrée privilégiée” (privileged land) with a “sol naturellement fertile” (naturally fertile soil) and a “climat idéal” (ideal climate). The stress is laid on the gifts of nature, which favors this land and creates the necessary conditions for the animals to prosper. Furthermore, it is endowed with “les abeilles [qui] butinaient ferme” (bees [who] gathered nectar assiduously) and “une race de paysans laborieux” (a breed of industrious farmers). The choice of the word “race” here is

noteworthy: it suggests that the quality of being hardworking is inherent to the breed itself, that it is a trait that occurs in them naturally. The image we are given of these animals, then, is that of industriousness and harmony with nature. Let us note that all these frames depict the countryside; there is not a single reference to the city or life in the cities.

Related to the naturally fertile soil and the breed of laborious farmers is the pervasive presence of food and drink in these initial frames, an element that is very common in children's literature in creating a child's world. Let us recall, before we discuss the issue of food any further, that in France almost all edibles were being rationed by autumn 1941. Both infant and adolescent mortality rates were on the rise due to deficiency-related illnesses¹⁷³. Also, in its move to build a healthy and disciplined society, the Vichy regime had imposed "jours sans", that is to say dry days, when buying or selling of alcohol was prohibited¹⁷⁴. In the months when these two volumes were published there were severe shortages of almost all edible items, due in part to the reduction in workforce because of the war, as also to the large amounts that Germany was exacting from France, and finally to the especially rigorous winter of 1944-45. In these conditions, the daily ration of food available officially was a mere 900 calories per adult¹⁷⁵.

Coming back to La Bête est morte, in these first fifteen frames alone food and wine appear in five frames each and milk in two. This frequency of food is certainly not gratuitous, and is cleverly used to portray a certain image of the pre-war years – as being an era of comfort and plenty. By the same token, it reinforces the insouciant, playful attitudes and activities of the French animals, which do not need to worry as such about their next meal or about feeding their families. Let us note, however, that this bountiful supply of food is attributed to nature: the

¹⁷³ For further details, see Azéma, Jean-Pierre. De Munich à la Libération. 1938 – 1944. Nouvelle Histoire de la France contemporaine 14. Paris: Seuil, 1979. pp. 160-167.

¹⁷⁴ Azéma, De Munich à la Libération, 93.

¹⁷⁵ For details, see Rioux, Jean Pierre. La France de la Quatrième République. 1. L'ardeur et la nécessité. Nouvelle Histoire de la France contemporaine 15. Paris: Seuil, 1980. pp 39-48.

government in general is not alluded to, and politicians in particular are derided. The drawing in the frame depicting a political rally is particularly relevant and comes across as a parody: a duck on a dais, delivering an impassioned speech, a bottle and glass full of wine on a table behind him. There are two placards around him, one outlining his political agenda, with a picture of a snail on it; the other with a picture of a roasted duck crossed out, with “nos réformes” (our reforms) written above it. The text accompanying this image, however, is a little more caustic, vilifying politicians since “il faut toujours que quelqu’un expose des idées qui ne sont pas celles des autres, et des programmes qu’on n’exécutera jamais...” (someone always has to talk, exposing ideas that others don’t share and programs that will never be carried out...). Thus the reforms of those in power are not so much the cause for the ample food reserves as is the benevolence of nature.

This image of the animals with no real rapport with the government or leaders is also maintained further on in the book. There is no direct reference to the Third Republic or the Popular Front government under which France suffered defeat. The absence of the previous government sets the stage for being able to occult, by the same token, the following government, namely the Vichy regime.

The predominant semantic field, that is to say nature, is linked also to the place of the action: the scene of the drama is the French countryside, although, as we have observed before, France is never explicitly mentioned. Various detours are used to refer to it, such as “pays” (country), “patrie” (fatherland), “terre” (soil/earth), with or without qualifiers. In the text, this topography of the French landscape is present not only in its geographic banality, but as much in its social connotation and political dimension, as is evident in the imagery of the daily existence of the animals: for instance the references to the widespread construction of nests, to the

prevalence of large families, to the standard of living - as seen in the availability of food, work as well as free time for relaxation.

This concept of leisure is an important one, both in the social as well as political contexts. Indeed, the pre-war Popular Front Government had managed to introduce drastic changes in this sphere: among its social reforms were the institution of the 40 hour work week, paid leave, tickets for annual vacations with a 40 percent reduction – which 600,000 workers took advantage of in 1936 alone; Léo Lagrange, the Under-Secretary of the Office of Sport and Leisure, encouraged the creation of youth hostels (319 new youth hostels were opened in 1935-36), began the construction of 235 new stadiums in 1936, encouraged education through theater, music and cinema: efforts which incited the political Right to nick-name him the “Ministre de la fainéantise” (Minister of idleness)¹⁷⁶. Pétain went as far as blaming the French defeat on this principle of leisure: “...l’esprit de jouissance l’a emporté sur l’esprit de sacrifice. On a revendiqué plus qu’on a servi. On a voulu épargner l’effort; on rencontre aujourd’hui le malheur”¹⁷⁷ (...the spirit of enjoyment won over the spirit of sacrifice. We demanded more than we served. We wanted to spare effort, today we meet misfortune).

Although Dancette endorses Pétain’s view in his Il était une fois un pays heureux, leisure is not portrayed entirely negatively in La Bête est morte. As we have mentioned before, the animals are shown to be engaging in various relaxing activities, swimming, playing music, dancing and so on. This is true of children as well: in these frames they play leapfrog or are out in the open with their families. There is a pervasive sense of *joie de vivre* in all these images. At a moment when fathers, brothers and uncles were away, either fighting at the front or

¹⁷⁶ For further details, see Borne, D., and H. Dubief. La crise des années 30. 1929-1938. Nouvelle Histoire de la France contemporaine 13. Paris: Seuil, 1976, 1989. pp. 157-159.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Barbas, Jean-Claude, ed. “Appel du 20 juin 1940” in Philippe Pétain. Discours au Français. Paris: Albin Michel, 1989. p. 60.

underground, wounded, missing, imprisoned or dead, the mere concept of free time becomes an important part of all that the country, or perhaps nature, has to offer these animals, that is to say, a better quality of life, especially the possibility for families to engage in various activities together, as can be seen in six out of the first fifteen frames.

Above and beyond leisure however, an essential political aspect of this land is a privilege afforded to all its citizens, that of safety, peace and tranquillity. This can be detected in the written word in a more obvious manner, and in the drawings in a more subtle way. The text furnishes us with the following adverbs and adverbial phrases in a span of thirteen frames: “en toute liberté” (in complete freedom), “en toute quiétude” (with complete peace of mind), “sans crainte du loup” (without fear of the wolf), “librement” (freely), “dans une liberté totale...” (in total freedom). This repetition leaves the reader in no doubt as to the atmosphere of pacifism which reigns. In the images, this prevalence of safety and peace in the land and lives of the animals can once again be seen in their expressions, physical attitudes and activities. The concept of liberty, repeatedly present in the text, also finds its counterparts of the motto of the French Revolution in the images: equality and fraternity are symbolized in the frame which shows the old cat, Raminagrobis, chatting and laughing with a group of mice. The presence of references to the motto of the Revolution is an important politico-historical element in the portrayal of pre-war France. This association with the ideals of the Revolution places the France of the 1930s in the same political tradition as the former, thereby imposing a continuity of the line of national ideals.

As we have noted in the beginning of this section, this representation of pre-war France rests mainly on nostalgia. The writers manage to depict a peaceful population of animals in its bucolic decor, and to achieve a balance in the representation of work and play in the lives of

these animals. The purpose of this particular portrayal of the past is not only to posit a certain vision of the past of the nation and its peoples, but as much to show its young readers something other than the four years of war they have lived through, something more positive at any rate. In this rosy past, nothing negative is shown, and in the continuity of a peaceful existence, the rupture is imposed from the exterior, with the German invasion of France.

The representation of work in these initial frames is one that is in close contact with nature, and all references to political influences or government are avoided. Also, there are eight frames that depict animals at play whilst only three show them working. For Dancette, this is a diametrically opposed stance from the one he takes in Il était une fois.

In this first movement that contributes to the creation of a national identity, the national community is portrayed as one that upholds the ideals of liberty and pacifism, an element that is important in distinguishing this community from that in the neighboring land, namely Barbary.

3.3.2 La Liberté guidant les animaux

The second instance in the creation of identity can be located in Calvo's reinterpretation of a painting by Delacroix, *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (Liberty guiding the people). This illustration appears twice in the book, first as a detail on the inside cover of Part II and then the entire frame towards the end of the book. The importance of this frame lies in the historical links created both through this imitation as well as through the changes in certain important details. We shall first focus our attention on the original painting, that is to say situate it in its politico-historical context and briefly analyze the painting in order to better understand Calvo's rendering of it. We shall then move on to the frame in La Bête est morte and, having examined the illustration, we shall bring out the elements that inscribe this drawing in the French cultural

imagination, ... see how the illustration is used to inscribe the present, that is to say the moment of publication, in the tradition of the Revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries.

La Liberté guidant le peuple (1831) is one of Delacroix' allegories inspired by current events¹⁷⁸, namely the Revolution of 1830. Charles X became the King of France in 1824. He was not a popular king since he was known to be among the first to have given the nobles the signal for emigrating during the Revolution of 1789. In addition, he was reactionary and authoritarian. In July 1830, he tried to nip the growing unrest in the bud by passing various laws, for instance by modifying electoral laws to diminish the number of voters and by totally suppressing the freedom of press. It was this latter decree that sparked off the revolt among 60,000 workers¹⁷⁹ who suddenly found themselves unemployed, and spread rapidly. The rebels tore down the white flags decorated with the fleur de lis, symbol of the much hated royalty, from public buildings and dragged them through the gutters. Men dug up paving stones from the streets with pickaxes and women and children carried them away to build barricades. The moment depicted by Delacroix takes place on July 28, 1830 in an encounter between the royalist troops and the rebels: the Swiss mercenaries protecting the City Hall attempted a sortie but were stopped by the rebels who were guarding the bridge which links the right bank to l'Ile de la Cité. A young man who was encouraging the rebels opened fire on the mercenaries, who withdrew only after having retaliated. Hit by several bullets, his last words are said to have been "Mes amis, si je meurs, souvenez-vous que je m'appelle d'Arcole."¹⁸⁰ (My friends, if I die, remember

¹⁷⁸ Other allegories from that period inspired by current events were *Greece expiring at Missolonghi* (1827), *The decapitation of the doge Mario Falerio* (1827) and *Assassination of the bishop of Liege* (1831).

¹⁷⁹ Ferrier, J-L. et al. *L'Aventure de l'art au 19e siècle*. Paris, Editions du Chêne, 1991. pp 271-3.

¹⁸⁰ Ferrier, 273.

that my name is d'Arcole). His death is said to have given Delacroix, who was pacing the streets and sketching the combatants, the idea for *Liberté guidant le peuple*¹⁸¹.

Coming up behind the three recumbent cadavers in the foreground, laborers and manual workers occupy the center ground of Delacroix' painting, come to fight at the barricades in their work clothes. The lone bourgeois with a top hat and a hunting gun, is said to be Delacroix himself¹⁸², and, in the background, we can also make out the cocked hat of a *polytechnicien* (student or ex-student of the Ecole Polytechnique, the prestigious public school of engineering in France). Little boys are also said to have participated in this revolution, and Delacroix includes two of them in the center ground of his painting, one on the far left of the painting, with the hat of light infantryman, and the other striding alongside Liberty, wearing a "faluche", that is to say a soft velvet beret worn by students. According to Ferrier et al, the young man in the blue shirt with a scarf around his head, kneeling at the feet of Liberty, is also a manual laborer¹⁸³. This Revolution is thus depicted by Delacroix as a collective initiative, as predominantly, but not exclusively, popular.

Finally, let us dwell a moment on the principal character of the painting, namely Liberty, who dominates the painting, rising above all that surrounds her. She appears in the center ground, along with the insurgents, but towers above them physically and, no doubt, figuratively. The sense of her tall stature is further heightened by the opposition of her verticality and the horizontality of the three cadavers before her, two of which are soldiers. The red bonnet donned by her recalls the self same red bonnets worn by the sans culottes during the Revolution of 1789. The sans-culottes fought in 1792 under the *enragés*, who were extremist revolutionaries who

¹⁸¹ Incidentally, the aforementioned bridge is known as the pont d'Arcole, named, in all likelihood, after the Italian city bearing the same name, which Napoleon took in 1796, and which helped him conquer Austria.

¹⁸² Ferrier, 273.

¹⁸³ Ferrier, 273

demanded not only civil and political equality, but economic and social equality as well. They also pressed for taxation and requisition of foodstuffs, redistribution of wealth in favor of the indigent and other reforms of socialist inspiration. During the popular uprising of May 31 and June 2, 1793, the sans-culottes fought with the *hébertistes* who had taken up the agenda of the *enragés*, and who succeeded in establishing the *Convention montagnarde*, the governing body which drew up the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* (Human rights declaration) in which the Article 2 proclaims “résistance à l’oppression” (resistance to oppression) as a right¹⁸⁴. Delacroix’ choice of the red bonnet of the sans-culottes for his Liberty inscribes this painting not merely in the tradition of the Revolution of 1789 in general, but in a specific line of political thought, namely socialism.

In addition, as Ferrier notes, “*La Liberté* est un tableau où le mythe se mêle à l’observation directe. La poitrine nue, en effet, est traditionnellement un attribut de la Victoire. Delacroix a dénudé sa Liberté et il en a agrandi la taille afin d’accuser son caractère mythique”¹⁸⁵. (*Liberty* is a painting where myth mingles with direct observation. A bare chest is, in fact, traditionally an attribute of Victory. Delacroix denudes his Liberty and enlarges her physical stature in order to accentuate her mythical character). The mythical nature of this character is further heightened by the effects of chiaroscuro. The whole painting is rather dark, especially all around the edges. Only the character personifying Liberty is bathed in a clear, bright light. This effect is particularly intensified around her head, behind which is a clear, white sky. The upper, outer edges all being dark, this silvery part around her head resembles a halo,

¹⁸⁴ France. Ministry of Justice. “Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen. 26 août, 1789”.
<<http://www.justice.gouv.fr/textfond/ddhc.htm>>

¹⁸⁵ Ferrier, 273.

stripping her of any possible human identity, thereby elevating this allegorical symbol from a notion to an ideal.

The public career of this painting was closely linked with political developments in France, and it was exhibited and withdrawn several times in the 19th century depending upon who was in power. As Jobert explains, “sa signification politique (...) fut en quelque sorte redoublée par les glissements iconographiques de la figure de la République, avec laquelle celle de la Liberté finit par se confondre”¹⁸⁶ (its political signification (...) was intensified by the iconographic shifts of the figure of the Republic, with which that of Liberty ended up being confused). In French political imagery, then, this figure of Liberty became amalgamated with that of the Republic.

Before beginning to analyze Calvo’s creative revision of *Liberté guidant le peuple*, let us briefly look at the historical episode depicted in this latter day version¹⁸⁷. Like *Liberté*, its more modern counterpart represents an insurrection as well. This insurrection began on August 19, 1944 and lasted until the liberation of Paris, on August 25, 1944. Like other previous Parisian insurrections, this one was spontaneous as well. Indeed, once the Normandy landing was successfully accomplished, various Parisian resistance groups were biding their time waiting for the right moment to rebel. In the meanwhile, they carried out punitive expeditions against collaborators (for example Henriot, an advocate of collaboration with Germany and Secretary of State for information and propaganda under Vichy, was killed on June 28, 1944); they also organized demonstrations and called for strikes. August 10 onwards, railway workers, postmen and policemen went on strike by turns until general mobilization was announced on August 19. From that day until August 22, the *résistants* took control of the *Préfecture de Police* (the Paris

¹⁸⁶ Jobert, Barthélémy. *Delacroix*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997. p. 133

¹⁸⁷ For further details, see Azéma. *De Munich à la Libération*, 342-52.

police headquarters), the *mairies* (council offices / mayor's offices) and ministries. In spite of these successes, they were still susceptible to a riposte by the occupying power. For this reason, the idea of a truce was launched, apparently from the *Préfecture de Police*. This truce was signed on August 20, 1944 by the German General von Choltitz and the representatives of the C.N.R., and the zones to which it applied were gradually increased. The signing of the truce was seen by some as an incomplete victory, and by others as partial treason. Two days later, the insurrection was relaunched, in all likelihood by the communist and chief of the *Forces françaises de l'intérieure*, Rol-Tanguy¹⁸⁸, and Paris was covered yet again in barricades. Leclerc and his 2nd Armored Division, trying to enter Paris by edging their way through German pockets, managed to reach the City Hall on August 24. On the 25th, there were still encounters between the Germans and the *résistants* (now fortified with arms brought by Leclerc's troops). The same day, Choltitz decided to capitulate, giving himself up at the *Préfecture de Police* and signing the unconditional surrender later that afternoon in the presence of Leclerc and Rol-Tanguy. Paris was liberated. A triumphal parade took place the following day, with tanks and other combat vehicles and a joyful crowd bringing up the rear. De Gaulle was present along with Leclerc at this parade which went all the way down the Champs Elysées and onwards to Notre Dame¹⁸⁹. The same day (Aug 26), the newspaper Carrefour carried a sketch of Delacroix' *Liberté* and the caption read: "La France écrasée, pillée, trahie, se redresse...!" The link between the Parisian insurrection of 1944 and the symbolism of Delacroix' *Liberté* was thus immediately exploited by the press.

Concluding his study of this insurrection, the historian Jean-Pierre Azéma notes that

¹⁸⁸ Baudot et al. "Rol-Tanguy" in The Historical Encyclopedia of World War II. trans. Jesse Dilson. New York: MJF Books, 1980 & 1989. pp. 415-16.

¹⁸⁹ Fighting continued at Notre Dame, with several dead and 300 injured in the shooting between the *miliciens* (an anti-Resistance Militia created by the Vichy regime) and the *résistants*. (Azéma, 347). Although Paris was liberated, the war was still on.

c'est bien l'image d'un Paris insurgé qui l'emporte; les assaillants renouaient – dans une large mesure – avec leurs ancêtres révolutionnaires: bon nombre d'entre eux étaient ancrés dans leurs quartiers derrière des barricades qu'ils défendaient (...) Et pourtant dans ce Paris des barricades, les uns et les autres œuvrèrent de concert et dans l'ordre souhaité par la Résistance: l'insurrection populaire se maria avec les forces extérieures (...) C'est cette conjonction – exemplaire à tous points de vue – qui « sauva » Paris. (It is indeed the image of a Paris in insurrection that prevails; the assailants reestablished a link – to a large extent – with their revolutionary ancestors: a good number of them were anchored in their neighborhoods, behind barricades which they defended (...) In this Paris of barricades everyone strived together and in the order wished by the Resistance: the popular insurrection united with the exterior forces (...) It was this conjunction – exemplary in every respect – which “saved” Paris.)

These moments of victory and jubilation, then, are the circumstances which Calvo depicts, all condensed into one frame of exultation. It is the only frame in the book where an animal is used as the personification of a notion, without any physical referent in reality (as opposed to all the other animals which represent political personalities or the people of a nation). It is also the only frame which does not manifest the parallelism between image and text that we have mentioned above. Having situated the frame, I will analyze relevant details, and establish links with its original, the Revolution, the discourses of the day, and the implications of the choice of painting.

Calvo's version of *Liberté guidant le peuple* is one single frame that takes up a whole page. The preceding frame depicts wolves in retreat, carrying away with them all that they can haul. The city in question is not easily identifiable, since the only buildings that are shown are a cathedral and some half-timbered houses. After the Normandy landing, Leclerc and his 2nd Armored Division successively liberated Le Mans, Alençon and Ecouche before arriving in Paris; both Le Mans and Alençon have a cathedral, which may be an indication for identification.

The frame following *Liberty*, also occupying the whole page, portrays the afore-mentioned parade. It is represented only partially, with the bell towers of Notre Dame in the background, and only one tank coming down a narrow street. De Gaulle was present at the parade, but is not shown explicitly in Calvo's rendering of it, although the Lorraine cross which symbolizes him appears on two flags. The national flag flutters from windows¹⁹⁰ as well as on the tank, and in a soldier's hat hanging off the front of the tank there are three flowers, blue, white and red (from left to right, in that order). Soldier rabbits ride atop the tank and crowds of civilian rabbits cheer them with offerings of flowers and wine, either running alongside or from windows.

Calvo's *Liberty*, like the original, can also be divided into three grounds. In the foreground, there are five wolves, two cringing with fear, covering their heads with their hands, two knocked unconscious, and one seems to be crawling toward the front of the frame by skirting a chair which is in the way, a fearful expression on its face. Towards the rear of the foreground, there are paving stones, and we can discern the tails of rats, seemingly scampering away to safety amidst the ruins. Unlike Delacroix' *Liberty*, this one has no dead visible, but there is a plate with a dark red liquid which overflows and runs into a gutter. It is unclear whether this liquid is blood or wine, since there are casks strewn about. The text is situated on the bottom left of the frame.

The centerground is occupied by the barricades, like in the 19th century version, but here, in addition to paving stones and beams, there is an assortment of objects that makes up the barricades, from barrels to a mattress, a chair, a table, a wicker basket, a ladder, a crate and even a wheel. In this picture, however, everything converges toward the center of the frame which is

¹⁹⁰ This profusion of flags fluttering from windows is reminiscent of another painting, *The Rue Montorgueil, Celebration of June 30, 1878* and its very similar counterpart, *The Rue Saint-Denis, Celebration of June 30, 1878* by Claude Monet. This same moment was depicted in three views of *The Rue Mosnier* by Manet as well. The event depicted in these paintings is the Festival of Peace, a national holiday observed on June 30, 1878, and which was meant celebrate the recovery of France after the franco-prussian war of 1870.

occupied by this confused heap of objects, whereas in the original, the figure of Liberty commands the central position that draws everything toward it. Coming forward over this heap of objects is the allegorical figure of Liberty, followed by the insurgents. The background of this picture is all white, with the basilica of the Sacré Cœur on the top left hand side of the page.

The representation of Liberty in this version is an exact replica of the original, albeit with a rabbit's face. Her dress has the same folds and the same red sash tied around the waist, the position of the arms is the same, with one bearing a rifle and the other raised, carrying the national tricolor. She also wears the red bonnet of the *sans culottes*, and also has her head turned to her right. Like the original, her gaze too is averted.

The rebels that surround her also resemble the ones in the original. There is the young rabbit walking abreast her, on her left, armed with two pistols, right arm raised. On her right is a rabbit in a suit and top hat, holding a rifle with both hands. Others around him are armed with swords and rifles. The young man kneeling at the feet of Delacroix' *Liberty*, with the national colors on his person, looking up at Liberty, is conspicuously missing from Calvo's depiction. The crowd of rebels which surrounds Delacroix' *Liberty* has expressions of fear, reflexion, stupefaction and even ecstasy (on the face of the young man kneeling at her feet), whereas here the animals wear expressions of courage, enthusiasm and awe.

More important than this list of similarities and differences, there are three significant divergences which belie an open, honest imitation of Delacroix' work. The first of these is the manner in which the elements of the painting are disposed. *Liberté guidant le peuple* is set up in a pyramidal structure, with the cadavers lying at the base of the pyramid, above which are elements of the barricades – paving stones and beams – and the rebels, with Liberty with her flag rising above, at the head of the pyramid. She thus dominates the landscape in which she is

inserted. In Calvo's version of the drawing, the same pyramidal structure is used, and Liberty also rises above the rebels. Physically, she is also the summit of the pyramid, but towering above her, to her right, rises the Sacré Cœur.

This seemingly innocuous presence of the Sacré Cœur does not operate in a totally innocent manner. In Delacroix' painting, as we have mentioned, the towers of the Notre-Dame can be discerned in the background. They are in the distance, and therefore small, not rising above her. The tricolor of the Revolution is also shown flying from its towers. Now, as Rautmann notes, "Notre-Dame, qui permet de localiser la scène, joue aussi le rôle de symbole national: le peuple se bat pour la liberté de la nation toute entière"¹⁹¹ (Notre-Dame, which allows us to localize the scene, also plays the role of the national symbol: the people fight for the liberty of the entire nation). The Sacré Cœur, on the other hand, is traditionally associated with the French Right"¹⁹². Indeed,

ce sont les péchés de Paris, Babylone moderne (...) que doit expier la consécration du Sacré Cœur. (...) La Commune de Paris (...) née de l'émeute de Montmartre, dernier drame de l'année terrible, ne fait que confirmer les auteurs du Vœu dans leur diagnostic : le libéralisme issu de la Révolution française ne peut que mener au désordre, et à la subversion sociale¹⁹³. (it is the sins of Paris, the modern Babylon (...) which the consecration of the Sacré Cœur should expiate. The Commune of Paris (...) born of the riots at Montmartre, the last drama of that terrible year, only confirms the diagnosis of the authors of the Wish: the liberalism which was born of the French Revolution can only lead to disorder, and to social subversion).

¹⁹¹ Rautmann, Peter. Delacroix. Paris: Editions Citadelles et Mazenod, 1997. p. 134

¹⁹² Proud. "Plus ça change...?" footnote 23, 73-74

¹⁹³ Mayeur, Jean-Marie. "Préface" in Le Sacré Cœur de Montmartre. Spiritualité, Art et Politique. De 1870 à nos jours. Jacques Benoist. Paris : Editions Ouvrières, 1992. p. 22

It was the legacy of the Revolution, then, that the basilica of the Sacré Cœur was meant to counter. Furthermore, the equestrian statues of Saint Louis and Jeanne d'Arc in front of the church leave little doubt to the monarchist persuasion of the supporters of the basilica.

In this light, the singular presence of the Sacré Cœur above Liberty in Calvo's drawing distorts any message that Delacroix' painting might evoke. It negates all that the original painting might represent in its post-war reworking. Also, not only does the Sacré Cœur figure above Liberty in La Bête est morte, it is also tellingly on her right, as opposed to Delacroix' painting where the Notre-Dame figures on her left. The signification of *Liberté guidant le peuple*, then, which might have been a means to inscribe this work in the political line of socialism, is cleverly belied.

Furthermore, the flag which Liberty bears in Delacroix' painting is whole, whereas Calvo's Liberty carries one that has the red completely worn out and in tatters. Red is said to represent not only the city of Paris¹⁹⁴, but Republicanism¹⁹⁵ as well, and was the color brandished by the rebels on the barricades in the Revolution of 1848¹⁹⁶. Earlier on in the text, we are told that the wolves “ne purent empêcher les nôtres de sauver leurs drapeaux qui, cachés précieusement, devaient un jour retrouver leur éclat et leur gloire” (could not stop [our men] from saving their flags which, hidden carefully, were to recover their brightness and their glory one day). This picture of brightness and glory does not in any manner conform with the flag that the liberty bears, with its red edges frayed.

Last but not least, there is the question of the artist's signature. Speaking of *Liberté guidant le peuple*, Rautmann notes:

¹⁹⁴ France. Présidence de la République. “Le drapeau français” <<http://www.elysee.fr/instit/sydrap.htm>>

¹⁹⁵ Pérutz, Vivien. Edouard Manet. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1993. p. 175

¹⁹⁶ France. Premier Ministre. “Le drapeau français” <<http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/HIST/index.htm>>

l'artiste est (...) présent dans le tableau par sa signature et la date d'exécution de l'œuvre. Apposé bien en vue sur les poutres de la barricade, juste au-dessous de la tour où flotte le drapeau tricolore, le nom de Delacroix ne remplit pas la simple fonction d'une signature. Il a permis à l'artiste de se glisser parmi les insurgés : s'il est absent de la scène en tant qu'individu, il est présent en tant que peintre et attire l'attention sur son rôle d'auteur d'un tableau consacré à la révolution. (the artist (...) is present in the painting through his signature and the date of production of the work. Appended well in sight on the beams of the barricade, just below the tower where the tricolor flag floats, the name of Delacroix does not merely fulfill the function of a signature. It has allowed the artist to slip in among the rebels: if he is absent from the scene as an individual, he is present as a painter and attracts [our] attention to his role as the author of a painting dedicated to the revolution).

This remark about the function of Delacroix' signature and of the date within the larger framework of the painting is relevant to our discussion of Calvo's drawing as well. In his version, in approximately the same position (roughly the center of the drawing, towards the right hand side), appended onto one of the barrels, are the letters G.P. which stand for the publishing house (Générale Publicité), with a little logo between the two letters which bears the address of the publishing house and "Paris" inscribed in the center. Above all of this is inscribed the year of production, 1944. Both G.P. and 1944 both appear in bold, large characters. Calvo, whose name appears in almost every single frame, affixes it at the very bottom of this one. This is the only instance where G.P. expressly appears within the story – and, more precisely, within the pictorial representation itself. This act of inserting the publishing house within the depiction of the insurgents allows it, by the same token, to slip in among the rebels. If we recall the fact that it was G.P. that also published Il était une fois, the pro-Pétain book by Dancette in 1943, it seems to be now trying to absolve itself by flaunting its participation in the liberation of Paris in August 1944.

The global message that this frame sends forth is, as we have seen, an equivocal one. The fact of basing this drawing on a painting of uncontested value in the French political imagination of the Left seems to function as a means of inserting La Bête est morte in the same line of thought. Indeed, the text accompanying this drawing reinforces this claim, referring to the uprising of August 1944 as an “explosion de tout un peuple pacifique” (explosion of a whole pacific peoples), who want to show that “l’apparente soumission de quatre années d’esclavage n’avait rien change à sa foi, à son courage, à son patriotisme” (the apparent submission of four years of slavery had not changed its faith, its courage, its patriotism in the least). The French are thus shown to act within a framework of revolt which has almost become a tradition since the Revolution, a tradition which continues in the uprisings of 1830, 1848, 1871. Even more than a tradition, it is a legacy of the Declaration of Human Rights which makes these animals “[brûler] du désir de secouer eux-mêmes le joug barbare” (burn with the desire to rid themselves of the barbarian yoke). Yet, the single substitution of the Sacré Cœur for the Notre-Dame contradicts the overall attempt at endorsing the political tradition of the Left.

Thus, the heritage of the Revolution of 1789 is claimed as part of the national character, thereby upholding the image of the French as the champions of the concept of liberty. Furthermore, this definition of French-ness is extended to the whole population: “...le soulèvement faisait l’unanimité chez nous et il n’était plus question de tribus, de castes ou de naissances. Tous les poils vibraient à l’unisson.” (the uprising was unanimous in our country and there was no longer any question of tribes, castes or birth. [Animals of all kinds] were vibrant [with enthusiasm] of one accord) We shall analyze the implication of this gesture in our next part; suffice it to mention here that by this means the text entirely negates the plurality of

political interests and positions, and at the same time eliminates any possible marginal group from the national community.

3.3.3 Remembering to forget

Throughout La Bête est morte, Patenmoins repeatedly speaks of remembering and not forgetting. “C’est (...) quelque chose, voyez-vous, mes enfants, qu’il ne faudra jamais oublier” (That (...) is something, you see, my children, that should never be forgotten); “leur souvenir doit rester impérissable parmi nous” (their memory must remain imperishable amongst us); “...ne l’oublions jamais” (...let us never forget that); “...n’oubliez jamais ceci...” (...never forget this...); “Puissent-ils ne jamais l’oublier!” (may they never forget it); “Puissent-ils (...) se souvenir...” (may they (...) remember...). These examples demonstrate clearly the stress laid on remembering in this book. There are, however, certain very important parts of the history of France from the war years that are, in a manner of speaking, already “forgotten” by the text, or at any rate not always remembered correctly. In this final section, we shall focus on some of these omissions and distortions in order to show how these omissions participate in the process of identity creation and in the myth of the Resistance as well.

At his grandchildren’s request, Patenmoins narrates the story of his wooden leg, inscribing it in the larger historical dimension in which it is set. Although the title tells us that the story deals with a World War, the perspective from which the story is recounted is that of the French. As we have seen, a great number of details of the war are included, from life in the pre-war years to battles (Menton, Bir Hakeim, Pearl Harbour etc), to international conferences and policies (Casablanca, Istanbul, the Allied stipulation of unconditional surrender). Yet, one of the

most contested episodes in French history, namely the Vichy government, is completely obliterated in this version of the event.

When Patenmoins starts his story of the war, no explicit reason is given as to why the war began in the first place. The origin of the war is enshrouded in vagueness: “on racontait que les Barbares voulaient tout manger autour d’eux” (it was said that the Barbarians wanted to eat everything around them). The natural propensity for evil on the part of the Barbarians and their desire to “dominer le monde” (dominate the world) makes them attack the lands of various animals. From this point onwards, everything negative is attributed to them. Hence, the declaration of war of September 3, 1939 by France and England on Germany as well as the period known as the Phony War are completely excluded.

In the portrayal of the pre-war years, the social advantages these animals are afforded are ascribed to an abstract notion, namely the nation. The government, as we have seen, is not alluded to. In much the same way, the government of the French State (Vichy France) is not alluded to explicitly either (we shall study the single indirect reference further below). Within the nation, then, we see the French animals (civilians), the defeated army, and the occupier. The *résistants* are not shown to be physically present in the country until a much later date in the guise of the *maquis*.

Once the Big Wolf and his hordes attack the nation, we find the first verbal reference to what might be considered collaborators: “notre terrible envahisseur (...) avait acheté la complicité de quelques traîtres, comme la chouette et la vipère qui nous conseillaient la capitulation et nous démoralisaient perfidement” (our terrible invader (...) had bought the complicity of some traitors, like the owl and the viper who advised us to capitulate and demoralized us perfidiously). The drawing that goes with this text, however, does not represent

either the owl or the viper: it shows a toad and a rat, both receiving gold coins from the Talkative Polecat. There are two important points to note here: firstly, that collaboration is shown as an act instigated by the occupier, which is untrue since it was Vichy France that took the first step and established the politics of collaboration; secondly, that these collaborating animals are depicted with no distinguishing features. It is hard to tell who they represent, unlike the other leaders who are easy to recognize (the Great Bear, the Bulldog, the Big Wolf etc). In this manner, the role of the leaders of Vichy France is de-emphasized. This gesture of downplaying collaboration fits in with the 'us versus them' schema. These animals are shown to be so like those that corrupted them, that they do not resemble the national community in any respect: they don't look gentle, they aren't prey, even physically they do not fit in. They have very little that links them to the French animals, and fit in more easily in the Barbarian community.

There are two more instances where the narrator accuses the Talkative Polecat of being responsible for depraving French animals: "...une colonne d'envahisseurs que le Putois bavard avait recruté à l'avance parmi nous" (a column of invaders which the Talkative Polecat had recruited in advance amongst us) and "quelques menues fripouilles que le Putois corrupteur avait définitivement "embochées"" (some little rogues that the corrupting Polecat had definitively hired / turned into Boches). In both instances, the agent of the action is the Polecat: once again, any responsibility on the part of French animals is deftly passed on to the vitiating influence of the wolves, and specifically to that of the Talkative Polecat. The first of the two above-mentioned examples refers to the period of the German invasion, prior to the occupation of the country. In this light, the use of the past imperfect tense is also significant: it implies that the act of corrupting occurred prior to the act of invasion. This line of reasoning is not pursued any farther in the book, but the implication that capitulation was manipulated from the outside

remains, thus suggesting that the great majority of French animals did not surrender, so to speak, and portrays them as having been duped.

This idea of having been misled is taken up again when, right after the rabbit soldiers are told to surrender their arms (June 17, 1940), we are told that “le Grand Loup (...) essayait de nous duper en remplaçant nos vrais chefs ou en les doublant par des traîtres qui acceptaient de nous gouverner au profit de l’envahisseur” (the Big Wolf (...) was trying to dupe us by replacing our real leaders or substituting them with traitors who agreed to govern us for the benefit of the invader). Let us note the use of the verb “to try”. The text does not read “the Big Wolf *duped* us...”, implying accomplishment of the act, but “*was trying* to dupe us”, intimating the reader to the attempt that the Big Wolf made, but which may or may not have been successful.

The illustration of this frame is also telling: it depicts a rabbit that is being put into fetters by an owl and a toad. The owl is also a rapacious bird, like the German hawks, and the toad, with its warty skin, is an animal that inspires disgust. The shades of green and brown used for these two animals is very similar to those used for the German countryside. In addition, they are both shown to be wearing a Tyrolean hat, a soft felt hat with a decoration of chamois hair passed through a ribbon, which certain collaborators like Alphonse de Châteaubriant, director of the virulently pro-Nazi weekly, *La Gerbe*, were seen to be sporting around Paris. This association of the colors (brown, green), the object (the Tyrolean hat) and the choice of animals (owl and toad, both of which do not fit into the wide range of French animals) serves to distinguish them, to set them apart. They are shown to be more like the German animals, and therefore not part of “us”. This marginal group is thus successfully distanced from the collective group of French animals.

There is one final instance where we can discern the creation of marginalized identities in France in La Bête est morte. The war is at its height and the Bulldogs, Polar bears

and Bison are putting all their energies into the war effort. The Big Wolf first drafts everyone who is not at the front to work in the factories (a reference to the *Volksturm*) and wants to do the same with the rabbits. Here we are told: “quelques âmes naïves de chez nous prêchèrent un moment cette « relève » qui pouvait être une belle chose et qui ne fut qu’une atroce duperie” (some naive souls in our country preached this « relief » for a moment, a thing which could have been lovely but in reality was only an atrocious deception). The choice of the word “naïve” is striking. In reality, Hitler demanded a workforce of 250 000. Laval thought he could use this means to facilitate the return of French prisoners by bartering, and set up the “Relève” (relief) on June 22, 1942, which was greatly celebrated by both the German and French propaganda services. In the end, Hitler decided to return only one prisoner for every three workers. Laval’s plan ended up in a big flop and, in order to meet the deadline, many workers were rounded up and deported by force¹⁹⁷. Although Laval might have been naïve to believe that Hitler would return one prisoner for every worker sent to work in Germany, he was certainly not naïve when he instituted the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (Obligatory Work Service) in February 1943. In any event, the important point is that he is shown to have acted out of naivety, not out of malice.

The last important point on the subject of omissions and distortions lies the depiction of the situation of the Jews. In seventy-five pages full of images and texts, there is one sole reference to the Jews:

Poursuivant plus particulièrement leur vengeance contre certaines tribus d’animaux pacifiques que nous hébergions et à qui nous avons bien souvent ouvert nos portes pour les abriter contre la fureurs de la Bête déchaînée, les hordes du Grand Loup avaient commencé le plus atroce des plans de destruction des races rebelles, dispersant les membres de leurs tribus dans des régions lointaines, séparant les femmes de leurs époux, les enfants de leurs mères, visant

¹⁹⁷ Azéma, De Munich à la Libération, 210

ainsi l’anéantissement total de ces foules inoffensives qui n’avaient commis d’autre crime que celui de ne pas se soumettre à la volonté de la Bête. (Taking their vengeance more particularly against certain tribes of pacific animals to whom we had taken in and to whom we had opened our doors in order to shelter them from the furors of the Beast unchained, the hordes of the Big Wolf had set in motion the most atrocious of plans to destroy the rebel races, dispersing the members of their tribes in faraway regions, separating women from their husbands, children from their mothers, thereby aiming for the total destruction of these inoffensive crowds who had committed no crime other than that of not giving in to the wishes of the Beast).

The illustration shows two fierce looking wolves pointing rifles at a female rabbit who has been put onto a train, and a third wolf who is carrying away the child. The mother and child have innocent and sad expressions and their arms are held out, as if trying to reach for each other.

Let us note that the Wolves are given the sole responsibility of the atrocities they are said to have carried out on these pacific animals. There is even a direct reference to the Final Solution, namely “plan de destruction” (plan of destruction) and “l’anéantissement total” (total destruction), but there is not even a shadow of doubt put on any “âmes naïves” (naïve souls) among the French animals. And yet, Vichy’s racial laws were instituted as early as July 1940 (the laws purging the administration of Jews). Furthermore, as historian Jean-Pierre Azéma makes it very clear, “Il est utile de préciser que la paternité du Statut des juifs revient à Vichy, et à Vichy seul, sans que l’Allemagne nazie ait exercé la moindre pression”¹⁹⁸ (it is useful to specify that the paternity of the Status of Jews falls upon Vichy, and Vichy alone, without Nazi Germany having applied the least amount of pressure).

¹⁹⁸ Azéma, De Munich à la Libération, 92-93

Also of interest is the verb “héberger”, which signifies to lodge, accommodate, take in or shelter. As is obvious, the text does not clarify whether it is speaking of French Jews or foreign Jews. The illustration shows rabbits, therefore this is not an indication either. In any event, the verb “héberger” implies that their situation is temporary, or at any rate out of the ordinary. It is unclear whether this is an allusion to the stereotype of European Jewry as a guest nation within Europe, or as Jews as being foreign to whatever culture happens to be momentarily “hosting” them. Also, the phrase “à qui nous avons bien souvent ouvert nos portes” (to whom we had often opened our doors) is striking: here again, the reader remains uncertain as to whether this is a reference to the age-old stereotype of the wandering Jew or to immigrant Jews in France, since they numbered about 150000 on the eve of the war and were also the first ones to be deported.

As we have seen at the beginning of this section, remembering is an important part of the lesson that the narrator is giving to his audience. There are various things to be remembered, from the martyrdom of French pilots to the fact that the wolves are inherently bad and might repeat their atrocities on peaceful nations, to the importance of the initial resistance of the Bulldogs, without which there might have been no hope for the French animals to recover. Whilst exhorting the readers to remember this or that, the text consigns to oblivion at the same time. What the text sets out to forget – willingly or unwillingly – is probably as, if not more, important than what it does remember.

Part of this forgetting deals with an entity with which the French had close contact for four years, since “la collaboration d’Etat” (state collaboration) involved all administrative and public services. As we have seen, neither Vichy nor Pétain appear in this book: they are thereby implicitly whitewashed of any responsibility that they might possibly bear. The significance of this gesture lies in the fact that it serves to depict a certain homogeneity, therefore no internal

fracture in the social fiber is portrayed. The fact of attributing everything negative, from the Jewish question (as applied in France) to the turning into Boches of a small minority of animals participates in this same gesture, accentuating the “us versus them” type of polarity we have seen in the manner in which the protagonists are portrayed.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This particular representation of the war seems to try to accomplish three goals: firstly, to establish an “act of resistance”, albeit of the eleventh hour, on part of the editor and one of these authors; secondly, to constitute a memory of the event in a specific line of political ideology; finally, to help to define a national identity. We have already discussed the first of these three at various moments of this chapter. The second and third are closely linked.

Patenmoins, as the speaking voice, re-creates the pre-war years through words. Defining this past is crucial in being able to explain the present and project the future. This period is seen principally from the social perspective: only the characteristics of the people in their daily existence are described, leaving out the political aspect. The exclusion of politics allows him to leave out the rise of the Right from the picture altogether. By the process of elimination, then, the text is superficially inscribed in the heritage of the Left as well as of the French Revolution. This argument is further bolstered by allusions within the text which implicitly endorse laws made by the Popular Front (easier access to leisure and vacations), and also associations through the illustrations, the most significant of which is the link with Delacroix’ *Liberté guidant le peuple*.

Similarly, de Gaulle's power is legitimized by portraying him as the uncontested chief who has managed to rally the whole nation around him. Also, Giraud is entirely left out of the picture: there are two occasions depicted in this book when Giraud was present in reality: firstly, the Casablanca conference and secondly the formation of the Comité Français de Libération Nationale (French Committee for National Liberation). Yet one more time, eliminating Giraud reinforces de Gaulle's position as the single, undisputed leader, thereby suggesting homogeneity of public opinion.

The French animals, as we have seen previously, are portrayed solely in a positive manner. They are shown to be hard-working, fun-loving, patriotic and peace-loving. Furthermore, they are shown to uphold the values of the Revolution: liberty, fraternity, the right to rebel. Yet, in the depiction of the very moment of rebellion, the creators of the album introduce a detail (the Sacré Cœur) which contradicts everything that the illustration evokes.

The act of eliminating the Right functions as a means of portraying the national community as a unified whole, and also defines one of the two polarities which are constantly evoked: right versus wrong, good versus bad, us versus them. This polarity is also evident in the depiction of the actors of the war who, in general, are shown to be either good or bad: there are no half measures possible. The one instance where we might be able to point out a negative element in the national community, namely collaboration, is underplayed by showing the collaborators to either have been too credulous or corrupted by elements outside the national community.

The narrator exhorts his audience / readers repeatedly to remember, and yet ends up "forgetting". What the text sets out to forget, then, is as, if not more, important than what it does remember. Leaving out Vichy, Pétain and collaboration (and therefore, logically, the purge)

implies that there is no taint on the monolithic national character depicted here, and leaves the reader with a picture of France that has no internal fractions.

4.0 REPRESENTATION OR CREATIVE REVISION? THE CASE OF JOURNAL SOUS L'OCCUPATION BY MARCEL JOUHANDEAU

Si un homme attribue tout ou partie des malheurs du pays et de ses propres malheurs à la présence d'éléments juifs dans la communauté, s'il propose de remédier à cet état de choses en privant les juifs de certains de leurs droits ou en les écartant de certaines fonctions économiques et sociales ou en les expulsant du territoire ou les exterminant tous, on dit qu'il a des *opinions* antisémites.
Ce mot d'*opinion* fait rêver...

- Jean-Paul Sartre¹⁹⁹

In the set of loose leaves which compose Marcel Jouhandeau's manuscript of his journal for the year 1940, he notes: "L'actualité vit de légendes qui ordonnent l'opinion selon l'intérêt sans aucun souci de la vérité. L'intelligence consiste à se dérober aux mensonges officielles. L'indépendance à ne jamais s'aligner (...)"²⁰⁰ (Current events thrive on legends which in turn shape [public] opinion, based upon vested interests and without any care for the truth. Intelligence consists in shying away from official lies. Independence consists in never conforming). In the printed edition of his Journal sous l'Occupation he inserts this statement, almost word for word, in an entry for 1944 instead of the original 1940, going so far as to say that even History is based upon these lies. True to his style, without saying it in so many words, Jouhandeau implicitly suggests both his independence as well as his intelligence in the way he purportedly recounts his version of "current events".

¹⁹⁹ Sartre, Jean-Paul. Réflexions sur la question juive. Paris : Gallimard, 1954. p. 7.

²⁰⁰ Jouhandeau, Marcel. Journal 1939-45. Ms. JHD 474. Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris. Folio 327

One of the most significant aspects of “actualité” (current events) that is reflected in Jouhandeau’s Journal sous l’Occupation is the phenomenon of the Purge. There are many scholarly analyses of the Purge in France, and it is not my intention here to study the processes, success or failure thereof. What is relevant to my reading of Jouhandeau is to acknowledge, as does historian Henry Rousso²⁰¹, that the Purge had several functions; one of these was

une fonction identitaire et de reconstruction nationale. C’est le sens de la peine de “dégradation nationale” instaurée par les ordonnances de 1944. En éliminant les traîtres à la patrie, à la nation *et* à la République, la France pouvait espérer fonder son destin futur sur une identité retrouvée (105).

(a function of identity and of national reconstruction. Whence the meaning of the punishment of “national degradation”, created by the ruling of 1944. By eliminating traitors of the homeland, of the nation *and* of the Republic, France could hope to found its future destiny on a reestablished identity).

The Purge, then, can be read as the moment of legitimization of the Resistance in concrete terms, and the Resistance itself as a phenomenon that came to represent a value-judgment, one that posed as being diametrically opposed to collaboration, which in turn was synonymous with betrayal. The Resistance was also the legitimization of the Republic, which the far-right had consistently denounced throughout the 1930s, and thereby represented a return to the principles of the Revolution.

The purge of journalists, writers and intellectuals of the collaboration in France was a particularly sensitive issue within this larger context. They were brought to trial months before the political leaders of the collaboration were even brought back to France from their city of exile, Sigmaringen, in Germany. These trials of intellectuals sparked off petitions for amnesty (the most well-known case being that of Brasillach in January, 1945), bitter debates about the

²⁰¹ Rousso, Henry. “L’Épuration en France. Une histoire inachevée” in Vingtième Siècle. 33 (Jan-Mar 1992). Pp 78-105.

role and power of the written word (Purge trials of extreme-right intellectuals), about the question of responsibility (Sartre), as well as about punishment and clemency (the debate between Camus and Mauriac). In this respect, I believe that the words Shoshana Felman²⁰² uses to talk about the significance of the Nuremberg trials, the Eichmann trial and the O.J. Simpson trial in the collective imagination of those persecuted in the respective cases are essentially applicable to the Purge trials in France, namely that they

found themselves turning into something different from a simple litigation or a simple controversy over legal issues: they have turned into veritable theaters of justice. They were *critical* legal events, both in the ways in which they dramatized or triggered an emblematic crisis in the law, and in the ways in which the legal crisis each of them enacted represented also a transcendent, vaster, and highly traumatic (if not always conscious) *cultural crisis*. (5)

French historian Jean-Pierre Rioux calls the purge trials the “plaie purulente de la mémoire nationale” (festering wound of our national memory), and it is this light that I use Felman’s definition of cultural crisis as she applies it to the above-mentioned trials. The question of an essentially failed purge and the failure to accept Vichy as quintessentially part of the French past has been repeatedly discussed by French writers, historians, and politicians over the past decades. The debate has resurfaced with every trial associated with the Vichy regime and the deportation of Jews in France in the past few decades, notably the cases of Jean Leguay, René Bousquet, Paul Touvier, Klaus Barbie and Maurice Papon. In light of the trial of the latter, the most recent one of them all, then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin is noted to have referred to the round-up at the Vélodrome d’hiver in Paris²⁰³ as a crime which “doit marquer notre

²⁰² Felman, Shoshana. *The Juridical Unconscious: trials and traumas in the twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2002.

²⁰³ This round-up took place on 16 and 17 July, 1942, when the French police gathered over thirteen thousand Jews in the Vélodrome d’hiver in Paris. Among these were over four thousand children.

conscience nationale”²⁰⁴ (should mark our national conscience), while Philippe Seguin, on the contrary, denounced the national “esprit d’autoflagellation”²⁰⁵ (spirit of self-flagellation). In this sense, we can read Vichy as the national trauma that is repeatedly verbalized in the previously mentioned trials and in the debates surrounding them²⁰⁶.

It is in this larger context that I will inscribe my study of Jouhandeau’s Journal sous l’Occupation. Scholarly works on French fascism or fascist intellectuals typically focus on the more famous writers and journalists such as Céline, Drieu, and Brasillach. This study will contribute both to the existing literature on French fascism and to Jouhandeau scholarship.

Marcel Jouhandeau states in his Journal that he was summoned to his Purge trial on the 8th of May, 1945; due to the historic moment of German capitulation, he received a message postponing his summons by a day²⁰⁷. The following day, May 9, 1945, he showed up at the quai des Orfèvres, was interrogated by a clerk, and was granted a suspended sentence at the same time as Henry de Montherlant, since the magistrate who was supposed to oversee the case was on leave and the one who was supposed to replace him never took up his duties. They were asked not to leave Paris while awaiting further summons. The case was never reopened and I was unable to trace the dossier in the Archives Nationales.

The premise of my reading of the Journal sous l’Occupation is the following: for Jouhandeau to prepare this book for publication at age 91, just before his death, and to choose specifically this part of his diary for publication out of a lifetime of journal entries is not a neutral gesture. In a period when holocaust negationism was rife in France, the fact that he should focus on the Occupation and the Purge to depict his version of the events underlines the presence of an

²⁰⁴ Jospin, Lionel. Le Monde. December 6, 1997.

²⁰⁵ Seguin, Philippe. Le Monde. October 21, 1997

²⁰⁶ See Rousso, Vichy Syndrome.

²⁰⁷ Jouhandeau, Journal sous l’Occupation, 365-6

agenda. That this should happen in the 1970s, a period which, as we have seen, Henry Rousso calls “the phase of the broken mirror”, is even more revealing. Significantly, Montherlant too is said to have written his memoirs justifying his political stance in 1948 but only published it in 1976²⁰⁸. In this light, I would like to argue that the published version of Jouhandeau’s Journal is his public testimony in writing of his purge trial that never happened. It is with this understanding that I will study Marcel Jouhandeau’s Journal. I will focus mainly upon the last two long divisions of the book, “1944” and “La courbe de nos angoisses” which he sets off from his Journal sous l’Occupation and publishes as a sort of annex, and which covers parts of 1944 and 1945. I will concentrate on these two sections extensively because that is the time period that I deal with in the larger context of this dissertation. The theme of “actualité” will be the binding theme which will hold together the various parts of the chapter. I will begin with some historical and biographical considerations, and then move to the question of fear which is never named but makes itself felt through self-justifying discourses. The fear that the text betrays is what Jouhandeau seems to have felt for his physical safety during the first months of the purge. I will then trace the process of self-exoneration in his reasoning, analyze the question of the journal as instrument of self-definition, and finally discuss the question of identity, both personal and national.

4.1 BACKGROUND

Marcel Jouhandeau was born in 1888 in Guéret (Creuse / Limousin) in central France. His father was a butcher and his mother came from a family of bakers. His mother and her sister had a

²⁰⁸ Assouline, 111

profound influence on his early life. They were both very religious, and Jouhandeau grew up believing that he would take the vows of priesthood²⁰⁹. He finished his bachelor's degree and moved up to Paris to teach Latin and French at the middle school St-Jean-de-Passy (1912 – 1949), a Catholic institution run by priests. In 1929, he married Élisabeth Claire Toulemon, a ballet dancer known in professional circles as Caryathis, but better known to Jouhandeau's readers as Élise. In spite of a tumultuous marriage which became the source of endless descriptions and analyses in his œuvre, Élise and Marcel lived together until her death in 1971. Jouhandeau died in their house in Rueil-Malmaison in 1979, after having prepared Journal sous l'Occupation for publication, based upon his manuscripts, but before its release.

4.1.1 Historical conjecture

In 1944 – 45, Jouhandeau was far from being the only reactionary, right wing writer to be active on the literary scene. His case, however, proves to be quite singular. Since his text is inscribed in a specific socio-historical moment, at a crossroads of the personal and the political, it is critical to begin by establishing the historical context before moving on to analyze the text.

The formative years of Marcel Jouhandeau, namely the last decade of the 19th century, coincided with the proliferation of the “ligues” in France²¹⁰. The creation of these leagues in turn was largely instigated by various maneuvers to separate the State from the Church and of the secularization of schools. Be it called the Union nationale (with its Youth and Worker divisions), the Ligue de l'Évangile, the Cercle d'apologétique sociale, the Ligue

²⁰⁹ Jouhandeau states that “... jusqu'à l'âge de dix-sept ans j'ai cru que je serais prêtre.” (...until the age of seventeen, I believed that I would become a priest). in Jouhandeau, Marcel. La vie comme une fête. Interviewed by Jacques Ruffié. Paris : Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1977. p. 22.

²¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of these “ligues”, see Birnbaum, Pierre. “Affaire Dreyfus, culture catholique et antisémitisme” in Histoire de l'extrême droite en France. ed. Michel Winock. Paris : Seuil, 1994. pp 83 – 124.

antisémite française (which had very close ties to local Catholic organizations), the Jeunesse antisémite et nationaliste, the Jeunesse royaliste (with its satellite organs, the Jeunesse antisémite, the cercle antisémite d'études sociales, the Fédération antisémite des lycées etc), the two beliefs that bound all these groups together were Catholicism and anti-Semitism. “La plupart de ces ligues se posent elles aussi en défenseurs de l'identité catholique française”²¹¹ (most of these leagues also presented themselves as defenders of a French Catholic identity), explains historian Pierre Birnbaum. He further notes that these groups were intent not only on defining the national identity as specifically catholic, but also on excluding Jews from the public sphere²¹².

Marcel Jouhandeau remained apolitical for all of his early career, or at least he did not make his political opinions public. In 1936, however, he joined Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français (PPF) right from its inception. This in and of itself is surprising since the PPF was a nationalist, left-wing party when it was founded, whereas Henri Rode claims that both Jouhandeau and his wife Élise had always been convinced reactionaries²¹³. Apart from being nationalist and left-wing, the PPF was also anti-parliamentarian and anti-clerical, but slowly moved toward the political right and also made concerted attempts to reconcile with the Catholics. The PPF boasted a number of prominent anti-republican and anti-Semitic writers such as Ramon Fernandez, Georges Suarez and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle.

Jouhandeau also gave vent to his personal anti-Semitism in L'Action Française, a well-established, daily newspaper directed by Léon Daudet and Charles Maurras. This newspaper was very influential during the reinforcement of the French far-right of the 1930s, and was notorious

²¹¹ Birnbaum, 96.

²¹² Birnbaum, 91.

²¹³ Rode, Henri. Un mois chez Marcel Jouhandeau. Paris : le Cherche midi éditeur, 1979. p. 243.

for its reactionary, monarchist, anti-Semitic as well as anti-German persuasion. Jouhandeau's article entitled "Comment je suis devenu antisémite" (How I became an anti-Semite) appeared in the Action Française on October 8, 1936. Furthermore, he collaborated with Je Suis Partout, a newspaper which was not very pro-German when it was started in 1930. After the riots of February 6, 1934, and especially after the victory of the Front Populaire in the 1936 elections, Je Suis Partout made its way to the right of the political spectrum. Its chief editor, Robert Brasillach, endorsed fascism as the only valid antidote to communism, and by the end of the 1930s Je Suis Partout openly supported Nazism. Jouhandeau contributed two articles to this newspaper, "Vous prendrez possession du pays" (You will take possession of the country) dated July 30, 1937, and "Réponse ouverte à M. René Schwob" (Open letter to Mr. René Schwob) dated January 14, 1938. Jouhandeau also manifested his anti-Semitism in a book entitled Le Péril Juif (The Jewish Peril) published by the Éditions Sorlot in 1936. Let us note in passing that in France, popular editions of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were entitled Le Péril Juif²¹⁴. Although by the time Jouhandeau published his book in 1936, the Protocols had long been known to be a forgery, they were at the same time being widely distributed in Nazi Germany as well as exported in translations by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda²¹⁵. Jouhandeau's choice of title then, though not very original, inserts itself consciously in a specific anti-Semitic tradition.

Finally, in his book on Action Française, Eugen Weber mentions another supposedly anti-Semitic work by Jouhandeau²¹⁶, namely Le Saladier. I scanned this document very closely:

²¹⁴ See illustration number 10 in George Mosse. Towards the Final Solution. New York: Howard Fertig, 1978, 1985.

²¹⁵ What are "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion?". Collective authorship by members of the Holocaust History Project. 1999. 4 June 2004 <<http://www.holocaust-history.org/short-essays/protocols.shtml>> .

²¹⁶ Weber, Eugen. Action Française. Trans. Michel Chrestien. Paris : Stock, 1964.

it revealed the use of anti-Semitic stereotypes twice but no barrage of acid and violent comments such as we shall see in the following excerpts²¹⁷.

In the articles as well as in the Le Péril juif, Jouhandeau criticizes Jews in an acerbic, violent tone, drawing upon all the traditional stereotypes used by the most notorious anti-Semitic writers of the time. He begins “Comment je suis devenu antisémite” (Action Française, October 8, 1936) with a short explanation of his anti-Semitic sentiments: he claims never to have met a Jew before moving to Paris, admits that he even knows some very nice Jewish people, but goes on to preface the article with the following statement:

Ce n'est ni par intérêt, ni par envie, ni par rancune personnelle que j'en suis arrivé à considérer le peuple juif comme le pire ennemi de mon pays, comme l'ennemi de l'intérieur. C'est mon patriotisme seul, si endormi qu'il fût alors, qui, tout d'un coup froissé, m'alerta.

(It is neither out of interest nor envy nor personal grudge that I have come to consider the Jewish people as being the worst enemy of my country, inasmuch as they are an enemy from the inside. As dormant as it once was, it is only my patriotism which, when suddenly hurt, alerted me).

He goes on to vituperate against Maurice Sachs whose grandfather, Georges Sachs, backed the founding of Jean Jaurès' newspaper *l'Humanité*,²¹⁸ a socialist newspaper founded in 1904, and which later became the organ of the Communist party in 1921. Jouhandeau continues to berate “le Juif Benda”, and declares that “sans la Révolution, les Juifs n'opprimeraient pas la France” (had it not been for the Revolution, the Jews would not oppress France), since it was the French Revolution that first recognized Jews as being equal to all other French subjects and indeed conferred upon them the status of citizens. France was the first European nation to

²¹⁷ Jouhandeau, Marcel. Le Saladier. Paris: Gallimard, 1936.

²¹⁸ Jacobson, David. “Jews for genius: The unholy disorders of Maurice Sachs” in Discourses of Jewish Identity in Twentieth Century France, Yale French Studies no. 85. 1994: 184.

emancipate the Jews, and in doing so gained the devoted allegiance of a good number of modern and progressive-minded Jews. Jouhandeau then concludes:

M. Blum, M. Benda et M. Sachs ne sont pas de chez moi et ils sont chez moi; et je n'ai jamais su, ni Européen au monde ne saura jamais ce que pense un Asiatique, et c'est ici, et ce n'est qu'ici tout à fait sur le plan logique que se pose la question des races et qu'elle prend toute son importance. (...) Je fais vœu ici de les signaler à la vindicte de mon peuple, tout le temps qu'il en restera un seul en France qui ne soit pas soumis à un statut special. (1936)

(Mr Blum, Mr Benda and Mr Sachs are not from my house but they are in my house, and I have never known, nor will any European ever know what an Asian thinks, and it is here, only here, on the logical level, that the question of races is formulated, and where it takes on its significance. (...) I vow here to denounce them to condemnation by my people, as long as there shall be one [single Jew] who is not subject to a special status).

This concluding statement to the article sounds like an ominous premonition of things to come. Yet again, in Le Péril Juif, we find the following statement:

“En somme, pour caractériser l'œuvre du Juif et le stigmatiser en même temps, suffit-il de le considérer sous l'aspect du parasite le plus royal, sous l'aspect éternel du Pou: pou de bibliothèque, pou de volaille, pou de soie, pou de laine, pou de blé, pou de la France, pou de l'Angleterre, pou de l'Europe, pou de la terre entière...”. (1936)²¹⁹

(All in all, in order to characterize the work of the Jew and at the same time, to stigmatize him, it will suffice to consider him in the aspect of the most royal of parasites, in the aspect of the Louse: a library louse, poultry louse, silk louse, wool louse, wheat louse, the louse of France, the louse of England, the louse of Europe, the louse of the whole world).

²¹⁹ Jouhandeau, Marcel. Le Péril Juif. Paris: Éditions Sorlot, 1936. p. 19.

He goes on in this booklet to denounce what he views as the nefarious influence of the Jews in the educational system, the press and politics and the economy in general; in short, to denounce the so-called Jewish plot to destroy Western civilization.

The title of his article in Je Suis Partout, “Vous prendrez possession du pays”, is taken from the Bible. Numbers 33 is the description of the passage of the children of Israel with Moses and Aaron from the desert through Jordan on their way to Canaan. Jouhandeau starts the article by quoting verses 50 through 56, where the Lord speaks to Moses about what they were to do once they arrived in Canaan. However, he puts into italics the following statements: “Vous prendrez possession du pays et vous l’habitez” (You will dispossess [the inhabitants] of the land, and dwell therein) and “Mais si vous n’expulsez pas devant vous les habitants du pays, ceux d’entre eux que vous y laisserez seront comme des épines dans vos yeux” (But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that those which you let remain shall be like pricks in your eyes...). He goes on to make an analogy between Canaan and France and gives various examples to illustrate how the homeland is being dispossessed. Just as in Le Péril Juif, here too he demonstrates the so-called power of the Jews over the land, in the economy and so on. Here, however, the tone is even more derogatory:

Il s’agit (...) de la race la plus terrible, la plus âpre qui ait existé, d’une race de lion à cœur de chacal en proie à laquelle la France est tombée, et s’il est une chose dont se moque le Juif, c’est bien de toutes les religions et de la sienne d’abord; mais dans sa religion il y a deux ou trois choses dont il ne se moque jamais, c’est de celles qui forgent son âme, qui l’aident à se maintenir dans sa force, (...) à triompher enfin par la patience, par la ruse, par l’insolence ou par la bassesse...”.
(1937)

(This concerns (...) the most terrible race, the most bitter race that ever existed, a race of lions with hearts of jackals to whom France has fallen prey, and if there is one thing the Jew couldn’t care less about, it is surely all religions, and his own

first of all; but in his religion, there are two or three things at which he never pokes fun, they are those that form his soul, that help him remain in force (...) and [help him] to triumph through patience, through ruse, through insolence, or through baseness.)

Above and beyond all of this was a sphere to which Jouhandeau was particularly attached, namely education. Being a school teacher himself, he is anxious to denounce the state of things. Jean Zay, then Minister for National Education, happened to be a Jew, and Jouhandeau deftly underlines the influence that a minister of Jewish origin could have on future generations, and warns the readers of a not so distant future when “l’on ne chantera pas seulement l’*Internationale* dans les rues: à l’oreille de l’enfant...” (the *Internationale* will not only be sung in the streets, but also in the ears of children), who will one day “se réveillera l’esclave du Juif” (wake up to find himself the slave of the Jew). The *Internationale* was composed in 1871 to celebrate the Paris Commune, and embraced by the Socialist International as the transnational anthem for the working masses as well as by the Bolsheviks as the Soviet national anthem²²⁰. This reference to the *Internationale* is very revealing: in his Journal, Jouhandeau stresses his anti-communism more than once, and here, like many other anti-Semites, he deftly associates the Jew with communism.

Last but not least, Jouhandeau participated in the first of the two so-called Weimar trips organized by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda²²¹ in October 1941. These trips were organized around meetings for European writers and artists, with a culminating conference in Weimar whose theme was the future of European literature. Jouhandeau traveled to Germany with Drieu,

²²⁰ L’Internationale. Iulian Vlad. © 2000-2003. 9 April 2004 <http://www.securitate.org/l'internationale.htm>>

²²¹ Jouhandeau refused to go on the second Weimar trip organized in 1942 because he had masons working in his house, and therefore could not leave Elise alone. Information provided by Gerhard Heller. I was unable to confirm this information elsewhere, and the source is not entirely reliable given that, in this book, Heller seems to have his own agenda, that is to say to portray himself in a positive light. Un Allemand à Paris. Paris: Seuil, 1981. p. 91.

Bonnard, Brasillach, Chardonne, Fernandez, and Fraigneau. These writers were taken to various cities in Germany before arriving at Weimar for the conference. A similar journey was organized for painters and yet another for sculptors. Derain, Vlaminck, Dunoyer de Segonzac, Despiiau were among the more renowned French artists who participated in the meetings.

In the Journal, Jouhandeau's description of the days leading up to him accepting to participate in this trip is, to say the least, contradictory. When he was asked by Lieutenant Gerhard Heller to accept, he was told he would "faire un voyage d'études, (...) on me demandait seulement d'ouvrir les yeux sur ce qu'on avait l'intention de me montrer..." (Journal, 80) (take a study trip (...) I was only being asked to open my eyes on what they had the intention of showing me). The Superior at the school where Jouhandeau taught also encouraged him to go in order to ingratiate himself with the Germans and help to repatriate one of his colleagues who was imprisoned in Germany. Therefore, he claims, "malgré ma repugnance personnelle, je me vis dans la nécessité de dire oui..." (83) (in spite of my personal aversion, I was forced to say yes...). However, three pages further on, when the trip is already underway, he notes the following:

Pour qui ou pour quoi suis-je ici? Parce que depuis que j'ai su lire, comprendre et sentir, j'ai aimé l'Allemagne, ses philosophes, ses musiciens et pensé que rien ne serait plus utile à l'humanité que notre entente avec elle. (...) Comment ne pas essayer de justifier de légitimer ma présence dans ce pays ennemi à un pareil moment ? (...) En Allemagne, je me sens français plus que nulle part ailleurs. (83-84)

(For whom or for what am I here? Because ever since I have known how to read, understand and feel, I have loved Germany, its philosophers, musicians and thought that nothing would be more useful to humanity than our entente with [Germany]. (...) How can I not try to legitimize my presence in this enemy territory at this moment? (...) In Germany, I feel French more than in any other

place).

All of a sudden, there is no more evidence of aversion to being in Germany. His presence in the country of the invaders moves from being a constraint to being a most natural occurrence, since it is where his “Frenchness” is most pronounced. At the same time, he stresses only his appreciation of German philosophers and musicians, thereby giving an incomplete picture of the culture of contemporary Nazi Germany. Furthermore, on the same page (83) he makes the single reference in the Journal to his “seul article politique (les deux ou trois autres qui ont suivi à mes yeux ne comptent pas)” (only political article, (the two or three others which followed count for nothing in [his] eyes) and then inserts this statement which does not appear in the manuscript:

Pas plus cependant qu’il n’y avait de haine dans ce manifeste, je ne prends part à l’expédition aujourd’hui contre personne, mais seulement dans un but de conciliation et d’amitié. Si l’on voyait dans mon voyage en Allemagne une suite à mes réflexions sur la question juive, on se tromperait lourdement. Je tente seulement de prouver par là qu’un Français n’est pas nécessairement germanophobe, même dans les circonstances présentes. Bien plus, je souhaiterais faire de mon corps un pont fraternel entre l’Allemagne et nous.

(No more, however, than there was hatred in that manifesto, I am not participating in this expedition today against anyone, but merely with the aim of reconciliation and friendship. If one were to see this trip to Germany as a logical follow-up of my reflections on the Jewish question, one would be terribly mistaken. I am merely trying to show that a Frenchman is not necessarily a German-hater, not even in the present circumstances. What is more, I would like to make of my body a fraternal bridge between Germany and us).

As I have mentioned before citing this passage, it is absent from the manuscript, added ostensibly at the moment he prepared it for publication, clearly to justify his participation in the Weimar trip. The imagery of using his body as a bridge between Germany and France is not

entirely innocent either. It could be read both figuratively as well as literally. In one of his articles²²², Brasillach had stated that “nous aurons cohabité ensemble; les Français de quelque réflexion durant ces années auront plus ou moins couché avec l’Allemagne, et le souvenir leur en restera doux” (we will have lived together; the French [capable of] some reflexion will have slept in Germany’s bed and the memory of it will remain sweet for them). Above and beyond all that Brasillach had published in the 1930s and earlier on during the Occupation, this particular statement compromised him tremendously. In using the imagery of his body as a bridge for the published version in 1980, it seems as if Jouhandeau is figuratively giving an indication of where his real sympathies lie, that is to say, with the collaborationist journalists of the years of Occupation. On the more literal level, Jouhandeau was infatuated with the lieutenant Gerhard Heller who had convinced him to go on this trip in the first place. In fact, barely four years after the end of the war, Jouhandeau anonymously²²³ published Le voyage secret dealing with his amorous sentiments. The use of the image of his body as a bridge between Germany and France can also be read in this light.

Upon returning to Paris, Jouhandeau published a dithyrambic article entitled “Témoignage” in the Nouvelle Revue Française (NRF) in December 1941. I would like to open a parenthesis to note that before the Occupation, the NRF was being directed by Jean Paulhan. Under the Occupation, the German censorship board immediately started lists of banned books, of books to be translated and promoted, and so on. It also “aryanized” publishing houses owned by Jews. Before the war, Drieu la Rochelle was known to have riled against the NRF under

²²² Brasillach, Robert. “Lettre à quelques jeunes gens” in La Révolution Nationale. February 19, 1944. Œuvres complètes, 612

²²³ anonymously on the face of it. The edition carries a note: “par l’auteur de L’Abjection”. De l’abjection was an essay Jouhandeau published in 1939 (Gallimard) which deals principally with good and evil, and which received wide critical acclaim. Mentioning in a supposedly anonymous book that it has been written by the author of a relatively well-known book makes the identity of the author quite obvious. This first anonymous limited edition of 65 copies was followed by a posthumous edition by Éditions Arlea in 1988.

Paulhan's direction as being "enjuivée et belliciste"²²⁴ (Judaized and bellicose) and was therefore quite willing to accept the direction of the NRF when it was offered to him by none other than Otto Abetz, the Ambassador of the Reich to Paris. The latter purportedly believed that the NRF was one of the "trois puissances de la France, avec le communisme et les grandes banques" (three great powers of France along with communism and the big banks)²²⁵. The new NRF with Drieu as its editor-in-chief appeared in December 1940. When Jouhandeau published "Témoignage", the NRF was still being directed by Drieu. It is important to note that through this article in the NRF, Jouhandeau was participating in the public sphere legitimized by both the Occupier and the Vichy regime.

"Témoignage" is a short, two-and-half page reflection on Germany and the Germans. In it, he begins with a discussion of the question of freedom: "La liberté n'est pas ce qu'on croit chez nous. On a celle qu'on mérite... (...) Ici, elle se confond avec la joie, avec l'enthousiasme d'adhérer à quelque chose de grand, et comment un Allemand s'y déroberait-il sans péché?" (Freedom is not what we think [in France]. One gets [the freedom] one deserves... (...) Here, it mingles with the joy [and] the enthusiasm of adhering to something great, and how could a German evade it without sinning?). Here, in the beginning of the article, he is praising Nazism without actually naming it. At the end of the article, however, his Manichean view of world politics becomes more evident:

Ne serait-il pas temps pour la France, en effet, de comprendre et de comprendre l'Allemagne, de comprendre que l'Allemagne n'est pas ce qu'on nous a prêché, de comprendre aussi que les hommes d'Adolf Hitler ne sont pas ceux que l'internationalisme a eu intérêt à décrier à nos yeux pour nous les faire haïr. (Would it not indeed be the time for France to understand[:] to understand

²²⁴ Heller, 41

²²⁵ Heller, 42

Germany, [and] to understand that Germany is not what has been preached to us, to understand also that it should not have been Adolf Hitler's men that internationalism should have disparage in our view in order to make us hate them).

Let us keep in mind the articles from the 1930s where Jouhandeau equated Jews with communism and his political engagement after the victory of the Front Populaire in the 1936 elections. In this light, the following lines from the Manuscript, which once again do not appear in the printed edition (1980), are telling: "... ce n'est que ce que j'ai éprouvé en 1936 qui me conduit ce soir logiquement à Bonn: tout plutôt qu'une victoire juive, tout plutôt qu'une domination juive et c'est ce à quoi nous destinerait une défaite allemande dans cette guerre qui est une guerre juive"²²⁶ (it is only what I felt in 1936 which logically takes me this evening to Bonn: anything [is better] than a Jewish victory, anything [is better] than Jewish domination and that is what would be our lot in case of a German defeat in this war which is a Jewish war). Juxtaposing these latter thoughts with what he actually published gives us a fuller picture of Jouhandeau's view of the political situation in 1936: if the choice was between Jews and communism on the one hand and Nazism on the other, he would obviously choose the latter.

Let us note here that during the Occupation, the only overt forms of collaboration identified with Jouhandeau were the participation in the Weimar trip, an accusation of having denounced the poet Max Jacob, and his personal relations, including those of a sexual nature, with certain members of the occupying power. In legal terms, the Weimar trip and the article "Témoignage" could have caused him to be condemned to "dégradation nationale" (national degradation). This was a new category of punishment created during the Purge for a newly

²²⁶ Jouhandeau, Marcel. Journal 1939-45. Ms. JHD 474. Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris. Folio 842

defined crime, namely “indignité nationale” (national indignity)²²⁷. In concrete terms, for Jouhandeau this would have entailed losing his civil rights and job as well as his future retirement benefits and pension²²⁸. Fortunately for him, none of this happened.

4.2 GUILTY SILENCE AND EXPLICIT JUSTIFICATION

In Qu'est-ce que le nazisme?, Ian Kershaw affirms that in writings on the immediate past are permeated with resentment on the part of the Allies, and justification on the part of the Germans²²⁹. We have just discussed Jouhandeau's writings of anti-Semitic nature, writings which he proceeded to erase from his list of works in 1939 (Journal, 154), when he claims to have realized that the Jews were being persecuted. In the Journal sous l'Occupation, we find overtones of both resentment as well as justification, but the origins and the motives of these feelings are different from both those of the Allies as well as those of the Nazis. In this first part, I will begin by addressing the question of guilt in the text, and then follow Jouhandeau's reasoning in order to analyze the use of self-justificatory rhetoric as a mechanism of self-exoneration.

As I mentioned earlier, I will focus mainly upon the latter two parts of the book, “1944” and “La courbe de nos angoisses”, since these are the parts of the book that address in a more direct fashion the question of guilt and exoneration, of the purge, and of the question of

²²⁷ The journalist of “L'Épuration et les sanctions”, a daily column during the months of the purge in Le Monde notes the surprise of the public when this term was used the first time for the case of Charles Maurras. He adds that the Ministry of Justice clarified that “dégradation nationale” was “la sanction de l'indignité nationale reconnue par la cour de justice” (the sanction / penalty of national indignity recognized by a court of law). Le Monde, January 30, 1945.

²²⁸ Sorlot, the editor of Jouhandeau's Le Pêril Juif was condemned to twenty years of “indignité nationale”. Peyre, Henri. “La Saison littéraire 1947 – 48” in The French Review. Yale University, vol XXII, no 2: 98

²²⁹ Kershaw, Ian. Qu'est-ce que le nazisme?. Trans. Jacqueline Carnod. Paris : Gallimard, 1992, 1997. p. 25.

identity. For this reason, I think it would also be pertinent to begin by discussing the title itself. The Robert defines the word “courbe” (curve) in French as a “ligne représentant la loi, l’évolution d’un phénomène” (line which represents the law or evolution of a phenomenon). The phenomenon Jouhandeau is dealing with in the latter part of the book is his “angoisse” (anguish) which is a psycho-physical manifestation of unease brought about by the feeling of imminent danger.

In light of the anti-Semitic bent of his political writings from the 1930s, as well as his participation in the Weimar conference, his article in the NRF and his close ties with some of the German occupiers, Jouhandeau’s name figured on the blacklists drawn up in 1944 by the Comité National d’Écrivains (National Writers’ Committee). This initiative of establishing a blacklist by a national committee introduces a new phenomenon in the post-war literary milieu: previously, a writer could be put on trial, but the most well-known examples that come to mind, namely Flaubert and Baudelaire, were tried because of the moral implications of their works; the Church habitually blacklisted certain works for the same reason, as it had done with the entire œuvre of Gide. In 1944, it was no longer a question of morality; now, a writer could be tried in a court of law for the political implications of his text. Along with Drieu, Céline, Brasillach, and Maurras among others, Jouhandeau was on these blacklists right from the very first one drawn up in 1944²³⁰. Like many other collaborators, during the occupation he was constantly threatened, pursued, tracked down, and was even sent a miniature coffin as an indication of what his punishment was to be²³¹.

With this information in mind, reading the title, “La courbe de nos angoisses”, gives us a clearer picture of a source of that anguish. Jouhandeau is clearly afraid of being lynched, which

²³⁰ Assouline, 105

²³¹ Hamilton, Alistair. L’illusion fasciste: les intellectuels et le fascisme, 1919-1945. Paris: Gallimard, 1976. p. 266

is why, as we shall see further on in this chapter, “La courbe de nos angoisses” reads like a line of defense. It is unclear if the inclusive gesture in the plural “nos” is meant to encompass Elise since she shared his anguish, if it associates those who were in the same situation as him, or if it refers solely to himself.

4.2.1 Feelings of guilt: a true confession or mere illusion?

As I have mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I read Jouhandeau’s Journal as his defense plea in a trial which he is openly enacting for his readership through the publication of this book. The context of a trial logically brings to the forefront the categories of guilt and innocence. In the Journal sous l’Occupation, Jouhandeau never once explicitly admits harboring feelings of guilt. Guilty of what, it is fair to ask. Nothing is openly confessed, and yet the repetitions and self-justificatory rhetoric sensitize the reader to the presence of something which is never put into words. This something which is tangible but never named outright is fear: it is what leads him to go into hiding when the violence in the streets begins to represent a real, physical danger for him personally, a period which he experiences and represents as voluntary exile, although he is really in hiding. I will first address the question of fear in the part of the text relating to self-imposed exile, fear which conditions his reasoning and the logic of his arguments. I argue that it is this voluntary exile that instigates a process of self-exoneration through writing. I will trace this sentiment in the text to show that fear leads him to shift his focus from himself to considerations on the human condition and to a line of argumentation which includes indifference to his fate, and mysticism, all of which culminate in him dissociating himself from his acts.

“La courbe de nos angoisses” focuses on the days leading up to Liberation, the Purge, and the end of the war. In the August of 1944, as Rennes, Le Mans, Alençon, Chartres, Dreux and Orléans fell successively, it was becoming increasingly obvious that Paris would soon be reached by the Allies and the Free French troops. On the 19th of August, coinciding with the beginning of the Parisian insurrection and the Occupation of the Préfecture de Police by the members of the Resistance, Jouhandeau and his wife Elise went underground. Going into hiding was the only alternative available to them in order not to be lynched. At this point in his *Journal*, Jouhandeau claims to feel only indifference: “Mon propre sort ne m’intéresse pas...” (269) (My own fate does not interest me) he claims, since the voice which is behind the constant phone threats “a déclenché cette vague de détachement absolu” (272) (has triggered off a wave of total detachment).

In yet another instance, he claims to be like an impassive statue in the midst of a storm (278). This feeling of indifference towards his fate is repeated in at least 8 instances over the span of less than 120 pages. These repeated claims of indifference are a means of showing that he is not afraid, yet a close reading of the text proves otherwise. In this second part of the *Journal*, he often uses the nouns “misery”, “despair”, “persecution”, “agitation”, “anguish”, “agony”, “torments” and so forth. The register of these words certainly does not convey a sense of heroic martyrdom.

Fear may also be read as the cause of the use of veiled references to his situation. For instance, in “La courbe de nos angoisses”, we read: “La seule chose qui puisse nous consoler dans notre malheur, *si nous l’avons fait*²³², c’est d’y trouver une apparence de raison” (252) (The only thing which can console us in our misfortune, if we have caused it, is to find a reason for it),

²³² Emphasis added.

or again, “Malheureux, on se rit de ses répugnances, de ses exigences, de ses délicatesses de la veille, comme de la seule misère qu’on ait connu” (268) (Being miserable, one makes light of one’s past aversions, exigencies, tacts, as if it were the only misery one had ever known). Further on, he claims that “Les mots dans lesquels on coule son malheur vous en distraient, parfois même vous en délivrent” (323) (The words into which you let your misfortunes flow distract you; sometimes [these words] even deliver you); and yet again, “Le malheur ne sera jamais pour moi qu’un accident *sans importance*²³³ dont l’ensemble de ma vie m’a consolé” (333) (For me, misfortune will only ever represent an accident with no importance for which my life overall consoles me). Let us note right away the “*si nous l’avons fait*” in the first quote, which might be read as the beginning of a confession, but is negated by the later “*accident sans importance*” of the third quote. In other words, this misfortune that he has created by his own hands has very little significance with respect to the rest of his life. Furthermore, the metonymic use of the word “malheur” is telling. It seems that the point of departure is not in recognizing his guilt so much as in a persistent regret for having put himself in this situation. The insistence on “malheur” allows him to remind the reader that he himself is responsible for his misfortune. Finally, in early January 1945, he asserts: “Le bien que je fais du mal qu’on me fait seul me regarde. J’ai tort de prévoir le pire, quand je ne connais que le meilleur, à mesure que j’apprivoise le malheur et le mal.” (357) (The good that I make out of the bad that is done to me concerns me alone. It is wrong for me to foresee the worst, when I have only known the best, whilst I tame misfortune and evil). Indeed, he turns the situation around completely: since he has caused his own plight, how could he possibly be blameworthy of anything towards anyone else? He is now the injured party.

²³³ Emphasis added.

In the section entitled “1944”, Jouhandeau narrates two different dreams which are worthy of discussion. The first one takes place sometime in May 1944. In it, a Jew explains to him some “action indefinissable” (inexplicable action) he is supposed to have done. In this dream, he has to expiate his wrongdoing by crossing over a bottomless pit, suspended by a beam. He portrays this as a terrifying experience and then declares: “Mais ce n’est pas notre faute, c’est la faute des autres qui nous perd” (237) (However, it is not our fault but that of others which brings us down). Once again, his use of the term “faute” attracts our attention, but he cleverly passes the blame to “des autres”. The fact that it is a Jew who explains his “action indefinissable” stands out conspicuously: could it be the fault of the Jew (“la faute des autres”) that will be Jouhandeau’s undoing? Or is it the fault of all those Jews who created a situation such that he was forced to rile against them? Whoever may be at fault, Jouhandeau makes it very clear that in his mind he is certainly not to blame. This dream is also very revealing: he refuses to assume the responsibility of his acts, but the suffering in his dream becomes the locus of catharsis. By suffering at the hands of a Jew in his dream, he manages to find a way out and give vent to his inner fear and anguish. At the same time, he turns the tables on the figure of the Jew by assuming the position of the victim at the hand of the Jew.

The second dream is recounted only a few pages further away. This time, we are given a specific date, namely August 8, 1944. In this dream, or rather nightmare, he is made to watch a woman who is being burned to death inside a church; he does not specify who the agents of her murder are. Her executioners actually move aside so Jouhandeau can get a better view of her final agony. There is an element of voyeurism in this act. He then exclaims: “Longtemps, ce visage à la minute d’être anéanti me hantera. (...) Non jamais la compassion ne m’avait saisi aux entrailles comme à ce moment, comme si j’avais éprouvé plus violemment que cette femme son

supplie” (250) (This face about to be destroyed will haunt me for a long time (...) No, never had compassion seized my innards as it had at that moment, as if I had felt more violently than the woman herself the torture [she was undergoing]). What is indecorous in the narration of this dream is his insistence on *his* suffering: he minimizes her experience of pain and final agony by stressing his own anguish as onlooker. But this suffering too seems to play a cathartic role, just like in the first dream, at the same time as it plays the function of representing him as a sensitive person, one who is not indifferent to the suffering around him. He insists on his sensitivity, but has no notion of the culpability of the bystander who watches someone bear extreme suffering without offering any aid. I shall return to the question of his representation of “actualité” further on in this chapter when I address the question of omissions²³⁴, suffice it to say that through his concluding remark, “Où étais-je allé chercher les éléments de ce drame que je me jouais intérieurement pour traduire l’horreur que m’inspire la vie actuelle?” (Where had I gone to seek the elements of this drama that I was interiorly enacting to translate the horror that today’s life inspires in me?), once again he is the one who poses as the injured party, having to play out public horrors in his private dreams.

Yet another example where we can discern fear in his attempt at self-exoneration is in his description of his running into a certain couple, Mr. and Mrs. Salacrou: “Comment m’expliquer leur gêne. Ils étaient si bien mis et moi si mal, un cabas au bras rempli de bouteilles vides. À notre époque, le luxe me semble plus embarrassant que la misère” (232-3) (How to explain their discomfort? They looked so well off and I looked so poorly, with a shopping bag full of empty bottles. In these times, luxury seems more embarrassing than poverty). Jouhandeau insists often in his entire Journal sous l’Occupation on the relative misery in which he and his wife spent the

²³⁴ notably the very similar case of the burning of all 642 villagers of Oradour-sur-Glâne in the local church by the retreating SS Panzerdivision only two months before this dream, which is conspicuously absent from the Journal.

years of the Occupation, but this incident is a direct reference to the black market and serves as a reminder to the reader that many so-called “collaborators” had profited tremendously. Since he lived so poorly, he stresses the fact of not having drawn economic advantage of the situation. I think it would be fair to suppose that Jouhandeau wants to attract our attention to the fact that other collaborators had carried out worse deeds by giving their services to the Nazis in exchange for economic gain, and therefore were more worthy of being pursued and punished. Once again, this sort of argumentation also points to the presence of the need for self-justification.

Another important element in the construction of his defense is his self-portrayal as victim. This is done principally through Jouhandeau’s depiction of his wife Élise in his Journal. As is true of any diary, Jouhandeau made note of anything that struck him particularly in his Journal, from events happening around him to politics to religious and philosophical considerations as well as day-to-day occurrences, and especially marital quibbles. At a moment when food was in very short supply, one of the leitmotifs in this book is the fact of Elise starving him. For instance, an entry for June 1943 reads:

Nous sommes, Élise et moi, au régime, ce qui nous donne droit ensemble par jour à trois litres de lait, en renonçant, bien sûr, à tout le reste. Viande, beurre et pain. Comme je ne compte pas pour elle, Élise trouve que c’est trop de lait et décide d’en vendre un litre et de boire les deux autres. (182)

(Elise and I, we are on a diet, which gives both of us together the right to 3 liters of milk per day, obviously renouncing everything else, that is to say meat, butter and bread. Since I do not count for her, Elise claims that that is too much milk, and decides to sell one liter and drinks the two other liters herself).

He makes a tragicomic spectacle of his marriage, supplying details which might at first amuse the reader. But the repetitiveness of these scenes takes its toll; one soon tires of reading about the conjugal mishaps of his household.

Apart from these instances of greed for food, the image he paints of her is one of a capricious tyrant, using qualifiers such as “barbarous”, “ferocious”, “proud”, “hostile” “ungrateful”, and so forth. Through the negative inflection given to her personality as it is depicted in the Journal, and which comes across as parody, the image Jouhandeau paints of himself is that of a self-sacrificing husband. Indeed, the terminology he uses to describe his situation is telling: he designates himself by using the words “prey”, “victim”, “martyr”, and even goes as far as to say that he is one who is “condemned to hard labor for life”. There is more at work here than just making himself appear better than his wife. On the one hand, there is an attempt to make the reader sympathize with him. On the other hand, his use of the terminology of victim and martyr can be read in at least two different ways. One of these has to do with Jouhandeau’s childhood. He was the son of a butcher, and was introduced to masturbation by one of his father’s assistants. He also came from an extremely religious background, and spent years before reconciling his faith with his homosexuality. Bernard Meyer has analyzed the expression of feeling like a victim in Jouhandeau’s lexicon, especially in his early works, as one which refers to his introduction to sexual pleasure²³⁵. Jouhandeau described the scene in his book La Jeunesse de Théophile (1921). He saw the moment of sexual initiation in ambiguous terms, both surprised by the pleasure he felt, but anguished at the loss of a state of innocence, and as Meyer states: “Et comme c’est un autre qui provoqua cette dépossession, il eut l’impression d’être la victime d’un crime” (And since it was another that provoked this dispossession, he had the impression of being the victim of a crime). The role of victim, then, predates the Journal and is recurrent in his works. In his marriage, too, he assumes this role by creating the conditions for it. He troubles his wife with his indiscreet homosexual escapades and she in turn troubles him by

²³⁵ Meyer, Bernard. Eros jouhandélien. Paris: L’Harmattan, 1994.

treating him badly and humiliating him publicly. In spite of this kind of treatment, the perverse relationship between them is something that he cannot envisage ending, since “sans elle plus rien autour de moi n’aurait de raison d’être, ni sa maison, ni son jardin, à peine moi-même qui me suis accoutumé depuis près de vingt ans à vivre en fonction d’elle” (without her, nothing around me would any longer have a meaning, neither the house, nor the garden, not even myself, accustomed as I am for almost twenty years now to live in function of Elise) (Jouhandeau, 223). In the 385 pages of his Journal, he is not denigrating her in only two other instances; in one of these, he even goes as far as to say: “Je l’aime, comme j’ai aimé ma mère” (330) (I love her, like I loved my mother). This statement, along with the title of one of his novels, Le Parricide imaginaire written in 1926-27 but only published in the year of his father’s death (1930) is glaring proof of the Freudian drama in Jouhandeau’s personality, but that is not a direction that my reading of his Journal will take. Suffice it to say that in the Journal sous l’Occupation, where Jouhandeau’s obvious agenda is to depict his version of the German Occupation of France, this type of depiction of his wife Elise functions to provide comic relief from the bleaker considerations surrounding these descriptions, to establish a complicity between himself and the reader, and to try to make the reader pity his fate. He goes even further and puts this into words: after a long account of how she mistreats him when he is sick, he exclaims: “Comment me maudire alors? Qui l’oserait? Oh! de pitié il n’en est pas question, mais c’est à une sorte de respect que j’ai le sentiment d’avoir droit, de ce respect qui est dû (...) à la grandeur d’un renoncement à soi-même qui efface toute indignité” (225) (How then can I be damned / cursed? Who would dare? Oh! Pity is out of question, but I feel like I have the right to a sort of respect, of the kind of respect which is due to the greatness of self-renouncement and which erases all indignity). He claims to not want pity but demands respect due to his self-abnegation.

The register of victim and martyr that Jouhandeau uses to depict his marital situation is used in the Journal in yet another context, this time in relation to the *résistants*. The person who makes phone threats and so forth is often referred to as his “bourreau”²³⁶ (executioner / persecutor) and he puts himself across as being an innocent but fearless victim and martyr, which was a topos readily used by collaborators during the Purge. He inscribes this argument in a religious vein as well: apart from the terms victim and martyr, he alludes to his “supplice” (torture), “martyre” (martyrdom), “tourments” (torments) and “persécution” (persecution)²³⁷. Indeed, more than once he makes allusions to Christ as well to Socrates²³⁸. The parallel he draws here between his “persécution” and that of Christ or Socrates serves the purpose of showing himself as unjustly persecuted, but who will be recognized for his true value and triumph only after his death.

Yet another strategy used by Jouhandeau is to insist on reminding the readers more than once of the relativity of political positions: “Que de gens on a canonisé qui, s’ils avaient vécu deux ans de plus, seraient morts sur le bûcher ou inversement” (236) (How many people have been canonized who, had they lived two more years, would be burnt at the stake or vice versa). By laying stress on the relativity of positions, Jouhandeau demonstrates that the situation in which he finds himself is only temporary, since only a few months before, the Resistance was considered illegal by the regime in power; indeed, he accentuates this fact once more in an entry for November 1944, when the purge was well underway: “Une telle subversion a corrompu certains mots qu’on se doit de ne plus les employer? (*sic*) Dans les guerres civiles par exemple, les mots traîtres et patriotes sont interchangeables selon la faction à laquelle on appartient” (334)

²³⁶ see Journal, pp. 289, 296, 321, 329, 333, 347, 356, 357, 377 etc.

²³⁷ see Journal, pp. 309, 335, 371 etc.

²³⁸ see Journal, pp. 25, 308, 309, 335, 371.

(Such a subversion has corrupted certain words that it is one's duty not to use them any longer ? In civil wars, for instance, the words traitor and patriot are interchangeable depending upon the faction to which one belongs). So far, if he has been circumventing instead of coming to the point, in January 1945 he comes forth and attests: "En droit, j'ai suivi les directions de l'autorité que je considérais comme légitime et, en fait, je ne suis jamais allé aussi loin qu'elle le prescrivait" (355) (In [the eyes of the] law, I followed the directions of the authority which I considered legitimate and, in fact, I never went as far as [this authority] stipulated).

Having reiterated and emphasized this fact of the relativity of one's political position amply, Jouhandeau can now contend that "les juges d'hier sont les accusés d'aujourd'hui et les accusés d'aujourd'hui seront les juges de demain" (368) (The judges of yesterday are the accused today and the accused today will be the judges of tomorrow). He is thus inscribing his discourse in History by projecting himself in the future, since it is only in the future that his actions will be judged correctly. In the meanwhile, he appeals to the emotion rather than the logic of his imagined judges:

Quelles que soient la religion, la nationalité, la race, la classe, les opinions de quelqu'un, quelles que soient ses fautes, ses faiblesses, ses erreurs, en lui la personne humaine a droit au respect et quiconque l'outrage, même criminel, manque à son devoir le plus essentiel envers la dignité de sa propre espèce, dignité que rien au Ciel ni sur la Terre ne saurait entamer ni effacer.

Les religions ne font que ratifier par des rites et des symboles mystiques ce caractère imprescriptible, royal et sacré qui est celui de l'Homme, la sainteté ne consistant qu'à ne jamais l'oublier dans les rapports que l'on entretient avec ses semblables. (288-9)

(Whatever be the religion, the nationality, the race, the class, the opinions of someone, whatever be his faults, his weaknesses, his errors, his person has the right to respect, and he who attacks him, even a criminal, fails in his most

essential duty towards his own species, a dignity that nothing in the Heavens nor on Earth would be capable of erasing.

Through mystical rites and symbols, the religions ratify this imprescriptible, royal and sacred character which is man's; saintliness consists in never forgetting it in the relations one has with one's fellow men and with oneself).

These lines were written on August 25, 1944, during the days of the liberation of Paris and the hottest days of the Purge, and in the midst of his weeks in hiding. Here again, without him saying as much, his fear is manifest. He hides behind Christian values seen in the use of the qualifiers royal, sacred, saintliness, and offers his judge (and his readers) these "universal truths", implying firstly that he too is a man and therefore has the right to respect, secondly, that in not respecting his person, the *épurgateur* will shirk his duty towards the human race, and that thirdly, since this is ratified by the religions, for his judge not to obey (by harming Jouhandeau's person) would be equivalent to renouncing the saintliness inherent in his own person. This argument is anchored in the Christian tradition of forgiveness, and he uses it to appeal to his readers. At the same time, he makes use of prevailing discourses to use them to his advantage. Indeed, the charter of the National Writers Committee specified that the purge officials were to "guarantee (...) respect for the person [of the accused]". Jouhandeau thus informs the interpretation of his statement by inscribing it in the official circulating discourse.

We have just considered a number of passages which Jouhandeau seems to be using as alibis in different ways. These various attempts at self-justification could be read as a sort of defense plea, and a first step in the process of self-exoneration.

4.2.2 Rhetorical process of self-exoneration

In the previous section, I have proceeded from the implicit narrative to demonstrate what comes across at the level of representation and perhaps at the level of intention as a defense plea. I will now focus upon his arguments and reasoning to illustrate the rhetorical means through which Jouhandeau arrives at self-exoneration. I will follow his reasoning largely in a chronological manner since I want to delineate the progression of his logic.

In the section entitled “1944”, an entry for 17 August, 1944 reads: “Si l’on savait de quoi est fait le remords, le repentir, on serait bien étonné. Ce ne sont pas ses fautes que chacun regrette dans ce qu’elles ont de grave objectivement et qui offensent proprement la loi, mais la forme qu’il leur a donnée, un procédé qui les déshonorent (sic) et qu’il est seul à connaître.” (254) (If one knew what remorse and repentance are made of, one would very well be surprised. It is not one’s faults that a person regrets for what is objectively serious about them and which offends the law as such, but the form which one gives to them, a process which dishonors them and which each person is alone in knowing). Here Jouhandeau stresses the *manner* of suffering: he emphasizes the greater importance of the mode rather than the reason for suffering. Therefore, a wrongdoing is of little importance in and of itself. What matters more is the consequence of the wrongdoing: not on the person at whom it is aimed, but on the perpetrator of the wrongdoing. The importance of the act which is the cause for this suffering is thereby put into question, even negated. There is also an exterior / interior opposition at work, where the importance of the exterior (“objectivement”, “loi”) is undermined and that of the interior (“qu’il leur a donnée”, “qu’il est le seul à savoir”) is emphasized.

Two pages farther, Jouhandeau quotes his translation of Psalm 138 which he did on 18 August 1944, two days before leaving his own home in order to take refuge in the house of one

“Mme. T.”. Marcel Jouhandeau came from a very Catholic family and, as we have noted before, he was convinced in his adolescence that he was destined to take his vows and become a priest²³⁹. It is therefore not surprising that he gave a Christian inflection to some of his arguments, and sometimes also a more mystical bent. Jouhandeau just notes “Psaume 138, traduit le 18 août 1944”, without specifying whether he is translating from Latin to French (he taught both Latin and French in a middle school) or whether he is paraphrasing the Psalm for purposes of interpretation or exegesis. I will quote only the part which is relevant to this discussion:

“... mes sentiers souterrains n’ont pas de secret pour toi. Toutes mes démarches, tu les prévois. (...)Voilà Seigneur que tu me pénètres de ton regard du commencement à la fin : c’est toi qui m’as formé et je porte l’empreinte de ta main. Admirable est la connaissance que tu as de moi : elle arrive à son point de perfection...” (256)

(...my hidden paths have no secret from you. You foresee all my moves (...) And you, Lord, penetrate me with your gaze from beginning to end: you created me and I carry the imprint of your hand. Your knowledge of me is admirable: it reaches its point of perfection).

One of the immediately apparent features of this excerpt is the idea of predestination. He is as he is because the Lord has made him so: therefore, how can he who carries the divine imprint do wrong? This is to say that since his motives are transparent to the Lord (sentiers n’ont pas de secret, tu les prévois, tu me pénètres, la connaissance que tu as de moi) and the Lord has created him thus (c’est toi qui m’as formé), human justice has no jurisdiction over his acts. This reading is corroborated by what Jouhandeau says a few pages later: “Sans cesse je me chantais: « Ma vie n’est qu’un tissu de fautes, mais le mal que j’ai fait n’a pas plus de rapport avec ce qu’on me reproche que la justice des hommes avec celle de Dieu »” (278) (I chanted to myself

²³⁹ See footnote 209.

ceaselessly: « My life is woven only with faults, but the wrong I have done has no fewer links with what one has to reproach me than human justice has with divine justice »). Here he links “fautes” and “mal”, but detaches “mal” from “ce qu’on me reproche”. The allusion to “ce qu’on me reproche” is evidently in the context of the Purge trials, whereas “fautes” is used in a more moral context as an allusion to his homosexuality. Bernard Meyer has pointed out that Jouhandeau refused to actually name his penchant for homosexual love. He refused to put it into words, preferring instead oblique references, especially the word “mal”²⁴⁰. By conflating different accusations and drawing the discussion to a moral plane, Jouhandeau lessens the amplitude (as he sees it) of the acts for which he is accused and at the same time emphasizes that of his moral “fautes”. With the same gesture, he opposes human justice and divine justice, downplaying the former while valorizing the latter as well as the acts for which it will one day judge him.

It is in these pages which are dated at the end of August 1944 (pp. 294-297), that is to say, the period when Jouhandeau and Élise had to leave Mme. T’s because they had been discovered, that Jouhandeau’s reasoning starts becoming incoherent. Until this point in the text, the passages of self-justification and those where he tried to convince the reader and himself that he was not afraid appeared only periodically. In these pages however, the passages with this kind of argumentation are to be found more frequently. Here, Jouhandeau repeats himself often, he tries to rationalize, he comments upon the human species in general in order to convince and confirm, prove and refute. This section gives us a clear insight into the fear he must have felt during the days of self-imposed exile. Since it would be too long-winded to discuss every single point in these pages, I will once again focus on the salient arguments.

²⁴⁰ Meyer, 33-34.

C'est à cette noble inconscience, à cette innocence coupable que j'arrive, à un refus total de reconnaître le coupable pour coupable. Non, à l'image des bêtes, des plantes, de la matière et peut-être de Dieu, je ne jugerai, je ne condamnerai personne. (294) (I arrive at this noble foolhardiness, at this guilty innocence, at a total refusal to accept the guilty as guilty. No, like beasts, plants, matter itself, like God, I will neither judge nor condemn anyone).

At the beginning of this passage, one might read the oxymoron “innocence coupable” as the beginning of a confession, but Jouhandeau quickly reverses it by his “refus total de reconnaître le coupable pour coupable”. In the two pairs of disparate words which he associates with each other (“noble inconscience”, “innocence coupable”) each carries one word which negates the other. Furthermore, he likens himself to animals, plants and matter: just as they do not judge others, he will not judge anyone either. He is now giving himself the possibility of judging while at the same time refusing to do it.

He pursues this reasoning by renouncing the human species:

M'appliquer, autant que possible, à n'avoir plus rien de commun avec ce que j'ai en moi de semblable à mes semblables, comme si j'abdiquais l'espèce humaine. Il ne s'agit certes là ni d'indifférence ni d'un volontaire ignorance, mais d'un refus préalable d'entrer dans l'examen de ce qui est l'affaire exclusive de chacun. (294) (To apply myself, as far as possible, to have nothing more in common with what I have in me which is similar to what is in my fellow men. This does not have to do with indifference nor with voluntary ignorance, but an unconditional refusal to enter in the examination of that which is the exclusive business of each person).

This is not the first time in the book that he proclaims his superiority²⁴¹, and here, this affirmation of his distinction allows him to renounce the human species. It is a means to distance

²⁴¹ There are a number of examples that demonstrate this; I will quote just one more here to show how disdainful he is of others: “Rien ne me répugne plus comme le contact de la canaille; davantage le risque d'être confondu avec elle” (279) (I find nothing more repugnant than contact with the rabble; and even more [repugnant] the risk of being confused with it). Here he is specifically referring to an Italian profiteer who was hiding with him at Mme. T's

himself from others and take himself away from their sphere of influence and judgement. Furthermore, he insists on the fact that each person's acts concern only him or her ("affaire exclusive de chacun"). Therefore, he claims the right to examine his own conscience without being judged by others.

He continues by proclaiming his love for the human race: "Tout visage, même s'il me hait, m'émeut et serait-ce mon bourreau, je le mets au défi de m'amener, de me forcer à ne pas l'aimer jusqu'à la fin et au delà malgré lui." (294) (Every face, even if it hates me, moves me; and be it my executioner himself, I defy him to lead me, indeed to force me not to love him until the end and beyond despite himself). Here, Jouhandeau himself poses as the potential object of hatred or of persecution ("me hait", "mon bourreau") and amplifies and exaggerates his love for his fellow human beings. This Christian love he claims to feel for others certainly did not come across in his previous "political" writings, but now he has deftly changed his stance. He declares this brotherly love, but with no penitence for what came from his pen before the war. Indeed, in his Journalier from 1977, which is a long interview edited by Jacques Ruffié, Jouhandeau asserts that

"J'ai cru un moment être antisémite, mais je l'étais surtout par mimétisme, parce que ma femme, elle, était foncièrement antisémite. Elle l'a été je crois, jusqu'à la fin. Moi, j'ai vu bien clair, bien avant même que la guerre éclate. En réalité, chez moi, ce n'était pas de l'antisémitisme. Je ne peux pas être raciste, c'est impossible, j'aime trop l'espèce humaine (...)"²⁴² (I believed for a moment that I was an anti-Semite, but I was so mainly mimetically, since my wife was so profoundly [anti-Semitic]. She was an anti-Semite, I believe, until the end. Me, I

house; elsewhere in the text there are other examples of condescension. The *résistants*, for instance, are "une horde avinée de soudards" (an inebriated horde of ruffians). p. 106

²⁴² Jouhandeau, Marcel. *La Vie comme une fête*. Interview edited by Jacques Ruffié. Paris : Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1977. p. 106. The next proof he offers to show he was not really an anti-Semite is to say that soon after proclaiming his anti-Semitic sentiments, he felt physical attraction ("passion") for a Jewish boy, as if one fact negates the other.

saw [through it] quite clearly, well before the war even started. In reality, in me there wasn't any anti-Semitism. I cannot be racist, it is impossible, I love the human species too much).

Firstly, blaming Élise for his own anti-Semitism is too facile a solution. The onus of responsibility is adroitly placed on her²⁴³. Furthermore, Jouhandeau's claim of having reformed his anti-Semitic feelings has been refuted by Gerhard Heller: "Jouhandeau a oublié, volontairement ou non, que lors du voyage à Weimar en 1941, il exprimait encore un antisémitisme virulent"²⁴⁴ (Jouhandeau has forgotten, voluntarily or not, that during the Weimar trip in 1941, he still expressed [a] virulent [form of] anti-Semitism). Coming back to the presence of this proclamation of universal love in the Journal, it seems to play the function of a certain type of self-portrayal: one which is quite opposite to what the reader could imagine based only upon his political tracts. This points to a discrepancy between how he thinks he is seen, and how he would like to be seen.

It is at this moment of his self-justificatory rhetoric that there is a break in the chain of his thoughts. Let us remember that he writes at the height of the Purge, which is reflected in his fear and his reasoning. Just after the above-mentioned proclamations of universal love, Jouhandeau starts flouting his superiority, both as contempt and as a mystic detachment from others. Firstly, he claims that "Plus je vois d'horreur, moins je me sens dispensé d'atteindre au sublime" (295) (The more horror I see, the less I feel dispensed from attaining the sublime). What he sees around him, namely the fight for the Liberation of Paris, the brink of civil war, the Purge looming as large as life before him, all of these constitute the horror he feels and make him rise

²⁴³ In *La Vie comme une fête*, Jouhandeau passes the blame of his anti-Semitism on to his wife in three other instances (pp. 106, 229 and 232). Jouhandeau's wife Élise was deceased when he gave this interview.

²⁴⁴ Heller, 77

above everyone else. This insistence on his superiority and the sublime is repeated on the same page, a few paragraphs farther:

Sans violence de ma part, un certain non-conformisme m'est naturel, est à l'origine de l'être particulier que je suis, ce qui m'amène à déconcerter nécessairement la société.

Tout en obéissant toujours à une sorte d'éthique, d'esthétique intime, irrésistible, qui me faisait une règle d'être sublime, dès que j'ai eu conscience de moi-même j'ai porté l'anarchie sur le plan de l'Absolu et que le sentiment de la grandeur de l'Ame ait ressemblé pour moi d'abord en face de Dieu à une révolution, c'était fatal. Ainsi, dès le premier jour, un air de révolte a rythmé toutes mes démarches et conditionné ma physionomie, mais sans violence et comme on prend de la hauteur pour mieux s'abîmer à la fin devant l'Éternel seul. (295)

(Without violence on my part, a certain non-conformism comes naturally to me, is at the origin of the unusual / distinctive being that I am, [and] which necessarily brings me to disconcert society.

While obeying a sort of ethics, a personal and irresistible aesthetic which made it a rule for me to be sublime, as soon as I was aware of myself, I took anarchy to the level of the Absolute; and that, being faced with God, the feeling of the greatness of the soul, for me should resemble a revolution was fated. Thus, from the very first day, an expression of revolt regulated all my initiatives and conditioned my facial appearance, but without any violence, just as one climbs higher to gain momentum preceding the final plunge before God alone).

Thus, the sublimity he refers to is an integral part of himself (“intime”), and yet is not in his control since it is part of his nature (“irrésistible”). What is more, it is imposed upon him by greater forces (“c’était fatal”), reintroducing the notion of predestination. Let us also note the lexical field of rebellion he uses to stress that he is essentially a dissenter (“non-conformisme”, “anarchie”, “révolution”, “révolte”) but without any element of brutality (“sans violence” repeated twice in this passage). After the moments of intense fear that he has lived through, this

lengthy disquisition about his singularity serves as a decisive moment in surmounting his fears. The following page introduces the month of September and already we notice a calmer tone: after this point, the text is once again in the form of more conventional diary entries, with a mix of the anecdotal and the contemplative.

The sense of superiority which he flaunts in the previous passages reappears further on in the text when a certain “docteur D.” informs him that a big daily newspaper has called for his arrest. Immediately after this, he proclaims: “La vraie supériorité, c’est de ne pas se croire (...) innocent parce qu’on ne vous inquiète pas, ni coupable parce qu’on vous accuse ou vous punit” (308). (True superiority lies in not holding oneself to be innocent because you are not accused, nor guilty because you are being accused or punished). As in the preceding passage, here too, faced by a more concrete threat, he retreats once again into a protective cocoon of haughtiness. What is more, according to him, it is not other people’s judgment that determines the status of “innocent” or “guilty”, neither does his own status depend upon the perception of the exterior. It is his perception of his own superiority that allows him to distinguish between the moral identities created by self-knowledge and public opinion.

This distinction between intimate knowledge versus public judgment now allows Jouhandeau to declare:

A-t-on à répondre d’un de ses actes, il faut distinguer le délit de la faute. Le délit regarde le juge et la faute l’accusé. Souvent, il n’y a aucun rapport entre l’importance du délit et la gravité de la faute.

Le délit tombe sous le sens : c’est un fait : on dit le corps du délit. La faute en est l’âme. Le jugement des hommes ne porte que sur le corps du délit. L’âme échappe à son ressort. (332)

(If one has to answer for one’s acts, it is necessary to distinguish the [criminal] offense from sin. The offense concerns the judge while sin concerns the accused.

Often, there is no connection between the importance of the offense and the gravity of the sin.

The offense [is] material : it is a deed : one says *corpus delicti* [body of the offense]. Sin is its soul. Human judgment applies only to the body of the offense. The soul escapes [human] jurisdiction).

Here, Jouhandeau repeats the interior / exterior opposition he has used previously, but pushes the concept even further. By a sleight of hand, he turns that which could have caused him to be condemned into a mere trifle. Using sophisms, he attenuates his misdeeds. Thus, based upon the distinction he offers us, human jurisdiction can only apply to “le corps du délit” or the material evidence, whilst “la faute” or sin, belonging to a moral category of right and wrong, is above human jurisdiction. There are two important points to be made here: firstly, as he clearly states in an entry for the summer of 1942, he had “effacé de la liste de mes ouvrages les pamphlets que j’avais écrits contre [les juifs]” (154) (erased from my list of works the tracts that I had written against [the Jews]). Therefore, there is no *corpus delicti* to incriminate him. Secondly, the distinction between the juridical register and the Catholic register is central to his line of defense. The importance of the offense has little to do with the gravity of the sin, in other words, in his eyes the offense committed is not as significant as a sin would be in the moral sense of the term. It would be justifiable to read this as an attempt to downplay the importance of the deeds for which he was being pursued by the Purge officials. The process Jouhandeau uses here is similar to the one described by Sartre in “Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?” where he discusses “la docilité aux faits”²⁴⁵ of the collaborator. According to Sartre, the collaborator “fait une morale renversée: au lieu de juger le fait à la lumière du droit, il fonde le droit sur le fait”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Sartre, Jean Paul. Situations III, 55

²⁴⁶ Sartre, Jean Paul. Situations III, 55

(deploys a reverse moral : instead of judging the deed based upon [existing] law, he founds the law [in light of] the deed). What is more, Jouhandeau introduces yet another dimension into the equation, that of the soul. The soul, for him, does not come under human jurisdiction which is created by man and can only judge the acts and deeds a person has performed. By valorizing the spiritual, he diminishes the importance of the material, that is to say of acts, indeed of the entire judicial system.

Having thus discredited human justice, Jouhandeau prepares an exordium for an apologia which he includes in the Journal. An apologia is specifically “a written defence or justification of the opinions or conduct of a writer, speaker, etc”²⁴⁷. In this exordium, Jouhandeau declares:

Quelle honneur pour moi de m’asseoir sur ce banc d’infamie. C’est que cette place convient parfaitement à ma suréminente dignité de Pécheur et que je serais plus embarrassé, messieurs les Juges, à la vôtre. Mais ne pas se méprendre. Tout ici n’est que malentendu et dérision. Les reproches que je me fais n’ont le moindre rapport avec ceux que vous allez me faire et ce n’est qu’une ironie maligne qui fait si content le sage que je suis d’avoir à comparaître devant le tribunal de Fous. (...)

What an honor for me to be seated upon this bench of infamy. This is the place that perfectly suits my super-eminent dignity as Sinner, and I would be more embarrassed, Your Honors, to be in your place. But do not misjudge. Here, everything is but misunderstanding and derision. What I have to reproach myself for has nothing to do with what you have to reproach me, and it is only a malignant irony that makes the wise man that I am so happy to have to appear in this Tribunal of Madmen. (...)

The opposition he creates between the referents used to talk about himself versus those used to talk about the *épurateurs* works on irony. For example, “honneur pour moi” goes hand in

²⁴⁷“apologia”. Oxford English Dictionary, © 2005. 9 November 2005.

<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50010381?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=apologia&first=1&max_t o_show=10>

hand with “banc d’infamie”; “suréminente dignité” is used in conjunction with “Pécheur”, and so forth. It is interesting to note the use of the word “pécheur” with a capital P. He is no ordinary sinner, the capitalization of the noun brings out his uniqueness as compared to other sinners. Also of interest are the qualifiers used to refer to the situation, “malentendu et derision” and to the Purge courts, “Tribunal de Fous”. Here he is, now deftly accusing his accusers; he has managed to reverse the situation completely and comes out of it, at least in his own mind, acquitted.

4.3 PERSONAL IDENTITY

At the height of the purge, when Jouhandeau’s fear is at its peak, the text reveals different defense mechanisms used by the author. This section explores the manner in which Jouhandeau presents himself to his readers. I will first address the question of self-perception. I will discuss the discourse of indifference which subtends the text in order to establish the link between this indifference and what I perceive as a cleavage. This cleavage exists not only between Jouhandeau and his environment, but also between himself and what he does, what he believes, indeed within himself. We will see how the text attempts to unify the scattered sense of self that the writer conveys.

4.3.1 Indifference to his fate

The period between the beginning of the Purge (October 1944) and the capitulation of Germany (May 1945) was particularly difficult for Jouhandeau, as it was for other writers whose names appeared on the black lists of the Purge authorities. Jouhandeau reacted to the mental and

emotional pressure in two ways. The first, in relation to the safety of his person and that of his wife, was by leaving their conjugal home and looking for refuge outside of it, as we have seen in the previous section. The second, in relation to his fear, was by creating a defense mechanism to lessen it.

Both Jouhandeau and Élise, or “Élise surtout” (especially Elise) (254) as he insists on pointing out, received several open threats during the months of August and September, 1944. They were even discovered in their first hideaway and had to find another one. This perception of being stalked and the fear of losing his life agitated him. Jouhandeau’s fear of being killed was not unfounded since summary executions were quite common at the time²⁴⁸.

In order to face his fear and overcome it, his first instinct was to withdraw into solitude, which had an ataractic effect on him:

Ainsi, de refuge pour nous il n’en est plus qu’en nous-même, où chacun, s’il sait s’y maintenir, est hors de la portée des hommes.

En effet, la tempête a beau se déchaîner, nous ressemblons de plus en plus à d’impassibles statues. (278)

(Thus, there is refuge for us only within ourselves, where each one of us, if he knows how to remain there, is out of the reach of men.

Indeed, even if the storm rages, more and more we resemble impassive statues).

The more tangibly he feels the presence of danger, the more Jouhandeau tries to blend in with the décor. At the same time, he seems to want to totally withdraw from those that surround him. This detachment from the outside and the focusing on the inside becomes a means of dominating his fear. It serves the purpose of creating a fortification, of becoming inaccessible to

²⁴⁸ In France, the numbers of summary executions in 1944-45 were claimed to be 10 000 by official government sources and as much as 100 000 by supporters of Vichy. Peter Novick’s calculation of about 20 000 has widely come to be accepted as the accurate number. Novick, 322

the inopportune presence of his tormentor. Furthermore, the reference to the statue is of significance: a statue, frozen as it might be in its attitude and its traits, survives the storm that lashes out at it. Is this to say that like the statue, he too will survive the stormy onslaught that was to be the Purge? He seems to be demonstrating as much to himself as to the reader, that he is like the statue: unperturbed and not susceptible to suffering.

When the death threats became more frequent, Jouhandeau turned to God. He naturally had recourse to prayer. Among his varied and numerous remarks, we shall look at those that are most pertinent to our discussion. For instance, in an entry for August 22, 1944 we find the following words: “Prier, c’est porter tout ce qu’on est, tout ce qu’on aime si haut que rien ne peut vous atteindre.” (277) (To pray is to take what you are and what you love so high that nothing can reach you). This entry acquires greater significance when we take its date into consideration. Prayer becomes the first means of evasion, a way of escaping his *épurateurs*. Losing himself in prayer allows Jouhandeau to appear more dignified and forcible and to tower above that which is human. He goes even further and associates himself completely with God:

C’est en de pareilles circonstances qu’en un clin d’œil on recouvre tout et tout ce qu’on peut dire de la religion n’est rien en comparaison de la présence de Dieu éprouvée sans délai dans la détresse mieux que jamais (...) Dieu se manifeste comme l’évidence et on L’entend murmurer : « (...) Me retrouver, ce n’est que t’avancer dans ta propre identification. Soyons un et tout ce qui vient d’ailleurs n’a plus de réalité. La haine, la douleur ni la mort ne peuvent rien ou seulement contre une vaine apparence. Le couple que nous formons, toi et Moi, est la seule Réalité. Ton essence échappe aux prises du monde et de ses mensonges dans la mesure où tu me connais »” (323-4)

(It is in such circumstances that, in the blink of an eye, one regains / recovers everything, and all that one can say about religion is nothing compared to the presence of God, felt without delay when in distress more than ever (...) God

manifests himself as evidence and one hears Him murmur: “Finding me only means advancing in your own identification. Let us be one, and everything that comes from the outside has no more reality. Neither hatred, pain nor death can do anything, or merely present a vain appearance. The couple that we form, you and I, is the only Reality. Your essence escapes the grips of the world and its lies as you get to know me”).

Here, we notice a total separation of body and soul: the latter rises to join the divine, leaving the former down on earth. The ideal jouhandelian self approaches God in order to unite with him. This dialogue between him and God, or this interior dialogue allows him to escape reality and to seek refuge in God. Jouhandeau thus stresses the idea that only divine judgment counts for him and, more importantly, if God allows him to be one with Him, then he cannot have committed any sin, at least not in the religious sense of the word.

Another method Jouhandeau uses to keep fear at bay is to feign indifference to what could happen to him. In order to do this, he detaches himself from his body by attaching no more value to it:

Mais pourquoi m’intéresser à moi-même au point de m’abandonner à la cruauté ? Que j’aie au moins la générosité de me départir assez de moi pour entrer dans l’indifférence à ce qui m’arrive personnellement. Ce n’est pas parce que j’ai partie liée avec mon corps que je suis autorisé à sortir de la sérénité qui doit demeurer la mienne en toute occasion, voire dans la pire. (238).

But why show any interest in myself to the point of abandoning myself to cruelty? May I at least have the generosity to separate myself from me in order to enter a [total] indifference to what might happen to me personally. It isn’t because I am in league with my body that I am allowed to leave the serenity which must be mine at all times and in every occasion, even in the worst).

This dichotomy between the body and the soul highlights the rift between his mental subjectivity and his physical being. By detaching himself in this manner from his body, and by devalorizing it, Jouhandeau reduces his fear of being physically harmed. The separation of mind and spirit make his real self inaccessible and, more importantly, help him reacquire a certain sense of calm:

Une certaine angoisse passée, la première, la plus terrible, je veux dire, une fois la porte de l'Enfer franchie, on se réjouit presque d'y être. Quelle expérience irremplaçable et quelle indifférence à ce qui suit. (...) Bienfait de la persécution, elle vous amène à négliger toute précaution, à déposer toute inquiétude, et il y a une espèce de grandeur dans cette indifférence à son propre sort. (323-4)

(Once a certain anguish has passed, the first and most terrible one, I mean once the [threshold] of Hell [has been] crossed, one is almost happy to be there. What an irreplaceable experience, and what indifference to what will follow. (...) The benefit of persecution [is that] it brings you to neglect all precaution, to put down all worries, and there is a kind of greatness in this indifference to one's own fate).

Now this detachment becomes a key factor for Jouhandeau: it helps him to vanquish the human condition since he is beyond mere human preoccupations, whence his "grandeur". War put him in this situation and he is grateful to it, since it has helped him to construct his self-image as a distinguished person. He feels he has been put to test by fire ("la porte de l'Enfer franchie") and has come out of it stronger. Once Jouhandeau takes this step, he gets carried away by his own momentum. After repeating a similar thought about the "indifférence à [son] sort" (329), he reaches a point of nothingness:

Tout d'un coup *rien*. Il n'est plus question de plaisir ni de peine, de malheur ni de bonheur, de mal ni de bien. Rien. Rien. C'est à quoi il faut arriver, à se prendre pour rien. Je ne suis pas éloigné de ce point mort. Est-ce le paradis ? Il ne s'agit pas d'imaginer, mais de sentir qu'on n'est plus et à force de ne plus se sentir

comme existant, comme un être, on n'est plus. C'est à ce sentiment de son propre néant, à cet anéantissement qu'il faut s'amener. Voilà l'humilité véritable. Ensuite, quoi qu'il arrive, rien ne vous arrive. *Rien* ne peut arriver à *rien*. (332)

(All of a sudden, *nothing*. It is no longer a question of pleasure nor of pain, of unhappiness nor of happiness, of evil nor of good. Nothing. Nothing. That is where one must arrive, to take oneself for nothing. I am not far from this neutral [feeling]. Is this paradise? It is not a question of imagining, but of feeling that one is no more, and by dint of not feeling oneself as existing, as a being, one is no more. It is to this feeling of one's own nothingness, one's own oblivion that we must arrive. That is true humility. Then, whatever may happen, nothing will happen to you. *Nothing* can happen to *nothing*.)

The parallel Jouhandeau draws between paradise and nothingness is quite unusual, especially in a writer who is so strong a believer. The aspiration to nothingness echoes the image of the statue discussed earlier on in this section, both being devoid of physical sensation and emotionally unresponsive. At the same time, aspiring to nothingness seems like an attempt to stop both time and events, to postpone or even eliminate the possibility of confrontation. He thus manages to transcend everything, to become pure transparency, to achieve "nothingness". In so doing, he goes beyond not merely human preoccupations but beyond everything: he is no more. Evidently, if he is no more, he cannot be harmed. His inner self thus escapes although physically he cannot. In the next sub-section, I will address the question of self-perception in the Journal; for now suffice it to say that fear and danger become a tool of evasion for Jouhandeau.

4.3.2 Self-definition: from alterity to unity

In “Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur? », Sartre analyses the “phénomène normal”²⁴⁹ of collaboration. While analyzing the social conditions of its emergence, Sartre defines collaboration as “un fait de désintégration, (...) de désassimilation” (a fact of disintegration, (...) of dissimilation) and collaborators as “éléments marginaux”²⁵⁰ (marginal elements). Jouhandeau is only too conscious of the difference between himself and the rest of society: “Sans violence de ma part, un certain non-conformisme m’est naturel, est à l’origine de l’être particulier que je suis, ce qui m’amène à déconcerter nécessairement la société” (295). (Without violence on my part, a certain non-conformism comes naturally to me, is at the origin of the unusual person that I am, and which leads me necessarily to disconcert society). The “je” occupies the central position of the sentence, thereby stressing the importance Jouhandeau accords to himself. Furthermore, even though he only uses the subject pronoun “je” once, in this single sentence there are three other qualifiers to refer to himself, namely the possessive adjective “ma”, the indirect object pronoun in “m’est”, and the direct object pronoun in “m’amène”, thereby mooring the focus entirely upon himself. He believes in his singularity and flaunts it. Having exposed the difference between himself and society, he goes on to denounce its gregariousness:

Moutonnaire, la foule obéit à tout ce que ses bergers du moment lui dictent et c’est à la lueur de cette intelligence prescrite que sa colère éclate contre tout ce qui refuse de s’aligner tantôt à droite tantôt à gauche, selon le vent.

Comment ne pas être en butte aux persécutions, si l’on ne prend son mot d’ordre qu’en soi-même ? (295-6)

Sheeplike, the crowd obeys all that its shepherds of the moment dictate and it is in light of this prescribed intelligence that its anger explodes against all [those who]

²⁴⁹ Sartre, “Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?”, 43

²⁵⁰ Sartre, “Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?”, 46

refuse to align sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, depending upon [the direction of] the wind. How can one not be the object of persecution if one takes one's watchword / slogan only from within oneself?)

The distinction and opposition Jouhandeau makes here between "l'intelligence prescrite" of the masses and himself who "prend son mot d'ordre en [lui]-même" is conspicuous. The fact that he does not follow what is prescribed by the powers that be recalls the stress he laid on his "non-conformisme" in other passages we have examined. I would like to open a parenthesis here in order to point out that further on in the Journal, he states that "En droit, j'ai suivi les directions de l'autorité que je considérais légitime et, en fait, je ne suis jamais allé aussi loin qu'elle le prescrivait" (355) (In law, I followed the directions of the authority that I considered to be legitimate and, in deed, I never went as far as it decreed). He is evidently underlining the fact that his actions were legal, since he considered that the authority which was in power, namely the Vichy regime, was legitimate. This implies that the authority that the masses were then following, that is to say the Resistance, was, at least in his eyes, illegitimate. In one movement, Jouhandeau manages to discredit the Resistance and at the same time show the independence of his own thoughts and actions, since he did not go as far as the "autorité légitime" prescribed. He thereby distances himself from the above-mentioned masses and distances himself from what he saw as the lawful government. Furthermore, this passage underscores a glaring contradiction: on the one hand, Jouhandeau emphasizes his individuality and non-conformity, and yet takes recourse to the rightful authority of Vichy whereby he conforms to the administration in power.

Having established the "foule moutonnaire" as exhibiting a lack of thought, Jouhandeau then distinguishes himself from it: "L'individu-né échappe à ce flux, pour suivre sa ligne, son «rayon» qu'il est seul à voir. En contradiction avec son époque, avec sa patrie ou avec l'univers,

il a beau en subir la malédiction, nul ne sait à quel trait il obéit.” (297) (The individual born [as a distinctive / singular person] escapes this flux in order to follow his line, his “ray [of light]” that he alone can see. In contradiction with his epoch, with his country or with the universe, [although] he may well have to suffer their curse, no one knows which line he follows). Jouhandeau thus underlines the essential difference between himself and the rest of society. He has his own system of values; he sets his own rules for his behavior and actions. He thus cannot be judged by the standards set by everyone else.

He thus establishes the fact that there is a rift between himself and the rest of society since he alone can create his principles, goals and values which emanate from within him (“ne prend son mot d’ordre qu’en soi-meme”). Yet, we notice that there is an inconsistency in his discourse. Indeed, he contradicts himself on this notion: on the one hand, he claims that he alone has the power to define himself, on the other hand he affirms that he has no power over himself. This is evident in the following extract: “Certitude de n’avoir été dupe de rien ni de personne, excepté de mon vice, dont je n’étais pas tout à fait responsable.” (269) (Certainty of not having been the dupe of anything or anyone, except of my vice, of which I was not totally responsible). Although he defines his own value system, he cannot always comply with it since this value system does not govern his acts. There is thus a dissociation between himself and his deeds: “Nos actions n’ont de rapport le plus souvent qu’avec les circonstances et nos manies. Très peu avec nous-mêmes.” (325). (Most often, our actions have more to do with the circumstances and our manias [and] very little [to do] with ourselves). He has now managed to completely dissociate the agent from the act by imposing an artificial distinction between his intrinsic nature – his soul – and his acts, which do not reflect each other. I will shortly address the question of the cleavage between the subject and his subjectivity; for now I would like to point out that he

totally detaches himself from his actions: what he does has nothing to do with him, like a puppet in the hands of a manipulator. Not only is he divided, there is yet another element which governs his actions:

La plupart de nos actions demeurent si énigmatiques pour nous, si inexplicables dans le ressort qui les a produites et dans leur développement qu'on a peine à établir ce qui nous a amenés à les entreprendre et à en poursuivre la commission, tant il est difficile de discerner ce qui en elles est notre part et quelle est celle de la fatalité. (325). (Most of our actions remain so enigmatic for us, so inexplicable in the mechanism / impulse that produced [these actions] and in their development, that it is difficult to establish what brought us to undertake them and to see these errands / tasks / assignments through; so difficult it is to discern what part of these tasks is ours and what part is that of fatality).

His actions are exterior to him since the disavowal of the self causes there to be no more link between him and them: the one who sees, thinks, believes does not know the one who acts, whence “énigmatiques” and “inexplicables”. Furthermore, he adds yet another variable in the relation between his selves, namely that of “fatalité”. Since the course of his actions had been determined in advance, he had, literally speaking, no hand in them. The choice of the word “fatalité” is particularly interesting. Instead of the word “destin” whose etymological sense in French is “projet” (plan, project) and which can hence convey a sense of contingency, Jouhandeau chooses “fatalité” which came into the French language from the Latin *fatalitas* and implies a sense of irrevocability. If fate has decided upon the existence of certain actions through his hands (“entreprendre la commission”), it is beyond his own capacity to contradict this power: he himself is the victim of fate rather than the master of his destiny. Consequently, he removes any possibility of being reproached since it is not really him who did what he did: “De plus en plus, je suis persuadé que certains de mes actes passés sont des mystères pour moi. Ils

m'intriguent plus qu'ils ne m'engagent²⁵¹." (333). (More and more, I am convinced that some of my past acts are mysteries to me. They intrigue me more than they commit me.) Once again, the word "mystère" stands out, for it too is anchored in Christian mythology: as in the current of Christian thought of the 17th century, Jouhandeau poses as a "messenger" or a "vessel" who acts only on behalf of God, with no comprehension of his acts²⁵². He remains perplexed before these "mystères" which make him move like a puppet and over which he has no control:

Une impulsion donnée, si légère soit-elle, crée la pente, puis une chute rapide et profonde. L'âme a été trompée, mais dans ses arcanes, elle demeure toujours, si elle en est digne, étrangère à l'événement. La voici roulée dans un tissu d'emprunt dont elle ignore même la couleur, quand déjà tout le monde du doigt en signale avec horreur le scandale. (325-6)

(Once even the slightest impetus has been given, it creates a [downhill movement] and then a quick and deep fall. The soul has been cheated, but in its secret [knowledge], if it is worthy, it remains forever foreign to the event. There it is, covered in borrowed clothing of which it does not even know the color, when already everyone points their fingers, horrified, to the scandal).

Not only does Jouhandeau insist upon the fact that he has no power over his actions and is not responsible for the consequences, he attributes it with duplicity, since it is that selfsame "fatalité" which could give the impetus he mentions. Furthermore, although the soul "a été trompée", it can remain independent "dans ses arcanes". The soul then remains pure and it is the body, this "tissu d'emprunt dont elle ignore même la couleur" that can be disgraced. It is then really the body, and not the soul, that has been cheated.

²⁵¹ The choice of verb is clearly used in the context of Sartre's notion of "engagement" or commitment. By stating that his acts intrigue him, he seems to confer them an autonomy which is outside his realm, whence "plus qu'ils ne m'engagent."

²⁵² For a discussion of Christian thought in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, see Jean Delumeau. Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire. Paris: PUF, 1992.

This interior distance which seems manifest in Jouhandeau, both with respect to his surroundings as well as with respect to his acts, finds its culminating point in the cleavage between his thoughts and himself. This is plainly revealed when the threat to his life is imminent. The extent of severance is so great that not even his beliefs belong to him any longer:

(...) nous ne croyons pas tout ce que nous croyons croire. Ce que nous croyons absolument ne nous demande pas notre permission pour être cru. On s'en aperçoit comme d'une gifle, au moment où elle tombe. C'est naturellement malgré nous. Nos opinions ne tiennent pas plus étroitement à notre âme que nos vêtements à nos corps. (324)

((...) we do not believe all that we think we believe. What we believe in an absolute manner does not ask our permission to be believed. We notice it like a slap, the moment it touches our faces. It is naturally in spite of us. Our opinions do not hold on more tightly to our souls than our clothes to our bodies).

The number of times Jouhandeau repeats this idea is staggering, not only in this passage, but in the rest of the book as well. The idea of not knowing or having any control over his deepest thoughts returns as a leitmotiv in the rest of the book²⁵³. The reader is left wondering whether the goal of these repetitions is not to give proof of his having acted in good faith. Several times, he underlines the fact that what he believes is apart from him, has even been imposed from the outside. If he believes something, it is not because of himself, but in spite of himself. And yet again, he pulls in the soul into the equation, claiming that it remains untouched by these "opinions". Thus, the unity of the jouhandelian self is only an illusion: he speaks of himself as he would of a stranger, and does not succeed in recognizing himself in the disparate elements that compose him. It would not be mistaken to say that the Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* is transformed in Jouhandeau's case into *cogito, et sum*.

²⁵³ see pages 321, 323, 325, 326, 329, 332, 333, 335, 356, 366, 369, 384.

In “La courbe de nos angoisses”, this alterity could appear to be a manifestation of his fear, an attempt at self-exoneration as well as a projection of the self which is divided and scattered. This disseverance appears in other works by him as well²⁵⁴. Jacques Dupont has noted that in Jouhandeau “Le moi est d’autant plus sujet à la dispersion qu’il est incarné, lié à un corps qui échappe à son contrôle (...) un véritable singulier pluriel” (the self is all the more subject to dispersion in that he is incarnated, tied to a body which is beyond his control (...) a true singular plural), whence the attempt to “mettre en place une sorte d’espace intime (...), de lieu privé: le moi enfin – utopiquement dénombré et remembré”²⁵⁵ (set up an intimate space (...) a private place : finally, the self – utopically counted and reconstituted).

The “espace intime” (intimate space) where Jouhandeau finally manages to reunite the dispersed fragments of his self is found in the concluding paragraphs of the book, the *explicit* (383-384). Referential confusion makes this passage unintelligible, for instance the repetitions of the pronoun “y” without any preceding referent. Furthermore, in several instances Jouhandeau repeats words which belong to the lexical field of representation (“théâtre”, “apparence”, “mensonge”, “dupe”, “décevoir”, “jeu”), but once he uses them, he quickly refutes them (“Voilà le théâtre de l’apparence...” / “je n’en fus pas dupe longtemps”; “l’intention (...) qu’on me prêtait”; “mon jeu n’était pas double” among others). He thereby manages to convey an image of himself as having been the dupe of a representational mechanism over which he had no control. Also, this passage begins with “la tourmente” but ends with “Amour”, evoking the image of the saint who has to have his faith tested through agony, and who has to endure torture to attain beatitude. All that was once plurality is commingled in this “Amour” which unites. Now the

²⁵⁴ See *Algèbre des valeurs morales*. Paris: Gallimard, 1936. pp. 59 and 172, and *Eléments pour une éthique*. Paris : Grasset, 1955. p. 131, among others.

²⁵⁵ Dupont, Jacques. “Jouhandeau, ou la surprise d’exister” in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, February 1979. pp. 63-73. March 1979. pp. 76-84. p. 63.

objectivity which was imposed upon him (“apparence”, “mensonge”) makes room for pure subjectivity (“passion”). The “Amour” to which he refers here is an entirely subjective concept which transcends everything, even good and evil. After having spent more than half the book saying that he wanted to have nothing to do with mankind, it is this “Amour” which brings him back into the fold of humanity; he is forced to recognize that he cannot dissociate and shows the *épurateurs* that he is part of it.

In this passage which is heavy with pomp and ceremony, we realize how strongly, in the Journal, the idea of self-definition is closely linked with the rhetoric of self-exoneration. Jouhandeau stresses the idea of alterity to get rid of his own responsibility of his acts and opinions. While speaking of political writing, Roland Barthes writes that “il y a au fond de l’écriture, une « circonstance » étrangère au langage, il y a comme le regard d’une intention qui n’est déjà celle du langage”²⁵⁶ (at the heart of writing, there is a “circumstance” which is foreign to language, it is as if there is the gaze of intention which is already not that of language). Although Jouhandeau’s Journal is not an explicitly political work, I hope to have extricated this “intention” which is hidden behind Jouhandeau’s use of language, that is to say, an attempt at proving himself no guilty by virtue of being in the hands of higher forces beyond his control.

4.4 “NOTRE JUSTIFICATION EST DANS L’AVENIR”

In Le degré zéro de l’écriture, Barthes writes: “Voilà donc l’exemple d’une écriture dont la fonction n’est plus seulement de communiquer ou d’exprimer, mais d’imposer un au-delà du

²⁵⁶ Barthes, Roland. Le degré zéro de l’écriture. Paris : Seuil, 1953, 1972. pp. 18-19.

langage qui est à la fois l'Histoire et le parti qu'on y prend."²⁵⁷. These words which refer to an article by Hébert can also perfectly be applied to Jouhandeau's Journal. Indeed, he clearly declares:

“Selon les époques, l'intérêt des nations ou des partis fait naître des légendes qui déshonorent l'adversaire et c'est sur de tels mensonges que s'ordonnent l'opinion et l'histoire, sans aucun souci de la vérité.” (333-4) (Depending upon the times, the interest of nations or of parties create legends which dishonor the adversary and it is around such lies that [public] opinion and history are organized, without any care for the truth).

A close reading of the text makes it amply clear that there is an obvious desire to reveal his version of “la vérité” in the Journal. In this last section, we will examine the bias of the author in writing and preparing this diary for publication. I will first address the question of the imbrication of re-writing

4.4.1 (Re)writing History while (re)writing his story

According to a declaration by Jean Cassou, one of the co-presidents of the Comité National d'Écrivains (C. N. E. – National Writers' Committee), “le C.N.E. (...) se contente d'être un souvenir”²⁵⁸ (The C.N.E (...) contents itself with being a memory). Many writers also wanted to leave a “memory” of the experience of a world war that they had just lived through, all of which have the common aspect of their political and ideological ramifications²⁵⁹. In this section, we

²⁵⁷ Translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith : “Now here is an example of a mode of writing whose function is no longer only communication of expression, but the imposition of something beyond language, which is both History and the stand we take in it.” London: Johnathan Cape, 1984

²⁵⁸ quoted in Jean Paulhan. De la paille et du grain. Paris : Gallimard, 1948. p. 91.

²⁵⁹ For instance, J. Benda, A. Camus, M. Duras, C. de Gaulle, Vercors among others consign a very opposite point of view from that of R. Brasillach or L. Rebatet. Examples of literature of witnessing of the camps cannot be included among these examples, since their first intent is not that of necessarily conveying a point of view, rather of writing to bear witness or to come to terms with the experience. Guy Kohen, Georges Wellers, David Rousset, and Robert Antelme, among others wrote testimonial narratives between 1945 and 1947.

shall examine what it is that Jouhandeau would like to consign to the memory of the war and the months of Liberation through the publication of his Journal.

I would like to begin by addressing the question of *rewriting*. Before going into hiding with Élise, Jouhandeau had entrusted the manuscripts of what he had written during the Occupation to his friend Véronique. The Liberation of Paris coupled with the published threats against him scared her and she burned everything she had. Very early on in the Journal, Jouhandeau admits that “Mes papiers, carnets de notes et de journal concernant cette époque ayant été brûlés par Véronique, je vais essayer de retrouver dans ma mémoire...” (79) (My papers, notebooks and diaries [were] burnt by Véronique ; I will try to retrieve it in my memory...). These papers were burned by Véronique in September 1944 as soon as she realized that his name appeared on the blacklists and that they could incriminate him, and her as well for having kept them. He therefore had to have rewritten at least three-fourths of his Journal, namely the parts dated from August 1939 to August 1944²⁶⁰. The manuscripts are abundant and often repetitive, so that it is unclear when he might have rewritten which parts.

The manuscript notes which Jouhandeau used as a source for this Journal are divided into four different categories: “Journal 1939 – 1945”, “La courbe de nos angoisses 1944 – 1946”, “Élise sous l’Occupation 1939 – 1945” and “Mémoires d’Occupation 1939 – 1948”. Some of these notes are in notebooks, others are sheafs of paper gathered under one of the above-mentioned titles. These are all handwritten in pen; only some copies of some versions of his articles are typewritten. There is abundant material, a lot of which is easy to trace from the Journal to the manuscripts. One can find changes in word choice or additions of entire

²⁶⁰ In spite of the fact that his manuscripts from August 1939 to September 1944, I still think it is legitimate to use Jouhandeau’s Journal for this study, since my focus is on works written during the months of Liberation (August 1944 – May 1945) and the burnt manuscripts pre-date this period.

sentences²⁶¹. There are also indications that he reworked the text several years before publication: “Dix ans plus tard, cet homme viendra me remercier du verre d’eau que je lui avais versé ce jour-là” (243) (Ten years later, that man would come to thank me for the glass of water I had poured him on that day). He also makes a glaring error in dates: in an undated entry between Easter 1942 and 22 August 1942, he refutes the accusation of having been responsible for the death of Max Jacob who, in reality, died of pneumonia in the camp in Drancy in March 1944²⁶². Finally, he adds a short paragraph by way of introduction to the published version of the book. For all of these reasons, I believe that the idea of *rewriting* is inherent to this work.

In the two preceding parts of this chapter, we have examined Jouhandeau’s reaction in light of surrounding events. I would now like to turn to the question of writing of the self and writing of the event. Journal sous l’Occupation is a text which is embedded in the conditions in which it is enunciated. The socio-historic anchor of this text determines its articulation, first through the defined temporal duration as the title indicates, and then through its contents, since everything that is chosen to be included for publication has to do with the war in a direct or indirect manner. What interests me here is not so much the choice of events as the manner in which he represents them and the questions which he avoids.

The manner of self-perception and the rhetoric of self-exoneration that we have examined in the previous sections are very revealing. Through the discourse of self-justification, Jouhandeau conveys a very flattering image of himself. He opposes his individuality to the gregariousness of the crowds that support the new judges. He highlights the injustice of his situation as victim, persecuted by the interior (his opinions, his alterity) as well as the exterior (those in power at the Liberation). He stresses his innocence, his fearlessness, even his

²⁶¹ see Appendix.

²⁶² See Jouhandeau, Journal, 154

martyrdom. Furthermore, he makes a parallel between the responsibilities of the philosophers of the Enlightenment and his responsibility in “les excès de l’antisémitisme hitlérien” (154) (the excesses of Hitler’s anti-Semitism) : “C’est à peu près comme si l’on rendait Rousseau, Voltaire et Diderot responsables des excès de la Terreur” (154) (It is more or less as if one held Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot responsible for the excesses of the Terror). He is not being facetious when he tries to make the reader come to the conclusion that, similarly, he is not responsible for Hitler’s excesses. It would also be pertinent here to note that the choice of the term “antisémitisme hitlérien” is not innocent. Indeed, many notorious French anti-Semites did not identify with Nazi anti-Semitism and wanted to create an anti-Semitism rooted in the French tradition²⁶³. By using the qualifier “hitlérien”, Jouhandeau distances himself from that type of anti-Semitism, but does not disassociate himself from anti-Semitism per se.

In the whole Journal sous l’Occupation, Jouhandeau does not refer to his anti-Semitic writings by name: “Dans toute ma vie, je n’ai écrit qu’un seul article politique (les deux ou trois autres qui ont suivi à mes yeux ne comptent pas)...” (84) (In all my life, I wrote only one political article (the two or three others that followed do not count in my eyes)...). His refusal to name the nature of these articles is telling. By changing anti-Semitic to political, he conceals the true nature of these articles. This dissimulation is part of his attempt to recreate himself in the post-liberation period as a tolerant person: “Ah! si je pouvais haïr! Mais non, L’homme est partout mon frère, plus que mon frère. L’homme est partout moi-même” (41) (Ah ! If only I could hate! But no, everywhere Man is my brother, more than my brother. Man is everywhere myself) or yet again: “Tout visage, même s’il me hait, m’émeut et serait-ce mon bourreau, je le mets au défi de m’amener, de me forcer à ne pas l’aimer jusqu’à la fin et au-delà malgré lui” (294) (Every face,

²⁶³ For a detailed discussion, see Ralph Schor. L’antisémitisme en France pendant les années trente. Bruxelles : Editions Complexe, 1992.

even if it hates me, moves me and were it to be my executioner, I defy him to bring me, to force me not to love him until the end and beyond in spite of him). Once again, he hides behind the Christian rhetoric of love for one's fellow beings. These can all be seen as attempts at reconstructing his public image²⁶⁴.

This very flattering image of himself also implies that he is unjustly persecuted. It is through this image that the question of violence is implicitly put forward. Jouhandeau juxtaposes what he claims to be with what he abhors, thus accentuating the arbitrariness and violence of the Allies and *résistants*. They become the target of his sarcasm and disgust. For instance, in one of the entries for January 1944, we find the following remark: “Samedi, 500 morts et les Anglais on annoncé: « Nous reviendrons ». Comme c’est gentil à eux!” (216) (Saturday, 500 dead, and the English have announced, “We’ll be back” How kind of them!). Similarly, while speaking of the Resistance, he refers quite sarcastically to its work as “ânerie” (243) (rubbish) and to the *résistants* as “une horde avinée de soudards” (292) (an inebriated horde of ruffians), and does not forget to report the term Élise uses for them, namely “cette vermine” (216 and 219), thereby adopting an even more denigrating attitude than the one in the term “terrorists” used by Vichy propaganda²⁶⁵. Jouhandeau makes no distinction between the *épurateurs* or purge officials and the *résistants* or members of the Resistance. Their overarching portrayal in the Journal is one of evilness. We see other instances of this when he reports “scènes horribles” (267) of the Purge: he gives us detailed accounts of policemen whose throats were slit, of families torn from their homes, of men who were shot and women who were shorn or imprisoned, of the F.F.I. who

²⁶⁴ He repeats a similar thought in a later work: “Comment serait-on raciste quand on a comme moi le culte de l’espèce humaine?” (How can one be [called] a racist when one has, like I do, the cult of the human species). Jouhandeau, Marcel. Du Singulier à l’Eternel. (Journaliers XXVII, août 1972 – décembre 1973). Paris: Gallimard, 1981. p. 65

²⁶⁵ If we make a link between this appellation, “vermine”, for the *résistants* and the entomological terminology used to designate Jews, one might say that Jouhandeau is implicitly aligning the Resistance with the Jews.

“maltraitent les détenus politiques à Drancy” (307) (mistreat the political detainees at Drancy)²⁶⁶, thereby discrediting the Resistance. The only mention that the German atrocities get is skillfully reversed:

Quelle raison peuvent bien avoir de s’indigner des atrocités allemandes ceux qui ont donné aux parachutistes de la Résistance le droit de torture dont ils ont usé. (...) l’un d’eux s’est vanté devant moi d’avoir fait mourir des miliciens ligotés, en leur enfonçant des clous de dix centimètres dans le crâne, quand ils ne les enterraient pas vivants avec dix centimètres de terre seulement sur le visage, pour les entendre plus longtemps agoniser²⁶⁷. (378). ([How can] those who gave the parachutists of the Resistance the right to torture [be right about German atrocities]. One of them boasted in my presence of having killed militiamen who were bound hand and foot by driving 10 cm-long nails into their skulls, or by burying them alive with only 10 centimeters of earth on their faces in order to hear them agonize longer)

Thus, the grotesque examples of the atrocities of the *épurateurs* entirely negate the single explicit mention that Nazi atrocities get in the whole book. Let us note that this entry dates from July 1945. Though the existence of concentration camps, of gas chambers and of the Final Solution had long been known at this time, Jouhandeau’s goal of explaining his own actions keeps him from developing the topic.

Although the question of violence is put forward, it is discussed only superficially and in an arbitrary manner. Jouhandeau does not portray the complete picture. He never cites a single example of the violence or arbitrary decisions and actions of the German occupying forces. This

²⁶⁶ For other examples of descriptions of violence during the Purge see pp. 267, 276, 277, 280, 288, 298, 307-8, 328, 350, 354, 377-8.

²⁶⁷ “Les atrocités allemandes” was the title of an article which appeared on the cover page of *La France Libre* on 5 September, 1944. Also, another article dated 17-18 September gives examples of the activities of the band of collaborators known as “la bande Lafont-Bony”. This article carries details of the different types of torture practiced by these collaborators, among which one was to “enfoncer des clous dans la tête des victimes.” L.M. “Trois de la Gestapo Parisienne” in *La France Libre*. 17-18 September, 1944

fact of underlining the perverse pleasure of the *épurateurs* and thereby offering his readers a one-sided discussion of the question of violence is typical of writers of the Collaboration. As the historian P. Assouline points out,

Le tableau est souvent fidèle. Mais ce qu'il y a d'indécent chez plusieurs de ces mémorialistes, c'est qu'ils écrivent comme si l'épuration succédait à une période de paix ou de sérénité. Eux qui se sont si bien accommodés des rafles de la police parisienne, des assassinats par la Milice, des déportations, des exécutions sommaires dans toutes les prisons de la France pendant quatre ans, les voilà qui se révoltent comme de juste (...) ²⁶⁸

(The picture they paint (of the purge) is often accurate. But what is indecent in many of these memorialists is that they write as if the purge followed a period of peace or of serenity. They, who adapted so readily to the raids and round-ups carried out by the French police, adapted to the assassinations carried out by the Militia, adapted to the deportations and to the summary executions in all the French prisons over a period of 4 years, there they are, revolting as if they had the right to do so).

This comment is pertinent to Jouhandeau's depiction of the purge as well. Just like in the writings of all the other memorialists, we encounter the same silence with regard to the violence perpetrated against Jews, the *résistants*, communists, the free-masons, in other words, those who did not belong to that part of the French population deemed to be genuine, as well as the same indignation over what they see as the excesses of the purge.

I would like to address yet another acceptance of the term perversion that can be applied to my reading of the Journal sous l'Occupation, namely the recasting of historical facts. As we have just seen, the unique mention of German atrocities is cleverly underplayed by shifting the focus to the atrocities carried out by the *résistants*. It is only Jouhandeau's bias that allows him to

²⁶⁸ Assouline, Pierre. L'Épuration des intellectuels. Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe, 1996. p. 14

do so, much in the same way that it allows him to remain silent about the 99 Frenchmen left dead, hanging from trees in Tulle by the Panzerdivision SS Das Reich, and about the entire population of 642 villagers of Oradour-sur-Glane who were locked inside the local church and burnt down. Oradour, which has since become the symbol for German atrocities in France, is conspicuously absent in his entries for June 1944, most of which deal with Elise, her whims and mistreatment of him.

Yet another instance of the revision of historical facts can be seen in the glaring absence of any mention of the Vichy regime in 385 pages of the Journal. He does refer once to the city of Vichy as the “capitale de la collaboration *franco-allemande*”²⁶⁹ (312) (capital of Franco-German collaboration). The qualifier he uses demonstrates that his conception of the situation was one where the two governments worked together willingly, as they would in times of peace. Or at least that is the image of Vichy that he wants to convey. Obviously, not even a shadow of any of the negative aspects of Occupation (the exacting of food supplies, raw materials, work force and so on) appears in the Journal. Later on in the book, Jouhandeau explains that

Un mot que je n’ai jamais consenti à prononcer durant l’Occupation, c’est celui de collaborateur, parce que j’avais l’impression que ni les Allemands ni les Français n’y croyaient. (355) (One word that I have never agreed to pronounce during the Occupation is [the word] collaborator, because I had the impression that neither the Germans nor the French believed it).

He thus distinguishes between “la collaboration franco-allemande” and “collaborator” plain and simple, as we have come to understand it since the end of World War II, with all its negative connotations.

²⁶⁹ Emphasis added.

Not only is there a lack of recognition of certain facts, as we have just seen, but in one instance, and a very significant one, there is an outright distortion of the term “concentration camp”. Indeed, at no point does Jouhandeau ever mention anything about the incarceration and deportation of Jews. However, at one point, he describes Mme R.F’s stay at Drancy. RF very probably refers to Ramon Fernandez, a well-known anti-Semite who died of an embolism during the Occupation. His wife was sent to Drancy, which was an interim concentration camp from 1942 to 1944, from where victims were deported to extermination camps, but which was later used during the purge to imprison collaborators. Jouhandeau recounts her stay at Drancy in her own words:

Le camp de concentration, nous dit-elle, n’est pas la prison (...). C’est une expérience à faire. Pour elle, il y a peu de différence entre le camp et la maison de santé : même allégement, plus aucun souci au point qu’elle en est partie avec peine (...) (338)

(The concentration camp, she tells us, is not prison. It’s an experience everyone should have. For her, there is little difference between a camp and a recovery home: the same feeling of relaxation, no more worries, to such an extent that she left it with regret.)

The term “concentration camp” as we know it has its current acceptance since 1906, and evokes in our minds hunger, suffering and death. On the other hand, the term “recovery home” evokes convalescence, healing, curing of disease. The association Jouhandeau makes between the terms camp and recovery home is indicative of a conscious desire to substitute the image one had of a camp with the image of a place where suffering is alleviated. This is the most significant

example of the perversion of a historical fact in the Journal which only Jouhandeau's bias allows him to do²⁷⁰.

Taking into consideration the previous examples of omission, partial representation or obvious misrepresentation, it would be fair to affirm that in this portrayal of himself and his entourage, Jouhandeau gives us a highly biased version of the Occupation. The last quote is directly in the line of holocaust negationism. The rewriting of part of the diary and its publication constitute further proof of the writer wanting to articulate a certain vision of the event.

4.4.2 Appropriation of circulating discourses and Historicism

The months of progressive Liberation of the French territory brought heated debates among the intellectuals of the Resistance on the questions of responsibility, bad faith, the right to err of the writer, and so on. In this last section, I would like to examine the extent of inter-discursivity between the Journal sous l'Occupation and the surrounding discursive field. I will then address the question of historicism as elaborated by Sartre and apply it to the case of Jouhandeau. Finally, I will look at the political ideology manifested in the text and, through this ideology, see how Jouhandeau envisioned the future of French society.

During the second half of the Occupation and during the months of Liberation, the intellectuals of the Resistance often dealt with the question of responsibility, for instance Sartre,

²⁷⁰ An opposing account of Drancy is given by François La Colère (Aragon) in his introduction to Jean Noir's 33 sonnets composés au secret: "Et Drancy... On en raconte de toutes les couleurs de Drancy, de la faim à Drancy, des humiliations, des coups... Quand je pense à Drancy, avec ses grands immeubles, ses gratte-ciels à bon marché où l'eau gelaît dans les conduits, et tout autour ce bled désolé, (...) j'ai du mal à m'imaginer ce que signifie aujourd'hui pour des milliers d'hommes et de femmes ce petit mot *Drancy*...". (And Drancy... There are all kinds [of stories] about Drancy, about hunger at Drancy, the humiliations, the blows... When I think of Drancy, with its big buildings, its cheap sky-scrapers where the water froze in the pipes, and all around it that desolate village (...) I have trouble imagining what, for thousands of men and women, this little word means, *Drancy* (...).) Aragon, "Introduction" in Jean Noir (Jean Cassou) 33 sonnets composés au secret. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1944. p. 15

Merleau-Ponty, Paulhan, Cassou²⁷¹ among others. The purge, notably the purge of intellectuals, introduced an important dimension: that of the responsibility of the writer. We have addressed the question of the legal implications of the responsibility of the writer, but the discussions of the intellectuals of the Resistance did not limit themselves to these legal implications. Some of these debates, which were ideological in nature, are reflected in Jouhandeau's Journal, but in a moral context. He takes up some of these ideas and reworks them, but this inter-discursivity is diffuse, since he does not name anyone explicitly. I will examine how Jouhandeau inserts himself in his era by taking up some of the circulating arguments to turn them around and how he uses others as a shield behind which to hide.

The notion of responsibility implies an obligation or a moral or intellectual necessity to repair a fault, as also to fulfill a duty or commitment. Among these various meanings, two were elucidated by the intellectuals of the Resistance towards the end of the war. The first sense in which the word responsibility was understood was to have to answer for one's acts, or as Merleau-Ponty notes, "(...) assumer et (...) considerer comme nôtres non seulement nos intentions, (...) nos actes (...) mais encore les conséquences de ces actes..."²⁷² (to assume and consider as ours not only our intentions, our acts, but also the consequences of these acts). A person thus does not act in a void, he belongs to a group, that is to say society, and therefore has to accept and bear the consequences of his acts based upon the criteria established by the group. Now, in order for the doer to accept and bear the consequences of an act, the doer necessarily has to recognize that the act(s) had a consequence in the first place. With his usual tact, Jouhandeau declares: "Parce qu'un de mes ouvrages se trouve sur la table de chevet de qui a fait une sottise, je suis l'auteur de la sottise" (370) (Since one of my works is on the nightstand of someone who

²⁷¹ See Introduction.

²⁷² Merleau-Ponty, M. "La guerre a eu lieu" in Les Temps Modernes, no 1, Paris Oct. 1945. pp 48-66.

did something silly, I am also the doer of the deed). He uses irony to imply that a written / published work is a separate entity from the writer; its effects exist independently of the author, and therefore cannot be traced back to him. How can he then be responsible for something which exists and affects those who read it independently of him, in short, how can he be responsible for the consequences it might have?

While referring to the Jews in the *Journal*, Jouhandeau admits that

J'ai attaqué les Juifs quand il m'eût suffi de les flatter (...) et, dès 1939, quand je les ai sus persécutés, je n'ai plus parlé d'eux et j'ai même effacé de la liste de mes ouvrages les pamphlets que j'avais écrits contre eux. (154) (I attacked the Jews when I had had enough of flattering them (...) and, right from 1939, when I knew that they were being persecuted, I spoke no more of them and I even erased the pamphlets I had written against them from my list of works).

By refusing to associate himself with his anti-Semitic articles and book, Jouhandeau pushes the notion of responsibility even further: he claims his right to inventory by deciding what he can continue to maintain on the list of his works. He thereby claims the right to judge the value of his works and the right to choose what to be responsible for. Let us note that although he publicly disowns these writings in the *Journal*, among his manuscripts I found copies of some of these articles, some in multiple versions. The public act of denial is thus refuted by the fact of him having kept these writings in his possession privately. Indeed, after his Weimar trip in 1941, he notes in his diary:

Je crois maintenant que grâce à l'Allemagne le sort des juifs va être au moins négativement réglé pour l'Europe, en attendant une solution plus equitable, plus complete, universelle (...) ²⁷³

²⁷³ Jouhandeau, Marcel. MS 474, folio 841-2. Bibliothèque Littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris.

I now believe that thanks to Germany, the fate of the Jews will at least be negatively solved for Europe, while awaiting a more equitable, complete, universal solution...)

Needless to say, Jouhandeau was shrewd enough not to include this statement in the printed version of his Journal.

The second acceptance of the word responsibility is explained by Sartre in Existentialisme est un humanisme: “Notre responsabilité engage l’humanité entière. (...) En me choisissant, je choisis l’homme.”²⁷⁴ (Our responsibility engages all of humanity. In choosing myself, I choose Man). This second understanding of the term responsibility has a much larger scope than the first. Here, the notion of responsibility is universal: “Je construis l’universel en me choisissant”²⁷⁵ (I construct the universal in choosing myself). Responsibility is thus conceived as an absolute value. We have seen in the two preceding parts of this chapter that Jouhandeau does not accept human judgment but rather demands the right to examine his own conscience. Consequently, the idea of subjectivity prevails over that of universality as it was articulated by the existentialists.

Another topic of debate that Jouhandeau picks up from the circulating discourses was that of good faith. He does not justify himself to the intellectuals of the Resistance, especially not to the existentialists, but he often gives proof of what he calls his good faith. Initially, he does not use the term “bonne foi”, but rather “générosité”, “conviction” and “intention”. For instance, he declares that “À ce point de conviction, il n’y a plus de mal, on retire leur sens et à la faute et à la peine” (254) (At this level of conviction, there is no more evil, and one takes away the meaning of both error and punishment). What is thus important for him is to have believed in what he was

²⁷⁴ Sartre, Jean-Paul. L’Existentialisme est un humanisme. Paris : Gallimard, 1946, 1996. p. 32-3

²⁷⁵ Sartre, 61

doing, thereby sidetracking the question of consequences. He repeats this idea several times, insisting upon the generosity which was at the origin of his deeds²⁷⁶. It is only in 1945 that Jouhandeau begins to use the term “bonne foi” directly²⁷⁷. He uses it twice, and the second instance is quite telling: “Il me suffit de n’avoir jamais manqué à la bonne foi qui est l’internationale des honnêtes gens” (355) (It suffices me to never have lacked good faith which is the *internationale* of honest people). The choice of words is particularly interesting. Indeed, that a staunch anti-communist should choose the word *internationale* among so many other possibilities cannot be mere coincidence. This phrase appears in the exordium we have previously discussed, where he addresses his judges. This fact coupled with the association of “bonne foi” and “internationale” in the same sentence shows that it is aimed at the existentialists and communists, perhaps even at Sartre. In this sentence, there is a complete reversal of the signification of “internationale”, since his “internationale” isn’t that of dishonest people. Simply put, he belongs to the category of honest people, the *résistants* do not.

During the purge (as much during the months of Liberation as after Liberation), the notions of “droit à l’erreur” (the right to err) and “délit d’opinion” (an opinion-related offense) triggered many a polemic. These debates came out of the physical attacks to writers who appeared on the blacklists; there were those who were for revenge and those who were against. Mauriac²⁷⁸, Char, Camus and Paulhan headed these debates. Jean Paulhan, who joined the Resistance right from the beginning of the Occupation in 1940, was for the recognition of the right to err by writers: “Un écrivain, à mon sens, a parfaitement le droit de se tromper”, (a writer,

²⁷⁶ see pp. 92, 325, 334 among others.

²⁷⁷ He does use the opposite idea once: “En 1940, j’ai observé de très près ce qui s’est passé et il est indéniable, à moins d’être de mauvaise foi, qu’après leur victoire les Allemands auraient pu nous traiter plus mal” (84) (In 1940, I closely observed what happened and it is undeniable, unless in bad faith, that the Germans could have treated us worse).

²⁷⁸ Jouhandeau mentions the title of one of Mauriac’s articles, “Le plaisir exquis de la vengeance” in Le Figaro. 27 October, 1944.

in my opinion, perfectly has the right to be wrong) which is why he wanted to “glisser dans la charte du Céné un petit article qui reconnût à l’écrivain le droit à l’erreur”²⁷⁹ (slip into the charter of the C.N.E a little article which would grant a writer the right to err). Paulhan supported Jouhandeau’s case throughout the months of the Purge, and even resigned from the Lettres françaises because of their call for the arrest of various writers, among them Jouhandeau. He is aware of the importance of having Paulhan as a friend, indeed of having friends in the right places: “Nous approchons d’une époque où jamais il n’aura plus importé d’avoir des amis” (216) (We are nearing times when it will never have been so important to have friends). In other points in the Journal, Jouhandeau uses Paulhan as a shield by dropping his name at the right moments. For example:

(...) l’inspecteur nous [annonce] qu’il vient de lire à la Préfecture de Police sur une liste parvenue d’Amérique le nom d’Élise et le mien parmi ceux des personnalités les plus en vue et les plus compromises. (...) Je cite les amis sur qui je compte pour me défendre. J’annonce en particulier la visite imminente de Jean Paulhan. (284) (The inspector announces to us that he has just read a list at the Préfecture de Police [which] came from America [and where] Elise’s and my names figure among the personalities that are most visible and most compromised. (...) I name the friends I can count upon to defend me. In particular, I announce the forthcoming visit of Jean Paulhan).

His use of Paulhan’s name to defend himself is almost childish. He uses a similar tactic in a letter to Gide:

Vous me connaissez trop bien pour avoir pensé à une lâcheté de ma part et n’avoir pas trouvé une explication à des erreurs dont je n’ai d’ailleurs été ni longtemps ni profondément la dupe. Jean Paulhan a dû s’en porter garant auprès de vous²⁸⁰.

²⁷⁹ Paulhan, 67-8

²⁸⁰ Jouhandeau, Marcel. Correspondance avec André Gide. Paris: Marcel Sautier Editeur, 1958. This excerpt is from a letter dated 27 September, 1946.

(You know me too well to have believed in [an act of] cowardice on my part and not found an explanation for errors of which I was a dupe neither for a long time nor very profoundly. Jean Paulhan must have vouched for [me]).

Jouhandeau thus uses both Paulhan's friendship and assistance as a screen behind which to hide²⁸¹ and drops his name at convenient occasions, as though that would suffice to get him out of trouble.

Another notion which was widely debated in the months of Liberation was the concept of opinion, a point also reflected in Jouhandeau's Journal sous l'Occupation. In Réflexions sur la question juive, Sartre addresses the question of opinion. In his discussion, he points out that the word opinion "suggère que tous les avis sont équivalents (...) [et] donne aux pensées une physionomie inoffensive en les assimilant à des goûts"²⁸² (suggests that all views are equivalent [and] gives an inoffensive physiognomy to thoughts by assimilating them to tastes). With Brasillach's trial, this notion became a controversial topic: can a person be made to appear before a court for his opinions? Brasillach's lawyer, Jacques Isorni, called his trial "un procès d'opinion" and "un procès de la continuité de la pensée"²⁸³. For his part, Jouhandeau uses this same argument when it suits him:

À [Mme T.] ce sont, nous l'en soupçonnons, des malversations, des spéculations, une sorte de trafic d'influence qui sont reprochés. À nous un *simple délit d'opinion*²⁸⁴, des imprudences qui n'ont rien rapporté. (278) ([Mme T] is accused, we suspect, of embezzlement, speculation, of misusing influence. We [are accused of] a simple opinion-related offense, rash [acts from] which we gained nothing).

²⁸¹ see Journal, pp. 271, 272, 273, 280, 284 – 286, 304, 306, 309.

²⁸² Sartre, J-P. Réflexions sur la question juive. Paris : Gallimard, 1954. p.7

²⁸³ quoted in Assouline, 55

²⁸⁴ Emphasis added.

The use of the word “simple” diminishes, even completely negates any influence the word “délit” might have. Let us recall his statement that “nos opinions ne tiennent pas plus étroitement nôtre âme que nos vêtements à notre corps” (324) (our opinions do not have a greater hold on our soul than our clothes on our bodies). Just as clothes can be shed, so can opinions; whence the significance of the word “simple” in the previous quote²⁸⁵. It seems that, for Jouhandeau, opinions are not expression of principles or beliefs.

Jouhandeau thus helps himself to circulating discourses, thereby trying to fit into the times and context. But he uses these discourses in ways that are convenient to his line of defensive argumentation. Indeed, he does not refute terms, he just re-uses them with qualifiers such as “honnêtes” or “simple” to modify their signification and subvert the concept in its authentic context. In this manner, he tries to turn the situation to his advantage.

I would lastly like to comment upon the image Jouhandeau portrays of the society he lives in and the manner in which he envisages the past, the present and the future. Mostly, Jouhandeau uses terse aphorisms to convey his impression of contemporary society or the “actualité” which opened this chapter. A fitting example from an entry for 18 August 1944 reads: Ce qui est affreux, c’est qu’il y ait des martyrs dans tous les camps et qu’ils n’aient la moindre considération les uns pour les autres, du moment qu’ils ne meurent pas pour la même sottise. (254) (What is dreadful is that there are martyrs in every faction and that they do not have the slightest consideration for each other, as long as they do not die for the same silly cause). Thus, he lives in a society that is divided, intolerant, ignorant and murderous. Only once does he expand (and expound) on the topic:

On a vu en effet, comme par une tour de passe-passe diabolique ceux qui avaient fait de la France la passion de toute leur vie, du nationalisme le plus exact, le plus

²⁸⁵ for other examples of the relativity of opinions, see pp. 200, 333, 335, 336, 368.

pur leur unique raison d'être, passer du soir au lendemain au rang des traîtres, en même temps que des étrangers ou des citoyens aussi peu soucieux des destinés du pays que de l'ordre public étaient promus tout d'un coup au rang de patriotes chevronnés, ceux-ci traînant ceux-là devant des tribunaux improvisés qui les condamnaient pour félonie, quand on ne les exécutait pas sommairement sans justice. (330 – 331) (Indeed, we have seen how, by a means of diabolic sleight of hand, those who had made France the passion of their lives, who had made the most exact and purest nationalism their *raison d'être*, passed from one day to the next into the rank of traitors, whilst foreigners or fellow-countrymen who had as little care for the fate of the country as for public order were suddenly promoted to the ranks of seasoned patriots, the latter dragging the former into improvised tribunals which condemned them for felony, if they weren't summarily executed without justice).

It is important to note the number of qualifiers Jouhandeau uses for the patriots and their actions in this single sentence: “la passion de leur vie”, “le plus exact”, le plus pur”, “leur raison d'être”. In doing this, he underlines the sincerity of their motivations. On the other hand, as far as the “étrangers” are concerned, “tout d'un coup” they become “patriotes chevronnés”. Once again, “étrangers” is not used innocently. Just like other French anti-Semites, in his “political” articles, Jouhandeau too riled against the “étrangers”, the Jews. In this particular context, it could also refer to the communists. Either way, one thing is for sure: for him, their commitment to the nation is only belated and superficial, since they are internationalists at heart. He suggests, then, that these people who are now in power represent a rupture in an otherwise uniform progression. In other words, he omits to mention the fact that the Occupation itself was the original rupture, or perhaps he did not consider it as such. The society he lives is portrayed as having been overturned by an evil machination, and the powers in place at Liberation as pure anarchy.

It is due to this reversal that Jouhandeau insists that he does not want to

assister aux déceptions qui vont suivre. L'Europe ne peut sortir que diminuée, anéantie par les victoires en cours. On devine quelle sera la place de la France, moulue entre le triomphe prochain de l'américanisme et du bolchevisme. (259) (witness the deceptions which will follow. Europe can only come out of them diminished, destroyed by the victories in course. One can guess what the place of France will be, crushed between the impending triumph of Americanism and of Bolshevism).

Other than the "étrangers" and the "citoyens (...) peu soucieux de la destinée du pays", he fears the possible future influence of Americans as much as that of the communists. He does not say it in so many words, but the implication is that a Nazi Europe would have been a radiant Europe because it elevated race over class and nation over collectivity.

In spite of the fact that Jouhandeau foresees the near future as being quite bleak, it is his faith in the future that keeps him from falling into despair. It is this faith that Sartre names "l'historicisme". In Situations III, while speaking of collaborators, Sartre explains that

le collaborateur est atteint de cette maladie intellectuelle qu'on peut appeler historicisme. L'histoire nous apprend en effet qu'un grand événement collectif soulève, dès son apparition, des haines et des résistances, qui, pour être parfois fort belles, seront considérées plus tard comme inefficaces. (the collaborator is affected by the intellectual illness that one can call historicism. History teaches us that when a great, collective event, right from its inception, creates hatred and resistance which, although they might sometimes be beautiful / noble, will later be considered inefficacious).

In other words, those affected by this "maladie intellectuelle" believe that they might be condemned now but History will prove them right. It is precisely this process that we can see in Jouhandeau. He too wants to begin the process of a retroactive reading of his commitment: "Il faut considérer les idées qui divisent aujourd'hui les hommes avec l'impartialité de l'historien

qui les étudiera dans cent ans” (335) (One must look at the ideas which divide men today with the impartiality of the historian who will study them in a hundred years). As for him, History will justify him. He was probably not even referring to a very distant future, since he is reported to have said that “Si Drieu la Rochelle consent à rester caché deux ans dans un sous-sol, on fera de lui un ministre”²⁸⁶ (If Drieu la Rochelle agrees to stay in hiding in a basement for two years, they will make him a Minister). He therefore categorically believed in an overturning of events which would render the contemporary situation (i.e. Liberation and the powers at Liberation) with no foundation.

We can thus affirm that in the case of the Journal sous l’Occupation, the (re)writing of History and the writing as well as re-writing of the self are closely connected; the latter explicates and modifies the former. Indeed, the act of writing his version of the event allows him to make a space for himself in this History and to choose his spot in the scheme of things. Also, through writing, he enacts the purge trial that never happened, giving it an outcome which for him is logical, namely “not guilty”. In reading the text closely, one realizes that there is a political and ideological continuity in his discourse. Thus, through his Journal sous l’Occupation, Jouhandeau achieves a creative revision of his political engagement and his acts.

²⁸⁶ quoted in Assouline, 26.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This dissertation began from the perspective of journalistic discourses of the months of liberation of France as the context in which the three works studied thereafter were written. As we have seen, in a variety of instances, some of the arguments and concerns of journalists and writers sometimes coincided, but clashed at others. For instance, the underlying discourse in La Bête est morte supports the ideals of the Revolution, but in Journal sous l'Occupation, Jouhandeau equates the purge to the Terror, thereby alluding to the recurrence of the Revolution in contemporary newspapers but in a way that is consistent with his political beliefs. To bring this work full circle, I would like to return to French newspapers during the months of liberation, this time to underscore the near-total absence of racial deportees from journalistic discourse. Newspapers used the umbrella term of “déportés” (deportees) to refer mainly to political deportees. As early as September 16, 1944, the pro-Gaullist daily Carrefour carried a longish article entitled “Comment rentreront-ils?” (How will they return?) which attempts to foresee logistical malfunctions and glitches that might hinder or delay the return of deportees²⁸⁷. In the whole article, the word “juif” (Jew / Jewish) does not appear even once. Similarly, Défense de la France carried an article at the end of the same month on the deportation of children from

²⁸⁷ Anon. “Comment rentreront-ils” in Carrefour. September 30, 1944.

Drancy²⁸⁸. It is an eyewitness account written by a survivor of that camp. Here too, in the whole article, the word “juif” never once emerges. In France, other than Jewish children, no other category had their young deported en masse²⁸⁹. To cite another example, in early November of the same year, François Mauriac begins his article, “L’inégalité dans la mort” (Inequality in death), with the following words :

Ce qui donne la mesure de la souffrance humaine durant ces sombres années, c’est la nécessité où nous sommes de classer les personnes par espèces, pour ne pas les confondre : les fusillés, les torturés des camps de représailles, les victimes de divers bombardements, les résistants du maquis, les morts de la Grande Guerre, ceux du Maroc, ceux de la guerre de 39-40, ceux d’Afrique, ceux d’Italie, de France, des Vosges. Ainsi les accueillons-nous tous, en les dénombrant, dans l’arche de notre mémoire encombrée de martyres.

(What gives us a measure of human suffering during these somber years is the necessity we feel to classify people by species, in order not to mix them: the executed, those tortured in retaliation camps, the victims of various bombardments, the *résistants* of the *maquis*, those who died in the Great War, those who died in Morocco, in the war of 39-40, those of Africa, of Italy, of France, of the Vosges. We thus take them all in, enumerating them in the arch of our memory [which is] saturated with martyrs.)

Mauriac addresses the question of classifying humans in types and categories, but alludes only indirectly to the one category that suffered the most due to deportation. As a last example, I would like to mention an article in *Carrefour*²⁹⁰. The journalist reports on a visit he made to Dachau less than two weeks after the liberation of the camp. He gives detailed descriptions of the

²⁸⁸ Van Lee, Loys. “Pendant trois nuits j’ai vu partir les enfants déportés en Allemagne”. *Défense de la France*, September 27, 1944.

²⁸⁹ In the Camargue region in Southern France, the Vichy regime had an internment camp constructed for gypsies, but the children were either placed in families outside the camp or put up for adoption. Debilly, Isabelle. “Un camp pour les tziganes. Saliers 1942-1944”. © Memoire-net. Mémoire locale et la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. <http://www.memoire-net.org/article.php3?id_article=247>. March 26, 2006.

²⁹⁰ Le Fèvre, Georges. “Ils sont trente mille qui attendent à Dachau”. *Carrefour*, May 12, 1945.

situation, the conditions of the camp, and of the traces of the horrors, but never once specifies who suffered these horrors. He states, “Le spectre en pyjama rayé, qui me guide, ne lâche pas son nouveau-venu. Il faut que je sache tout, que je voie tout, que je comprenne tout”²⁹¹.

As we have seen, in all of the above examples, the specificity of the Jewish Holocaust in French journalistic discourse is relegated to a peripheral position at best. In light of this fact, when I stumbled upon Guy Kohen’s Retour d’Auschwitz, souvenirs du déporté 174949, I was struck by the singularity of his project at so early a date²⁹². Given the paucity of attention given to Jewish survivors in newspapers of the time, I have chose to focus on this particular little-known work as an early sample from the incipient category of personal narratives that dealt with holocaust survival. Although there is a lot to be said about Kohen’s reflections on the overall experience of the camps and on human behavior in the camps such as the capacity to distinguish between good and evil, I will approach this work in the specificity of the French context as a text that can be read both in complement to, and in contrast with, prevailing journalistic discourses, and focus mainly on the multiple temporalities of memory.

Retour d’Auschwitz is a work of non-fiction, a documentary narrative like many early survival narratives. It follows a linear, chronological structure, from life in the *zone-sud*, to arrest in January 1944, imprisonment in Limoges, transportation to Drancy, deportation to Auschwitz in March 1944, labor in the Buna *werke*²⁹³. The narration concludes with the long march from

²⁹¹ In the 1930s, Dachau was intended mainly for German and Polish prisoners, but by the end of the decade, many racial deportees were interned there. Many experiments were also carried out in this camp.

²⁹² Kohen, Guy. Retour d’Auschwitz. Souvenirs du déporté 174949. Paris: Librairie Leroy, 1945

²⁹³ A sub-camp of Auschwitz, the Buna *werke* was designated as Auschwitz III. The majority of the prisoners were Jewish of which a “significant proportion died due to the arduous slave labor, starvation, savage mistreatment, and executions”. “Auschwitz III (Monowitz) Concentration camp and sub-camps”. Auschwitz and Birkenau Memorial and Museum. << http://www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl/html/eng/historia_KL/monowice_ok.html>>. March 26, 2006.

Auschwitz towards Germany after evacuation in mid-January 1945, and finally escape, repatriation and return to Paris via Odessa and Marseilles on May 11, 1945.

The initial contact with the cover page is striking: the barbed wire and bricks of the walls, the flames leaping out of the crematory furnace, the flailing limbs, and the deportee number both in the subtitle at the bottom of the cover page and tattooed on the arm in the foreground leave little doubt as to the intent of the work. The word “souvenir” in the subtitle displays the manifest will to leave a trace, that is to say, the author reminisces, but he also wants to record the evidence of the existence of his experience and suffering (witnessing as “devoir de mémoire”).

Other than the language in which the title is written, nothing on the cover reveals anything specifically French. The book opens with a lengthy dedication to the author’s father, but there is no authorial intervention as to the reason for writing or publishing this work or the urgency with which this is done. Kohen reserves that for the end of the book. But already in the dedication, when speaking of the arrival of persecuted Jews from Eastern Europe, Kohen states “*Nous vîmes arriver sur notre sol cette foule malheureux de proscrits*” (*We saw this crowd of unfortunate exiles arrive on our soil*)²⁹⁴. The use of the first person plural subject pronoun and possessive adjective indicate that the author is an assimilated Jew. This is reinforced by the closing words of the part of the narration that recounts his arrival in Marseille from Odessa, printed in upper-case letters, “VIVE LA FRANCE! VIVE LA LIBERTÉ!” (Long live France! Long live freedom!)²⁹⁵. It is clearly in the capacity of an acculturated Jewish citizen of the French Republic that he affirms his right to speak out. These closing words also underscore the author’s optimism as well as his lasting faith in the ideals of the Revolution of 1789, and this in spite of having experienced Drancy and Auschwitz at the young age of twenty.

²⁹⁴ Kohen, 8. Emphasis added.

²⁹⁵ Kohen, 122

As mentioned earlier, the text does not start with any statement of explicit intention or goal. There are also not too many clarifications initially as to the place or year Kohen speaks about. The first chapter begins simply with “Janvier”. To understand that the narrative begins in January 1944, the readers have to either work their way backwards, since there are more indications later in the text, or have to know by the prisoner number that that series (174949) was used later in the war²⁹⁶. There is a sense of urgency that comes across through this sort of rushing over what, to the historian, is an important detail. Other types of information, however, are given with some precision. This is mainly the case with sensorial memories – namely the taste of food, the feelings of pain, of hunger and thirst, of extreme cold or heat. For instance, Kohen specifies the precise elements of his last meal before his arrest by the Gestapo – pâté en croûte, and a clafoutis for dessert – and lingers on their physical aspect such as color, form, the consistency and flavors²⁹⁷. Other details provided to the reader are visual in nature, such as the mother of pearl on the handle of the penknife with which the German officer in the prison in Limoges cleaned his teeth²⁹⁸. These details are present in the text not only for a semblance of realism, but also and mainly to underscore the greater precision of sensorial memory²⁹⁹.

The theme of memory is linked to the past, but also to the present of writing and to the future, and in all three cases it is in the context of bearing witness that memory plays the greatest

²⁹⁶ Primo Levi’s prisoner number, for instance, was 174517. He arrived at Buna on February 26, 1944. Baxter, Jeannette. “Primo Levi (1919-1987)”. The Literary Encyclopedia. <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=2709>>. March 26, 2006.

²⁹⁷ Kohen, 16

²⁹⁸ Kohen, 28

²⁹⁹ Antoine Prost states: “Face à l’historien, le témoin est toujours volontaire: il témoigne parce qu’il le veut bien. (...) Il y a pour [le témoin] obligation de parler, et de dire vrai. L’historien n’est pas en droit d’en demander autant. Il n’a pas de pouvoir: le témoin l’aide dans sa recherche, il lui prête concours” (As opposed to the historian, the witness is always a volunteer: he witness because he wants to. (...) [For the witness] there is an obligation to speak out, and to speak the truth. The historian does not have the right to ask for as much. He does not have the power: the witness helps him in his research, he lends his support). It is thus in the type of details that memoirs convey that the source for microhistory resides. Antoine Prost, “L’historien, le juge, le témoin et l’accusé” in Le Génocide des Juifs entre procès et histoire 1943-2000. Ed. Florent Brayard. Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 2000. p294

role. One such instance can be seen in a situation described by Kohen while in the prison in Limoges. An entire Jewish family native to the region was brought in, and included the parents, son, daughter, and son-in-law. Their four-year old girl was not arrested but left with the concierge (“rue Pétoniaud Baupeyrat, je crois” Kohen tells us), and the Germans are stated to have said to the concierge: “Nous ne sommes pas des sauvages. Nous ne nous attaquons pas aux enfants.” (We are not savages. We do not attack children). Kohen goes on to state: “Combien de fois cette phrase m’est passée par la tête, à moi qui fus le témoin de l’extermination massive de milliers de jeunes êtres innocents!” (How many times this sentence went through my mind, I who was witness to the massive extermination of thousands of children)³⁰⁰. He then goes on to enumerate the different ways in which children were exterminated.

The commentary on the past is also approached through the question of national origin. More specifically, this has to do with the Francophobia experienced by the author. In the following excerpt, Kohen describes the phenomenon and then goes on to hypothesize as to the cause of this Francophobia:

J’aborde ici un sujet particulièrement délicat. Pourquoi les éléments français du camp, minorité certes, mais minorité importante, avaient-ils si mauvaise réputation? On leur reprochait d’être sales, de ne pas avoir de sentiment de camaraderie, d’être hypocrites; pourquoi, dès notre arrivée, étions-nous mis à l’index et traités en brebis galeuses, tant par les Allemands que par les Polonais et tous autres internes? Pourquoi, le jour même de mon arrivée à Auschwitz, un vieux détenu me prit-il le bras et me dit-il méchamment: “Le four crache de la fumée noire et épaisse, c’est ton convoi, ce sont les cochons de français qui brûlent. »

Il se peut que ce soit le fait que (...) nous portions la lourde responsabilité de la faillite militaire de notre pays, sans laquelle il n’y eût peut-être pas eu

³⁰⁰ Kohen, 39

d'Auschwitz, défaite inattendue d'une nation en qui l'Europe avait mis tout son espoir et qui fut la grande déception de tous les peuples déjà opprimés par les Nazis, il se peut que nous fussions plus lents que les autres détenus à cette existence atroce, il se peut... il se peut... (...) Aujourd'hui encore je ne suis pas en mesure, même après avoir réfléchi longuement, de tirer une conclusion valable de cette prévention. Je ne peux que faire cette constatation: être Français était au camp la plus noire référence, à tel point que maint déporté de Drancy n'hésitait souvent pas à se faire passer pour Belge.

(Here I touch upon a particularly delicate question. Why did the French elements of the camp, certainly a minority, but an important minority, have such a bad reputation? They were reproached of being dirty, of not having the feeling of camaraderie, of being hypocrites; why, right from our arrival, were we blacklisted and treated as black sheep, as much by the Germans as the Polish and all other prisoners? Why, on the very day of my arrival at Auschwitz, an old prisoner took my arm and said to me in a mean tone: "The oven spits out a thick, black smoke, it's your convoy, it's French pigs that are burning".

It is perhaps the fact that (...) we bore the heavy responsibility of the military defeat of our country, without which there may have never been an Auschwitz, unexpected defeat of a nation in whom Europe had put all her hope and which had been the great disappointment of all the peoples already oppressed by the Nazis, it is perhaps ... it is perhaps... (...) Today, after having thought about it at length, I am still not able to draw a valid conclusion for this prejudice. I can only make one observation: to be French in the camp was the worst reference, to the point that many a deportee from Drancy would not hesitate to pass himself off as Belgian.)³⁰¹

It is interesting to note that Kohen starts his observations on the French by referring to them in the third person singular ("on leur reprochait"), but midway through a sentence switches to the first person plural ("dès notre arrivée"). It is as if he distances himself from those particular reproaches (being dirty, not having the feeling of camaraderie, being hypocrite), but is

³⁰¹ Kohen, 66-68

all the same a victim along with his compatriots. Also, this particular aspect of the past, that is to say the position of French Jews in the hierarchy of the camps, is seen through the prism of the French defeat and Armistice, but more on a continental than national scale. That, at least, seems to be Kohen's interpretation of the resentment felt by Jewish prisoners of other nationalities, which might be explained by both the contemporary trials of Vichy officials as also the writer's young age³⁰².

In the same context, not only defeat and armistice, but also collaboration are depicted in terms of treason and crime, echoing the contemporary circulating legalistic and journalistic discourses. The Vichy courts that condemned *résistants* to death thus earn the epithet "tribunaux de trahison" (33), created on the approval of "ce grand criminel qui a nom le Maréchal Pétain" (33). Similarly, in defeat and Occupation, the French are portrayed as "victimes de traîtres" (68). Referring to collaborators as traitors was a topos in contemporary journalistic discourse, it was an exclusionary gesture that in part contributed to what Henry Rousso has called the resistentialist myth. Kohen makes another similar reflection towards the end of the book, once again in the context of inclusion and exclusion from the national community:

Je vais me permettre d'abandonner le plan international, car, pour Auschwitz, il ne pouvait être question d'autre chose, pour revenir chez nous, en France. Ce qui m'a toujours infiniment attristé fut de voir avec quelle facilité l'occupant était à même de recruter ses agents. *Tous les Français* seront d'accord avec moi pour reconnaître que *certaines parmi nous* se sont rendus coupables d'atrocités qui n'ont rien à envier à celles de leurs professeurs d'Outre-Rhin.

(I will take the liberty to leave the international sphere, since, for Auschwitz, there could be no other way to look at it, in order to return to us here, in France. What always saddened me infinitely was to see with what ease the occupiers were able

³⁰² Philippe Pétain's trial lasted from July 23, 1945 to August 15, 1945. He was convicted for treason but his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment due to his age.

to recruit their agents. *All French people* will agree with me that *some of us* were guilty of atrocities that [are comparable to] those of their professors from the other side of the Rhine.)³⁰³

The opposition between “tous les Français” and “certains parmi nous” serves both in terms of national self-definition and the positing of collaborators as inherently distinct from this national community.

The present of writing is also tied to the question of memory, this time in terms of remembering for purposes of testimony. In the concluding chapter, entitled “Pour servir de conclusion” (As a conclusion), after a reflection on the feeling of inadequacy of the testimony and on the dehumanization of prisoners in Auschwitz, Kohen broaches the question of credibility:

Ce sont des choses bien délicates à écrire, car tout ceci dépasse tellement l’imagination d’un homme de cœur qu’il est difficile d’être cru de prime abord. Heureusement, des documents photographiés et filmés, des procès à répercussion mondiale, tels que ceux qui se déroulent actuellement à Lunebourg, et où des monstres comme Kramer et Irma Grez étalent leur cynisme et rient devant les témoignages de leurs crimes, ont donné une publicité, pas encore assez large à mon gré, à ce qui s’est passé dans les camps d’extermination. *Testis ullus (sic), Testis nullus*, dit-on, mais peut-on réfuter le témoignage de milliers d’êtres, que dis-je de millions, car les morts sont là, eux aussi, et tous ces spectres décharnés d’hommes, de femmes, d’enfants ACCUSENT.

(These things are quite delicate to write, for all of this surpasses the imagination of noble-hearted men that it is difficult to be believed initially. Fortunately, photographic and filmed documents, trials of global repercussions, such as those that are currently taking place at Lunebourg, where monsters such as Kramer and Irma Grez display their cynicism and laugh before the evidence of their crimes, have given publicity, not yet large enough for my liking, to what happened in the

³⁰³ Kohen, 130

extermination camps. *Testis ullus (sic), testis nullus*, one says, but can the witnessing of thousands of beings, of millions, for the dead are there too, and all these emaciated specters of men, of women, of children ACCUSE³⁰⁴.

Facts, motivations, and reasoning are all subsumed in this passage where first and foremost, we have an indication of the time frame in which this work was written and published. Josef Kramer, commandant of the Belsen camp who was also known as the “Beast of Belsen”, and Irma Grese, also an SS officer at Belsen, were on trial in Lunebourg from September 17 to November 17, 1945, and they were hanged on December 13, 1945. Since he states that their trials are on-going, the work was ostensibly composed between September and November 1945. Secondly, Kohen also clearly anticipates revisionist claims as to the veracity of the Holocaust by admitting to the incredulity of the reader faced by such a literary enterprise. Concomitantly, he blends verbal testimony with visual testimony, reinforcing his claims with the evocation of films, photographs, and more importantly, the survivors that substantiate his affirmations. Furthermore, Kohen sets out to refute the legalistic aphorism, “a single witness is no witness”, which is a vestige from Justinian’s Codex, by evoking precisely these survivors who strengthen his own written deposition³⁰⁵. Finally, the verb that ends the paragraph, that is to say “Accusent” not only echos Zola’s legendary “J’accuse”, but also underscores the importance of bringing to justice. “Il faut punir, c’est une nécessité, c’est un devoir” (They must be punished, it a necessity, it is a duty), Kohen states a little later on in the text³⁰⁶. Among all the points that emerge from this passage, the common denominator is the larger question of justice. On the topic of justice, Kohen

³⁰⁴ Kohen, 126-127

³⁰⁵ In his essay entitled “Just one witness”, Carlo Ginzburg argues precisely the contrary. He states: “In fact, (...) narratives based on one witness (...) can be regarded as experimental cases which deny such a clear-cut distinction: a different reading of the available evidence immediately affects the resulting narrative. A similar although usually less visible relationship can be assumed on a general level. An unlimited skeptical attitude toward historical narratives is therefore groundless.” Ginzburg, Carlo. “Just one witness”. Trans. Nadine Tanio. Probing the limits of representation. Ed. Saul Friedlander. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. p. 96.

³⁰⁶ Kohen, 141

reduces the discussion from the larger context of Europe to one of more immediate, personal interest, or more specifically the French context. The author cites the example of André Algarron, chief editor of the collaborationist newspaper, *Le Petit Parisien*. He quotes a letter written by his father, Henry Kohen, to Algarron in December 1941, which in turn is about a letter he had written to Pétain proposing the emigration of Jews to French Guyana. Guy Kohen then quotes Algarron's response, where the journalist states his opinion unequivocally: "Mon cher Monsieur, quand on veut se débarrasser d'une maladie contagieuse, il n'y a pas trente-six moyens: on isole le bacille et on le tue." (My dear sir, when one wants to get rid of a contagious disease, there are not thirty-six methods: one isolates the germ and one kills it). The younger Kohen's written reaction to this is telling: "Je ne crois pas qu'il soit nécessaire de faire aucun commentaire. Et c'est un Français qui a écrit cette lettre. Valait-il mieux qu'un SS? A vous de répondre." (I do not think it is necessary to comment [upon this further]. And it was a Frenchman who wrote this letter. Was he better than an SS? It is up to you to answer). Here again the rabidly anti-Semitic journalist is equated to a Nazi, thereby portraying him as unsuited to, and inconsistent with, the national community.

Lastly, the theme of memory is tied to the future, more specifically in terms of remembering in order to avoid the repetition of the phenomenon of camps and extermination.

Kohen states: "

La fumée, sortant des fours crématoires, qui formait, sous le souffle du vent, des ondulations capricieuses, avait parfois figure humaine. Et ces figures, derniers restes des sacrifiés, nous crient à nous, les rescapés de cet enfer, elles nous crient: "N'oubliez jamais, souvenez-vous qu'il y eut un jour un Auschwitz sur cette terre, et faites en sorte qu'il n'y ait plus jamais d'autre.

(The smoke emanating from the crematory furnaces, which formed capricious undulations under the breath of the wind, sometimes made a human figure /

countenance. And these figures, last remains of the sacrificed, scream at us, the survivors of that hell, they scream at us: “Never forget, remember that there once was an Auschwitz on this earth, and make sure that there might never be another.)³⁰⁷

The link between memory and the future becomes explicit here: remembering in order not to repeat past errors, and more importantly, past horrors.

As we have seen in the previous chapters of this dissertation, political debates were played out through the forum of the national newspapers during the months of liberation. Dominant journalistic discourse dealt largely with questions of national self-definition. Many of the stakes that were played out in the newspapers were also present, more or less evidently, in the three works I have analyzed. I have chosen to conclude with a reflection on Kohen’s text due to the exceptional nature of the writer’s testimonial project, accomplished in less than six months after his return from Auschwitz, and which intentionally or unintentionally fills a lacuna in contemporary journalistic discourse.

³⁰⁷ Kohen, 129-130

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