

ANTI-ANTISEMITISM &
THE POLITICS OF THE
FRENCH INTELLECTUAL

Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question

Jonathan Judaken



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Texts and Contexts

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the Politics of the French Intellectual*

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To Julia
in the hope of provoking future Jewish questions

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Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question

Introduction

French Intellectuals and the Jewish Question

Will it be necessary to write in the dictionaries of the year 2000: “Intellectual: noun, masculine, category social and cultural, born in Paris at the moment of the Dreyfus affair, died in Paris at the end of the twentieth century, unable to survive the decline of the universal”?

Bernard-Henri Lévy

The funeral march began at two PM Saturday, April 19, 1980. Twenty thousand people gathered outside Broussais hospital to follow the processional as it wound past the areas of Paris that Sartre haunted. Moving solemnly through the streets, the crowd gathered the young and old, foreign and French, swelling into a cacophonous demonstration of fifty thousand. The throng walked the two-mile route surrounding the hearse with Sartre’s “family,” followed by a car from *Les Temps Modernes*, another from Éditions Gallimard, a third from *L’Amicales des Algériens en Europe*, one more from *Libération*. They moved from the fourteenth arrondissement past the cafés, the restaurants, the clubs, and the brasseries in Saint-Germain that Sartre had frequented. When the cortege passed La Coupole, the waiters came outside to bow. The stream moved into the cemetery in Montparnasse, now decorated with red flags and black flags, with some people standing atop tombstones and cheering.

The funeral reunited intellectuals of the postwar Left from several generations: those from the Resistance stood alongside those who resisted the war in Algeria, comrades and fellow travelers from the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*, PCF) mixed with New Leftists and Maoists. The surge was so intense that a human chain wound around Simone de Beauvoir

and Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, Sartre's adopted Jewish daughter, to protect them. There was no service, there were no speeches. After the coffin was lowered into the grave Beauvoir sat at its edge for more than ten minutes, enveloped by the multitude.

In the press a deluge of testimonials bore witness to Sartre's significance. Serge July in *Libération* spoke of "this huge personality" who "occupied this century the way Voltaire and Hugo occupied theirs." *Le Figaro* hailed Sartre as the "last master of French thought." *Le Monde* dedicated eight pages to "the passionate history of a committed intellectual." The weeklies—*L'Express*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Point*, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*—printed a slew of tributes by prominent intellectuals, and their covers were blazoned with Sartre's image. *Libération* and *Le Matin* published special issues dedicated to Sartre; each sold over a hundred thousand copies. Bernard Pivot canceled his scheduled program for the television show *Apostrophes* to broadcast a "Sartre Special." The outpouring spilled beyond France's borders, attesting to Sartre's international acclaim. "The only discordant note in this chorus of praise came from a few Arab countries: 'It is my opinion,' the Palestinian political scientist Nafez Nazzal declared, 'that his allegiance to Israel overrode all other concerns.'"¹ Nazzal's allegation was not so bizarre placed in the context of the last days of Sartre's life.

For Sartre died as he had lived, in controversy. Just before he entered the hospital with a pulmonary edema, his dialogues with Benny Lévy were published in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, causing a scandal in the French press. In conversation with Lévy, the young leader of the Gauche prolétarienne (the French Maoists) who had served as Sartre's secretary and friend since the onset of his blindness in the fall of 1973, Sartre made, for an avowed Marxist activist and lifelong atheist, seemingly outrageous claims, saying, for example,

one would have had to conceive of history differently if one wanted to say that there is a Jewish history[,] . . . [and] obviously there is a Jewish history. . . . There is also another theme I like: the Jewish dead[,] . . . they will be reborn as living beings in this new world. This new world is the end [and interests me] precisely because it possesses no Marxist element. . . . [I]t's the beginning of the existence of men who live for each other. In other words,

it's an ethical end. . . . [M]essianism is an important thing that Jews have conceived of alone but that could be used by non-Jews for other purposes[,] . . . [a model of] doing away with the present society and replacing it with a juster society.²

Sartre at seventy-five was beginning afresh. In dialogue with Lévy he was rethinking fundamental aspects of his thought: his conception of consciousness, Marxism as the key to philosophy in our time, the role of the intellectual, writing as a form of praxis, his theory of history, and his understanding of Jews and Judaism.

If Sartre's interview with Lévy was sensational because it marked a new point of departure in the author's life and thought, then the scandal of my study is to claim that his last published words should come as no surprise, since every time he fundamentally rethought the underlying principles that defined his politics and his role as a public intellectual, Sartre did so by reflecting on "the Jewish Question."³ His interventions on behalf of Jews and Judaism were intermittent and seemingly peripheral to the central political issues of his life: his critique of bourgeois values, the rise of fascism, the Nazi occupation, the cold war and communism, decolonization, the student movements, and the problems of the Third World. However, at each defining moment of his intellectual agenda Sartre turned to the image of "the Jew" to either clarify, reassess, or redefine his ideas. His response to the Jewish Question helped determine his approach to other concerns and was part of the reason that his ideas resonated so deeply in French political culture. While he spilled much more ink on other topics, his representations of Jews and Judaism as persistent figures of alterity serve as a fecund site to interrogate and reevaluate his oeuvre, especially his conception of the role of the intellectual. This claim, though startling, should also come as no surprise, since the public intellectual was born in France in the late nineteenth century and from the outset was intrinsically enmeshed in the debate on the Jewish Question. To understand Sartre's position, therefore, we must trace it back to the origins of the intellectual.

The Birth of the Intellectual

The concept and very word “intellectual” was introduced into every language and culture from the French *intellectuel*.⁴ This term was first used widely at the height of the Dreyfus affair.⁵ The case of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain and member of the General Staff who was falsely accused of treason and found guilty by a military tribunal in 1894, had deeply divided France by 1898. A transformative moment in the long campaign to exonerate Dreyfus was the open letter by the famous naturalist writer Émile Zola addressed to the president of the Republic on January 13 that appeared in Georges Clemenceau’s newspaper *L’Aurore* under the huge front-page headline “J’accuse.” The letter indicted the military with perpetuating a grave injustice against an innocent citizen and demanded a revision of the verdict in the name of truth, justice, and humanity. The next day a group of university professors, scientists, and writers published a “manifesto of the intellectuals” supporting Zola. In *L’Aurore* on January 23, Georges Clemenceau applauded the intellectual *protestataires*, whom he called “a sign” of a “movement of opinion” that comes from “all corners of the horizon grouped together by an idea” led by “resolute men who demand justice.” The manifesto by those who would henceforward be termed *intellectuels* was the first time that the word “intellectual” had achieved “common currency” in any language.⁶ It thus “consecrated and politicized” the noun and the social actor it designated.⁷

The intervention by these “intellectuals” resulted in rioting in the streets and a long battle between the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards over the soul of France. This was a Franco-French war: republicans opposed monarchists and Bonapartists, liberals and socialists stood against conservatives, secularists rejected clericalists. The Right, the military, and the Church’s desire for an organic, hierarchical, Catholic, traditional social order governed by *raison d’état* was at odds with the Republic’s recasting of the egalitarian, democratic values of the French Revolution, including fraternity, equality before the law, and individual human rights.

For the anti-Dreyfusards responding to the manifesto, the intellectuals who signed it represented the abuse of power and language akin to the Judaization they saw threatening France.⁸ The literary critic Ferdinand Brunetière deplored

the fact that “the Protestants, the freethinkers, the Freemasons, [and] the Jews” had attempted to “monopolize public functions” through “the pretense of raising the writers, the savants, the professors, the philologues to the rank of supermen.”⁹ Jules Delafosse in *Temps* would substitute the Asiatic word “mandarin” for “intellectual,” clearly according it a pejorative value. Like these other anti-Dreyfusards, Maurice Barrès’s response, “La protestation des intellectuels!” published in *Le Journal* on February 1, 1898, picked up on Clemenceau’s use of the “excellent word” to turn it against his opponents by branding them with it. For Barrès, intellectuals, like Jews, are only “pretenders,” “half-cultured . . . poisoned spirits” who have destroyed French instinct and substituted consciousness for it because they are “ashamed to think like the simple French.” Like the Jews, for whom everything has only an exchange value, Barrès contended, “the Dreyfus syndicate” offers a bargain: “Give me your name and I will give you the title of intellectual.”

Barrès’s retort characterized “intellectuals” as members of a decadent, avant-garde group on the margins of society who used the esoteric, urbane, universal, Kantian language of philosophy and were thus severed from the rootedness of the French language and the true culture of *la patrie* (the fatherland). His article offers a typology of the *protestataires* based on four signatories who embody the lack of legitimacy, the corruption of the Republic, the foreignness, degradation, and degeneracy with which he associates Jews. His wrath denigrates Zola most derisively: “By his roots, [he] is not French.” There is a “foreign, . . . antinational, . . . exotic” sensibility to Zola’s writings indicative of his Venetian origins. “I will say nothing of the Jewish signatures,” he concludes, because for Barrès their very Jewishness was an indictment of their endorsement and made their cosigners guilty by association.

The invention of the public intellectual in the context of the Dreyfus affair was, therefore, from the start thoroughly interwoven with the discourse on the Jewish Question. Barrès’s reply to the “manifesto of the intellectuals” associated the intellectual with decadent outsiders, with those who were urbane and universalist, *déraciné* (uprooted) from the purity of *le peuple*. He thereby attached to the image of the intellectual many of the same connotations that characterized his response to the Jewish Question.¹⁰ As a distillation of the anti-Dreyfusard

position, Barrès's rejoinder to the Dreyfusards has strongly determined the cultural image of the intellectual ever since, fusing the destiny of the universal intellectual to the image of Jews and Judaism, especially since intellectuals embraced many of the qualities that the anti-Dreyfusards disparaged.¹¹

In addition to the image of the intellectual, the specific social actor who came to underlie the intellectual's national role and function in France also emerged in the context of the Dreyfus affair. Christophe Charle has identified this role by mapping out its ancestors: the secular cleric (*le clerc*), who embraced rationality in his struggle with the priest for universal moral authority in the seventeenth century; the public critic and activist philosophe of the Enlightenment; the Romantic prophet, exemplified by Victor Hugo, who voiced the aspirations of the people; and the savant, whose expertise was put in the service of the progress of mankind.¹² As the intellectuals qua intellectuals were born in France during the late nineteenth century, they consolidated these various roles inherited from their precursors. At the crossroads of the development of the modern, secular, republican idea of the nation, the intellectual thus emerged as what Venita Datta has termed a "national icon."¹³ What's more, as Paul Cohen has argued, this national figure is a "consecrated heretic" who incarnates a uniquely French conception of liberty, critical of the "negative" liberty of Anglo-American liberalism and its concomitant materialism and utilitarianism. French intellectuals are equally resistant to identifying liberty with the state, as in the German model of freedom. Rather, consecrated heretics define themselves in opposition to the bourgeoisie, the Church, the government, and all forms of the established order.¹⁴

Socially, then, intellectuals are consecrated heretics who self-consciously act in public with others identified as intellectuals.¹⁵ This group identity is formed in networks of recruitment, such as educational institutions, journals, and publishing houses. Their opinions frame the national debate through the dissemination of their ideas in the mass media. Their cries are constituted through the use of a bifurcated polemical discourse (i.e., Left vs. Right, good vs. evil, moral vs. immoral, truth vs. illusion). Intellectuals stand as witnesses of the national conscience, representatives of the nation's values, poised to

speak in the name of truth against those they perceive as blocking the achievement of justice.

Intrinsic to the role of the public intellectuals is also the notion that they speak against the dominant voices of power on behalf of the oppressed, the downtrodden, the marginalized Other by announcing their truth and demanding justice for them. Nonetheless, despite the social and cultural origins of the French intellectual, the specific ways in which the alterity of “the Jew” contributed to defining the “national icon” after the Dreyfus affair and throughout the twentieth century in France has not been sufficiently explored. That is the aim of this study, which focuses on the image of “the Jew” in Jean-Paul Sartre’s life and work. But because Sartre’s response to the Jewish Question took up the terms and categories of a protracted discussion in French intellectual history, it must be set against that larger backdrop.

The Jewish Question

The catchphrase *la question juive* emerged in the 1840s from the German *die jüdische Frage* and then *die Judenfrage* (the Jewish Question) as the crystallization of a series of questions whose modern formulation goes back to the eighteenth century: Should Jews be granted civil and political rights equal to those of Christian subjects and citizens?¹⁶ Would civic education make them more like Gentiles? Can they serve as loyal soldiers? Are the Jews a distinctive people, race, or nation? Is there an inherent dichotomy between Judaism and modernity? This set of questions was part of a broader Enlightenment debate about human nature, natural religion, natural rights, common humanity, tolerance, and regeneration.¹⁷ The earliest phrasing goes back to the disputes in England concerning the 1753 Bill of Naturalization, the so-called Jew Bill. The outburst of newspaper articles, songs, petitions, and visual materials included among the pamphlets one entitled *Reply to the Famous Jew Question*.¹⁸

The Jewish Question was thus part of a wider Enlightenment discussion that in Germany ensued most famously between Moses Mendelssohn and Johann Caspar Lavater and in France between Isaac de Pinto and Voltaire.¹⁹ This debate reached its high point in 1781 with the publication in Berlin of Christian Wilhelm Dohm’s *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Concerning the

Amelioration of the Civil Status of Jews). Encouraged by Mendelssohn, Dohm argued in favor of granting Jews civil rights, believing that doing so would lead to an improvement in their behavior. His contentions were further advanced in 1787 by Count Honoré Gabriel Mirabeau's summation in *Sur Moses Mendelssohn sur la réforme politique des juifs*. This intellectual discussion dovetailed with the transformation of the political status of Jews in Austria and France as a result of Joseph II's 1782 *Toleranzpatent* (Edict of Toleration) and Louis XVI's *Lettres patentes* (letters patent) in 1784.

These issues were brought to wider public attention by the question posed by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Metz for its 1787 essay contest: "Are there means to make the Jews more useful and happier in France?" The question implied that there was a problem with the Jews. The three winners suggested that emancipation would lead to the economic, moral, political, and physical *regeneration* of the Jews that all the contestants as well as all the Enlightenment thinkers agreed was necessary.²⁰ This ambivalent assessment of the Jews and Judaism within Enlightenment discourse rested upon the secularization of medieval theological conceptions mediated by a heavy dose of the Enlightenment's emphasis on tolerance, its conception of a malleable human nature, and Montesquieu's theory of environmental influence. In short, the philosophes suggested that Jewish deficiencies—like the Jews' purported usurious moneylending, regressive rituals and mores, uncivilized and unsavory personal habits, and self-segregation—were the result of injurious social attitudes and bad governmental policy.²¹

What made this marginal population of such significance to the philosophes was the symbolic role played by metaphors of the Jewish body within the changing French body politic. While the concerns about Jews and Judaism remained peripheral to the wider debates about the new nation that erupted in 1789, disquiet about the forty thousand Jews of France provoked intense discussion by members of the National Assembly and churchmen. The Jewish Question became a mirror that enabled the French to reflect on many aspects of their culture, history, values, and underlying political precepts.²² The debates in the National Assembly and during the postrevolutionary period about Jews and Judaism were a significant aspect of the general quarrel about the desirability

and the process to achieve the politics of emancipation and regeneration proposed and promised by the Revolution.²³ In short, as Gary Kates puts it, “there were so few Jews in France . . . [that] they were easily turned into symbols of something else. . . . The debate over Jewish emancipation was thus a debate over what it meant to be a French citizen.”²⁴ As such, the Jewish Question is best understood by what Shulamit Volkov calls a cultural “code,” and it will be treated as such throughout this work.²⁵

After the outbreak of the Revolution and over the next two years the recurring arguments for Jewish emancipation finally triumphed in the French National Assembly, led by moderates like Mirabeau, Stanislas Clermont-Tonnerre, and the radical abbé Henri Grégoire.²⁶ The first discussion of Jewish rights in the Constituent Assembly was raised on September 28, 1789, in response to Jews from Alsace who asked to be protected from popular violence. The issue was settled after the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen on August 26, when the assembly decreed that “the Jews are under the safeguard of the law and require of the king the protection that they need,” thus effectively giving Jews civil rights.²⁷ Active citizenship for all Jews, with the right to vote and hold office, would, however, have to await the decree of September 27, 1791. The decree pushed the differing Jewish communities in France to the forefront of modern Jewish history as the first legally emancipated Jews in Europe, extending full citizenship to those who swore the civic oath that specifically renounced Jewish communal autonomy.²⁸ Emancipation was passed despite vehement opposition and in two stages that reflected the duality of revolutionary attitudes caught between long-standing prejudices and Enlightenment principles.²⁹ The price of Jewish emancipation was cultural integration, with Judaism and Jewishness limited to the private sphere and citizenship deemed to conflict with communal affiliation. “The Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals,” Clermont-Tonnerre famously proclaimed, since “there cannot be one nation within another nation.”³⁰ No subsequent regime until Vichy, whether republican, royalist, or Bonapartist, would challenge the principle of Jewish citizenship, but the Jewish Question would be raised anew in each succeeding period over the next two hundred years.

Napoleon's reign synthesized ancien régime attitudes and practices and Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals toward Jews.³¹ When the emperor stopped in Strasbourg after his victory at Austerlitz, he heard complaints about the Jews. By the time he arrived in Paris the press was rife with a campaign led by Catholic intellectuals calling for the abolition of the Jewish franchise. Responding to the ongoing discussion of why Jewish economic and cultural patterns were not changing even though Jews were emancipated, Napoleon convened an Assembly of Jewish Notables in 1806 to address complaints about dishonest Jewish peddlers and usurious lenders, to clearly demarcate the line between civil and Jewish law, and to firmly establish assimilation as the goal of emancipation. Napoleon posed twelve questions to the 111 primarily nonrabbinical notables, and their responses became the official position of the assembly. They reinforced the Revolution's cleavage between ethnic and religious identity, with all Jews subservient to French national law and rabbis serving thereafter as teachers and preachers but not as judges with an autonomous legal code that might conflict with Napoleon's. The Great Sanhedrin ratified the assembly's position in 1807. Obedience to the state was assured in all civil and political matters, including juridical, educational, taxation, and other administrative functions. Jewishness was limited to religious observance. To secure this outcome on March 17, 1808, Napoleon issued three decrees: the first created a Central Consistory, a hierarchical, centralized organization under the aegis of the Ministry of Religions that had a monopoly over the public expression of Judaism in France; the second mandated the documentation of all synagogues and required Jews to fix family names to assist in their regulation; the third became known as the "Infamous Decree." Valid for ten years, it limited where Jews could live, mandated military service, and created discriminatory restrictions on Jewish commerce and moneylending. Louis XVIII did not renew the "Infamous Decree" in 1818.

Henceforth, the Jewish community underwent rapid acculturation and geographic and social mobility, with the last discriminatory legislation, the *more judaïco* court oath, abolished in 1846. As legally equal citizens, Jews were well positioned to ride the tide of modernization, impelled by industrialization and urbanization, leading to their integration into economic, political, and uni-

versity institutions and to their progressive *embourgeoisement*. By the end of the nineteenth century, although a tiny minority, Jews were visible in every area of French life, especially after the advent of the Third Republic, to which they were zealously committed.³²

In response, two currents of anti-Jewish antipathy—right wing and left wing—emerged out of broader critiques of French modernization and the modern state. Each identified Jews as the symbols of what the critics opposed.³³ First, a counterrevolutionary, conservative, Catholic tradition arose that depicted the Jews as the spirit and corrupting force of modernity and revolution, allied with republicans, Freemasons, and Protestants. These groups, their critics complained, were bent on the destruction of the family and the organic France of the peasant and the provinces. The counterrevolutionary Right started with the émigrés and members of the court who fled France to overthrow the Revolution, and they were supported by the counterrevolutionary insurgents in the Vendée region. Their doctrines were carried into the nineteenth century by the Ultras, who continued to uphold the restoration of the France of the *ancien régime*.³⁴ The proponents of this worldview—from Joseph de Maistre to François-René de Chateaubriand and Louis-Gabriel-Ambroise de Bonald, from Arthur de Gobineau to Henri Gougenot des Mousseaux and Abbé Chabauty—opposed their vision of a traditional, aristocratic, hierarchical France ordered by the monarch to the France of the Revolution and its slogans of liberty, equality, fraternity, and the universal rights of man. They sought to purge France of the corrupting influence of Judaized modernity that they identified with banking, commerce, the stock market, industry, and the city. Worst of all was Paris, where so many Jews were now centered; it was described as a Babylon of vice and decadence, criminality and incredulity, immigration and cosmopolitanism.

The second current was a socialist critique that argued that industrialization and capitalism created a new aristocracy of money.³⁵ Its origins go back to the July Monarchy (1830–48), when Louis-Philippe took the throne and the middle classes achieved new power. Among this emergent Orléanist elite were a number of Jewish families, especially the Rothschilds, who became the new symbol of everything that nascent socialism opposed. There was strong Jewish adherence and a philosemitic thrust to the Saint-Simonian strand of utopian

socialism, but the followers of Charles Fourier (1772–1837) and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) began to identify the Jews with the members of a new plutocracy of financial capitalism who, like the aristocracy of the *ancien régime*, were considered parasites on the body of the people.³⁶

An early socialist and progenitor of anarcho-syndicalism, Proudhon recast anti-Jewish images in the new socialist idiom. He contended that “the Jew” was by nature inherently “the evil principle, Satan, Ahriman incarnated in the race of Shem” and as such “always fraudulent and parasitic, who operates in trade . . . by means of falsification.”³⁷ He therefore advocated the exclusion of Jews from all kinds of employment and to correct their nefarious ways called for the closure of synagogues as a means to destroy the cult whose religion was the source of their demonic ways. Considering Jews as rulers of banking and the stock market, the icons of bloodsucking exploitation, he declared that eventually “one must send this race back to Asia or exterminate it.”³⁸

Like that of Proudhon, Fourier’s social critique was full of anti-Jewish diatribes, calling Jews “the leprosy and the ruin of the body politic” as he fulminated against granting them citizenship.³⁹ He sought to rebuild society around communitarian cooperatives he called phalansteries, and he depicted Jews as the antithesis of this ideal: the quintessence of individualistic, urbane civilization and the spirit of Mammon. The most influential socialist antisemite, however, proved to be Alphonse de Toussenel (1803–85), a disciple of Fourier and author of *Les juifs, rois de l’époque* (The Jews, Kings of the Age, 1845). Toussenel argued that Jews dominated France through control over financial capitalism. His attacks on the Rothschilds resulted in a flood of pamphlets targeting the banking family as symptomatic of what was wrong with capitalist modernity. He idealized rural France and ultramontane Catholicism. Strangely for a socialist, he decried the decline of monarchical authority, which he contended represented the voice of the people, protected workers, and, allied with the Catholic Church, was a bulwark against the Protestant enemies of France.

These two trends fused in the aftermath of the stunning defeat in the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War to create a new, truly modern French antisemitism. With the amputated regions of Alsace and Lorraine a perennial source of French humiliation, and with the firm establishment of the Third Republic on the principles

of 1789, a politics characterized by *revanche* (revenge) arose that would cohere on the Right around integral nationalism and antisemitism by the *fin de siècle*. This third variety of antisemitism constituted an indigenous French racial Jew hatred. Although it incorporated German racial biology, British eugenics, and social Darwinism, the French variant of racism rested more upon culture and tradition than blood, more on sociological, medical, criminological, and psychiatric sciences than on “hard sciences.”

The “pope” of this new antisemitism was the muckraking journalist Édouard Drumont, who rose to prominence with the publication of *La France juive* (Jewish France, 1886), a 1,200-page combination of socialist and counterrevolutionary Judeophobia undergirded by science that mingled folk stereotypes with anecdotes to produce a powerful mix of political, economic, religious, and racial antisemitism.⁴⁰ It was the best-selling political work of the century, with one hundred thousand copies sold in six months and more than two hundred different editions printed by 1900. The fertile ground for its reception was laid by the 1882 crash of the Union générale, a Catholic bank established four years earlier with the support of Church institutions, Catholic families, and thousands of small investors, ostensibly to provide an alternative to Protestant and Jewish banking houses.⁴¹ Although the bank failed due to mismanagement, the Catholic press, especially the Assumptionist religious order and its mass circulation daily, *La Croix*, charged that Jewish bankers had orchestrated its fall.⁴² The Jewish plot insinuated by the Assumptionists was generalized by *La France juive* into a conspiracy theory about Jewish domination of a degenerate France.⁴³

Drumont’s book was lucrative enough to launch an antisemitic newspaper, *La Libre Parole* (1892), whose masthead, “La France aux français” (France for the French), summarized the newspaper’s position as propaganda spearhead for the new antisemitic leagues agitating for extraparliamentary solutions to what they perceived as France’s decadence. These included the Union nationale (1893), the Jeunesse antisémite et nationaliste (1894), Jules Guérin’s Ligue antisémite française (1897), the revival of Paul Déroulède’s Ligue des patriotes (1898), as well as the Ligue de la patrie française, founded in 1899 by schoolteachers.⁴⁴ These *ligues*, their leaders, and the news organs that fostered their interpretation

of French modernity were the bridge between the Boulanger affair (1886–89) and the formation of the new revolutionary right-wing royalism of the Action française, formed in 1899 during the Dreyfus affair. They would provide ideological coherence to the extreme Right during the belle époque and the impetus to the fascist Right of the interwar years.

The Boulanger affair was a turning point because it transformed antisemitism into a populist political code that provided coherence for the diverse groupings that opposed the Republican state: Blanquists, socialists, workers, radicals, Bonapartists, and royalists.⁴⁵ Boulangism was a nationalist and authoritarian crusade uniting Left and Right in a movement focused on a popular general who would heroically save France from its perceived decline. Even after General Boulanger fled France in 1889 and the threat of a coup d'état receded, the organized campaign led by his followers continued, with antisemitism as one of its key lexical refrains.

An important adherent to Boulangism was Maurice Barrès, who provided intellectual credibility and doctrinal coherence to the new revolutionary Right, weaving together the diagnosis of degeneration, the politics of *revanche*, the desire for a strong central authority, a disdain for the parliamentary system, and the appeal of socialism for *le peuple*, who were the antithesis of *les déracinés* (the uprooted: individualistic, cosmopolitan, urbane, abstract, universalist, in short, Judaized).⁴⁶ Barrès, one of the great writers of his generation, also held a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. He infused nationalism with a mystical dimension incarnated in French traditions and “la terre et les morts” [the earth and the dead]. The martyrs who died for France served as the progenitors of a resurrection that would be fulfilled when France returned to her roots. While the early volumes of his *culte de moi* trilogy advocated self-glorification and ego worship, Barrès’s later trilogy, *Le roman de l’énergie nationale* (1897–1902), with *Les déracinés* as its first novel, collectivized and nationalized the subject, insisting that community and nation were constitutive of individual identity. The integrity, purity, and stability of the nation were threatened, however, by foreigners, whom Barrès called “barbarians,” with the Jews as the quintessential outsiders. An accomplice of Paul Déroulède, leading Boulangist, key anti-Dreyfusard, and a formative figure in the Action française, along with Drumont and Charles

Maurras, Barrès was one of the trinity of founding fathers of the French extreme Right whose ideology crystallized during the Dreyfus affair.

The Dreyfus affair (1894–1906) clearly marked the fusion of the new mass political movements of the Right soldered together by antisemitism.⁴⁷ The Jew Alfred Dreyfus became a palimpsest over which this *guerre franco-française* was inscribed. Antisemitism now became a political weapon employed by the opponents of liberalism and the republican state that anti-Dreyfusards identified as *la France juive*.

There were three outcomes of the Dreyfus affair that impacted the Jewish Question. First, anticlericalism triumphed with the government of “Republican defense,” led by René Waldeck-Rousseau, that came to power in 1899 and the Radicals’ consolidating the Left republican victory at the beginning of the century, leading to a complete separation of church and state in 1905. For the vast majority of Jews, the victory of republicanism was a vindication of their faith in it. They felt more secure than ever that the pact that defined Franco-Judaism was safe, and they reaffirmed the emancipation social contract of the French Revolution.

Second, the Action française, with Charles Maurras as its central figure, emerged as the major group on the extreme Right, reaching its peaks of influence on the eve of World War I and from 1918 to 1926.⁴⁸ The major theorist of “integral nationalism,” Maurras was a founder of the *École romane*, which called for a return of French letters to its roots in Greco-Roman culture and seventeenth-century classicism. He rose to prominence with his defense of Col. Hubert-Joseph Henry after Henry was discovered as the key forger of the evidence that indicted Dreyfus, leading to Henry’s suicide, which Maurras hailed as a sacrifice to the greater cause. At the height of the affair in 1899, the Action française was formed around a journal, followed by the cultivation of activist student groups, the creation of an institute as an alternative to the corrupting influence of the university, and then the launching of the newspaper *L’Action Française* in 1908.

Action française was defined by its antirepublicanism, exclusionary nationalism, monarchism, clericalism, traditionalism, and antisemitism.⁴⁹ Maurras’s “integral xenophobia” was even more coherent than Barrès’s in delineating

what he termed “Anti-France”—the Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, and *métèques* (aliens), who, he insisted, formed “four confederated states” inherently at odds with the French nation.⁵⁰ Maurras’s assault on the revolutionary and democratic tradition, his view of nature as hierarchical and unequal, his anticosmopolitanism and cultural racism, his adherence to monarchy as a principle of leadership and an institutional repository of order and authority, his antipacifist nationalism, and his regionalism made the tenets of the *Action française* a synthesis of Maistre’s counterrevolution, Barrès’s mystical nationalism, and Drumont’s antisemitism.⁵¹

The third result of the Dreyfus affair was that it would become mythologized as the beginning of Zionism, especially as a result of the acclaim accorded Bernard Lazare (1865–1903) at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898.⁵² Lazare, an assimilated Sephardi Jew and a contributor to the symbolist movement with anarchist and socialist leanings, was the first Dreyfusard intellectual, writing pamphlets to demonstrate Dreyfus’s innocence several years before Zola and others entered the fray.⁵³ His *L’antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes* (1894), one of the first systematic analyses of antisemitism, reflects how the Dreyfus affair transformed Lazare’s perception of the problem.⁵⁴ Even though Lazare’s history reiterated a slew of antisemitic representations of Jews, he believed that antisemitism was an anachronism of modernity and would disappear. The Dreyfus affair led him to forge an autoemancipationist national solution to the Jewish Question and steered him to defend Eastern European, especially Romanian, Jews before his untimely death.

While the antecedents of Zionism go back much farther than the affair, Theodor Herzl (his 1896 book, *Der Judenstaat* [*The Jewish State*], the bible of political Zionism, was subtitled *Attempt at a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question*), Max Nordau, and other major figures of political Zionism as well as cultural Zionists like Ahad Ha’am were convinced that if an antisemitic backlash could happen in France, the heart of liberal Europe, which French Jews conceived in quasi-messianic terms as the second Jerusalem, then faith in Jewish emancipation within Europe was doomed.⁵⁵ The Zionist Federation of France was established in 1901 but had a hard time gaining a foothold in France among French Jews. It was successful primarily among Eastern European immigrants, especially

the two hundred thousand who entered France over the next thirty years, making Paris the third largest Jewish city in the world on the eve of World War II.⁵⁶ These immigrants radically transformed the Jewish community in France between the Dreyfus affair and Vichy.⁵⁷ They challenged the synthesis of Franco-Judaism through the public expression of their ethnic difference and asserted socialist and Zionist ideals that came out of their working-class background. While the established Jews of France and their institutions generally rejected Zionism, the 1920s witnessed a renaissance of Jewish culture in which Zionism exerted a significant influence, especially on intellectuals (Gustave Kahn, André Spire, Henri Franck, Edmond Fleg) and the youth movements established in this period.⁵⁸ Zionist organizations sponsored a variety of publications, and Yiddish-language and French-Jewish periodicals gave extensive treatment to the questions of Jewish identity and history raised by Zionism.

The Dreyfus affair was thus the culmination and the beginning of a set of processes that shaped the twentieth century in France. It launched intellectuals into the spokespeople of the French nation, and the Jewish Question was woven into the key French cultural concepts of the period: national identity, civilization, citizenship, civic duty, education, and modernity. This was not just the case for the extreme nationalists and antisemites. Zola defended Dreyfus not as a Jew but as a legitimate member of *la Nation*. Dreyfus was a symbol of and for the Republic and its values, specifically construed as rational and universal, forged in the struggle of the Revolution of 1789, and elaborated by the France of the Third Republic.⁵⁹ Indeed, in the wider debate, Zola, Gen. Georges Picquart, and Dreyfus were sometimes portrayed as Christ-like martyrs whose personal sacrifice testified to the ideals of truth, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, and the universal rights of man over which the Dreyfus affair was being fought.⁶⁰ For the Dreyfusards the true injustice of the affair was the corruption and perversion of a “True France,” understood as their version of the France of the Revolution.

The Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards thus mirrored one another’s discourse in their competing visions of France, the role of the intellectual, and “the Jew.” Furthermore, as Venita Datta has shown, both rightist and leftist intellectuals shared an opposition to the literary and political establishment, needed to

negotiate the new marketplace, scorned the bourgeoisie, were elitist, defended heroism and male codes of honor, and used organicist metaphors. This notwithstanding, Jewish intellectuals like Émile Durkheim, Julien Benda, and Léon Blum embraced the universalist model of both the state and the role of intellectuals in order “to integrate themselves further into the mainstream of French society by equating their own Jewishness with . . . universality, abstraction, and rationality”; thus these “assimilated Jewish intellectuals themselves helped to propagate the republican, Revolutionary vision of national identity.”⁶¹

Sartre’s Anti-antisemitism

This study draws upon and continues this long, rich, and complex history to analyze the image of “the Jew” in the interventions of the preeminent post-Dreyfusard public intellectual in twentieth-century France: Jean-Paul Sartre.⁶² Because Sartre is considered the ideal type in discussions of the role of the intellectual in twentieth-century France and his politics of *engagement* defined the terms of the debate about the duties of intellectuals for the generation who came of age after World War II, I focus on how he construed the responsibilities of the politically active intellectual. The trajectory of Sartre’s thought and his shifting images of “the Jew” constitute a particularly relevant site for an investigation of the role of the intellectual in France after Dreyfus because the cultural tensions and crises in the Dreyfus affair had parallels in the 1930s, during the German occupation, and in postwar France. Indeed, I show how the battle over national identity throughout the twentieth century (and continuing today) has depended in crucial ways on the image of “the Jew” and on the perception of Judaism in the French cultural imagination.

As such, the analysis of Sartre’s life and work permits exploration of more general tensions within French culture concerning Jews and Judaism and the role played by anti-antisemitic intellectuals in defining French identity through the reification, abstraction, and allegorization of “the Jew.” This is the first study that systematically examines Sartre’s reflections on the Jewish Question as a crucial point within the matrix of his major literary, philosophical, and political texts, contextualizing them by focusing on the connections between the

major concepts structuring his oeuvre and his image of “the Jew” and situating these within their different historical epochs.

As such, this work takes up the challenge posed to intellectual history after “the linguistic turn” by putting into practice what I would call a *cultural history of ideas*.⁶³ I approach Sartre’s texts in their contexts as constructions. This demands both understanding the conceptual matrix of Sartre’s work and attention to the social, political, economic, and ideological contexts that shaped his projects. It also entails a history of the reception and representation of Sartre not only in his own time but in subsequent periods without pretending that the intellectual historian stands outside this field of contested meaning. A cultural history of ideas therefore elucidates the production, distribution, and consumption of ideas and in so doing accounts for the political economy of meanings as well as the political unconscious of a system of thought.

My point of departure is to focus on “the Jew” as a figure of alterity. This demands, as Elaine Marks puts it, investigation into “how and where in texts and institutions othering” takes place. This strategy of reading is akin to work in cultural studies that “seeks to account for cultural differences and practices by reference to the overall map of social relations and asks the question ‘in whose interests’ [it operates].” As such, I focus on how the image of “the Jew” functions within Sartre’s work as a mirror image—a revealing reflection of how he conceives of politics, subjectivity, ideology, and power. Because of Sartre’s prominence, this focus opens the angles for viewing these conceptions within French political culture. My argument is that “the Jew” was, in Rodolphe Gasché’s arresting formulation, “the tain of the mirror” in Sartre’s reflections on the foundations of politics. This is significant on two levels. First, *empirically* the figure of the mirror and “the Jew” as a mirror image constantly appear in Sartre’s thought and have proven to be significant recurring tropes within French culture. Second, the Other as a mirror image has proven *theoretically* to be a fecund site for the critical examination of ideology and what Marks calls “the making of meaningful social divisions” as well as the unconscious play of language within texts.⁶⁴

I treat Sartre within the tradition of what some scholars call *philosemitism*, but I prefer the designation *anti-antisemitism* to address the leftist, “progres-

sive” intellectuals like Sartre who have intervened on behalf of Jews and Judaism in contexts of cultural crisis where antisemitism has served a pivotal role as a cultural code for expressing that crisis. Anti-antisemitism clearly denotes an opposition to prejudices and stereotypes related to Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness, and anti-antisemites resist the institutionalization of discrimination against Jews. The term *philosemitism* implies a love of Jews and Judaism. However, its usage almost always refers to those who oppose antisemitism but who often lack an understanding of the history, culture, and religion of the Jews. The point of focusing on anti-antisemites is to evaluate the conceptual and perceptual “biases” that animate the opposition to antisemitism.

So by insisting on the term *anti-antisemitism* I make three further claims. First, *tolerance* like Sartre’s is itself based on “prejudices” or prejudgments that reflect a perceptual system that is historically, socially, and culturally constructed. Second, anti-antisemitism partially overlaps with *philosemitism*’s imaginary and symbolic idealization of “the Jew,” which is used as a fantasy mirror to construct the *philosemite*’s identity. In Sartre’s case this functions most strongly in his definition of his role as an intellectual. Third, the risk of anti-antisemitism is that it merely reverses the dictums of antisemitism without problematizing the axiology and doxology that underpin antisemitism and can thereby end up duplicating aspects of the problem that anti-antisemites seek to resist.

There are two interrelated elements in my analysis of Sartre’s anti-antisemitism. First, I explore how the seemingly peripheral matter of the Jewish Question was interconnected with Sartre’s continual reappraisals of the role of the intellectual. I identify five major phases in the development of his intellectual politics and their relationship to his representations of Jews and Judaism, from his earliest considerations on the role of the intellectual in France in the 1930s to his final interviews in 1980: chapter 1 examines his earliest reflections in the 1930s; chapter 2 analyzes the crucial crucible of World War II and Sartre’s writing under the German occupation; chapters 3, 4, and 5 closely consider the context and content of Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive* (*Antisemite and Jew*) in relation to the postwar elaboration of his theory of *engagement*; chapter 6 considers the reworking of this theory from the 1950s to the 1970s, as evidenced in his stance on Israel; and chapter 7 discusses the reevaluation

of the role of the intellectual from the 1960s until Sartre's last days, when he published his dialogues with Benny Lévy. This focus on the trope of "the Jew" enables me to explore Sartre's pronounced interest in the link between alterity and oppression.⁶⁵ It facilitates posing the question of the limits of a French intellectual's identification with marginalized Others and how this investment can take phantasmatic turns. But second, it also permits a perspective on the social order out of which Sartre's intellectual politics sprang that renders it amenable to insightful critique. In short, Sartre's interventions into the Jewish Question prove an illuminating prism from which to trace not only the paths of the reflected and refracted rays in his life and thought but also those of French culture in the twentieth century.

1. The Mirror Image and the Politics of Writing

Sartre's Early Reflections on the Jewish Question

*I was born from writing: before that, there was only a reflection in a mirror.
From my first novel, I knew that a child had entered the palace of mirrors.*

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*

Historians' description of France in the 1930s as a period not only of social, political, and economic crisis but of cultural, psychological, and moral distress was evident to contemporary observers. "There coexist a number of incompatible forces," Paul Valéry, in a speech given at a Paris lycée in 1932, said of the era: "Never has humanity joined so much power and so much disarray, so much anxiety and so many playthings, so much knowledge and so much uncertainty."¹ The "crise de l'esprit" that Valéry enunciated—characterized by a search for meaning, a hope for salvation, a need for new structures and unification, with its ultimate sensibility expressed as *inquiétude* (disquiet)—was the prevalent mood of much of the 1930s.² "The crisis of the 1930s," Eugen Weber maintains, "was as much economic as diplomatic, as much institutional as economic, as much about public morality, confidence, and self-confidence, as it was about economic interests, employment, or the balance of payments."³

This crisis of civilization that Mary Louise Roberts has shown was projected onto the cultural images of women in the 1920s was exacerbated by the Great Depression of the 1930s and the social and political cleavages it provoked. This gender crisis was indicative of a self-perceived angst about French identity re-

sulting from the transformation and “uncertainty concerning the rapid social and cultural changes taking place during the postwar period—changes arising from both the war’s impact and the accelerated growth of rational, technocratic, mass consumer society.”⁴ In the 1930s the underlying unease was focused primarily on foreigners, and none more so than on Jews immigrating to France, fleeing Nazism and the destitution of life in Eastern Europe. If the crisis of identity in the 1920s was expressed in relation to “the woman question,” as Roberts has argued, then the crisis of the 1930s was often constructed in relation to the Jewish Question.⁵

It was in this chaotic context, rife with an ever more clear anti-Jewish subtext, that Sartre began to publish his first philosophical and literary works. Following his own subsequent declarations and supported by Simone de Beauvoir’s memoirs, intellectual historians and critics have often claimed that these writings, while generally antibourgeois, were apolitical.⁶ The canonic interpretation of Sartre is that in the 1930s he was concerned only with literary aesthetics, ontology, and the existential-phenomenological analysis of consciousness. According to this reading of his intellectual development, his political commitment as a writer emerged in his corpus during the German occupation and under Vichy rule and cohered around Sartre’s experience with the French Resistance.⁷

I want to reevaluate this intellectual history by placing Sartre’s work in the moment of the crisis in which it was produced, highlighting how his reflections on the rising tide of antisemitism reveal his political commitments. The analysis of how he represents the figure of “the Jew” in two of his early works of fiction—*La nausée* (*Nausea*) and “L’enfance d’un chef” (“The Childhood of a Leader”)—demonstrates that Sartre’s writing in the 1930s already sketched the outlines of his theory of *engagement* that he developed during and after the war. Sartre negotiated his own early position on the concept of the intellectual and concomitantly on the politics of writing through the opposed protagonists of Lucien Fleurier in “The Childhood of a Leader” and Antoine Roquentin in *Nausea*. In this negotiation the image of “the Jew” was a critical *agōn* for demarcating the differences in the French intellectual tradition that each character represents.

Inter(con)textual Interconnections: Rethinking Sartre's Early Politics

The overlaps and parallels between Roquentin and Lucien are already evident in the publishing history of *Nausea* and "The Childhood of a Leader."⁸ *Nausea* was started as a pamphlet on contingency in the fall of 1931.⁹ A second version was completed during Sartre's stay in Berlin and Freiburg in 1933 and 1934.¹⁰ It was thus written in the midst of the rise of fascism and the Nazi seizure of power. The final manuscript, named *Melancholia* after Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I*, was completed in 1936, only months before the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.¹¹ Gaston Gallimard changed the final title of the novel to *La nausée* when the book was first published in the spring of 1938.¹² "The Childhood of a Leader" was completed in July 1938 and was part of a collection of short stories called *Le mur* (*The Wall*) that was published in 1939. *Le mur* was promptly designated the "book of the month" for March and awarded the Roman populiste prize in April 1940. The collection was Sartre's first major published work after *Nausea*.

A comparison of the inserts drawn up by Sartre at the time of publication elucidates the thematic proximity of both works while serving as a useful introduction to the texts. The *prière d'insérer* (review slip) to the first edition of *Nausea* offers a conventional reading of the novel according to its plot.¹³ Sartre explains that *Nausea* is the diary of Antoine Roquentin, an intellectual who has settled in Bouville (Mudtown), the quintessential French provincial bourgeois locale, to write the history of an eighteenth-century adventurer, the marquis de Rollebon. Sartre's literary rendition of the town was based on his years teaching at Le Havre. The diary documents how Roquentin's banal and predictable existence undergoes a metamorphosis. Roquentin's memoirs record his internal reflections on his experience of *Nausea*: "Nausea is Existence revealing itself—and Existence is not pleasant to see." It is so unpalatable that its full apprehension provokes his queasiness and his crisis of identity.¹⁴

The insert to *The Wall* indicates that the overarching theme of the volume, like that of *Nausea*, concerns the encounter with Existence and indicates the parallels of Lucien's experience in "The Childhood of a Leader" to Roquentin's in *Nausea*: "No one wants to look Existence in the face. Here are five little failures—confronting it, five lives. . . . Lucien Fleurier is the closest to feeling he

exists, but he doesn't want to; he evades himself and takes refuge in thinking of his rights; for rights do not exist, they ought to. In vain. All these efforts to escape are blocked by a Wall; to flee Existence is still to exist. Existence is a plenum man cannot leave."¹⁵ Susan Rubin Suleiman acutely summarizes "The Childhood of a Leader" in the introduction to her argument that the novella is a parody of the *roman à thèse*: "*L'enfance d'un chef* is the story . . . of a young man in search of an identity, and who eventually finds one. Lucien Fleurier, the only son of a provincial industrialist, wants to escape from the uncertainties of adolescence—he wants 'a character and a destiny.' Discovering and rejecting in turn the self-definitions offered him by surrealism and psychoanalysis, he finally finds his 'true self' as an antisemite and as a militant member of the Action Française."¹⁶ Like Roquentin's diary, which documents the transformations of consciousness that he experiences as he becomes more self-conscious about existence, Lucien's unfolding self-discovery progresses through the interplay within his consciousness and with the other characters he encounters. While Sartre employed different narrative techniques and alternative temporalities in each story, the chronology of both Lucien's and Roquentin's "story is based on a series of figures or leitmotifs which constitute the various stages of the boy's *prise de conscience*."¹⁷ In "The Childhood of a Leader" these moments begin with Lucien's earliest memories about his childhood and culminate with his final self-determination as an antisemite. As the inserts that accompanied the texts indicate, for both Lucien and Roquentin existence is without meaning and at the same time is a plenum of meaning. In this absurd situation each character must choose how he comports himself.

But the stories do not simply offer different ways of approaching the same existential dilemma, they are mirror images of one another. Nausea systematically represses any reference to the larger cultural and political context that circumscribes Roquentin, even as the text inscribes itself in a specific situation—the provincial town of Bouville in the early 1930s. Although Roquentin's diary is explicitly dated from the beginning of January to the end of February 1932, there is no discussion of the political incidents, economic conditions, or cultural concerns of the time anywhere in the diary.¹⁸ Thus, while Sartre is

careful to locate the text and its protagonist in a specific time and place, the novel simultaneously and methodologically avoids reference to a larger historical context. As Robert Denoon Cumming suggests, the text performs a kind of phenomenological reduction in order to focus on thematizing the perception of existence by consciousness.¹⁹ The absence of the context of *Nausea* is made present in “The Childhood of a Leader,” in which Sartre’s savagely ironic portrayal of Lucien Fleurier is shaped by his invocation of the circumstances of the 1930s, including echoes of World War I, gender ambiguity, class conflict, surrealism, psychoanalysis, and the rise of fascism and antisemitism.²⁰ Thus, what he represses in *Nausea* is worked out and reflected upon in “The Childhood of a Leader,” while both texts examine obverse sides of the larger existential questions of identity, existence, meaning, authenticity, and self-deception. A full appreciation of each text, therefore, demands that we read them in tandem. When we do so it becomes evident that while *Nausea* does not appear on the surface to be a political novel, when read as a mirror image of “The Childhood of a Leader” it clearly engages the same political issues.

The historical events of the interwar years suppressed in *Nausea* are traced in explicit detail in “The Childhood of a Leader” as Sartre develops Lucien’s character: “After . . . the armistice, papa read the papers aloud every evening, everybody was talking about the Russians and the German government and reparations and papa showed Lucien the countries on the map: Lucien liked it better when the war was still going on; now everybody looked lost.”²¹ The statistics explain why Lucien felt this way: 1.3 million French men died in the Great War, and 1 million more were handicapped. In 1930 45 percent of males were veterans, there were six hundred thousand widows, and five million acres of farmland would be unusable for years.²² Like so many others, Lucien’s father had fought the “Boches in the trenches” (91), and Lucien’s identity is shaped in important ways by the effects of World War I. During the war the Fleurier family had to move to Férolles because of the bombings. In the aftermath of the war the Russian Revolution and the French demand for reparations are everyday topics of conversation. When Lucien returned home from finishing his *baccalauréat*, the attitudes of M. Fleurier’s workers “had changed a lot” (100). The workers no longer showed him the same kind of respect as before the war, and M. Fleurier

lectures his son about the workers' "class struggle," insisting that "the interests of the bosses and the workers were just the opposite" (122).

The war effort had accelerated the transformation of the economy toward heavy industry. The endeavor to forge a new working-class consciousness was led by the formation of the Parti communiste français (PCF), which split off from the socialist Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (SFIO) at the Congress of Tours in 1920, with the PCF gaining hold of the daily newspaper *L'Humanité*. In 1929 1.3 million workers went on strike. The businesses of *les petits* were more than ever strangled by the expansion of chain and department stores that stocked the latest goods promoted by the new advertising machine.²³ The tensions between rural and urban dwellers were heightened by the suspicions that peasants had hoarded and profited from the war.²⁴ The immigration of two million foreigners between 1921 and 1931 to cover the losses of French soldiers exacerbated class conflict, which was often focused on these outsiders and intensified during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The depression hit France later but lasted longer than elsewhere, impacting the French economy beginning in 1931 and settling into the longest and deepest economic crisis in French history. While some foreign workers left as the economic conditions worsened, they were offset by the arrival of Eastern and Central European refugees, many of whom were Jewish.²⁵

These economic tensions were supplemented by the political conflicts manifest in the earliest childhood fantasies of Lucien, who wished "he'd be a great general like Joan of Arc and he'd take back Alsace-Lorraine from the Germans" (88). This vision of *revanche* is significant, especially since Michel Winock has shown how Joan of Arc served as a potent national symbol, representing from the fin de siècle the antithesis of "the Jewish myth," an opposition that resurfaced in the 1930s. Joan of Arc was an icon for the land and roots, the organic world of the peasant's honest hard work, the healthy, natural life of *le peuple*, the virginal, spiritual Catholic saint who is an emblem of national unity. "The Jew," on the other hand, was represented as a nomadic wanderer, a parasite of speculation, the quintessence of anti-France as the agent of decomposition, the profiteer of the Revolution, materialist, utilitarian, and lascivious. Winock is clear that the "association between Joan's religion and antisemitism did not

end with [Dreyfus or] World War I and the Sacred Union. The victory of the Front Populaire and the end of the 1930s were to again combine those cries of love and hate in the publications of the ranks of French nationalism, which were increasingly drawn to the fascist example. They shifted their attention from Dreyfus to Blum.”²⁶

Léon Blum, leader of the Front populaire, is a condensed image in “The Childhood of a Leader” of Lucien’s political prejudices. While not directly invoked by Lucien, it was the affair of Serge Alexandre Stavisky, a Russian-born swindler who sold worthless bonds to poor workers, that sparked the riots of February 6, which were the proximate cause of the Popular Front coalition that brought Blum to power. The Stavisky scandal thus proved the most important political *affaire* in interwar France, since it focused the antipathies of the Right to the parliamentary democracy of the Third Republic on a single figure. A mass protest, called by the Action française, was ignited by the Stavisky affair, combined with the firing of the prefect of police, Jean Chiappe, whom Prime Minister Édouard Daladier replaced with a socialist. Forty thousand demonstrators were divided into different columns that met at the Place de la Concorde. They clashed with police and stormed the Chamber of Deputies.

The Stavisky case thus marked a watershed between the refugee crisis provoked by the initial Jewish expatriates fleeing Hitler’s ascension to power in Germany in January 1933 and the Vichy regime that ended the seventy years of the Third Republic in June 1940. For those who opposed the liberal political system, Stavisky was a symbol of the corruption and inefficacy of key institutions in the Republic, including the highest rungs of government, the police, the judiciary, and the financial system, and was thus symptomatic of the Republic’s decadence and decay. “The Stavisky scandal had provoked outbursts of xenophobia mixed with antisemitism,” Paul Jankowski indicates, “notably on the far right and in the columns of *Action Française* and *Je Suis Partout*. Such phobias, fed by immigration, diplomatic impotence, and economic stagnation, expressed a free-floating fear of decadence.”²⁷ Stavisky thus became a sign of the corruption of the state, the impotence of political liberalism, the parasitism of financial exploitation, and the degeneration brought on by the invasion of corrupt foreign elements into France. The identification of Jews with all of these crises would

come to haunt them by the middle of the 1930s, when the second wave of fascism targeted what Robert Brasillach called “Judeo-Marxist” ideas.²⁸ Thus the right-wing leagues agitated for change, the left wing denounced fascism, and the climate of a *guerre franco-française* deepened in France.

As Robert Soucy has shown, the first wave of French Fascism had come in the wake of the Cartel des gauches (Coalition of the Left) victory in 1924 and receded when Raymond Poincaré was elected on a right-wing platform two years later.²⁹ Even though the Action française was at its peak, inspired by the success of Mussolini’s Fascist movement, new groups broke ranks from it, forming Georges Valois’s Faisceau in 1925 and Pierre Taittinger’s Jeunesses patriotes. The second wave hit French shores after the onset of the Great Depression in 1931 and the second Cartel des gauches victory in 1932. The economic depression, political polarization, and xenophobic nativism in a period of high immigration fostered the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Inheriting the tradition of extraparlimentary agitation from the *fin-de-siècle ligues*, a profusion of heterogeneous Fascist groups like the Francistes, Cagoule, Solidarité française, Croix de feu, and Parti populaire française arose. Their message, which decried decadence, demographic decline, parliamentary disorder, the specter of communism, socialism, and the Jewish Republic, was advanced by their newspaper allies, including *L’Action Française*, *Gringoire*, *Candide*, and *Je Suis Partout*. The ultimate symbol of their hatred was Léon Blum, who came to power as head of the Popular Front government in May 1936. While the cultural antisemitism of Action française and Solidarité française was constitutive of these organizations, it was not until the election of the Popular Front under the premiership of the Jewish socialist Blum that anti-Jewish discourse became endemic among French fascists and widespread within French culture.³⁰

Lucien’s antipathy to Blum was indicative of this. When Lucien “thought of Léon Blum” it was as the one “who got money from Germany and hated the French” (140). For many like Lucien, Blum served to consolidate the hostile images of Jews and Judaism that became pandemic around 1935. “The fact that Blum was both a socialist and a Jew,” Paula Hyman maintains, “reinforced the stereotype of the Jew as radical subverter of the social order. Jews were deemed responsible for all the ills of modernity, ranging from capitalist speculation to

Marxist revolutionary ferment, to Freudian psychology and Marxist culture. In the popular antisemitic discourse of the day Blum was depicted as having betrayed his lack of true French sensibility and his intrinsically Jewish soul in his . . . lifelong dedication to socialism,” which he nonetheless argued had its sources in Judaism and was perfectly congruent with French culture.³¹ Blum’s premiership meant that antisemitism was now “not only [in] newspaper articles, songs, caricatures and street demonstrations which spread antisemitism throughout society” but had entered the Chamber of Deputies. Xavier Vallat, future head of Vichy’s Commissariat-Général aux questions juives, greeted Blum as head of state on June 7 by signaling his historic significance: “For the first time this old Gallo-Roman country would be governed . . . by a Jew. . . . To govern a peasant nation such as France, it is better to have someone whose origins, however modest, are deep in our soil, [rather] than to have a subtle Talmudist.”³²

While he did not conform to the repulsive physical and moral caricature of “the Jewish body,” nonetheless Blum was represented as a threat to the body politic, a symbol of the Jewish invasion, of “the Jew” as a destroyer of nations, of Jewish power, and of the corrosive effects of “the Jew” on religious and cultural life.³³ Blum facilitated the associative logic of stereotyping that enabled the opponents of the Popular Front to tar the Republic with a series of interchangeable epithets, exemplified by Jacques Doriot’s condemning what he called the “pluto-Judeo-Bolshevik coalition.”³⁴ Plutocracy, communism, socialism, Freemasons, national decline, demographic deterioration, and decadence had all been linked in the discourse on the Jewish Question since at least the 1880s. In the 1930s the image of “the Jew” could thus easily represent everything that had gone wrong in France and in civilization more generally. In February 1936 Blum was beaten in the streets by the Camelots du roi, and in March Hitler goose-stepped into the Rhineland. France was in a state of internal tension and conflict and faced severe external threats. Léon Blum was thus part of a series of metonymic images that map the interwar social, political, and economic context within “The Childhood of a Leader”—from Lucien’s father’s involvement in World War I to reparation payments, from Joan of Arc to Alsace-Lorraine, from the new industrialism and consumerism to the economic, social, and political conflict entwined in Blum’s election.

Nor does “The Childhood of a Leader” neglect the intellectual and cultural currents in France in the interwar years, specifically surrealism and psychoanalysis.³⁵ The period witnessed the growth of mass society, mass culture, and new leisure time, which spurred changes in the arts. Media technologies invented before the Great War—photography, film, phonographs, and the radio—now reached a mass audience. Radios became more common in households, with regular broadcasting beginning in 1922, and four thousand theaters made a day at the movies a popular pastime. The motor car, telephone, and typewriter helped further facilitate the dissemination of ideas and spurred cultural experiments that blurred high art and popular forms. A community of Anglo-American exiles working on the Left Bank, including Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, revolutionized the novel in the English language.³⁶ This was Jazz Age Paris, with Josephine Baker the most famous icon of its popularity.³⁷ Black music and dance from America and sculpture from Africa, referred to collectively as *art nègre*, profoundly influenced modernist “primitivism” from Matisse and Picasso to surrealism. André Breton was the godfather of surrealism’s intensification of the experimentation of Dadaism, and he urged his gang of poets, photographers, and artists to reach “a certain point of view from which life and death, the real and the imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be seen as opposites.”³⁸ Through psychoanalytic concepts and automatism, the surrealists sought to carry out a revolution of the mind opposed to positivism, patriotism, logic, social control, and the repression of bourgeois society. They were one thrust of an avant-garde of thinkers, painters, and musicians residing in Paris who amplified the fin-de-siècle modernist cultural revolution through their celebration of fluidity, uncertainty, and the breakdown of form, turning the world of their fathers’ values upside down and making Paris the capital of the modernist aesthetic, evidenced in a torrent of interwar cultural movements: fauvism, cubism, futurism, expressionism, constructivism.

Lucien’s existential crisis begins, in fact, while taking the preparatory course for the *École centrale*, when he meets Berliac, who “scandalizes the whole class” with his avant-garde appearance and his poems, which he creates with the new surrealist technique of “automatic writing” and by imitating the style

of Lautréamont and Rimbaud. In the course of their friendship Berliac also introduces Lucien to Freud and psychoanalysis, which drives his proclivity for self-reflection and leads to his sense of a personal crisis.

Sartre's repeated references to the political and cultural events of the 1930s in "The Childhood of a Leader," coupled with his insistence on dating Roquentin's diary, clearly places the protagonist of each work in the context of France in the 1930s. Through an extended focus on the thematic connections between the two texts, Sartre's response to the cultural context of his writing becomes clearer. The crisis France faced in the 1930s has its parallels in the crisis of identity that Roquentin and Lucien undergo in *Nausea* and "The Childhood of a Leader," respectively.

The Mirror Image and the Absurdity of Identity

Both Lucien and Roquentin face a crisis of identity. Each text depicts how the central character experiences Sartre's dictum that existence precedes essence. Each story delineates a growing consciousness that there is no absolute foundation that grounds our values. Lucien and Roquentin gradually discover that life is meaningless because the meaning and function of things in the world is not directed by a divine or natural order. They learn that, like all of us, they are thrown into an absurd existence and are condemned to the freedom of having to create themselves as they create the meaning of their lives. This realization connects Lucien and Roquentin, even though their resolutions are diametrically opposed.

But the stories are not only mirror images of one another; the protagonists' experience of gazing at themselves in the mirror is a key motif that represents the crisis of identity in both texts. This encounter with the mirror image stages the crisis of self-reflection.³⁹ It challenges a representational theory of consciousness because the representation of self in the mirror is just another object of consciousness. Robert Denoon Cumming has connected the mirror image to Sartre's early critique of "the reflective structure of consciousness in the French philosophical tradition . . . from Descartes' *cogito* to Bergson's *moi profond*."⁴⁰ The mirror image dramatizes the drive for self-consciousness as inher-

ently unrealizable. In two pivotal moments in *Nausea* and “The Childhood of a Leader” Lucien and Roquentin witness their own crisis of identity. Each is a scene where the protagonist views himself in the mirror and where regarding the self submerges the character’s identity into what Alain Buisine terms “an abyssal space.”⁴¹ The mirror image is thus a trope that consolidates within it both Roquentin’s and Lucien’s identity crisis.

Roquentin’s first glimpse of insight into the contingency of his own identity happens when he sees a reflection of his own image in the mirror: “There is a white hole in the wall, a mirror. It is a trap. I know that I am going to let myself be caught in it. I have.”⁴² The mirror is the “trap” of the I, the trap of believing that I-identity can be reified and objectified into an image, an *eidos*, an essence. In a paradigmatic statement of the conception of bad faith or self-deception (*mauvaise foi*) that Sartre would later develop in *Being and Nothingness*, Roquentin says that “people who live in society have learned how to see themselves in mirrors as they appear to their friends” (18).⁴³ He castigates seeing yourself as others see you, accepting their objectification by internalizing their reification, absorbing as your own identity the gaze of the other.⁴⁴ The mirror image in *Nausea* thus exposes the crisis of identity, staging the tension between authenticity and bad faith.

In Lucien’s case, the scene of his self-examination in the mirror rearticulates the crisis of identity already exposed in *Nausea*. Here the mirror image occurs not only at the beginning of the crisis of identity but also at its conclusion. The last episode of the novella condenses the ambivalence and ambiguities of Lucien’s search for a stable identity that unfolds throughout the text:

A clock struck noon; Lucien rose. The metamorphosis was complete: a graceful, uncertain adolescent had entered this café one hour earlier; now a man left, a leader among Frenchmen. Lucien took a few steps in the glorious light of the French morning. At the corner of the Rue des Ecoles and the Boulevard Saint-Michel he went towards a stationery shop and looked at himself in the mirror: he would have liked to find on his own face the impenetrable look he admired on Lemordant’s. But the mirror only reflected a pretty, headstrong little face that was not yet terrible. “I’ll grow a mustache,” he decided. (144)

In the denouement of the narrative Sartre ironically portrays Lucien's crisis of identity as resolved—he is “now” “a leader among Frenchmen” who walks into the proverbial French dawn. However, he gazes at himself in the mirror. As is the case in *Nausea*, the mirror image is the moment in the text when the unavoidable confrontation with *mauvaise foi* is enacted. Lucien's bad faith is revealed in his desire to have his image reflect Lemordant's—to internalize as his own identity Lemordant's “impenetrable look.”

Lemordant is the paragon of the *chef* in the novella's title: the fictionalized leader of the Camelots du roi, the “shock troops” for the Action française.⁴⁵ Antisemitic, opposed to the Republic and to the decadence for which it stood, royalist, and nationalist, the Camelots were a paramilitary group that served as the street fighters for the royalist Ligue d'action française. Their name means “street vendors of the king,” and it was sometimes spelled as Camelots du roy, indicating their adherence to a mythic image of old France. These activists were formed as a unit in November 1908 out of the student groups studying at the Action française's institute. Within a year there were sixty-five Camelots sections throughout France and about six hundred members in Paris alone. In 1910 an elite of the elite, the Commissaires, was formed to keep meetings in order, to march on either side of the Action française members at parades, to guard the leaders and offices, and to serve as the shock troops for other activities.

The Camelots armed themselves with canes, clubs, and smoke and stink bombs, and they bolstered their courage with their jeering songs. They attacked politicians, defaced icons, disrupted university lectures, rioted in national theaters against films and plays they considered unpatriotic, and demonstrated in the Latin Quarter against those at cross-purposes. Sartre described such an event in “The Childhood of a Leader”: “When Lucien saw the President of the Republic and the Rector enter at the sound of the *Marseillaise*, his heart began to pound. . . . Just then a few young people rose from their seats and began to shout. With sympathy Lucien recognized Rémy, red as a beet, struggling between two men who were pulling his coat, shouting, ‘France for the French!’” (133). The Camelots were dissolved by government order after Action française adherents attacked Léon Blum in 1936. In their ideas and practices and certain

personnel they were the bridge between the revolutionary royalism of the Action française and the fascist groups of the 1930s.

Lemordant is the fictional version of their *chef*. He characterizes the mythic ideal of a stable identity formed in the natural order and preserved in the cultural order. He represents the plenitude of national identity, someone who “did not seem to have acquired that maturity. . . . [H]e was an adult by birth” (126). He offers Lucien a resolution of his crisis of identity through reclaiming his social and cultural heritage by rooting his identity in a mystical, nationalist, organic vision of France. In seeing in the mirror that he is *not* Lemordant, Lucien recognizes that his identity crisis remains unresolved, that a disturbing disjuncture persists between a stable and unproblematic image of himself and the reflected image.

Identity, Time, History, and Memory: The Image of the Nation

“The Childhood of a Leader” and *Nausea* depict two opposing responses to this crisis of identity: the group identity of the national community over against individual liberty, the acceptance of determinism rather than contingency, the celebration of traditions and institutional repositories of order rather than choice and creativity. Each response depends upon the larger question of history. Roquentin’s history of Rollebon is folded into the progression and escalation of his identity crisis. Likewise, Lucien’s identity crisis concerns a relation to the past—in his case upon his identification with the Barrèsian vision of a lost France that must be recovered and renewed.

Roquentin’s progressive crisis concerning the history of the marquis de Rollebon that he is writing is intertwined with the tensions around time and temporality, memory and history, the fictive and the historical, living and telling. He believed that through writing a history he could claim a link to the past that would ground the present. As he becomes more aware of the contingency of existence, however, Roquentin becomes progressively disgusted with his history. He gradually discovers that history is an imaginary construct. He comes to accept that, like memory, history is partly fictive and constructed and therefore that there is no foundation that stabilizes the relationship between past and

present. History as a science, with its disciplinary apparatus of archives and documents, cannot resolve the absurdity of existence.

In direct opposition to Roquentin, Lucien solves his crisis of identity by connecting to France's "ceremonials" and "memorials"—to the mythic past of what Herman Lebovics has called "true France."⁴⁶ Lemordant instructs Lucien on how he can recover from the malaise he feels because of his sense of the disorder and contingency of his present life. He explains that Lucien is "uprooted." He prescribes Barrès and his novel *Les déracinés* as "the cause and cure" for the melancholia that grips Lucien. Lemordant describes Barrès as offering neither a psychology à la Freud (which is foreign to France) nor the internal degeneracy of a Rimbaud or Verlaine but rather a vision of French tradition. "Tradition" for Barrès condensed his stress on the role of race, nation, and heritage in the creation of the individual—it was the means for connecting to a mystical French past that would restore the self to its true identity. David Carroll has shown that "tradition" in Barrès's discourse performs the same function as race in racist theories, "enabling the French to be preformed and providing cultural rather than racial typologies of what it is to be French. Tradition enables modern Frenchmen to have roots in a past origin . . . an origin that all the French supposedly carry within themselves as their cultural endowment—in their spirit, their unconscious, or their soul, rather than in their blood."⁴⁷ Lucien recognizes himself in Barrès's mystical image of French tradition: "'It's true,' he said, 'I'm uprooted.' He thought of the moral health of the Fleuriers, a health acquired in the land" (131). To be his own name—"Fleurier"—Lucien had to flower in the soil of French tradition. He thereby connects to Barrès's mythic True Past—the past of the land and the dead.

Barrès's vision links Lucien to the past and offers him "a character and a destiny, a means of escaping the inexhaustible gossip of his conscience, a method of defining and appreciating himself. And how much he preferred the unconscious, reeking of the soil, which Barrès gave him, to the filthy, lascivious images of Freud" (131). In order to grasp the identity that is offered him by Barrès, "Lucien had only to turn himself away from a sterile and dangerous contemplation of self: he must study the soil and subsoil of Férolles, he must decipher the sense of the rolling hills which descended as far as the Sernette, he must apply him-

self to human geography and history . . . from which Lucien could at last draw the strength to become a leader" (131). It is therefore through the nationalist and mystical vision of a lost France—a past contained in "human geography and history" and that must be reclaimed—that Lucien finally becomes the *chef* in the title of the story. The platitudes of Barrès are absolutized as the basis of Lucien's existence: the scraps of sentences resounding in him about the French past—"renew tradition," "the earth and the dead"—resolve the uncertainties of absurdity and contingency.

Figuratively, Roquentin had already explicitly dismissed this Barrèsian vision, noting in his diary that he dreamt that "I spanked Maurice Barrès" (59, translation altered). In an unleashing of his unconscious wrath against Barrès's jingoistic patriotism, Roquentin's fantasy is that he might subject Barrès to "being debagged, flagellated and having the image of his fellow right-wing Nationalist Paul Déroulède imprinted on his posterior in violet petals." Moreover, when Roquentin savagely attacks the values of the provincial bourgeoisie after he visits the portraits of their "leaders" (*chefs*) in the municipal art gallery, he associates them also with Barrès. Roquentin says of Olivier Blévine that he "somewhat resembled Maurice Barrès. . . . But the deputy from Bouville did not have the nonchalance of the President of the League of Patriots" (92). Hence, Roquentin vehemently critiques the worldview of *les chefs*, who like Lucien, the son of a *chef* and a future leader like those in Bouville, consider themselves "infallible instruments of a supposedly divine will to impose authority and order upon society, imperturbable in their consciousness of their God-given right to govern, impermeable" in their sense of their right to exist and the absoluteness of their values. As such, Barrès figures as a "sort of super-salaud," the archswine who is the quintessence of what Roquentin despises, since he has come to realize the contingency of all rights, values, and identity itself.⁴⁸

Along with the intertextual mirroring of each character in relation to the past, Sartre explores Lucien's and Roquentin's relation to the nation through the spatial chiasmus in their individual narratives. In "The Childhood of a Leader" Lucien moves from rural, provincial France to Paris and then returns to his "true" home in Férolles. In contrast, after a period of international traveling Roquentin settles in Bouville—the paragon of a French rural town. There he experiences

his bouts of nausea, and at the conclusion of the text he is about to get on a train to return to Paris in the hope of transcending the existential quagmire he has experienced in the lugubrious provinces. Lucien's and Roquentin's personal journeys therefore traverse inverted trajectories across the imagined French nation. Each character's individual crisis is resolved by following antithetical routes across France's geography. This journey across the nation completes the spatiotemporal framework of Sartre's exploration of the crisis of identity in interwar France. Through Lucien's and Roquentin's individual paths Sartre presents two versions of the French national crisis and depicts two alternative paths open to the French nation in the 1930s.

The Mirror Image and the Politics of Writing

This mirroring of themes concerning the crisis of identity—the mirror image and the problem of self-reflexivity that it enacts and its inflection in time and space—reflects Sartre's own developing conception of the role of the writer in the 1930s. Sartre explicitly connects the mirror image to the politics of writing in an article entitled “John Dos Passos and ‘1919.’”⁴⁹ His article on Dos Passos was published in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* in August 1938, only one month after he wrote “The Childhood of a Leader.” His opening line makes evident the relation he establishes between texts like Dos Passos's 1919, *Nausea*, and “The Childhood of a Leader” and the mirror image:⁵⁰

A novel is a mirror. So everyone says. But what is meant by reading a novel? It means, I think, jumping into the mirror. You suddenly find yourself on the other side of the glass, among people and objects that have a familiar look. But they merely look familiar. We have never really seen them. The things of our world have in turn, become outside reflections. You close the book, step over the edge of the mirror and return to this honest-to-goodness world. . . . The mirror that closed behind you reflects them peacefully and now you would swear that art is a reflection. There are clever people who go so far as to talk of distorting mirrors. (88)

Like the crisis of identity that Lucien and Roquentin each encounters in the mirror image, the text as mirror is supposed to engender the reader's crisis of

identity. The novel places readers “on the other side of the glass” in a position to reflect on themselves. The modernist novel Sartre embraces is not a predetermined reflection that offers a solution to the dilemmas the characters face but rather the occasion for readers to reflect upon their own choices and the contingency of identity more generally.

Sartre’s understanding of the text as mirror critiques a conception of writing as mimesis, of art as an accurate description of reality or a reflection of an author’s intention. Instead, Sartre celebrates writing, like modern painting, that forces readers to reflect upon how meaning is made in the world of the novel and in turn in their lives.⁵¹ At the same time, the reader is trapped in the gaze of the author, who creates the mirror text for the reader’s reflection. When the reader steps back from the mirror and closes the book, the gaze of the author remains a judgment on the reader. In Sartre’s notion of the text as a mirror image, the reader sees-the-self-seeing-the-self-being-seen.

The axiom that the text is a mirror thus implies that the role of the writer is to fashion a text that enables readers to reflect upon themselves, apprehending the process of identity formation itself. The role of the intellectual is to hold a mirror up to society, but not in the conventional sense of realism. Instead what Sartre enjoins is writing that shatters any sense that one’s identity as determined—by God, psychology, or social conditions.⁵² This consciousness is the basis of human liberty, the threshold of commitment, and a pivotal condition of the possibility of *engagement*. Sartre argues that Dos Passos’s writing reflects the absurdity of the era because his characters’ destinies are never resolved in advance—there is neither ontological nor psychological necessity that determines their freedom. Dos Passos’s writing therefore encourages readers to “feel like smashing our destinies. We have become rebels; he [the writer] has achieved his purpose. . . . We [readers] are rebels *behind the looking-glass*” (92, emphasis in original).

To be a rebel “behind the looking glass” is the ground zero of political commitment, since it transforms the consciousness and self-consciousness of the reader. “It involves commitment,” Sartre claims of “the abject consciousness of ‘everyman,’” since the reader must “play the role of the obliging chorus.” He continues: “This consciousness exists only through me; without me there would

be nothing but black spots on white paper. But even while I am this collective consciousness, I want to wrench away from it, to see it from the judge's point of view, that is to get free of myself" (94). At the same time that readers forge the meaning of the text, therefore, they imagine counterpossibilities in their own world, feeling "shame" and "uneasiness" while "creating and rejecting social taboos" (94). The mirror text is thus a condensed image of the struggle of human intersubjectivity that Sartre fully explicates in *Being and Nothingness* and that does not achieve resolution in his thought until *What Is Literature?*

For Sartre, the text as mirror—the text that forces the reader to self-reflection and to questioning the stability of his or her identity—has radical potential for revolutionizing the whole social sphere. The text as mirror encourages the reader to become "a revolutionary," even if only "an unwilling one" (94). Through the technique of writers like Dos Passos and of course Sartre himself,

life crystallizes into the Social, and the problem of the transition to the typical—stumbling block of the social novel—is thereby resolved. There is no further need to present a working man type, to compose (as Nizan does in Antoine Bloyé) an existence which represents the exact average of thousands of existences. Each character is unique; what happens to him could happen to no one else. What does it matter since Society has marked him more deeply than could any special circumstance, since he is Society? Thus we get a glimpse of an order beyond the accidents of fate or the contingency of detail, an order more supple than Zola's physiological necessity or Proust's psychological mechanism. (95)

Sartre's conception of the text as a mirror is thus intended to move beyond Zola's naturalism or Proust's experimental modernism. The text must enable the reader to enter the consciousness of the characters, whose choices are never determined in advance, whose futures remain contingent. As such, these characters live on the border between interior and exterior, between the singular and the universal, forcing the reader to look at himself or herself as an individual but at the same time, through identity with the character, to become "everyman," thus threatening the singularity of the reader's identity. To enter

the text is thus to enter the hall of mirrors and, for writer and reader alike, to enter a political stage.

The paradigmatic example that Sartre offers for how writing is supposed to effect this process of self-reflection is a scene in Dos Passos's novel 1919 in which Joe, a character in the novel, while he is shaving sees in the mirror an image of himself being murdered; he witnesses his own death. This scene of the mirror image in 1919 once again dramatizes for Sartre the crisis of identity. In all of these scenes of the mirror image, according to Sartre, the reader passes from the interior reflections of the protagonist to the exterior facts of the events presented by the author. As such, a structural necessity of the writing is to inhabit the limit of identity. The reader passes into the mirror of the text, into the reflections of the author, his or her character, and his or her reflection in the mirror in a *mise-en-abîme*. The political significance of the text as mirror is to effect this destabilization of identity. Sartre wants all readers to go through this crisis of identity because for him it is the crisis that expresses the conditions of his time.

The Image of "the Jew"

In both *Nausea* and "The Childhood of a Leader" the instability of identity that the texts mirror and that Roquentin and Lucien experience is worked out through respective images of "the Jew" at the conclusion of each text. In each text the figure of "the Jew" becomes the foil for the indiscernibility and uncertainty of identity. Moreover, it is precisely in terms of their respective imaginings of "the Jew" that Roquentin's and Lucien's *engagements* coalesce, although along directly inverse paths.

The possibility of transcending the contingency of existence that *Nausea* documents occurs in the final scene of Roquentin's diary, when he is listening to his favorite jazz song, "Some of These Days," while writing in a café waiting to board his train for Paris. He suddenly has the crucial realization that writing may rescue him from the absurdity of existence. He records in his diary that the jazz lilt he is listening to functions like a cultural mirror, making him feel guilty about his situation: "I am ashamed. A glorious little suffering has just been born, an exemplary suffering. Four notes on the saxophone. They come

and go, they seem to say: You must be like us, suffer in rhythm" (174). It is the anguish of this collective suffering and the possibility of giving it meaning that humanity shares in common.

At that moment Roquentin conjures up an image of the world of the jazz singer. This is the precise moment in the text when he seizes on the redemptive possibility of writing. He conjectures that the creator of the song he is listening to is a "Jew with black eyebrows." In this reverie the song was given birth to from "the worn-out body of this Jew with black eyebrows which it chose to create it. . . . And why not I?" (176). The song resonates from "the worn-out body of this Jew" through Roquentin and suggests to him that he might also write an ode to human anguish. He asks Madeleine, the *patronne* of the café, to put the record back on and thinks that he would like to get more information about the Negress who sings "Some of These Days" and the "Jew with black eyebrows" who wrote it. From this idyll Roquentin suggests that the production of art can perhaps rescue the writer from the absurdity of existence: "The Negress sings. Can you justify your existence then? Just a little?" (177). The Negress singer is a figure of salvation; she is an elegiac figure who redeems because she responds to her situation creatively, turning her suffering into song, which paradoxically is the freedom from anguish.

Precisely the moment when he reflects upon the redemptive possibility of writing, Roquentin imagines "the Jew" as a sign for the possibility of this emancipation. "The Jew" is the figure that writes the song of salvation. "The Jew" offers the possibility of redemption for the Negress by writing the story of her torment in music. "The Jew" is an emblem for the one who writes the suffering of mankind, and his identity is associated with that misery himself. "The Jew" suffers to write the suffering of another. Sartre imagines the "clean-shaven" Jew (signifying his assimilation perhaps) "suffocating in the heat, on the twenty-first floor of a New York skyscraper" (176).⁵³ In this rather cursory representation he inscribes "the Jew" as the witness of human suffering. "The Jew" is a mirror of the human condition, a martyr-witness to the human experience.

Sartre divulges a political efficacy to writing, an opening to the politics of literature, through this figure of "the Jew." "The Jew" is revealed as the witness who reflects the anxiety of the external world while refracting that anxiety.

Roquentin realizes that, telling the story of “the Jew” writing the song for the Negress saves him. Roquentin can, therefore, redeem his own existence by becoming a writer. Roquentin writes so that the three of them are saved: the writer, the Jew, the Negress. Likewise, Sartre, who writes the story of Roquentin, is redeemed through writing. The reader of Roquentin’s diary is also offered this possibility insofar as the text is a mirror. Through the creation of texts as cultural mirrors Roquentin appears to solve his crisis of identity by turning that crisis into a mirror where the reader can gaze at his or her own identity in an endless multiplying *mise-en-abîme* of meaning.

“The Jew” and the Negress that Sartre imagines as the writer and singer of “Some of These Days” are, however, mirror images of the reality of the song’s historical origins. “Some of These Days” was, in fact, written by a black man, Shelton Brooks, and sung by a Jewish woman of Eastern European descent, Sophie Tucker, who described herself as “the last of the red-hot Mamas.”⁵⁴ In “The Childhood of a Leader” Sartre refers to Sophie Tucker, indicating he may have known the factual origins of the song when he wrote *Nausea*.⁵⁵

This misrecognition of the identity of “the Jew” suggests that the redemption through artistic creation that Roquentin seizes upon as the apparent denouement of the novel is ironic. The careful reader is thus cautioned to question an apocalyptic narrative or its secular analogue in any version of radical transcendence. Instead, like Sophie Tucker and Al Jolson, who as young Jews entered vaudeville through parody and farce in the form of the blackface minstrel shows that reenacted the conventions of the Jim Crow stereotype as entertainment,⁵⁶ Sartre emphasizes a critical praxis that destabilizes a linear narrative, including that of a politics of ultimate salvation. Roquentin’s reverie about “the Jew” threatens to take literally what Sartre signals is always the danger of identification: that it can easily become a stereotype.

In direct opposition to Roquentin and in yet another parodic reversal in the two works, in “The Childhood of a Leader” Lucien hears Sophie Tucker (whom he correctly identifies as Jewish) at the beginning of his crisis, not at the moment of its resolution. Lucien’s crisis of identity begins when he arrives in Paris and befriends Berliac, who was a Jew who “scandalized the whole class” because he “wore coats ringed in green or purple, in the latest styles.” He and Lucien

agree that “they belonged to the same sacrificed generation. . . . [T]hey smoked English cigarettes, played phonograph records and Lucien heard the voice of Sophie Tucker and Al Jolson” (103). Shortly thereafter, Berliac introduces Lucien to the foreign and Jewish thought of Freud and psychoanalysis, which is where Lucien’s *prise de conscience* begins to unfold. In his memories his encounter with Berliac “the Jew,” with Sophie Tucker and Al Jolson and Freud, is the source of his crisis of identity, and he comes to hate them. “Berliac is a monkey. . . . Did you know his maternal grandmother was a Jewess?” Lucien’s friend shares with him, “That explains a lot of things” (109). For Lucien, (Berliac) “the Jew” is the origin of the threat of disorder and the beginning of his decay. “The Jew” becomes a free-floating signifier that represents disorder and contingency.

Lucien’s image of “the Jew” is not only the origin of his identity crisis, however, but also the site for the resolution of that crisis. Lemordant introduces Lucien to the violence and power of antisemitism as a solution to his existential crisis. Lucien first meets Lemordant when he “bumped a Jew named Loewy in the bathroom” (127). Lemordant besmirched “the Jew”: “‘Back to Poland’ ‘to Poland you dirty kike and don’t come crapping around here with us.’ . . . He finished up by slapping him and little Loewy apologized: the affair ended there” (127). A few days later Lucien is approached by Lemordant to take political action—the political action of the intellectual: the signing of a manifesto.⁵⁷ “Lemordant came up to Lucien; he held a paper. ‘You want to sign?’ he asked. ‘What is it?’ ‘Because of the kikes at the Normale Sup; they sent the *Oeuvre* a petition against compulsory military training with 200 signatures. So we’re protesting; we need a thousand names at least: we’re going to get the *cyrards*, the *flottards*, the *agros*, the X’s and the whole works.’ Lucien was flattered. ‘Is it going to be printed?’ ‘Surely in *Action*. Maybe in *Echo de Paris* besides’” (130). Lucien looks for his signature in *L’Action Française*. Alongside it is the headline “YOUTH OF FRANCE SCORES IN TEETH OF INTERNATIONAL JEWRY.” He sees his signature on the manifesto against the Jews as grounding his national identity: “His name was there, compressed, definitive, not far from Lemordant’s. . . . ‘Lucien Fleurier,’ he thought, ‘a peasant name, a real French name’” (130). Lemordant then introduces him to the Camelots du roi, with whom Lucien

shares a camaraderie that leads to the progressive rigidification of his identity as an antisemitic *chef parmi les français*.

Lucien's individual identity becomes progressively intertwined with the identity of the community of the Camelots du roi and takes on a more consciously antisemitic position as it does: "Lucien threw out severe biting reflections about the Jews and spoke of Berliac who was so miserly" (134). He, in fact, becomes recognized in the group for his antisemitic barbs and the Jewish jokes he learned from his father. In time he becomes the expert among the group on the identification of the Jewish body: "There was no one like Lucien for recognizing a Jew from the nose" (135). An incident in which ten members of the Camelots du roi beat up a man suspected of being Jewish, including Lucien, who hits him in the face, consecrates a rigid community among the boys while simultaneously solidifying Lucien's place in the group. The clique celebrates Lucien's joining by getting drunk and talking about what a great punch he has. His antisemitism reaches its apogee when his hatred extends to the point of a physical revulsion.

At the conclusion of the text Lucien seems to triumph over his crisis concerning the instability of his identity by his hatred of "the Jew": "I am Lucien! Somebody who can't stand Jews" (142). "The Jew" becomes, then, the cure for which it was also the illness. Reflecting on himself, Lucien says that antisemitism enables him to appear "respectable in his own eyes" because he

had finally pierced his envelope of flesh, of likes and dislikes, habits and humors. . . . "Where I sought myself," he thought, "I could not find myself." In good faith he took a detailed counting of all he was. "But if I could only be what I am I wouldn't be worth any more than that little kike." What could one discover searching in this mucous intimacy if not the sorrow of flesh, the ignoble lie of equality and disorder? "First maxim," Lucien said, "not to try and see inside yourself; there is no mistake more dangerous." (142)

To stop the inherently differential structure of identity, the crisis of identity reflected in the mirror image, Lucien breaks the *mise-en-abîme* by attacking the embodiment of this difference, "the Jew." "The Jew" thus figures in Lucien's *Weltanschauung*—Lucien, who is the portrait of the antisemite for Sartre—as

both the origin and solution to the absurdity of existence. In “The Childhood of a Leader” Sartre’s viciously ironic depiction of Lucien and the politics of the Action française makes clear what is intimated in *Nausea*: that the politics of identification is doomed to alienation and the misrecognition both of the self (collective or individual) and the Other.

Thus, Sartre’s conception of *engagement* that he was developing in the 1930s was structured in terms of a debate concerning the Nation, “the Jew,” a crisis of identity, a specific relation to the past, to French culture and French values. While he had not developed a coherent political position, he was clearly debunking what Winock calls the “closed nationalism” of Drumont, Maurras, and Barrès and their fascist and antisemitic progeny.⁵⁸ The analysis of Antoine Roquentin and Lucien Fleurier as mirror images of one another representing two inverse models of the intellectual in France before World War II shows that Sartre was deeply engaged in working out the political role of the intellectual in the 1930s. The mirroring in *Nausea* and “The Childhood of a Leader” is evident in the historical production of the texts, the historical context conceived in each work, and their relation to the parallel crises of identity experienced by Roquentin and Lucien. Both Roquentin’s and Lucien’s experience of their own mirror image exemplifies the crisis of identity that is a central concern of Sartre’s existential analysis. Moreover, the trope of the mirror was pivotal to defining Sartre’s developing conception of the politics of writing. Lucien and Roquentin each enact crucial elements of the role the intellectual played in Sartre’s developing notion of *engagement*.

The instability of identity that the texts mirror and that Roquentin and Lucien experience was a literary representation of the crisis faced by France in 1930s. For both characters this crisis was enacted through their respective reflections on “the Jew” at the conclusion of each text. In short, each man’s encounter with “the Jew” is the very point at which the intellectual becomes political in Sartre’s writing. For both Lucien and Roquentin, the image of “the Jew” is the foil that fashions the shift from passive reflection to active commitment, from *embarquement* to *engagement*, from *exis* to *praxis*, from *témoin* (witness) to *témoignage* (bearing witness). The ambivalences and overlaps between Lucien and

Roquentin establish the links between the *engagement* of the leftist intellectual and the cultural image of “the Jew” that were constitutive of Sartre’s idea of the engaged intellectual. Lucien and Roquentin represent competing versions of how intellectuals and the Nation could respond to the French national crisis of the 1930s. In crucial ways, for both Sartre and for France, this response depended upon a response to the Jewish Question.

2. Sartre's Useless Passion

Writing under the German Occupation

I was quite comfortably ensconced in my situation as an individualist, anti-bourgeois writer. . . . What exploded all that was the fact that one fine day in September 1939 I received a call-up paper, and was obliged to go off to the barracks at Nancy to meet fellows I did not know who'd been called up like me. That's what introduced the social into my life. . . . Up till then I believed myself sovereign; I had to encounter the negation of my own freedom—through being mobilized—in order to become aware of the weight of the world and my links with all those other fellows and their links with me. The war really divided my life in two. It began when I was thirty-four and ended when I was forty and that really was the passage from youth to maturity. At the same time, the war revealed to me certain aspects of myself and the world. . . . [Y]ou might say that in it I passed from the individualism, the pure individual, of before the war to the social and to socialism. That was the real turning point of my life.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Self-Portrait at Seventy"

For those of us who would not consent to the triumph of the Reich and who did not anticipate its defeat, it was a very ambiguous period, even the memory of which is cloudy.

Simone de Beauvoir, cited by Vladimir Jankélévitch
in "Jankélévitch, le mal de la bivalence"

In the summer of 2000 an acrimonious debate erupted around Sartre's position on the Jewish Question during the German occupation. It focused on the chair of philosophy that he occupied at Lycée Condorcet from October 1941 to May 1944. The chair had previously been held by Henri Dreyfus-Le Foyer, a Jew who was forced to leave his position as a result of the first Statut des juifs.

Promulgated on October 3, 1940, to expunge Jews from the public sphere in France, this legislation was the basis for the Vichy government's assault on Jews during the German occupation.¹ It began by defining who was a Jew and sought to exclude all Jews from important positions in the public sector, including the military and civil service and all posts influencing public opinion, including the press, radio, film, theater, and teaching.²

The "Affaire de Lycée Condorcet," as it came to be called, emanated from an article by Ingrid Galster, who argued that Sartre had directly benefited from the Vichy persecution of Jews within the academy by obtaining Dreyfus-Le Foyer's post.³ Further, she suggested that his acceptance was a direct contradiction of the principles of his theory of *engagement*. After all, had he not made a speech to UNESCO on November 1, 1946, at the Sorbonne entitled "La responsabilité de l'écrivain" (The Responsibility of the Writer) in which he argued that every German who did not protest was responsible for the Nazi regime and, moreover, that German professors should have quit their jobs when Jews were eliminated from their ranks?⁴

Galster also invoked two earlier moments when the memory of Sartre's stance on antisemitism and his response to Vichy's solution to the Jewish Question was broached for public deliberation: an article by Jean Daniel and, most damagingly, an interview in *Libération* with the Jewish philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch.⁵ Jankélévitch had maintained that the heroes of *engagement* like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Sartre were heroes only of a concept whose rhetoric was not the reality of their lives, since they missed the most important moment to have lived their ideas, which was during the Vichy period.⁶ In the 1990s Sartre's choices under the German occupation continued to be questioned, often following the lead of Jankélévitch. The most vicious assault would be articulated by Gilbert Joseph in *Une si douce occupation* (Such a Sweet Occupation), which tried to show that Sartre's choices were overwhelmingly defined by his careerism and that to accumulate his cultural capital he would make almost any concession, to the point of complicity with the German occupiers.⁷

It turned out that the matter is not so simple. By consulting the archives at the Lycée Condorcet, two Sartrelogues, Jacques Lecarme and Michel Contat, revealed in *Le Nouvel Observateur* that Ferdinand Alquié and not Sartre was the

immediate successor of Dreyfus–Le Foyer’s appointment.⁸ Lecarme would follow up by castigating Galster’s intimation that the cases of Martin Heidegger, who was a rector of Freiburg, a major German university, and Sartre, who worked in a high school, are comparable.⁹ He insisted that there was no equivocation whatsoever on Sartre’s part during the German occupation.¹⁰ Sartre had condemned Beauvoir for having signed the Vichy declaration that she was neither a Jew nor a Freemason, which was required for her to continue teaching (and which he refused to sign upon his return from a prisoner-of-war camp).¹¹ Lecarme further maintains that there is not “one viewer of *Les Mouches* [The Flies] who could imagine an ambiguous and *attentiste* [wait-and-see] Sartre.”¹² This was clear in the record of his resistance activity during the war: as a member of the resistance group *Socialisme et liberté*, as a participant in the *Comité national des écrivains* (National Committee of Writers, CNE) from the end of 1942, and from the seven underground articles he published for the clandestine *Les Lettres Françaises* in which he directly combated Nazism, Vichy ideology, and racism, condemning antisemitic and collaborationist writers. As such, Lecarme defends Sartre’s claim summing up the war years that he was more a “writer who resisted than a resistor who wrote.”¹³

The Condorcet affair is a microcosm of the difficulties both in judging the Vichy period and in assessing Sartre’s choices under the German occupation. The scholarship on *les années noires* (the black years) has moved in the direction of appreciating what one might call, following Primo Levi, the “gray zones” of life under the German occupation.¹⁴ The time has come to situate Sartre beyond the dichotomies of guilt or innocence, armed resistance or collaboration.

This chapter consequently considers the gray zones of Sartre’s politics and publishing under Nazi-dominated Paris. The war years were the crucible for Sartre’s shift from individual ethical, political and existential questions to the politics of collective liberation. It was also a period of unequaled productivity in which he produced some of his greatest works of philosophy and theater. His *Carnets de la drôle de guerre* (The War Diaries) document the “Phony War” as a soldier on the front line awaiting the German onslaught. He wrote his first play while a prisoner of war, and upon his return to Paris in 1941 he helped form the short-lived resistance group *Socialisme et liberté*. In 1943 he published *L’être*

et le néant (*Being and Nothingness*), his philosophical magnum opus. In the same year, *Les mouches* (*The Flies*), his first major theatrical production, was produced at the Sarah Bernhardt Theater, now Aryanized, with Bernhardt's Jewish name effaced from the architrave when the theater was renamed Théâtre de la cité.¹⁵ The "Sartre phenomenon" was born in 1943.¹⁶ He ascended to center stage in French intellectual life, galvanizing a small group of students and thinkers that would grow ever larger in the coming years. While both *Being and Nothingness* and *The Flies* were approved by the Nazi censors, Sartre was at the same time writing for the underground journal *Les Lettres Françaises*.

Sartre's work during the war years thus enacts an ambivalence that I trace within and between the texts and their contexts. My focus in discussing his dilemmas as a writer dwells on his imagined, symbolic, and real invocations of Jews and Judaism in the moment when the "État français"—the Vichy government's name for itself instead of the "République française"—abandoned the promise of emancipation and responded to the Jewish Question by pursuing a relentless policy of persecution. Responses to the Jewish Question were pivotal in shaping how both Sartre individually and different groups within the French population experienced the German occupation. While Sartre's comments about Jews and Judaism were relatively scarce during the war, they serve as a prism through which to see his own refracted perspective and as a portal into the wider vista of French cultural life during World War II.¹⁷

The War Diaries and the Drôle de guerre

Saying good-bye to Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre was mobilized and left Gare de l'est on September 2, 1939, the day after Germany's attack on Poland.¹⁸ He was called up along with five million other Frenchmen with France's declaration of war and was directed to join the Seventieth Infantry Division, which was mobilizing in Nancy. Having completed his military service in 1929, his official position was as a clerk for the Army Weather Corps in the meteorological section attached to the Artillery HQ in Sector 108, just behind Alsace. In the course of his duties he transferred between several small towns in the south of Strasbourg, including Ceintrey, Marmoutier, Brumath, Morsbronn, and Bouxwiller.¹⁹ He had little to occupy his time, except for writing, which he

did up to twelve hours per day.²⁰ He thought that the war would be a “modern” war without combat, just as modern art has no subject, and that it would be over before Christmas.²¹ Sartre wanted to profit from this short period when little distracted him from his work. Thus, the nine months of the *drôle de guerre* were a period of intense composition, and, by its conclusion, he had written about two thousand pages.

For the French, the “Phony War,” as the period between Germany’s assault on Poland and the attack on France on May 10, 1940, is commonly called, was a period of indecision, waiting, and boredom mixed with anxiety. It marked the suspension of normal life. The expression *drôle de guerre* to describe this interval is generally credited to Roland Dorgelès, a journalist who popularized it to express the uncanny situation of being in a war during which troops settled into the bunkers on the Maginot Line before any fighting with the enemy broke out.²² The millions of men mobilized to the front obviously had a huge impact on the economy, politics, and administration of the nation. “There was a great deal of worry in France . . . [and] disorganization, negligence[,] . . . [and] anarchic individualism,” the Catholic intellectual Jacques Maritain would say in *À travers le désastre* (Traversing the Disaster).²³ In preparing for war a number of democratic liberties were suspended, including elections by the decree of November 18, 1939. The French Communist Party was driven underground. Many began to complain that the Third Republic was no longer a democratic regime. Guy Rossi-Landi’s detailed study of the period describes it as a time of pacifist intrigues, of personal rivalries within the government of Paul Reynaud, of a witch hunt against communists and states that it was characterized by a progressive deterioration of the public spirit.

In contrast, Sartre filled up fifteen notebooks in a blaze of literary activity. Five of these were published after his death as *The War Diaries*, supplemented by a sixth that was published with the second edition. The notebooks discuss a range of topics, covering many of the intellectual and personal concerns that preoccupied him in this period.²⁴ He maintained that the “journal is a calling into question of myself,” and its English translator, Quintin Hoare, suggests that Sartre self-consciously saw the war as a period of self-transformation and the diaries as the means to effect this change.²⁵ Sartre envisioned his diaries

as an example of an ordinary soldier stationed behind the Maginot Line who wrote voluminously on a number of points that he experienced and thought through during this period.²⁶ His great inspiration at the time was Heidegger, whose ontological analyses he digested while pursuing his own philosophical explorations of authenticity and freedom. Sartre's trilogy *Les chemins de la liberté* (*The Roads to Freedom*) is the literary counterpart to these explorations, and he finished the first volume, *L'âge de raison* (*The Age of Reason*), on December 31, 1939, and immediately began the sequel at the same time that he elaborated the contours of *Being and Nothingness*.

Unfortunately, the diary entries in which Sartre specifically tried to work out the connections between his Frenchness and the question of Jewishness are missing among the nine other notebooks that have never seen the light of day. However, on the basis of his continuous letters to Beauvoir collected by her in *Lettres au Castor* (published in English as *Quiet Moments in a War*), in which he consistently gives a digest of what he was working on, it is possible to reconstruct the contents of all fourteen notebooks.²⁷ In the eighth notebook, written between January 6 and 15, 1940, Sartre wrote extensively on the interconnections between Heinrich Heine and Jewishness, how this affected his understanding of the politics of the Left, and the implications for Sartre's own *francité* (Frenchness). What remains are fragments that nevertheless give us some indications about how Sartre represented the Jewish Question in the period of the *drôle de guerre*.

"The Angel of Inauthenticity": Pieter, Heine, Jews, and Politics

On January 6 Sartre wrote to Simone de Beauvoir:

I read the biography of Heine (the beginning), which inspired some curious reflections. While in fact I was praising him internally for having known how to assume his condition as a Jew, and I was understanding luminously that rational Jews like Pieter or Brunschwig were inauthentic in that they thought themselves men first and not Jews, the idea came to me, as a direct result, that I had to acknowledge myself a Frenchman; it was a rather spiritless idea and above all it was devoid of meaning for me. Simply an inevitable and obvious

conclusion. I wonder where it'll take me, and I'll explore it tomorrow. Since I have broken my inferiority complex vis-à-vis the far Left, I feel a freedom of thought I've never known before; vis-à-vis the phenomenologists too. I feel I'm on the way, as biographers say around page 150 of their books, to discovering myself. Which only means that I no longer think with an eye to certain structures (the Left, Husserl), etc., but with a total and gratuitous freedom, out of pure curiosity and disinterestedness, accepting in advance that I could end up discovering I was a Fascist if that's where my reasoning led me. Do not worry, I doubt that'll happen. . . . Tell me if you understand that we must acknowledge ourselves as French (with no a priori link to patriotism, of course), I'm very eager to have your opinion on that.²⁸

This brief reflection on the Jewish Question opens up all of the issues Sartre would pose to himself concerning Jews and Judaism during the period. It telescopes how the Jewish Question served to inspire the development of some of his major philosophical concepts, specifically, the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity.

For in the solitude of his ruminations near the front Sartre had already begun to work out in crystallized form his notion of the dialectic of the authenticity and inauthenticity of "the Jew." His models were the "authentic" Heine and the "inauthentic" Pieter. Pieter's real name was Pieterkowski, but he had disguised it in order to conceal his Jewish origins, fearful of what would happen to him if he were captured by the Nazis.²⁹ He was an assimilated Jew with whom Sartre shared the former classroom now converted into their barracks in Brumath and the hotel room in Morsbronn.³⁰

For Sartre, Pieter personifies the "bad faith" of the typical bourgeois *salaud*, which in his depiction is not separate from his Jewishness. In describing Pieterkowski's inauthenticity Sartre paints a portrait of him in the broad brushstrokes of a series of Jewish stereotypes, reducing him to a caricature. He charges Pieter with "inauthentic rationalism," which Sartre identifies with Pieter's "disputatious Jewish reason" (11, 12). Sartre is particularly vexed at the determinism that he sees as underlying Pieter's self-deception. Pieter sees "thought and actions being an emanation of one's temperament, and the lat-

ter in its turn deriving from one's heredity, profession and environment" (13). His bourgeois disposition and values result in him merely incorporating social ideas without investigating these positions for himself. This makes him the quintessential example of "Heidegger's inauthentic being. . . . He relates to himself only through society" (13). Sartre thus names him "the angel of inauthenticity" (106). He also associates Pieter's inauthenticity with "his Jewish self-importance" (14). Pieter thus occupies the place not only of inauthenticity incarnate but also of the inauthentic Jew, whose response to his situation was characterized by a flight from his Jewish origins and a refusal consciously to accept responsibility for his situation. This takes the form of a slimy desire to please everyone and a pure instrumental rationality that determines his relations with others.

This refusal to take responsibility makes Pieter soft and feminine in Sartre's eyes. Like the officers, whom Sartre deems "the feminine element in the army," Pieter "always goes into the officers' toilets, so much tenderness is there in his heart and his big bum" (106). He portrays Pieterkowski as someone who cannot squelch his desire for bourgeois comfort, who is "incapable of taking responsibility for, or checking, his greedy pleasures" (118). Pieterkowski lacks all masculine reserve, succumbing totally to his meek, feminine desires.

But Sartre not only depicts Pieterkowski's reason as Jewish, his persona as queer and viscous, but he imagines their origins. He paints a family portrait of Pieterkowski's life that runs rife with typological constructions of "the Jew":³¹

I like to picture that legendary father, through his son, my great, greedy angel. He was a Pole under Russian rule and, in about 1898, serving as a private in a sotnya. . . . He came to settle in Paris in 1900; my Pieter was born there in 1902. The Pieters used to live in the Rue des Rosiers, and the kid went to school in the Place des Vosges. . . . Pieter's pals sported leather caps and began to act high and mighty; the oldest ones already had a woman or two working for them. (119)

The Pieterkowskis metonymically represent the whole imagined community of the Marais, the Jewish section of Paris.³² There the children of Eastern Eu-

ropean immigrants grow up to be young toughs and pimps just trying to make a buck.

Sartre does not confine the image only to Pieterkowski but compares his situation to that of the Bienenfeld family, whom he knew intimately, since he had a short affair with Bianca Bienenfeld, a friend of Beauvoir, in July and August 1939.³³ The families share Polish ancestry, and each seeks a profession that will garner a decent living. They thus have a shared fate, a shared “Jewish and Polish destiny . . . which I’ve already sensed through L. [Bianca Bienenfeld]” (119). Sartre finds the challenges faced by these families beguiling. The lives of these Jews is a site of reverie for him and conveys onto Pieter a certain aura: “All this haloed Pieter. . . . [I]n my eyes, he wore the glory of having lived in that neighborhood, where I was never anything but a tourist; of having lived in it, a Jew among Jews, a hoodlum among all those other little hoodlums who hang round the Dupont café at the Bastille” (120).

The image of Pieterkowski that forms through Sartre’s portrait is a stock figure: his particular form of reason and way of thinking, his Jewish haughtiness, his femininity, his “legendary” Polish father, his life in the Jewish quarter of the rue de Rosiers, his associations with prostitution, and his drive as a pariah to become a parvenu. This portrait of Pieterkowski is nonetheless a mirror that Sartre reflects upon as he tries to work out the differences between authenticity and inauthenticity. Pieterkowski in his “greedy, stay-at-home softness, his masturbated sensuality, his radical-socialist inauthenticity” (121) incarnates “bad faith” for Sartre.

In opposition to his characterization of Pieterkowski, Sartre presented Heinrich Heine as his model of authenticity. Heine’s extraordinary life (1797–1856) as one of nineteenth-century German literature’s most controversial poets, indubitably complicated by his Jewish origins, deeply impressed Sartre. What Susanne Zantop has described as Heine’s “multiple identities and multiple allegiances”—“a German-Jewish writer living in French exile, writing mostly in German and publishing in both countries[;] . . . a ‘radical liberal’ caught between republicanism à la [Ludwig] Börne and Prussian absolutism and at odds with any totalizing system of thought; and . . . an assimilated Jew and converted

Christian who rejected both Judaism's and Christianity's 'asceticism'"—would intuitively excite Sartre's rethinking of identity.³⁴ From the opening pages of the biography of Heine he was reading Sartre focused on Heine's Jewishness as a constitutive element of his interest.³⁵

As a great German-Jewish poet, Heine's relationship to France is interesting, and this, no doubt, must have called Sartre to think about his own connection to French culture. The French-Jewish philosopher and biblical scholar André Neher called Heine "a lost child of assimilation" who lived in exile in France and on his deathbed returned to Judaism: "Heinrich Heine grew up in the atmosphere of liberty which the armies of the French Revolution and Napoleon had brought to the German Jews of the Rhineland. As an adult, he successively espoused baptism in the Lutheran Church, Hellenic apostasy, and then once again socialist utopianism. Desertion, indifference, irony, cynicism, libertinism: These were some of the elements of the Heinean anarchy, which also included some incongruous bits of Judaism."³⁶ In his youth Heine was enraptured by Napoleon and by French culture and chose Paris as his home after the revolution of 1830. Due to the connections of a millionaire uncle, he was received by the Rothschilds, and because he was recognized as a great poet, he was feted by the great literary salons and sought out by other German radical exiles sojourning in Paris.

In his second letter to Beauvoir on the topic of Heine and Jewishness Sartre wrote that he had finally gotten far enough in the biography to realize that his assertion of Heine's authenticity was perhaps premature, given the fact that Heine had converted to Lutheran Christianity in order to have the possibility of a law career in Germany. Despite this, Sartre insists upon Heine's authenticity, comparing him to the protagonist of Paul Nizan's *La conspiracy* (*The Conspiracy*).

Sartre assessed his own authenticity in comparison to Heine's and found himself wanting: "My life seemed pretty futile next to his; he'd done lots of underhanded things and had a very weak character, but he had lived so superbly within his situation" (19). In his letter of January 16 he would explain why he believed that Heine had lived authentically as a Jew:

On what we were saying about Jews, you haven't convinced me in the least. You write: in that case (if to acknowledge oneself as Jewish was demanding rights for Jews as Jews) then to acknowledge oneself as French would be to turn chauvinistic. . . . The problem is as follows: does acknowledging oneself as Jewish entail a subsequent suppression of the race and the collective representation of "Jewish"? . . . [O]r else, is not it possible too that in acknowledging oneself as Jewish one recognizes a cultural and human value in Judaism, in which case the principle one would use for inspiring oneself to struggle against antisemitism would be not that the Jew is a man but that the Jew is a Jew. (32)

While the matter of the tensions between *humanité* and *judéité* remains unresolved, Sartre verges on insisting that precisely in recognizing the uniqueness of the Jewish situation one reveals the Jew's humanity. He proposes that it is only on these terms that one can effectively undermine the position of the antisemite.

Sartre was thus provoked by the biography on Heine and by the immediate circumstances of his close living quarters with Pieterkowski during the *drôle de guerre* to reflect on the questions of Jewish identity, freedom, being-in-a-situation, authenticity and inauthenticity, and their relationship to French national identity.³⁷ Sartre did not expand on these notes on the Jewish Question, but he clearly was working out and working through these issues, and they helped spur how he developed these central categories of his thought.

Defeat: The Roads to Unfreedom

The beginning of the Battle of France on May 10, 1940, abruptly halted Sartre's writing on these topics. His infantry division was one of sixty that were defending the Maginot Line when the Germans attacked. Bypassing the French defenses through Luxembourg, surprisingly choosing to descend through the forests of the Ardennes, the Germans had crossed the Meuse by May 13, forcing many of the British, French, and Belgian divisions to retreat to Dunkirk. In the course of the Blitzkrieg assault there were at least 92,000 French soldiers killed and approximately 200,000 wounded. Sartre was one of about 1.8 million soldiers

taken prisoner in June 1940; he was captured at Padoux (Lorraine). On June 10 the government left Paris for Bordeaux, and by June 14 the Germans marched triumphantly through the deserted streets of Paris.

Sartre wrote extensively about the moment of the defeat in his notebooks and in the third novel of his trilogy, *La mort dans l'âme* (published in English as *Troubled Sleep*). These works serve as interesting eyewitness reports, very different from the classic account of Marc Bloch's *Strange Defeat*. Bloch's analysis is that of a historian and an experienced soldier who dissects the interconnection of the military and political failures of the French in losing the Battle of France. "To sum up" the military loss, Bloch wrote, "our leaders, blind to the many contradictions inherent in their attitude, were mainly concerned to renew in 1940 the conditions of the war they had waged in 1914–1918."³⁸ The military incompetence of the high command was reinforced by the political divisions inside France.³⁹

In contrast, Sartre's chronicle describes rather than dissects the defeat. His sole publication of 1942 was a short extract from one of his journals recounting his experiences between Mommenheim and Haguenau near France's eastern border as the French troops attempted to remain out of reach of a German army that rapidly established its complete domination in the area. The text was published in the journal *Messages*, an underground review edited by Jean Lescure, and was entitled "La mort dans l'âme," the same title that Sartre adopted for the third novel of his *Roads to Freedom* trilogy. In it he depicts the evacuated terrain, the ghostly presence of an area that was bombarded on May 12 and that had remained uninhabited since. The soldiers set up quarters in the cellar of the city hall, while the officers occupied a Catholic girls' school. On the desks there Sartre thumbed through the French composition notebooks left behind as a token of normality before the invasion. All exercises in the books "stop on May 10, 1940."⁴⁰ Haguenau was buzzed in low-flying swoops by German aircraft that continued bombing the region, undeterred by French anti-aircraft defenses or French fighters, who concentrated on keeping low to forestall any attacks from the air.

The soldiers around Sartre had little idea of the larger situation. There was a foreboding feeling of indeterminacy as they walked around on a Wednesday

morning that he said felt like “a Sunday in the country” (146), with the stores closed and life suspended. The overwhelming sense was the prevalence of normal life eviscerated by the defeat, a city entombed, normality embalmed: “Wherever we go, on windows, doors, and fronts of buildings we read the word Death. It’s a sinister little obsession. Up close we see, ‘Pillaging evacuated houses is punishable by DEATH. Sentence will be carried out immediately.’ But all that is in small letters; all you see is *Death*. Death: a dead war, death in the sky, a dead town and these thousands of colors dying in the store windows along with this fine putrid summer, full of flies and misfortune” (148). Sartre transposed this historical experience of the defeat into a fictional account in the third novel of *The Roads to Freedom*, *Troubled Sleep*.

The three finished novels of *The Roads to Freedom* situate their characters in the final years of the Third Republic and in the days of the May–June defeat: *The Age of Reason* covers 1937–38; *Le sursis* (*The Reprieve*) examines the Munich crisis in September 1938 from a multiplicity of perspectives; and *Troubled Sleep* discusses France from June 15 to 18 in part 1 and June 18 to 29 in part 2, from the front lines and from Paris, from the south of France and from a prisoner-of-war camp. Seemingly following Roquentin’s realization of art as redemption from the contingency of history, Sartre thus writes a historical fiction of the years leading to France’s defeat in the course of his trilogy. Sartre’s representation of *judéité* in the novel *Troubled Sleep* and in the cycle of *The Roads to Freedom* helps to reveal his perspective on the wider panorama of issues raised by the French defeat and makes concrete the philosophical questions that he was pursuing in his fiction and philosophy during his early period: the meaning of human freedom, responsibility, contingency, authenticity, and self-deception.

The French Defeat and the Jewish Question

The cycle of novels is framed and permeated in important ways by Sartre’s portrayal of Jewish characters. He opens the trilogy with Mathieu, the central protagonist of the novels, needing to secure enough money to pay a Jewish refugee from Nazism for an abortion because Mathieu has impregnated his girlfriend,

Marcelle. The plot of *The Age of Reason* concerns the forty-eight hours when he approaches various people—his brother, his friends, and a moneylender's office—to obtain the money. The Jewish doctor hovers in the background, driving the narrative forward: "Waldmann. You haven't met him . . . [a] Jew, a gynecologist. He's a sort of specialist in abortion. . . . Will Sarah manage to get round that Jew? Where is the money to come from. . . . '[H]e wants four thousand francs, cash down. I did tell him that you were rather hard up at the moment, but he would not budge. He's a dirty Jew,' she added with a laugh."⁴¹

There are also a few Jewish characters in *The Reprieve* whose stories form part of the montage of reactions to the heady days of the Munich crisis, drawn using Dos Passos's technique of simultaneity, which depicts multiple viewpoints of the same event. None of these is more stereotypical than the diamond dealer, M. Birnenschatz, whose bad faith is thrown into relief by his employee Weiss: "After what they did to the Jews in Germany, we have a reason for fighting' [Weiss said]. M. Birnenschatz took a few steps; he was annoyed. 'What's all this—us Jews?' he asked. 'Don't know 'em. I'm French myself. Do you feel like a Jew? . . . But what is a Jew? It's a man whom other men take for a Jew.'"⁴² Birnenschatz thus announces the key thesis of Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive* even as he serves as an example of the inauthentic Jew that Sartre depicts in that work.

Likewise, Jewish characters make an important appearance in *Troubled Sleep*. In the first part of the novel Sartre narrates the defeat as it was experienced almost hourly by a diverse group of people. The technique of simultaneity he employs stresses the differences in the experience of the defeat depending upon geography and social position. In part 2 we read about the capture of French soldiers and their prison experience at the end of June 1940. This section focuses primarily on Brunet, the Communist editor of *L'Humanité* and an activist, and Schneider, an intellectual—two competing countenances of how to respond to the defeat.

The opening of *Troubled Sleep* depicts two Jewish characters, Sarah and her son, Pablo, who are part of the mass exodus from the north of France. In Sartre's representation Sarah's Jewishness reinforces the biblical elements of the exodus scene. The racial inflections of the experience are evident in Sarah's anxiety about Pablo, who is the product of her intermarriage with Gomez, a general on

the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War now living in exile in New York. Pablo, sensing his mother's apprehension, asks her directly if the "Nazis would kill us if they caught us." Sarah suffocates from the burden of responding to this question: "Why protect the young life at her side? So that he might wander from country to country with bitterness and terror in his heart? So that for fifty years he might endure the curse that lay upon his race? So that at the age of twenty he might be machine-gunned on some stretch of road and fall, holding his guts in with his hands? From your father you inherit pride, sensuality, and a wicked nature; from me, your Jewish blood."⁴³ Sarah parrots *le Juif errant* (the Wandering Jew), cursed because of his "race" to rove from country to country.⁴⁴ Pablo is fated to suffering and martyrdom because of his "Jewish blood." The stress on racial stereotypes is also clear in the set of attributes Sarah accords to Pablo's Latin heritage: pride, sensuality, and sinfulness. In zeroing in on Sarah's experience of the exodus Sartre figures the event around a clearly split set of dichotomies that he inscribes onto the child: Paul/Pablo; European/Jew; *la race latine/la race juive*; father/mother; Christian/Jew; soldier/wanderer.

Sarah's desperation at her situation enacts in miniature the drama of assimilation. She wants to flee into the anonymity of the crowd as they move southward in flight from the Germans, but Pablo serves as a reminder that others will always see her as Jewish and that she cannot escape her "race": she "forgot she was a Jewess, one of the persecuted, she found a way of escape into a huge movement of impersonal charity, and for that reason she hated Pablo because he was flesh of her flesh, and the mirror of her race. She laid her large hand on the boy's head. 'It's not your fault,' she thought, 'if you've got your father's jaw and your mother's race'" (23–24, emphasis added). Sarah repeatedly reiterates the discourse of racialization that locates the qualities of personality in terms of genetically inherited characteristics. Sartre thus depicts her as internalizing the traps of assimilated Jews who believe that they can escape into anonymity. Despite these specifically racial markers, Sarah synechdochically stands for the mob of French people fleeing south. She represents the widespread sense of hopelessness and the desperation of these refugees from the German military machine. Sartre thus suggests that at the moment of defeat the French became like the Jews—victims of history.

Sartre uses the effect of simultaneity to represent the defeat not only from Sarah's perspective during the exodus but also from occupied Paris. His depiction focuses on Daniel, one of the characters in Sartre's cycle who reappears in each of the novels. A homosexual, Daniel refuses to accept his sexual proclivity for men but cannot escape that this fact is constitutive of how others view him. He therefore lives in self-deception and guilt, wavering between construing his homosexuality in essentialist terms and his efforts at denial. Daniel's *mauvaise foi* is evident at several moments in the novels: he desires to castrate himself, then decides against it; he marries Marcelle as the way out of her illegitimate pregnancy but on their honeymoon finds himself disgusted with her female body and enticed by a young gardener, and he leaves her. His refusal to come to terms with his own desires is constantly projected onto his invectives against others, not least other homosexuals. He goes so far as to convert to Christianity, which proves as much a sham as his marriage. He believes his moment of redemption arrives with the German occupation of Paris.

Daniel synechdochically represents the response of collaborators to the defeat, Sartre thus correlating them with outsiders and homosexuals. He depicts Daniel in the near-empty streets of Paris, looking into the glass of a store window, which becomes a mirror as he sees only his own reflection. In a Dostoevskian gesture Daniel remarks that everything now is permitted and that he would like to cry "Long live Germany!" (102). He decides that all the individuals and groups that have shamed him and judged him for his homosexuality are finished now that nihilism rules the city. "This was the victory of contempt, of violence and of *mauvaise foi*," Sartre notes (105, translation altered). Daniel's delight in the reign of self-deception and collaboration thereby conflates the image of the homosexual, the collaborator, and the man of "bad faith."

If Daniel personifies the occupation of Paris and the ensuing collaboration, it is Mathieu who conveys the experience of the soldiers. Mathieu, as the protagonist of *The Roads to Freedom*, threads together these three fragmented modernist novels. Many commentators have suggested that he functions as an alter ego for Sartre. By the third novel Mathieu, a former professor of philosophy, is serving at the front, and it is from his perspective that Sartre portrays the military defeat. In several of the scenes Sartre focuses on Mathieu's discussions

with Charlot, a Polish Jew serving on the front with him. Charlot expresses his fear that the Germans will cut off the soldiers' testicles, especially if they know they are Jews. His castration anxiety is partly an expression of his apprehension about his circumcised phallus. Moreover, as a representative of the people of the book, Charlot is almost inevitably described with a book. He is constantly concerned that he will be singled out as a Jew, and Mathieu regularly reassures him that he will be treated like all the others. Like Pieterkowski, Charlot has already destroyed his official identity papers. However, he wants to know from Mathieu, "Do I look like a Jew?" Mathieu's response is rife with the central paradox of the Jewish Question: "'No,' said Mathieu. 'You do not look like a Jew'" (135). The matter of whether Mathieu can determine if Charlot is Jewish or not, of course, already requires that "the Jew" is determined according to racial criteria, and so to respond to the question always reinforces the racial gaze. Charlot insists that Mathieu can never understand the fear that comes from deep inside his "race" because he is not Jewish. Mathieu has no response to this but silence and hopelessness as he waits for the darkness to descend, expressing the hopelessness of the French military defeat.

Against the backdrop of Daniel's collaboration and Charlot's anxiety and fear, Mathieu finally translates his existential philosophy of the act into his deeds. In the final dramatic sequence of part 1, in the village where Mathieu's unit is installed, an elite regiment of *chasseurs* (rapid action troops) appears. It is still intact and clearly determined to fight heroically. When the soldiers install themselves in the clock tower of a church (the religious symbolism is quite clear), Mathieu asks if he can join them in making a last stand. As the Germans advance Mathieu kills a German soldier. He finally feels that he has left a trace of himself on the world. His goal is to resist for at least fifteen minutes. At the end of thirteen minutes he realizes that he is the only soldier still alive in the church steeple.

In the last image of the scene Mathieu recounts that each shot is for an unactualized feat in his life. Writing with no pauses, Sartre captures in stream-of-consciousness Mathieu's thoughts: "you love your neighbor as you love yourself—bang! in that bastard's face . . . on Virtue, on the whole world: Liberty is Terror." It closes: "he was purified, he was all powerful, he was free" (255,

translation altered). While seemingly a resolution to his inaction throughout the novel, Mathieu's last stand remains deeply ambivalent, and it is an ambivalence that will haunt Sartre throughout the German occupation. On the one hand, in choosing to fight the German soldiers heroically, Mathieu chooses his entire destiny, for each shot represents a deed that he previously refused to undertake. However, as he did with Roquentin's final thoughts, Sartre was also ironically castigating the terror of absolute freedom—the idealistic absurdity that the past can be remade through violent, apocalyptic freedom.

POW

The second part of the third novel fictionalizes Sartre's internment in Stalag XII D in Trier, Germany. Caught in the chaos and confusion of the debacle in the forests near Padoux, Sartre was captured on June 21, his thirty-fifth birthday, at 9:45 AM. Dirty and unshaven and weighed down by his manuscripts, he was apprehended with so many other soldiers that the Germans were hard-pressed to guard them. Along with twenty thousand other prisoners of war he was taken first to Rambervillers and put, ironically enough, into the Stade de la Liberté, a sports stadium filled with the vanquished, where the defeated soldiers were supplied with little food and water.⁴⁵ From Rambervillers they were taken to Baccarat, where they were stationed in a glassworks that had been transformed into a camp. At the same time that the grills of these barracks closed on the prisoners, Marshal Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun, signed the Armistice.

Taking over as head of the government on June 17, in a quintessentially Christ-like gesture Pétain announced on the radio that he was offering France “the gift of his own person to attenuate its misfortunes.”⁴⁶ His self-portrayal as sacrificial victim and savior would be repeatedly recast through the war in paintings and statuettes, even in children's coloring books, with Pétain taking on the guise of king, miracle worker, military leader, and exemplar of the cultural values of the National Revolution.⁴⁷ On June 18 Pétain's message would be countered by Charles de Gaulle's appeal to continue to resist. “Two men, two messages, two missions” were thus posed to the nation. “Both were figureheads,” Philippe Burrin writes, “each believing that it was he who embodied France. Both were symbols of the divorce of the army from the Third Republic. . . . The appeals of

17 and 18 June placed the French people at a parting of the ways, with a choice between immediate relief or war to the bitter end, a redeeming resignation or regeneration in an armed struggle.”⁴⁸

In the same railway carriage where the Reich accepted defeat in 1918 Pétain agreed in the armistice he signed on June 22 to divide France into two main zones. Three fifths, including most of the north and the west of France along the Atlantic and Channel coasts, was occupied territory under German control. The demarcation line quickly became a real border, requiring special passes, with currency and other controls. It ran northwest from the Spanish border to a point near Tours and then eastward to the Swiss frontier. Two departments, the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais, were placed under the jurisdiction of the German command for Belgium and northern France and administered from Brussels. Alsace and a large section of Lorraine were annexed. The French government agreed to collaborate in the administration of a divided France, and the military was demobilized. Legally, the Vichy regime was responsible for governance in both zones, provided they adhered to German regulations in the occupied territories. The new French state immediately launched a propaganda campaign in posters and leaflets, placing the blame for the defeat squarely on the shoulders of the diabolical decadence caused by the “Jewish politicians and financiers of the Third Republic.”⁴⁹

For many of the soldiers it was the transfer from Rambervillers in France to Trier in Germany that made the defeat concrete. They were transported in cattle cars into a camp surrounded with Nazi flags, and Sartre’s “home” there for almost a year was Stalag XII D, named after the military division of the territory of Trier-Petriberg. Stalag XII D was a microcosm of the German occupation of France.⁵⁰ Our knowledge about the conditions of the POW camps comes from reports made throughout the war by the Americans, the French, and the International Committee of the Red Cross of Geneva. The U.S. ambassador’s report in August 1940 described the conditions of the prisoners.⁵¹ The camp, located atop a hill and surrounded by trees and vegetation, overlooked a city of ninety thousand inhabitants. With over fifteen thousand prisoners, “the camp . . . exceeded its capacity.” The crude wooden barracks were divided into small rooms with double- or triple-deck wooden cots, with some men forced

to sleep on cement floors. There were washrooms in each barrack and open pit toilets, and the “kitchen was extremely dirty and full of flies,” as was the infirmary (indicating perhaps why Sartre chose the motif of flies as his image of the occupation in his play *Les mouches*). After describing the camp’s inadequate provisions and overcrowding, the report concluded that “the general impression of this camp was rather unfavorable in comparison to most other camps visited heretofore.”

Discipline was maintained, however, by the two heavy barbed-wire fences that surrounded the camp. These were guarded by soldiers in an elevated sentry box with machine guns and by constant patrols around the grounds. Within the camp certain prisoners were appointed as *Lagerpolizei* (camp police). The prisoners were clothed in tiger-striped uniforms and had little or no change of apparel, so disease and lice were prevalent. The racial politics of defeat was evident in the attitude of the French soldiers toward the significant minority of colonial soldiers from the Maghreb and Senegal; they were perceived as an embarrassment and objects of derision. Thus a clear hierarchy emerged in the camp: at the top were German guards, followed by French doctors, interpreters, other soldiers, and, at the bottom, Africans.

Out of the half-dozen French doctors in the camp, at least one clearly advocated antisemitism. According to Jean Pierre, with whom Sartre shared a room alongside Pieterkowski, when Pieter attempted to pass himself off as incurably ill in the hope he would be sent home, the German doctors endorsed his repatriation, but a Dr. Bourdin instructed them that “this man is a Jew. . . . You cannot liberate a Jew.”⁵² Pieterkowski was returned to his barrack, after which time his fate becomes unclear, since his real name is unknown.

Sartre attempted to improve his personal situation first by putting his knowledge of German to use as an interpreter and then by being admitted to barrack number 55, “the artists’ barracks,” when it was discovered that he was a published author.⁵³ Peopled by painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, professors, set designers, and gymnasts, the artists’ barracks had clear privileges. A semblance of cultural life that included both Protestant services and Catholic masses reemerged in the camp.⁵⁴

Sartre was a key figure in these intellectual gatherings, which brought together the priests in the camp and the secular intellectuals. Their meetings are

detailed in the memoir written by Marius Perrin.⁵⁵ Sartre gave a lecture to about twenty in the group on the relationship to death in the work of Rainer Maria Rilke, André Malraux, and Martin Heidegger, arguing that for each of these writers man was the being that knew that he would die; failure to recognize this meant being inauthentically human. According to Perrin, the talk was captivating and made everyone “examine their conscience” (17–21).

Sartre would later invite Perrin to a reunion of intellectuals that included communists, university students, and a small group who claimed to be surrealists. One of the students “was worried for his teacher Marcel Mauss, who, because a Jew, was forbidden to teach in Paris.” This came as a surprise to Perrin, who “did not know that they now applied antisemitic measures in France even to the ‘grand patrons’” (42). In fact, teachers on every level were affected by the Vichy elimination of Jews. The purge of the public domain to rid it of “Judaization” resulted in the retraction of 1,111 teaching positions. Edmond Faral, the director of the Collège de France, France’s most elite academic institution, was no exception when he indicated in a letter to the authorities that the institution fulfilled the requirements of the *Statut des juifs* beyond the letter of the law: “[On] the Jewish Question: no Jew has taught at the Collège de France since the beginning of the academic year. That decision was taken even before the law of 3 October 1940.”⁵⁶ Perrin helped Sartre to procure a copy of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) through a priest who visited the camp, and Sartre tutored him individually in Heidegger’s masterwork. They also discussed Perrin’s reading of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and Alfred Rosenberg’s *Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Sartre dismissed the antisemitism of these Nazi works as *mauvaise foi* (69), indicating the continuity with his stance in “The Childhood of a Leader” (89).

Sartre’s Passion Play

In addition to furnishing the inmates with a small library and providing a venue for religious services, classes, lectures, and concerts, the inhabitants of the artists’ barracks were also allowed to put on theater productions. It was in these circumstances that Sartre would begin his foray into playwriting with his hastily composed *Bariona ou le fils du tonnerre* (*Bariona, or the Son of Thunder*).

With the prisoners' first Christmas approaching, he proposed to write the play, which he said would not be a Christmas play per se but would deal with the theme of liberty in the general context of Christmas.⁵⁷ The play was clearly a *pièce de circonstance*. In preparing to write the work Sartre read texts by Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet lent to him by Abbé Leroy, the professor of theology at Lyon, and the Bible lent to him by Perrin, and he had continuous discussions with the priests about faith, religion, its mysteries, and its history.

The play, which concerned a small Jewish community under Roman occupation at the time of the birth of Christ, needed to be approved by the German censors (as did the Sunday sermons and the two letters that POWs were allowed to write home), which ultimately meant authorization from the camp *Kommandantur* and the *Abwehr*. The Christian context of the play and its evident Christological story clearly erased some aspects of what was transgressive about staging a play concerning a community of Jews under occupation. But in several instances in the play Sartre inscribes the Jewish context of the Christian story.⁵⁸ In an interview given in 1968 he explained the transposition of the German occupation into the mythological framework of the Christmas narrative and suggested why the German censors may have approved the performance: "The play was full of allusions to the situation we were in, and each one of us understood them perfectly well. In our minds, the Roman envoy to Jerusalem was the German. Our captors saw him as the Englishman in his colonies!"⁵⁹ The clear implication here is that the French soldiers were also to transpose their own situation onto the suffering Jews depicted in the drama. As Sartre testified just after the war, "As I addressed my comrades across the footlights, speaking to them of their state as prisoners[,] . . . I realized what theater ought to be—a great collective, religious phenomenon."⁶⁰

The play was produced when the POW camps themselves were being inundated with Vichy propaganda: Pétain's portrait, which was adorning walls throughout occupied France, was affixed next to the chapel in the camp, clearly identifying the church with the National Revolution. In the camp there was even a Francisme group, one of the minor fascist organizations originally founded in September 1933 by Marcel Bucard. After many years involved with the radical Right (Action française, Croix de feu, Faisceau), Bucard had formed his own movement, which embraced antisemitism after 1936.⁶¹

Clearly intimating this context, *Bariona* was the prototype for Sartre's early approach to theater and for his conception of *engagement*. It reveals how his stance on the Jewish Question was a key starting point for the development of these aspects of his oeuvre. The play was paradigmatic of the role of the intellectual as a heroic martyr-prophet who bears witness to an ideal that redeems not only his own existence but that of humanity. These elements are engraved within the particularities of a Jewish context that ultimately is subsumed under the logos and mythos of the Christian narrative, encapsulating the telos that characterized the outgrowth of Sartre's political thought. He very cleverly exploits the ambivalence of Jews and Judaism in his drama to construct a heroic resistance myth that has the possibility of being interpreted within the narrower framework of a collaborationist viewpoint.

Bariona is a Sartrean redramatization of the Annunciation as witnessed from Béthaur, a Jewish village of "eight hundred souls located twenty-five leagues from Bethlehem and seven leagues from Hebron" (73–74). The plot is straightforward; one of the shortcomings of the play is that it depends heavily on long speeches by the protagonists rather than on much action. Sartre's protagonists represent clear countervailing value systems. Bariona, the chief of the village, opposes Lelius, a colonial administrator who has arrived to announce a new census that will be the basis for increased taxes. Bariona begrudgingly accepts the new tax after calling a "Council of the Elders" (of Zion?) (82) but also announces a policy of no longer having any children (a sign of creation, evolution, life, a future). Recognizing that what is most human about man is his limits, Bariona is determined to find salvation in his defeat, which depends upon having no more children, since this will end "the suffering of our race. We shall beget no more. We shall consummate our lives in meditation on evil, injustice, and suffering" (86).

Bariona is challenged by his wife, Sarah (who intertextually resonates nominally with "the Jew" Sarah in Sartre's *Roads to Freedom* trilogy), who emerges as the true hero of the play. She objects to his politics of quietism and promptly announces that she is pregnant. Bariona demands that she go to the "witch doctor" in order to get an abortion. Sartre thereby thematized what would serve as a central element in the Vichy National Revolution: the politics of mothering

and the criminalization of abortion acutely depicted in Claude Chabrol's film *Une affaire de femmes* (Story of Women).⁶² Work on the role of women and gender in the National Revolution has examined the relations between sexuality and ideology and shown, as Miranda Pollard succinctly puts it, that Vichy "attempted to institutionalize a paternalist and reactionary definition of women's role and status within French society. Furthermore, this definition centered on motherhood and femininity, and found expression in a wide range of anti-feminist policies in education, employment and sexuality."⁶³ Central to these policies were Vichy attitudes to *dénatalité*, *dégénérescence*, and *la crise de la famille*.⁶⁴ In his plays during the Vichy period as well as in *The Age of Reason* Sartre often highlighted a gender politics that directly transgressed the conventions of the National Revolution on women and gender by focusing on abortion as a trope of resistance to these paternalist practices.

Refusing to obey her husband, Sarah insists in an allusion to Christ on the Mount of Calvary that "even if I knew that he would betray me, that he would die on the cross like a thief and cursing me, I would still give birth to him" (88). There are multiple biblical resonances in Sarah's attitude, which simultaneously positions her as Christ and as Moses's mother, Yocheved, who floats the infant Moses down the Nile, saving him from the Egyptian pharaoh's order that all male Hebrew children must be killed. Sartre's story thereby weaves the Jewish national archmyth of Moses's birth with that of the Christian narrative. Having disclosed the values that each character embodies, Sartre then trots out the narrator to announce to the audience that an angel has arrived to welcome the birth of the new messiah.

The climax of the play revolves around the political and ethical significance of the birth of Christ staged in terms of Bariona's acceptance or not of the good news Christ is supposed to bring. In the concluding sequence Bariona embodies the Jewish response to Christ. He learns Christ's future from the "witch doctor" when in a prophetic trance he reveals several of the key stages of the Passion: "He's being arrested, dragged before a tribunal, stripped naked, whipped, mocked by everyone, and finally crucified" (117). Bariona categorically rejects the Christian meaning ascribed to the Passion as salvation through faith in Christ's sacrifice for the sins of humanity. What Bariona demands is a mili-

tant messiah who will fight for redemption on earth. Bariona is thus a strong voice for political rebellion. Seeking to prevent his people from subjugating themselves to “resignation” and “the spirit of sacrifice” (122), he decides upon *deicide*. Bariona’s stiff-necked rejection of the divinity of Christ, his demand for justice and redemption on earth, and his willingness to commit *deicide* in this theological drama place him in the position of “the Jew” in the tradition of Christian Passion and mystery plays.

Sartre himself, playing the character Balthazar, who reveals that Christ’s true significance is close to Bariona’s own self-understanding of the messiah, would offer the denouement of the production. He explains that man is made in the image of God, that Jesus is both man and God, and this is because he suffers, and this suffering is what defines humanity. This existentialist Christ stands for the transcendence of suffering by giving it meaning. Balthazar thus urges Bariona to let his son be born because each new child bears the seed of the world’s future redemption through the choices he or she makes. Converted to this gospel, Bariona discovers his own freedom in aligning with Christ. The play thus ends with Bariona’s decision that he will become a martyr of Christ by fighting against the Romans to get Jesus out of Bethlehem.

According to Sartre’s subsequent discussions of the text and seconded by the few critics who have commented on this marginal play in his oeuvre, his intentions in writing *Bariona* were voiced directly in the persona of Balthazar, who conveys an existentialist message of hope and resistance. Ingrid Galster contends that Sartre’s point to the audience was to assume liberty by transcending the limits of their situation via their project for the future. This is precisely how he would define authenticity in *Being and Nothingness*.⁶⁵ According to Sartre, the political allegory was evident to the French soldiers: “The text was full of allusions to the situation of the moment and *perfectly clear for each of us*. The envoy from Rome to Jerusalem . . . was Germany.”⁶⁶ According to this account, the revolt of Bariona against the Romans had implications for the revolt of the French against the Germans, and Christ served as a convenient symbol of Sartre’s existential conception of liberty.

According to Marius Perrin, who knew the author’s thoughts when he wrote the play, the drama enjoined the audience to “refuse tyranny, seize liberty,

then [pose] the question, what to do with this liberty?" (45). However, Perrin also clearly says that the piece was ambiguous: "Each read what they desired" (103). The allusions to the politics of Vichy's campaign for "family values," the transformation of the key Christian myth into an allegory of resistance, and the affirmation of individualism that flew in direct contradiction to the rhetoric of the National Revolution was probably not picked up by most of the soldiers at the performances that Christmas. While the audience was profoundly moved by the play and applauded vigorously, Perrin affirms that they were probably touched by different things (97). True to Sartre's own self-representation, Perrin even says that the Christian theme and the Jewish setting were not essential; what was central to Sartre was a mythic and heroic figure, like a character in Malraux's novels, who would die fighting and thereby give meaning to life.

I would insist, however, that the meaning of the play cannot be abstracted from either its literary or its political context. Staged during the Christmas holiday, Sartre's play participated in a long tradition of Annunciation and mystery plays. It enacts a profound ambivalence between the Christological elements so central to Vichy ideology, where "the Jews" serve a sacrificial logic in the interest of renewing and purifying the nation, and a subversive Jewish subtext that simultaneously identifies "the Jews" as the martyr-victims of history and projects onto them the situation of the French under the German occupation, proposing a politics of resistance. There is an element of undecidability that Sartre leaves to the viewer. But clearly, Jews and Judaism and their meaning in history once again constitute a foil for the development of some of the key elements of his thought.

The Return of Sartre in 1941: Culture under the German Occupation

Sartre nurtured the idea of escape from the camp for some time before *Bariona* was produced, but shortly after its premiere he was successful in his efforts. The exact circumstances that permitted his release are unclear, but he walked out of Stalag XII D in the latter part of March 1941. Repatriated, he returned to Paris on April 1.⁶⁷ The Paris that Sartre returned home to was very different from the city he had left in September 1939. The symbols and ideology of the German occupation evidenced by the Nazi flags that flew atop Notre Dame and other

buildings in Paris marked all French institutions. The press and radio were venues for constant propaganda advocating a "Return to the Land" and "Work, Family, Fatherland." The German military regime sought to establish administrative control of everyday life from the moment the Wehrmacht marched triumphantly down the Champs-Élysées on July 14. The ultimate authority in the Occupied Zone was the *Militarbefehlshaber in Frankreich* (German military headquarters in France). Located in Paris as well were the German embassy, responsible for relations with the Vichy government; the secret state police, the Gestapo, headed by Theodor Dannecker, who was responsible to Adolf Eichmann; and the headquarters of the German security and intelligence apparatus, known as the Security Police and Security Service. These organizations established the political, social, and economic domination of the Occupied Zone.

This domination also included control over the cultural field. There were four main organizations of the German occupying authorities affecting French cultural production: (1) the German embassy, (2) the Propaganda-Abteilung, or propaganda department, which reported to the German military command; their operational responsibility was given to the Propaganda-Staffel, which had separate staffs for regulating music, literature, general culture, and active propaganda—this was the key organization responsible for censorship and surveillance of French culture; (3) the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), which was the SS Security Service; and (4) the *Deutsche Institut*, which was a cultural propaganda organization that held extravagant parties and other activities intended to encourage cultural exchange between the French and the Germans.⁶⁸ The Vichy government likewise set up its own censorship apparatus, but this did not have as much control, since most legal cultural production remained centered in Paris.⁶⁹

In the suffocating atmosphere of the occupation there were collaborationist groups, movements, and journals that agitated for fascist rule or that actively sought to align with the National Socialist vision. These included smaller groups and parties like the Francistes, *Mouvement social révolutionnaire*, *Ligue française*, *Parti français national-collectiviste*, and *Front franc*. The four most important collaborationist groups were the *Rassemblement national populaire* (RNP), with about twenty thousand members; the *Parti populaire française*

(PPF), with about thirty thousand members; the Groupe collaboration, which had cultural aims that went beyond its political focus, with at least forty-three thousand members; and the Milice, formed in January 1943, which became the main arm of Jewish roundups and the armed wing of the civil war in France fighting against the Resistance by 1944.⁷⁰ While rife with internecine conflict, these groups shared an ideological nexus around the themes of integral nationalism, anticommunism, antifeminism, antidemocracy, paramilitary forms of organization under a charismatic leader, and antisemitism.

Vichy historians generally distinguish between the *collaborationism* of these groups and the *collaboration* of Vichy and its National Revolution.⁷¹ The cultural origins of the Vichy government shared with collaborationism the integralist tradition of Catholic antirepublicanism, conservative and radical authoritarianism, and xenophobic antisemitism. As Robert Paxton has pointed out, however, the ideology of Vichy should not be treated as a bloc “reduced to imported nazism, to the triumph of Maurras, or even to the outgrowth of 1930s Personalism.”⁷² Rather, the National Revolution proposed by the Vichy government was a complex of often competing and even antagonistic visions. They were often only united in their opposition to the interchangeable composite of Judeo-Marxist decadence and the Allied enemies, which collectively and individually were construed as a political and military threat as well a symbolic and cultural threat. The National Revolution espoused an organic, hierarchical, patriarchal, antidemocratic, anticommunist vision that promised national regeneration through the discipline of work and the resurrection of peasant values, encoded in its slogan that replaced the republican trinity (liberty, equality, fraternity) with “travail, famille, patrie” (work, family, fatherland). The formula is generally attributed to Raphaël Alibert, Vichy minister of justice from July 1940 to February 1941 and the author of the *Statut des juifs*.

By the time Sartre returned to Paris, carrying out the program of the Jewish statute had turned deadly. The persecution of Jews was among the first ordinances of the new regime. As Marrus and Paxton show, Vichy began “its own antisemitic career before the first German text appeared, and without direct German orders.”⁷³ Beginning on July 17, 1940, one week after the new government was formed, civil service employment was limited to people with French

fathers. On July 22 a commission was established to review all citizenships granted under France's 1927 naturalization laws to decide whether they should be revoked; both laws disproportionately affected Jews. The first specifically antisemitic legislation was the repeal on August 27 of the "Marchandau Law," which supplemented the 1881 press legislation and outlawed any attack in the press on a person belonging "by origin to a particular race or religion when it is intended to arouse hatred among citizens or residents."⁷⁴ With this change in the law, antisemitic propaganda was now legal. The *Statut des juifs*—the French Nuremberg Laws—were passed on October 3 to define who was a Jew using racial criteria and to exclude Jews from public positions. On October 4 it was decreed that the French police could arbitrarily arrest any foreigner of the Jewish race. Internment camps had already been set up by the French government to hold Spanish Republican soldiers, and following the Battle of France thousands of "enemy aliens" were locked up. Under German pressure a census of Jews was conducted at the end of 1940, and a month after Sartre arrived in Paris in April 1941 the first mass arrests of Jews occurred. A second law on the status of Jews was passed in June that broadened the definition of a Jew and placed further restrictions on them. This was followed a month later by an Aryanization law that enabled the seizure of Jewish property. A Ministry of Jewish Affairs was established; the Commissariat général aux questions juives (CGQJ); a special police unit for dealing with Jewish affairs, was assembled; and a Jewish council to force Jews to cooperate with the new measures, the Union générale des israélites de France (UGIF), was instituted.

What was Sartre's response to Vichy's anti-Jewish ideology and institutions? In order to judge what he said and did we need to place him within a broad overview of the cultural field at the time. Among the Protestant and Catholic establishments and prominent members of these communities there was a diversity of views that changed through time and that were also often equivocal on different issues.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, a few broad generalizations can be made. First, a significant portion of both practicing Protestants and Catholics saw the defeat of France as evidence of the corruption and moral decadence of the Third Republic; they believed the fault lay in the rabid secularism institutionalized most concretely in the separation of church and state in 1905. They thus

rallied to Pétain in 1940 and supported the National Revolution, especially on matters of family and youth; this stance did not contradict their anti-German or anti-Nazi attitudes.⁷⁶ Second, while the majority of Church leaders gave tacit or overt support to the Vichy regime, which they saw as offering the hope of national renovation and perhaps a new *concordat*, there was nevertheless a range of responses by Church leaders.⁷⁷ Third, there were often stark differences between the leadership and the lower clergy, Catholic schoolteachers, and the rank-and-file laity and between these groups and the exemplary response of Protestant communities like Le Chambon.⁷⁸ Fourth, the predominant outlook from December 1941 onward was characterized by *attentisme*, a “wait-and-see” attitude.⁷⁹ Finally, Christian leaders progressively began to lose credibility as the tide of the war changed and Frenchmen began to support de Gaulle and the Resistance. By the time of the liberation Church leaders had been fiercely criticized for their sins of both commission and omission.

French Catholic intellectuals during the occupation provide a manifest case of the variety of intellectual responses during the Vichy years. Michael Kelly has argued that among Catholic intellectuals, while “by no means all of the old Right, new Right, ultra-collaborationist or Pétainist writers and journalists were Catholic[,] . . . certainly a majority were.”⁸⁰ There were also prominent Catholic intellectuals who engaged in Resistance activities, including those in the largely Catholic-dominated Combat movement, with its newspaper of the same name, and the smaller *Témoignage chrétien*, which was responsible for some important Resistance pamphlets, as well as figures like François Mauriac who were involved in other Resistance movements.⁸¹ There were several Catholic literary and intellectual reviews founded during the war, but the two most important were *Temps Nouveaux* and *Esprit*, founded in 1932 and directed by Emmanuel Mounier. *Esprit* would emerge, along with Sartre’s newly launched journal *Les Temps Modernes*, as one of the most important publishing venues for postwar intellectual debate.⁸²

As was the case with Catholic intellectuals, each domain within the intellectual field, including fine art, film, literature, theater, and philosophy, was characterized by greater continuities than discontinuities from the 1930s to

the postwar period, although there were constraints that made the Vichy years unique. The visual arts serve as a useful point of entry to the cultural milieu. The art world under Vichy, like the other cultural realms, remained very lively, despite the witch hunt against decadence aimed at the avant-garde: salons functioned, galleries had shows, theme shows were organized at museums and private galleries, the new press had its art columns, and the art market prospered, since currency was unstable and there were few other luxury goods available.⁸³ The face of art changed, however, since artistic life in the Vichy years was characterized by the suppression of international modernists and Jewish artists such as the Dadaists and surrealists, including Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson, Fernand Léger, and Yves Tanguy, who lived in exile in the United States.⁸⁴ The middle-of-the-road artists and the *rappel à l'ordre* movement, which advocated a return to classicism and whose origins go back to at least the 1920s, became the predominant style.⁸⁵

Michèle Cone's work *Artists under Vichy* demonstrates that "rather than a consensus about form, there seems to have been agreement that from now on French art would be 'judenrein,' harmonious, decorative, joyful, and uplifting, and that art probing the seedy sides of life and of the psyche should remain out of sight. Women artists appear to have remained very much in the background in this antidecadence rampage."⁸⁶ A wide range of exhibitions was held during the war years, and an even wider audience was reached for the most propagandistic of these shows through the inclusion of filmed versions of them in the cinema newsreels: "'Secrets de la Franc-Maçonnerie' at the Petit Palais was filmed in October, the Exposition de la France Européenne at the Grand Palais was transmitted in June 1941, [and] the pernicious exhibition 'Le Juif et la France' at the Palais Berlitz appeared in the cinemas in October 1941."⁸⁷

The exhibition *Le juif et la France*, mounted in September 1941, was a clear example of the rigid opposition that the authorities sought to establish between France and the Jews. It was the most successful propaganda undertaking of the Institut d'études des questions juives (Institute for the Study of Jewish Questions, IEQJ), a French organization with a large budget from the Germans, closely regulated by the Gestapo, and in close contact with Rosenberg's anti-Jewish institute in Frankfurt.⁸⁸ The exhibition included huge panels with diagrams,

photos, texts, caricatures, and enormous sculptures that sought rigorously to identify Jews from non-Jews, even as it asserted that “the Jew” was everywhere and nowhere, a visible embodiment of racial intermixing and cultural pollution that nevertheless remained disguised and camouflaged in the body politic. The cover of the catalog showed an old, bearded Jew clawing at the globe he sought to control. The introductory article written by J. Marquès Rivière justified the need for the exhibition by explaining that “the Jews” dream of conquering the world. To realize this dream they seek to “control the financial and economic life of the world”; they are the “creators, directors, propagators and financiers of Marxism (socialism, communism, bolshevism)”; they want an end of religion and thus to proclaim the “universal Republic”; they control the media (cinema, publishing houses, news agencies); they control secret societies; they “are unable to think like other citizens”; in short, they are at the bottom of “all the troubles, all disturbances, all conflicts, all the revolts of the modern world; they judaize other people slowly under the influence of their organizations.”⁸⁹ In the rotunda of the exhibition was a statue that held the solution to the nefarious influence of the Jews in the form of a “thirty-foot-high sculpture of a tall, attractive, and athletic young female (France) subduing a repulsive, greedy old man (the Jew) with her knees, and pushing another Jew down with her free hand.”⁹⁰ The statue by Perron, which might be thought of as Vichy’s Marianne, was called *La France se libérant des juifs* (France Liberating Itself from the Jews).⁹¹ As in other sectors of the intellectual field, however, the range of choices within the visual arts varied from Lucien Rebatet’s viciously antisemitic cultural criticism, supportive of such exhibitions, to the activities of Jean Moulin, de Gaulle’s delegate to the internal Resistance who opened an art gallery as his cover in Nice. However, as in culture more broadly, the majority of fine artists were middle-of-the-road on the C curve.⁹²

This was the general context in which Sartre operated. His choices about how to intervene in the cultural field were most clearly constrained by the strictures on publishing. The control and censorship of French publishers was established immediately upon the German occupation of Paris in June 1940.⁹³ Calmann-Lévy, Fernand Nathan, and Ferenczi were marked for Aryanization, publishing houses were closed down, and Hachette was procured for use by the Germans.

The first seizures of books were carried out in August 1940 on the basis of the German "Liste Bernhard," which contained 143 titles that the Germans determined should be banned from circulation. French publishers responded to the new situation by following what Philippe Burrin calls "a business logic."⁹⁴ In September 1940 they established the Syndicat des éditeurs (French Publishers Guild), which signed an agreement with the German Propaganda-Staffel that would protect the "autonomy" of French publishers by making each house responsible for its own production and agreeing not to publish anything that was anti-German or any book banned in Germany. The same month the first notorious "Liste Otto" was drawn up by the French publishers themselves (two more would follow in July 1942 and May 1943). It contained over a thousand titles that were withdrawn from sale. As the preface by the French publishers indicated, "especially targeted are the publications of political refugees and of Jewish writers who . . . by their lying and tendentious spirit, have poisoned French public opinion."⁹⁵ During the occupation French publishers bought and published translations not only of German classics but of Nazi racial theorists as well as works of collaborationism.⁹⁶ A long list of very prestigious writers also published under the German occupation, including Aragon, Bataille, Blanchot, Camus, Claudel, Duras, Éluard, Gide, Mauriac, Paulhan, Ponge, Rolland, Valéry, and Sartre and Beauvoir. The official figures of book production show that business was booming, with almost nine thousand titles published in 1944.⁹⁷

While there were those like Georges Politzer who argued that "today in France, legal literature is a way of saying treasonous literature," according to Philippe Burrin, the publication of books was generally accepted by French writers.⁹⁸ There was a consensus that French literature should remain vital, since it was the soul of French culture; the Republic of Letters, it was thought, should persist in the wake of the defeated French Republic. Publishing a book, in short, did not necessarily mean capitulation to the ideological and political situation.⁹⁹

Comoedia: Sartre's Complicity with a Collaborationist Journal?

Publishing in journals was another matter. The ethics and politics of publishing in periodicals were vigorously debated. The director of the journal, its political line, and the other contributors to the periodical strongly determined how the

publication was perceived during and after the war. As Michel Trebitsch makes evident, it was not censorship only but the advent of war—the mass mobilization, the exodus following defeat, and the military occupation—that led to a major transformation in the publication of serials. He shows that, contrary to the mythical notion that journals voluntarily stopped publishing in June 1940 or in November 1942 with the Nazi occupation of the southern zone, it was the beginning of war that altered the publishing scene and saw the demise of hundreds of periodicals, especially avant-garde and art journals and any journals with a significant Jewish cohort.¹⁰⁰ In the publishing world journals occupied an intermediate position between newspapers, which were the primary target of censorship, and books, which found many ways to accommodate. The range of periodicals, like individual choices, was nevertheless wide and extended from those like Jean Lescure's *résistant* journal *Messages*, which was one journal in which Sartre published during the war, to those that claimed to be rigorously apolitical, to violently racist and politically committed fascist or National Socialist serials.¹⁰¹ The journals of the Right included *Au Pilon*, *La Gerbe*, *Les Nouveaux Temps*, *Gringoire*, *Aujourd'hui*, and, the most infamous, *Je Suis Partout*.¹⁰² There were also established journals that continued to publish in the new context, although not without concessions, compromises, compliance, and even direct collaboration. Perhaps the best example here is *Nouvelle Revue Française (NRF)*, which was central to the publishing empire of Gallimard, Sartre's publishing house, and was able to continue output because Jean Paulhan was replaced as director by the fascist Drieu La Rochelle. Under Drieu's direction the old coterie of writers was slowly replaced by many profascist, antisemitic newcomers.¹⁰³ There was also a lot of publication of works in journals claiming to be purely cultural enterprises like *Poésie*, *Confluences*, *Fontaine*, and *Comoedia*.¹⁰⁴

Almost immediately upon returning from Stalag XII D Sartre was asked to contribute a regular column to the newly reestablished weekly *Comoedia*. After he initially accepted the offer he contributed a short piece on the translation of Melville's *Moby Dick* for the first issue. Throughout the war *Comoedia* published articles by many of the leading French writers; only the most committed Resistance authors refused to publish their work in it. Paulhan argued that Valéry and Claudel, for example, published in *Comoedia* to express their opposition to the

newly reconstituted *NRF*. In *Prime of Life* Beauvoir underlines Sartre's reservations about publishing in the journal even as she insists that *Comoedia* was "at variance with that of the rest of the press [and] . . . opposed Fascist values and Vichy-type morality." Despite Sartre's concerns and the fact that, as Beauvoir said, "the first rule on which all the intellectuals of the Resistance were agreed was: 'No writing for Occupied Zone papers,'" he would later give an interview to the journal to promote his upcoming play, *Les mouches*, and offer a tribute to Jean Giraudoux in an issue as late as 1944.¹⁰⁵ Sartre's contributions and the role of *Comoedia* more generally within the field of legalized publishing indicate the limits and possibilities of *engagement* under the German occupation.

Comoedia was originally created in 1907 under the direction of Henri Desgranges as a daily covering theater, art, and literature. It stopped publishing in 1938 and then reappeared on June 21, 1941, under the direction of René Delange. Delange's role was pivotal because there was no editorial team at *Comoedia* like that at *NRF*. Despite his claim to "total independence," his newspaper was supported by the German Institute. Delange insisted in response to a questionnaire that the newspaper's "main aim is to work towards total Franco-German collaboration in the domain of culture and in a general fashion toward . . . an impartial national and European project."¹⁰⁶ The weekly always featured a page that was dedicated to European intellectual life, especially emphasizing German culture. At the same time, however, Delange was condemned in a letter by Doctor Artz of the Pressegruppe because he "maintained relations with influential Jews."¹⁰⁷ The paper was also malevolently denounced by *Je Suis Partout* in strong antisemitic language on several occasions.¹⁰⁸ Olivier Fouranton's rigorous analysis of the journal shows that while *Comoedia* made clear concessions to the occupying forces, it was certainly no vehicle for Nazi propaganda, nor was there an unequivocal collaborationist editorial policy.¹⁰⁹ In the first issue, which included Sartre's article, there was an antisemitic article on Bernard Nathan, who was associated with the filmmaker Pathé, calling him "an undesirable from a Balkan ghetto."¹¹⁰ But through the war there were also many articles in *Comoedia* that were critical of the present political regime, sometimes in covert language.

Like these, Sartre's discussion of *Moby Dick* has the façade of an apolitical review, but his reading of Melville stresses themes that might have suggested a critique of Nazi and Vichy racial hatred.¹¹¹ The opening and closing make clear that while Sartre strongly welcomes the translation of Melville's great work, he is critical of the translator Jean Giono's preface. He indicts Giono for failing to appreciate the textual qualities of Melville's genius, treating his work too literally, as if its only focus was the maritime world. He explicitly correlates Giono's treatment of Melville with the limits of Barrès's treatment of Lorraine. The book must be understood as an allegory. This is what makes Melville's *Moby Dick* not only his greatest work but, as Sartre indicates in the title of his essay, a monument, an epic on the order of Homer. While insisting that Melville's greatness as a modern writer is his literary rendition of existential and ontological problems, Sartre concentrates on what might be understood as the racial inflections in Melville's novel around the imagery of whiteness and the theme of hatred.

According to Sartre, "whiteness recurs as a leitmotiv of diabolical terror." *Moby Dick*'s drama is created by Captain Ahab's zealous chase in pursuit of this whiteness animated by a compulsive hatred. Sartre's conclusion is elusive and ambiguous. For Ahab there is only one idea of hatred, as there is only one idea of whiteness or of the chase (his existential project?), "and this idea commits [engage] the man and the whole human condition entirely." Sartre does not explicitly tie his reading of whiteness, hate, and the meaning of human existence to the politics of his present circumstances. Nor does he articulate his own position on how to assess the relations between these terms, much less to argue for the inherent failure of hatred, as he will do in *Being and Nothingness*. The possible interpretations are left open, and the reader can unscramble the terms of Sartre's discussion to fit any political agenda.

Likewise, Sartre's tribute in *Comoedia* to Jean Giraudoux upon his death could also be read in directly antagonistic ways, expressing both critique and praise. Giraudoux's plays influenced Sartre's earliest work in the theater, but his *Pleins pouvoirs*, published in 1939 and condemning the depravity of modernity and advocating national renewal on the basis of a nostalgic, xenophobic, elitist view of France, was the apotheosis of a rightward drift and differed markedly from

Sartre's perspective. Giraudoux "denounced the recent uncontrolled 'invasions' of undesirables who were threatening to 'corrupt' the French race." He specified that these "undesirables" were made up primarily of "all the expelled, the inept, the greedy, the ill[,] . . . hundreds of thousands of Ashkenazim, escaped from the ghettos of Poland or Romania."¹¹² In an unusual statement for a eulogy, Sartre would say of Giraudoux's writing that it was "anachronistic yet bearing witness to the time. The old values of measure, order, reason, and humanism which he rediscovered are still" relevant, and while Sartre did not "know whether [Giraudoux] was right," Giraudoux's ideas came from the "depths of his being," which at bottom was characterized by a "metaphysical optimism."¹¹³ The content of Sartre's contributions to *Comoedia* are thus circumspect about Vichy propaganda, even as he chose to publish in a periodical that made clear concessions to the Nazi occupiers. This ambiguous intervention speaks to the ambivalence of the cultural field under the occupation.

Socialisme et liberté: The Impetus to Resist

At the same time that Sartre published in a weekly like *Comoedia*, he was firmly committed to resistance against the status quo established by the Germans and the Vichy regime. Beauvoir's memoirs testify that immediately upon his return to Paris she was struck by Sartre's new commitment to political activism. He was apparently thinking about forming a resistance group.¹¹⁴ After the Easter holidays, at the beginning of April 1941, he resumed his position of professor of philosophy at the Lycée Pasteur and was promised the position of *khâgne* (slang term for the second-year preparatory class required for entrance to the École normale supérieure) professor at the Lycée Condorcet the following year. During this period Sartre met Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a former classmate at the École normale who had served as an infantry lieutenant and was writing a thesis that would become *The Phenomenology of Perception*.¹¹⁵ Together they shared ideas for a resistance organization. Merleau-Ponty introduced Sartre to Jean-Toussaint and Dominique Desanti, who were part of a clandestine organization that had started in the fall of 1940.¹¹⁶

The group was headed by a Trotskyist named Raymond Marrot, who was a young mathematician. There were several other mathematicians, including

Colette Rothschild. There were three philosophers: François Cuzin, who was later assassinated by the Milice, Jean-Toussaint Desanti, and Simone Devouassoux. She and Cuzin had ripped up their Communist Youth cards to protest the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. There was a young lawyer on a fellowship, Renée Plasson, more or less Trotskyist, who married Pierre Stibbe, a key figure in *Ceux de la résistance*. While committed to resistance, the group disliked de Gaulle (whose name they thought was a pseudonym) because he was a general and because they thought he sounded like a monarchist. Some had belonged to organizations before the war, like the *Union fédérale des étudiants*, which was attached to the PCF. Everyone in the group was vaguely Marxist, and most were students at the *École normale supérieure*. Using stencils and paper they had pilfered from the buildings at the rue d'Ulm and at grave personal danger, they produced and distributed copies of a tract entitled "Sous la botte" (Under the Boot) around Paris and at factories.

Since the group was made up of young intellectuals and philosophers, they had heard about Sartre, especially as a result of the acclaim he had received for *Nausea*. He met with Jean-Toussaint Desanti, who reported that Sartre wanted to meet their group. They were extremely excited to join forces with this engaging young philosopher.¹¹⁷ They got together in Simone de Beauvoir's hotel room on the rue de Seine, and it was quickly decided that several members of "the family"—the circle close to Beauvoir and Sartre, including Jacques-Laurent Bost, Jean Pouillon, and Merleau-Ponty—would join their group.¹¹⁸ The group met regularly, often to discuss Marxism and phenomenology as well as to plan their resistance activities. Their main action was recruiting further support, compiling anti-German information, and circulating this information in news bulletins and pamphlets.

Violent action seemed out of the realm of possibility. The group decided to continue publishing under the name *Socialisme et liberté*, which summed up the principles of the group. The editorial job alternated between Sartre and a Marxist member to achieve the ideological balance that characterized the group. Neither Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka nor any of the survivors of the group, who tried to locate documents produced by the circle, have recovered even a single example of their publications. The content of their work is known

to us only through the vague memories of the participants. They cautioned their readers about the enemy's propaganda, affirmed that resistance was a choice, and described their vision for a "purified" French society in the future. Sartre and Beauvoir later recalled that while engaged with *Socialisme et liberté* Sartre wrote a constitution for a revived France that included a long section on the Jewish Question. While Beauvoir thought that "the Jews ought to be looked upon as having the same rights as all citizens, but neither more nor less . . . [Sartre] wanted very exact rights to be granted to them—the right to speak their language, to have their religion, to have their culture, and so on." He had apparently been "converted" by Arnold Mandel, who interviewed him on the Jewish Question before the war, convincing him "of the specific nature of the Jewish fact and of the necessity for giving Jews particular rights."¹¹⁹

Socialisme et liberté published several tracts, but there was a growing number of arrests as the resistance movements congealed into more organized units. Within *Socialisme et liberté* Georges Chazelas was jailed for six months for putting up posters that he had designed with Sartre, calling for the escalation of sabotage activities. Yvonne Picard, a brilliant young philosophy student who had quit *Socialisme et liberté* for another Marxist group, was sent to the camps, from which she never returned. The group was also breaking apart because after their *agrégation* many members left Paris to teach. The Desantis, for example, moved to Clermont-Ferrand, where they joined the Front national.

Several writers have recently scorned the efforts of *Socialisme et liberté* and Sartre's role in it as "bad faith" for an intellectual who after the war demanded *engagement* but who during the war was largely an *attentiste*.¹²⁰ Maurice Nadeau, for example, described Sartre's efforts to recruit him in almost comical terms. After meeting at a café Sartre indicated that he was forming small resistance cells and invited Nadeau to join his group. The units were to be composed only of a few other members, who were to be recruited primarily among writers, intellectuals, and university students. When Nadeau asked what they would be called upon to do, Sartre indicated that for the moment their only responsibility was to take a position against Vichy and the occupation. Nadeau attended a meeting of the group that included five members. He recalls that Sartre concluded the meeting by stipulating that within "a year we will have elucidated

the nature of the state built by Vichy.” He suggests contemptuously that, having expected practical action such as contacts, liaisons, and propaganda, he found himself instead involved in a philosophical conversation.¹²¹ According to Nadeau’s version, Sartre’s *engagement* was thus nothing other than the idle chatter of intellectuals.

Socialisme et liberté was short-lived; it lasted only a few months in 1941. To judge the efforts of the group, however, it is important to place them within the development of the Resistance as a whole and to examine the role that intellectuals came to play within the networks and movements that made it up. After all, following the defeat of France in May–June 1940 there were only isolated individuals who refused the German terms of the occupation, even after de Gaulle’s oft-repeated prophetic speech on the radio from London on June 18 insisting that “whatever happens, the flame of French Resistance must not and will not be extinguished.”

The process of resistance slowly gathered steam through the course of the war as organized movements and networks and then networks of networks grew.¹²² By the end of the war there were 250 networks and movements. The different phases within the Resistance roughly corresponded to the years of the war. In 1940 it was a matter of individuals seeking those with similar inclinations. In 1941 precisely the kind of tentative organizing attempted by Socialisme et liberté was the beginning of collective struggle. By 1942 resistance had gathered enough momentum to cause some problems for the Reich, especially after the institution of the *Relève* in June 1942, which promised to trade POWs for workers. It was only in 1943, after Allied troops had landed in Africa, the Nazi defeat at the Battle of Stalingrad in January, and the imposition of the *Service du travail obligatoire* (STO), that there was a major increase in the number of active fighters and the formation of the *Maquis*, or French Resistance guerrilla fighters.¹²³ By 1944 the fight against the Nazi regime reflected the desire of the majority of the French, albeit not their active participation. If there were perhaps ten thousand *résistants* in the fall of 1940, as many as a million were involved by the liberation of Paris in August 1944. If between 5 and 10 percent of the population were committed to the overthrow of the German occupation, there were also many individuals who contributed in small ways to make these active *résistants*

effective, for example, the people who kept safe houses or whose houses served as “mailboxes” and police who looked the other way. The *résistants* came from every sector of French society, but there was a dramatic overrepresentation of minorities, including Jews, Protestants, and foreigners.

Socialisme et liberté therefore actually serves as an excellent example of how resistance movements got started. They began with intelligence gathering and then the dissemination of information, first done by mimeograph and later through mass printing. The obstacles were enormous, since even finding paper was a major task, let alone collecting information, writing articles, printing, and then disseminating the documents.

The repercussions of even this type of resistance were severe. Resisters were subject to denunciation, interrogation, jail, death by hanging or firing squad, or deportation. By the end of the war there were sixty-five thousand political *résistants* who were deported for their activity, and 40 percent of them died in concentration or extermination camps. Their fortunes differed depending upon where they were sent. But, as Charlotte Delbo's attestation in *Auschwitz and After* makes clear, their fate was horrific, the traumatic consequences inseparable from those suffered by Jews, with the major difference that the *résistants* were deported for their acts and not for who they were.¹²⁴

Since much of the actual effect of the Resistance was symbolic, intellectuals played a particularly important role. One of the earliest gestures of resistance was the demonstration of secondary school students who celebrated the armistice of 1918 at the Arc de Triomphe in 1940. The first nucleus of systematic resistance formed around the Musée de l'homme group in Paris. They united in July 1940 in order to facilitate the escape of prisoners to the southern zone and then started publishing tracts similar to those of “Sous la botte.” The group was made up of members of the university community, including ethnologists and scientists and intellectuals like Germaine Tillion, Jean Cassou, Pierre de Lescure, and Jean Paulhan, the former editor of the *NRF* and advisor to Gallimard. The group published a newspaper called *Résistance* until they were infiltrated; most members were arrested and executed by firing squad.

Intellectuals also published clandestine books. Resistance literature obviously faced greater material and political constraints than legalized publication,

but nevertheless a range of texts was disseminated, from tracts and journalism to literature, including fiction, poetry, plays, and essays. The production and circulation of Resistance literature was extremely hazardous. The largest clandestine publishing house was Éditions de Minuit, founded by Vercors and Pierre de Lescure in 1941, which produced around twenty titles, including fiction, poetry, and essays. Another significant enterprise was Bibliothèque Française, founded by Aragon, Seghers, and Eluard in Saint-Flour and which published poetry and fiction. In 1941 the CNE was established, with its organ, *Les Lettres Françaises*, appearing in February 1942 in the occupied zone and *Les Étoiles* appearing in the southern zone. Like *Les Lettres Françaises*, other Resistance newspapers (*Résistance*, *Cahiers de la Libération*, and *Combat*) also carried reviews of cultural productions. This Resistance writing and literature was copied and sometimes broadcast to France by radio from England and America and in de Gaulle's speeches, thereby reaching a wider audience.¹²⁵

Before the dissolution of *Socialisme et liberté*, Sartre spent the summer holidays in 1941 with Simone de Beauvoir in the Free Zone on a bicycle trip they undertook to establish contact with other Resistance groups. He met with both André Gide and André Malraux, who informed him that for the time being his action was useless. Sartre decided to abandon the formation of his own Resistance group in the fall of 1941 and tried instead to join the Communist underground. The Communists rejected Sartre's overtures because his felicitous escape from the POW camp raised the suspicion in the party that he was a spy. Having failed to join the Communists, he committed himself entirely to writing *The Flies*. Through 1942 Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir spent most of their time in the triangle between Montparnasse, Passy, and Saint-Lazare in different cafés, primarily Café Flore, where they could work and enjoy both light and heat.¹²⁶

In February 1943 Sartre was invited to join the CNE, which by then was one of the primary venues of intellectual resistance. Initially affiliated with the Communist National Front, the group was formed in 1941 by Jacques Decour and Jean Paulhan as a way to organize intellectuals into a national front opposed to the Nazi occupation. By 1943 it constituted an ideologically widespread group. Its publishing organs attacked the culture of collaboration and the intellectu-

als who were complicit and sought to inculcate a spirit of resistance, serving also as an intermediary for publishing manuscripts at Éditions de Minuit. The CNE's newspaper, *Les Lettres Françaises*, included political commentary, cultural criticism, poetry, rumors, homage to victims, and portraits of intellectual collaborators, like Sartre's blistering vignette of Drieu La Rochelle.¹²⁷

One year after castigating Drieu in *Les Lettres Françaises*, in April 1944 Sartre lashed out at Marcel Aymé for writing *Vogue la galère*, which Sartre maintained reflected a fascist despair. In the article he articulated some of the basic precepts that structure his notion of *littérature engagée*. He correlates literature with freedom and thus condemns any writing that does not seek to develop the liberty of its readers: "Literature is not an innocent and facile lyric capable of accommodating itself to any sort of regime," he wrote, "but by its very nature confronts us with the political problem: to write is to demand that all men be free, and if a work is not the act of a freedom which wants to get itself recognized by other freedoms, it is nothing but infamous gossip." Thus, Sartre suggests that fascist writers have no real literary talent; in fact, "they even hate literature."¹²⁸ In addition to his contributions to *Les Lettres Françaises* Sartre also published works of literary criticism and snippets of his novel *The Age of Reason* in resistance organs like *Messages*, *L'Arbalète*, and *Cahiers du Sud*.

The Flies and No Exit: Staging Allegories of Resistance

At the same time as he was active in intellectual resistance, however, Sartre was emerging as an intellectual star in no small measure because of the success of his works produced with the censors' stamp of approval, specifically, his play *The Flies* and his philosophical masterpiece, *Being and Nothingness*. To understand the ways in which Sartre's theater productions under the German occupation simultaneously made concessions while conniving against the enemy, we need to situate them within the strictures that determined the choices faced by those in the theater world. Theater, like literature, provides another example of the dilemmas facing artists during the occupation.

In some senses, the Vichy period was a golden age for theater, as it was for film.¹²⁹ There were limits on the amusements available to the French populace, and since the occupying authorities were interested in forms of entertainment

that might reestablish a sense of normalcy, theater was permitted and attendance soared. By the end of 1940 there were thirty-four theaters, fourteen music halls, two circuses, six cabarets, and thirty cinemas.¹³⁰ The administrators of these theaters collaborated with the Propaganda-Staffel, and by 1941 a new system of organization was institutionalized under the Comité d'organisation des entreprises de spectacle (COES), headed by René Rocher.¹³¹ Through the COES anti-Jewish legislation was enacted on June 6, 1942. It banned Jewish actors, playwrights, directors, and musicians from performing or participating in productions. Limits were also placed on the employment of blacks. The system of censorship responsible for surveying the theater banned works or translations by Jews, along with works with Russian associations, themes of adultery, the words *zazou* (a term used to describe an eccentric young lover of jazz) and "swing," all works that might have a pernicious or demoralizing influence on youth, and most references to the present political and military situation or to England.¹³² Nevertheless, there were numerous ways in which theaters avoided censorship, and subversive messages were often transmitted between the lines.

The Flies

The Flies thus required cohabitation with the legal Aryanization of French theater in order to run for twenty-five performances before it was shut down. The play opened on June 3, 1943, in Théâtre de la cité, which was operated by Charles Dullin, who acquiesced to removing Sarah Bernhardt's name.¹³³ Dullin, in fact, was judged favorably by the Propaganda-Abteilung, which called him *deutsch-freundlich* (German friendly).¹³⁴ The play was even promoted by Dullin in *La Gerbe* on its opening day. Founded in July 1940 by Alphonse de Châteaubriant, *La Gerbe* was continuous with the prewar political and cultural weeklies of the nationalist and antisemitic Right like *Gringoire* and *Candide* and advocated all the themes of the National Revolution. *Les mouches* was therefore advertised in the collaborationist and pro-Nazi press, performed in an Aryanized theater, and directed by someone looked upon favorably by the German authorities.

The story line of *The Flies* was an adaptation of Aeschylus's tale of Orestes, which, as he indicates in his interview in *Comoedia*, Sartre transformed from

the ancient "tragedy of fate" into a "tragedy of freedom."¹³⁵ The plot of Sartre's version has Orestes return to Argos, where his father, Agamemnon, once ruled as king but was murdered by Orestes' uncle Aegisthus, a usurper who married Agamemnon's widow, Clytemnestra, and who institutes a policy of national contrition to assuage the sin that founds their rule. The play hinges upon the dialogues about the human condition and freedom between Orestes and Jupiter, who reveals the divine secret that since men have their liberty, not even a god can determine their fate. To assert his moral autonomy and thereby teach the community about their freedom, Orestes kills Aegisthus and his mother. In an ambiguous ending he leaves the polis, condemning himself to exile rather than participating in the fate of the community. But Orestes takes with him the flies that had plagued the remorseful city and that stand in for the Furies of Greek mythology.

The *Comoedia* interview helped publicize the play. In it Sartre boldly articulated his intentions. He sought to "take the case of a free man in situation" who through a singular exceptional act definitively liberates himself. Sartre clearly indicates how he defines freedom: "The man who has risen above himself to the point of being free in his consciousness will not become free in his actual situation unless he establishes freedom for others, unless his act results in the disappearance of an existing state of things and the reestablishment of what ought to be." Sartre insisted on numerous subsequent occasions that the play was an allegory of resistance, and his own interview published at the time of the production unquestionably supports this.

Philip Watts has suggested that works of allegory like Sartre's tend to appear in moments of historical crisis because allegory serves as "a trope of indeterminacy." "Allegory allows writers," he adds, "not only to speak about World War II and its aftermath but also 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."¹³⁶ The displacement of meaning within allegory as a result of the perpetual shifting from the literal to the metaphorical level thus enacts a certain ambivalence that was apparent in Sartre's staging of a narrative of resistance within the heart of collaborationist France.

Through the allegory of *The Flies* Sartre sought to subvert one of the pillars that legitimated collaboration: Vichy's constant refrain that France's defeat was a result of the decadence of the Third Republic for which the French must now repent. Argos ritually enacts the religion of repentance. In so doing, Aegisthus symbolically stands for the German usurper and Clytemnestra for the French collaborators. But Sartre also wanted to dramatize the problem with fighting back, which might result in reprisals of fifty or a hundred people killed for a violent act of resistance.¹³⁷ Thus Orestes killing not only Aegisthus but Clytemnestra symbolically stands for the French who killed Germans and their fellow Frenchmen in the struggle against the occupation.¹³⁸ Moreover, Orestes does not stay in the community to reshape its politics and government but leaves, having committed what might then amount only to an act of vengeance. Sartre's allegory of resistance was thus ambivalent both in its context and within the text itself.

According to Ingrid Galster, who has done a rigorous survey of all the reactions to *The Flies*, the political ramifications of the play were never directly addressed by anyone in the legalized press.¹³⁹ Critics pilloried the play across the political spectrum, especially in *Je Suis Partout*, in *La Gerbe*, and by Alain Laubreaux in *Le Petit Parisien*, among several others. However, it was also defended in reviews by the aesthete Maurice Rostand, the Catholic Henri Ghéon, the royalist Thierry Maulnier, and the leftist Yves Bonnat. Michel Leiris and Maurice Merleau-Ponty celebrated its subversive intentions in articles in the underground press, however.¹⁴⁰ What unanimously fixated the attention of the critics were the scenery, costumes, and masks of the performance, which were strikingly avant-garde. M. H. Adams's costumes were even prominently displayed next to Sartre's interview about the play in *Comoedia*. Laubreaux, for example, complained that the play was an "incredible cubist and dadaist bric-a-brac, an avant-garde that had long become the rear-garde."¹⁴¹ The set and costume design certainly subverted Vichy ideology's response to the visual arts, which considered this type of aesthetic the quintessence of degenerate Judeo-Bolshevik decadence. Reading the play in its context, one can thus appreciate that it simultaneously made concessions to the occupying authorities even as it was circumspect about the present regime and critiqued its value system.

No Exit

Galster has suggested that *Huis clos* (*No Exit*), first performed in the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier starting on May 27, 1944, and reprised after the liberation, pointed to the contemporary context even more directly than *Les mouches*. The play has historically been interpreted almost entirely in the abstract philosophical terms of Sartre's theory of "the look" (*le regard*) elaborated in his chapter on "Concrete Relations with the Other" in *Being and Nothingness*. But it clearly bears the traces of the Vichy period.¹⁴² "Although I had wanted to dramatize certain aspects of inexistentialism," Sartre later said of the play, "I was not forgetting the feeling I had had at the Stalag of living constantly and totally beneath the eyes of others, and the Hell which naturally set in under such circumstances."¹⁴³

This classic theatrical production, originally called *Les autres*, was written rapidly in August 1943. It places three characters in Hell, doomed to a purgatory of facing others whose constant gaze shames them into confronting the choices they have made in life: a lesbian, Inès, who turned a wife against her husband; Estelle, who kills the illegitimate child of her young lover; and a deserter and adulterer, Garcin, who fornicated with his lovers in front of his wife and then had her serve them breakfast in the morning. Galster argues that the play revolves around the concrete refusal by Sartre and Beauvoir to acquiesce to the regime of family values that was central to Vichy ideology. Estelle's abortion was, as we have discussed, taboo for the Vichy government. The play also revisits Beauvoir's suspension from her teaching position in 1943 as a result of the charges levied against her for "corrupting a minor," Natalie Sorokine, with whom she was having an affair.¹⁴⁴ Sartre, likewise, was faced with an administrative inquiry concerning his "pathological" behavior, bolstered by evidence from *The Wall* that he wrote on prurient, erotic subjects. Their dossiers were given to the rector of the University of Paris, who called upon the secretary of education to exclude them from the academy, but only Beauvoir was removed from her post. Galster thus suggests that the lesbian evoked Beauvoir's own struggles; Sartre, like Garcin, was accused of being a Don Juan; and abortion transgressed the heart of Vichy's family policies. All this could be discussed because Sartre placed these decadent protagonists in Hell. Galster perhaps goes too far when she proposes that Sartre was the incarnation of "anti-France," however.

Clearly, on one level, Sartre's plays intellectually resisted the norms of the National Revolution, as Sartre intended. The treatment of abortion, adultery, and lesbianism went against the grain of official Vichy ideology and normativity. But we have to consider what concessions were made that permitted the play to be produced with the censors' approval. All three transgressions are depicted in the context of the play as forms of bad faith, not authenticity. This could be argued to render them at best equivocal in relation to Vichy propaganda, which condemned them in its totally different discourse. Moreover, the relation of adultery and lesbianism to circumstances in the lives of Sartre and Beauvoir might also be interpreted in various ways: as apologetic, ambivalent, or even self-critical. In other words, embedded in its context, *No Exit* was as ambiguous as was *The Flies*. Finally, it bears mentioning that *No Exit* was also allegorically connected to the Jewish Question in terms of the definition of the Other by the gaze. Sartre made this evident in *Being and Nothingness* and developed this thesis in his postwar essay on antisemitism.

Being and Nothingness: Sartre's Useless Passion and the Jewish Question

In the period between his two theatrical productions Sartre met Albert Camus, who originally agreed to play the role of Garcin in *No Exit*, and, through Camus's influence, he became affiliated with the underground newspaper *Combat*. Sartre and Beauvoir spent the summer of 1943 traveling while he worked on the second volume of *The Roads to Freedom*. From October through December he lectured at Dullin's theater school, and he continued to attend CNE meetings and write resistance material for *Les Lettres Françaises* in addition to having *Being and Nothingness* published.

Like that of *The Flies*, the publication of *Being and Nothingness* in 1943 with the permission of the censors' has bolstered the argument of Sartre's critics that he was only concerned with establishing his intellectual reputation.¹⁴⁵ As with Sartre's other writings under the German occupation, however, it is important to place the work in its cultural milieu and to read closely his pronouncements, specifically for my purposes his discussions of Jews and antisemites, to assess the validity of these charges. In zeroing in on the scant comments that Sartre makes regarding Jews and Judaism in the work, we will see that they not only

are useful in understanding his larger project but help define his ethics on the Jewish Question at the moment when Vichy collaboration with the Nazis was reaching new heights.

Robert Pickering has identified a taxonomy of themes that were given the censors' approval during the occupation, and *Being and Nothingness* was certainly on par with these. The censors approved works that invoked war or that explored the French military tradition; texts that examined the relation between the self, the community, and the nation; and, most relevantly, the recurring theme of absurdity both in form and content, which expressed "dissatisfaction with language's ability to cope with reality, with the complex of problems and pressures of French experience," and which traversed "apparently incompatible ideological divides."¹⁴⁶ The widespread exploration of absurdity and the quest for the war's meaningfulness certainly help us to understand how existentialists like Camus and Sartre began to achieve widespread prominence during the war and explain why existentialism would dominate the postwar cultural scene.

Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, as its subtitle indicates, is a "phenomenological essay on ontology." It is an effort to lay the groundwork for an ethics on the basis of an existential analysis of consciousness. His first principle of consciousness, already developed in his philosophical works before the war, is the cogito: consciousness turns back upon itself in the act of cognition. For Sartre, this does not establish the basis of a subject who can perceive and know the world like Descartes's cogito. The point of departure for Sartre is Edmund Husserl's notion of intentionality: that consciousness is always consciousness of some-thing. As Maurice Cranston elegantly puts it, "just as a mirror has no content except that which is reflected in it, so consciousness can have no content except the objects on which it reflects. Yet such an object is always separate and distinct from the consciousness which 'mirrors' it."¹⁴⁷ Descartes's cogito founded the rationalist tradition and the human subject born with innate ideas, but Sartre's cogito follows the phenomenological tradition of the Husserlian cogito as developed by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927).

The first half of *Being and Nothingness* is concerned with defining the central categories of Sartre's ontology through an elaboration of the distinction between the object world, which Sartre calls the in-itself (*être-en-soi*), and the

perceiving subject, which he names the for-itself (*être-pour-soi*). In a paragraph in the middle of his discussion of the temporal dimension of the *pour-soi*, Sartre intimates that a model for his conception of human subjectivity was the Jews: "In the ancient world the profound cohesion and dispersion of the Jewish people was designated by the term 'Diaspora.' It is this word which will serve to designate the mode of being of the For-itself; it is diasporatic" (195). Strewn across time and space, Jews nonetheless maintain unity in this dispersion. As such, they serve as Sartre's example of the *pour-soi*, another name for being human, defined by its nothingness (*le néant*), its negation of what is in-itself. There is no essence to the *pour-soi* (and, by extension, Jewishness), which would turn it by definition into an *en-soi*, reifying human beings.

Sartre discusses a third kind of being that occupies the second half of *Being and Nothingness*, being-for-others (*être-pour-autrui*). In elucidating our being-for-others he articulates the central point of his philosophical magnum opus: in responding to the human condition of a shared world human beings are free and as such responsible for the choices they make. This is the central theme of Sartre's oeuvre, and it runs counter to the foundational axioms of Vichy ideology. Sartre explains that, despite our inherent freedom, we inhabit a world always already also inhabited by others, and therefore we also exist as an object for others.

The gaze determines the basic structure of being-for-others. I see others and see them seeing me and know that they judge my choices. The Other's gaze turns me into an object in his or her world, a character in his or her life drama, and thereby takes away my freedom to freely determine my own essence. When I am looked at (*être regardé*), I become objectified, and my subjectivity is fixed by my being-for-others; this can be avoided by returning the gaze and objectifying the Other. On the basis of this structure, Sartre describes all concrete relations with others as forms of struggle. Indifference is impossible: it is a mode of self-deception that refuses to see that others gaze at me, a refusal to accept that I am alienated from my own objectivity. My desire for this objectivity—my desire to be the foundation of my own existence, to constitute my-self as an essence, to be an *en-soi-pour-soi*, is the quintessence of self-deception, or what Sartre calls

mauvaise foi, and it is animated by the human desire to be God. This desire creates the inherent conflict in my concrete relations with others.

The structure of being-for-others is fundamentally limited. There are only two responses to the gaze of others: to make oneself the kind of object one would like to be perceived as (which in its extreme form Sartre names "masochism") or to desire the pure instrumental appropriation of the Other (which in its ultimate manifestation is named "sadism"). Masochism is the desire to be the object of the gaze of the other, while sadism is the desire to objectify the other, achieved at its extreme through violence.¹⁴⁸

Having described in abstract ontological terms the conditions of our relations with others, Sartre begins to make the implications of this more concrete for the Jewish Question in his discussion of hatred. Hatred is the most intense expression of sadism: it is the desire for the complete eradication of the other as Other, the desire to eliminate alterity itself. However, like sadism, hatred is doomed to failure, he argues, because "it implies the explicit recognition that the Other *has existed*" (534). The comprehension of the failure of hatred ultimately requires the for-itself to recognize the freedom of the Other; what animates hatred is the desire to eliminate (this) freedom. Sartre seeks to show the total fruitlessness of overcoming the drama of the human condition through the violent effort to eliminate alterity. He suggests, although he does not develop, the idea that obligation to the Other is itself the condition of freedom and responsibility, in short, that an ethics precedes ontology, an axiom that would become central in Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy in the postwar period. The ethics intimated in Sartre's discussion of hatred, however, was not really pursued in his text. Rather, the relation with the Other was described by Sartre in Hegelian terms as fraught with struggle for recognition.

In the final part of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre concretizes this discussion more explicitly around the relation between the antisemitic gaze and the Jewish Other. It takes place in the context of a larger discussion entitled "Freedom and Facticity: The Situation." In this section he makes clear that the conception of freedom that he is developing is not an abstract freedom divorced from the strictures upon individual choices. Freedom is always situated and conditional upon how the individual perceives his or her "situation." Sartre outlines specific

factors that determine one's situation: one's place in the world, one's past, the environment, and all others that define one's context.¹⁴⁹

In the subsection "My Fellow Man" Sartre explicitly uses the example of the relation between the antisemite and "the Jew" to explicate the struggle for recognition and the objective limits of freedom in a situation:

It is only by my recognizing the freedom of antisemites (whatever use they may make of it) and by my assuming this being-a-Jew that I am a Jew for them; it is only thus that being-a-Jew will appear as the external objective limit of the situation. If, on the contrary, it pleases me to consider the antisemites as pure objects, then my being-a-Jew disappears immediately to give place to the simple consciousness (of) being a free, unqualifiable transcendence. To recognize others and, if I am a Jew, to assume my being-a-Jew are one and the same. (675)

Sartre thus explains that a limit of the Jewish situation is the gaze of the anti-semitic Other, who defines "the Jew" in accord with an essence of being-a-Jew, thus fixing one of the limits of the Jewish condition. "The Jew," like all others, can refuse this designation. However, "the Jew" cannot deny that the antisemite perceives him as a Jew and thus demands of Jews that they recognize this as a constitutive factor of their existence. They are perceived as Jews by others, like it or not. The question for Jews becomes how they respond to this limiting factor in their situation.

Sartre goes on to tackle this question: "How then shall I experience the objective limits of my being: Jew, Aryan, ugly, handsome, kind, a civil servant, untouchable, etc.?" The objectification of one's being, the designation of one's essence by an Other, does not define who one is for-oneself. These labels conferred upon us by Others require "an interiorization and a subjectivizing" (675). Every essence ascribed to us by others, Sartre categorically insists, must be conferred with a meaning for us. In short, "a Jew is not a Jew first in order to be subsequently ashamed or proud; it is his pride of being a Jew, his shame, or his indifference which will reveal to him his being-a-Jew; and this being-a-Jew is nothing outside the free manner of adopting it" (677). In other words, the Jewish situation is like the condition of all humans for whom there are objective

conditions that structure our choices (class, race, place, the body, and the gaze of the Other), but ultimately these only have the meaning that an individual confers upon them. The difference for "the Jew" is that this meaning is always doubled: it is a question not only of the meaning of human existence but of what it means to be-a-Jew and how this shapes one's humanity.

Sartre concludes this section by saying that "the Zionist Jew resolutely assumes himself within his race." He goes on to broach Heidegger's categories of "authentic" and "inauthentic" but refuses to elaborate, since they imply a "moral content" (680). He is clear, however, that conferring any essential meaning to your identity, whether interiorizing the labels others ascribe to you or fixing your identity absolutely by insisting that some facet of your situation defines your essential being, is a denial of your freedom and humanity (which are coterminous).

Sartre concludes the final part of *Being and Nothingness* by distinguishing between Christ's Passion, which defines the meaning of human salvation in accord with Christ's trial, suffering, and ultimate resurrection, and "the passion of man." "The passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ," Sartre insists, "for man loses himself as man in order that God may be born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion," he concludes (784). This formula summarizes Sartre's existentialism, since his point was to show that any effort to establish an absolute foundation is futile because it denies existence, which precedes any essence.

While Sartre's references to Jews and Judaism are relatively scant in the body of his enormous ontological description of the human condition, he is explicit about their implications for the antisemite and draws some provisional conclusions for "the Jew." The antisemite's bad faith is that he wants to be God, to have an absolute foundation for the meaning of his existence. As such, he embodies the quintessence of self-deception by seeking to found his essence in his sadistic appropriation of "the Jew", which at its extreme leads to a violent hatred for the Jew, which at bottom is a hatred of all alterity. "The Jew" must respond to his situation by defining the meaning of his Jewishness and his humanity (always a double responsibility), knowing that Others will define his

choices in part by how they perceive “the Jew,” thus conferring upon Jews the facticity of their being-a-Jew.

The Final Solution in France

In 1943 the extent to which antisemitism circumscribed the limits of one's choices as a Jew were clear, and it was in this context that Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* was published under the censors' imprimatur. The deportation of Jews from France, primarily from the Drancy camp outside Paris, had begun on March 27, 1942. In April the zealously racial antisemite Louis Darquier de Pellepoix replaced Xavier Vallat as commissioner for Jewish questions. This indicated a change in the nature of Vichy's *antisémitisme d'état* (state-sponsored antisemitism) because, as Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton have demonstrated, “the last pretenses of French independence were swept away. The French program had been swallowed up in the far vaster German design of extermination. And while French police made the arrests and guarded the trains, and while the French administration coordinated the whole inhuman operation, few French people doubted that the Germans were in charge.”¹⁵⁰ Though lacking general public support, the mass roundups of Jews were met with no collective resistance. The most notorious was the Vel d'Hiv raffles. On July 16 and 17, 1942, 888 teams of French policemen went throughout Paris, aided by about 4,000 blue-shirted fascist youth from the *Parti populaire française*, and arrested 12,884 Jews, including 4,000 children. They were interned in the *Vélodrome d'Hiver*, the indoor sports and bicycling stadium in Paris. From there they were either sent to Drancy, the antechamber to Auschwitz, or held temporarily in Pithiviers and Beune-la-Rolande before being sent to Auschwitz.

In general, public opinion was indifferent or hostile to the Jews until July 1942, and public opinion of Pétain (although not necessarily of all Vichy programs) was high. July and August marked an important shift when the clandestine Resistance press was finally aroused and the plight of Jews was looked at with greater benevolence by the French populace, who still overwhelmingly focused on their own difficulties.¹⁵¹ Most French people knew by September that Jews—men, women, and children—were being rounded up and handed over to the Nazis. Still, most were unclear about the fate of the Jews. Many lead-

ers, including Jewish and Christian religious leaders, probably knew about the Final Solution. Before the end of 1942, when the Nazis occupied the southern zone, nearly forty-two thousand Jews were deported from France to the East. In 1943 the Germans deported seventeen thousand Jews from France, and in 1944 fifteen thousand more, making little distinction between French and foreign Jews. By this period the Milice, aided by a special commando unit led by Aloïs Brunner, were making most of the arrests. Including the victims who died of malnutrition and disease in the French camps, close to eighty thousand Jews died as a result of the Final Solution in France, almost one fourth of the Jews who were living in l'Hexagone at the beginning of World War II. However, due to the early distinctions made between French and foreign Jews, the establishment of escape routes and organizations, and the assistance of non-Jews, 75 percent of Jews in France survived World War II, a higher percentage than in Holland and Belgium.

In the face of the Final Solution Sartre's muted response to the Jewish Question, which is clearly critical of the metaphysical underpinnings of Vichy ideology and concretely applies this ontological analysis to the Jewish condition, was of little use. In *Being and Nothingness* the discussion of "the Jew" and antisemitism in the midst of the examination of the structure of the gaze is extremely abstract and ultimately insufficient not only in terms of the Holocaust but in the context of the treatment of Jews before the Final Solution. Sartre's analysis is limited, but it is unlikely that he could have said more and still be published. His passion about Jews and Judaism, inserted strategically in *Being and Nothingness* so as to be unnoticed by the censors and the regime, was indeed a useless passion, if only because the lines he committed to the topic were lost in the density of a philosophical tome whose clarion call for freedom and responsibility was impossible to hear beneath the din of the machinery of destruction.

Sartre's Projects for the Future and His Role in the Vichy Past

By 1944, in no small measure because of his recently published work of philosophy and his plays, Sartre had established himself as a star in the underground cultural scene in Paris, spending time with Picasso and other luminaries. In this context, the project to start a journal after the war, which became *Les*

Temps Modernes, was envisioned. In January Sartre joined the Comité national du théâtre, a resistance group of playwrights. The landing of the Allied forces at Normandy on June 6, 1944, brought the German occupation close to its end. Sartre left Paris, but when he returned in August Camus informed him that the leaders of the Resistance wanted Paris to liberate itself. Sartre was immersed in this effort from August 13 to 28, during which time he wrote articles for *Les Lettres Françaises*. He was also asked by Camus to write several pieces on the liberation for *Combat*.

Sartre's experience constitutes an exemplary vantage point from which to understand these dark years in French history, especially in the cultural field, but doing so requires showing how he was embedded within that wider context.¹⁵² Understanding the choices he made during the crucible of the Vichy period demands critical attention to the shades and shadows of the time. There are several general points to highlight in judging the choices he made. First, the efflorescence of French culture during the Vichy years was constituted by the elimination of those identified with the decadence and degeneration that were deemed the diabolical cause of France's defeat. This meant literally the elimination of Jews, Freemasons, foreigners, communists, socialists, and others considered a threat to the purity of the French cultural tradition. Through the corpus of his writing, however, Sartre consistently reinscribed Jews within the body politic during this period, even if he did so within stereotypical terms at times. Second, there were many paradoxes to culture under the German occupation, including spaces of liberty within a regime committed to "liberticide."¹⁵³ Sartre sought to exploit these spaces, most clearly in his theater productions and philosophical work but also in his literary criticism. Third, there were important continuities within the discontinuity characteristic of war and defeat. These include the modernization of the apparatuses and organizations of cultural production, formal techniques of representation, the themes most characteristic of the era, and the new voices that emerged during the war to dominate the postwar cultural scene. Sartre was certainly one of the central figures of this new generation by the war's end. Not only was he an insightful witness to the *drôle de guerre*, defeat, occupation, collaboration, Holocaust, resistance, and

liberation, but his unceasing effort to transcribe these processes into literature, theater, and philosophy also helped to shape the collective experience and meaning of these events. While consistently circumspect about both Vichy and Nazi ideology and institutions, he nonetheless often had to make compromises to express his point of view and to have that message reach a wide audience. His writings on the Jewish Question were an expression of this dilemma, often caught within the contradictions of his own thought and the confines of the situation of the German occupation. As such, understanding the gray zones of the French cultural field during the Vichy period is crucial to comprehending Sartre's ambivalent place within it. But in the postwar period those gray zones tended to be represented in static black-and-white hues.

3. Sartre's Postwar *Témoignage*

Résistancialisme and the Double Strategy of Forgetting

*Paris! Paris humiliated! Paris broken! Paris martyred! But Paris liberated!
Liberated by itself, by its own people with the help of the armies of France,
with the support and aid of France as a whole, offighting France, of the only
France, of the true France, of eternal France.*

Charles de Gaulle, August 25, 1944

It was with the few words cited in this epigraph that, according to Henry Rousso, Charles de Gaulle “established the founding myth of the post-Vichy period.”¹ The following day Paris was fully liberated, and de Gaulle walked triumphantly down the Champs-Élysées to the uproarious acclaim of the crowd. At that moment “the symbol of protest and resistance,” in Roderick Kedward’s phrase, became “the embodiment of power.”² Fusing the temporal and the spiritual salvation of France, a magnificent Te Deum was staged at Notre Dame cathedral following the rally.³ A more fitting ceremonial backdrop could not have been chosen to stamp the seal of France’s redemption from the sins of the German occupier.

The cathedral, originally the site of a Gallo-Roman temple, has historically served as a place for major religious and political celebrations. For two thousand years prayers have been offered on this spot on the Île de la Cité. When the cathedral was completed in 1345 it embodied the soul of this Catholic country. As a sign of its symbolic centrality, just in front of Notre Dame there is a plaque from which all distances in France are measured. The face of the edifice is supported by unforgettable twin towers. The ornate Gothic statuary inscribes in stone the story and meaning of Christian salvation. Above the three main

portals stands the gallery of twenty-eight kings of Judea and Israel who represent Christ's forebears, thus externalizing the Christian supersession of the Old Testament through the new covenant in Christ's martyrdom.⁴ The central portal of the Last Judgment sculpturally depicts the struggle of Good over Evil. In its heart stands the figure of Christ. The whole is framed by a statue representing the Church to Christ's right and a statue representing the Synagogue to his left. A classic of medieval iconography, she is blindfolded because "the Jews" are blinded to the truth of Christian redemption. The entrance to Notre Dame therefore encapsulates the dominant narrative of the Christian relationship to Jews and Judaism.

In the shadow of Notre Dame, at the farthest tip of the Île de la Cité, is the Mémorial de la déportation, inaugurated in 1962 by President de Gaulle. "The symbolic liaison between Notre Dame Cathedral and the Mémorial," Shelley Hornstein comments, "is marked by the way that the crypt of the church is extended topographically and spiritually by the crypt of the memorial."⁵ On the grounds of the Mémorial a short concrete wall is engraved in roughly hewn, blood red capitals that bear homage "to the two hundred thousand dead in the camps, French martyrs of the deportation." A short staircase leads down into the site of the monument, where Georges-Henri Pingusson's stark, abstract, modernist design connotes a cell that demands solemnity and silence. Its dark steel grating covers the only opening, where the waters of the Seine lap against it, evoking the river Styx, the shore of a journey to death. The final space in the memorial is a tomb to an unknown deportee at the end of a long, dark corridor diffusely lit by two hundred thousand glass beads. Above the entrance we read, "Two hundred thousand French citizens lost, exterminated in the Nazi death camps."

The Mémorial condenses French collective memory of the war up until the 1970s. This memory, inaugurated and epitomized by de Gaulle's statement upon liberation, effaced Vichy collaboration and the French role in supporting the Final Solution, emphasizing instead the heroic martyrdom of the French Resistance. It connected "fighting France" with "true France." The first brochure by the Réseau du souvenir (Network of Remembrance), the initiators of the Mémorial, made this relationship evident:

It was important that the site itself should express the Spirit of Remembrance. Its place, therefore, was in the ground of our time-honored capital, within the precincts of the old Paris of Philippe-Auguste, at the foremost point of the   le de la Cit  , in the thousand year old shadow of Notre Dame. It was here that the Crypt was hollowed out of the sacred isle, the cradle of our nation, which incarnates the soul of France—a place where its spirit dwells. For was it not around this core, this “twin vessel” sung by the poet Charles P  guy, that our country came into being?”⁶

The invocation of “the old Paris” of Philippe-Auguste and the “thousand year old shadow of Notre Dame” repeats de Gaulle’s rhetorical gesture of “eternal France.”

In the internal crypt at the core of the M  morial, alongside passages by other intellectual resisters (Paul   luard, Jean-Pierre Maydi  u, Antoine de Saint-Exup  ry, Louis Aragon), is a quotation by Sartre prominently etched into the wall. The epitaph reads, “the choice that each of us makes of his life and of himself was authentic because it was made in the presence of death.” The brief quotation is an eerie Sartrean translation of Heidegger’s notion that in being-toward-death authenticity is revealed.⁷ This is perhaps true for the heroic *r  sistants* who died for the choices they made to try and end the German occupation. But for the seventy-six thousand Jewish deportees, most of whom were exterminated simply because of being Jewish, what sense of authenticity, what choices did they make of their lives “in the presence of death”?

Sartre’s text makes evident what Hornstein concludes generally about the monument, which is that it reads “as a stunning erasure of Jewish presence and Jewish identity . . . while highlighting French national martyrdom.”⁸ Sartre’s contribution to the postwar myth of the occupation was not limited to the epitaph in the M  morial, however. His immediate postwar writings played their part in “the Vichy syndrome.”

Henry Rousso’s eminent study, *The Vichy Syndrome*, investigates the monuments, public commemorations, radio broadcasts, newsreels, speeches, books, novels, and films that represented the occupation in postwar France. He argues that there was a four-stage process in the evolution of coming to terms with

the trauma of Vichy: first, a “mourning phase” from 1944 to 1954, which consisted of the purging of collaborators and rebuilding and which ended with the granting of amnesty; second, the Gaullist myth of the occupation from 1954 to 1971, which involved minimizing the role of French collaboration and identifying the French nation with the Resistance; third, “the broken mirror” between 1971 and 1974, when the myth was shattered; and, finally, the present moment, which Rousso characterizes as one of “obsession.”

The Mémorial, then, was built during the second phase, which Rousso aptly calls *résistancialisme*.⁹ What he describes as *résistancialisme*, though, was manifest in all of Sartre's *témoignage* (testimony) immediately after the liberation.¹⁰ Contrary to his vilification of Gaullism, just after World War II, when he was emerging as a major voice on the French intellectual scene, Sartre's version of *résistancialisme* clearly overlapped with the Gaullist myth of the occupation. As Susan Suleiman puts it, his “role as memoirist of occupied France and his role as intellectual leader of a generation” were linked.¹¹

The most significant cultural issue of the immediate postwar period, in fact, was the stance intellectuals took on the *épuration* (purge) of writers identified with collaboration. Sartre played a prominent role as a member of the Comité national des écrivains (CNE) to eliminate writers who had sided with Nazism, Vichy, or their cultural ideals during the war.¹² At the first legal meeting of the CNE in September 1944, members issued a proclamation that called for “the just punishment of the imposters and traitors,” a punishment they saw as fundamental to “France's resurrection.”¹³ Sartre was one of the sixty intellectuals who signed the “Manifesto of French Writers,” which supported the demand to bring collaborators to justice. The manifesto appeared alongside his widely disseminated article “La république du silence”; both were published on the front page of the first legal publication of the underground resistance paper *Les Lettres Françaises*.

The manifesto included all the members of the CNE and identified Sartre as a leading figure of the intellectual resistance, which included Vercors (Jean Bruller), François Mauriac, André Malraux, Paul Éluard, Albert Camus, Edith Thomas, Michel Leiris, Jean Lescure, Louis Aragon, and Roger Martin du Gard.

He was also one of the members of the Comité d'épuration de l'édition (Committee for Purging Publishers), which targeted collaborationist writers and publishers by bringing them to trial or blacklisting their work. The debate about the intellectual purge, most pointedly concerning the trial of Robert Brasillach, involved defining collaboration and treason, deliberating over the meaning of a just punishment, and examining the political responsibility of the writer.¹⁴ It created fissures in the intellectual field: Sartre was with those, like the PCF, who took an intransigent stance that identified writing as an act and demanded retributive justice, which was opposed by the call for moderation and caution led by François Mauriac and Jean Paulhan.

The insistence that writing is an act within the historical circumstances that give rise to it was at the heart of Sartre's theory of *engagement*. This theory defined the role of the intellectual for his generation. It was formulated at the same time that he published a series of articles soon after the war that simultaneously mythologized the resistance and sterilized the darkest chapters of the Vichy period. His postwar *témoignage* engages in what I call a double strategy of forgetting. When read together, the general drift of the articles becomes clear. On the one hand, they allegorized and hypostatized the Resistance, heroizing resisters as a symbol of all of France and suggesting that Resistance was ubiquitous. In his typological construction of the Resistance Sartre celebrated the sacrificial logic of martyrdom, redemption, and purification. Like the *Mémorial* would later, he homogenized the *déportés* and obscured the specificity of the different groups who made up the Resistance. On the other hand, the substantial French collaboration with the Nazis is repressed, since his *témoignage* consistently depicts collaborators and antisemites as outsiders, foreigners, and un-French and contends that by purging them from the nation in a national revolution France would be restored to its unity. Sartre's image of collaboration as an alien presence is also homophobic and aids in advancing his scapegoating. It is precisely the duality of this strategy that prevents the possibility of mourning that Rousso argues characterizes the first phase of the Vichy syndrome. Sartre's forgetting is made possible by a series of subtle steps, each of which may seem reasonable but which taken together comprise a strategy of forgetting that served to exculpate French collaboration and to promote the

résistancialiste myth that was so significant to political and intellectual legitimacy in postwar France.

The Ambiguities of Occupation and the Myth of the Resistance

These steps begin with Sartre's insistence on seeing the war years from a French perspective—a perspective that he maintains was unequivocally dominated by French contempt of the occupation and the difficulty of life under the Nazis. He was concerned to demonstrate, especially to the Americans and the British, how arduous the war was for the French, how much they suffered from and hated the occupation. This concern is evident in the article "Paris sous l'occupation" (Paris under the Occupation), published first in December 1944 in *France Libre*, the Gaullist journal edited by Raymond Aron in London.¹⁵ He focused particularly on the emotional experience, asserting that inwardly the French unanimously "resented the occupation" (18).

When he begins to describe their actual experience, however, what he recounts is filled with ambiguities. Sartre described the German army treating the French fairly well: they were courteous and "in the metro, they offered their place to old ladies" (19). He even undermines the assumption that the war itself was worse than the occupation, for unlike war, "the concept of the enemy was not completely closed or completely clear" (21). "For in war," he goes on, "everyone can fulfill the task of man; instead, in this ambiguous situation we were not really able to either act or think" (42). Under the occupation life was bewildering because there was no basis beyond everyday banality—the need to eat, to survive, to accommodate to the circumstances—that grounded thought and action. Sartre amplifies and develops the dualities of this problematic situation by consistently suggesting that the conditions of the French made every action an inherently compromised option: "If Pétain hung a medal around your neck, it was the Germans who decorated you. From one end of the war to the other, we were not able to acknowledge our acts, and we were not able to claim responsibility for their consequences. Evil was everywhere, every choice was bad" (37). He thus describes the everyday life of the French under the occupation as if they lived in a generalized state of *mauvaise foi*. Highlighting this bad faith, he concedes that "without a doubt, during this period France was not al-

ways able, the Resistance aside, to prove its grandeur" (42, emphasis added). This gesture of singling out the Resistance proves to be the final step that grounds the first movement of Sartre's double strategy of forgetting. On this basis he begins to establish the Resistance as a symbol that redeems France from the compromises and concessions of collaboration.

The uncertainty and ambiguity of the war years are juxtaposed by Sartre with an image of the heroic, resilient *résistant*, who was clear and distinct in his or her understanding of the occupation. It is this symbol of the *résistant* that saves the grandeur of France. The elite minority who resisted "offered themselves as martyrs, deliberately and without hope," and they therefore "amply suffice to redeem our weaknesses" (42). This figure of the martyr—the victim whose death bears witness to an ideal—is a repeating trope that traverses Sartre's postwar writings. He consistently states that the chief importance of the Resistance was its "symbolic value" (30), since the resisters knew they had no real military utility and that the British, Americans, and Russians would win or lose the war without them.¹⁶ That is why the Resistance was "always symbolic. A symbolic rebellion in a symbolic city" (29). The liberation of Paris at the end of the war was the embodiment of this emblem. Ultimately, the Resistance was an icon of an authentic choice in a context of generalized bad faith.

The *résistants* thus offer a future to a France freed from the occupation based upon an idealized immediate past. This hypostatization of the Resistance enables Sartre's discourse to elide the differences in the degrees of opposition to the Nazi occupation outlined in the previous chapter. He insists to those British and Americans who imagine that the French were happy to have avoided war that they "could not imagine with what ardor the French would have wanted to take up combat" (30). The signs and signals of revolt were found in simple gestures and in a general attitude: "We never obeyed: we stayed in the street, noses in the air" (31). His emphasis on banal acts and attitudes, which he ascribes to the population as a whole, constitutes the kernel of his own bad faith in his representation of the Resistance. The abstraction of the Resistance from its historical acts to an iconic object of memory obfuscates the differences between ordinary gestures and the extraordinary courage it took to confront the German enemy. This hypostatization served to diffuse the spirit of the Resistance among the French.

Sartre extends and finally mythologizes the Resistance in the widely reprinted article "La république du silence."¹⁷ It followed a series of other articles that he had published in *Combat* at the behest of Camus, recounting the liberation struggle and emphasizing the unity of the Parisians during the fighting. Describing the entry of Leclerc's French soldiers into Paris, Sartre comments in one *Combat* article: "They look, they laugh, they smile, they salute us with their fingers shaping [a] V, and we feel that their hearts beat in unison with ours. Some women and children have invaded the trucks and cars; cars full of FFI [Forces françaises de l'intérieur, or Resistance fighters] follow the tanks; civilians and military are of one race: free French."¹⁸ As Suleiman has commented, the front page of *Les Lettres Françaises*, where Sartre's "La république du silence" appeared, was itself a paean to political and intellectual unity. Alongside Sartre was a piece by the Catholic François Mauriac celebrating France's "soul"; next to it was an article by the Communist editor of the paper, Claude Morgan. The articles all surrounded the "Manifesto of French Writers."¹⁹

The ode to a mythological unity represented by the French Resistance resonates through Sartre's opening of "La république du silence": "Never were we more free than under the German occupation" (11). The "we" in this opening line registers all of the paradoxes and problems in Sartre's text, until by the conclusion of the article not only were all Frenchmen freer under the occupation but the French, in their spirit at least, were all a part of the Resistance. Rhetorically reiterating this unanimity, Sartre uses the word "we" twenty-one times in the first twenty lines of the text.²⁰ The result is that the discourse through the pages of "La république du silence" moves systematically to the conclusion that the *cri de coeur* of the French was Resistance.

Sartre's axiom is that the poison of the Nazi occupation purified French thought because it made every word into a declaration of principles: "Each of our acts had the weight of commitment [*engagement*]" (11). The hardships of occupation, which forced each person to extremes, put into relief "this torn, insupportable situation that we call the human condition" (12). The occupation condensed and amplified the ontological conditions of human existence, forcing to the foreground the recognition of "exile, captivity, and death" (12), which are habitually masked in our everyday lives. Sartre exhorts, "Each second

we lived in the plenitude of meaning in this banal phrase: 'All men are mortal'" (12). Thus, the occupation enabled the French to achieve authenticity: "The choice that each of us makes of his life and of himself was authentic because it was made in the presence of death" (12).

It is this fateful line that became the epitaph for the Mémorial. Like the memorial site, Sartre's article is a monument to national unity that effaces the differences in the experience of different sectors of the population, claiming that "we were deported en masse, as workers, as Jews, as political prisoners" (11). The Jewish deportee is here swept into the same mythic story as the Resistance fighter, whose experience is equated with the *déportés du travail*, the laborers deported to Germany to work for the Reich.²¹ The quote in the context of "La république du silence" indicates that not only the Resistance fighters but all the French who in some way rejected the situation they were in achieved authenticity: "And I don't only speak here of that elite who were the real *résistants* but of all the French who at every hour of the day and night during four years said no" (12). The occupation thus becomes an analogy for the ontological situation—it is an allegory for the human condition—and the Resistance is coterminous with authenticity. "The secret of man is not his Oedipus complex," Sartre maintains, "it's the limit of his liberty, his power of resistance to torture and death" (13). He consequently connects his ontological description of life with his conception of the symbolic significance of the Resistance.

The Resistance was thus not only the choice to act, it was authentically to accept the human condition itself. But conversely, every choice for freedom is equated by Sartre with an act of resistance: "All those who were aware—and what Frenchman was not, at one time or another—of some information about the Resistance" faced the ultimate question of human liberty (12). The situation of the occupation was therefore "the same for all. . . . [A]t the depth of this solitude, others were present, all the comrades of the Resistance they were defending" (13, 14). In the course of the article Sartre thus abandons all distinctions between various types of opposition. Even the desire for freedom from liberation or the mere cognizance of the Resistance is equated with or at least associated with the Resistance.

Sartre's representation of the Resistance as a hypostatized abstraction, connected to but always transcendent of concrete acts of resistance, enables him to offer the French after the war the opportunity to have chosen in their hearts the virtuous choice of resistance whether or not they actually resisted. In the identification with the Resistance as an object of memory the French chose a mythic and unified Republic of Liberty leading the people: "Each of these citizens knew his duty to everyone and that he could only count on himself, irremediably, and that in choosing himself in his liberty, he is choosing the liberty of all. It is necessary that each Frenchman conquers and affirms this Republic without institutions, without army, without police, at every instant against Nazism. We are now at the beginning of another Republic: can't we hope that it conserves the austere virtues of the Republic of Silence and of the Night?" (14). Sartre's text gathers together the silent acts and gestures along with the acts of resistance into an abstract allegorical ideal of the Republic and the Resistance. In choosing the Republic of the Silence and of the Night, the Republic of those who said no, in choosing the Republic of Freedom, each citizen chooses the liberty of all. To love this France of the Republic of Freedom is at once to love humanity.

Sartre's allegorical symbol of the Resistance disintegrates the differences between the symbolic and the real: the symbolic replaces the real, and the real is buried in the first fold of the double strategy of forgetting. The rhetorical force of Sartre's text is that the object of memory that his texts help to construct is what counts as the real meaning of the Resistance. The Resistance hero is thus, at one and the same time, an image, a symbol for France, all of France, but inasmuch as he represents the spirit of "true France," resistance was also the most authentic response to the strictures of the occupation. This conflation enables Sartre to accomplish a double slippage in his testimony: between Paris, France, and humanity, on the one hand, and between an elite minority, what they symbolized, and universality, on the other.

Moreover, Sartre suggests that the spirit of the Resistance was self-consciously made incarnate in the apocalyptic liberation of Paris. Having contributed to the mythologizing of the Resistance, in his essay commemorating the anniversary of the week of the liberation of France, "La libération de Paris: Une semaine

d'apocalypse" ("The Liberation of Paris: An Apocalyptic Week"), published in *Clartés* on August 24, 1945, he contends that "the goal of the members of the Resistance [was] to show future conquerors that the Resistance was not, as people outside the country still seemed all too ready to believe, a myth."²² The *résistants* sought to achieve this goal through their martyrdom. The symbol would become real through the sacrifice that the Resistance offered of itself: "They wanted to affirm the sovereignty of the French people . . . and they understood that the only means they had of legitimizing the power of the people was to shed their own blood" (161). The Resistance thus serves to redeem the French through their martyrdom because the Resistance itself bears witness "to the will of the French people" (162).

The idea of the Resistance that Sartre constructs exorcises through its martyrdom not only the sins of France but the sins of humanity. Sartre effects the connection between France and humanity by juxtaposing the dropping of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6–9, 1945, as an obverse image to that of the Resistance. The commemoration of the liberation, whose anniversary falls close to that of the bomb, can stand in stark opposition to what the bomb represents, which is "the negation of man. Not only because it risks destroying the whole of mankind, but above all because it makes the most human qualities—courage, patience, intelligence, the spirit of initiative—vain and ineffectual" (162–63). These most human of qualities are, of course, the very qualities of the Resistance.

Sartre universalizes the heroic French resister by presenting him or her as a universal witness to the ontological condition in his article "La fin de la guerre" (The End of the War), originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* in October 1945.²³ He effects this universalization by extending his opposition of the inhumanity of the Americans' act of dropping the bomb and French identity. The bomb is depicted in both ontological and historical terms. Since it can effect immediate death, it makes us confront the ontological condition: each human before his or her own nothingness. At the same time, however, the bomb ties each French individual's existence to the collectivity and to the French situation in the world. He argues not only that the peace was uncomfortable because it was produced by the bomb but that it was uncomfortable for France because in the peace

France “had lost a lot of its power” (70). The ontological fact of the bomb thus defined not only the human condition but the situation of France in the world. “To repudiate the French collectivity is to repudiate ourselves,” he harangues his readers, urging them to follow the example of the *résistants* and to “take on the commitment [*engagement*] of looking to integrate into this severe and painful world, into this humanity, in peril of death” (70). In opposition to the inhumanity of the bomb the *résistants* sacrificed themselves not only for France but, through the liberation of France, for all humanity. The outcome of their acts did not count, he suggests, because Resistance activities were undertaken to “prove the power of freedom” (163).

Moreover, Sartre argues for the memorializing of the Paris uprising as an historic symbol of the intertwining of the aspirations of humanity with the history of France, connecting human ideals, especially the principle of liberty or liberation itself, with French history from the Revolution: “When the mob of 1789 invaded the Bastille, they did not know the meaning, the consequences of their gesture; it was only afterward and by degrees that they became conscious of it and raised it to the level of a symbol. What was striking in August 1944, was that the symbolic character of the uprising was already established even while its outcome was still uncertain” (163–64). August 1944 is depicted as continuous with the insurrection of the Bastille of 1789, a modern symbol of the link of French history and human liberation. Sartre develops this connection in the articles he wrote for *Combat*, there contending that “the street has once again become—as it did in 1789 and 1848—the theater for great collective movements and social life.”²⁴ He argues that the events of the liberation of Paris were from the outset written as history. The liberation of Paris was a “ceremony,” a “human sacrifice” to true France and thereby to all humanity.

Thus, like de Gaulle’s subsequent *résistancialisme*, Sartre’s postwar *témoignage* on the occupation, the Resistance, and the liberation allegorizes and mythologizes the Resistance. In doing so he glorifies the sacrificial logic of martyrdom, connecting it to the redemption and the purification of the French spirit. This image of the Resistance collapses the different responses of the French to the occupation, serving to disperse the resistance spirit throughout France—becoming the essence of France, the will of all the people of “true France.” Simul-

taneously, Sartre stitches together a republican version of French and human history from the Revolution to the Resistance. This movement in his thought completes the first stage in his double strategy of forgetting.

What Is a Collaborator?

At the same time that Sartre identifies the spirit of France with the Resistance and the *esprit de résistance* with freedom and with the universal drive for liberation, his postwar *témoignage* contains a second movement. He excoriates the collaborator as inherently un-French and consistently depicts the collaborator as an outsider and collaboration as a marginal phenomenon that resulted from the French being seduced by foreigners. The solution to the problem of collaboration is a revolution that will purge these abject forces from the body of the nation, enabling the French to reconnect to the image of “true France” represented by the Resistance.

In “Qu’est-ce qu’un collaborateur?” (What Is a Collaborator?), edited in New York in August 1945 and published in *La République Française*, Sartre contends that “collaboration is a fact of disintegration. . . . It represents at its origin a consolidation by collective foreign forms of elements ill assimilated by the indigenous community.” Collaborators are the “dregs” of society who essentially fail to integrate into the autochthonous body politic. Collaboration is a “phenomenon of disassimilation” that “never finds its place”—it is a “social hesitation.”²⁵ He consequently defines collaboration not only as a fixation on foreign forms of thought or culture or ideology that consolidate the maladjusted and marginal members of society but also as inherently unassimilable by indigenous French culture. He also stressed this point in the *Combat* articles, in which collaborators are foreigners, outsiders who come from the “marginal elements” and are unable to properly integrate into either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.²⁶

Classless, placeless, marginalized, and unassimilable, collaborators are fascinated by foreign ideologies. “Drieu la Rochelle,” he insists, “was obsessed his whole life with Italian Fascism and Russian Communism” (46–47). In contrast to the lower clergy, who were “solidly rooted [*enraciné*]” and therefore “fiercely résistant,” Sartre suggests that collaborators in the high clergy were already disposed toward Rome and were swayed by Fascist Italy (47). He consequently

characterizes the typical collaborator as a suicidal, criminal, marginal, or mal-adjusted individual, a foreigner, an outsider, or someone seduced by alien ideologies who inadequately integrates into the social body.

Sartre continues by contending that without firmly entrenched values in French culture, “without real bonds in contemporary France with the grand political traditions, with a century and a half of our history and our culture, they were protected by nothing against the attractive force of a foreign community” (48). He elaborates by explaining that 1789 was a moment of radical cleavage in French history and that, while the majority accommodated themselves, there was “on the margins of the democratic community” riffraff who “have perpetuated until today” (48). These “dregs of society” Sartre names the “interior émigrés” who have remained “outside of French national life” since the Revolution because “they refuse to adapt to the Republican constitution” (48). Since they are marginalized from the French national community, collaborators seek solidarity, which is offered to them by the circumstances of the occupation. Like Daniel, the fictional archetype of the collaborator in *The Roads to Freedom*, “they preferred the order that the German power represented to the national reality from which they were excluded” (49).

By consistently and systematically suggesting that collaboration is by definition un-French and a pathology within French culture since the Revolution, by characterizing collaboration as a marginal activity, the result of the acquiescence by a small minority of the population who submit to foreign domination, Sartre marginalizes collaboration.²⁷ Since collaborators have no volition because it is a function of a naturalized sociopsychological response to disintegration, the blame for the circumstances of the occupation are placed squarely in the hands of foreigners in general and the Nazis in particular. Collaboration is not French: it is unassimilable into French culture, but in the right circumstances it can become manifest under the direction of foreign powers.

Repressing the long tradition of the extreme Right in France, Sartre further distances collaboration from the French when he maintains that they had no legitimacy: “It wasn’t personal prestige but the force of an occupying army that conferred authority upon them” (50). The Pétain government only had the appearance of lawfulness, but ultimately it depended entirely on the force of

the Nazis. In fact, "the chief of a little troop of *maquisards* had more initiative, more prestige and real authority than Laval ever had" (51). Sartre makes no mention whatever of how well integrated most of the intellectuals, journalists, clergy, civil servants, and politicians who collaborated quite zealously were, and he completely occludes the ideological motives for collaboration, including antisemitism.²⁸

Furthermore, in contrast to the heroic, masculine, and resilient *résistant*, who has the genuine authority of the French people, the collaborator is depicted by Sartre as effeminate and even homosexual.²⁹ Sartre argues that Drieu la Rochelle, Brasillach, and others use "curious metaphors that present the relations of France and Germany under the aspect of sexual union, where France plays the role of a woman" (58).³⁰ The collaborators' *esprit de corps* was feminine. Applying the categories of *Being* and *Nothingness* to collaboration, he suggests that this feminization of France is the result of "a curious *mélange* of masochism and homosexuality. The milieu of Parisian homosexuals, among others, provided many brilliant recruits" (58). The perversity of collaborationist desire further alienates collaborators from the norms of French culture. This is Sartre's postwar version of a stab-in-the-back theory, with the accentuated gendering of defeat made clear. The collaborators, who could not integrate into French culture, assimilate with German culture to penetrate France from behind, seeking to "infect all France with this slavery" (59).

Sartre's description of collaborators as men of "easy virtue," pederasts, and decadent drunkards is akin to his portrait of Lucien's disintegration. As such, he reverses the terms of the fascist assault on decadence, vilifying fascism but surrendering to its cultural lexicon. Like Lucien, fascist collaborators such as Drieu la Rochelle are men of *mauvaise foi* who are unable to fill the inner void of man's nothingness and who turn to have the hole filled by an order imposed from without.³¹ Collaborators and fascists flee from their own freedom, they hate themselves for it, they cannot abide a France that provides this freedom, and ultimately they become misanthropes who want to transform society into an ironclad hierarchy of rules and norms. They want to annihilate the humanity in people—the principle of liberty itself—and this inhumanity is what leads them to become traitors to France. This image of collaboration serves as a

direct inversion of the *résistant* who fights as a martyr for all humanity. Thus Sartre again reinforces the connection between a love of France and a love of humanity that he identified with the Resistance and a hatred of France and a hatred of humanity in the self-hatred of collaboration.

According to the logic of the double strategy of forgetting, consequently, the Resistance becomes an icon that unifies France and defines the unity of Frenchness in its continuation of the grand traditions of the French revolutionary past. The integration offered by the figure of the Resistance is opposed to the disintegration of collaboration: "Refusal of the universal and of the law, anarchy and the dream of one constrained by iron, apology for violence . . . femininity, hatred of man: so many characteristics [are] explained by disintegration" (60). The opposition between the disintegration of collaboration and the integration of the Resistance underscores a whole axiology in Sartre's postwar *témoignage* between the politics of capitulation and bad faith in opposition to a universalist and humanist politics, between obedience and duty adverse to liberty, between the feminine contra the masculine, the traitor opposite the hero, the inhuman machine clashing with the humane lover of life, between the un-French and the true France. Nonetheless, Sartre's repression of real collaboration in his image of the collaborator as the figure of disintegration and nonassimilation places collaboration outside the social body or on its periphery as an enemy that threatens to destroy France.

On the basis of this image of the collaborator Sartre contends that the solution cannot be merely the execution of a few individual traitors. The only authentic response that will enable the permanent resolution to the problem of which collaboration is only a manifestation is a national revolution that continues the heritage of the French Revolution: "It is necessary, as far as possible, to achieve the unification of French society that the work that the Revolution of '89 began and that can only be realized by a new revolution, this revolution that one attempted in 1830, in 1848, in 1871 and that was always followed by a counterrevolution" (60). This national revolution must impose a universal law that will solve the underlying problems engendered by collaboration and fascism, unify the nation, and serve as an example for all humanity. The politics of *mauvaise foi* that he identifies with collaboration will be eliminated in this

radical revolution, which actualizes the legacy of 1789, elevating the whole nation to authenticity. It is a revolution that achieves self-consciousness with Sartre's existential ontology abstracted from the concrete circumstances of the occupation, collaboration, and the liberation.

As the solution to the contradictions that characterize his *témoignage* on France during World War II Sartre thus posits a universalist politics of emancipation embodied in a cataclysmic revolution whose progenitors were the martyrs of the Resistance. To further this end he valorizes a sacrificial logic that leads to redemption. This is accomplished through scapegoating collaboration as merely a marginal phenomenon that can be purged from France and thereby lead to its purification and salvation. A new revolution, he maintains, would finally complete the process begun by the French Revolution in overcoming the tensions in French society made evident by the war.

This revolution functions, at the same time, to suture the ellipses in Sartre's *témoignage*. His postwar writing thus served at once to reconcile tensions within French culture and as the basis for how he defined his role as a French intellectual. It was situated at the interstices between his ontological description of human existence and the temporal tensions in French politics and society. The conflation and confusion of these layers of analysis enabled him to serve simultaneously as a conscience for the nation and as its witness and to repress French collaboration and antisemitism through the double strategy of forgetting. The paradoxes of Sartre's vision and role for the engaged intellectual were also apparent in his *témoignage* on the Jewish Question.

4. Bearing Witness to the Victims of History

Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive*

[*Réflexions sur la question juive*] is a fine book, but Sartre was not knowledgeable about Jews. He thought that all Jews were like his schoolmate, Raymond Aron, who was totally unreligious, thoroughly French, who largely ignored Jewish tradition, and thus, only Jewish because others called him Jewish.

Raymond Aron, *The Committed Observer*:

Interviews with Jean-Louis Missika and Dominique Wolton

The Jews were turned by Hitler into scapegoats and public enemy number one. More than anyone else, they have paid their blood-soaked dues to barbarism. They were handed a sinister privilege, and will not use it to cover themselves with the halo of martyrdom.

Jacques Darville and Simon Wichené,
Drancy la juive ou la deuxième Inquisition

The liberation of France was joyously celebrated by French citizens, including the 250,000 Jews who had survived the German occupation and Vichy persecution. Like their confreres, the Jews' overwhelming concern in the war's aftermath was reconstructing their lives. For Jews, this involved the restoration of their rights and the suppression of racial distinctions; the reintegration of surviving deportees; the establishment of welfare and relief activities; the reestablishment of communal organizations; the return of confiscated and stolen property; and the pursuit of the punishment of functionaries, *administrateurs provisoires*, and others who had profited illegally from Vichy laws.¹ Ostensibly, this was made possible when the provisional government decreed that all racial distinctions would be eliminated when the Free French Forces retook the country.

With the ordinance of August 9, 1944, reestablishing republican law, the social contract that defined Jewish emancipation in France was legally restored.

However, the Gaullist (and Sartrean) stress on unity and the refusal to emphasize differences between the experiences of various sectors of the population was a factor not only in restoration rhetoric but in policy too. This made recovering from the Aryanization measures—economic, political, and cultural—difficult. “Observers here note a general reluctance in official circles not only to do anything to remove the disabilities against the Jews, but even to discuss them,” a 1945 article for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported. “The attitude seems to be one of desire to smother the whole issue under a blanket of silence, perhaps on the principle that the situation will not exist if it is not acknowledged.”²

But ignoring the Jewish Question did not end it. When Jews attempted to reclaim their property, anti-Jewish sentiments resurfaced. In Paris, from April to October 1945, small groups of demonstrators marched through the streets, occasionally calling for “Death to the Jews” and “France for the French.”³ A tract for a large gathering that was convened on October 10 made it evident that for some the Final Solution to the Jewish Question was not final enough: “The French do not need to choose between the Hitlerian plague and the Jewish cholera,” it read. “For France to be free, happy, and prosperous, it is necessary to no longer have on her soil neither a German, nor a traitor, nor a Jew.”⁴ Supporting the efforts of these groups, a network of a dozen associations formed to defend those who had rented or purchased Jewish property during the war.

So antisemitism, acknowledged or not, endured in the immediate post-war period, nourishing stereotypes that continued to have a hold on the public imagination.⁵ Jews were sometimes accused of profiting from the war and the occupation and of controlling the black market. In March 1946 the *Ligue internationale contre l'antisémitisme* (LICA) published a special issue of *Droit de Vivre* prompted by the eruption of antisemitic graffiti in the Paris metro. Despite the execution of Brasillach, the suicide of Drieu, the imprisonment of Maurras and the *Je Suis Partout* team, and the exile of Céline and Morand, antisemitism remained a key element of the ideology of the extreme Right, which began publishing again immediately after the war. *Aspects de la France*, with the

same initials as the Action française before them, toed the AF editorial line under a different name. The foundational work *Nuremberg ou la Terre promise* (1948) by Maurice Bardèche, seminal in forging the French tradition of Holocaust denial, was already under way. The PCF as well, anxious to cash in politically on its central role in the Resistance, downplayed the significant contributions of Jews and celebrated its heroism in nationalist terms. When it denounced the exploitative role of banks and trusts, party propaganda occasionally ascribed them a Protestant and Jewish character. William Cohen and Irwin Wall thus suggest, "In the liberation era the PCF's nationalism often appeared to have antisemitic overtones."⁶ Moreover, the long effort of Catholics and other Christians to atone for Christian anti-Judaism would not substantially transform the discourse of the Church until the 1960s.⁷

Despite this, the vast majority of French Jews never rejected the French model of emancipation, as Annette Wieviorka has demonstrated.⁸ Even though thirty-seven thousand of the sixty-three thousand *résistants* who were deported to camps survived, while only twenty-five hundred Jewish deportees among the seventy-six thousand returned alive, like the wider French collective memory of which it is a part, almost none of the first Jewish memoirs makes a distinction between those deported as Jews and those deported as resisters. There is almost no evidence in their testimony that they felt they belonged to a separate Jewish community, people, or nation. They continued before, during, and after deportation to identify with France and reaffirmed their commitment to the social contract that defined Franco-Judaism. "Vichy and collaboration had not frayed the organic bond between France and its Jews," Wieviorka writes, because for the majority Vichy was considered an illegitimate government that did not represent France.⁹ While Vichy's *antisémitisme d'état* may have shaken the convictions of survivors, it was difficult to question wholesale the Franco-Jewish synthesis.

For example, Julie Crémieux-Dunand's memoir recounts how for the majority Bastille Day and not Passover, Rosh Hashanah, or Yom Kippur was celebrated at Drancy. On July 14, 1943, she reported, "The stair wardens remove their hats, all inmates remain motionless for a minute of silence to commemorate the national holiday and to commune in spirit with those fighting for the liberation

of France.”¹⁰ When leaving Drancy, Jewish deportees would sing “La Marseillaise,” followed by “Ce n’est qu’un au revoir mes frères” (Until We Meet Again, My Brothers), just as was the ritual of non-Jews. Louise Alcan notes that as late as November 11, 1944, in Rajsko the inmates observed a minute of silence and sang “La Marseillaise” to celebrate the Republic and the French victory over the Germans in World War I.¹¹ Julien Unger’s testimony reveals that the same rites that marked the departure were repeated upon their return.¹²

Wieviorka shows conclusively on the basis of this evidence that the French-Jewish *témoignage* immediately after the Shoah differed little from the dominant Gaullist narrative of the war, which suggested that “the lot of the Jews . . . was part of a common tragedy. Their portion in it was perhaps greater, the difference quantitative rather than qualitative.” This narrative proclaimed that, having been “reintegrated into the bosom of the French homeland who would open her arms wide to foreigners, they should not seek to stand out by proclaiming their martyrdom.”¹³ Evidently, in the aftermath of the Holocaust Jews did not want to be differentiated from other Frenchmen.

In *Le spectateur engagé* (*The Committed Observer*) Raymond Aron evoked a conversation he had with Sartre in 1945 about why there was nothing in the French press that proclaimed, “Welcome to the Jews returning to the French community.” For Aron, “The profound reason for this silence was because one had in a sense effaced what had happened. . . . The French settled down again in their France as if the Jews had never been cast out. I took this phenomenon as evidence of a determination to forget, and also as a kind of return by France to its old self.”¹⁴ It is within this context of a general amnesia that characterized the immediate postwar memory about the French collaboration in the Final Solution that Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive* (published in English as *Antisemitism and Jew*) should be placed.

Martyrology, Engagement, and the Jewish Question

Réflexions sur la question juive was written rapidly in the fall of 1944, just after the liberation of Paris and just before the liberation of the death camps, and it was never substantially revised. It was the first extended application of the existential analysis of the relation between Self and Other developed in *Being and Nothingness* and was also an archetype for the intellectual’s responsibil-

ity to address the defining historical issues of the era through *témoignage*. It is thus a pivotal text in Sartre's oeuvre and remains a major theoretical account of antisemitism.¹⁵

Sartre's immediate recognition of the Jewish victims of the Shoah and his testimony insisting on the complicity of French antisemitism were rare in that period. As we will see, however, his *témoignage* nevertheless also subtly sidelined the specific French responsibility for collaboration in the Final Solution. He did no research for the text beyond soliciting anecdotal evidence; he was friendly with only a few Jews, and they were highly assimilated; and he knew little about Jewish history, religion, and culture or the history of antisemitism. This lack of insight is evident in the shortcomings of the text, which uncritically reiterate antisemitic stereotypes central to Jewish persecution. Still, these should not obscure the fact that Sartre's text was an important exception to what Emmanuel Mounier called the "strange silence" on the Jewish Question in the aftermath of the liberation.¹⁶ Nor do they undermine the perspicacity of the work, stemming from Sartre's existential analysis of the antisemite and Jew, which resulted in his critical examination of the terms of Jewish "emancipation." Moreover, the convergence of his existential premises, his *témoignage*, and his *engagement* are firmly established in the *Réflexions*.¹⁷ As such, it was appreciated by the new generation of French-Jewish intellectuals, albeit not uncritically.

It was the closed dialectical logic of the text that precluded the possibility of a critical relationship to the antisemitic representation of "the Jew" that Sartre so brilliantly dissected. As a result, he repeats many of the racist stereotypes he sought to denounce. Rather than disrupt the antisemite's image of Jews and Judaism, like his writing on collaboration, the *Réflexions* attempts textually to purge the antisemite from the community of French culture while enabling Sartre to define himself as the conscience of the French nation, the progenitor of the French Revolution, the paragon of the intellectual. What is more, as we have already seen, Sartre had a tendency to subordinate specific historical problems to transhistorical, ontological concerns rather than articulating the two in a nonreductive manner. This leads him to the dubious sacrificial logic whereby he portrays "the Jew" as exemplary of the exile and suffering at the core of the human condition yet to be authentic must take upon himself the martyr-

dom of humanity. As such, “the Jew” becomes a figure of negativity that only has a positive identity as a universalizing revolutionary. These tensions in his *témoignage* on French antisemitism reveal the contradictions in his conception of *engagement* and the role of the intellectual that he was developing. They point to the dangers of a universalist politics of emancipation, particularly when intertwined within the key tropes of the new nationalist discourse.

The Portrait of the Antisemite: Toward a Theory of Modern Antisemitism

Réflexions sur la question juive is a dialectical analysis of the Jewish Question in France that poses the problem in terms of the ontological condition of “the Jew” and the historical actuality of antisemitism. Sartre’s text has four parts. Part 1, “Portrait of the Antisemite,” was published in December 1945 in one of the first issues of *Les Temps Modernes*.¹⁸ Part 2 discusses the liberal-democratic solution to the Jewish Question, which he rebukes by calling it a “politics of assimilation.” Part 3 considers the interrelation of the authentic and inauthentic Jew, and part 4 proposes a revolutionary solution to the Jewish problem.

Part 1 is a social and existential consideration of the antisemite that Sartre had portrayed fictionally in “The Childhood of a Leader.” The Voltairean irony with which the *Réflexions* opens is reminiscent of the sardonic twist at the end of that story; both texts expose the fundamental contradiction that is characteristic of antisemitism. On the one hand, antisemites deny Jews the rights others have. On the other hand, it is “in the name of democratic institutions, in the name of the freedom of opinion, [that] the antisemite asserts the right to preach the anti-Jewish crusade everywhere.”¹⁹ Thus, from the opening lines, the basic inconsistency that he seeks to expose and oppose is the notion of freely willing the unfreedom of the Other and the exploitation of the political institutions and principles of a free society that make this possible.

Sartre consequently claims that deliberation about antisemitism cannot rest only upon economic, historical, religious, or political studies, which only disclose aspects of the problem but do not assess it as a totalizing existential choice. His multidimensional assessment therefore weaves together an explanation of antisemitism on the basis of Christian anti-Judaism, cultural racism, a sociopsychological explanation that attempts to account for the etiology of

hatred, an economic account, and the theory of the Jews as scapegoats. He concludes, however, that the fundamental cause of antisemitism is the *mauvaise foi* of the antisemite and his fear and flight from the human condition. Accordingly, full understanding requires a phenomenological and ontological description of the antisemite and “the Jew.”

Sartre recognized the Christian sources of antisemitism, contending that “the Jew” was originally persecuted as “the assassin of Christ. . . . [T]he Jew was therefore a murderer or the son of a murderer. . . . [I]t was as such that he was taboo” (67–68).²⁰ But Christian prejudice and oppression, he insists, is not the cause of modern antisemitism. Instead, French Jews suffer from cultural racism.²¹ Within such racism “culture,” “civilization,” “tradition,” and the “nation” serve as homologues for “race” in scientific and biological racism. Sartre castigates Édouard Drumont, Charles Maurras, and Maurice Barrès as exemplary of French cultural antipathy to Jews and Judaism.

For these “master thinkers” of modern French antisemitism French culture ties together language and the soil through the traditions of a national community to which “the Jew” can never gain access: “The true Frenchman,” Sartre notes, is “rooted [*enraciné*] in his province, in his country, borne along by a tradition twenty centuries old, benefiting from ancestral wisdom, guided by tried customs, [and] does not need intelligence. His virtue . . . is a matter of inherited property, not property one buys” (23).²² For the cultural racist the goodness of the “true Frenchman” depends on the transmission of traditions, inherent in the customs and heritage of a people, which cannot be learned from a book or otherwise acquired. Virtue is tied to taste, handed down through generations, and to a mystical conception of local norms, rules, and values that antisemites called *la France réel*. For the antisemite, identification with “the true France” in its particularity is opposed to the universal legalism of French republican law (*la France légale*) (31). Through this mystical relation to “the true France” antisemitism seeks to unite the divided nation. In the ethnic prejudice of antisemitic discourse “the Jew” represents the absolute negation of the values rooted in the land and the dead: “[The antisemite] is opposed to the Jew, just as sentiment is to intelligence, the particular to the universal, the past to the present, the concrete to the abstract, the owner of real property to the possessor of ne-

gotiable securities" (25). For cultural racists, "the Jew" is the opposite of what defines the exclusionary national community.

Christian anti-Judaism and cultural racism alone do not explain antisemitism, however. Sartre also recognizes a significant place for the economic causes of Judeophobia.²³ The demonization of Jews within Christian theology was the basis for their exclusion from employment outside of a narrow sector of the economy: "Thus the original curse was soon reinforced by an economic curse, and it is above all the latter that has persisted" (68). Judas, after all, was the traitor of Christ for thirty pieces of silver, and Shylock, the symbol of Jewish materialism and moneygrubbing, continues to provoke anti-Jewish prejudice. In France these figures were supplemented above all by the image of the rapacious Rothschilds.

In addition to antisemitism forcing Jews to occupy precisely those economic functions for which antisemites then condemn them for succeeding at, Sartre contends that an important cause of antisemitism in the modern period is class conflict. This strand of his investigation rests upon a dogmatic historical materialism. For example, he bluntly states that "each man judges history in accordance with the profession that he follows." At times, he insists that antisemitism is "a bourgeois phenomenon" (37), and he naively contends that "we find scarcely any antisemitism among workers" (35), thus reducing it to a class ideology.²⁴

Sartre also ties this class analysis to a scapegoat theory.²⁵ With "the Jew" as scapegoat he maintains that class conflict is avoided: "It represents, therefore, a safety valve for the owning classes, who encourage it and thus substitute for a dangerous hate against their regime a beneficent hate against particular people" (44). Antisemitism thus serves as an ideology that occludes the social hierarchy that engenders social conflicts within the political order. Kindling antisemitic sentiments in the masses is a strategy that governments, parties, and interest groups have exercised from time to time.

In addition, like Sartre's image of collaboration as a sociopathological phenomenon, his analysis of the "passion" of antisemitism also proposes an etiology of antisemitic hatred, which focuses on the deviance of antisemitism. He likens the inherent contradictions in antisemitism to madness (12). He de-

clares that antisemites are sadistic criminals and symbolic murderers who anticipate the fulfillment of their murderous desires (49). He even contends that perhaps there are people who have a predisposition toward antisemitism (12). When Sartre elaborates upon the “passion” of the antisemite, this original choice to define oneself by hating Jews is sometimes cast as a nonchoice: it is a prelogical, emotional, nonrational response to the world that the antisemite can do nothing about.²⁶ The elements of Sartre’s analysis that emphasize the etiology of hatred as an inborn inclination that induces antisemitism violate the axioms of his existential analysis, which refuse any deterministic explanations. But, like his depiction of the collaborator, he does accord certain validity to a sociopsychological theory of antisemitism that diagnoses it as an illness or social pathology that is inherently abnormal.

But even with such considerations Sartre insists that psychological, historical, political, and economic factors cannot fully explain antisemitism. Putting it simply, he notes that “this *engagement* is not caused by experience” (11). So antisemitism cannot only be understood on empirical and positivist grounds. Accepting the various objective explanations of antisemitism amounts to accepting the same epistemological criteria that underpin antisemitism. The antisemite legitimates his position on the basis of statistics, historical factors, and economic and political constants and thereby argues that antisemitic opinion is “strictly objective” (9). “In short,” Sartre asserts, “the essential thing here is not an ‘historical fact’ but the idea that the agents of history formed for themselves of the Jew” (15). This is his most unique contribution to the various theories of modern antisemitism.

Sartre thus indicates a composite of stereotypes that make up the Jewish character in antisemitic thought. “The Jew” is directly associated with “the Spirit of Evil himself, Satan,” and “all that is bad in society (crises, wars, famines, upheavals, and revolts) is directly or indirectly imputable to him” (40). “The Jew” is a parasitic, contaminating agent (34) whose desire is “to dominate the world” (38). “The Jew” is imagined as behind both “international capitalism” and its exploitation, and “he is the front man for piratical Bolshevism with a knife between its teeth” (38). Antisemitism depends upon these contradictory

stereotypes, “piling up anecdotes that reveal the lubricity of the Jew, his appetite for money, his ruses, and his treasons” (45).

Applying the sexualized modes of relating to the Other conceptualized in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre adds that the antisemite has repressed a strong sexual attraction toward Jews that vacillates between sadism and masochism. “The words ‘a beautiful Jewess’” in the history of French literature, he claims, already “carries an aura of rape and massacre” (48) and, like “the Oriental,” is thus a stock figure of the erotic, nubile, submissive, and compliant woman.²⁷

The antisemite adopts in advance this “certain idea of the Jew, of his nature and of his role in society” (13) and through a process of projection and transference chooses himself through this image. In a Manichaean gesture the antisemite defines himself through abjection, opposing himself to the impurity, depravity, corruption, pollution, impiety, ugliness, untruth, racial deviance, urbanity, or foreignness of “the Jew,” who he deems threatens essential Frenchness.²⁸ Through this negative image the antisemite explains his experience of the world, and, therefore, “if the Jew did not exist, the antisemite would invent him” (13). With this model of the degraded and perverse Other he “is under no necessity to look for his personality within himself. He has chosen . . . to be nothing save the fear he inspires in others” (21). Antisemitism consequently boils down to a “basic fear of oneself and of truth” (18), a fear of finitude and failure.

The totality of the antisemitic response to the Jewish Question thus needs to be conceived in terms of an existential analysis. This analysis reconstitutes the basic categories of Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*: antisemitism is an inauthentic response to man’s situation in the world and being-with-others. The antisemite’s mode of relating to the world and others operates through the reification of values by insisting they are absolute, predetermined, natural, or defined by a divine will rather than the product of human volition and history. By ossifying the existential condition, the antisemite denies the freedom that founds human existence. “Authentic liberty assumes responsibilities,” Sartre maintains, while “the liberty of the antisemite comes from the fact that he escapes all of his” (32). Paradoxically, antisemitism is thus the *choice* to flee the responsibilities of freedom. Sartre synthesizes this in the phrase, “wherein one

seeks only what he has already found, wherein one becomes only what he already was" (18). The world of the antisemite is prefigured by his image of "the Jew," and his identity is defined by claiming that his destiny is to oppose this incarnation of evil. This is the inverse of the equally paradoxical logic that encapsulates Sartre's conception of authenticity in *Being and Nothingness*, which he states is "a freedom which wills itself freedom." It "is in fact a being-which-is-not-what-it-is and which-is-what-it-is-not," and it chooses this as its "ideal of being."²⁹ In other words, authenticity demands choosing afresh in every situation and, in engaging this choice, accepting the responsibility that one redefines oneself and concomitantly the world with each action. Refusing this is to flee the human condition.

Sartre thereby condemns not only those who consider themselves antisemites but also those who give passive consent to antisemitic opinions, whereby "they make themselves into an echo, a murmur, and without thinking of evil—without thinking of anything—they go about repeating learned formulas which give them the right of entry to certain drawing rooms" (51).³⁰ These antisemitic shibboleths manifest the "collective and irrational" soul of an "occult and conservative France" (51). He thus summarizes his portrait of the antisemite:

The Jew only serves him as a pretext; elsewhere his counterpart will make use of the Negro or the man of yellow skin. The existence of the Jew merely permits the antisemite to stifle his anxieties at their inception by persuading himself that his place in the world has been marked out in advance, that it awaits him, and that tradition gives him the right to occupy it. Antisemitism, in a word, is fear of the human condition. The antisemite is a man who wishes to be a pitiless stone, a furious torrent, a devastating thunderbolt—anything except a man. (54)

Therefore, theological anti-Judaism, cultural racism, economic considerations, the scapegoat theory, and Sartre's etiology of hatred only partially explain modern antisemitism. Each of these various aspects that he identifies as exacerbating antisemitism needs to be subsumed within Sartre's examination of the lived structures of the human condition to understand antisemitism as an existential choice.

The Interrelation between the Authentic and Inauthentic Jew

Sartre's dissection of antisemitism and his portrait of the antisemite are dialectically connected to the second major section of the *Réflexions*, the effort to understand "the Jew" in his ontological situation. Only by comprehending the constitutive limits of Jewish existence, Sartre claims, can one attain a totalizing perspective on the Jewish Question because "man is defined first of all as a being 'in a situation'" (59). While all men share certain limitations that define the commonality among them (Sartre here specifies death, work, and the existence of others), the Jew qua Jew faces specific conditions that define the parameters of Jewish existence. These ontological boundaries, which form the limits of the Jewish situation, "decide his possibilities; but inversely, it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it" (60).

But Sartre marks the confines of the Jewish situation by reiterating as defining strictures biological, economic, political, and cultural traits assigned to Jewishness by the antisemites whom he portrays in part I. Each of the elements that he discusses as circumscribing the Jewish condition—race, French nationalism, "the Jew" as a figure of alterity—echoes antisemitic depictions of Jewish identity. While antisemites charge these qualities negatively, Sartre is either neutral or valorizes what he agrees are specific Jewish characteristics. Therefore, despite his vitriolic opposition to antisemitism, there is a series of antisemitic images that are recycled in the course of his text.

First, his equivocation on whether Jews constitute a "race" is evident when he does "not deny that there is a Jewish race" (60).³¹ As a result, he does not always adequately critique the antisemitic conception from Drumont to Darquier de Pellepoix of what Sartre himself calls the "marked Semitic type" evidenced by "a hooked nose, protruding ears, and thick lips" (61). In one breath he warns against understanding race as an "indefinable complex" of "somatic characteristics and intellectual and moral traits" (61), thereby challenging the *sine qua non* of racism. In the next breath, however, he asserts that the Israelite is an "inseparable ensemble in which the psychical and physical, the social, the religious and the individual are closely mingled" in a "living synthesis" (64). He assents that certain "ethnic characteristics"—inherited physical conformations—are more frequently encountered among Jews than non-Jews

within each country. So instead of a Jewish race, from Sartre's perspective, one might speak of Jewish races—each country has its Jewish type. These inborn racial characteristics significantly influence the personality of "the Jew" even if they do not determine Jewish identity. "We must therefore envisage the hereditary and somatic characteristics of the Jew," he claims, "as one factor among others in his situation, not as a condition determining his nature" (64). This is the slippery slope of his position on the question of a Jewish "race."

Sartre also depicts the Jewish relation to the nation and to national political culture as a double-edged sword. He indicates that the dispersion of Jews from their homeland and soil resulted in a "spiritualization of collective ties" (65). Their diasporic identity, unified only by their phantasmagoric religion, resulted in "the Jew" being defined as the Other not to be incorporated into the modern nation-state. For integral nationalists, "the Jew" is always part of an-other nation within the nation: the "one whom these nations do not wish to assimilate" (81). Real France and French mores are ineffable and sublime, but "the Jew," defined in part by what French values are not (82), remains other to France and the French nation, "the stranger, the intruder, the unassimilated at the very heart of our society" (83), with the very desire for assimilation deemed "a dream" (143).

Furthermore, in Sartre's account "the Jew" is always defined by the Other, resulting in the ineluctable double binds of Jewish identity.³² The key axiom of Sartre's text is that "the Jew is the one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start" (69). This means that "the Jew" can become himself only as others see him, which leaves "the Jew" in an intractable struggle with inauthenticity: "The Jew has a personality like the rest of us, and on top of that he is Jewish. It amounts in a sense to a doubling of the fundamental relationship with the Other. The Jew is overdetermined" (79). This is the twist in the quandary of the Jewish relation with the Other: in becoming himself he can only become other—other than himself, other to the Other.

"The Jew" thus becomes the quintessential example of the human being condemned to be what he is not and not to be what he is: "The root of Jewish disquietude is the necessity imposed upon the Jew of subjecting himself to end-

less self-examination and finally of assuming a phantom personality, at once strange and familiar, that haunts him and which is nothing but himself—himself as others see him. You may say that this is the lot of all. . . . [T]his is the expression of our fundamental relation to the Other” (78–79). Sartre therefore concludes, “There is a basic doubling of Jewish sensibility concealed beneath the exterior of a universal humanism” (131–32). The Jewish situation is, accordingly, an allegory of the human condition. The drama of the Jewish condition enacts “man’s useless passion” writ small.

In fact, Sartre’s depiction of the predicament of the authentic and inauthentic Jew secularizes the image of “the Jew” in the Christian Passion—the Christologocentric story of Christ’s trial, suffering, and redemption. He universalizes Kafka’s *The Trial* as a parable about the situation of “the Jew” in the modern world:

This is perhaps one of the meanings of The Trial by the Jew, Kafka. Like the hero of that novel, the Jew is engaged in a long trial. He does not know his judges, scarcely even his lawyers; he does not know what he is charged with, yet he knows that he is considered guilty. . . . His external situation may appear brilliant, but the interminable trial inevitably wastes him away, and it happens sometimes, as in the novel, that men seize him, carry him off on the pretense that he has lost his case, and murder him in some vague area of the suburbs. (88)

The parable of the trial is the result of the inescapable tension he describes between the authentic and the inauthentic Jew.

Sartre clearly lays out the terms of his analysis of authenticity:

If it is agreed that man may be defined as a being having freedom within the limits of a situation, then it is easy to see that the exercise of this freedom may be considered as authentic or inauthentic according to the choices made in the situation. Authenticity, it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate. (90)

But the antifoundationalist axiom of Sartre's text entails that his conception of Jewish authenticity and inauthenticity rest on quicksand.

Jewish identity is precariously grounded as Jews are caught on the horns of a dilemma. "To be a Jew," he contends, "is to be thrown into—to be abandoned to—the situation of a Jew; and at the same time it is to be responsible in and through one's own person for the destiny and the very nature of the Jewish people" (89). The one thing that "the Jew" can never choose is not to be a Jew (89). To deny one's Jewishness is to further inscribe it. Inauthentic Jews are Jews who deny their situation and their concomitant responsibilities; in short, those who deny the abjection of the antisemitic gaze: "Inauthentic Jews are men whom other men take for Jews and who have decided to run away from this insupportable situation" (93). The inauthentic Jew acts in order "to prove to [himself], to prove to others, that there is no such thing as a Jewish nature" (96). During the German occupation there were those inauthentic Jews in the Resistance, Sartre reports, who wanted to resist not as Jews but as Frenchmen. Inauthentic Jews try to live the dictum of Terence: "*Nil humani alienum puto ergo homo sum*—nothing human is alien to me; therefore, I am a man" (96). The inauthentic Jew rejects his alien-nation, strangeness, and foreignness, but this requires the estrangement of "the Jew" from himself. The process is one of constituting and identifying the other within the self in order to isolate and eradicate it. In a word, the inauthentic Jew is self-hating.

Sartre describes the inauthentic Jew as one who tries to slip into the anonymity of the Christian crowd, like the characters Sarah and Birnenschatz in *The Roads to Freedom*, in order to assimilate into "humanity without race . . . recognized as a man by other men" (98). Since assimilation is impossible, an interminable suffering marks the life of "the Jew," constitutive of the impossibility of his or her situation. Sartre attempts to theorize on the basis of this understanding what the possibility of redemption from this trial and suffering might be—to determine whether there is a third way between the failures of the antisemite and the democrat, between extermination and total assimilation. This other path is, of course, (Jewish) authenticity. But in following this road to freedom the authentic Jew is skewered on the other horn of the Jewish dilemma.

The Double Bind(s) of Jewish Identity

Sartre's vision of redemption for "the Jew"—his solution to the Jewish Question—remains mired in the aporias and contradictions encapsulated in the following passage:

We have created this variety of men [the Jews] who have no meaning except as artificial products of a capitalist (or feudal) society, whose only reason for existing is to serve as scapegoat for a still prelogical community—this species that bears witness for essential humanity better than any other because it was born of secondary reactions interior to humanity—this quintessence of man, disgraced, uprooted, destined from the start to either inauthenticity or martyrdom. In this situation there is not one of us who is not totally guilty and even criminal; the Jewish blood that the Nazis shed falls on all our heads. (135–36, *emphasis added*)

The only authentic response for the Jew is to understand the shared nature of his or her condition with other Jews—to accept the irresolvable struggle with French-Jewish (in)authenticity and (non)identity: "Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself as Jew—that is, in realizing one's Jewish condition" (136). This demands that "the Jew" "knows himself and wills himself into history as a historic and damned creature" (136). The authentic Jew necessarily inscribes himself in the logic of antisemitism: "He knows that he is one who stands apart, untouchable, scorned, proscribed—and it is as such that he asserts his being" (136).

The possibility of Jewish authenticity is thus Jewish martyrdom: "The Jew can choose to be authentic by asserting his place as Jew in the French community, with all that goes with it of rights and *martyrdom*" (139, *emphasis added*). The authentic Jew recognizes the condition of other Jews and identifies with their pariah status, their alterity, and he derives pride from this situation. This means for Sartre that "he accepts all, even martyrdom," and thus "the authentic Jew makes himself a Jew, in the face of all and against all" (137). The Jew is thus free to choose only between "either inauthenticity or martyrdom." Lawrence Kritzman has effectively articulated this "no exit" situation of the French Jew: "If Jews opt for authenticity, they become the mere reflection of the anti-

semiter's gaze; if they opt to do things differently, by assimilating and adopting the discourse of the dominant Christian culture, they end up as victims of their own bad faith."³³

This quandary, however, ultimately stems from the terms of the emancipation social contract, which is critically evaluated in part 2 of the *Réflexions*, Sartre's assessment of the liberal-democratic solution to the Jewish Question. The liberal democrat "wants to separate the Jew from his religion, from his family, from his ethnic community, in order to plunge him into the democratic crucible where he will emerge naked and alone, an individual and solitary particle like all the other particles" (57). Sartre calls this the "politics of assimilation," which he argues has the same logical result as antisemitism: the elimination of the Jew.³⁴ The antisemite wants to destroy the man and leave nothing but "the Jew," the democrat wants to destroy "the Jew" and leave nothing but the man. The difference between antisemitism and liberal democracy is that the former condemns "the Jew" for being Jewish, focusing this antipathy on the Jewish body, while the liberal democrat reviles the Jewish affirmation of Jewish difference.

"The Jew" is thus caught in the double bind of the politics of assimilation, at once unassimilable and too assimilated. Sartre's solution to this impossible existential situation is for "the Jew" to support the socialist revolution, which will end all antinomies in its explosion of the antithetical constructs "the Jew" and the antisemite. In his vision of the postrevolutionary Jewish situation, however, the Jew will still lose his particular identity to the interests of the universal community: "[If] acceptance is total and sincere, the result will be first to make easier the Jew's choice of authenticity, and then, bit by bit, to make possible, without violence and by the very course of history, that assimilation to which some would like to drive him by force" (147). Like that of the liberal democrats, Sartre's socialist solution to the Jewish Question dissolves Jewish difference, erasing Jewish identity while calling for another French Revolution in the name of "the Jew."

Sartre is haunted by the ghost of Abbé Grégoire. In his attempt to find a third way between the politics of assimilation and the politics of antisemitism, he reinscribes parallel stereotypes of the Jewish body and of Jewish difference to

those he criticized in the antisemite and the liberal democrat. Many of the antisemitic representations that he disparaged remain embedded in his own discourse about Jews. Since his existential premises problematize a stable ground to identity, whether biological, psychological, or theological, he denies any positive basis to being Jewish. But he goes further in denying a Jewish claim to history: "We have attempted to show that the Jewish community is neither national nor international, neither religious, nor ethical, nor political: it is a quasi-historical community" (145). As a result of his "progressive" view of history, Sartre uncritically accepts both the Enlightenment's and Hegel's depictions of Judaism as atavistic and anachronistic.³⁵ Thus he sums up Jewish history as "one of wandering over the course of twenty centuries; at any moment . . . [the Jew] must be ready to pick up his stick and his bundle" (132). Here he reiterates the image of Ahasuerus, *le Juif errant*.³⁶ "The Jews," unlike the French, are denied a collective history and must accept only a collective memory of exodus, admonishment, banishment, and exclusion, in short, a memory of collective martyrdom and suffering. Sartre thereby reinscribes "the Jew" as a martyr to an authentic French culture, revalorizing the sacrificial logic of the Vichy regime that he so valiantly opposed.

According to Sartre, "the Jew is not yet historical"—"he floats on, uncertain, uprooted [*déraciné*]" (84). At times like this he accepts without critical intervention the language of Barrès. Unlike the French, whose values are rooted in French history, the Jews are severed from history: "If it is true . . . that a community is historical to the degree that it remembers its history, then the Jewish community is the least historical of all, for it keeps a memory of nothing but a long martyrdom, that is, of a long passivity" (66–67). Moreover, Sartre claims that the Jewish religion is only an inauthentic substitute for the rootedness of a national community: there is a "secret and deep-seated need to attach oneself to tradition and, in default of a national past[,] to give oneself roots in a past of rites and customs" (66). Jews are thus severed from history and from the roots of the French nation, "destined from the start to either inauthenticity or martyrdom."

Worse still, in the very gesture of distancing himself from the antisemitic "opinions" that open the text, Sartre depicts Jews with all the typological fea-

tures of the Jewish stereotype: "He is a Jew, the son of Jews, recognizable by his physique, by the color of his hair, by his clothing perhaps, and, so they say, by his character" (10). He invokes the image of "the smart Jew" and relies upon the supposed hyperrationalism of Jews in his argumentation, which leads him to assert that Jews lack tact.³⁷ Sartre creates a family portrait of the Jewish character much akin to his reveries on Pieterkowski and Bianca Bienenfeld:

Here is a Jew seated on his doorstep in the rue des Rosiers. I recognize him immediately as a Jew: he has a black and curly beard, a lightly hooked nose, protruding ears, steel-rimmed glasses, a derby pulled down over his eyes, black clothes, quick and nervous gestures, and a smile of strange and dolorous goodness. How am I to disentangle the physical from the moral? His beard is black and curly; that is a somatic characteristic. . . . Is his son any less a Jew for being clean-shaven? (63)

As is the case with most of the antisemitic motifs that Sartre reiterates, he does not categorically reject them but instead offers an explanation for why Jews are, in fact, the way they are. His reasoning is much the same as that of the Enlightenment reformers like Grégoire who sought to regenerate Jewish degeneracy.

For example, Sartre invokes the image of the Jewish usurer, which he attributes to the impossible desire for Jewish assimilation. He explains that if money defines value, then value is as universal and rational as the exchange of currency. The Jewish desire for integration, which is rational and universal, is the reason for the Jews' obsessive love of money: "Thus we see all the background for the Jew's alleged taste for money. . . . Money is a factor of integration" (128). He continues this line of reasoning: since Jews belong principally to "the lower or middle class" (73), their vocations are dependent upon the opinion of others, which means that "the Jew" always needs "to seduce" and "to captivate" the Other; Jews are always concerned with protecting their professional reputation, which depends upon the gaze of the other. The Jewish businessman cannot forget his Jewishness, because it is defined within a structural logic; he is an intermediary, a point of exchange, and dependent for his identity on his reputation by the Other. Here Sartre picks up a thread from the French utopian socialists that runs through Marx's "On the Jewish Question,"

which identifies “the Jew” with modern financial capitalism. Jews are “artificial products of a capitalist (or feudal) society.”³⁸

In short, since he never adequately demolishes the antisemite’s image of “the Jew,” Sartre reinscribes many of the stereotypes that he denounces: he does not deny that Jews are a race; he reiterates the identification of “the Jew” with Mammon and the particularly Jewish love of money; Judaism is atavistic or anachronistic in the modern period; Jews are represented as hyperrational and “quasi-historical,” wandering through the centuries in search of the salvation that Sartre comes to offer.

In addition to the blind spots in his existential analysis of the antisemite and “the Jew,” Sartre is ambiguous about the issue of French complicity in the Final Solution to the Jewish Question.³⁹ Seemingly assuming responsibility for it, he states, “There is not one of us [Frenchmen] who is not totally guilty and even criminal” (136). Later in his *Réflexions*, however, he says, “We [Frenchmen] are not guilty and yet we run the risk also of being victims.” The “Jewish blood,” like the guilt and responsibility for the Shoah, is ascribed to the Nazis, limiting French involvement. The French, like “the Jews,” were also victims of Nazi atrocities. Sartre’s gesture, which seemingly disseminates guilt to all Frenchmen, simultaneously and subtly exonerates French collaboration in the Final Solution.

In a strange paradox, akin to the “strange silence” on the Jewish Question following the war, complicity is avoidable to the extent that French culture responsibly fights “our involuntary complicity with the antisemites, who have made hangmen of us all” (136). The dichotomy that Sartre establishes between (true) Frenchmen and antisemitic Nazi hangmen enables him to project responsibility for antisemitic actions outside of French culture. Sartre contends that many of those who supported Pétain’s antisemitic measures were not antisemitic executioners. They merely accepted that “France could be saved at the cost of a few sacrifices” (70), with the martyrdom of the Jews as the sacrifice for French unity.

Sartre’s text, which bears witness to this Jewish martyrdom, figuratively attempts redemption from culpability by accepting to “fight for the Jew, no more and no less than for ourselves” (151). The last line of the text thus reads,

"Not one Frenchman will be free so long as the Jews do not enjoy the fullness of their rights. Not one Frenchman will be secure so long as a single Jew—in France or in the world at large—can fear for his life." To this end, Sartre affirms, "it is for the Jews also that we shall make the revolution" (151). Frenchmen will effectively choose the France of the Resistance—an image of France that is at once an idealized past and a regulating ideal for the future—by accepting antisemitism as "our problem" (152). Like his other postwar *témoignage*, Sartre's testimony about French collaboration in the Shoah therefore repeats the double strategy of forgetting.

The Revolution as Solution to the Jewish Question

As was the case in Sartre's *témoignage* on collaboration, part 4 of his *Réflexions* proposes a socialist revolution as the solution to the Jewish Question. This is the dialectical resolution that he offers to the aporias and contradictions that pervade his *Réflexions sur la question juive*. Once more, he urges a revolution that will purge antisemitism from French society: "The Jewish problem is born of antisemitism; thus it is antisemitism that we must suppress in order to resolve the problem" (147). Revolution, Sartre suggests, will eliminate the differences that are responsible for conflict within the social body by exploding the antinomies not only between antisemite and Jew but between Jew and non-Jew: "Divisions continue to exist since their economic and social causes have not been touched; an attempt is made to lump them all together into a single one—distinctions between rich and poor, between laboring and owning classes, between legal powers and occult powers, between city-dwellers and country-dwellers, etc., etc.—they are all summed in the distinction between Jew and non-Jew" (149). Antisemitism is one expression of social tensions; in his conclusion Sartre flirts with reducing it to class conflict. Therefore, he maintains, antisemitism could not exist in a society without the "conflict of interests": "Antisemitism would have no existence in a society without classes and founded on collective ownership of the instruments of labor, one in which man, freed of his hallucinations inherited from an older world, would at long last throw himself wholeheartedly into his enterprise. . . . Antisemitism would then be cut at its roots" (150). In calling for the transcendence of the antagonisms engen-

dered by the capitalist system Sartre suggests that revolution will finally raise the consciousness of humans to the task of human-being, which is “to create the kingdom of man” (150). He thus weaves together existentialist and Marxist motifs within a secularized vision that upends Barrès’s nationalist and socialist antisemitism, advocating a program of deracination aimed at antisemitism. The final solution to the problem of antisemitism is a national revolution that will purge the antisemite from the social body—an enterprise that will finally “create the kingdom of man”: “The authentic Jew simply renounces for himself an assimilation that is today impossible; he awaits the radical liquidation of antisemitism for his sons. The Jew of today is in full war. What is there to say except that the socialist revolution is necessary to and sufficient for the suppression of the antisemite” (150).

So Sartre’s socialist revolution, a commitment to a vision of future France, offers *épuration* through the textually encoded purging of antisemitism, a purification of French culpability through commitment to the French revolution, past, and future. As we saw was the case in his analysis of collaboration, French authenticity is linked by Sartre to the continuation of the heritage of 1789 channeled through the Resistance, with its attendant cultural values. This serves as the source and the model for the reconciliation of internal French divisions in Sartre’s postrevolutionary image of France. French authenticity depends upon a commitment to the French-socialist-humanist revolution—a revolution that will complete the struggle for liberation that began in 1789 and whose most self-conscious expression was the French Resistance.

While Sartre says, “It is a lazy way out to place on a future revolution the burden of liquidating the Jewish Question” (150), this is, paradoxically, precisely how he concludes his *Réflexions*. In a footnote in “Paris sous l’occupation,” he states, “If it is necessary to find an excuse or at least an explanation of collaboration, it would be convenient to say that it was also an effort to give France a future” (30). Sartre’s socialist revolution is equally an effort to restore to France a future, which is made possible by exorcising collaboration and French antisemitism from French culture. He adopts this solution as a means not only to reconcile the tensions that he sees in French society but also to overcome the antinomies of his own thought.

The problems of *Réflexions sur la question juive* result from the strict dialectical logic that structures Sartre's anti-antisemitism. "The Jew" is a negation, the antisemite is the negation of the negation, and the synthesis is Sartre's utopian revolution. But the possibility of a dialectical disruption of this image of "the Jew" is incapacitated within the line of reasoning of his closed dialectical approach. The constitution of "the Jew" is thus fixed as a negation. "The Jew" as a category is nothing but an empty signifier against which the antisemite defines his own essence as the "true Frenchman." By textually "liquidating" the antisemite, Sartre seeks to exclude antisemitic hangmen as authentic members of the French national community. In the process, "the Jew" is figuratively martyred—constituted as a negativity, a ghost, "a phantom personality, at once strange and familiar, that haunts [French culture]" (78). Sartre's testimony for these ghosts in the fall of 1944 positions "the Jew" between the Scylla of self-effacement and the Charybdis of the antisemites' essentializing gaze. His *témoignage* subtly but surely reinscribes "the Jew" as the martyr who bears witness to the necessity for French cultural unity. In so doing, Sartre's revolutionary solution to the Jewish Question duplicates many of the limitations that have characterized the French Left's responses to the Jewish Question.

Thus, at precisely the moment in French history when the most radical repercussions of the legacy of French antisemitism were apparent, Sartre intervened. As a star of the French intellectual field, he spoke at once as the representative of French culture and as a leading light in the postwar French cultural scene. His testimony struggled with French culture's responsibility for antisemitism and its culpability in the Shoah. His voice, courageous and lonely, railed against this key aspect of the ideology of the extreme Right in France, offering a powerful theoretical examination of antisemitism. Indeed, he went beyond only castigating antisemites, ushering in a new era for reflections on the Jewish Question by holding up for critique the incongruities of Jewish "emancipation" itself.

But the universalist politics of emancipation he offered in its stead likewise prove untenable. First, he collapsed the ontological and historical dimensions of his analysis, articulating antisemitism in transhistorical, ontological terms at a time in history when the French wanted to forget their collaboration with the

Nazis. The ambiguities and contradictions that characterize Sartre's *témoignage* for the Jews in the immediate postwar period thus are connected to the double strategy of forgetting. Second, Sartre's text falls prey to its own closed dialectal logic, causing his *Réflexions* to duplicate the cultural logic of the period rather than challenging it. Finally, Sartre's anti-antisemitism capitulates to the lexicon of antisemitism by merely reversing the terms of the debate—French/Jewish, universal/particular, authentic/inauthentic—rather than consistently questioning the underlying premises of the Jewish Question itself. Our examination of the consolidation of Sartre's politics of *engagement* in the following chapter will make more evident how his *Réflexions* served as archetype of the writer's responsibility to bear witness to his own times as well as enable the stark emergence of the tensions within his secularization of the Passion narrative as the basis for how he conceived the role of the intellectual.

5. Sartre's Passion

Engagement and the Project of Universal Emancipation

We want the man and the artist to be redeemed together, the work to be an act as well, conceived expressly as a weapon in the struggle men are waging against evil.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "We Write for Our Own Time"

Sartre's intellectual legacy was firmly established in the postwar period when he emerged as the leading voice of the intellectual Left. Bracketed by Marxists and Catholic personalists, existentialism became the most widely discussed postwar cultural movement in the "Republic of Letters." Jean Guéhenno has fittingly described its representatives as "wholly contained in a few Parisian houses, some cramped magazine or publishing offices, some drawing rooms, some cafés, some artist's studios, some attic rooms. It is not easy to penetrate this world. The real dialogue takes place between a few dozen writers who acknowledge each other, and that is all"; thus it exists much as it did "two hundred years ago at the time of our masters, the philosophers of enlightenment, [who] founded it."¹

Following Montmartre and Montparnasse as the preeminent meeting points of the avant-garde, the epicenter of existentialism was the square just outside of the café Les Deux Magots, opposite the Romanesque church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The square has been officially renamed la place Jean-Paul Sartre–Simone de Beauvoir. It is surrounded by a cluster of bookstores, publishing houses, galleries, and cafés, including the colorful Brasserie Lipp and the Art Deco elegance of the Café de Flore. The square is near the two prestigious lycées, Henri IV and Louis-le-Grand, that Sartre attended before his entrance

into the *École normale supérieure*, the training ground of France's cultural elite. The diarist Jean Galtier-Boissière wittily remarked that after the liberation Saint-Germain-des-Prés became Sartre's cathedral.²

After the war Sartre was hailed as the high priest of existentialism, the leader of the cultural movement that swept Paris and the Western world. In the first half of 1945 he was packaged for export.³ Cultivating the existentialist myth was now part and parcel of French international prestige. "Now a second-class power," Beauvoir maintained, "France was exalting her most characteristic national products with an eye on the export market: *haute couture* and literature."⁴ In the first half of 1945 Sartre visited the United States as a French cultural emissary and as a correspondent for *Combat* and *Le Figaro*. In what Beauvoir called the "existentialist offensive" the second half of 1945 saw a number of Sartre's projects reach fruition. The first two volumes of *The Roads to Freedom—The Age of Reason* and *The Reprieve*—appeared in September, along with Beauvoir's existentialist novel *Le sang des autres* (*The Blood of Others*), one of the first books about the Resistance to be published after the liberation. The first issue of *Les Temps Modernes* was published in October. With its prestigious editorial board, including its founders, Sartre, Beauvoir, and Merleau-Ponty, along with Raymond Aron, Michel Leiris, Albert Ollivier, and Jean Paulhan, it soon replaced the now discredited *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. It competed with *Europe*, the CNE's unofficial monthly organ dominated by the Communists, and the Catholic personalist journal *Esprit*, as well as with the newly founded *La Nef*, *La Table Ronde*, and *Poésie*, for its place as the leading independent leftist intellectual review. On October 29 Sartre delivered his famous lecture "L'existentialisme est un humanisme" at the Club Maintenant, remembered afterward as the cultural event of 1945. The room was so stiflingly packed, the atmosphere so charged, the weather so warm that people squabbled and fainted as his absorbing voice announced the key themes of existentialism: "existence precedes essence," "man is nothing else than the ensemble of his acts," humanity is "condemned to be free."⁵ Sartre and Beauvoir were henceforward celebrities, followed everywhere by photographers. Everything they said or did or wrote about was covered extensively in the press.

More than merely writers and philosophers, Sartre and Beauvoir were cultural icons, identified with a lifestyle and a set of values. Sartre moved into an apartment on rue Bonaparte with a view of the Saint-Germain-des-Prés intersection. Working in his favorite cafés soon became impossible due to his popularity. He migrated to the basement bar of the Pont-Royal hotel, down the street from his publisher, Gallimard. He was ensconced as an underground man because magazines like *France-Dimanche*, with over a million copies printed weekly, contained copiously illustrated stories describing in detail how he entered the Café de Flore “with his short steps, his head buried in the dirty wool of an unkempt jacket, its pockets bursting with books and papers, a Balzac novel from the public library under his arm[,] . . . removing the scarves from his neck and . . . warmed by a few cognacs, the small pipe stuck in his sensual lips burning cheap tobacco[,] . . . taking a two-bit pen from his briefcase . . . to scribble forty pages of manuscript.” *Samedi-Soir*, a sensational weekly with half a million readers, also published stories on the café and nightclub life of the literary Left Bank, suggesting that the hipsters who congregated there were all “existentialists.”⁶ Sartre enjoyed going to hear jazz at the nightclubs and bars like Le Tabou and Le Club Saint-Germain, burrowed into a cellar near the Café de Flore. The rhythm of existentialism was trumpeted by bebop groups in joints like Le Méphisto, which Claude Roy in his memoirs called “an agitated meeting place of agitators,” the perfect ambience for a group of people who “wanted to change the world during the daytime, and exchange ideas at night.”⁷ In these environs Sartre’s theory of *engagement* defined the theoretical basis not only for his own intellectual politics but for a whole generation of engaged intellectuals in France and around the world.

The Politics of *Engagement* and the Role of the Intellectual

Sartre elaborated, refined, and formulated central aspects of his theory of *engagement* throughout World War II, especially his notion of liberty as coterminous with responsibility and his idea of the situation and its transcendence through the individual project. However, its organizing concepts only solidified in his immediate postwar writing. He insisted that writing is an act that must address the historical situation of which the writer is a part. He posited

a politics of universal emancipation in which the intellectual mediates social and political conflicts by relating the particular situation to the universal conditions of human liberation. To manage the tensions between the particular and the universal constitutive of his project, he constructed an image of the writer as a prophet-martyr who bears witness to the ontological conditions of human liberty when he intervenes in history. This image is exemplified for him in the Resistance writer. Sartre's concept of the universal intellectual was thereby connected to the idealized memory of the war years, the horizons of which we have discussed in the previous two chapters.

This chapter reconstructs the conceptual ensemble of Sartre's theory of *engagement*. First, we establish its links to his postwar *témoignage*. Next, we consider the shifts in his work from his notion of man as a "useless passion" as the distillation of his description of authenticity in *Being and Nothingness* to a secularized version of the Christian Passion as the model for Sartre's intellectual hero. In *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (*What Is Literature?*), the classic statement of his theory of *engagement*, Sartre anchors his theory in an ontological analysis, thereby universalizing it. The result is that in spite of his insistence on writers' political responsibility to bear witness to their own time, the terms of his theory demands that they transcend history, disclosing tensions immanent within Sartre's universal project of emancipation.

These tensions run through his concrete political commitments from the liberation to the end of the Algerian conflict in 1962. This chapter assesses this period by focusing on the application of his theory of *engagement* to the problem of racial oppression. During this period he reconceptualized the role of the intellectual and worked out the determinate linkages between the individual, society, and history as he developed his existential Marxism. This revamping is evident in the transformations in the decade from *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1947) to *Questions de méthode* (*Search for a Method*, 1957), from his emphasis on the ethical-political imperatives of literature to his stress on politics and polemics, from his accent on the concept of *engagement* to the notion of *compréhension*. These transmutations depended upon Sartre theoretically articulating the sociohistorical mediations that are missing from *Being and Nothingness* but that are foregrounded in his *Critique de la raison dialectique* (*Critique of Dialectical*

Reason, 1960), his major contribution to existential Marxism. In tracing these shifts in Sartre's understanding of the role of the engaged intellectual I focus on the pivotal role played by his reflections on the Jewish Question.

The Resistance Writer

Sartre's conception of the engaged writer crucially depended upon the image of the Resistance hero constructed in his postwar *témoignage*. The connection is evident in an article that appeared in *Vogue* magazine in July 1945. Titled "New Writing in France," it was intended to assess the state of French literature in 1945. He distinguished between two generations of writers in France, arguing that a tie to the Resistance marks the divide between the prewar generation (Sartre named the surrealists, André Gide, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, and Jean Anouilh) and the postwar avant-garde, which he claims is the "result of the Resistance and the war."⁸ Sartre is introduced in the editor's note as "a man of the Resistance" who was already admired before the war, but "his part in the Resistance seems to have made his work broader, more human, greater. Two of his plays, now running, 'Les Mouches' and 'Huis Clos,' pointed arguments for resisting the oppressors, were presented in Paris under the Germans" (85). Thus it was specifically his link to the Resistance that helped define him as the future of French letters.

What is more, Sartre connects the Resistance writer to the project of human liberation. For the postwar avant-garde "the Resistance was an education. It taught them that the freedom to write, like freedom itself, must be defended by arms under certain circumstances, and that literature consequently is no fancy activity carried on independent of politics" (84). The situation of the Resistance necessitated that the choice to write was politically committed. Every word was a deed. The lesson of the Resistance was that writers are obligated to address their historical epoch and therein define the conditions of liberty for others. Since resistance writers wrote with death or torture as an immediate consequence of their actions, they were well suited to "measure the powers and the limits of man" (85). With Resistance literature as his model and because writing involves readers in their own freedom, Sartre declares that there is a lot of discussion in France of what he calls a "literature of involvement" (84).⁹

In Sartre's description of the "literature of involvement" he compares the extreme situation of the French Resistance writers with "the tortured corpses of Buchenwald." They are both martyrs, witnesses, extreme examples that illustrate the limits and possibilities of the human condition and man's inhumanity to man.

The stupefaction, the indignation that Americans feel before the tortured corpses of Buchenwald we have felt for a long time. For four years the young of France and even the children of France have known what man is capable of. Four years of struggle without glory and without hope in a country humiliated by defeat have taught them that the world is hard and unjust, that the best men were those who suffered the most, who died first; that in war death strikes by chance, but in the Resistance death chose. Those who survive to-day know that death has struck down the elite of the country. (85)

In the same terms as the Mémorial de la déportation and Sartre's postwar témoignage, the differences between the Final Solution and the torture and murder of the Resistance are effaced. Sartre stresses the sameness of the shame and subjugation of the French and the Jewish victims.¹⁰ He associates both the Resistance heroes and the Jews as martyrs, with the difference that the Resistance hero was a willing martyr, and the Resistance was "the elite of the country" whose members thus bore witness to the possibility of liberation during the war and consequently stand as paragons of the human condition.

Sartre's Manifesto for the Politics of *Engagement*

What Sartre had introduced as the "literature of involvement" in the *Vogue* article was consolidated in his manifesto for *littérature engagée* in his "Présentation des Temps Modernes."¹¹ This introduction to the journal argued that the new periodical would be defined by his idea of *engagement*. *Les Temps Modernes*, he insists, would take a stand on all the major contemporary cultural and political debates. These *prises de position* would not serve any particular political party and would "serve no dogma" (16). Each article would commit its author individually. He thus emphatically distinguished *engagement* from *embrigadement*—subservience to a political (party's) doctrine.

Sartre also contends that *engagement* is the culminating point of intellectual politics in France. He identifies himself and the journal in a line of writers who chose to intervene in the situation that defined their historical era—Voltaire in the Calas affair, Zola in the Dreyfus affair, and Gide in the discussion of the administration of the Congo. He castigates Balzac's failure to support the revolution in 1848 and Flaubert's reticence about the Commune. There is "a particular circumstance in their life that measured the responsibility of the writer," he contends, and failure to bear witness in this situation is simply to fail in the task of the intellectual. "The occupation gave us ours" (13), he declares. Sartre's conception of the relation between the situation and freedom is thus the basis of his idea of *engagement*, and the Resistance writer is his example of the authentic response to a situation.

Moreover, he sees literature in a constitutive relation with politics, shaping the polity at the same time that the public chooses its literature. Literature is not to be reduced to politics, nor is it beyond politics. Rather, literature is a site of mediation between universal, transcendental questions and the historically specific tensions of politics. The *intellectuel engagé* is positioned as the mediator between these positions. Sartre's "Présentation des Temps Modernes" consequently does more than introduce his journal to its readers: it is a manifesto on behalf of a particular role for the intellectual in France and the blueprint for his theory of *engagement*.

What Is Literature?

Beginning in February 1947 Sartre began to publish a series of articles that were to become the locus classicus for his theory of *engagement*, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*¹² He defined the theoretical and practical foundation for committed literature by considering three questions: "What is writing? Why does one write? For whom does one write?" (viii). In the responses to these questions that organize the text he further develops his image of the intellectual as a mediator between a particular political situation and the universal project of human liberation. In doing so he refers to his essay on the Jewish Question as an exemplar of engaged writing.

Sartre's answer to the question "What is writing?" is based on the elaboration of a rigid distinction he makes between prose and other forms of the arts, especially poetry. The basis of the distinction is his observation that "poets are men who refuse to utilize language" (4). The prose writer, on the other hand, sees words as tools with utility and function—words, language, and literature are forms of action. Prose is thus inherently engaged with the world. When Sartre elaborates upon the distinction between prose writing and poetry, he does so in terms of the thematics of the mirror image: "If you name the behavior of an individual, you reveal it to him; he sees himself. And you are at the same time naming it to all others, he knows that he is *seen* at the moment he *sees* himself" (14). The reader of poetry never gets behind the mirror image, however, because language is conceived as merely "the mirror of the world" (6). Thus, while poetry is a hall of mirrors and like the other arts pays more attention to its own techniques of representation than to the situation that circumscribes its production, prose writing is an act that forces readers to examine their choices in a historical situation.

In summing up his position Sartre states, "In short, it is a matter of knowing what one wants to write about, whether butterflies or the condition of the Jews. And when one knows, then it remains to decide how one will write about it" (16). In marking the basic series of distinctions that structure the conceptual ensemble of Sartre's theory of *engagement*—between poetry and prose, passive contemplation and engaged resistance—Sartre's comment about "the condition of the Jews" establishes this issue as one crucial point of vision that stresses the critical role of the writer who voices the perspective of the oppressed.

The basic distinctions in Sartre's theory of *engagement* are further developed in his response to the question "Why does one write?" He presents writing as a gift that mutually recognizes the freedom of writer and reader. This pact sets the work of art apart from the conflict inherent in the encounter between Self and Other that he characterized in his ontological examination of being-with-others in *Being and Nothingness*.¹³ Like the mirror image in Sartre's early writing, the *dévoilement* (revelation) that writing facilitates enables the reader to attain reflective consciousness. The goal of writing should be to fos-

ter the recognition of freedom, and therefore all writing should be an appeal to the freedom of all people.

Sartre contends that there is a necessary dialectical logic that leads to human liberation inherent in all authentically engaged literature. This dialectic is his solution to the tensions between the particular and the universal, between the historical and the ontological, and “this dialectic is nowhere more apparent than in the art of writing” because writing implies reading (25). The very meaning of a text depends upon the synthesis of writing and reading, and “reading seems, in fact, to be the synthesis of perception and creation” (26), thus generating the pact between writer and reader. By this means he recasts the logic of the mirror image in his early work into the conceptual ensemble of the dialectic drawn from Hegel and Marx.

Sartre construes this engaged dialectic as a secularized depiction of Christ's Passion.¹⁴ Writing, Sartre maintains, “is a Passion, in the Christian sense of the word, that is, a freedom which resolutely puts itself into a state of passivity to obtain a certain transcendent effect by this sacrifice” (31). Christ's trial, crucifixion, and resurrection form the central narrative of Christian faith. Following Christ's example offers entrance to the kingdom of heaven through freedom from death. Sartre's image of the writer is that of a prophet-martyr who bears witness to the kingdom of man—to the highest human values, including liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice. The intellectual is exemplified by his secularized incarnation of that image—the Resistance writer. As we have seen, the occupation replaces the trial, the Resistance mirrors Christ's martyrdom, and the socialist revolution supplants the resurrection. He transforms and secularizes the Christian Passion by a shift in emphasis from the eternity of the kingdom of heaven to the ends of a universal kingdom of human liberation revealed by the gift of engaged literature.

This final move in Sartre's theory of *engagement*—the shift from individual freedom to the mandate to recognize universally the freedom of all other humans—results in new impasses in his thought. He encapsulated and elaborated this position in the famous lecture that he gave in October 1945, “Existentialism Is a Humanism”: “Thus, existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest

on him. And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.”¹⁵ The kernel of Sartre’s existential-humanism was, however, already announced in the concluding line of his *Réflexions sur la question juive*: “Not one Frenchman will be free so long as the Jews do not enjoy the fullness of their rights. Not one Frenchman will be secure so long as a single Jew—in France or in the world at large—can fear for his life.”¹⁶ We have already discussed the tensions in Sartre’s position between freedom for the individual, for the collectivity, and for universal humanity in the previous chapter dealing with his *Réflexions*. These antinomies were not only evident in his writing on the Jewish Question, however, but are endemic in the shift from existentialism to a universal humanism, the underlying basis of his existential Marxism.

This becomes clear by the extent to which the oppressed are often situated outside the cycle of exchange between writer and reader in his response to the question “For whom does one write?” His reply is structured by the conflict of interest he poses between the intellectual’s unique responsibility to the French nation and to humanity more generally. His solution connects a universal politics of emancipation to a collective French identity mediated by the role of the intellectual.

While the writer is Sartre’s example of the universal condition that man faces to enact his freedom, he writes for a specific reader, in Sartre’s case, the French reader, “speaking to his contemporaries and brothers of his class and race” (43). In speaking from the rooted perspective of class, race, and nation, the writer must attempt to transcend these limits and strive toward the universal. This battle is not easily won, however, since Sartre painstakingly argues that readers play a crucial role in determining the meaning of a text, which involves a specific cultural milieu, including shared “memories” and “perceptions.” The writer thus appeals to a group of “people of the same period and collectivity, who had lived through the same events, who have raised or avoided the same questions, have the same taste in their mouth; they have the same complicity and there are the same corpses among them” (44). The sameness that Sartre iterates so emphatically is the shared symbolic system and historical experiences of the writer and reader that facilitate the text’s authentic transmission

of meaning. Sartre's example of what can or cannot be shared universally is the difficulty Americans have in understanding the German occupation of France: "If I were to tell an audience of Americans about the German occupation . . . I would waste twenty pages in dispelling preconceptions, prejudices, and legends. . . . If I were to write about the same subject for Frenchmen, we are '*entre nous*'" (44). This *entre nous*, like the *nous* in "La république du silence," expresses Sartre's nationalism and the limits of his theory of *engagement*.

Faced with this dilemma between France and humanity—the particular and the universal, the real and the ideal, the historical and the ontological levels of his analysis—Sartre's first step is to suggest that the engaged writer is able at least to speak for the nation. *Littérature engagée* is the site for enacting national debate, often about the meaning of collective identity. The engaged intellectual is the concrete repository of national values; in short, "he is their conscience" (51). Thus the intellectual's own effort to transcend his situation in the name of the universal becomes the model for the nation, while the nation's own essence becomes incarnate in this struggle.

In the face of these insuperable tensions between the individual, France, and humanity, Sartre positions the writer's *engagement* as the intermediary between the universals of the human situation and the history of the French and as the bridge between history and individual freedom. When able to overcome these differences in the revolution that *littérature engagée* promises, Sartre suggests,

literature would end by becoming conscious of itself; it would understand that form and content, public and subject, are identical, that the formal freedom of saying and the material freedom of doing complete each other, and that one should be used to demand the other, that it best manifests the subjectivity of the person when it translates most deeply collective needs and, reciprocally, that its function is to express the concrete universal to the concrete universal and that its end is to appeal to the freedom of men so that they may realize and maintain the reign of human freedom. (108)

The revelation (of the revolution) that the writer offers resolves all tensions, ends all contradictions, offering as a gift a final synthesis: the end of history in the universal freedom of all humanity. The fulfillment of this revelation depends

on the *intellectuel engagé* as the intermediary between the individual, French culture, and the eternal and universal, a paradox that is unlocked by Sartre's notion of the nation and the national role of the writer. The engaged intellectual writes for France, but through France for all humanity, in a specific situation, but to reveal the conditions of universal liberation.

Sartre's effort to work through these tensions invokes the Jewish prophet Jeremiah as a negative image. He contends that the problem with his prophetic lamentations was that "Jeremiah spoke only to the Jews" (52). Sartre's image of the universal intellectual depends on contrasting itself with this position. He insists that, unlike Jeremiah, the engaged French writer addresses all humanity. He thereby becomes, "*par excellence*, a mediator and his *engagement* is a mediation" (49) between passive reflection and active commitment, *embarquement* and *engagement*, the witness and bearing witness, *exis* and *praxis*. For writing to be the gift of art, the writer must suture the splits and divisions of society at the same time that he must offer society an image of these tensions within itself and offer himself as the model that transcends these divisions.

The tensions that Sartre wrestles with in his effort to articulate the project of universal emancipation once again perambulate around the writer and "the Jew." He gives an example of such a writer, rather haphazardly invoking an Eastern European Jewish writer: "Perhaps he is a Jew, and a Czech, and of peasant family, but he is a Jewish writer, a Czech writer and of rural stock" (49). He then, just as abruptly, uses his own text on the Jewish Question as his example of an authentic *engagement*. He explains why his *Réflexions* is a paradigm of engaged writing: "For there are qualities which come to us solely by means of the judgment of others" (49). His writing on the Jewish Question is an archetype because "the Jew" constitutes a marginal position from which the social whole is revealed. Sartre thus privileges the perspective of the oppressed, and the viewpoint of "the Jew" is his prototype of seeing the world through the critical lens of the Other, a viewpoint that it is the obligation of the intellectual to voice.

As he crystallized his theory of *engagement*, therefore, Sartre used his own reflections on the Jewish Question as his example of engaged prose that self-consciously intervenes in a particular situation in order to mediate the tensions and to reveal the conditions that will help to bring about freedom. The

role of the writer is situated at the interstices between the particular and the universal, France and humanity, the Jew and the non-Jew, history and ontology, the real and the ideal. The development of his theory of *engagement* links his postwar *témoignage* and his image of the Resistance hero. The Resistance writer, willingly risking martyrdom, serves as a prophetic redeemer, authentically responding to the exigencies of society by revealing the oppression in the world and the path to emancipation. In his image of the universal intellectual as the prophet-martyr the particular is sometimes sacrificed to the catholic image of the intellectual as the incarnation of universal redemption. Sartre's passion suggests that freedom is possible through liberation from those who will the unfreedom of the Other, a position that he sees as exemplified by antisemitism, racism, and collaboration.

From Antisemitism to Racial Oppression

Beyond the occasional allusion to his *Réflexions* and his interventions in the Arab-Israeli conflict, discussed at length in the next chapter, Sartre wrote almost no nonfictional prose about the Jewish Question in the period from 1945 to 1962. He did, however, write extremely influential works on colonial oppression and the role of racism in legitimating imperialism that are indebted to the politics of *engagement* concretely worked out in his critique of antisemitism. He maintained that his analysis of antisemitism could be transposed to other forms of racial prejudice. "Replace the Jew with the Black, the antisemite with the supporter of slavery, and there would be nothing essential to be cut from my book [on the Jewish Question]," he claimed.¹⁷ Considering his interventions on the topic of racial and colonial persecution in all their breadth and detail would take us too far astray, but they merit some discussion: first, to show the fecundity to which his writing on the Jewish Question led in other instances of racism; second, as a point of comparison to the central concerns of this study; and third, because they help to establish clear evidence of how the Christian Passion serves as Sartre's model of intellectual *engagement* and why this leads to certain dead ends in his politics.

Akin to what he says about Jews and Judaism, in *What Is Literature?* Sartre spends several pages discussing the African American writer Richard Wright

as exemplary of engaged literature because “he is the man who sees the whites from the outside” and in disclosing the alienation of blacks within the hegemony of white culture reveals the limits of that culture. Indeed, Wright’s contention that “there is no Negro problem in the United States, there is only a white problem” may well have informed the central thesis of Sartre’s *Réflexions* that “it is the antisemite who creates the Jew.”¹⁸ Wright served as a witness to the struggle of blacks and as such has something to teach whites about their own culture that they cannot see without his illuminating mirror: “He is their conscience. And the movement by which he raises himself from the immediate to the reflective recapturing of his condition is that of his whole race.”¹⁹ This “reflective recapturing” in the mirror of critical literature is the sum and substance of engaged writing, and Sartre contends that it is outsiders who best reveal it: “If society sees itself and, in particular, sees itself as *seen*, there is, by virtue of this very fact, a contesting of the established values of the régime” (52). Wright’s writing, in a parallel fashion to Sartre’s analysis of antisemitism, is thus hailed as a critique of white supremacy.

Sartre’s considerations of white supremacy and the racial domination of blacks in the United States and elsewhere in the African diaspora, while they explore directions not taken in his writing on the Jewish Question, especially in their emphasis on the role of the semiotic system in racial oppression, are analogous to his discussion of Jews and Judaism.²⁰ In Sartre’s “*Présence noire*” (Black presence), his preface to the first volume of the newly launched journal *Présence Africaine*, for example, he argues that Africans in Europe, like Jews, are “hostages” of a system of assimilation and are often recognized only as token symbols of its values. Ultimately, they “testify to our civilizing mission,” he asserts.²¹ Much of his writing on colonialism revolves around the same conflict that he characterized for Jews: the struggle with how the dominant culture imposes itself, how this is internalized, and how colonial subjects can liberate themselves within “the hostile language of their colonizers” (29).

Sartre’s Passion for Negritude

Sartre’s “*Orphée noir*” (Black Orpheus), originally published as an introduction to Léopold Sédar Senghor’s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de*

langue française (1948), a key contribution to establishing the negritude (black consciousness) movement, brilliantly dissects the paradoxes of assimilation for cultural minorities and casts light on the centrality of the Passion narrative as an influential model for Sartre's notion of *engagement*. Clearly indicating that the writer of negritude poetry "wants to be both a beacon and a mirror," Sartre opens by connecting the mirror image to the dialectic of the gaze.²² As he emphasized in his analysis of the situation of "the Jew," European domination of Africans has depended upon the ability to objectify others, "the privilege of seeing without being seen" (13). Negritude poetry, however, returns the gaze, forcing white Europeans to see themselves as others see them. In doing so it holds up a mirror to humanity as a whole; as such, negritude poetry is a paragon of *littérature engagée*. Sartre thereby recants on his rejection of poetry in *What Is Literature?*

In "Black Orpheus" he takes the definitive step in the argument that will define his politics in the postwar period: the writer reveals the world from the perspective of the oppressed. The standpoint of "the Jew," the African, the colonized, the woman, and the worker offers a critical lens through which to view the system of subjugation. His discussion of negritude has definite overlaps with his reflections on *judéité* (Jewishness) and discloses more distinctly how the politics of *engagement* works in speaking for the persecuted and marginalized.

The role of the intellectual as the spokesperson for the downtrodden vis-à-vis hegemonic culture is parallel. Sartre's celebration of negritude positions the intellectual as a critic of established values and norms that exclude and repress through the pathologization and exploitation of the subaltern. He is sensitive to the contradictions of French culture, which espouses liberty, equality, and fraternity but ultimately turns colonials in France into token representatives of a civilizing mission and hollow humanism that are often uncivil and inhumane in order to maintain power.

Sartre makes evident the secularized Passion as his model of *engagement*. Like Jesus, who atones for the sins of all humanity through his martyrdom, these black poets struggle to give voice to the consciousness of the black situation and reveal universal truths of the human condition:

To the absurd utilitarian agitation of the white man, the black man opposes the authenticity gained from his suffering; the black race is a chosen race because it has had the horrible privilege of touching the depths of unhappiness. And even though these poems are anti-Christian from beginning to end, one might call negritude a kind of Passion: the black man who is conscious of himself sees himself as the man who has taken the whole of human suffering upon himself and who suffers for all, even for the white man. (41–42)

The role of the intellectual, like that of Christ, is to take the burden of humanity onto his own shoulders. In positing this Sartre treats blacks, like Jews, as chosen outsiders whose mission ultimately reveals the meaning of human existence. This is because the black poet expresses “the inexpressible suffering which is the universal essence of man. . . . [T]he Black man blends with the whole of nature in as much as . . . he claims he is Man in his Passion of rebellious suffering” (42). Drawing from the negritude poets themselves, Sartre constantly uses religious analogies in elaborating his analysis of negritude, calling these poets “prophets” (48), “evangelists” (25), and seekers of the “black grail” (35).²³

While Sartre's essay on negritude helps elucidate the politics of *engagement* and the significance of the Passion narrative to it, there are also homologies in his analysis of blackness and Jewishness. Both are defined by what they oppose: racial oppression and antisemitism. *Négritude* is a critique of the cultural discourses and institutional structures that repress the African in the European world. Since race is intrinsic to their oppression, Sartre is emphatic that blacks must first be made conscious of their race, and, therefore, “anti-racist racism is the only road that will lead to the abolition of racial differences” (18). In a counterpart to his discussion of authentic Jewishness, Sartre states that since the oppression of blacks has depended upon the vilification of blackness, there must first be a moment of pride in being black. There must be a moment of “separation or negativity” (18) where blacks cultivate their authenticity before there can be unity.

White Christian European hegemony is experienced by blacks as a powerful existential alienation, another correspondence to the Jewish experience. This alienation is rooted in the persecution of the black qua black. This demands

the self-questioning of black identity that Sartre describes as an endless struggle of self-interrogation, the abyssal dialectic of authenticity analyzed in *Being and Nothingness* and concretely applied in his *Réflexions*. It is as such that the particularities of the African diaspora struggle reveal the universal ontological conditions of the human situation and liberation. Sartre does emphasize a difference of degree between the alienation of Jews and blacks, for “a Jew—a white man among white men—can deny that he is a Jew, can declare himself a man among men. The Negro cannot deny that he is a Negro, nor can he claim that he is part of some abstract colorless humanity: he is black” (18). While the possibility of assimilation is thus greater for Jews, Sartre argues, as we saw in his *Réflexions*, that it is ultimately doomed to failure. In a fashion not dissimilar to what Sartre described for Jews, blacks, repressed by European culture, develop what the American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois called “double-consciousness” and what Sartre describes as the split consciousness of their “double exile” (20).²⁴ Exiles from Africa, they are exiled within Europe.

Having discussed what negritude opposes and why (the alienation of blacks as a result of white supremacy, which parallels Sartre's long section on anti-semitism as rooted in fear of the human condition), Sartre moves on to discussing what negritude is in the same way that he discusses Jewishness as an aftereffect of the struggle against the antisemite's image of “the Jew.” Here, he engages in a prescient critique of how blackness is figured within the semiotic system of the West that prefigures much deconstructive and postcolonial work. Since he is writing about black Francophone poets, he argues that these diaspora writers are forced to use the oppressor's language for their resistance, thereby utilizing the master's tools to dismantle his house.

Sartre argues that because their critique happens in language, negritude poets are destined to reestablish “the hierarchy they have just upset” (27). But just as he did in his writing on Jewishness, Sartre contributes to this reestablishment by unproblematically accepting stereotypical conceptions of blackness and Africa. As Stuart Zane Charmé acutely puts it, “Repeating the same strategy that had produced *Antisemite and Jew*, Sartre remained on the level of myth or symbol rather than history. Like the Jew, the black's primary mythic function was to embody simultaneously the victimization by, and the negation of,

white European culture and the colonialism it supported.”²⁵ Sartre's depiction of blackness as the negation of white supremacy serves to destabilize white, European, bourgeois hegemony.

In the process, however, he reinscribes typological constructions of blackness that figure for him the negativity of European values. He thus identifies “the black” with primitivism, and he resorts to images of blacks as natural man and unchaste woman whose identification with nature and eros has a liberatory function not only for blacks but for repressed Europeans. The blacks’ “wild and free looks that judge our world” (14) plunge “man back into the seething breast of Nature” (31). Blacks have “timeless instincts, a simple manifestation of universal and eternal fecundity” (46). Sartre's identification of blacks with nature, sexuality, a phallic order, instinct, creation, and rhythm is justified by him as a necessary stage within “Universal History.”

Franz Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952) sharply criticized Sartre for failing to condemn these hackneyed images. As I have suggested of Sartre's *Réflexions*, Fanon blames the effacing of what he calls “the fact of blackness” on Sartre's dialectic, with its totalizing and universalizing logic that Fanon construes as the foundational problem in Sartre's writing on behalf of the black Other.²⁶ The historical specificity of the Other, “the fact of blackness,” is sacrificed to a mythological and ahistorical depiction within the logic of Sartre's dialectic.

Sartre's reiteration of these stereotypes should give us pause about the dialectic of universal liberation as he conceives it, which is ultimately the result of its Christologocentrism. He outlines a clear “dialectical progression”: “The theoretical and practical affirmation of white supremacy is the thesis; the position of Negritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity. . . . [I]t aims at preparing the synthesis or realization of the human being in a raceless society” (49). This is directly congruent with the dialectic of antisemite and Jew. As was the case with Jewishness, “Negritude—like liberty—is a point of departure and an ultimate goal” (29).

With this as axiomatic, the logic of the *Passion* becomes clear. Black suffering held up in the mirror of negritude poetry reveals that “suffering is man's lot” (45). However, “suffering carries within itself its own refusal,” which will

lead to the negation of oppression and eventually to “revolt and liberty” (46). As was the case for authentic Jews, the “redemption” signaled by negritude poets “resembles that of the white God after the Passion” (45), since it requires that blacks accept martyrdom in exchange for rebirth. Says Sartre, “the black man must therefore find death in white culture in order to be reborn with a black soul,” to embrace “death in order to be born in truth” (29).

Sartre thus reads the liberation narrative, the “black Epic,” in Christological terms. As was the case with the revolution as the solution to the Jewish Question, the redemption that Sartre offers the martyr-prophets of negritude who seek to raise black consciousness is the disappearance of their black identity in the “universality” of a postrevolutionary future utopia. In the process, as Fanon suggests, Sartre’s universalization of the black experience homogenizes, standardizes, and normalizes the racialized other, reiterating the core gesture of racism by sacrificing embodied suffering to its universal significance.

“Black Orpheus” is thus a transposition of Sartre’s analysis of antisemitism in his *Réflexions* to the broader conditions of racial oppression. The form of the analysis is congruent: a radical critique of white Aryan superiority and an examination of the subjectivity of minorities in the struggle to assert their freedom and agency in opposition to European cultural domination. As was the case with his *Réflexions*, Sartre’s universality, like the longer Greco-Roman-Christian-Enlightenment tradition of which it is a part, ultimately excludes cultural difference and particularity. Both Jewishness and blackness must be sacrificed in the martyrology of the revolution that will finally redeem the world.

The Colonizer and the Colonized

Sartre’s subsequent writing on the role of racial oppression was part and parcel of his intransigent anticolonialist stance. Let us take two outstanding examples to show that a corresponding logic from his *Réflexions* would underpin his later interventions as well. In his preface to Albert Memmi’s classic analysis *Portrait du colonisé précédé du colonisateur* (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 1957), for example, he praises Memmi’s inquiry, which is clearly modeled on Sartre’s dialectic of the gaze. Memmi’s existential premises concerning freedom and authenticity in a specific situation are derived from Sartrean precepts. The form

of Sartre's *Réflexions* is also foundational for the two portraits Memmi draws: the colonizer is not unlike the portrait of the antisemite, and the situation of the colonized overlaps with Sartre's portrait of the Jewish situation.

Sartre endorses Memmi's position in precisely the terms that define the politics of *engagement*. He assents to Memmi's claim that as a Tunisian Jew he has unique insight into the colonial situation because he belongs neither to the dominant French group as a result of his Jewishness nor to the dominated Muslim Arab group because he has assimilated French culture through his education. The result, according to Sartre, is that Memmi lives "in a constant state of uneasiness," since he has experienced "a twofold rejection," and thus he understands the situation because it is his lived contradiction.²⁷ Since Memmi suffers these tensions, he "can enlighten others through his self-examination. . . . [H]e represents no one, but since he is everyone at once, he will prove to be the best of witnesses" (xxii).

Sartre is nevertheless critical of Memmi's subtle psychological depiction of the dynamic relationship within colonization and how this results in the interiorization of colonial hegemony. "The whole difference between us arises," Sartre asserts, "because he sees a situation where I see a system" (xxv). The shift in emphasis from the situation to the system reflects Sartre's own subsuming of his existential analysis within a Marxist framework. This carries over into his understanding of racism, for he now claims that "racism is ingrained in action, institutions, and in the nature of the colonialist methods of production and exchange" (xxiv). Racism serves to dehumanize colonial subjects so that human rights and equality need not be extended to them. The notion of the institutionalization of racism and its imbrication in the system of production and exchange goes beyond the terms of his earlier reflections on antisemitism. Sartre's critique of Memmi indicates the difference between Memmi's existential-humanist as opposed to Sartre's now Marxist analysis of colonialism.

The Wretched of the Earth

Sartre's analysis of colonialism reached a Manichaeian crescendo with his preface to Franz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961). Once again he deployed the set strategies articulated in his concrete analysis of ra-

cial oppression and resistance that I have traced from his *Réflexions*. The short introduction applauds Fanon's call for a revolutionary uprising of the Third World against Western culture in order to discover its authentic voice through revolutionary violence, which in turn reveals the inherent meaning of human history: the struggle for liberation. Sartre's piece has a similar organization to *What Is Literature?* answering the questions, Who writes? For whom? And in whose interest? The camps of the opposing forces in the apocalyptic scene that Sartre draws this time are not determined by the dialectics of the gaze but by the struggle for the power of expression, between colonizers who had "the Word" and the colonized, like Fanon, who have seized it.²⁸ Colonization is the process of instilling Western culture and Western values into the mouths of an elite; decolonization begins when the very conception of classical humanism is used to show the inhumanity of Western civilization.

Sartre heralds a new generation of anticolonialist writers and poets who express the contradictions of colonialism by showing that European moral principles and codes of conduct and the material lives of colonized peoples "did not hang together, and that they could neither reject them completely nor yet assimilate them" (8). Like the negritude poets, Fanon bends "language to new requirements, makes use of it, and speaks to the colonized only," serving as mediator and martyr-prophet so that the Third World "finds itself and speaks to itself through its voice" (10). Europeans should read the book because it explains how we are "estranged from ourselves," since in defining the non-European, Europeans do not only alienate and subjugate others: "It is enough that they show us what we have made of them for us to realize what we have made of ourselves" (13). A central element of this, Sartre contends, is "racist humanism," since "the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters" (26). The dehumanization and ostracism of racialized others is part and parcel of the creation of European hegemony and its hollow humanism.

Fanon's expression of the liberation struggle of the colonized is able "to bring the process of history into the clear light of day" (14) because he holds up a mirror that shows how the West has shaped the rest of the modern world. Fanon's advocacy of violence is merely the return of the repressed violence of colonial-

ism deflected back upon the West, “as when our reflection comes forward to meet us when we go toward a mirror” (17). The trope of the mirror image is re-worked to reveal the dialectic of history: “We only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made us” (17).

This is the key premise that animates the Sartrean dialectic of authenticity first applied concretely in his *Réflexions*. It discloses the primary axiom that Sartre’s existentialism shares with Marxism encapsulated in Marx’s comment in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* that “men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.”²⁹ Sartre’s preface to Fanon is the culmination of a strategy he developed in the postwar period and advocated through the early 1960s that consistently urged Europeans to encounter themselves in their opposition to antisemitism and racism and to support decolonization, for “we in Europe too are being decolonized” (24). The preface to Fanon emphasizes the apocalyptic moment at “the end of the dialectic” (30), when Sartre urges Europeans to “stand in judgment” (31) of themselves and side with the revolution that will bring about the final liberation of all humanity.

The Cold War and the Heat of Polemics

Sartre’s transpositions and transformations of his writings on the Jewish Question to situations of racial and colonial oppression were marked by two intersecting contexts: first, the cold war, including the show trials of the late 1940s, revelations about the labor camps in the Soviet Union, especially during the Kravchenko affair, the Communist Party’s stance on Tito and Yugoslavia, the Korean War, the execution of the Rosenbergs, and the invasion of Hungary in 1956; second, decolonization movements, especially in French Indochina, the Algerian War, the Cuban Revolution, and the American war in Vietnam.

We have seen the importance of his *Réflexions* as a model for Sartre’s interventions in situations of racial oppression and colonialism. The historical and philosophical problems raised by Nazism and the Holocaust would also inform his political theory and practical interventions in the cold war. His first direct incursions into mass politics took place in 1948 and 1949, when he was part of

a group of nonaligned leftist intellectuals who attempted to forge a third way between the inequities of capitalism and the oppression of Stalinism. Along with founders Georges Altman, Jean Rous, Gérard Rosenthal, and ex-Trotskyist David Rousset, the author of *L'univers concentrationnaire*, Sartre was one of the central figures identified with the Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire (RDR). Along with Sartre, Albert Camus, André Breton, and Richard Wright headlined their large public rallies.

The founding statement for the movement indicates how the historical experience of National Socialism helped to define the outlook of the leaders of the RDR: "Survivors of hell, escapees from the Resistance, and militants, sympathizers, or fellow-travelers in the great movements demanding social liberation, we think the world has paid dearly enough for its deliverance from nazism to look for its salvation—now that it is safe from the greatest attempt to enslave ever known to history—in nothing less than the respect for and assurance of the rights of man and freedom. . . . Through the liberation from nazism, the democratic freedoms have proven irreplaceable."³⁰ Sartre's advocacy of a third path that was revolutionary and socialist in opposition to U.S. economic and political domination and that was democratic and independent in contrast to the PCF and Stalinism ultimately failed.³¹ The RDR could not uphold its initial momentum because it was assailed by both the Left and the Right and failed to recruit enough members to sustain the movement financially. But the experience of the Nazis and their concentration and extermination gulag was one factor in hindering Sartre's adherence to the PCF in the early years of the cold war.³² He abandoned his involvement with the RDR when he felt that the group was veering toward alignment with U.S. interests.

By early 1950 Korea, Indochina, McCarthyism, and the arrest of Jacques Duclos, second-in-command of the PCF, made a neutral position more untenable for Sartre.³³ He became a firmly committed fellow traveler of the Communist Party after the Ridgeway riots in May 1952. These resulted from the hostility to Gen. Matthew Ridgeway, the embodiment of U.S. militarism as the former head of command in Korea, who visited Paris en route to taking over command of NATO. His trip led to riots spurred by the PCF, resulting in Duclos being jailed. In response, Sartre was provoked to write *Les communistes et la paix* (*The Commu-*

nists and Peace) and "Réponse à Camus," articulating his reasons for now aligning with the PCF. This association would result in his refusal to criticize the party or the Soviet Union until the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, which he strongly denounced, leading him to break with the PCF.

Sartre's vacillations and his effort to forge a third way in the heated polemics of the cold war before his affiliation with the PCF in 1952 were never evident in his stance on decolonization, which was absolute and unequivocal. As early as December 1946, in an editorial in *Les Temps Modernes* by Jean Pouillon entitled "Et bourreaux et victimes . . ." (Both Executioners and Victims . . .), the review as a whole took a strong anticolonial stance. "The editorial provoked a furor," David Drake notes, "by drawing an explicit parallel between the German Occupation of France and French involvement in Indochina, and called unambiguously for a withdrawal of French troops."³⁴ Sartre's definitive support of the colonized against the colonizer was also apparent in his writing on negritude in 1948. His first close work with the PCF came in 1951, when he joined the Communist-led campaign to free Henri Martin, a Communist sailor who was imprisoned for disbursing leaflets denouncing French involvement in Indochina.

He was one of the earliest critics of the French war in Algeria, making his first explicit critique at a rally "for peace in Algeria" organized by the Comité d'action contre la poursuite de la guerre en Afrique du Nord (Action Committee against the War in North Africa) on January 27, 1956, and published as "Le colonialisme est un système."³⁵ Articulating here what he would reiterate in his preface to Memmi's book, he argued that since exploitation was intrinsic to the colonial system it could not be reformed but needed to be smashed.

When Gen. Jacques Massu was given full police power to destroy the terrorist networks in Algeria in 1957, thus beginning the Battle of Algiers, repeated scandals concerning the use of terror and torture in the Franco-Algerian War resulted in a shift in the tide of opposition to continuing the war. This was unmistakable when Raymond Aron, who in 1956 signed a manifesto in support of *Algérie française*, published *La tragédie algérienne*, which advocated Algerian independence.³⁶ By 1958 the war in Algeria had destabilized the Third Republic. Sartre was deeply disillusioned by the Left's failure to deal with Algeria.

His dismay peaked with the popularity of General de Gaulle's assumption of office in June with unlimited powers for six months and a mandate to revise the constitution. By 1959 Sartre had shifted from advocating peaceful decolonization to unbridled support of the Front de libération nationale (FLN). He was one of the first signatories of the manifesto of 121 intellectuals who supported the "Declaration of the Right of Insubordination in the Algerian War" in 1960. The failure of the French to embrace the aims of the FLN led to the radicalization of Sartre's position, apparent in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. His intransigence led to him being personally targeted by the Organisation armée secrète (OAS), an organization of military officers and *pied-noir* (a French colonial born in Algeria) extremists, formed in 1961 to use terror tactics to bring down the regime that was ending French Algeria. They bombed the offices of *Les Temps Modernes* on May 13, 1961, and Sartre's apartment on rue Bonaparte in Saint-Germain-des-Prés on two occasions: July 19, 1961, and January 7, 1962.

Existential Marxism and the Jewish Question

In the wake of his political interventions in the key struggles of the cold war and decolonization, Sartre began to reexamine the theoretical foundations of his thought, specifically, the relations between the individual, society, and history. Asked to write an article entitled "The Situation of Existentialism in 1957" for a Polish review, he contributed an essay that he would eventually elaborate as *Search for a Method*, his epistemological preamble to his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. His prologue repeatedly reiterated that "Marxism is . . . the philosophy of our time." He defined what was philosophical not as ahistorical speculation but as a "mirror [that] must be presented as the totalization of contemporary Knowledge."³⁷

Marxism offered the best method for comprehending the present, but it needed to be resuscitated from the stultifying dogmatism of Stalinism or any reductive, deterministic, mechanistic economism. This would be accomplished by reintroducing the individual within the dialectic in order to understand simultaneously how the world makes humans and how humans make their world. However, existentialism too must be rethought within the frame of Marxism,

since the “‘analysis’ of a situation,” he argued, “is not enough,” for “it is but the first moment in an effort at synthetic reconstruction” (27). What was required was a more sophisticated understanding of the mediations between economic determinations and concrete action, with the family serving the mediating role, and where social context and class position are constitutive factors of individual development (30-31).³⁸

This reorientation in Sartre's thought, Rhiannon Goldthorpe persuasively maintains, occasioned a shift from an emphasis on *engagement* toward the notion of *compréhension* as the basis for Sartre's synthetic thinking. She traces the concept of *compréhension* to Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics, which sought “to understand social, psychological, and historical phenomena in terms of distinctly human intentions and meanings, grasped as synthetic wholes and apprehended either through empathy and intuition or by rational reconstruction.”³⁹ Like Dilthey, who sought to formulate a “critique of historical reason” in order to understand “objective mind,” Sartre wanted a theory that would account for the relative autonomy of institutions, customs, the state, the law, ideology, religion, language, art, and philosophy.⁴⁰ He sought to show how these in turn were mediated to the individual through the family.

This effort to forge a “structural, historical anthropology” in order to determine the meaning and purpose of human history and simultaneously provide an axiology for individual choices would be worked out concretely in Sartre's screenplay for the John Huston film on Freud and in his last dramatic work, *Les séquestrés d'Altona* (*The Condemned of Altona*). Both of these productions crucially concerned the Jewish Question. Therefore, as Sartre began to reformulate the theoretical underpinnings of his politics of *engagement* in light of Marxism, we once again see that Jews and the Jewish Question served as the foil for his reflections on the foundations of his politics.

Sartre's Freud

Sartre's screenplay for John Huston was written in three versions between 1958 and 1960. This was an immensely difficult period for him, since he was suffering from medical, personal, professional, theoretical, and political problems.⁴¹ Beauvoir called 1958 an “intolerable year,” the worst of Sartre's life.⁴² The Al-

gerian conflict almost led to civil war, de Gaulle's ascent to power resulted in the complete defeat of the Left, Sartre was levied a huge tax assessment that severely strained his financial situation, and he was consuming massive quantities of corydrane, an amphetamine, to help him finish writing the *Critique*, almost triggering a fatal heart attack.

In May Huston, who had staged *No Exit* on Broadway in 1946 and had already directed the classics *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), offered Sartre a lucrative contract of \$25,000 for a draft of a screenplay focused on the period of Freud's seminal psychoanalytic discoveries. Using his earlier reading of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Sartre plunged into Freud's case histories, the volume on *The Origins of Psychoanalysis* that contain Freud's letters to Wilhelm Fliess, and especially the first volume of Ernest Jones's biography of Freud, which had just appeared in French translation a year earlier. His ninety-five-page typewritten synopsis was accepted by Huston at the end of 1958. A year later he submitted the complete massive manuscript, long enough for a five-hour motion picture. To discuss appropriate cuts, he flew to Huston's estate at Saint Clerans, Ireland, where they spent ten days together. The encounter was a model of personal and cultural misunderstanding. Sartre would write to Beauvoir about Huston that "he refuses to think because it saddens him." Meanwhile, Huston considered Sartre a thinking machine, no doubt wired on speed, writing about their meeting that Sartre "made notes—of his own words—as he talked. There was no such thing as a conversation with him; he talked incessantly, and there was no interrupting him. . . . Everyone's face had a glazed look."⁴³ Sartre returned to Huston his second version, an even longer, eight hundred-page typescript, resulting in Huston eventually completing *Freud: The Secret Passion* without Sartre, who even withdrew his name from the credits when it was released as a box-office bomb in 1962 starring Montgomery Clift and Susannah York. The various versions of Sartre's screenplay would be posthumously published in 1984, edited by J.-B. Pontalis and entitled by him *Le scénario Freud* (*The Freud Scenario*).⁴⁴

Sartre clearly has a transference relationship with Freud, who is depicted as a "brother-in-arms, an adventurer, struggling against a hostile establishment and 'thinking against himself.'"⁴⁵ The plotline depicts the main events of the

fifteen early years from September 1885 to Freud's major psychoanalytic breakthroughs: his tutelage under Brücke, Meynert, and Breuer; his life as a Jew in fin-de-siècle Vienna; his break with the medical establishment when he goes to Paris to hear Charcot's lectures on hysteria; his marriage to Martha Bernays and the birth of their children; his impoverished beginnings as a practitioner; his formulation under the influence of Fliess of the "seduction theory" and repression, which argued that neuroses are the results of real childhood experiences of sexual abuse; his understanding of the transference between patient and analysand; and his final crisis involving the death of his father, his subsequent self-analysis, his abandonment of the seduction theory, and his formulation of the Oedipus complex.

The plot is organized around Freud's search for a project to give meaning to his situation, which is clearly mediated by his family and class position. Sartre emphasized Freud's father's financial difficulties in the garment industry, the prevailing positivist medical and psychiatric institutions, and the social values of Viennese society, especially antisemitism.⁴⁶ The social mediations that Sartre highlighted in the *Critique* were thus specifically included as shaping influences for his portrait of Freud.

As Pontalis points out in his introduction, Sartre aimed at a "totalizing perspective," weaving together several strands of Freud's life "to make intelligible at one and the same time the Jewish Freud and the bourgeois Freud, Freud-the-son and Freud/Fliess, Freud the neurologist and Freud the 'neurotic,' Freud the civilizer and Freud the driven, the Freud of fin-de-siècle Vienna and the Freud without frontiers."⁴⁷ These are given unity by Sartre's focus on the leitmotif of Freud's own work, the relation to the father image, which in accord with Jacques Lacan's approach is developed by Sartre as a symbolic relationship to authority and cultural systems. This thematic focus is, in turn, given coherence in Sartre's account by the prominent emphasis he places on Freud's struggle against antisemitism that becomes cathected in his development of psychoanalysis.

If Sartre's larger project in the *Critique* was to work out the mediating influences between the individual and collectivities in history and if Freud was written coterminously with this theoretical work, then within it antisemitism serves as the window into Freud's life from a social perspective. When Sartre

was asked by Kenneth Tynan in a 1961 interview about whether one can “deal with Freud’s life from a social viewpoint” he answered, “We have tried. There is one great problem that analysts tend to sidetrack: Viennese antisemitism. It seems to me that Freud was profoundly aggressive, and that his aggression was determined by the antisemitism from which his family suffered.”⁴⁸

Several scenes indicate that Freud’s battle with antisemitism is a key to understanding Sartre’s representation of Freud. In an early moment set around the Ringstrasse Freud encounters street vendors selling antisemitic literature. His sense of the antisemitic sentiments of the Gentiles around him is pervasive and foreboding: “When the time comes, they’ll hunt us down mercilessly and cut our throats. If we allow them to do so,” he warns his fiancée, Martha (32). This last phrase is crucial not only because it indicates Freud’s cognizance of his perception qua “Jew” by Viennese Gentile society but because it shows that his desire as an authentic Jew is to overcome antisemitic prejudice. This is what drives him to excel, to push beyond the taboos of his society. Afterward, Martha and Freud return to the Jewish section of Vienna, a “poor neighborhood” that is “a kind of ghetto” with numerous Jews in front of Jewish shops indicated by “inscriptions in Yiddish” (32). There Freud tells her the story of how as a child he “used to call the goys Romans; we, the Jews, were Carthaginians. There was a picture in a prize-book. I tore it out of the book and kept it. Hamilcar, the great man of Carthage, was making his son Hannibal swear to wreak vengeance upon Rome” (32).

Freud idealizes himself as Hannibal and his father as Hamilcar. Martha questions the parallel because Freud’s father was “the most gentle of men,” but Freud insists, nevertheless, that his father wanted him to avenge the Jews through his career in medicine. Sartre depicts Freud throughout the screenplay putting up the portrait of Hannibal/Hamilcar and taking it down during the various ebbs and flows in his career. It is a symbolic measure of his willingness, in David James Fisher’s words, to “counter, and ultimately transcend the vicious antisemitic stereotypes and racial practices pervading the socio-economic, cultural, professional, and psychic atmosphere of end-of-the-century Vienna, including the attitudes of many Jews towards themselves.”⁴⁹ The *point de capiton* of Sartre’s *Freud* is the portrait of Hannibal/Hamilcar, which serves as a

symbolic displacement of Freud's relationship with his father and with the multiple surrogate father figures in his life that frame the plot—Brücke, Meynert, Charcot, Breuer, Fliess, ur-father of the Oedipus complex, Moses, the Law of God-the-Father.⁵⁰ Freud's Jewishness and his response to antisemitism are intrinsically interwoven around the master signifier of the work.

Sartre returns to Freud's struggle against racial degradation and his identification with his Jewishness in a Gentile world at every crucial stage in Freud's early life. When he returns from Paris, having moved beyond Charcot's insights about male hysteria with his own notion of autosuggestion, Freud is reviled at his first major lecture at the Vienna Medical Society in October 1886. As the doctors leave the amphitheater they castigate Freud, pointing to his ideas as symptomatic of his Jewishness, which is also the cause of his arrogance, evident in his attempt to instruct his mentors, who are themselves father figures (79). When Freud unveils the ideas from his *Studies on Hysteria* to the same medical society ten years later, he will again be berated and leave the amphitheater to a chorus of "Dirty Jew! Dirty Jew! Filthy Yid! Back to the ghetto! Back to the ghetto!" (321).

Antisemitism is emblematic throughout the screenplay of more than a specific set of attitudes about Jews, however. It is a social code, an assemblage of habits that have an institutional and systemic basis, depicted primarily in Freud's relationship to the medical establishment, that are transmuted to the individual through the family. Antisemitism is a shortcut for Sartre to broach the concrete enactment in Freud's life of the complex theoretical matrix that Sartre was working out in the *Critique* to understand the relationship between individuals, society, and history and the ways the world makes us and we make the world.

Sartre's screenplay suggests that Freud removed the skin of colonization and assimilation in steadfastly defining himself in relation to his Jewishness.⁵¹ Sartre's Freud, through his self-analysis, attenuated by his awareness of his social position, transforms his outcast and marginal subjectivity into a site of contestation and struggle. Roman/Gentile culture, which made his father weak and feeble, must be wounded, castrated, and circumcised by adhesion to the Law of the Father that Freud's discovery of Oedipus universalizes.⁵²

The Oedipus complex thereby called the whole system of Western rationalism, the link between enlightenment and progress, and the pathologization of sexual difference through positivist medical and scientific discourse into question. Fisher argues that Sartre's *Freud* makes several important contributions as an original interpretation of Freud. It extends Sartre's earlier reflections on the Jewish Question by emphasizing within the Viennese context the role of antisemitism in defining social roles. It depicts the inherent alienation between antisemite and Jew, physician and patient, and father and son and suggests that "the intersubjective aspects of the analytic dyad . . . [establishes] reciprocal attachments, mutual responsibility, emotional echoes, co-created meanings, and a shared sense of process, purpose, goal and insight."⁵³ As such, psychoanalysis is both a means of analyzing the mediations between individual and society and, as a dialogic process, a microcosm of the nonalienating relationship that Sartre argues for in his discussion of the group-in-fusion in the *Critique*.⁵⁴

The Condemned of Altona: Collaborators and Collective Responsibility

Along with *The Freud Scenario*, the other major creative work that Sartre developed while writing his *Critique* was *Les séquestrés d'Altona*. It once again reveals the importance of the Jewish Question for Sartre's reflections on the underlying principles of his politics. Sartre began writing the play in Rome in the summer of 1958. It was interrupted by his near heart attack in October and completed in 1959, just before he finished the *Critique*. First performed at the Théâtre de la Renaissance on September 24, 1959, it is Sartre's most sustained meditation on the culpability of collaborators in the Holocaust, as opposed to its victims, his focus in his *Réflexions*. The Final Solution to the Jewish Question here serves as Sartre's screen for the more general interrogation of individual conformity with regimes that perpetrate systemic violence. *The Condemned of Altona* examines "the contradiction between the industrial might, the hereditary title, the past, the culture of these people, and their collaboration with the Nazis they scorn. They think against and act for. . . . [It] present[s] clearly the problem of collusion, which is essential if you want to understand man."⁵⁵

The play was written in the context of Sartre's denunciation of torture and terror tactics during the Franco-Algerian War, when aggression against the civilian population—searches, torture, concentrations camps, and summary executions—were part of the French strategy to quell the independence struggle. He had already raised the matter in his preface to Henri Alleg's *La question*, an exposé by a Communist *pied-noir* journalist who was arrested and tortured in 1957 by the French army. In accord with government policy at the time, both Sartre's preface and the book were suppressed in France in 1958. As the anti-colonial struggle gathered momentum among intellectuals, many now drew the analogy between the situation of the French under the German occupation, with the French now as occupiers and the Algerians in the position of the Resistance.⁵⁶ Drawing upon the analogy, Sartre sought to raise the question obliquely in *The Condemned of Altona* by focusing on Franz (France?), a German officer, maddened by his effort to come to terms with his use of torture and other crimes, as well as his personal inability to change the course of history by doing what he knows is right in an individual situation. The figure of Franz also raises the underexplored problem of perpetrator trauma.

The drama presents the dilemmas of the von Gerlachs, a family of wealthy industrialist shipbuilders who do not support Nazism but who benefit from their economic collaboration with the regime. Set in Altona, an industrial suburb of Hamburg, the play takes place entirely in the home of the family patriarch, referred to only as "the Father."⁵⁷ He has summoned his family to inform them that he is dying of cancer. The drama unfolds because the Father wants to reconcile with his son Franz before he dies. The play operates on at least three intertwined levels: first, it interrogates the interpersonal relations of the family members; second, it deals with personal guilt and responsibility for the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust as part of a wider German collective accountability; and third, it considers the interconnection between the modes of reproduction operating in the family and the mode of industrial production.

Franz, the original scion of the family fiefdom, was, like Lucien in "The Childhood of a Leader," raised in the image of his father to rule over others and the family business. Two key events and Franz's response to them reveal why

he cannot, unlike Lucien, accept his socially scripted role. These in turn ripple through the three registers of the play. We learn in the course of the plot that in 1941 the Father, who found the Nazis brutal and uncouth, nevertheless sold them property that is used to build a concentration camp, doing so in order to maintain good relations with the authorities upon whom his shipbuilding business depended. Franz's idealism led him to hide a Polish rabbi attempting to escape from the camp, an act Franz thought would redeem the Father he loves and admires. Fearing that his chauffeur, a Nazi sympathizer, would report Franz's "crime," the Father telephoned Joseph Goebbels, the minister of information and propaganda, pleading clemency for both the rabbi and his son. The result, however, is that only Franz is saved on condition that he enlist, while the rabbi's throat is promptly slit by the SS in Franz's room. The second event that shapes Franz takes place in 1944 on the Eastern Front, where his unit is cut off by partisans. Two prisoners have information that may lead to his men's deliverance. Franz decides to torture the prisoners, who die without disclosing their secrets, and his unit is massacred. After listening to the proceedings of the Nuremberg trials, cognizant that he too is a perpetrator of atrocities while aware that he was merely a cog in the machinery of destruction, Franz voluntarily sequestered himself in the attic in the family home. There, in a quasi-delirious state, he serves as a perpetual witness to Nazi horrors and the brutality of the twentieth century, constantly serving to remind the family of their responsibility even as they have become an industrial power in the rebuilding of the German Democratic Republic. The play thus powerfully enacts the contradictions of accommodators, who are at once victims of historical processes they are powerless to control and condemned to responsibility for their actions and for the significance of the traumatic past.

To appreciate the inexorable ethical dilemmas that Sartre portrays it is important to understand that the Father's denunciation of Franz was neither cruel nor unethical. It is not as himself but as Other to himself (i.e., as CEO of his business and as "the Father") that he calls Goebbels. He is not a Nazi sympathizer but a member of the upper middle classes, where his money, culture, and humanism all predispose him to think of the Nazis as plebeian and of Nazi violence as criminal. However, his corporation also has interests, and these correspond

to those of the Nazi war machine, and as the Father he sought the well-being of his son before the welfare of the Polish rabbi. The Father thought that by calling Goebbels he could save his business, his son, and "the Jew," but his call destroyed his relationship with his son and killed "the Jew."

The Father's choices resulted in the opposite of his desires: he created what he did not want, and he did not want what he created. In dialogue with Franz the Father is lucid about the way the structural forces of history negated his good intentions, with the tragic results experienced as lived reality by the family: "My poor boy! I wanted you to run the firm after me. But it does the running. It chooses its own men. It has got rid of me. I own it, but I no longer run it."⁵⁸ The process described here is true not only of the von Gerlachs but of German society as a whole, which has emerged as the economic superpower of Europe despite its defeat in World War II.

The Condemned of Altona brilliantly weaves the complicated interconnections of the *Critique's* analysis of "serial alterity" into the drama of the von Gerlach family.⁵⁹ Every character's fortune in *The Condemned of Altona* is bound to the Father, who represents a social relation as much as an individual.⁶⁰ The children call him "Old Hindenburg," after the soldier and statesman who as president of the Weimar Republic appointed Hitler chancellor in 1933. "Old Hindenburg" no longer controls the events that shape him, like the cancer that has taken over his body and that will seal his destiny. He stands in for Sartre's abstract discussion in book 1 of the *Critique* of the process from "Individual Praxis to the Practico-Inert."⁶¹ Sartre argues in the *Critique* that human labor organized to achieve an end (praxis) creates a product (practico-inert) that not only is alienated from its producer but that modifies and ultimately defines the meaning of the producer rather than the other way around. Sartre calls this "alterity," a reformulation of Marx's description of the fetishism of the commodity, where humans have the quality of things and things of people.⁶² In the microcosmic society that makes up *The Condemned of Altona* the family firm represents the logic of the practico-inert: having resulted from the work of the Father to support and sustain the family, the firm ultimately imprisons them.

The characters consequently live within the family system, the microcosm of society, in a negative, antagonistic, nonreciprocal relationship to one another

that Sartre calls “serial alterity.” Their mutual interdependence only exacerbates their isolation and atomization. The morality of bourgeois individualism by which they pursue their own ends leads to their solitary confinement and the failure of reciprocal recognition. Their good intentions are the path to hell, which is now depicted by Sartre in more complex terms than in *No Exit* through a more acute assessment of the historical mediations that render our individual acts powerless when we fail to comprehend the social system in which we live and whose inner workings Sartre’s *Critique* seeks to describe.

In appreciating how artfully Sartre concretizes his analysis from the *Critique* in the drama of *The Condemned of Altona* it is important to emphasize that he returns to World War II, to accommodation, and to the Jewish Question as the historical situation to represent his analysis of collaboration. War, and specifically the war against the Jews, is the ultimate situation of social alterity, with its absurd violence, crimes, destruction, and terror. No one wants what results from war, and no one assumes individual responsibility for the horrific acts done in the name of the collectivity. Thus, in a parallel fashion to how Sartre’s *Réflexions* applied the terms of *Being and Nothingness* to the concrete situation of Jews, *The Condemned of Altona* applies Sartre’s existential Marxism to an analysis of World War II and the assault on the Jews, even as this serves as a screen on which to enact the wider problem of collusion with regimes that employ systemic violence.

In the denouement of the play the ideal of heroic martyrdom at the heart of Sartre’s politics of *engagement* is once more instantiated, this time, however, with a profound ambiguity on Sartre’s part, indicating a critique of his earlier position in the shift from *engagement* to *compréhension*. Franz, we have seen, is the Son created in the image of the Father who declares to the Father, “You and I are one,” and who seeks to atone for his sins by rescuing “the Jew.”⁶³ When he finally decides that he will meet the Father again he reenacts a demented Last Supper, performing his “communion” with cake and champagne, replacing the bread and wine, before they meet. In their final encounter each takes responsibility for his past: the Father acknowledges that the real legacy of his shipbuilding enterprise is not a stable future for his family but results in their destruction. And Franz acknowledges that he alone is ultimately responsible

for his own crimes committed during the war. They decide upon a double suicide in a car, a symbol of industrial modernization, which is supposed to result in Franz's reconciliation with the Father.⁶⁴ The play concludes with Franz handing his sister a tape recording that he has made as testimony for his trial before a tribunal of crabs, who will stand in judgment of humanity. The tape is played as the final monologue encapsulating the play. It ends, "I, Franz von Gerlach, here in this room, have taken the century upon my shoulders and have said: 'I will answer for it. This day and forever'" (177-78). Having faced his trial and chosen his martyrdom, Franz is redeemed because he takes the sins of humanity upon himself. His Christologocentric gesture is profoundly ambivalent, however.

Franz's martyrdom bears witness to universal emancipation by demanding that each individual understand the interconnection of his or her choices with all others, following Sartre's claim in "Existentialism Is a Humanism" that our choice to take responsibility for our individual situations becomes a choice that liberates all humanity. As such, Franz serves as a martyr-witness who enables the audience or reader to take responsibility for History. Sartre hoped that the audience of *The Condemned of Altona* would have this reaction not only about themselves but about the whole century: "I'd like the audience to see that strange thing, our century, from the outside, as a witness. And at the same time I'd like it to take part in it, because it is creating this century. Besides, there's something special about our era: we know we'll be judged."⁶⁵ On this reading *The Condemned of Altona* enacts the politics of *engagement*.

However, Franz's choice and the Father's to commit suicide together is not the choice of a group-in-fusion, the members of which cohere to collectively liberate themselves, and as such it remains a futile and empty gesture, one more serial act in a one-dimensional society. While the play may serve as a mirror facilitating reflection on the crimes of the century, there is no redemption offered in *The Condemned of Altona*, in which the characters, like almost every character in Sartre's fiction, are negative images. As he says, "Those people cannot renew themselves. It's total collapse, the 'twilight of the gods.'"⁶⁶ This profoundly pessimistic ending was an expression of the quagmire that Sartre felt

personally and politically and a sign of the limits that he came to acknowledge of the politics of *engagement*.

In tracing the key concepts and shifts in Sartre's politics of *engagement*, both theoretically and in practice, it becomes clear that his seemingly peripheral reflections on the Jewish Question prove pivotal once more in shaping the underlying principles of his politics. Sartre's *témoignage* on *les années noires* was key for defining his theory of *engagement*. The Resistance writer stood as the ultimate symbol for the politics of *engagement* that would underpin each of his interventions from the liberation to the end of the Algerian conflict. Sartre pointed to his *Réflexions* as one exemplary instance of *engagement* in *What Is Literature?* The analysis of his *Réflexions* was transposed in his writings on racial and colonial oppression that were one crucial aspect of his political interventions in the context of the cold war. The model of the Christian Passion in structuring Sartre's *littérature engagée* resulted in him depicting the intellectual as a martyr-prophet who ultimately sacrificed the particular and the concrete in the interest of the "universality" of the politics of emancipation. The resulting Christologocentrism entailed a foreclosing of cultural difference, even as "the Jew" remained a fertile allegorical site for Sartre to think through the foundations of his politics. Sartre's interventions on behalf of the state of Israel made more concrete the modifications I have traced in his politics of *engagement*.

6. On Ambivalent Commitments

Sartre, Israel, and the Politics of the Intellectual

I will never abandon this constantly threatened country [Israel] whose existence ought not to be put into question. . . . I know that my stance earns me the enmity of certain Arabs who cannot understand that one is able to be at the same time for Israel and for them.

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Ce que Jean-Paul Sartre avait dit à 'Tribune Juive'"

On November 7, 1976, accompanied by Simone de Beauvoir and his adopted Jewish daughter, Arlette Elkaïm, Sartre, blind since the fall of 1973, arrived at the Israeli embassy in Paris in order to accept a degree in philosophy *honoris causa* from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In presenting the honor the president of the Hebrew University, Avraham Harman, recalled Sartre's distinguished track record in fighting against racial prejudice and his courageous stand against antisemitism, which, he added, Sartre recognized "can take the mask of anti-Zionism."¹ The Israeli ambassador, Mordechai Gazit, attested that Sartre's sympathy for the struggle of the Jewish people and the state of Israel flowed directly from the core principles of his oeuvre, and he commended him for fighting for "the cause of the Jews of the U.S.S.R."² In taking the microphone Sartre acknowledged that he did not usually accept honors. Most famously, he had refused the Nobel Prize in 1964.³ But in accepting the honor from the Hebrew University, Sartre explained that his decision to do so could justifiably be "interpreted as a political choice."⁴

In elaborating on the meaning of this political choice he reaffirmed a number of propositions that he had long held: that he was sensitive to the Jewish peo-

ple's unique plight; that he was a longtime friend of Israel; that his support for Israel did not mean that he was less pro-Palestinian; and that he decried those who "identified Zionism and racism."⁵ Those who advocate this position, he sternly suggested, align themselves with the nefarious politics of racial anti-semitism, implying that "the Jews are in their eyes a race."

Sartre's acceptance came at a time when the need for a negotiated peace settlement between Arabs and Israelis was greater than ever. He insisted that the only means to this was a direct "dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians . . . based on justice."⁶ He hoped that his support might aid the initiatives by Israelis and Arabs to end the conflict. He closed his remarks by indicating that by opening up such a dialogue the Israelis would respond to the hopes of all those who, like Sartre, had always defended them. The speech that he gave that evening and the positions that he advocated had a long history.

This chapter retraces Sartre's stance vis-à-vis Israel, which vacillated in his life and thought between a concept, a political entity, a geographical space, an identity, and an ethical imperative. These designations parallel the five overlapping periods in the transformation of Sartre's intellectual politics: the 1930s, the Vichy years, his postwar politics of *engagement*, his existential Marxism, and his final phase in dialogue with Benny Lévy. Israel, it turned out, was always doubled for him, always doubled back upon itself, remaining perpetually unknowable, undecidable, overdetermined, rendering his *engagement* ambivalent. He moved from an equivocal position on Jews and Judaism and unequivocal support of the state of Israel in 1948 toward a committed neutrality on the Arab-Israel conflict around 1967 at the same time that he gave progressively greater support to Jews and Judaism after the Six-Day War. Nevertheless, a continuity characterizes the shifts in Sartre's position: Israel functioned as a significant site for defining the underlying principles of how he defined his role as an intellectual.

"Between Paris and Jerusalem"

Sartre's *Antisemite and Jew* provided the philosophical grounding for his interventions on behalf of Israel. The duality of the Jewish situation that he described in his *Réflexions* was condensed in the two designations that he used

throughout the text to name “Jewish identity”: *Israël* or *israélite* and *Juif*.⁷ While there is a disconcerting slippage in Sartre’s text between these terms, one might associate *israélite* with Sartre’s description of inauthenticity and *Juif* with his designation of the authentic Jew. However, in the concluding passages of the third part of his *Réflexions* Sartre himself recognized not only the ambiguity between these terms but the impasses that structure his entire conception of Jewish authenticity:

*The choice of authenticity can, in fact, lead to conflicting political decisions. The Jew [Juif] can choose to be authentic by asserting his place as a Jew [Juif] in the French community, with all that goes with it of rights and martyrdom; he may feel that for him the best way to be French is to declare himself a French Jew [Juif français]. But he may also be led by his choice of authenticity to seek the creation of a Jewish nation [nation juive] possessing its own soil and autonomy; he may persuade himself that Jewish authenticity demands that the Jew [Juif] be sustained by a Jewish national community [communauté israélite].*⁸

Zionism was, therefore, one option for the authentic Jew. But Jews who remained in France would be caught in a dilemma: “If we had not created for the Jew his situation as a Jew, it would be possible for him to exercise an option between Jerusalem and France” (140). But such an option is riddled with complications. Without moving to Israel, the acculturated and integrated French Jew could still preserve ties with his homeland, since “Palestine might represent in his eyes a sort of ideal value, a symbol” (140). However, Jews who remained in France would be caught in an impasse, for Palestine would take on an immense significance not only for Jews. Even before the creation of the state of Israel Sartre saw that anti-semites would use this situation to bolster their charge of double allegiance—of Jews as a “nation within a nation” or of Jews as a fifth column.⁹

The gaze of the non-Jewish Other consequently creates an inherent conflict amongst authentic Jews between the Diaspora and the homeland, between *golah* and *geulah*, between France and Jerusalem.¹⁰ The inexorable tensions for authentic Jews reveal that the choice of authenticity qua moral choice is inher-

ently contradictory. On this plane, every choice Jews make eternally returns to haunt them.

As a result, Sartre suggests that the immanent contradictions within his analysis of the Jewish situation must be approached on the level of politics, which leads to the final section of his *Réflexions*, where he postulates the revolution as the solution to the quandaries engendered by the structure of his own thought as well as by the Jewish situation. It is thus precisely in the shift from part 3 to part 4 of his *Réflexions* that he postulates the limits of an existential analysis confined to the ontological and ethical level and the solution to these difficulties in a praxis committed to revolution, which defined his intellectual militancy after the war.

Sartre's Advocacy for Israeli Independence

While authentic Jews' choices were murky, caught somewhere between Paris and Jerusalem, the authenticity of the *intellectuel engagé* was clear. In "Situation de l'écrivain en 1947" (Situation of the Writer in 1947), the concluding section of *What Is Literature?* Sartre maintains that "the writer's duty is to take sides against all injustices wherever they come from."¹¹ He follows this statement by taking an unmistakable position on behalf of Israeli independence in what was then Palestine under the British mandate. "From this point of view we must denounce British politics in Palestine," he exhorts.¹² Hence, the national struggle against the English in Palestine is one of the first national liberation struggles that he supported.

This unambiguous engagement on behalf of the autonomy of the Israeli state was repeated in several gestures in the months preceding Israeli independence. In a message addressed to the French League for a Free Palestine shortly before the proclamation of the independence of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, Sartre advocated that the United Nations arm the Israelis after the pullout of the British troops, declaring that "a Palestinian state, an independent, free, and peaceful state, will guarantee peace if it is strong enough to make itself respected."¹³ Arguing that for many years France and Europe "played Pontius Pilate," tolerating the fact that the Jews (*Israélites*) were pushed in herds into the

gas chambers, he insists that at this historic juncture “we cannot dissociate ourselves from the cause of the Hebrews” (15, 14). Fearing another massacre of Jews by “Arab mercenaries awaiting the departure of the English” (13), he called for the arming of the Yishuv (the Jewish settlements in Palestine).

Sartre’s unequivocal support of a militant Zionist national liberation movement was also evident in his testimony at the trial of Robert Misrahi. On February 13, 1948, he would serve as a character witness for his former student from the Lycée Condorcet who had been accused along with another student, Jacques Martinski, of concealing explosives for the Stern Gang.¹⁴ Caryl Gardosh, another member of Lehi, attested later that several members of the group were either students or adepts of Sartre “educated in the principle of *engagement*, based on existentialism.”¹⁵ At the hearing he praised Misrahi, asserting that he was a “veritable defender of liberty” whose sources came from “the same pure convictions that we ourselves, Free French, prevailed upon in combating the Nazi occupier.”¹⁶ He proclaimed afterward that he considered it the duty of non-Jews “to help the Jews and the Palestinian [i.e., Zionist] cause.”¹⁷ His declaration caused a sensation.

In the months immediately following the Israeli War of Independence Sartre would continue to state publicly his unbridled support of Israel. In an issue of *Hillel*, the organ of the Union mondiale des étudiants juifs, he declared, “I have always hoped, and I still hope, that the Jewish problem will be solved within the context of a human community unrestricted by national boundaries, but since no developing society can skip the stage of national independence, we must be glad that an Israeli state has come to justify the hopes and battles of Jews all over the world.” He thought that the founding of Israel was one of the most important events of his time. He maintained that “for the Jews it is the crowning of their sufferings and their heroic struggle,” and “for all of us, it marks a concrete step toward a human community in which man will be the future of man.” He nevertheless emphasized that “the Jewish problem is a particularly agonizing expression of the contradictions which are tearing contemporary society apart.”¹⁸ So while the situation of “the Jew,” as Sartre spelled it out, was rife with tension, it helped enable the clear formulation of the politics of the engaged intellectual.

Between Israel and the Third World

In the years when Sartre was a fellow traveler of the French Communist Party (1952-56), *Les Temps Modernes* nonetheless condemned the destruction of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union, and Sartre personally made several interventions at the Soviet Embassy on behalf of dissident Jews, many of whom sought refuge in Israel.¹⁹ In this same period his support of the liberation movement in Algeria brought him closer to a consciousness of the problems of the Third World and to Arab nationalism. He was a proponent of Gamal Abdel Nasser's program of "Arab socialism," which he hoped would serve as a bridgehead to bring socialism into the Arab world. In 1956, after the United States and Britain withdrew their support for Nasser's project to build the Aswan High Dam on the Nile, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company, promising to finance the dam with canal tolls. Nasser's action provoked an Israeli invasion of the Sinai Peninsula and an Anglo-French invasion of the Canal Zone. In the context of the Suez crisis Sartre was critical of both France's and England's roles, but he was silent on the role taken by Israel.²⁰

Sartre's subsequent interventions in the Arab-Israeli conflict embody as praxis his shifting understanding of the role of the intellectual. After his break with the PCF and in the wake of the Algerian conflict, his conception of the role of the intellectual began to change. He started to critique what he called the "classical intellectual," articulating an alternative understanding of the "militant intellectual" in the lectures he gave in Japan in the fall of 1966, published later as "Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels" ("A Plea for Intellectuals").²¹ He argued that the intellectual is a "torn consciousness, impossible to suture," and thus it is only through the self-reflexive focus on the ambivalence constitutive of the role of the intellectual that he can be "a friend of the people."²² In the final lecture of his "Plaidoyer" he contends that the writer is necessarily engaged but to a radically different task from what he proposed in *What Is Literature?* Whereas he had previously claimed, "I distrust the incommunicable; it is the source of all violence," he now asserted, "The commitment [*engagement*] of the writer is to aim to communicate the incommunicable." As a result, he claims, "it is the affair of the militant intellectual that he will live in tension."²³

Sartre's interventions into the Arab-Israeli conflict began to stress the irreducible strains within the struggle and his own agonized experience of this: "I find myself torn between contradictory friendships and loyalties. . . . Today, we find that the Arab world and Israel are opposed and we are divided within ourselves and we therefore live this opposition as if it was our personal tragedy."²⁴ The complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict helped to spur the changes in Sartre's intellectual politics and in ways that prefigured the poststructuralist gestures of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault's "specific intellectual" and Lyotard's "postmodern intellectual."²⁵

Sartre called the conflict, in fact, the "différend judéo-arabe,"²⁶ employing the term in precisely the sense that Jean-François Lyotard would later when he articulated the task of the postmodern thinker as that of "bearing witness to the differend."²⁷ "As distinguished from a litigation," Lyotard wrote, "a differend [différend] would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. *One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy*" (xi, emphasis added). For Lyotard, conflicts over irreconcilable differences are inevitable, and the postmodern condition is such that there is no universal discourse that can provide a final arbitration of disputes (xiii). This is very similar to what Sartre suggests should be the role of the intellectual in the Arab-Israeli conflict: to reveal the inherent differences in each side's positions and how their underlying presuppositions are irreconcilable and lead to strife. This is clearly different from what he had argued was the responsibility of the universal intellectual, which was to take a stance on how the opposing sides should resolve their hostility.

Like Foucault would later, Sartre sought to use his position as an intellectual in order to open a space for the parties themselves to express those differences, which he hoped might open a dialogue between Arab leftists and Israeli leftists. The special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* planned to coincide with Sartre's voyage to the Middle East in February–March 1967 embodied this shifting conception of the role of the intellectual.

Sartre's interventions in the Arab-Israeli conflict became more pronounced around 1965, when he determined that Nasser's politics were beginning to de-

velop in a revolutionary direction. In this context he sought to open a dialogue between the Egyptian Left and the Israeli Left.²⁸ On December 25, 1965, he granted an interview to the Cairo daily *Al-Ahram* that was reprinted in the Israeli press and excerpted by *Le Nouvel Observateur*. The topics in the interview ranged from Sartre's sympathy for the revolution in Egypt, which he saw as becoming more democratic, the complexity of the relations between the Left in France and the Third World, the abiding problems of decolonization, and finally his affirmation that "Egypt has always played a prominent role on the frontier of revolutionary policy as a revolutionary leaven. For my part, I have supported her ever since the Suez War."²⁹

In the *Al-Ahram* interview Sartre also announced his intention to publish a special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* on the Arab-Israeli conflict that reflected the new model of praxis that he developed theoretically in "Plaidoyer."

*If that special issue succeeds as we hope, it will . . . contribute towards clarifying the problem. I mean that for the first time we are presenting both points of view. Our journal is striving to maintain absolute neutrality on this question. We want to leave it to the parties concerned to present their views so that the public will be able to grasp the problem. I want to continue to cling to this attitude of absolute neutrality. That is why I will visit you in Egypt, talk with you, visit the Palestinian (refugee) camps, and then visit Israel in order to see with my own eyes. This is the spirit in which I approach the special issue. We will be satisfied with presenting the two points of view with full objectivity and at a fitting level, by choosing the people best able to express them.*³⁰

Rather than specifying a solution to the problem, Sartre aimed to clarify the foundations of the inherent differences on each side. He sought to marshal his status as an intellectual celebrity to draw attention to the opposed viewpoints of the participants in the conflict.

In accord with this commitment to impartiality and his resolution to bear witness to the dispute by allowing each side to assert its own point of view, Sartre gave a parallel interview to Simha Flapan of *Al-Hamishmar*, the Israeli newspaper of the socialist party, *Mapam*, in the beginning of 1966. Like the *Al-Ah-*

ram interview, the topics ranged from neocolonialism, to the Third World and Vietnam, to the tensions between socialism and nationalism and the possibilities of a successful socialist revolution. He also stressed the importance of maintaining an indissoluble link between theory and practice within socialism, which he maintained was the key rupture within Stalinism.

Sartre would open the interview in *Al-Hamishmar* by testifying to his sense of being torn between contradictory affinities for the Jews' and the Arabs' struggle: "The situation of my Jewish friends during the Occupation revealed the problem of the Jews in Europe to me at the same time that our common resistance to Nazism created deep-seated bonds between us. . . . But in a similar fashion the struggle against colonialism led us during the Algerian War to take our stand with the FLN and to cement many friendships in the Arab nations."³¹ Sartre's own sense of contradiction and tension was consistently the emphasis in his interventions, which sought to multiply the perspectives on the problem. He refused to determine a categorical solution to a complex and ambiguous situation. He would conclude the interview with *Al-Hamishmar* on a parallel note to his interview with *Al-Ahram*, expressing his happiness about his forthcoming trip to Egypt and Israel, stating that he would spend one month in each country.

Crossing the Sand Curtain

Sartre's voyage to the Middle East would begin in Egypt on February 25 and last for about three weeks; his visit to Israel would start on March 14 and end March 30. Beauvoir accompanied him, along with Arlette, and for a few days Claude Lanzmann joined them. Sartre's trip was originally intended to come after the publication of the special issue of *Les Temps Modernes*; however, due to delays in publication, he arrived before the journal appeared. Nevertheless, the continuity of Sartre's visit to Egypt and Israel back-to-back was intended to parallel precisely the journal itself. It reflected Sartre's committed stance of nonintervention, his desire to appreciate the position of both sides from within their own immanent perspectives, and his desire to inform a broader public by enabling each party in the conflict to express its position.

The trip to Egypt was officially organized by *Al-Ahram* and was orchestrated by a welcoming committee of Egyptian journalists and intellectuals.³² Sar-

tre “saw the City of the Dead, visited temples, floated down the Nile on a boat, [and] cruised over it in a plane.”³³ His schedule involved numerous meetings with avant-garde intellectuals and artists, political militants, trade unionists, and other representatives of the Egyptian intelligentsia. He attended numerous debates, meetings, social gatherings, and even a performance of *The Flies* in Arabic. He spoke on the role of the intellectual in the West at the University of Cairo to an audience of two thousand.³⁴ The culmination of his tour was a three-hour meeting with Nasser.

During this time Sartre staunchly refused to offer his own advice or opinions on the situation, choosing rather to emphasize the achievements and problems facing Egypt and generally remaining silent on the thorny problem of Palestine, Israel, and Jewish-Arab relations.³⁵ When speaking to students at the University of Alexandria, for example, he expressed how much he was moved by his visit to the workers camp in the “Liberation Province,” but when questioned directly about the Palestinian problem he replied that he should not express an opinion about a subject in which he was not versed and that when he was studying a problem he should learn about it from both sides.³⁶ He maintained his principled impartiality by constantly asking questions, listening, and gathering information rather than advocating a specific stance. His oft-repeated mantra was “I have come here to learn, not to teach.”³⁷

Immediately following his voyage to Egypt Sartre crossed the “sand curtain” to visit Israel.³⁸ Mapam and the journal *New Outlook* organized the trip. Sartre’s fifteen days in Israel involved a schedule that directly paralleled his stay in Egypt: he visited many of the significant cultural and historical sites in the country, spent time on kibbutzim and moshavim, and investigated the enterprises of the Histadrut.³⁹ He participated in debates and discussions and met with Israeli journalists, writers, and professors.⁴⁰ Once more, he gave a lecture entitled “The Intellectual’s Role in Contemporary Society.” Visits and lectures were once again followed by meetings with political leaders, including Igal Alon, the secretary of labor; Zalman Chazar, the president; Lévi Eshkol, the prime minister; and Moshe Sueh, secretary of the Communist Party.

Sartre’s most memorable evening was spent in the home of Gershom Scholem, the eminent professor of Jewish thought at the Hebrew University and the

innovative scholar of the academic study of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism). The discussion centered on a seemingly simple question that Sartre posed to the group of prominent academics who were invited to the *soirée* chez Scholem: “What does being-Jewish signify to you?” After a long and contentious disputation that included complex philosophical and religious elaborations, socio-historical explanations, and psychophenomenological explications by Israel’s academic luminaries, Scholem brought the deliberation to its conclusion: “Ah! What is being-Jewish?” he asked rhetorically. “If only you had asked me your question half a century ago when I young! I would have had very good answers! Then I got older; I have no idea.”⁴¹

The evening at Gershom Scholem’s might well serve as a metonymic marker of Sartre’s whole trip. He would summarize his impressions at a press conference before he left Israel. In general, he found a great variety of opinions and a passion to discuss and debate, noting, “In these conditions, I can tell you that a real democracy reigns amongst Jewish Israelis.”⁴² The various deliberations clearly indicated the deep tensions he found between an Israeli national identity animated by Theodor Herzl’s idea that the sovereign state would normalize Jewish identity and a Jewish state designed to guard the specificities of Jewish tradition. He nevertheless concluded, “I have found at the interior of these traditions a veritable unity in their variety. . . . [T]he ensemble of contradictions . . . are lived and surpassed in making the unity of the Jewish people” (8). He ended his short speech by saying, “It therefore seems to me that . . . if the new Israeli people, the new Jewish Israeli is able to develop in peace and to seize all of these contradictions and make them his own and to surpass them in his action, they will be—they are already—one of the richest people that one might find in history” (10).

Sartre’s concluding statements at the press conference would come in response to the questions of reporters, who prodded him to take a position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. He disappointed many by his staunch impartiality, insisting that he spoke from “the point of view of an intellectual who came to inform himself and who, moreover, has taken what I would not say is a position of neutrality, but of a strict absence in the number of the journal that he prepares for French public information on the problem of Israel and the Arabs” (10).⁴³

He insisted that the whole French Left was torn because of the double legacy of the Algerian conflict and the memory of Jewish persecution. This rendered Sartre and the Left strictly impartial or, as he says, “absent.” Emphasizing the immanent contradictions of an impartial *engagement*, an absent-presence, he continued, “Neutrality, in truth, is not possible in a problem of this type. That would be to be above the battle. . . . [I]n any case we are not able to take a position. It is for you [Israelis] and them [Arabs] to take a position” (11).

The equivocation of Sartre’s engaged noncommitment on his voyage and in the special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* is reflected in his *témoignage*, which bears witness to the immanent conditions of conflict rather than serving as an advocate for one side or the other. He insisted that both the Israeli and the Arab points of view are rigorously incompatible. This is because the two basic preconditions for dialogue and for peace on either side are directly in contradiction, and neither side can or will recognize the prerequisites of the other: “Precondition on the side of the Israelis: recognition of the sovereignty of Israel. . . . Precondition for the Arabs: the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to Israel. . . . For us, neutrality only consists of putting into question these two preconditions” (11). Sartre’s response qua *intellectuel engagé* is thus to bear witness to the *différend*: to put the very preconditions of discussion into question, to recognize the issues that require negotiation, and, à la Foucault and Deleuze’s specific intellectual, to open the debate by creating a space for the antagonists themselves to voice their perspectives. His hope was that “from the moment where these two preconditions will be the object of common discussions, perhaps there will be a chance for peace” (14). This statement was made only days before the Six-Day War.

The Six-Day War and Its Aftermath

Upon his return to Paris and on the eve of the conflagration, he signed a manifesto with other French intellectuals that was published in *Le Monde* on June 1. It was written to counter rising European and French opinion indicating that Israel was the aggressor and an agent of American imperialism and identifying the Arabs with socialism and with the desire for peace. The manifesto urged the public to recognize that Israel was the only state that continually had its

right to exist put into question. It urged a dialogue that would lead to a path for peace. The first line, however, may have provoked the ire of the Arab world: "We [who] are friends of the Arab peoples and opponents of American imperialism, and not supporting every stand that the Israeli leaders take, nevertheless take note of the State of Israel's present manifestation of evident restraint and desire for peace."⁴⁴ Josie Fanon was outraged enough to ask François Maspero, the French publisher of *The Wretched of the Earth*, to retract Sartre's legendary preface from all future editions, accusing Sartre of joining the "camp of the assassins."⁴⁵ The manifesto, although certainly not taking a clear stand for either side and certainly not endorsing the stance taken by either side in the ensuing war, was appreciated in Israel and strongly condemned in Arab countries, which saw it as Sartre breaking his neutrality. This led, in some Arab states, to the censure of his books.

The Arab-Israeli struggle reached its apex in the days following the manifesto. Maintaining that war was inevitable, Israeli Premier Eshkol, Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan, and Army Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin authorized preemptive Israeli strikes at Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and Iraqi airfields on June 5, 1967. By the evening of June 6 Israel had destroyed the major Arab air forces. Israeli troops also soared into the Sinai, reaching the Suez Canal and occupying most of the peninsula in less than four days. King Hussein of Jordan rejected an offer of neutrality and opened fire on Israeli forces in Jerusalem on June 5. By June 8, however, successful Israeli operations had placed all of Arab Jerusalem and the Jordanian West Bank in Israeli hands. As the war ended on the Jordanian and Egyptian fronts, Israel attacked Syria in the north. In less than two days of ferocious fighting Syrian forces were driven from the Golan Heights, from which they had previously shelled Jewish settlements across the border. The Six-Day War ended on June 10 when the UN negotiated cease-fire agreements on all fronts. Israel was now clearly in a dominant position militarily vis-à-vis its Arab neighbors and occupied a significant new portion of land that included the Sinai, Gaza, Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.

At the height of the Six-Day War Jews in France and around the world feared what Raymond Aron called an *étatcide* (genocide of the people of the state of Is-

rael) and joyously celebrated the rapid-fire victory of the Israelis and the unification of Jerusalem they effected in June 1967. On November 27, 1967, in a press conference from the Élysée Palace that Robert Wistrich termed his “sermon to the Hebrews,” President Charles de Gaulle condemned Israel as the instigator of the war, severed France’s alliance, and legitimated an arms embargo as the beginning of a major shift in France’s foreign policy in the Middle East.⁴⁶ In castigating Israel de Gaulle crossed the line in also defaming the character of the Jewish people as a whole, calling Jews “a self-assured, domineering, elite people,” thus echoing antisemitic stereotypes.

Aron led a chorus of voices that charged that when de Gaulle, the symbol of the Resistance, the intransigent fighter for liberty and national autonomy, invoked the images of Jewish arrogance, superiority, power, and domination, he removed the protective shield that he represented. “De Gaulle has knowingly and deliberately initiated a new phase of Jewish history and perhaps of anti-semitism. Everything has once again become possible; everything is beginning again,” Aron asserted.⁴⁷ In fact, Xavier Vallat, the former Vichy commissioner for Jewish affairs, accorded de Gaulle’s comments precisely that value, gleefully writing in the right-wing weekly *Aspects de la France* that until de Gaulle’s pronouncements, journalists who dared to say that “the Jewish people . . . is imbued with its superiority and considers itself destined . . . to dominate the world” were immediately hauled into a court of justice.⁴⁸ With the taboo on public antisemitism that had persisted since the Holocaust undermined, in the ensuing years antisemitic outbursts, often justified as anti-Zionism, took many forms, from graffiti to terror attacks, from the desecration of cemeteries to assaults on Jewish synagogues, establishments, and individuals.

De Gaulle’s position and that of the French government was reflected in a shift in French public opinion after the Six-Day War. Sartre’s position went against the grain of the harsh indictments of Israel both on the Left and by Gaullists. He called the embargo of arms “an indefensible caprice which has nothing to do with anything” and indicted de Gaulle’s entire foreign policy by saying that “people ought not to play the great power when they are not a great power.”⁴⁹ By 1969, however, Sartre showed a greater sensitivity to the plight of the Palestinians, refusing to decry Palestinian terrorism, since he said he could

not “reproach the Palestinians for doing what I approved when it was the Algerian FLN. . . . [T]errorism is the weapon of the weak.” At the same time, however, he would not denounce the Israeli response to terror, believing they had a right to defend themselves.⁵⁰

Sartre’s stance on the conflict was certainly more equitable than the tide of leftist opinion in France, which had dramatically shifted since the end of World War II. In the immediate aftermath of the war and in the events surrounding the establishment of the state of Israel, the Shoah hung heavy in the minds of most on the Left, who thought of the Jews as a hated and persecuted minority. Those who migrated to Israel were not conceived of as colonialists but as escapees of the European tragedy, confounded by their English persecutors. Initially, there was greater sympathy for Jewish misfortune than for the cause of the Arabs. This began to change when the Left began to focus on anticolonial struggles in the context of the cold war. A new image of Israel emerged in the Suez conflict when Israelis were now coming to the aid of the French parachutists of Guy Mollet’s Socialist government. Now Israel was no longer the humiliated but the humiliator, no longer the victim but the perpetrator, no more sheep to the slaughter but a military people, strong, victorious, and the vanguard of international capitalist colonization in the Middle East.⁵¹

The Six-Day War was the final event cementing this change in opinion on the Left. In its aftermath the plight of the Palestinians replaced the Algerian cause. Israel was represented as one wing of the American eagle’s new worldwide imperialism, whose most nefarious consequences were being wrought in Vietnam. *L’Humanité Nouvelle*, for example, asserted quite clearly that “Zionism [is] the spearhead of imperialism in the Middle East” (May 25, 1967). The Maoists of *La Cause du Peuple* denounced “the imperialist and Zionist plot” (February 1969). *L’Humanité Rouge* contended that “Zionism is fascism” (January 4, 1973), and for the Trotskyist *Rouge* “the fundamental nature of the Zionist project” was “expansionist, racist, colonialist” (August 24, 1973). There was thus, as Michel Winock puts it, “structural analogies between the Zionist/imperialist plot—denounced by both the French Communist party and by numerous leftist groups—and the old universal Jewish plot.”⁵² Anti-Zionism was now in danger of replacing antisemitism on both the extreme Left and the extreme Right.

Sartre would respond to these currents by addressing the origins and consequences of the Six-Day War in a long interview with Arturo Schwarz that took a dramatically more balanced approach than most on the Left.⁵³ He contended that the role of intellectuals in examining the Middle East conflict ought to reproach simple binary thinking, depicting one side as evil and the other as good: "It is our affair, as intellectuals, precisely because we write and speak, to condemn this manichaeism. . . . [T]here is no total justice on one side or the other, but we have to understand both sides completely" (347). As he had in the manifesto he signed in early June 1967, he rejected the claim that Israel was the lever of Western neo-imperialism in the Middle East. While he understood some of the reasons why this might be asserted, for example, the large funding sent to Israel by the United States and by Jewish groups and the general support of Israelis for American policies, he nevertheless thought that "it is completely absurd to consider Israel the spearhead of American imperialism" (348). He was likewise critical of the argument that Arab countries intentionally left Palestinians in refugee camps to apply pressure on Israel, maintaining instead that the economic situation of those countries clearly did not permit them to integrate these refugees. On the one hand, he thought that Israel served as a scapegoat for Arabs. Given the social stratification in Arab societies and their lack of democracy, often what united them was to call for "the death of Israel" (350–51). On the other hand, he condemned the treatment of the Arab-Israeli minority as second-class citizens: they had their land taken away, they could be evicted, they suffered from an occupational glass ceiling, and they were victims of the humiliating pass system between the territories (358).

Sartre tried to recommend changes in the positions of both sides. He suggested that Israel should evacuate the occupied territories, give the Palestinians sovereignty, and ensure equality between Arab and Israeli citizens. At the same time, he spurred the Palestinians to recognize the right of Israel to exist and to accept the right of every Jew, whether persecuted or not, to have the right to immigrate to Israel and to become an Israeli citizen. He made specific policy recommendations, claiming, for example, that "it is not possible to abandon the heights of Golan overlooking Lake Kinneret. It is too dangerous" (365). As for Jerusalem, he thought it should be a "completely neutral zone," placed un-

der the auspices of the United Nations and regulated by a variety of religious representatives.

He thus continued to express the conditions of reciprocal nonrecognition that characterized the foundations of each side's stance and pressed each to accept the underlying principles of the other that he thought were all just. He tried to assist both Israelis and Arabs to recognize the parallel animus that each side had because of the failure of the other to acknowledge its abiding concerns. Given their inherent tensions, he recognized that his suggestions were utopian. At the same time, he sought to debunk the myths that animated many on the Left's political stance toward Israel.

Going beyond the anti-Zionism of the extreme Left, Sartre contended that "Zionism is dead," that it was a political ideology whose time had passed because "there will be no new crisis of antisemitism." Treating Zionism as a monolith, he asserted that it was a progressive ideology in the aftermath of the Shoah, when it underpinned the national liberation struggle in the context of the fight against colonialism. In the post-1967 context, however, he saw it as an ossified and regressive ideology, no longer relevant in a world without "violent antisemitism" that he did not believe would exist in the foreseeable future. In this new era he believed that Israel should renounce its Zionist positions (368, 367). He thus sought to usher in a post-Zionist perspective that might open the dead ends in Arab-Israeli relations.

Overall, Sartre's position was very close to that of the Comité Israël-Palestine, an initiative of young, independent leftist revolutionary militants. When they convened a conference at Choisy-le-Roi from March 20 to 22, around 150 people attended from ten European countries representing diverse groups. Mony Elkaim, European coordinator of the committee, insisted in opening the conference that "it is not up to us to make peace or to dictate solutions to the two parties present; our only ambition is to contribute to building a bridge between revolutionary Israelis and Palestinians." The resolution they passed indicating their perspective stipulated that "the Israeli government must recognize the Palestinian people and their right to auto-determination" and "the Palestinian organizations can no longer ignore Israeli reality."

Sartre wrote a message to the organizers in which he said that he supported "the Israel-Palestine Committee because it is a committee formed by mem-

bers of the revolutionary Left, and because it approaches the Israel-Palestine problem in the unifying perspective of the development of socialist forces in the Near East . . . without privileging any of the parties and without denying the fundamental rights of either.”⁵⁴ He thus backed the Israel-Palestine Committee on the basis of the same principles he had advocated since the Six-Day War: demanding the rights of the Palestinian people while simultaneously insisting upon the rights of Israel as a nation. On this basis he sent a telegram to applaud the initiative of Jewish and Israeli-Arab writers who organized a discussion in Tel-Aviv in April attended by more than five hundred people on the “possibility of peace between Arabs and Israel.”⁵⁵

“Terrorism Is the Weapon of the Weak”

Peace was dealt a serious blow, however, when the Black September faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) kidnapped nine Israeli athletes, killing two others in the process and murdering all of them in a firefight that ensued with German police on September 6, 1972, in the midst of the Munich Olympic games. Sartre declared that the Israelis and Palestinians now existed in “a state of war.” Supporting the Palestinian action, he claimed, “In this war, the only weapon the Palestinians have at their disposal is terrorism. It is a terrible weapon but the oppressed poor have no other.” What is more, he declared that those French people who approved of the terrorism used by the FLN in their struggle for national liberation in Algeria must approve the action of the Palestinian terrorists. As an aside, he questioned whether “the Palestinians’ primary enemies may not be these feudal dictatorships, several of which have supported them verbally while at the same time trying to massacre them, and whether the first effort of the Palestinians, whose war necessarily dedicates them to socialism, must not be to side with the peoples of the Middle East against those Arab states that oppress them.” Nonetheless, he indicated that the Munich massacre “perfectly succeeded” because the spectacle of the attack at the Olympics with the eyes of the world focused on the games undeniably put the Palestinian cause at the forefront of world debate. The “horrible courage” of the Palestinian terrorists had demonstrated that it was necessary to immediately resolve the Palestinian problem, since it was now clear that “this problem has become the problem of everyone.”⁵⁶

Sartre's stance this time was radical even by the standards of the extreme Left in France. Among the diverse Trotskyist organizations, some, like the newspaper *Lutte Ouvrière*, condemned the attack outright, calling it "imbecilic," "demented," and "execrable." Some of the articles in *Rouge*, the organ of the Trotskyist League, applauded the assault in similar terms to Sartre: "Violence is part of imperialism; it imposes itself on the oppressed classes and leaves them only one recourse: revolutionary violence." However, not all of the articles in *Rouge* or all of its executive committee upheld as legitimate the actions of the Palestinian fighters.

Neither did the declaration of the *Nouvelle résistance populaire* (NRP), the "military branch" of the Maoist *Gauche prolétarienne* (GP), support the terror tactics of the PLO. The NRP published "a critique of the Munich action" in an article in *La Cause du Peuple—J'Accuse*, the organ in which Sartre published his response to the affair two weeks later. While declaring their ongoing support of the Palestinian struggle, the Maoists insisted that "the fundamental principle of any form of guerilla [warfare] is to only attack the direct enemies of the people" and that it was essential "to make a distinction between an ordinary Israeli and the army, the police, or the occupying administration of Israel." Even though the Israeli athletes represented the nation, they did not "participate actively, consciously, in the oppression of the Arabs of Palestine." Attacking them, therefore, could only have a negative effect on the public opinion of the Palestinian cause, which was key to their struggle. The Munich massacre had such a profound effect on the GP that it was one of the reasons for their autodissolution shortly thereafter. Pierre Victor, who would reclaim his Jewish birth name, Benny Lévy, after he became Sartre's secretary and a close associate when Sartre went blind, was one of the Jewish leaders of the GP powerfully shaken by the event, asking himself, "What crime is imputable to a young Israeli athlete? Wearing a uniform? Being Jewish?"⁵⁷

Holy Days and Holy War: October 1973

Sartre saw each incident in the aftermath of the Six-Day War as one battle in a longer and ongoing conflict that would reach fruition in the Yom Kippur War in 1973. From the termination of the Six-Day War, Arab leaders had refused to ac-

cept the occupation of Arab lands by the Israelis. Anwar al-Sadat, who succeeded Nasser as president of Egypt in 1970, continued the threats about another war and began to amass troops armed with sophisticated Soviet equipment along the Suez Canal. Sadat secretly arranged for a joint attack with President Hafez al-Assad of Syria in an assault that King Faisal of Saudi Arabia would finance and that would be code-named Operation Badr after the site of the Prophet Muhammad's first victory over the pagan Arabs in Arabia. Egypt and Syria attacked on October 6, 1973, and initially defeated the Israeli forces, which were shocked by an offensive during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the most sacred Jewish holiday. Israel recovered, however, and, after the longest and most costly campaign since the War of Independence, was once again successful.

Sartre was interviewed at the time of the Yom Kippur War and reaffirmed yet again that in the Arab-Israeli conflict he was neutral; nevertheless, he stipulated that the war was animated by a profound Arab aggression and a desire to destroy Israel that he called "criminal."⁵⁸ He distanced himself from the position of the French government, which he said had vested oil interests and wanted to continue economic and cultural neocolonialism in Arab countries. He nonetheless maintained that the new territorial borders created by the expansionist politics of Israel after 1967 were a real danger, that the Israeli government had become a conservative force, and that the occupied territories had become a new cause for war due to the subjugation of the Palestinians.

Sartre claimed that the Palestinian problem was now the motor that animated the Arab-Israeli conflict. While recognizing that the Palestinian problem was serious, he once more refused to offer a solution. He hedged on the issue of whether it was possible for Israelis to continue to live in one state with the Palestinians or whether a two-state solution would be necessary. Regardless, he asserted that the answer to the problems of the Middle East could not come from either the Soviets or the Americans but must come from within the Middle East.

In the ensuing years Sartre would protest on several occasions against the policies taken by the Israeli government to handle the Palestinian problem, including the destruction of houses and the expulsions from the territories. He

would also continue to express his disapproval of the discrimination against the Arab minority in Israel.⁵⁹ But he also defended Israel in the international arena. In 1974 he joined Raymond Aron and others in signing an indignant petition against the anti-Zionist positions of UNESCO.⁶⁰ The following year, along with François Mitterrand, Pierre Mendès France, and André Malraux, he would also condemn the United Nations declaration that Zionism was racism.⁶¹

Sadat and the Hope for Peace

Sartre's hope for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East was revived by Sadat's courageous trip to Jerusalem on Sunday, November 19, 1977, to initiate an end to conflict. In response, he published a piece on the front page of *Le Monde* directly addressed to his comrades in Israel that was at once an appeal and an ethical-political demand.⁶² He described Sadat descending from the sky to make peace as a "mythic event," which he compared to the "symbolic significance" of the taking of the Bastille. The definitive gesture of Sadat's symbolic trip was when he visited the Memorial of Martyrs (Yad Vashem) because with this gesture "the Arab recognized the Jew, the Israeli." This opening to the Jewish Other by Sadat contained the ethical imperative of a reciprocal response by the Israelis to the Palestinian Other, since Sartre maintained that Jewish ethics is "founded on this recognition [of the Other]." The categorical imperative to respond to the Palestinians also came with two political exigencies that Sartre sketched: restitution of the occupied territories and the creation of a Palestinian state. He closed by stating that Sadat's trip imposed a difficult choice upon the Israeli people and that, faced with that choice, he understood their anxiety, since "it is that of freedom."

In the immediate aftermath of Sadat's peace pilgrimage there was euphoria in Israel, with huge rallies demanding "Peace Now!" At the beginning of 1978 Ely Ben-Gal invited Sartre's young Jewish entourage to come to Israel to view how the process was transpiring up close. Sartre visited Israel for a second time, accompanied by Arlette and Benny Lévy. They arrived in the beginning of February, spending time in a hotel down by the Dead Sea and in a rented home in Jerusalem.

At the Dead Sea the group spoke one evening in some detail about Judaism: Sartre was genuinely curious about the preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides), about Kabbalah, and about Jewish messianism. The messianic ideal, in particular, fascinated him, since it promised “terrestrial hope.”⁶³ Sartre’s infirmity required a more subdued trip than his voyage ten years earlier and that it be largely a private affair, although he did have some political meetings.

At the end of this trip Sartre, Arlette, and Lévy participated in an informal dialogue followed by an article signed in common by Sartre and Lévy that was offered for publication to *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Jacques-Laurent Bost, who worked there and was a longtime member of *Les Temps Modernes*, read the piece and called Beauvoir. The nucleus of *Les Temps Modernes* was scandalized by the tone of equality between Lévy and Sartre in these pieces: Lévy was thinking with Sartre, not interviewing him, and he sought to publish under joint authorship. Moreover, in the interview Sartre was challenged on some of his early works, especially what he had said in his *Réflexions*. The Sartreans applied pressure on Jean Daniel, the editor, not to publish these works, which resulted in the first rejection of Sartre’s words in his entire life. The board of *Les Temps Modernes* was convened to discuss the matter, a meeting at which Lévy exploded, denouncing the group as “corpses” and severing his relationship with the board and with Beauvoir.

The interview was, however, very much a continuation of positions that Sartre had already taken. He once more maintained that he responded to the Arab-Israeli conflict not as a “functionary of the universal [intellectual]” but as the particular conscience of a third party. He again affirmed that the conflict is based on fundamental contradictions between the two sides: from the Arab perspective, the Jews do not have a right to be there, and therefore the Arabs are motivated to destroy the Jews. From the Jewish side, it is crucial that the Jewish state remain in existence.⁶⁴ Queried at some length about his *Réflexions*, Sartre conceded that he did not understand elements of the singularity of the Jewish experience, that the text was based on little more than the few integrated Jews whom he knew and on the Judaism invoked in the Jewish joke in which Jews are victims of what he calls “ordinary antisemitism.”

Sartre even acquiesced that in the “*Réflexions* it was myself that I was writing while believing that I wrote about the Jew, a type that was nothing, without ground, an intellectual.” The image of “the Jew” that he produced was at once “fascinating and anxiety inducing,” and he did not know why he attributed to “the Jew” these characteristics. At the same time, he defended himself against Lévy’s accusations, asserting that if he does not understand Jewishness and Judaism, he is not sure that Lévy does either. He also insisted that while he might not have addressed the Holocaust directly in the text, his text was an oblique way of speaking about that unspeakable horror.

The coauthored article with Lévy, likewise, was a continuation of what Sartre announced in his *Le Monde* article.⁶⁵ Their common declaration affirms that Sadat’s visit could be a turning point in Israeli and Jewish history because the genius of Sadat’s gesture was “to have begun at the end: the recognition of Israel” (322). This, in turn, must be radically endorsed by an Israeli populace that also demands peace: “The Israeli-Jew-in-the-Arab-world cannot not choose anymore after November 19: to be open to the Arab world or to close in on [itself]” (325). This stance required Israelis to set aside the complexity of the “reality” of the situation and to conduct negotiations on the moral plane, not on the plane of realpolitik and power diplomacy. To insist only upon “peace with security” is to demand a peace without risk. A permanent peace that fulfills the messianic ideal can only be realized by taking the risk of recognizing the Palestinian Other. Sartre and Lévy suggested that Israelis should respond to Sadat’s recognition of the state of Israel. They should likewise recognize the Palestinians as a free people, an occupied people, who have a deep connection to their land. Ironically, their article closes with Herzl’s utopian quote about the creation of the state of Israel: “If you will it, it will not be a dream” (327).

Despite his decaying health, Sartre continued to hope that dialogue between Arabs and Israelis would lead to their mutual recognition. Benny Lévy was assigned the task of convening a colloquium in March 1979 called “Peace Today” that was financed by *Les Temps Modernes* and held in the apartment of Michel Foucault, who lent his home but who was not active in the discussion.⁶⁶ Most of the participants came from Israel to Paris to speak to one another. The Jewish side included Ely Ben-Gal, who arranged for the Israeli contingent, which included

the young philosopher Avishai Margalit, the Orientalist Yehoshaphat Harkabi, who was also a high member of the Israeli military, the rabbi Adin Steinsalz, and a militant activist of the Left, Ran Cohen. On the Arab side were two Palestinian intellectuals of East Jerusalem, Nafez Nazzal and Ibrahim Dakkak, the professor Charaf, Ma'hamad Wattad, who had organized the Arab delegation, and Edward Said. Said's conclusion that "it was a disaster, and I think everybody thought the same thing" was confirmed by other participants.⁶⁷ Sartre's own physiological decline was symptomatic of the failure of the event to inspire any meaningful opening that might heal the chasm between the two sides. He would die one year later with his hope for a peaceful resolution unfulfilled.

7. Sartre's Final Reflections

Intellectual Politics and the Jewish Question

The image of the Jew is undergoing a kind of reversal of fortune: now he is the one who has roots, and it's the French philosemite, that poor wandering goy, who sees himself as deracinated and stateless, a man without qualities.

Alain Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*

I want that my death never enter my life, nor define it, that I be always a call to life.

Jean-Paul Sartre

Just before Sartre entered Broussais hospital with a pulmonary edema, three dialogues with Benny Lévy were published in *Le Nouvel Observateur* on March 10, 17, and 24, causing a sensation. Six years had passed since the last volume of *Situations* had appeared, five since *On a raison de se révolter* (One Is Right to Resist).¹ Since the onset of his blindness in the fall of 1973 Sartre had not been much in the public eye. Now in dialogue with Lévy he was rethinking fundamental aspects of his thought: his conception of consciousness, Marxism, history, Judaism, and intellectual politics. *L'espoir maintenant: les entretiens de 1980* (*Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews*) is the dialogue with Benny Lévy published as a book—Sartre's last thoughts.

This chapter examines *Hope Now* as a prism through which to view the continuities and transformations in the relation between Sartre's intellectual politics and the image of "the Jew" in his thought during the last twenty years of his life. The final section of *Hope Now* constitutes a fundamental reassessment of Sartre's position on Jews and Judaism as he emphasizes the importance to non-Jews like himself of the Jewish concept of the coming of the Messiah. At

the same time, Sartre hopes to lay an ethical foundation for a New Left politics: to revive the Left through a rethinking of political commitment in the face of the resurgence of the Right in 1980. As ever, his reconsiderations link his own critical reassessment of the role of the intellectual to his ideas about the Jewish Question.

The ongoing reevaluation of his intellectual politics, as we have seen, was not something new—Sartre had always thought against himself. His enormous fecundity as a thinker was built on his self-reflexivity and self-criticism, his open questioning, and his self-doubt, which are at the heart of his conception of authenticity. His final reappraisal goes back to his autobiography, *Les mots* (*Words*). Sartre uses the narrative of his childhood as the occasion for a trenchant critique of the role of the engaged writer that he formulated following World War II. He sharpened this critique of the “universal intellectual” in the lectures he gave in Japan, published as “Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels.” The conjuncture of forces that reached its apex in the events of May ’68 constituted the final turning point. As he did in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Sartre abandoned his defense of the “universal intellectual” as the conscience of the oppressed who speaks for the victims of history in favor of the “militant intellectual” who supports the dispossessed by enabling them to voice their own interests. This *autocritique* reached its logical limit in the dialogues with Benny Lévy.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Words would mark a rupture with the politics of *engagement*. Sartre conceived of writing it as early as 1953 and wrote the bulk of it in 1954, reworking it several times and finally revising it for publication in the beginning of 1963.² While clearly a polyvalent text that operates in many registers, a unifying theme is Sartre’s self-parody as a means of critique.³ One thread in the autobiography of his childhood is his criticism of the romantic idea of the writer as hero and the notion of literature as a transcendent realm of salvation. The title of the text captures Sartre’s overarching theme. He stipulates that “Words” represent the literary absolute—the possibility of Truth, Beauty, Goodness, the Sublime. He abandons these universal concepts as childish.⁴ He rebukes as infantile their overvaluation and satirizes the role of the writer as a priestly “guardian of culture.”⁵

In recounting the conception of literature he had as a child Sartre also emphasizes the Christologocentric elements in his theory of *engagement*. "One day, I handed my teacher a French essay on the Passion," he records. "It had delighted my family, and my mother had copied it out herself" (65). He recalls strongly identifying with the epic hero of Jules Verne's *Michel Strogoff*, a work that he describes as a secularized version of the Passion, calling it "a model life": "What I adored in him, under cover, was the Christian they had prevented me from being. Michel, entrusted, like all creatures, with a unique and vital mission, passed through our vale of tears, avoiding temptations and surmounting obstacles, savoring martyrdom and enjoying supernatural aid, glorifying his Creator and then, his task complete, entering into immortality. . . . [I]t fascinated me because it wore the trappings of heroism" (82). Sartre sarcastically describes this childish view of himself as a messianic figure. He discusses how he came to see himself as an immaculate conception, "the child of a miracle rather than a dead man's son" (16). From his birth in 1905 until 1914 he thought of himself as "Good without Evil" made incarnate, "the undefined made flesh and blood" (24). He adopted a prophetic role, delivering "genuine oracles. . . . Good was born in the depths of my heart and Truth in the youthful darkness of my Understanding" (22). It was the introduction of humanism, he stipulates, that "transformed the writer-knight into a writer-martyr; this is the process of bringing the divine into culture . . . [through] the Holy Ghost . . . the patron of literature" (112).

Sartre uses biting irony to castigate the writer as the humanist witness with a mandate to intercede on behalf of the downtrodden. He sardonically characterizes his own mission for the writer-martyr: "I confused literature with prayer and made a human sacrifice of it. My brethren, I decided, were quite simply asking me to devote my pen to their redemption: they were suffering from an insufficiency of being which without the intercession of the Saints, would have doomed them to eternal nothingness" (113). He parodies the notion of the writer as a representative for *le peuple* who simultaneously achieves their salvation through his own by declaring himself "the licensed savior of the crowd" (114). He thus repudiates the notion of the writer-martyr whose mandate is to speak for the Other in the name of universal ideals.

In his parody of the universal intellectual Sartre also describes himself as a child of the book and contends that this made him like the Jews. "I was to hear antisemites reproach the Jews a hundred times over," he says, "for being ignorant of nature's lessons and mysteries. I used to reply: 'In that case I'm more Jewish than they'" (33). His comparison of himself to Jews suggests that, unlike antisemites, his relation to reality was not in "the earth and the dead" but in the library and that "the library was the world trapped in a mirror" (33). If speaking truth to power encapsulated the social role of the *intellectuel engagé*, then *Words* challenges the epistemological ground associated with holding up a mirror to the world. He is critical of the idealism of "people of the book," now finding naive the writer-martyr-prophet who bears witness through literature and the library to what is eternal in the story of man. Several times, including in his concluding lines, he insists, "I have changed. . . . My retrospective illusions are in pieces. Martyrdom, salvation, immortality: all are crumbling; the building is falling in ruins. I have caught the Holy Ghost in the cellars and flung him out. . . . I have renounced my vocation, but I have not unfrocked myself. I still write. What else can I do?" (157). Sartre's last lines hint at the answer that he develops in his "Plaidoyer."

A Plea for Intellectuals

Sartre's autobiographical autocritique in *Words*, with its often elliptical language, was transformed into a rigorous historical and existential reexamination of the politics of writing in "Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels."⁶ "Plaidoyer" does not explicitly address the Jewish Question, but we have seen how Sartre's intellectual politics were impacted by the Arab-Israeli conflict and, reciprocally, how his changing conception of the task of the intellectual, which crystallized in his "Plaidoyer," altered how he intervened in that situation. "Plaidoyer" consists of three lectures delivered in Tokyo and Kyoto in September–October 1966 that successively address three questions: What is an intellectual? What is the function of the intellectual? Is the writer an intellectual? It thus echoes the three questions in *What Is Literature?* that structure Sartre's theory of *engagement*: What is writing? Why write? For whom should one write? His response reassesses the political role of the intellectual. In elaborating his plea for the

intellectual to be “a friend of the people” Sartre begins to transform his own self-critique in *Words* into a general shift in his understanding of intellectual politics.⁷ He elucidates how the “classical” or universal intellectual is ensnared in a series of contradictions and as such is an “unhappy conscience,” caught between being a “technician of practical knowledge” and a “militant intellectual,” the radicalized companion of the masses.

In the first lecture Sartre establishes a critical distance from the universal intellectual by historicizing that role. In rewriting the historical lineage of the intellectual presented in *What Is Literature?* rather than focusing on the emancipatory potential of the intellectual he emphasizes the role intellectuals have played in supporting structures of domination. He begins the history with the clerics of the fourteenth century.⁸ He contends that reading was the province of the priests, that they were thus “guardians of ideology” and “mediators between lord and peasant” (232). He goes on to discuss the eighteenth-century philosophes, chastising them as reflecting the class ideology of the rising bourgeoisie who merely expressed these class values in universal terms. He maintains that the genesis of the modern intellectual was the Dreyfus affair, thus giving a schematic historical presentation of the progenitors of the modern intellectual that emphasizes how they served as the guardians of a particularistic ideology (237).

Having now raised as a historical problem what Sartre earlier identified as the virtues of the universal intellectual, he develops a distinction between intellectuals and “technicians of practical knowledge.” Technicians of practical knowledge are the embodiment of false consciousness, and he calls them, following Paul Nizan, “watchdogs”: “a type created by the dominant class to defend its particularistic ideology by arguments which claim to be rigorous products of exact reasoning” (251).⁹ Technicians of practical knowledge are the agents of narrow interests camouflaging the dominant ideology as scientific law. Intellectuals emerge from the immanent contradictions structuring this group.

In his second lecture Sartre argues that the function of the intellectual is to investigate these contradictions. To understand himself he must analyze the society of which he is a social product. By examining his own situation as an

intellectual within the social universe of which he is a part he would come to reject the internalization of ideological systems of thought not only in the abstract but through his interventions into events within “the history of the nation” (251), his model again being the Dreyfus affair.

Sartre distances the intellectuals from the watchdogs by their radicalism. The true intellectual is a radical thinker, the committed conscience of the disenfranchised, and “the nature of his contradiction obliges him to *commit himself* in every one of the conflicts of our time, because all of them—class, national, and racial conflicts—are particular effects of the oppression of the under-privileged and because, in each of these conflicts, he finds himself, as a man conscious of his own oppression, on the side of the oppressed” (254). The labor of the intellectual is to create “a social universality . . . where all men will be truly free, equal and fraternal” (254). At the same time as he critically evaluates his own theory of *engagement*, therefore, Sartre revises certain fundamental elements of his understanding of the intellectual developed in the postwar context. The difference is that in his “Plaidoyer” Sartre self-critically stresses the contradictions and tensions within the role of the intellectual.

Having problematized the universal intellectual, Sartre proposes an alternative model. Whereas his response to the question, Why write? in *What Is Literature?* posited writing as a gift of revelation that transcended the antagonisms of the relation between Self and Other, his discussion of the function of the intellectual in “Plaidoyer” focuses on the contradictions within the intellectual and the tensions in the relation between the intellectual and the masses. Self-conscious of these contradictions, however, and focused on a perpetual process of dialectical self-critique, the intellectual can form affinity relations with the oppressed through the very process of this autocritique. Bearing witness to the inner tensions and ineluctable contradictions of the intellectual, as Sartre does in *Words* and in “Plaidoyer,” marks a significant departure from the role of the intellectual imagined in *What Is Literature?* As the witness who stands as the representative of all humanity. In the third lecture of “Plaidoyer” he argues that the writer necessarily confronts the contradictions of the technicians of practical knowledge. His task is to subvert his own role as intellectual and through this process serve the masses.¹⁰

Jean-Paul Sartre and the Events of May '68

The mass movements of the 1960s and May '68 in particular were the final turning point in the denouement of the politics of the universal intellectual. Sartre's notion of the engaged intellectual as the voice of the disempowered masses was transformed by his role in the events of May in favor of a strategy where the intellectual's own self-criticism helped support the oppressed in voicing their interests. What is more, there was a Jewish subtext to these events that has received almost no attention from prior scholars and that will, therefore, be a central focus here. Properly understood, the Jewish dimension must be integrated into our narrative of the events at the same time that we appreciate how May '68 transformed the role of the universal intellectual that Sartre embodied.

Contemporaneous with geoglobal transformations, the Jewish community in France underwent a radical change in the 1960s. The migration of Maghrebian Jews who returned to the colonial metropole after the independence of Tunisia and Morocco (1956) and Algeria (1962) made France the largest and most vibrant Jewish community in Western and Central Europe. Between 1950 and 1970 220,000 Jews from North Africa, many of whom were already French citizens, migrated to Paris and to the Midi, resulting in a total Jewish population of approximately 535,000 by the 1970s.¹¹ This demographic shift resulted in a renaissance of Jewish life in France, evident in the flourishing of both secular and religious communal institutions.¹² France witnessed the building of synagogues, community centers, schools, and kosher restaurants and butcher shops as well as a new interest in Jewish intellectual concerns. The Sephardim who arrived were at ease with the outward expression of their Jewish identity, rooted in the traditions of Jewish culture, and their more assertive and visible Jewishness challenged the republican social contract.

The rise in the practice of Jewish ritual worship in the home and the communal expression of Jewishness was complemented by an intensification of Jews focused on politics, specifically connected to Zionism and events in the Middle East. In contextualizing the prehistory of May '68 the overwhelming emphasis is placed on Cuba, China, and the Congo and obviously on the key role of the decolonization movement in Algeria, on the uprisings in Eastern Europe, and on the student movements around the world, to the exclusion of the Arab-Is-

raeli conflict, the Six-Day War in June 1967, and de Gaulle's "sermon to the Hebrews" on November 27, 1967.

The Six-Day War, in Dominique Schnapper's words, "shook the consciousness of the Jews of France (as of Jews the world over) and led a large number of them to rediscover their identity."¹³ French Jews organized huge demonstrations in support of Israel in May 1967 at the same time that many Jewish and non-Jewish leftists came to identify the Palestinian cause with that of the oppressed. The aftereffects would be expressed during the events of May '68. In Simone de Beauvoir's memoir, *Tout compte fait* (*All Said and Done*), she describes the carnivalesque party in the Latin Quarter by the middle of May, emphasizing the importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a hot topic of debate:

As soon as the Sorbonne reopened, the students occupied it. . . . The red flag flew over the chapel and statues of the great men, and the walls blossomed with the wonderful slogans invented some weeks earlier at Nanterre. Every day new inscriptions appeared in the corridors, new tracts, posters, drawings. Clusters of people argued passionately on the stairs or standing in the courtyard. Each political formation had its own stand for the distribution of tracts and papers. The Palestinians' stood next to that of the "left wing Zionists." . . . I often went there with friends, and we wandered about the corridors and the courtyard. . . . We strolled about and talked and listened to the discussions: many of them centered about the conflict between Israel and the Arabs, about the Palestinian question.¹⁴

While it is clear that other world events, especially the Franco-Algerian War, had a more powerful catalytic effect on May '68, the Six-Day War and the Palestinian cause that it ushered in was a significant animating issue for both Jewish and non-Jewish leftists before, during, and after the events of May.¹⁵

This is especially true when one considers the high level of Jewish participants among those who animated May '68.¹⁶ Out of the four most visible figures among the student radicals (Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Alain Krivine, Alain Geismar, and Jacques Sauvageot), only Sauvageot was not Jewish. In 1982 *Matin* magazine published a list of the 153 personalities that most marked the events, and at least 55 were Jews. In the portraits of insurgents included in Hervé Hamon

and Patrick Rotman's best-seller of 1988, *Generation I: Les années du rêve*, sixteen out of the twenty-nine are Jews. The Ligue communiste révolutionnaire, a still-active Trotskyist group, used to joke, "Why don't we speak Yiddish at the political bureau of the Ligue? . . . Because of Bensaïd!"¹⁷ Daniel Bensaïd was a Jew of North African descent and therefore would not have understood the other ten out of twelve members of the bureau, who were of Eastern European Jewish descent and who spoke some Yiddish. In addition to Alain Geismar, Benny Lévy, another Jew, was one of the leaders of the Maoists and later the Gauche prolétarienne. Jews were also at the forefront of the new directions being suggested for the student organization of the French Communist Party, the Union des étudiants communistes. This is a brief intimation of the leadership and does not mention the many anonymous militants at the time, some of whom would later become well-known Jewish intellectuals, such as André Glucksmann and Alain Finkielkraut.¹⁸

Moreover, the demythologization and remythologization of memories of the Vichy past and antisemitism was certainly one facet of the more general crisis of representation fostered by the uprising.¹⁹ As Henry Rousso states in *The Vichy Syndrome*, "1968 marked a turning point in France's thinking about the Occupation."²⁰ The Shoah and Vichy France were important reference points for the *gauchistes* (new leftists) of May '68 in their fight against what they called fascism and racism.

This complex of issues was raised at every consequential turning point in the events and was a continuing preoccupation for the *gauchistes* afterward. The conventional narrative of the events often begins with a student encounter at Nanterre in January 1968, when Cohn-Bendit called the visiting minister for youth and sport, François Missoffe, a fascist. This established a leitmotif of *gauchiste* revolt in which de Gaulle's government was tarred with the label of "nouveaux occupants," with the masses depicted as "les français occupés," and *gauchistes* playing the role of the Resistance. When members of the Mouvement de 22 mars (M22M) took over the administrative building at the University of Nanterre on March 22, leading Dean Grappin to close the university, they identified the university policies they were resisting with the Nazis, shouting, "Down with the pigs. No to the university of pigs! Nazis!"²¹ On May 3, con-

cerned about the several hundred protestors who gathered at the Sorbonne just after classes let out at lunchtime and fearful of street fighting between Occident, a militant Right organization, and the *gauchistes*, Rector Roche sent for the police, who began arresting students as they left the Sorbonne courtyard.²² Rattling the police vans, the swelling crowd of students invoked the collaboration with the Nazis by associating the Compagnie républicaine de sécurité (riot police) with the ss, shouting: "CRS-ss."²³ It was a cry against police violence, but, consciously or not, it conjured up the part played by French police in the *rafles* during the Second World War.²⁴ The association of the Gaullist state with the Nazi occupation and with fascism and the extreme Right with racism and antisemitism would continue through May and its aftermath in posters, pamphlets, and demonstrations.

Sartre entered the fray on the side of the students by signing a manifesto that was published in *Le Monde* only days after the first protests. He stepped forward on May 8 to condemn the police, who had clashed with almost twenty thousand student demonstrators on the boulevard Saint-Germain two days earlier, with the students using paving stones as weapons and the police using tear gas, clubs, and fire hoses. Signed also by Beauvoir, Colette Audry, Michel Leiris, and Daniel Guérin, the manifesto called on all workers and intellectuals to give the students moral and material support.²⁵ There was certainly nothing new in Sartre's initial intervention in the events, using the most conventional political strategy open to the French intellectual—the signing of a manifesto. On May 10 he signed another, this time with Maurice Blanchot, André Gorz, Pierre Klossowski, Henri Lefebvre, Georges Michel, Maurice Nadeau, and Jacques Lacan, affirming their solidarity with the students.

Sartre's next move in the events, however, reveals a shift in his public role as an intellectual. He said, in retrospect, that many intellectuals "failed at the outset to understand that this was a movement contesting themselves. Some of them were visibly confounded, and cherished a nagging hostility to the events of May when suddenly they felt the movement was contesting *them* in their capacity as *intellectuals*, whereas until then the intellectual had always been there to help others, to be available—the natural person to provide the theories, the ideas."²⁶ The revolts of May '68 clearly challenged the role of the universal in-

tellectual as the social prophet who gives voice and direction to the oppressed and marginalized. Some of the key *groupuscules* that animated the uprising, for example, the Trotskyist Jeunesses communiste révolutionnaire (JCR) and the Maoist Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes (UJC[ML]), included a critique of intellectuals in their party platforms. The JCR cited Lenin in insisting that “in such a party ‘any distinction between workers and intellectuals must be eradicated.’”²⁷ Echoing Marx, the UJC(ML) was similarly critical of intellectuals who saw theory as a form of praxis: the role of intellectuals was not to interpret the world; instead, “the theoretical work of revolutionary intellectuals has as its objective the revolutionary practice of transforming society.”²⁸

The theoretical critique evident in the *gauchistes*’ positions, in Sartre’s *Words*, and, more explicitly, in his “Plaidoyer” was enacted in the interventions undertaken by him from the middle of May. This shift is evident in an interview he did with Radio Luxembourg on May 12. He once again supported the students, whose movement had rapidly accelerated and radicalized as the two largest unions, the Confédération général du travail (CGT) and the Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT), joined forces with the student union, the Syndicat national de l’éducation supérieure (National Union of Employees in Higher Education, SNES[UP]), and the teachers federation. The most significant thing about this interview was Sartre’s insistence on refusing to tell the students what to do: “At present it is up to the students, as they, however, are perfectly aware, to decide what form their struggle is to take. It isn’t up to us to give them our advice, for even if we have protested all our lives, we’re always just a little compromised by this society we’ve made.”²⁹

Sartre supported the students’ violent confrontation with the ills of consumer society, bureaucracy, and the alienation of postindustrial capitalism, all of which were condensed in the closed university. But he also makes clear that he does not speak as a universal intellectual, who would serve as the voice that gives consciousness to the movement.

By the time of Sartre’s interview the support for the movement was widespread in the intellectual and literary world: writers occupied the Société des gens de lettres, Jean-Luc Godard and others forced the closure of the Cannes

Film Festival, and intellectuals came to rallies and supported the student movement. By then, the two student unions, the Union nationale des étudiants de France (UNEF) and the Union des étudiants communistes (UEC), had called for a general strike, and a force of perhaps 700,000 demonstrators marched across Paris on May 13. There was an interesting reaction by the students to the intellectuals who joined them, however. Louis Aragon was jeered because of his continuing support for the PCF, but he nevertheless proclaimed himself on the side of the students.³⁰ Students spray-painted "Don't liberate me, I'll take care of it" and "Althusser-a-rien" on the occupied walls of the Sorbonne and broke into Althusser's office.³¹

As the graffiti indicates, disrespect and critique of the role of the intellectual as a paternalistic voice that authorizes the uprising of the oppressed was a significant element in the revolts.³² Artists, writers, directors, and even the student leaders themselves refused the traditional authority accorded to leadership, since authority itself was one of the targets of the insurrection. When Sartre spoke in the amphitheater of the now occupied Sorbonne on May 20 there were cries of "Sartre make it snappy!"³³ Once he reached the platform he was bombarded with a variety of questions. Annie Cohen-Solal describes it as a moment of "complete anarchy, the joy of unleashed talk, a downpour of questions on all sorts of subjects."³⁴ He was referred to by the students as "Jean-Paul," an informality in discourse rarely exercised by anyone even in his most intimate circle. He never gave the students any direction or advice. His focus was on putting his notoriety behind them and at their service.³⁵

Sartre's new strategy of intervention was evident in his interview with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, entitled "Daniel Cohn-Bendit Interviewed by Jean-Paul Sartre," which was published in a special supplement in *Le Nouvel Observateur* the same day as Sartre's appearance at the Sorbonne. Sartre took the role of the interviewer and allowed Cohn-Bendit to express his own ideas about the revolution and the future of the student movement. He thereby used his intellectual celebrity to enable the revolutionaries to voice their own ideals and aspirations rather than assume the role for them. The published interview gave the public a different image of Cohn-Bendit: he was someone with a sophisticated and rational understanding of the political process and not just a hot-headed radical student.

A few days after the interview memories of the Vichy years and of antisemitism reached their zenith when Cohn-Bendit was prevented from returning to France by the government after a short trip to speak at other student revolutionary gatherings in Europe. After heavy protests in the Latin Quarter against this decision, the Gaullist and Communist press made statements about Cohn-Bendit's Jewishness and emphasized that he was German, a foreigner, and undesirable. In a significant response two demonstrations were held in Paris on May 24. The protestors took their rally cry—"Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands!" [We are all German Jews!]³⁶—from the posters made by the action committee at the École des Beaux-Arts.³⁶ There were two posters that showed Cohn-Bendit's face, one with the inscription "Nous sommes tous 'indésirables'" and the other with "Nous sommes tous des juifs et des allemands." In their support of Cohn-Bendit the rebels of 1968 thus identified with German Jews, with undesirables, outsiders, and foreigners, reduplicating the language of Vichy legislative exclusion and simultaneously associating the Gaullist government with the Vichy regime.

The next day, imitating the earlier occupation of the Sorbonne and the Odéon, fifty young Jews occupied the Consistoire israélite, the national organizing entity of Judaism in France, protesting "against the archaic and anti-democratic structures of the existing Jewish organizations."³⁷ At the end of May, when the parties of the Left began to maneuver for a replacement to de Gaulle, the proposed candidate for president was Pierre Mendès France, along with Léon Blum, one of only two Jewish premiers. His political career had been shadowed by the antisemitic slurs directed at him, evident in the surnames the Right used to pillory his reputation: "Mendès Jerusalem," "Mendès Palestine," or, most emphatically, "Mendès Anti-France."³⁸

As de Gaulle responded to these events, his actions also recalled memories of Vichy. After dissolving the National Assembly on May 30 and calling for new elections to be held on June 23, he addressed the French for the second time in less than a week, his first speech proving to be a bleak failure and indicating the possible end of his regime. May 30 was, fortuitously, the feast day of Joan of Arc, and de Gaulle's speech was only broadcast on radio because the Office de radiodiffusion télévision française (ORTF) was on strike in support of the

movement, and television may have been cut off by protestors. Memories of the Resistance reverberated through de Gaulle's address. As Keith Reader indicates, "it acted as a powerful reminder of another de Gaulle radio broadcast many years before—the 18 June appeal of 1940 . . . a call to resist the German invader."³⁹ The speech was extremely effective, and on the evening of May 30 over 300,000 pro-order demonstrators filled the Champs-Élysées in support of the regime. François Mauriac, Raymond Aron, and André Malraux joined hands with members of Occident.

In these pro-de Gaulle demonstrations the role of a "collaborationist" Right imputed to the regime by students was at least momentarily embraced by some of de Gaulle's supporters, as, along with the cries of "de Gaulle n'est pas seul" [de Gaulle is not alone], a few of de Gaulle's defenders were heard shouting, "La France aux français" and, hauntingly, "Cohn-Bendit à Dachau!"⁴⁰ The May 30 rally down the Champs-Élysées in favor of de Gaulle marked the death knell of the events of May. The Gaullists would score massive victories in the first rounds of the June election, and the PCF and the other left-wing parties would all sustain losses. Nonetheless, memories of fascism, antisemitism, Vichy, and the Jewish Question as well as that of the authority of the intellectual were important sites for the students' denunciation of French society and encouraged the critical analysis of these issues after May '68.⁴¹

Benny Lévy and the New Left

Against this backdrop the shifts in Sartre's position on the role of the intellectual and the image of "the Jew" in his thought coalesced in his final years due to his relationship with several Jews of the *soixante-huitard* generation, especially Benny Lévy. Sartre met Lévy in the aftermath of the events of May. At that time Lévy used the pseudonym Pierre Victor as the leader of a faction that grew out of the student revolts, the Gauche prolétarienne (GP). Of all the splinter groups of the New Left in post-1968 France, "the most important numerically as well as in cultural influence was without question the Gauche prolétarienne."⁴² Raymond Marcellin, minister of the interior, denounced the group as the most dangerous revolutionary movement of the time.⁴³ Maoist inspired, the GP formed in 1968 from a fusion of members of the UJC(ML) aligning with

part of the group that lit the flame of revolt, the M22M, including Serge July, and was joined by Alain Geismar, secretary general of the SNES(UP), giving it credibility as the heir to the politics of May '68.

The impetus for creating the new organization was a struggle over none other than the issue of intellectuals as leaders of the group. In August 1968 Jacques Broyelle circulated a text criticizing his role as one of three of the key figures in the UJC(ML) along with Robert Linhart and Pierre Victor. "We based our leadership style on the authority of the bourgeois intellectual," Broyelle maintained. "I was in charge because I had good training in theory."⁴⁴ Broyelle believed that the intellectual leaders of the group should resign, and he called for a new committee more in accord with the "nonelitist ideology of the Chinese Revolution."⁴⁵ Broyelle thereby took to its logical limit the program adopted by the UJC(ML) in its Second National Conference held July 14–16, 1967, at which members declared that "in contrast to intellectual spontaneism, the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the diverse aspects of French social reality necessitates a patient work of concrete analysis and investigation."⁴⁶ The group adopted this program from Chairman Mao's 1930 essay, "Oppose Book Worship."⁴⁷ Going beyond the argument that students needed to leave their training as "bourgeois intellectuals" at the rue d'Ulm and become factory workers or to agitate amongst the peasantry, Broyelle now suggested that the intellectuals in the UJC(ML) needed reeducation from the workers.

While Linhart acquiesced to the criticism, Pierre Victor struck back and left the UJC(ML) with a core group of most of the leadership, intellectual elites trained at Lycée Louis-le-Grand and the École normale supérieure, to form the GP. They would, nonetheless, enact a program, as Judith Friedlander puts it, of taking "the revolution out of the library and into the streets, abandoning books in the name of direct, violent action."⁴⁸ Harking back to the German Occupation, members of the GP considered themselves the "New Partisans," opposing what they characterized as the fascist-bourgeois occupation of France, exemplified by trade union delegates and foremen, who were labeled "collaborators."⁴⁹ They preached spontaneous rebellion against the hierarchy and discipline of the workplace and rejected academic and authoritarian Marxism.⁵⁰ Preaching exemplary, illegal, and violent action in order to provoke the repres-

sive state apparatus, which they believed would lead to civil war, the political stance of the group was radical, nearly leading to full-fledged terrorism like that of the German Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Italian Red Brigades. While the group categorically rejected the notion of a revolutionary vanguard party and all hierarchy, after the government crackdown in May 1970 the organizational structure was largely pared down to the Comité exécutif, made up mostly of young intellectuals, with Benny Lévy as *primus inter pares*.⁵¹

Lévy was the third of three sons, born in Cairo in 1946.⁵² His father worked in the import-export business. The Lévy's were middle-class assimilated Jews who strongly identified with their heritage but who were not interested in Jewish law or observant of traditional practice and did not give their children a specifically Jewish education. The family sometimes celebrated the Shabbat and holidays, but they were largely secular. Benny Lévy's uncle was Hillel Schwartz, the founder of the Egyptian Communist Party. Lévy's oldest brother, Bobby, joined the Union of Workers, Peasants, and Students and educated his siblings early on about the evils of capitalism. When the British lost control of the Suez Canal in 1956, most Jews living in Egypt decided to leave, including the Lévy's, but Bobby, then eighteen, refused. He remained in Egypt and was subsequently arrested and sent to prison. When Benny Lévy moved to Paris to study for entrance to the *École normale supérieure*, he joined his brother Tony, who had moved there to pursue a degree in mathematics and had joined the UEC and supported the Algerian liberation struggle.

Like his brother, Benny also became a member of the UEC. He became friendly with Jacques Broyelle, who introduced him to the Althusser students at the *École normale supérieure*, including Robert Linhart, then leader of the Althusser faction of the UEC. Linhart soon invited Lévy to sit on the executive committee of the group. By 1966 the various factions of the UEC were pulling apart; Linhart was critical of the Soviet Union and endorsed Mao's Cultural Revolution. In December 1966 more than a hundred members, including the Lévy brothers, left the UEC with Linhart to form the UJC(ML). This group received support from many of the students in Paris and in the provinces, and Benny Lévy rose to second in command.

Linhart refused to let the UJC(ML) participate in the early days of the student revolts because he wanted the revolution to be “working class.” In the midst of the May uprisings, however, he collapsed from exhaustion. The Renault car factory strike in Billancourt on May 17 united worker and student activists. Lévy decided to support the strike in a new popular front that aligned workers with progressives of the middle classes. The UJC(ML) marched with other students to the Sorbonne and then to Billancourt, carrying the red flag to the huge Renault factory with a placard that read, “The working class takes the battle flag from the students’ frail hands.”⁵³ The next day wildcat strikes began to paralyze the entire French economy, resulting in the biggest strikes in French history.

In the schisms following May ’68, when Lévy left the UJC(ML), he lashed out at Broyelle and his followers, whom he called *liquidors* (exterminators) for trying to destroy the party. He departed with about fifty others to form the GP, and they took with them the paper, *La Cause du Peuple*.⁵⁴ In the paper members of the GP followed an Althusserian line by distinguishing themselves from the humanism of the early Marx. They also called on students to leave the protected walls of the university and to ally themselves with the proletariat.

When an *anticasseurs* law of April 1970 made participating in violent demonstrations illegal and made organizations calling for such demonstrations responsible for the destruction wreaked by rioters, the government arrested two successive directors of *La Cause du Peuple*. To prevent the crackdown, Sartre was asked to front the paper, initiating an affiliation of prominent intellectuals with diverse actions of the GP.⁵⁵ He became the paper’s “titular director,” a position that gave him little authority to influence anything. Immediately before becoming the nominal head of the paper, in fact, Sartre had been under attack in its pages.⁵⁶

In May, when he announced to the public that he would be the director, he said that he endorsed the Maoists’ right to publish, even though he did not always agree with the group’s political actions. “At the beginning,” Sartre later declared, “I stated that I was not in accord with the Maos, nor were they with me. I took a legal and not a political responsibility; I simply gave my name so that the newspaper could continue and the militants could act and write as they

intended.”⁵⁷ In the following two years, however, he did often join the Maoists when they marched on factories and demonstrated. Some of the most famous images of the period include those of him selling the paper in the streets. He also lent his name to the Maoist-Communist *La Parole au Peuple* and the more anarchist publication *Tout*, as well as *J'Accuse*. In 1973 he helped to found *Libération*, serving as its first director, and later claimed that the radical news organ established to “help the people seize language [*prendre la parole*]” was part of his oeuvre.⁵⁸ In order to raise money for the newspaper Sartre started the series of conversations with Benny Lévy and Philippe Gavi (a journalist for *Tout* and a leader of *Vive la Révolution!*) in November 1972 that were published under the title *On a raison de se révolter* (One Is Right to Rebel), the revolutionary motto of the GP.⁵⁹ In the interviews the three traced Sartre's political itinerary and analyzed the thinking of the New Left.

Sartre's solidarity with diverse ideological positions among the student revolutionaries was part of a new strategy of political commitment after May '68. He used his name and notoriety as an intellectual to make himself, *qua* author, more plural, multiplying the possibility of dissent by lending his name for use by *gauchiste* publications and positions that he did not always agree with. This effort to intervene publicly in new ways was halted in the summer of 1973 when he had a stroke and went blind.

In autumn of 1973 the GP disbanded all political activity. The leaders of the group, including Lévy, decided that the military wing of the group had grown too violent. In 1972 Robert Nogrette, the assistant head of personnel at the Renault factory at Renault-Billancourt, was kidnapped following the shooting of a young Maoist worker, Pierre Overney, by a security guard at Renault.⁶⁰ We have already discussed the impact of the Munich massacre on the GP leadership. Along with the Bruay-en-Artois affair, in which the GP called for the lynching of a notary, accused without evidence of the murder of a young working-class woman, and the desire of the group to guillotine Paul Touvier, a member of Vichy's Milice, after he was pardoned for crimes against humanity by President Pompidou in November 1971, it was becoming clear that the careful line insisted upon by the leadership between illegality, violence, and terrorism was breaking down.⁶¹

After the autodissolution of the group Sartre offered Lévy a job—to help him finish his work on *Flaubert*. Lévy came every day from then on to Sartre's home in the fourteenth arrondissement on the rue Edgar-Quinet and read to the blind, rather enfeebled, depressed, and often sleeping Sartre about the French Revolution, religious heresies, the Gnostics, and ontological problems. Sometimes they worked on Sartre's *Flaubert*. Lévy always addressed him as *tu*. When Sartre regained his health he socialized with Lévy and his friends, dining at their commune in Eaubonne on the outskirts of Paris. In 1974 Sartre wrote a letter to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing on Lévy's behalf, asking him to facilitate Lévy's citizenship. In December 1974 Lévy went to Stuttgart with Sartre to talk to the terrorist Andre Baader, who had tried to make contact with the GP earlier; they were joined by Daniel Cohn-Bendit as translator. Sartre soon began planning a series of dialogues with Lévy that were to be collected together as *Pouvoir et liberté* (Power and Liberty), which he hoped would finally complete his perpetually deferred work on ethics. During this same period Lévy began to explore his Judaism through the influence of Levinas, and in 1978 he started studying Hebrew with Shmuel Trigano, whom he had recently met.

As we have discussed, Sartre and Lévy went on their trip to Israel together in February 1978, four months after Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, to interview Israelis and Palestinians. Soon after they returned they submitted the article about the visit to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, signed jointly. As Simone de Beauvoir tells the story, Jacques-Laurent Bost telephoned her and said that they needed to pull the article because it would cause embarrassment, and she convinced Sartre not to publish it.⁶² In an editorial meeting with *Les Temps Modernes* Lévy exploded, insulting everyone at the meeting, storming out, and renouncing his position as an editor. Sartre's relationship with Lévy had become the first important rift between Beauvoir and Sartre in their lifelong relationship.

Hope Now: Rejections, Responses, Reexaminations

The rift widened with the publication of the *Hope Now* interviews. These initial reflections were supposed to be developed in Sartre and Lévy's continuing discussions for a full-length treatise on ethics that Sartre had promised since the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness*, a project perpetually taken up and post-

poned. It is not clear whether the dialogue with Sartre was based on one specific interview or a composite of discussions spliced together or how much they were edited. We know that the dialogues were read to Sartre for his approval and that he insisted on having them published against Beauvoir's wishes.

The interviews are scandalous because in them Sartre revisits and sometimes reassesses a series of concepts and themes that he had been concerned with throughout his life, occasionally in radically new ways, including violence, oppression, hope and despair, terror, being for others, the possibility of genuine intersubjectivity, fraternity, community, goals for humanity, the principles of the Left, and the meaning of revolution.⁶³ What was most shocking, though, was how the infamous atheist stressed the importance to non-Jews like himself of the Jewish concept of the coming of the Messiah.

In *La cérémonie des adieux* (*Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*), published in 1981 as her testament to Sartre's final years, Beauvoir rejected the validity of the interviews on the grounds that the ideas in the conversation were coerced by Benny Lévy. She seconded Olivier Todd's assertion that the dialogues comprised a "*détournement de vieillard*" (corruption of an old man) by the manipulative Lévy, who abducted Sartre for his own depraved purposes.⁶⁴ She emphasized Sartre's mental and physical infirmity. She also discussed Sartre's intellectual and psychological dependence upon Lévy, who as a leader of the *gauchistes* enabled Sartre to remain an engaged and engaging intellectual figure even as he waned. However, the most damning aspect of her repudiation of the dialogue with Lévy is the manner in which she castigates his religious and particularly his Jewish beliefs, opposing them to her own and Sartre's secularism.

I read this conversation at last—it was signed by Sartre and Benni [sic] Lévy, Victor's real name—about a week before it was to appear. I was horrified. It had nothing to do with the "plural thought" that Sartre had spoken of in *Obliques*.⁶⁵ Victor did not express any of his own opinions directly; he made Sartre assume them while he, by virtue of who knows what revealed truth, played the part of the district attorney. The tone in which he spoke to Sartre and his arrogant superiority utterly disgusted all the friends who saw the document before it was published. And like me they were horri-

fied by the nature of the statements extorted from Sartre. In fact Victor had changed a great deal since Sartre first met him. Like many other former Maoists he had turned toward God—the God of Israel, since he was a Jew. His view of the world had become spiritualistic and even religious. Sartre jibed at this change of direction. I remember one evening when talking to Sylvie and me, he gave vent to his dissatisfaction. “Victor absolutely insists that the whole origin of morals is in the Torah! But that’s not at all what I think,” he told us. And as I have already pointed out, he would struggle with Victor for days on end, and then, tired of contention, would give in. Victor, instead of helping him to broaden his own thought, was bringing pressure to bear on him so that he should repudiate it. . . . Sartre knew the full extent of my disappointment. . . . I told him that the whole Temps modernes team was with me. But this only made him the more set on having the conversation published at once.⁶⁶

Principally through her characterization of Lévy’s hidden manipulation of Sartre, Beauvoir’s description delegitimizes the texts by claiming that all of Sartre’s major statements in the dialogues are not his own and do not reveal his true intentions.

She depicts Lévy as a domineering, opportunistic, arrogant, all-too-Jewish interlocutor. He is characterized as a Svengali who exploits Sartre to achieve his own ends, which she claims differ markedly from Sartre’s.⁶⁷ Beauvoir also remonstrates against Lévy’s tone in the dialogue because he dares to speak to Sartre—the great thinker whom Beauvoir always addressed as *vous*—from the presumptuous perspective of what she calls “revealed truth.”

She was not alone in denigrating Lévy. Roland Castro called him “the least humanist of all leftists, a monster of cynicism and mysticism”; an ex-Maoist comrade warned that he was “a crazed moralist [*fou de morale*] . . . capable of turning . . . an audience around with his perfect speeches and his crushing intelligence”; and John Gerassi referred to him as a “fanatic diminutive warlord [and] . . . a fake disciple” who tried to create the impression that “Sartre was really a Jewish philosopher all along.”⁶⁸ Although Beauvoir does not directly accuse Lévy of fabricating *Hope Now*, others have suggested precisely this, including Raymond Aron and François Truffaut.⁶⁹

Having attempted to thoroughly discredit the dialogue with Lévy, Adieux tries to overshadow it with Beauvoir's own taped interviews with Sartre, recorded in August through September 1974. Beauvoir declares in the "Preface to the Conversations" that these discussions "do not reveal any unexpected aspects of him, but they do allow one to follow the winding curve of his thought and to hear his living voice."⁷⁰ Sartre's living speech, his presence of mind, is here opposed by Beauvoir to Lévy's Sartre: seduced, passive, his core principles bugged by the young bum. Thus, in opposition to *Hope Now*, *Adieux* serves as the authentic document of Sartre's "true" beliefs, promulgating a consistency within Sartre's positions even at the moment of his death.⁷¹

In response to Beauvoir and Adieux Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, his adopted Algerian-Jewish daughter whom he vested with the legal authority of the posthumous publication of his work, upheld the authenticity of Lévy's dialogue with Sartre. In an open letter that appeared in *Libération* in 1981 she defended the legitimacy of the text as an accurate reflection of Sartre's intentions:

*When Sartre and I were alone together, I tried to be his eyes as much as possible. As I did with other interviews of that same period, I therefore read and re-read their dialogue to him, repeating word after word as well as the whole text several times, to the point of irritating him, aware that certain phrases of his would be surprising. Sartre added and corrected as he wished. He thought that he would explain himself in greater depth in their future book. I grant that my rereadings didn't achieve the intimacy that one has with one's own text when one reads it oneself, but how could that be helped?*⁷²

Elkaïm-Sartre thus insists, against Beauvoir and those who support her perspective, that the interviews did indeed reflect Sartre's intentions and beliefs about the topics raised in the dialogue.

So after the death of the author, the invocation of Sartre's intentions became the common basis for two apparently irreconcilable readings. These two interpretations have shaped all the subsequent responses.⁷³ In characterizing this fundamental dichotomy Annie Cohen-Solal, Sartre's biographer, concludes that at the end of his life Sartre was caught between "two strong systems": on the one hand, "the guardians of the Sartrean Truth"—Beauvoir and *Les Temps*

Modernes; on the other, Sartre's new allies—Benny Lévy and Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, two young, committed Jews of North African descent who represent the influence of the generation of May '68 in Sartre's life. Still, the dichotomy that Cohen-Solal describes persists in the search for Sartre's intentions. In the end, in the words of Ronald Aronson, "Cohen-Solal's account returns us to Beauvoir's: to continue feeling alive Sartre joined with those who demanded that he renounce, indeed, betray himself."⁷⁴

Aronson's own analysis maintains that "we have to locate Sartre's own complex intention in and through several fields of tension, including that of his relationship with Lévy and the divergence between his own purposes and those of Lévy" (40). Aronson's exemplary assessment of these diverging intentions, despite his distance from aspects of Beauvoir's approach, once more returns us to her insistence upon Sartre's Judaization by Lévy.⁷⁵ He affirms that Sartre's purpose in these interviews was to revive left-wing politics by formulating an ethics that would serve as its basis. But he suggests that "while Lévy's original point seemed to be to separate Jew and Leftist, Sartre takes over the discussion and turns it in his own direction. He trumps Lévy's interest in Orthodox Judaism by insisting on the broadest conception of Jewishness" (36). This insistence on the diverging intentions of Sartre and Lévy rests upon Aronson's notion that "Lévy . . . has begun to seek personal salvation" (37) through "the God of orthodox Judaism" (38), while "Sartre remains political and revolutionary" (37).

What Aronson fails to appreciate is the deeply political stance of Lévy's critique of politics embedded in his understanding of Orthodox Judaism. Lévy has tied politics to his own return to Talmudic study, emphasizing the ethical critique of injustice in prophetic Judaism and the traditional rabbinic rejection of the status quo and political power.⁷⁶ He has said of his own return to Talmudic study, "What has triggered and crystallized my interest and rootedness in these texts is the great gesture of the Pharisees toward Rome and its concept of politics. When Jerusalem was in flames, rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai asked the Roman general only for permission to rebuild an academy of study at Yavneh. It is in accord with this gesture that I express my critique of politics."⁷⁷ We all know today that it is impossible to separate politics and religion.

Moreover, Lévy's Orthodox Judaism, which evolved over time and was still at an early stage in the late 1970s, should not automatically be correlated with an antileftist agenda; Orthodox Judaism is not a monolith, and neither are the political implications that are drawn from it. Instead, as Aronson affirms, "the quest for human equality and social justice harmonizes with Lévy's developing religious vision and Sartre's political quest" (38).

Final Reflections on the Jewish Question

Just as politics and religion cannot be easily rent apart, likewise in the course of the dialogues Sartre and Lévy challenge the search for the intentions of a singular author as antagonistic to the political and ethical stance that they embrace together. What Aronson, Beauvoir, and others point to as Sartre's declared intention in the text—the reexamination of the political through the attempt to discover an ethical foundation for a New Left politics—cannot be understood by separating Lévy and Sartre as two distinct authors with discernibly different intentions. To read *Hope Now* this way is to silence the connections the text makes about the role of the author, ethics, and politics. The links between these issues, established in the text, have crucial implications for how scholars should read Sartre's final reflections on the Jewish Question.⁷⁸ *Hope Now* depends upon a hermeneutic sensitive to the flow of discussion, a mode of listening attuned to the weave of positions created by two intellectuals thinking-together, which we might name a *hermeneutics of performativity*. The performative dimensions of the dialogue demand that readers focus on the "plural thought" created between Lévy and Sartre.

In *Hope Now* Sartre and Lévy take the critique of the universal intellectual to its limits, questioning from the outset any attempt to foreclose the interpretation of the dialogue by claiming that the ideas it contains are not shared by its authors.⁷⁹ *Hope Now* clearly problematizes the drive for the singular intentionality of the author. Sartre explicitly addresses his status as an author and Lévy's role in the dialogues:

Don't forget: in spite of the way you are participating in this dialogue—keeping out of the spotlight and talking about me—we are working together . . . I had to enter into a dialogue because I couldn't write any more . . . I would

have to include you in my meditation—in other words, I would have to accept our meditating together. And that fact has completely changed my mode of inquiry, for until now I have always worked alone . . . [w]hereas now we work out ideas together. . . . Either it was an abomination, which is to say my ideas were being diluted by another person; or it was something new, a thought created by two people. When I write, the thoughts I offer people in writing are universal, but they are not plural. . . . When there is only one author, an idea bears the author's mark: one enters his thought and one moves along paths that he has traced. . . . What our collaboration brings to me are plural thoughts that we have formed together, which constantly yield me something new even though, *a priori*, I agree with their whole content.⁸⁰

Sartre thus remarks that the dialogue with Lévy constitutes a new modality of thinking, “a thought created by two people.” In discussing his work with Lévy in the *Obliques* interview with Michel Sicard in 1979 he called it “double-thinking,” “the unity of the double” produced by two authors thinking about the same thing from different perspectives, which opened up a multiplicity of standpoints. Unlike the Platonic dialogues or those written by Hume or other philosophers where one author inscribes all the positions advanced, the dialogue with Lévy was “a work together,” “a new thing” that contained at once an idea but also its counterargument (*contrepartie*), mutual understanding, but also disagreements and contradictions.⁸¹ This performative interaction, this dialogic thinking is a “plural thought” between Sartre and Lévy that inscribes the difference in their positions even as it results in a thinking that goes beyond either individual author.

Moreover, Sartre and Lévy undermine the focus on the individual intentionality of the author not only in the specific content of the conversation but in the form of the dialogue (just as, we might add parenthetically, is the case in the rabbinic, Talmudic writing that inspires Lévy's Judaism). The form of the dialogue is not incidental to the project at the heart of the conversations with Lévy. The grounding of the ethics that Sartre and Lévy explore depends upon undermining precisely the autonomous conception of subjectivity that the search for the authors' singular intentions implies.⁸²

The contours of this ethics are schematically presented in the interviews with Lévy. In the section immediately prior to the discussion of the status of the author Sartre begins the elaboration of a new position on ethics that calls his earlier conception of “being-for-others” into question through a thinking of ethics in terms of the dimension of obligation to and for the Other. This obligation Sartre calls a “requisitioned freedom” (70), which requires a rethinking of the theory of consciousness and individual freedom that his earlier work painstakingly developed.

Clearly influenced by Emmanuel Levinas, the central element of the concept of “requisitioned freedom” is a notion of obligation as an inner constraint imminent within every action and perception by consciousness that Sartre contends “is the beginning of ethics” (70). He distinctly indicates that in order to found the possibility for the ethics he envisions he would need to reconceptualize the theory of consciousness that underpins his oeuvre: “I was looking for ethics in a consciousness that had no reciprocal, no other. . . . [E]ach consciousness seems to me now simultaneously to constitute itself as a consciousness and, at the same time, as the consciousness of the other and for the other. . . . It is this reality—the self considering itself as self for the other, having a relationship with the other—that I call ethical conscience/consciousness [*conscience*]” (71). The sense that every perception and every action has a dimension of obligation means that the *pour-soi* of Being and Nothingness is always-already *pour-soi-pour-autrui*. Herbert Spiegelberg has nicely summarized the implications of Sartre’s new position: “Everything in consciousness is bound up with the presence and even the absence of the existence of others. In this sense consciousness is essentially moral consciousness. This is clearly a complete reversal of the social philosophy of *Being and Nothingness*.”⁸³

Therefore, both the form and content of the dialogues discover ethics, politics, and the other before consciousness and intention.⁸⁴ The form and the content of the discussion resist the attempt to redefine with clear boundaries an autonomous and centered subject. Writing-together is thus the means of the embrace of the other. It enacts what Jean-Pierre Boulé calls the “ethics of reciprocity” that Sartre and Lévy sought to establish as the foundation for a New Left politics.⁸⁵ The process of writing-together imminently inscribes in

the text the dimension of obligation that Sartre and Lévy contend is the foundation for an ethics.

Sartre's reassessment of the other in his ontology also entails a reconsideration of humanism. Lévy rehearses Sartre's previous positions his stance before 1939, exemplified by his vicious condemnation of bourgeois humanism in *Nausea*; his embrace of existential humanism in "Existentialism Is a Humanism"; and his position in the context of the decolonization struggles that humanism helped to veil colonial oppression (67–68). In *Hope Now* Sartre and Lévy announce a new project to forge an ethical means of being human beyond humanism. Says Sartre, "We are beings who are struggling to establish human relations and arrive at a definition of what is human. . . . So it is by means of searching for this definition, and this action of a truly human kind—beyond humanism, of course—that we will be able to consider our effort and our end" (67). Together with Lévy, Sartre's effort is to offer a redemptive reading of humanism in terms of the ethics of obligation. This humanity beyond humanism refuses an essence to human beings but affirms humanism as the very process of thinking the ethics that Sartre and Lévy are trying to develop.

Sartre and Lévy attempt to ground the moral transformation of human relationships that they envision in the bond that they initially call "fraternity." As William McBride puts it in commenting on this section, "This entire, frustratingly brief text can be regarded as a kind of Rorschach Test concerning Sartre's final philosophical position."⁸⁶ In rather sketchy terms they attempt to develop the concept of fraternity by arguing that it must radicalize conventional notions of social relations and democracy, aiming at a primary, transhistorical relationship among humans, with "fraternity" as the common origin and end of humanity. This fraternity turns out, in fact, to be a maternity, since the constitutive fact of the human condition is that we are all born of mothers, or, as Sartre puts it somewhat banally, "we form a single family. . . . [Fraternity is] the relationship of being born of the same mother" (87).

In the final section of *Hope Now* Sartre points to Jewish messianic thought as his example of an ethics that moves beyond the strictures of Marxism and humanism toward this idea of fraternity/maternity. In doing so he links his re-examination of ethics as "the basis for establishing a guiding principle for the

left as it exists today” (60) to a rethinking of the image of Jews and Judaism. In the process he critiques his own thesis formulated in his *Réflexions* that “the Jew” is an invention of the antisemite’s gaze. He regards his former approach as an ahistorical understanding of Judaism.

In an inversion of his earlier position that claimed that Judaism was “quasi-historical” Sartre now contends that the reality of Jewish history forces a reassessment of the whole notion of history itself:

At the time that I said that there was no Jewish history, I was thinking of history in a certain well-defined sense—the history of France, the history of Germany, the history of America, of the United States. In any case, the history of a sovereign political entity that has its own territory and relations with other states like itself. . . . One had to conceive of Jewish history not only as the history of the Jews’ dispersion throughout the world but also the unity of this Diaspora, the unity of the dispersed Jews. . . . The philosophy of history isn’t the same if there’s a Jewish history or if there isn’t. But obviously there is a Jewish history. (103)

Steven Schwartzschild remarks, “The new and striking thesis on ‘the Jewish question’ in Sartre’s last interview is that there is a positive, ‘metaphysical’ and ‘profound Jewish reality’ all its own. This reality of the trans-historical Jewish people refutes all of Hegelian/Marxist philosophy of history.”⁸⁷ This reexamination of history as such has critical implications for Sartre’s view of the role of the intellectual because the notions of *engagement* and *compréhension* and Sartre’s theory of *praxis* more generally depend on his understanding of history.

But of what does Jewish history now consist? Schwartzschild again puts it succinctly:

Jewish history is produced, so asserts Sartre now, by commitment to the monotheistic God, whose “word” creates a metaphysical life and destiny. This destiny is defined by its end (goal, purpose, telos, eschaton), and that telos is a totally new, different, ethical world—in traditional language, the messianic kingdom of God on earth. Sartre adds, provocatively, that the Jewish conception of the messianic kingdom is better than the Christian, because

it is this-worldly, and on this ground he even professes his liking of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

But Sartre clearly does not take Jewish messianism literally. It is an allegory, a figurative paradigm, a model for how to relate to the past, the future, the world, others, and oneself.

This exploration of Jewish history opens Sartre's thought beyond the Hegelian and Marxist conception of history to a Jewish messianic thinking where he sees hope for a new foundation for politics. Lévy asked, "In what way can this Jewish messianic end interest you today?" Sartre responded:

Precisely because it possesses no Marxist element. I mean, it is not an end that is defined in terms of the present situation and then projected into the future, one that will be attained by stages through the development of certain facts today. . . . The Jewish end has none of this. If you like, it's the beginning of the existence of men who live for each other. In other words, it's an ethical end. Or, more exactly, it is ethics. The Jew thinks that the end of the world, of this world, and the upsurge of the other will result in the appearance of the ethical existence of men who live for one another. (106)

The Jewish messianic end consequently exemplifies a radical reconceptualization of temporality and ontology, consciousness, ethics, and politics. It suggests a model of time that is not linear, an ethics that precedes ontology, the fact of the Other as intrinsic to consciousness. We must therefore recognize our obligation to and for the other as a condition of the self. Furthermore, the Jewish notion of the coming of the Messiah radically reimagines revolution as the end of Sartre's politics:

What do we mean by revolution? Doing away with the present society and replacing it by a more just society. . . . Revolutionaries want to bring about a society that would be humane and satisfying for human beings, but they forget that a society of this kind is not a de facto society; it is, you might say, a de jure society. That is, a society in which the relations among human beings are ethical. Well, it's through a kind of messianism that one can conceive of this ethics as the ultimate goal of revolution. (107)

Accordingly, read as a performance, what Beauvoir and the *Temps Modernes* “family” feared and dreaded and sought to repress was precisely what *Hope Now* represented: a revolution in Sartre’s thinking about the ends of politics, the ethics upon which it must be based, the understanding of subjectivity and intersubjective relations that was the foundation of this ethics, and the philosophy of history that defined the horizons within which this comprehension of human relations takes place. Sartre and Lévy were not able to systematically develop these insights, but *Hope Now* laid down the lines for Sartre’s rethinking of these problems, and Sartre and Lévy’s riff on Jewish messianism provided the inspiration for this reevaluation.

Despite the new starting points of *Hope Now*, however, there are no clear breaks in Sartre’s work. Every shift has its own chronology. Vincent de Coorebyter has rightly cautioned that we need to beware of the myth of rupture in interpreting *Hope Now*.⁸⁸ We are well served in reading Sartre rhizomically rather than genealogically, as François Noudelmann suggests, or in tracing “continuities in diachronic discontinuities and discontinuities in synchronic continuities,” as Dominick La Capra has advocated.⁸⁹ Sartre was constantly thinking against himself, reworking concepts and conclusions and reconceptualizing old categories in new contexts.

To highlight only one example, the ethical conscience/consciousness of *Hope Now* does not come from nowhere. Already in *Being and Nothingness* the Other is constitutive of the *pour-soi*, albeit in a more conflictual sense, delimiting one’s existence and one’s consciousness. And this ethical consciousness as the basis of a political consciousness is not a radical departure either nor solely a Levinassian turn, as many have supposed. The pivotal transformation in Sartre’s thinking regarding the question of human liberty is best formulated in “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” in which Sartre argued, “If existence really does precede essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus, existentialism’s first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him. And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men.”⁹⁰ In other words, in choosing for myself I must choose in such a way that it leads to the emancipation of all humanity. My ontological

freedom is thereby bound to a political obligation that is an inner constraint within every action if it is to be authentic, according to Sartre's existential humanism. As we have already suggested, this axiom was apparent in the concluding line of his *Réflexions*, where the rights and freedom of all (Frenchmen) are conjoined to the fate of the Jews: to their liberation from fear.⁹¹ Replace the Jew with the proletariat, the colonized, women, gays, indeed any marginalized, dispossessed, repressed, and oppressed member or group in the human species, and you have the contours of Sartre's political and ethical itinerary. *Hope Now* radicalizes these propositions in new terms and with some far-reaching implications for positions that Sartre had long wrestled with in his oeuvre. In short, not unlike Sartre's conception of Jewish identity and his transformed understanding of history in light of it, his corpus is diasporatic but still unified in its differences within itself. Each needs to be understood in its context.

The context of Sartre's work with Lévy is often delimited to the period after Sartre's blindness in 1973, when he was an enfeebled old man, no longer physically capable of the creativity that had sparked his most productive periods. To read *Hope Now* in this way, however, is to cut off the fecundity of Sartre's politics in the 1960s that had been worked out in dialogue with many members of the *soixante-huitard* generation, among whom were a preponderance of Jews, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Alain Geismar, André Glucksmann, Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, and Ely Ben-Gal, among many others, well before Sartre's encounters with Benny Lévy. Sartre's last work was a part of the changes in the intellectual culture that led into and out of May '68, which in many respects his work anticipated but in others would be changed by it.

Hope Now only contained a schematic outline for Sartre's rethinking of ethics after humanism. The dialogue with Lévy, like all of Sartre's work on ethics (from his promise at the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness* to the two thousand pages in his *Notebooks for an Ethics*, from the lectures he planned to deliver at Cornell in 1965 to *Pouvoir et liberté*), remains unfinished. In the course of elucidating this unfinished promise *Hope Now* takes Sartre's long critique of the universal intellectual to its limits and discovers a politics that no longer moves from particular to universal but rather questions universality in the interests of plural-

ity. This politics was to be based upon a *de jure* ethics that precedes ontology and that grounds itself on obligation and the Other rather than on the singular, autonomous subject. To read Sartre and to sever the Jewish content of his final reflections from politics by opposing Benny Lévy and Orthodox Judaism to the revolutionary project in Sartre's final reflections is to circumvent the ethical relation to the Other that Sartre's dialogue with Lévy suggests as the basic principle for his new politics. In sum, the Jewish Question is not a foreign question imposed on Sartre by Lévy but a crucial component to Sartre's rethinking of politics at the end of Marxism as the philosophy of our time.⁹²

To find Sartre reimagining "the Jew" at a moment when he was profoundly reforging his politics confirms how the image of "the Jew" consistently functions as a foil in formulating the foundations of his intellectual politics. The image of "the Jew" has proven to be a ubiquitous figure in Sartre's thought, serving as a constant catalyst in his conception of the political role of the intellectual. His reflections on the Jewish Question—from his fiction in the 1930s to his final interviews in 1980—help to disclose how Sartre, the paragon of the French Left intellectual tradition, defined his own identity and the role of France, partly through his considerations of Jewish difference. His reevaluation of the role of the intellectual and "the Jew" in *Hope Now* reveals how the Jewish Question continues to haunt not just the French intellectual tradition but the Western tradition in general.

8. The Eternal Return of Sartre

Reading Réflexions sur la question juive in Postwar France

In January 2000 *Le Nouvel Observateur* announced on its cover that after twenty years of purgatory there was a “retour de Sartre” evident in the slew of studies, monographs, and memoirs that had begun to appear, in conferences and exhibitions, and in the return to discussions about him to the culture pages of newspapers. Introducing a dossier of responses to this “return” that included among its luminaries Bernard-Henri Lévy, Alain Finkielkraut, and Claude Lanzmann, Jean Daniel indicated that despite Sartre’s dramatic works being out of fashion, his occasionally overly didactic literature, and questions about his political commitments, he merited his legendary status because he had defined the ethico-political agenda of a generation.¹ “I would add,” Daniel maintains, “that I have always felt indebted to Sartre because of his *Réflexions sur la question juive*.” Two generations of Jewish intellectuals had discovered themselves in Sartre’s book, he stated: “We are many, from François Jacob to Simone Veil, from Edgar Morin to Claude Lanzmann and Robert Misrahi, to have recognized ourselves in the Sartrean text.”² This recognition, and the response to Sartre’s *Réflexions* by intellectuals from across the spectrum of French intellectual life, are the topics of this chapter.

As Daniel indicates, in postwar France Sartre’s *Réflexions* itself became a *lieu de mémoire* for reflections on the Jewish Question.³ Whether hostile or laudatory, critical or sympathetic, whether Jews or non-Jews, French writers in the postwar period often determined their own stance on the Jewish Question relative to Sartre’s text. His *Réflexions* became an ur-text because his analysis framed the issues of the debate. In reviews, articles, journals, and books Sartre’s treatise

was often the touchstone for a reexamination of the questions that structured the four parts of his study: What is antisemitism and how is it perpetuated? What defines Jewish alterity and what are the limits of the liberal tolerance of this difference? What is the relationship between antisemitism and Jewish identity? How should the French respond to antisemitism?

This chapter traces the reception of Sartre's *Réflexions* as a means to map the discussion of the Jewish Question in postwar France.⁴ I first consider Sartre's own critical reappraisals of his *Réflexions* and the account in Beauvoir's memoirs and in other biographical works. I then examine the range of the early responses: from Céline's vituperative diatribe to Marxists' condemnation of Sartre's work as idealistic. These replies are weighted against the early critiques of Jewish thinkers. Next, I consider some of the key examinations of Jewish identity in postwar France by André Neher, Albert Memmi, Robert Misrahi, and Arnold Mandel, followed by the views of writers of the May '68 generation: Pierre Goldman, Alain Finkielkraut, Benny Lévy, Shmuel Trigano, and Bernard-Henri Lévy. I conclude with assessing how the Sartrean thesis that "the Jew" is a construct of the specular gaze of the French antisemite helped define postmodern efforts to pose the Jewish Question. Postmodernists have developed Sartre's antifoundationalist and antiessentialist conception of Jewish identity and difference. Sartre's *Réflexions* thereby serves as the springboard for a genealogy of responses after Auschwitz to the series of questions that have haunted *la question juive* from its origins.

Sartre's Autocritique

We have seen that Sartre returned often to the issues raised in his *Réflexions*, reexamining and reworking his *engagement* on behalf of Jews, Judaism, and Israel and rearticulating his understanding of the Jewish Question. As with other positions, he was often his own most insistent critic, thus embodying his conception of authenticity by refusing to take a transhistorical stance that was not amenable to change. Therefore, when he reassessed the *Réflexions* in light of mutations in the postwar period, he chipped away at elements that defined his earlier views even as he reworked his axioms to suit new contexts.

Sartre hedged on aspects of the *Réflexions* even before the complete text came out in November 1946 as a result of objections to the section on the authentic and inauthentic Jew.⁵ Following publication, he gave two lectures to French-Jewish organizations that showed a greater sensitivity to the Jewish situation than that exemplified in the book. He gave an address entitled “Kafka, a Jewish Writer” before the Ligue française pour une Palestine libre (French League for a Free Palestine) on May 31, 1947.⁶ Then in June 1947 he gave a speech to members of the Alliance israélite universelle (AIU) entitled “*Réflexions sur la question juive*,” in which Sartre’s *abrégé* (summary) of his essay subtly responded to some of his earliest critics. One of France’s most important Jewish organizations, with thousands of members in France and around the world, the AIU was founded in May 1860 by professionals, businessmen, and intellectuals in order, as their statutes indicated, to “work everywhere for the emancipation and the moral progress of the Jews” and “to lend effective support to those who suffered because of their being Jews.”⁷ Because he was speaking before a large group of identified activist Jews Sartre softened his emphatic tone and language, acknowledged the existence of a unique Jewish culture, and unexpectedly foregrounded the fact that his perspective was “the point of view of a Christian—of someone with a Christian education—on this question.”⁸ He focused on the historical specificity of Jews and Judaism to a greater extent and downplayed the significance of the “inauthentic Jew” and the “politics of assimilation.” Facing a largely bourgeois audience, he also dropped the homology between the working class and Jews and the emphasis on the assimilation of Jewishness in the classless society that would emerge after the revolution. His elisions in the lecture downplayed the aspects of his *Réflexions* that critics, especially Jewish critics, would often harp upon.

Sartre’s predominant predisposition from the 1950s to the 1970s was to defend his analysis in the *Réflexions*, albeit with some qualifications. In 1953, for example, in response to François Mauriac’s castigation of him for his failure to address antisemitism in the Soviet Union in the context of the Slansky trial, he insisted that he had no intention of justifying Russian antisemitism.⁹ He reaffirmed the final sentence of the *Réflexions*, which stated that no Frenchman was free or secure so long as a single Jew anywhere feared for his life.¹⁰ In 1966, in

the context of the exacerbation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, during his interview with Simha Flapan of *Al-Hamishmar* he criticized the limits of his phenomenological approach in the *Réflexions*, stating that his methodology was insufficient and needed to be supplemented by a treatment of “the problem from a double point of view—historical and economic—inspired by a series of remarkable works, like Poliakoff’s [sic] *History of Antisemitism*.”¹¹ Nevertheless, he insisted that his conclusions would remain the same: the dialectical relation between Jews and antisemitism was still significant, since antisemitism continued to be a serious problem in Europe. In addition, he upheld the distinction between the authentic and inauthentic Jew.

It was only in the 1970s, in large measure due to his relationship with several *soixante-huitard* Jews, especially his adopted Jewish daughter, Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, his friendship with the Israeli socialist-Zionist Ely Ben-Gal, and most notably through his conversations with Benny Lévy, that Sartre would revise his views. In the spring of 1972 Sartre, Arlette, and Ely Ben-Gal would record three different sessions of a conversation, which remained unpublished until after his death, that delved into great detail concerning Sartre’s representations of Jews and Judaism.¹² The three began by revisiting the milieu of Sartre’s upbringing: the influence of his Dreyfusard grandfather’s anti-antisemitism, which was nevertheless tinged by Jews being the butt of many jokes; his relationship with several Jews at school, most prominently Raymond Aron; and his early attitude toward antisemitism, which he saw as a serious problem by the eve of World War II. If Sartre’s sensibility was profoundly shaped by the Jews he knew and the attitudes toward them in the French society of the late 1930s, he also addressed the enormous Jewish influence in literature that shaped his own writing, mentioning in particular Proust, Marx, Freud, and Kafka. Except for Freud, however, who he knew was persecuted as a Jew, the Jewishness of these writers meant nothing to him. Until he later read Kafka’s correspondence, the Jewish symbols and values in his work passed entirely unnoticed (249). He knew very little Yiddish literature, although he had some acquaintance with writers like Sholom Aleichem as a result of the translations by Edmond Fleg, and he knew about the work of André Spire. His knowledge of Judaism was equally limited.

When questioned specifically about his *Réflexions*, Sartre once more indicated, as he had in his interview with Simha Flappan, that if he were to rewrite the work he would do so within the framework of a Marxist analysis, emphasizing the economic point of view. Ben-Gal pushed him about whether he would consider the question from within aspects of a Jewish self-understanding. To this end he introduced some distinctions: *judaïsme* as Jewish thought, culture, and religion; *judéité* as an individual psychological apprehension of Jewishness; and *judaïcité* as a collective, sociological reality. Sartre relented that he did not really understand *judaïcité* when he wrote his *Réflexions*, considering only *judéité* (265). He maintained that the experience with Gershom Scholem while in Israel was revelatory because until that point he thought that outside of religion there was no historical or cultural idea of Judaism. Among some of Israel's leading professors, however, there were several who advanced a notion of a cultural Judaism outside of biblical and rabbinic Judaism and who argued that Jews nevertheless shared a Jewish fate (258).¹³

There were several aspects of his *Réflexions* that Sartre insisted were still justified. He once more stipulates that a great challenge facing Jews is that they must live in the heart of a Christian society that loves the God they are supposed to have killed, even if this is a myth (265). Jews are, therefore, shaped by how they are perceived and represented by the predominantly Christian culture. Not unlike Hannah Arendt, he takes the position that twenty centuries of dispersion prevented Jews from having a political history, since their collective political action was limited to adaptation, reaction, and resistance to persecution.¹⁴ In opposition to Ben-Gal, he continued to insist that Jews have a unique relationship to their bodies as a result of the antisemitic fixation on Jewish anatomy. Moreover, against the objections of Arlette that he exaggerated the markers of Jewish difference, Sartre maintained that "his name, his face, his gestures, [and] a thousand other traits designate ['the Jew'] as Jew" (267). He would nonetheless finally capitulate to the critique of his position by those Jews who were close to him at the end of his life when he concluded the conversation by saying that "a French Jew can imagine being a goy, but a French goy cannot imagine being a Jew" (276). It was not only in Sartre's autocritique that his *Réflexions* were revisited but also in the biographies written about him.

Beauvoir, Biography, and the Second Sex

Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs have had the greatest impact on defining how later readers should interpret each moment and work in Sartre's life, and she accords his *Réflexions* a petty place within the totality of his corpus. *La force des choses* (*Force of Circumstance*) grants the text a single line in the middle of a paragraph about the limits of Sartre's early understanding of Marxist materialism. Beauvoir remarks, "*Antisemite and Jew* shows how the phenomenological method can be enriched and made flexible by constant recourse to the social; but the concrete factual basis necessary to a history of antisemitism is not there."¹⁵ She intimates that the work anticipates the fuller development of Sartre's social theory that would still be necessary to understand antisemitism historically. Her critical comment, like Sartre's in the 1960s, evinces their mutually shared existentialist Marxism.

Nevertheless, Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe* (*The Second Sex*, 1949) reveals that Sartre's *Réflexions* had a profound influence on her, since she develops her monumental feminist critique of "woman" from the same axioms as Sartre's study of the Jewish Other. In several instances Beauvoir parallels the subjugation of "woman" with antisemitism, racism, colonialism, and class oppression. "Just as in America there is no Negro problem, but rather a white problem; just as [Sartre argued] 'antisemitism is not a Jewish problem: it is our problem'; so the woman problem has always been a man's problem," she maintains.¹⁶ The central premise of Beauvoir's analysis—that "the whole of feminine history has been man made"—is thus correlated with Sartre's analysis of the Jewish situation. Just as Sartre paradoxically argued that one is not born a Jew, one becomes one under the gaze of the Other, so Beauvoir's antiessentialist argument in *The Second Sex* is that "one is not born a woman, one becomes one."¹⁷

Like Sartre, Beauvoir compares sexism, racism, and antisemitism while drawing attention to their differences:

Whether it is a race, a caste, a class, or a sex that is reduced to a position of inferiority, the methods of justification are the same. "The eternal feminine" corresponds to "the black soul" and to "the Jewish character." True, the Jewish problem is on the whole very different from the other two—to the

antisemite the Jew is not so much an inferior as he is an enemy for whom there is to be granted no place on earth, for whom annihilation is the fate desired. (xxviii)

While she makes these connections between the subjugation of women and Jews, she is equally adamant about condemning the Jewish tradition and the biblical portrayal of women as an important locus for female subordination. She castigates the prayer that is a part of daily Orthodox services where men thank God that they are not born women (xxviii), and she rails against the patriarchy of “the Jews of Biblical times” (85).¹⁸ Hence, even as Beauvoir’s own memoirs played a crucial role in mythologizing Sartre and her relationship with him, her critical feminist project assails the myths and facts that have structured women’s social experience, based in part on the precepts of Sartre’s existential analysis and specifically as they were concretely applied to the Jewish situation.¹⁹

First Impressions

Like those of Beauvoir and Sartre himself, the earliest responses to the *Réflexions* were generally quite critical of his approach to the Jewish Question but for very different reasons. They were expressions of the array of theoretical positions in the period after the liberation: during the purge, amnesty, and rebuilding. The response of the Right, nonconformists, Catholics, Marxists, anticolonialists, and the differing reception of Jews reflected their own ideological positions as much as it did the limits of Sartre’s text. On the basis of these early readings, however, one can discern six of the primary constellations shaping the Jewish Question in the postwar period.

1. Céline and the Postwar Right

Louis-Ferdinand Auguste Destouches (1894–1961), whose nom de plume was Céline, wrote one of the earliest retorts to Sartre’s analysis of antisemitism. Céline first achieved notoriety in French literary circles after the publication of his debut novel, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (*Journey to the End of the Night*, 1932), which was an important influence on Sartre’s *Nausea*. In the late 1930s and then during the period of Vichy collaboration, however, he published three

pamphlets—*Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937), *L'école des cadavres* (1938), and *Les beaux draps* (1941)—that are some of the most violent antisemitic harangues ever written. Once the Allies landed in France, Céline realized that he would be called to account. In July 1944 he fled to Germany, joined the Vichy government group in exile in Sigmaringen, and then went north to Denmark, where he was denounced, arrested, and imprisoned by the Danish police.²⁰

While awaiting extradition Céline read Sartre's "Portrait de l'antisémite," the first part of his *Réflexions* published in *Les Temps Modernes* in October 1945, in which, after rebuking Céline's Manichaean bifurcation between the Aryan and "the Jew," Sartre wrote, "If Céline supported the socialist theses of the Nazis, it was because he was paid to do so. At the bottom of his heart he did not believe in them. For him there is no solution except collective suicide, nonreproduction, death."²¹ For Céline these lines must have been profoundly ambivalent. Sartre at once offers him exoneration by claiming that he never really believed in collaborationism. There was a cost for Sartre's exculpation, however, because in order to accept it Céline must assume the role of Judas, the traitor for a price, the war profiteer.

In "À l'agité du bocal" Céline responds as a means to exonerate himself of the charge.²² He commences his malicious polemic by suggesting that Sartre's portrait of the antisemite is nothing but the work of a schoolboy; it is a "pastiche," uncreative, written by an author who should be called "Lamanièredeux" (8). Céline's literary style is allusive and filled with ellipses—it is dotted with impressions and vulgar expressions in an attempt to challenge the language of Sartre's "Portrait," which is Cartesian in its clear and distinct indictment. In Céline's portrait Sartre is depicted as atavistic, infected, diseased, corrupt, and degenerate, with an ugly and contorted body: "These embryonic eyes? These petty shoulders? . . . [T]his fat little phony. . . . He wants to become totally monstrous!" (12). Sartre is represented as unmanly, unvirile, unheroic, and sterile. He is a "malicious, dirty, ungrateful, hateful ass" (13) who has burrowed himself into Céline's bunker (10, 11).²³ He suggests that Sartre seeks only to soil Céline's reputation, to stab him in the back in order to destroy him (9-10).²⁴ Thus, turning the charge of Judaization and collaboration against Sartre, Céline portrays him using the full panoply of the images of the Jewish body.²⁵ He ends by

generalizing from his tirade against Sartre to implicate other writers, naming Paul Éluard and François Mauriac, who were part of the CNE responsible for purging collaborators from the republic of letters and whom Céline depicts as “assassins by signature,” machines of self-congratulation, who have “nothing of the true blood!” (16).²⁶

Céline’s own citation of Sartre’s accusation/exoneration is framed by two brief lines that bring the links between writing, language, and textuality, on the one hand, and contamination, pollution, and degeneration, on the other, into focus: “What does he dare write. ‘If Céline supported the socialist theses of the Nazis, it was because he was paid.’ Textual” (9). Sartre’s brief indictment apparently penetrated to the heart of Céline’s literary fascism, which was an effort to turn language against itself in order to purify it of what is unaesthetic, unoriginal, unnatural (i.e., “the Jew”).²⁷ He sought to disinfect language of the “textual” in order to restore the pure, powerful, raw, genuine experience of the spoken language of *le peuple* (understood as “Aryan”). This demanded that he, like Heidegger, perpetually enter language, ceaselessly dwell within its corrupting power like a victimized subject haunted by the power of a horror he sought to overcome. In short, Céline wrote in order to undo what for him was the degenerative power of textuality. “The war he waged,” writes David Carroll, “against grammar, syntax, and lexical restrictions, against the state of French language in modernity, the dead language French had become in the hands of bourgeois and ‘Jewified’ professors, journalists, and writers, was the same war he waged against the Jews.”²⁸ Céline’s writing was thus the mirror image of that of Sartre, who deploys the utility and function of words, language, and literature to demonstrate that “not one Frenchman will be free so long as the Jews do not enjoy the fullness of their rights.”²⁹

A. LA TABLE RONDE

If Céline represents the response of a resurgent antisemitism, then he was not alone on the Right in reviewing Sartre’s *Réflexions*. *La Table Ronde*, a literary monthly first published in January 1948 by the right-wing publishing house by the same name, was an attempt to counter the influence of *Les Temps Modernes*, to oppose Sartre’s conception of *engagement*, and to safeguard “freedom of spirit.”³⁰

Codirected by François Mauriac and Thierry Maulnier, the journal also published Jean Paulhan, Albert Camus, Raymond Aron, and Marcel Jouhandeau. *La Table Ronde* would eventually become the launching pad for Roger Nimier, Jacques Laurent, Michel Déon, and Antoine Blondin, known collectively as *les Hussards*, who were resolutely anti-Sartrean and anti-Communist and who espoused an elitist, virile nationalism.³¹

For an issue that contained an article by Jean Cocteau touting the virtues of Barrès, whose “admirable books” he hoped would be released from perdition and who Cocteau insisted was fully engaged, unlike Sartre’s “artificial engagement,” Aimé Patri wrote a lengthy review of Sartre’s *Réflexions*.³² Patri castigates Sartre’s approach to the Jewish Question by arguing that his position is untenable for Jews, and he situates Sartre’s discussion within an overview of a number of other theories of antisemitism, none of which he finds satisfactory. He places Sartre within a tradition of leftist, anticlerical thinkers who have overlooked the spiritual dimension of human existence, where Jews and Judaism continue to have a significant role to play.

Patri locates Sartre’s position on antisemitism within the philosophical vocabulary of *Being and Nothingness* and argues that, given his premise that the antisemite makes “the Jew,” “the Jew” is condemned always to be *pour-autrui*, never *pour-soi*. He is critical of Sartre’s description of both the authentic and the inauthentic Jew, arguing that, given the terms of Sartre’s argument, the Jewish subject is plunged into the interminable “l’enfer des autres” (hell is other people) of *No Exit*. It was Hitlerian racism, Patri remarks, that argued that the Jews had stigmata that indelibly marked them, and Sartre “was a victim of this illusion” (1897). He maintains that in order to understand Jews and Judaism one has to analyze the whole ensemble of Jewish rituals, attitudes, and values, and then one will grasp that Jews are more than only a people, a nation, or a religion, suggesting in his concluding remarks that the source of antisemitism may be a “generalized anticlericalism.” Patri believes that the Jewish vocation is to serve as the repository of spiritual values, and anti-Jewish passions will end when humanity as a whole reclaims these spiritual ideals (1902–3). His review in *La Table Ronde* thus clearly seeks to distance the French Right from antisemitism at the same time as it condemns Sartre and the anticlericalist Left for denying the spiritual dimension of human existence.

B. RESUSCITATING ACTION FRANÇAISE

By the time of the reprint of Gallimard's edition of *Réflexions* in 1954, the now resurgent antisemitic right-wing press had vilified Sartre's text. *Aspects de la France*, the reconstituted weekly newspaper of the Action française started in 1948, published a sardonic review by Jean Marsay wryly making fun of Sartre's thesis that the antisemite created the Jew.³³ It appeared with a wave of other antisemitic pieces in the newspaper, buoyed by the Poujadist movement and the crisis in Indochina that would bring Pierre Mendes-France to power.³⁴ In the same issue as the Sartre review Xavier Vallat, a regular collaborator, would contribute "L'honneur de nos missions catholiques" (The Honor of Our Catholic Missions). If Pétain's heroism was often valorized by the newspaper, then Sartre was frequently pilloried, and Marsay's review is no exception.

In belittling Sartre's book Marsay's review explicitly reaffirms the attitude of Maurras and the Action française, arguing that the Jewish problem must be examined from the perspective of *raison d'état*, which is ultimately delimited by exclusionary nationalism. He rejects Drumont and any scientific racialization of the Jewish Question. It is sufficient, he insists, to examine the negative effects of the emancipation of the Jews during the French Revolution. Since then Jews have served as "revolutionary agents," pursuing their narrow self-interest even when it conflicts with the "precious independence of the *patrie*."³⁵ When Sartre denies *deicide*, he contends, he treats the gospels as an "abusive legend" and places all responsibility for the reprehensible dispositions of Jews in the hands of Christian maltreatment. Moreover, Marsay attempts to show that the *Réflexions* leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*. Sartre accuses the liberal democrat of being tinged by antisemitism because he does not accept the Jew *qua* Jew, but, ironically, Sartre also claims that "the Jew" is only the product of the antisemite. Critical of Sartre's logic, Marsay asserts, "It appears to us necessary to vanquish the repulsion that the Sartrean rot inspires in the natural French." In thus rejecting Sartre's analysis of the Jewish Question, Marsay reprises the long-standing response of the Action française on the subject of Jews and Judaism in France.

2. Georges Bataille and the Nonconformists

Like Céline and the antisemitic Right, Georges Bataille (1897–1962) also transposed obsessions with horror, obscenity, and death into writing, but, unlike

Céline, *La Table Ronde*, and *Action française*, Bataille deployed these motifs to explore the transgression of a pure, homogeneous, genuine self, opening individual identity and community to heterogeneity and alterity. Bataille's review of Sartre's *Réflexions* appeared in May 1947 in the journal *Critique*, which Bataille founded in 1946 and where he served as the *directeur* of an editorial board that included Blanchot and that would be an important avenue for the presentation of the work of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

Bataille opens his response by stating that Sartre's study of the characters of "the Jew" and the antisemite is "the direct consequence of one of the darkest actions to mark the account of man," adding, "the image of man is inseparable, from now on, from gas chambers . . ." ³⁶ The quote ends with ellipses, like so much of Céline's writing, here perhaps connoting an abyssal transgression effected by the systematic, bureaucratic, mass destruction of life, following the ultimate logic of an instrumental, utilitarian rationality that was a major target of Bataille's critical project.³⁷ He is clearly repelled by antisemitism, and his response is thus generally affirmative. Sartre's portrait of the antisemite provides a "necessary lesson" (472), as his *Réflexions* aimed at comprehending the underlying issues of the Jewish Question after Auschwitz.

However, Bataille also makes several trenchant points about Sartre's connections between reason, universality, and Jewish particularity. Arguing that Sartre's categories are "excessively rigid" (472), Bataille criticizes the parallel Sartre draws between the liberal democrat and inauthentic Jews, who both take flight from their existential situation into an abstract universalism, since this makes Bergson, Husserl, and Spinoza into inauthentic Jews. But for Bataille Spinoza was a revolutionary because he was "the first of the democratic thinkers" (472). He also wonders whether "reason itself becomes, in its turn, particularity" when it opposes "the Jew" to the rest of the world and whether in negating his particularity "the Jew" does contribute to "the birth of a universal authentic world" (473). He concludes with an ambivalent statement: "I won't say that Sartre's critique has no value (there is a flight at the base of the universal), but there is an epic of reason and the Jews have written some of its most authentic pages; moreover, doesn't Jewish authenticity consist precisely in the fact that in Auschwitz reason itself suffered through their flesh?" (473).

Bataille's conclusion celebrating the epic of reason accords a problematic theological significance to the notion of the Holocaust *avant le mot*, where the sacrificial Jewish victims suffered in the service of the vicissitudes of reason. Jewish suffering within the logos of this epic served, in the words of Bataille's *The Accursed Share*, to "restore to the sacred world that which servile use has degraded, rendered profane."³⁸ Bataille's catholic interpretation of the general economy of sacrifice—explored at length in *The Accursed Share*, where human sacrifice radically questions a world dominated by utilitarian exchange and instrumental rationality—makes the Jewish Holocaust into a moment of sacred communion, in the words of his essay on "The Sacred," into "a privileged moment of communal unity, a convulsive form of what is ordinarily stifled," all the while reiterating the positive stereotype of "the Jew," who serves to embody reason.³⁹ Bataille suggests that Auschwitz bears witness to the perennial human perversion of the sacred and the impossibility of permanently purifying the national community through sacrifice. But in his "review" "the Jew" after Auschwitz embodies a radical excess that goes beyond pure, practical, or instrumental reason to become the sacrificial symbol of the epic of reason itself.

3. Marxist Critiques

Sartre's epic, revolutionary solution to the Jewish Question appealed to Marxists like Roger Payet-Burin, writing in *La Revue Internationale*, who nevertheless criticized him by contending that if socialism was the necessary and sufficient condition for ending antisemitism, then this entirely contradicted the whole "idealist" analysis that preceded it in Sartre's text.⁴⁰ Like Aimé Patri, Payet-Burin reproaches Sartre for failing to appreciate that antisemitism already existed in nascent form in antiquity, even as he vehemently opposes Patri's "spiritual" analysis of the problem in favor of a materialist one. In a classic statement of dogmatic socialist explication he identifies Jews with the whole history of capitalism, claiming that since Roman Palestine Jews served as "specialists in the *métier* of commerce." If under Christianity they were accused of deicide, then this was because Christianity had become the ideology of the ruling class. By the twelfth century an autochthonous class of European merchants had arisen to compete with Jews.⁴¹ So goes Payet-Burin's economic determinism. Con-

sequently, contra Sartre, antisemitism is not an internal passion or the result of an original choice but a mystification by those who control the means of production. Therefore, only dialectical materialism understood through class struggle can illuminate the Jewish Question and determine its permanent solution in revolution.

4. Christian Voices

Christian writers and journals, especially those committed to overcoming anti-Jewish biases, cited, reviewed, and praised Sartre's *Réflexions* but ended up repeating some of the most troubling aspects of his account. The first issue of *L'Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne* (Jewish-Christian Friendship)—a journal attached to the International Council of Christians and Jews that sought after the horrors of the Occupation to replace “traditions of hostility between Jews and Christians” with “respect, friendship and mutual understanding”—referred to Sartre's *Réflexions* to affirm his contention that antisemitism was a total choice. They applied this to a Christian context by asserting that one could “not be a true Christian and in addition an antisemite.”⁴² A second example was an early review in *Esprit* in which the pseudonymous Yefime strongly endorsed Sartre's intervention without any criticism.⁴³ Sartre had countered antisemitism, which like a phoenix was already rising again on the walls of Paris, Yefime mentioning a recent article by the Resistance hero Vercors in *Europe* who pointed out that small notices were being posted saying “LES JUIFS AU CRÉMATOIRE!” (Jews to the ovens!) (169). In acclaiming Sartre's work, however, Yefime also accepts Sartre's description of Jews as “a people without history and without homeland, of which the members have nothing in common except the lax rites of a practical religion, whose sole principle of unity is the hostility of which they are the objects everywhere in the world” (169).

The longest distinctively Christian reading of Sartre's *Réflexions* was an article by André Dumas entitled “Marx et Sartre devant les juifs” in a special issue of the Protestant periodical *Foi et Vie*. In introducing the issue Charles Westphal, in his article “Père, pardonne-nous” (Father, Forgive Us), stated that the periodical sought to be “before everything the testimony of a Church that asks forgiveness.”⁴⁴ The issue contained articles on the Christian sources of antisemitism

and on recognizing Israel, the confessions of a survivor, and a poem by Edmond Fleg, "Sionide" (Zionide), from his *L'Éternel est un* (The Lord Is One).

Dumas's article summarizes the basic points of Karl Marx's essay "Zur Judenfrage" and contends that one hundred years later, albeit in different historical circumstances and in a different literary style, Sartre comes to the same conclusions as Marx, also urging a socialist revolution.⁴⁵ While indicating that the Jewish problem must be treated delicately since it is easy to slip into treating Jews not as "brothers" but as a theological pretext (245), Dumas's comments do precisely that, giving his reading its firm Christian imprint. This is because what fascinates him is that for both atheists and Christians the Jewish Question is "a touchstone for the universal liberation of mankind" (244) and for defining the "fundamental essence" of humanity (254).

The Jewish Question is settled for Dumas by chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Paul's epistles to the Romans where Paul seductively argues that divine election does not rest with the Jews but comes through faith in Christ, who offers universal salvation, since "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him" (Romans 10:12). The Christian response to the Jews remains for Dumas as Saint Augustine defined it, with the solution to the Jewish problem determined by the final conversion of the Jews (256).

Sartre and Marx are marshaled here against the infidelity of a Christian conservatism happy to be patient for God, rendering them passive. Christian faith, Dumas insists, places Christians firmly on the concrete side of political justice and the preservation of the human dignity of all the oppressed and therefore in opposition to antisemitism and on the side of the socialist revolution (257). In making his case, however, Dumas charges that Sartre erred in "denying the participation of the Jews in the death of Christ" (255), citing the infamous phrase in Matthew 27:25: "His blood be on us and on our children." While disputing Sartre's claim that the first fact of the Jewish situation is "the Christian as antisemite who makes the Jew" (251), Dumas has no qualms with Sartre's typological constructions of Jewish masochism, universalist rationalism, preference for abstract, legal, and impersonal property, and desire for money (252). This is strongly supported by his avowal of the most damning

pages from Marx's essay, specifically, his identification of the Jews with the spirit of capitalism and Marx's conclusion that "the social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of the society from Judaism" (248). Consequently, in his effort, however stunted, to overcome the tradition of Christian theological anti-Judaism, Dumas represents a version of the Christian response to the Jewish Question in the postwar period, one that was deeply concerned to overcome its role in the history of antisemitism.

5. Anti-Antisemitism and Anticolonialism

Sartre's *Réflexions* was deployed not only for the ends of Catholic intellectuals but also by anticolonial and antiracist writers. Frantz Fanon, for instance, appreciatively cites Sartre's *Antisemite and Jew* as a formative influence in his thinking about how racial prejudice functions. "Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you," his philosophy professor from the Antilles stressed, and Fanon affirms, "He was universally right."⁴⁶ He signals as significant in the *Réflexions* the analysis of how stereotyping conditions the behavior of racialized others, noting, however, that Jews can still "pass" (115). Therefore, while the existence of "the Jews" is overdetermined from within, the situation of blacks is "over-determined from without" (116). As we have seen, Fanon was ultimately critical of Sartre's dialectical critique of racism, especially as developed in his support of the *négritude* movement. Other anticolonialist and antiracist writers associated with the *négritude* cause found greater virtue in Sartre's *Réflexions*.

Maurice Watteau, for example, contributed an article to one of the first issues of *Présence Africaine* that made explicit the parallels suggested by Sartre's attack on antisemitism for the critique of the racism underpinning colonialism.⁴⁷ His piece treats the Jewish Question in extenso as a means to develop an existential analysis of racism.⁴⁸ In the process, however, he also assents to Sartre's reiteration of mythological images of Jews (their abstract intelligence, their lack of history, the denial that their collective identity is national, their peculiar proclivity for financial capitalism) (224–25).

Watteau's stress is on how Sartre's theorization of antisemitism provides a model for how to conceive of racism. The figure of "the Jew" is substitutable:

“Here the Jew, there the Negro, elsewhere the Chinese, somewhere else the Arab” (227). The fight against antisemitism is thus simultaneously a fight against “all the racial hatreds that oppose blacks and whites, Africans and Europeans, colonized and colonizers” (227). While Sartre himself provides the analogies that Watteau picks up, he is also clear that Sartre distinguishes between antisemitism and racism, insisting that blacks are authentic by nature because they can never flee their color.⁴⁹ Watteau, however, truer to Sartre’s existential premises, asserts that blacks, like Jews, must adopt either an authentic or an inauthentic stance toward their “race.” Hence, like Sartre, he claims that the fight against racism in all its forms is, finally, about the struggle for freedom, not only for the racialized other but for the racist as well.

6. Early Jewish Responses

While Watteau’s adoption of Sartre’s argument for an antiracist agenda was totally celebratory, the early readings of Sartre’s text by Jews and in Jewish revues were mixed, generally split between strong praise for Sartre’s insightful understanding of antisemitism and strong criticism of his lack of comprehension of Judaism and the culture and history of Jews. Like Payet-Burin, Jean-Albert Hess, for example, appreciated Sartre’s bravery because as an influential voice among young intellectuals he had the courage to break the silence that reigned for the four damnable years during the German occupation. Writing in *Le Monde Juif*, a journal actively committed to remembering the genocide of European Jewry, Hesse praised the activist accent Sartre placed on Jews and “all men of good will . . . to form a front against always virulent racism.” He also esteemed Sartre’s reproach of the liberal-democratic defense of Jews that had so patently failed them.⁵⁰ If Hesse lauded Sartre’s *Réflexions* because of its attack on antisemitism, then Émile Biollay castigated him for defining Jews from an external perspective, for failing to understand Jewish collective identity, and for his ignorance of Jewish philosophy and the Jewish contribution to culture.⁵¹ Biollay insists that Sartre is neither an antisemite, nor a philosemite, nor an anti-antisemite. He is an *asémite* because for him “the Jew is not” (215), and as such Sartre posed the Jewish problem poorly.

EMMANUEL LEVINAS: THE SACRED HISTORY OF "BEING JEWISH"

One of the earliest responses to Sartre's *Réflexions* by a Jewish thinker of major importance was Emmanuel Levinas's "Existentialisme et antisémitisme," his introduction to the extracts from Sartre's lecture to AIU members, which appeared in *Les Cahiers de l'Alliance* in June 1947.⁵² He acknowledged in passing "how Sartre's theory, in linking Jewish destiny to antisemitism[,] can be disappointing" (27). But his stress is on the fecundity of Sartre's existentialist approach in the battle against antisemitism: "The most striking feature of Sartre's fight resides less in his victory than in the new weapons he deploys. . . . Antisemitism is attacked with existentialist arguments" (28). An existentialist approach, he affirms, enables one to transcend the inherent contradictions that have determined how "the problem of Jewish emancipation [was] formulated before this" (28). He concurs with Sartre's rebuke of the Enlightenment's "analytical vision of society," which conceives of human-being(s) as independent from birth, milieu, religion, and social status. Accordingly, antisemitism can thus only be condemned on the basis of the universalist, abstract, "rationalist vocabulary of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (28).

Going beyond Sartre's position and intimating his own philosophical project, Levinas suggests that an analytic vision of society conceptualizes the relationship between human beings and the world in terms of "structures of knowledge," reifying the subject-object relation, and instituting epistemology or ontology rather than ethics as first philosophy.⁵³ He stresses the tensions between economic and ethical liberation, intimating that the former is a necessary but not sufficient condition of justice. This is a latent critique of the Marxism that would increasingly determine Sartre's position in the postwar period.

Still, these points are not developed, as Levinas emphasizes the significance of Sartre's effort to think being-human without reducing it to "a mere object for thought. This philosophy recognizes that the mind is tied by commitments that are not structured as knowledge. Commitments that are not thoughts—that's existentialism!" (28). Sartre and Levinas thus converge on an "existentialist humanism" (31) that seeks to oppose antisemitism without recourse to liberalism and the Enlightenment tradition. However, the differences between Levinas's

ethics of commitment as a structure of obligation be-fore-the-Other conditioned by the command(s) of responsibility to the Other and Sartre's politics of engagement structured by the exigency to prophetically pronounce the limits and possibilities of liberation for the Other in the end have different ends.

Levinas would expand upon these differences in a second article published in 1947, "Être juif" (Being Jewish), in which he argues that Jewish existence cannot be adequately expressed in the "distinctions by which Sartre, for example, attempted to seize it."⁵⁴ The piece appeared in a special issue of *Confluences*, *Bilan Juif*, amidst articles by, among others, Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, Jean Starobinski, Payet-Burin, Rabi, André Spire, and Arnold Mandel that explored the meaning of Jewish identity from multiple perspectives.⁵⁵ Challenging not only Sartre but the wider provisos of the Jewish Question, Levinas here maintains that *la question juive* has been posed in overly narrow social and political terms that refer only to rights without offering a reason for being. "Being Jewish," Levinas contends, "is not only searching for a refuge in the world but feeling one's place in the economy of being" (254).

Sartre begins with the assumption of a contingent world without a creator, a world that is "simply present," while for Levinas the world begins with "the imperative of commandment and of the law," where Jewish existence is defined by divine election that introduces into the economy of being a different facticity (261). Levinas clarifies that election does not mean "the injustice of a preference" or a special privilege, nor should it entail pride or particularism. Every human is created in the image of the God. Rather, election is a mystery that breaks with a conception of a world without origin and that is "simply present" (263). Levinas asserts that every Jew, atheist or not, lives the mystery of his creation and election, which founds his being Jewish and constitutes the basis of a "sacred history." Where Sartre fails, Levinas concludes, is in his inability to appreciate the "taste of the sacred" (264).

Levinas's emphasis on "sacred history" would be the key refrain for his other writings on Sartre's *Réflexions* later in his life. In an article and an interview that appeared just after Sartre's dialogues with Benny Lévy and following Sartre's death, Levinas again praised Sartre's demystification of the "crime" of antisemitism as well as his unfailing recognition of the right of the existence of the state

of Israel. In his homage to Sartre as a traveler on the roads to freedom, always en route, “like us,” Levinas was nevertheless critical of him for having posed the question of Jewish existence without examining properly Jewish sources. He nonetheless commended Sartre’s final message of hope to a new generation, noting that for survivors of the camps and of universal history the echo of Sartre’s last thoughts were “familiar” and “very close.”⁵⁶ He highlighted, in particular, Sartre’s rethinking of Hegel’s conception of history in light of “sacred history” (132). He praised Sartre’s discovery with Lévy of this sacred history in the rapport of the Jewish people with monotheism, in the ethics of commitment to the Other that it entailed, and, with it, his discovery of a humanity beyond humanism.⁵⁷ Levinas insisted that this did not entail that Sartre had abandoned his general philosophical project but rather that he and Sartre, two thinkers of the “same generation” who “read the same books,” had come to very similar conclusions, albeit from different beginnings and in different ways.

RABI: FRENCH-JEWISH INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Like Levinas, another major Jewish voice that responded to Sartre’s *Réflexions* was Wladimir Rabinovitch (1906-81), who adopted the nom de plume Rabi after becoming a magistrate in Briançon (Hautes Alpes).⁵⁸ A writer of more than five hundred articles in Jewish and non-Jewish journals, historical sociologist, playwright, literary critic, pamphleteer, and essayist, Rabi was a dissident voice on the Left. He was critical of the antisemitic notes within key chords of modern French culture, but he was also an intransigent critic of the Jewish establishment and the assimilationism of Franco-Judaism.⁵⁹ Until he died in a car accident, he wove together the two sides of his personality described by Izio Rosenman: “a man of the Left in his positions, his actions, his cultural references, and a Jewish intellectual profoundly influenced by Jewish history, culture and traditions even if he was not religious.”⁶⁰

Rabi’s “Sartre, portrait d’un philosémite” is a long response in the second number of *Esprit* written after the war devoted to the Jewish Question.⁶¹ He asserts that Jews are reified and objectified in Sartre’s analysis: “We are under the microscope, but there remains enough lucidity amongst us to see the fat eye of the man who examines us. Sartre too often appears to us . . . as someone

who subordinates the facts to the theory” (540). For example, Rabi alleges that while Sartre’s perceptiveness regarding nonrecognition of difference is a facet of the homogeneous Frenchness created by the French Revolution, democrats have stood by Jews on the basis of their principles in times of trouble (538). Furthermore, Sartre is faulted for not denying that there is a Jewish race, especially when he does deny that there is a community of Jewish interests, a community of faith, a national community, and a unique Jewish history. Nevertheless, Sartre has produced the most remarkable description of “the Jew” within French and Western society, accurately portraying “the true France, with its true values, its true tact, its true morality from which the Jew remains a stranger” (541). Sartre captured “the Jewish complex” shared by all Occidental Jews to varying degrees (543), all of whom waver between attachment and flight, identity and anonymity, particularism and universalism. For all their differences, then, Sartre and Rabi cohere not only in their shared analysis of aspects of the Jewish condition but in their approach to wider social problems, aptly put by Rosenman in his analysis of Rabi: “belief in the necessity of *engagement*, defense of the persecuted, fidelity to ethnic values, fighting for justice, not [only] in theory, but in the domain of politics.”⁶²

CLAUDE LANZMANN AND THE SARTREAN HERITAGE

Like Rabi, Claude Lanzmann also embodies the authentic Jew of Sartre’s *Réflexions*. Akin to Levinas’s influence on the postwar discussion of the Jewish Question—his return to reading the Jewish oral tradition condensed in the Talmud—Lanzmann’s contribution is the gravity he places on the oral testimony of the Shoah.⁶³ As in his film *Shoah*, there is a double horizon that opens Lanzmann’s testimony on Sartre’s *Réflexions*: the difference between memory and history, past and present. In the wake of Sartre’s death in 1980 and in the context of François Mitterrand’s visit to Israel after his election in 1981, Lanzmann addressed the significance of his reading of *Réflexions* in the immediate aftermath of the war.⁶⁴

The importance of Sartre’s *Réflexions* for Lanzmann was that it responded to the exigencies of the survivors of Vichy who did not know “how to continue to live in this country among . . . our compatriots who we knew had more or

less accepted . . . for four years to make us ‘Others,’ excluded from this national community” (1709). Haunted by a shame and a fear that did not magically disappear with the liberation, he attests that “we were no longer French and not really Jews.” The liberation that Sartre offered was that he “immediately reconciled us with France and with our Jewish situation” (1710). Lanzmann contends that the force of Sartre’s text was more relevant than all the laws and reparations in enabling Jews to feel French and in reconstituting Jewish pride. In doing so, he reduplicates the logic of the Maurrasian distinction that Sartre had analyzed between “la France réel” and “la France légale.” Sartre’s words designated an “indivisible France where we recognized ourselves because he recognized us,” a politics of recognition that Lanzmann calls a “truly redemptive reciprocity” (1711).

Sartre’s gift of the acknowledgment of an authentic French-Jewish existence was extended in his insistence on recognizing the existence of Israel, which achieved fruition with Mitterrand’s trip, since it was the first time the president of the Republic of France journeyed to Israel (1713). Lanzmann ends his testimony by reflecting on Mitterrand’s visit to Yad Vashem, and in doing so he turns Levinas’s abstract critique of epistemology into a historically specific and powerfully ironic point: “‘Did they know?’ That is the question in effect. The question that is at the heart of the Holocaust and that returns at every stage of the process of destruction. And what does it mean ‘to know’ when one confronts the unimaginable?” (1715).⁶⁵

Sartre’s existential formulation of the Jewish Question powerfully influenced Lanzmann’s conception of his Jewish identity. When *Le Nouvel Observateur* published a special issue entitled *Être juif en France* (Being Jewish in France) and asked Lanzmann what being Jewish meant, he responded, “Thanks to the executioner, I ask to reflect.”⁶⁶ It is the antisemite who demands a response. Nonetheless, the perpetual reflection that ensues for the Jew means that there is no stable, unified, coherent, and essential conception of Jewishness. Robert Misrahi would develop this Sartrean emphasis on reflexivity as constitutive of identity.

The Sartrean legacy is there also in Lanzmann’s rebuke of all efforts to represent the Shoah “realistically,” most pronounced in his admonition of Schindler’s List. There is a danger and necessary failure in attempts to reconstruct what hap-

pened, in any essentialized effort at depicting this unique and unprecedented past. In the attempt to incarnate the horror, one forecloses the difference between the image, perceptions, and reality. Lanzmann veers between an iconoclastic effort to guard against turning the Holocaust into an idol and his “Jewishly” inspired refusal to accept an image of the Shoah in its ineffability.⁶⁷ His commitments continue directly and self-consciously the heritage of Sartre’s *engagement* on the Jewish Question, as he affirmed in his interview in the special edition of *Le Nouvel Observateur* on “le retour de Sartre” in January 2000.⁶⁸

PIERRE VIDAL-NAQUET AND FRANCO-JUDAISM

Similar to those of Lanzmann, Pierre Vidal-Naquet’s reflections on Antisemite and Jew are woven from “a torn fabric,” severed between his “Remembrances of a 1946 Reader” and the transformations in his understanding of the problems raised in Sartre’s text fifty years later.⁶⁹ He first heard about Sartre in 1943 after the success of *Les mouches*. In the aftermath of the liberation he read Sartre’s “La république du silence” and passionately absorbed his manifesto for *littérature engagée* in the first issue of *Les Temps Modernes*.⁷⁰ Sartre’s political attitude accorded perfectly with that of Vidal-Naquet, who was an engaged leftist with a diffuse Marxist orientation and who was critical of the Communists. He says of his reading of Sartre’s *Réflexions* that it “deeply marked me” (7), and in musing on that reading he recounts the differing views on Sartre’s text of those around him in 1946, how his own family history shaped his understanding, and how he judges that history in retrospect.⁷¹

Having read the pages on the look in *Being and Nothingness*, Vidal-Naquet “had already experienced that being Jewish was to live under the other’s gaze, and Sartre liberated me from this gaze” (10). He was “elated” by the portrait of the antisemite, and Sartre reminded him “of the Voltaire of the Calas Affair” (9–10). After the extermination of his parents and living with relatives who were Eastern European immigrants and less assimilated, Vidal-Naquet was surprised to hear one of them argue that Sartre’s portrait of the liberal democrat was as justified as his portrait of the antisemite (10).

Vidal-Naquet’s family was a microcosm of Franco-Judaism and the upward mobility and integration that it afforded. In Paul Berman’s words, he proudly

represents “a specific intellectual and political tradition of the French Jews. It is the tradition that derives from the French Revolution, a tradition of rigorous adherence to the principles of republican citizenship. It is a secular rationalist tradition, a tradition that, during the nineteenth century, took Greek classical studies as one of its scholarly ideals—yet never lost sight of its own origins in Judaism. It is a tradition of Jewish patriotism for France.”⁷² The ultimate embodiment of this tradition, Vidal-Naquet would become one of the leading scholars of Greek history and culture.

Fifty years later, having made himself “more Jewish: through my own ‘Réflexions’; through writing about Flavius Josephus; through working on the history of ancient and modern Jewry” (17), Vidal-Naquet reads *Antisemite and Jew* with a greater attentiveness to the shortcomings of Sartre’s text. He now sees Sartre’s lack of appreciation for the positive values of Judaism, the paucity of his awareness of Jewish history and sociology, the insufficiency of his distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic Jew. Instead of Sartre’s binary schema, Vidal-Naquet prefers a prismatic model in which “there is room for all the nuances, all the colors of the spectrum” (22). He suggests that Sartre’s bifurcation is close to Hannah Arendt’s distinction, borrowed from Max Weber, between the pariah and the parvenu and that “emancipation hasn’t canceled this antagonism; it has just transformed it into a dialogue between parvenu and pariah, between the Jew who refuses his history and the one who identifies with it and carries it on” (23). This dialogue within the “torn fabric” of Vidal-Naquet’s own life is symbolic of the muted affirmation of the intellectual and political tradition of Franco-Judaism that he represents even after Vichy and the Shoah.

In sum, for many in France in the immediate postwar period Sartre’s *Réflexions* was the portal into the discussion of the Jewish Question. The responses to Sartre’s *Réflexions* by the Right, nonconformists, Marxists, Christians, anti-colonial writers, and Jews demarcate some of the defining constellations of reflections on the Jewish Question after Auschwitz. Céline and others on the Right anticipate the denial of collaboration and the reinvention of antisemitism, including the French deniers of the Holocaust.⁷³ Bataille’s proto-postmodern-

ism illustrates the significance of Auschwitz in reevaluations of the dialectic of enlightenment and the epic of reason undertaken in the critical theory of poststructuralism and deconstruction. Christians sought to come to terms with the devastating links between Christian anti-Judaism and the horror of the Holocaust that would reach fruition with the beginning of Vatican II, especially in the *Nostra Aetate* declaration of 1965, inspiring repeated calls for forgiveness thereafter. The Marxist evaluations of Sartre's text evince the insistence on analyzing antisemitism and racism from the purview of historical materialism. Rejecting a narrow emphasis on economic factors, the negritude movement and anticolonial writers maintained that economics needed to be superimposed within a framework that assessed the power of racism. They drew inspiration from the philosophical structures developed by Sartre. The spectrum of Jewish readings from Lanzmann to Levinas indicates two pivotal poles in postwar French-Jewish reexaminations of identity: the traumatic memory of Vichy and the Shoah and the process of *teshuvah* in the return to the Jewish sources of the self. These six constellations would not define the whole galaxy of responses to the Jewish Question in the postwar period.

French-Jewish Responses to *la question juive*

In addition to the early responses to Sartre's *Réflexions* and the application and rejection of his insights in the work of scholars of antisemitism, Sartre's analysis of the Jewish Question would influence the agonized and agonistic effort to (re)imagine *judéité*, *judaïsme*, *juiverie* (antisemitism), *judaïcité*, and *la question juive* after the Shoah by Jewish thinkers in France.⁷⁴ This section first considers responses by Jewish thinkers in the period of France's decolonization and the migration of Jews from North Africa to the metropole (1956–62), which had a fundamental impact on the French-Jewish dyad. I then examine thinkers who were predominately marked by the triptych of events—the Six-Day War, de Gaulle's "sermon to the Hebrews," and the events of May–June 1968—that would usher in an epoch characterized by the *différend* between an advocacy of "le droit à la différence" (the right to be different) and a revived xenophobic nationalism and antisemitism beginning in the early 1980s.

André Neher: Religious Existentialism and Jewish Identity

While I do not know of a sustained discussion in André Neher's work on Sartre's *Réflexions*, he cites it, along with the work of Albert Memmi and Robert Misrahi, as a significant sociological contributor to understanding "the dialectic of Jewish identity" in his *Clefs pour le judaïsme* (Keys to Judaism).⁷⁵ As a great biblical scholar and Jewish philosopher grounded in the Jewish textual and cultural tradition, Neher's own approach is far removed from Sartre's. Nevertheless, his conceptual vocabulary and existentialism certainly evince traces of Sartre's influence. His discussion of the "dialectic of the Jewish condition" in *Ils ont refait leur âme* (They Made Their Souls Anew), for example, is construed as a dialectic of *être-pour-soi* and *être-pour-autrui*.⁷⁶ While not a major source for Neher's complex and illuminating ruminations, which mix his reading of biblical sources with considerations of Jewish thinkers, Sartre's *Réflexions* would be a more important site for other important French-Jewish intellectuals like Albert Memmi.

Albert Memmi: The Postcolonial Jew

The Sartrean influence marks much of Memmi's work and is most clearly exemplified in his *Portrait d'un juif* (Portrait of a Jew), the book mentioned by Neher as an important contribution to discussions of Jewish identity.⁷⁷ The epigraph to the preface has a quotation from Memmi's first published work, the semiautobiographical novel *La statue du sel* (Pillar of Salt), where the protagonist, Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche, characterizes himself as "a native in a colonial country, a Jew in an antisemitic universe, an African in a world dominated by Europe."⁷⁸ The tensions in the name of Memmi's character concentrate the social relations that he elucidated in his literary and sociological work and lived concretely. It names his situation: between the colonizer and the colonized, West and East, the insider and outsider, assimilation and alienation, liberation and oppression.

Memmi's *Portrait* was the first of a triptych of essays that offered a sociological examination of what he previously explored fictionally. These expositions of the Jewish situation, which included *La libération du Juif* (The Liberation of the Jew, 1966) and *Juifs et Arabes* (Jews and Arabs, 1974), explored Sartre's existential

ontology from the perspective of Memmi's autobiographical experience. The *Portrait* was dedicated to Sartre, "un homme libre" (a free man), along with Memmi's Chalotzim comrades, thus crystallizing the narrative structure that defines Memmi's analyses, which move from an existential portrait based on Sartrean axioms to a liberation struggle, which in the Jewish situation was defined by Israel.⁷⁹

Memmi's analysis of the Jewish condition uses Sartre's *Réflexions* as a subtext for his own essays and creates "an intertextual dialogue with his arguments."⁸⁰ The Sartrean influence is duly credited: "Sartre's analysis in *Antisemite and Jew* appears to me to contain more intuitions and insights than are found in tons of other publications" (16). At the same time, Memmi seeks to redress the limits of Sartre's *Réflexions* by considering not only the role of antisemitism but the impact of the multifaceted dimensions of history and culture on the construction of Jewish identity. He firmly declares that a Jew cannot be properly understood only as a "concrete negativity. . . . [H]e is not only that: he is also history and traditions, institutions and customs. He is brimming over with positive traits, he is also a broad and rich positivity" (81). On the whole, however, Memmi remains irresolute about the positive dimensions of Jewish existence.⁸¹

As early as his classic analysis *Portrait du colonisé précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (*The Colonizer and the Colonized*), Memmi argued that Jews occupied an ambivalent status in the Maghreb.⁸² "As near as possible to the Moslems in poverty, language, sensibilities, customs, taste in music, odors and cooking," the Jews nevertheless "passionately endeavored to identify themselves with the French" (xiv). Memmi goes on to analyze how the colonized (as well as Jews) internalize the mythical portrait of themselves advanced by "the ideology of a governing class" (88), paralleling Sartre's dialectical analysis of the Jewish struggle to come to terms with the gaze of the Other.

While self-conscious of the process of the internalization of the negative image of their difference by subjugated groups, Memmi still reiterates aspects of this in his writing on Jews and Judaism. In the first part of the *Portrait*, "The Misfortune of Being a Jew," Memmi discusses how Jewishness is experienced as a "spiritual malaise."⁸³ While he has never denied being a Jew and is not ashamed of it, he insists there is much "anxiety and misfortune" in being Jewish (15).

He indicates that Judaism and Jewish history were taught to him as joyous and optimistic in opposition to the Catholic emphasis on “sickness and death” (18), but he confesses that “my delight in Jewish history has never been more than a gloomy delight, the reminder of an endless succession of disasters, flights, pogroms, emigrations, humiliations, injustices. This is not merely an impression: I have only to open a book of Jewish history, a Dubnow or a Graetz. What is called Jewish history is but one long contemplation of Jewish misfortune.” He thus shares Sartre’s opinion that “martyrdom has become the sole collective habit the Jewish people have retained in their memory” (20).

While the last part of the book explicitly seeks to correct the Sartrean model of “the Jew” as defined by the gaze of the Other, to show that Jews live “a Jewishness and Judaism that are completely positive” (265), most of the alternative attributes of Jewish identity are defined by dogged resistance to victimization: the desire to survive, the refusal to convert to other religions, acceptance of the Jewish situation, the strength of the Jewish family, and Jewish solidarity. As did Sartre, Memmi depicts Jewish religious rites as defensive reactions to persecution and exclusion, always already filtered by the negative view of the antisemite. He only regards Judaism as a religion of Nietzschean *ressentiment* derived from a reactionary perspective. Therefore, both he and Sartre, who share existentialist axioms, place much of the stress on depicting “the Jew” in terms of negativity, absence, and lack. This is the critical lever of their undermining of antisemitism but also the underpinning of their internalization of negative depictions of Judaism and Jewish history.

Sartre and Memmi diverge somewhat on their solutions to the double binds of the Jewish situation, however. In his most general work on racism Memmi argues that racism is a specific form of heterophobia.⁸⁴ Antiracism ultimately depends not on subsuming it within the revolution, as Sartre argued in his *Réflexions*, but on orienting a social revolution toward “recognizing certain differences among human beings” without resort to the categories of colonization that have previously organized and hierarchized those differences (religion, race, ethnicity, etc.).⁸⁵ Memmi thus cites Nahum Goldmann in his *Portrait*, contending that “in the nineteenth century, ‘we had to fight for the right to be equal; in the twentieth century we have to fight for the right to be

different” (75). But, like Sartre, in the second volume of his *Portrait, The Liberation of the Jew*, Memmi argues that for the Jews this fight takes the form of the national liberation struggle in Israel. Israel is the necessary framework for the liberation of the Jews because Jews are oppressed as a collectivity and thus must be liberated as a people.⁸⁶

Robert Misrahi: Reflexivity and Jewish Consciousness

Like Memmi, Sartre’s work was pivotal for Robert Misrahi, who was a student of Sartre and later a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne. Misrahi wrote a series of articles on Jews and Israel that were published in *Les Temps Modernes*. His book, *La condition réflexive de l’homme juif* (The Reflexive Condition of the Jewish Man), also mentioned by Neher as an important contribution to analyses of Jewish identity, was published in the *Les Temps Modernes* collection. All of his writing on the Jewish Question, including *Philosophie politique et l’état d’Israël* (The Political Philosophy of the State of Israel) and *Marx et la question juive* (Marx and the Jewish Question), were significantly influenced by Sartre, even though he strongly criticized his former teacher.⁸⁷

Misrahi would contribute one of the first major critical rereadings of Sartre’s *Réflexions*, which first began to appear just after his death in 1980.⁸⁸ Having been befriended by Sartre in 1943 in a context where his relatives were being arrested and deported, where he was forced to wear a yellow star and to stay in hiding to remain alive, Misrahi is deeply appreciative of Sartre’s critique of antisemitism, which he credits with helping to make it shameful in France.⁸⁹ For this he deserves an “indestructible and fraternal memory” (11), but not one that becomes sacrosanct.

Misrahi opens his iconoclastic interpretation by arguing against the criticisms of Sartre’s text leveled by the Jewish community, which rejected Sartre’s position that “the Jew” is an invention of the antisemite (3). There are two misunderstandings of this thesis. The first is that Jewishness is a pure negation, a projection where “the Jew” was depicted as a “purely imaginary being.”⁹⁰ A second misreading came from members of the religious community who “based their lives (livelihood, rites, and values) on the Torah, Jewish Law, the fundamental text that Sartre had not taken into consideration in his definition of a

Jew” and who contended that Sartre denied Jewish specificity.⁹¹ Misrahi argues that Sartre was consciously concerned to embrace Jewish particularity; he never said that the Jew does not exist, only that Jewish characteristics developed as a response to antisemitism. Antisemitism does not invent an imaginary, mythical Jew who masks the real Jew but rather impacts the real Jewish characteristics that Sartre ascribes to Jews and that Misrahi assents are dispersed among the Jews: reflexivity, hyperrationalism, lack of tact, a taste for money, an ambivalent sensibility, and nonmetaphysical disquietude. The antisemite ascribes these characteristics to the Jewish race when they are due, according to both Sartre and Misrahi, to inauthentic Jews (4–5).

Having rearticulated what he insists is Sartre’s true position, Misrahi reexamines Sartre’s three major texts on the Jewish Question—his *Réflexions*, his preface to the special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* on Israel, and his interview with Lévy—to mount his critique of Sartre. He argues that there was continuity in Sartre’s positions on Jews and Judaism throughout his life, and it was characterized by his profound ambivalence on the state of Israel as the point of contact between Jews and history. Failure to recognize this Zionist point results in a “total ignorance of Jewish history” (6) and accounts for the ambiguities between these three texts. While in Sartre’s work “the Jews are therefore recognized” by the time of *Hope Now*, they “are recognized only as a spiritual, metaphysical, moral and religious reality, but never as a concrete historical reality, as an independent political reality” (10). This Zionist perspective is the basis of Misrahi’s Jewish identity.

Misrahi is a thoroughly acculturated and integrated French Jew of Sephardi Turkish descent who is totally areligious; Jewish culture is not of central importance to his Jewishness. His *La condition réflexive de l’homme juif* is his reply to Sartre’s *Réflexions*, marked by his effort to go beyond Sartre’s text in constructing his own phenomenological analysis of the Jewish condition. His conclusion nevertheless makes clear his indebtedness to Sartre in his own efforts to construe Jewishness:

To be Jewish is not to belong abstractly to the class of Jews, or to deploy within being an element of Jewish substance, or to be oneself a substance or a thing

of which the essence will be precisely Jewish. Otherwise said, being Jewish is evidently not “biological” or “sociological” or “metaphysical”: being Jewish is not being one thing among other things, but it is also not having a belief among other beliefs, for example, in the rigorous unity of God or in the rigorous necessity of the advent of justice. No—being Jewish, in the modern world and notably in France, is first to reflect upon oneself as a Jew and then to act on the reflection.⁹²

The work is an effort to construct a “veritable philosophy of judaïcité” based upon an overt assumption of Jewish identity and solidarity with all Jews, with Israel, and with all those who suffer injustice. Misrahi’s “reflexive dialectic” of Jewish identity ultimately is a reworking of Sartre’s basic postulates in his *Réflexions*. Jews living in the Diaspora and attempting to assimilate encounter exclusion and marginalization, which force them to reflect on and respond to their Jewish situation. Rabi thus critiques Misrahi as one of the children of Sartre: “To eliminate all the positive elements [of Jewish identity]—faith, history, consciousness, culture, Jewish humanism—only to retain the simple dialectical game of relations between Jews and the majority society” is to present a false solution to the problems raised by the Jewish Question.⁹³ The effort of attempting to maintain the critical power of Sartre’s emphasis on Jewish negativity while still going beyond his work to a positive assessment of Jewish collective identity would haunt several French-Jewish thinkers.

Arnold Mandel: Modern Orthodoxy and the Jewish Question

If Sartre shaped Memmi’s and Misrahi’s work, it was Arnold Mandel who convinced Sartre of the desire of Jews to affirm their Jewish difference despite antisemitism.⁹⁴ In his 1974 *Entretiens* with Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre credits Mandel with fundamentally influencing his perspective on Jewish identity. “When I wrote *Nausea*,” he recollected, “I knew a Jew called Mandel, whom we’ve often spoke about since. I wanted to make the Jews citizens like the Christians, and he convinced me of the specific nature of the Jewish fact and of the necessity for giving Jews particular rights.”⁹⁵ Mandel was the first person to do a recorded interview with Sartre when they discussed the relation between antisemitism

and Jewish identity in 1939, just after the publication of Sartre's "The Childhood of a Leader" in 1938.⁹⁶ In the postwar period Mandel was an important figure within French-Jewish intellectual circles, praised by Claude Vigée as "the most brilliant Jewish literary critic of our generation" for his many contributions to Jewish periodicals, especially *La Terre Retrouvée*, *Evidences*, *L'Arche*, and *Information Juive*.⁹⁷

Mandel intermittently returned to evaluate Sartre's writings on Jewish topics. On the occasion of the reissue of the *Réflexions* as an inexpensive *livre de poche* in 1962, he argued that it "is both the best and the worst of things."⁹⁸ He was critical of the students of the 1960s generation who drew too much inspiration from the *Réflexions* in constituting their Jewish identity. As he put it, "the Jewish students that walk around with the *Réflexions* in their pocket because they recognize themselves in it proves absolutely nothing about the reality of this Jew of Sartre, because to recognize oneself [*se reconnaître*] is not necessarily to know oneself [*se connaître*], and can be the opposite."⁹⁹ Mandel thought it sad that "a great number of Jewish students underwent their catechism and found themselves, or thought they found themselves, in the existential Jew uniquely conditioned by antisemitism."¹⁰⁰ This is because his drive as a French-Jewish intellectual was steeped in the secular tradition but as a mode for enriching and deepening his fidelity to Yiddishkeit and to modern Orthodox Judaism. This tension would persist in the *soixante-huitard* generation of Sartre's Jewish readers.

By the late 1970s France had become what German Jewry was in the Weimar period. As a result of the demographic increase of French Jewry since the decolonization of Tunisia (1956), Morocco (1956), and Algeria (1962), France now had the largest Jewish community in Western Europe and the fourth largest in the world. The confluence of Jewish and French intellectual traditions made it one of the most dynamic and intellectually exciting communities. French Jewry since the 1960s had spread geographically throughout the Hexagone and had undergone a vibrant renaissance in establishing new institutions and in multiplying the possibilities of religious, social, and cultural identification. Jewish intellectuals in France have emerged as among the most innovative and articulate representatives of the ongoing relevance of Jewish thought and tradi-

tion for the (post)modern world. These thinkers and the French-Jewish cultural efflorescence that they represent have also had a profound effect on French culture generally and on the postmodern position in particular.

This influence is evident in the way that the *soixante-huitard* generation of French-Jewish thinkers has responded to Sartre's *Réflexions*. Focusing on the work of Pierre Goldmann, Alain Finkielkraut, Shmuel Trigano, and Benny Lévy permits us to show how these four thinkers represent the four major constellations that define the positions of post-1968 French-Jewish intellectuals. Their efforts to "work through" the French antisemitic past and the history of Jews and Judaism in France in the postwar period are embedded in a double repetition: (1) those that have constituted *la question juive* from its origins and (2) those that shaped Sartre's own response to the Jewish Question.

Pierre Goldmann and the Jewish Radicals of May '68

Pierre Goldman embodied the dying spasms of the May '68 generation, and, as Ya'ir Auron has argued, his death symbolized the death knell of his generation of "Jewish radicals" who constituted much of the leadership of the May events.¹⁰¹ It is not only his affiliation with *Les Temps Modernes* and *Libération* but also the terms of his discourse that show a clear Sartrean influence. In an interview in *Le Monde* just before his death Goldman synthesized his views on Jewish identity: "To be Jewish is not what I have, but my condition. . . . It's a space that I fill existentially with this and that. . . . And why is this so important? Because of antisemitism. Because of the hatred. The only answer to the question of what it means to be a Jew, is Auschwitz."¹⁰² Goldman's existential conception of Jewish identity and his reiteration that it is "the antisemite who makes the Jew" clearly echoes Sartre's *Réflexions*. In response to the appearance of the interview just after his death, Laurence Podselver, an anthropologist who writes on the Hasidim in France, said, "Pierre Goldman represents our whole period. . . . Like all gifted people, he knew how to express a great deal of what many in my generation think about their Jewish identity. . . . It is full of contradictions and obscure passages. These contradictions are ours."¹⁰³ The influence of Sartre on Goldman's construction of his Jewish identity therefore clearly resonated with many of the *soixante-huitard* generation, as Mandel indicated.

In Goldman's memoir he states unequivocally, "I was deeply influenced by Sartre," and the intertwined themes of thanatos and existential authenticity-before-death run through much of his autobiographical narrative, *Souvenirs obscurs d'un juif polonais né en France* (Dim Memories of a Polish Jew Born in France).¹⁰⁴ Goldman's self-description quintessentially embodied Sartre's conception of authenticity defined in *Being and Nothingness*: to be what you are not, and not to be what you are.¹⁰⁵ Recall that Sartre correlated authenticity with "the profound cohesion and dispersion of the Jewish people" in their "diaspora."¹⁰⁶ Referring to the Vichy period, during which Sartre produced his magnum opus, Goldman insisted of his own identity, "I had been born in France at a time when I was not permitted to be born French—I did not have to prove that I was French because basically I had never been French. I was only an exiled Jew without a promised land. Exiled indefinitely, infinitely, definitively . . . I had no country, no country other than absolute exile, the Jewish exile of the Diaspora" (28). It is this radically decentered conception of (Jewish) identity that would inspire Hélène Cixous to write *Un K. incompréhensible Pierre Goldman*.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, an epigraph taken from Léopold Trepper that Goldman uses to open his memoir perfectly summarizes the authentic Jew that Sartre describes in the third part of his *Réflexions*: "I became a communist because I am a Jew."

Goldman's memoir also thematizes a fundamental limit to assimilation that structures Sartre's conception of Jewish identity. This is evident in his description of his father, Alter Mojsze, who came to France from Poland inspired by the ideals of Victor Hugo's monumental novel of the French Revolution, *Ninety-Three*, but soon found that "racism was still alive" in France (1). His father later served in the French imperial military corps in order to earn his French nationality and was awarded the *Croix de guerre* because he returned to the front on May 10, 1940, the beginning of the German assault on France, while on leave. Nevertheless, Goldman states unequivocally that even though "he deserved his French nationality . . . he was never so much a Jew as at that time" (2). In the paradigmatic statement of his memoirs he maintains, "To be or not to be French had never been a question I asked myself. I think I always knew that I was simply a Polish Jew who had been born in France" (7). In short, Goldman represents the influence of Sartre on a constellation of Jewish radicals or *gauchiste* authentic

Jews (in Sartre's sense), defined more by their radicalism than their Judaism but for whom the two were never separate, that include Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Alain Geismar, André Glucksmann, Alain Krivine, Marc Kravetz, Bernard Kouchner, Régine Dikois-Cohen, and Michele Firk, among others.¹⁰⁸

Alain Finkielkraut and the Critical Secularists

Alain Finkielkraut is another child of Polish Jews born in France.¹⁰⁹ Following the publication of *Le juif imaginaire* (*The Imaginary Jew*) in 1980, he would emerge as one of the most visible Jewish intellectuals working on questions of identity—and Jewish identity in particular—in relation to nationalism, the Holocaust, French deniers, and the politics of memory.¹¹⁰ He is the author of a number of books on these themes, and his ideas have been widely disseminated through his regular appearances in the French media, including on his own radio talk show, *Répliques*, and as the editor of the now defunct *Le Messager Européen*.¹¹¹ The influences on Finkielkraut are multiple, but the Sartrean strand remains significant, especially in *Le juif imaginaire*.

Le juif imaginaire is an insightful meditation by a modern, secular Jew on the inherent dilemmas of modern Jewish identity from assimilation to Jewish observance. In Finkielkraut's self-presentation the Sartrean conception of (Jewish) subjectivity, where the self is always dependent upon "the look" of the Other, is complicated because the Other also turns out to be Finkielkraut himself.¹¹² This inscribes within the text a distrust of its own self-reflective mode and personal memory.¹¹³ This is evident in the opening chapter, which specifically indicates the centrality of Sartre for Finkielkraut's own analysis. The text begins with a memory from childhood when Alain was verbally assaulted by some young boys who yelled at him, "Crève, sale Juif!" (Die, dirty Jew!). Finkielkraut remembers that this insult conferred on him the sense that he was "Jewish: this consciousness of a hidden uniqueness, of an invisible and inefaceable difference."¹¹⁴ He self-consciously deploys this Sartrean moment where identity is conferred by the dialectical encounter with the Other.¹¹⁵

Still, Finkielkraut's text problematizes Sartre's understanding of Jewishness, ultimately destabilizing his conception of authenticity.¹¹⁶ In his youth Finkielkraut availed himself "of the vocabulary [Sartre] bestowed upon my existence. . . .

With unimpeachable rigor [Sartre] told me that I was an authentic Jew, that I assumed my condition[,] and that courage, even heroism were required for me to claim so loudly and so strongly my ties to a people in disgrace. . . . Sartre's prose filled the gap between what I imagined myself to be and the existence I actually led. I was a nice Jewish boy, indulging myself in nomadic fantasies and a revolt without risk, subject to none of their malaise" (9, 10). Finkielkraut is aware that his story is of the post-Holocaust child who inherits the suffering of his forebearers but who never endured their oppression. Sartre's analysis facilitated the terms of this self-deception: "Enchanted by my image, I immersed myself in the dream which *Réflexions sur la question juive* gave the bitter, virile face of reality" (10). He recognizes that his conception of authentic Jewishness was grounded in the "family stories of the final solution" (11) and that ultimately his claim to authenticity was a fiction of his own family romance. To lay claim to the ostracism and exile of Jewish identity on the basis of his father's generation's experience in Auschwitz was bad faith, a "drama without a fateful event" (6). The "imaginary Jew" is the name that Finkielkraut gives to those Jewish mama's boys (and girls), protected from the horrors of the persecution of Jews, who are "cowards in life, martyred in dreams" because "they have not performed their apprenticeship to Judaism under the gaze of the Other" (14–15).

There is a direct correlation that Finkielkraut establishes between the "bad faith" of his conception of his own "authentic" Jewish identity and members of the New Left of May '68, whom he chides in the second chapter as imaginary revolutionaries. This chapter, entitled "Tous des juifs allemands?" (All German Jews?), begins with the memory of the protests in support of Daniel Cohn-Bendit. In retrospect, Finkielkraut says, "the only thing I could really hold against these ephemeral German Jews was their caricature of my own Jewishness. They were Jews, but only for the sake of the image, just as I was, just as at any given moment our entire generation might strike an anarchist, Trotskyist or Maoist pose" (18). Finkielkraut insists that the *soixante-huitard* generation lived a carnivalesque charade, as he himself did. He suggests, as had Raymond Aron, that the entire revolt in May '68 was a festival of "symbolic identification": "All German Jews? Come on: we were all imaginary Jews" (21). May '68 was the simulacrum incarnate: "We imitated images" (23).

Rather than an authentic symbol of the revolutionary sixties, for Finkelkraut Pierre Goldman is a symbol of the danger of “appropriating the Holocaust as my own, draping myself with the torture that others underwent. Goldman helped me turn traitor and inform against myself.”¹⁷ This self-critique, however, leaves him in a paradoxical position, since he is a confirmed atheist but does not wish to renounce his “origins. . . . I am a Jew, yet the figure designated by this statement can be located nowhere—neither in the constants of my character nor in the biographical events of my life” (32–33).

What remains for Finkelkraut is the trace of the past in memory. Here again, he will be guided by Sartre but take him to the limits of his own position. For the “introspective Jew” memory is “the inward gaze” (38). But like interpersonal relations in the Sartrean schema, in our relation to the past Finkelkraut suggests that we must be aware of nostalgia, which is an essentializing, narcissistic, and metaphysical conception of history that reifies and monumentalizes the past as an image; it is an imaginary past. In his critique of nostalgia he paraphrases Sartre’s famous claim: “Memory is thus the useless passion a vanished civilization stirs in me” (39). Yet Finkelkraut’s text is filled with a melancholia for an idealized Jewish world lived somehow before memory where Jews had “two thousand years of History at the tip of . . . [their] tongue” (38). He yearns for a Yiddishkeit that will “come naturally” (38). This is Finkelkraut’s own imaginary Jewish world, a fictitious fabrication that never existed except as nostalgia.

Finkelkraut is thus caught in the aporias of Sartre’s structure. In the post-Shoah era the unraveling of the double binds between the unassimilable Jew and assimilation rebounds because the identity to be affirmed can only be “an unending obsession and imaginary tale” (82). This results in an empty or abyssal Jewishness defined only in opposition to what it is not. Like Memmi, the negativity of his identity serves a critical force in relationship to antisemitism and racism and a self-critical impulse when it comes to dogmatic conceptions of Jewish identity. This negation has guided Finkelkraut in the subsequent texts that he published, first in his castigation of the deniers of the Holocaust in *L’avenir d’une négation* (*The Future of a Negation*, 1982) and subsequently in his critique of the anti-Zionism expressed during the Lebanon War in *La réprobation d’Israël* (1983), in his intervention into the culture wars and his rejection of

multiculturalism in *La défaite de la pensée* (The Defeat of the Mind, 1987), and his critique of how memory was manipulated in the Klaus Barbie trial.¹¹⁸

Finkielkraut's positive values, especially his effort to rethink the humanist and Enlightenment tradition by affirming the commonality of humanity as its diversity, draw more on the sources of the Western tradition than on the Jewish tradition.¹¹⁹ This leaves him straddling the double binds of the French-Jewish social contract that has preoccupied his many political interventions, acutely summarized by David Suchoff: "The Imaginary Jew thus imagines a Jewish politics that is anti-assimilationist but committed to the Enlightenment, supportive of Israel while it argues for the Diaspora, and a proponent of ethnic particularism rooted in history, yet that aspires to remain in critical tension with universal ideals."¹²⁰ This position aligns Finkielkraut with other Jewish intellectuals like Robert and Elisabeth Badinter, Pierre Birnbaum, Elizabeth de Fontenay, Dominique Schnapper, Chantal Benayoun, and Catherine Kintzler.

Benny Lévy and the Radical Jews

Benny Lévy represents a position almost diametrically opposed to Finkielkraut's. Lévy's own analysis of Sartre's corpus in his first book, *Le nom de l'homme: Dialogue avec Sartre*, followed from the lines that he explored with Sartre in his many exchanges with him and was published by Verdier, the publishing house that was formed by a group of former Maoists.¹²¹ His insightful, rigorously internal reading of Sartre is crystallized in a short article, "Sartre et la judéité."¹²² Here he exposes, albeit in a reserved, often enigmatic, and allusive style, the centrality of phantasmatic and negative representations of Jews and Judaism for the self-construction of the Occident (140). He explores the tensions between France's magnanimous cultural heritage and the assimilation it demands as the price of citizenship, explicitly addressing the issue in terms of his relations with Sartre: "I never adopted Sartre, he adopted me, naturalized me in a sense; I was in France thanks to Sartre's grace" (140). Quoting Sartre's *Situations*, Lévy also shows that Sartre clung to "the true culture that is *la Révolution*" (141).¹²³

Seeking to undermine Sartre's revolutionary politics in its own terms, Lévy indicates the foundational significance of Sartre's *Réflexions* for his later anticolonial advocacy of the "wretched of the earth" (141) and more generally

critiques Sartre's conception of revolution by suggesting that the difference of the stranger, the downtrodden, and the colonized, which he suggests are homologues in Sartre's thought for "the Jew," would ultimately be assimilated by Sartre's revolutionary politics: "The human will not be Judaized; the Jew will simply rejoin humanity" (141).¹²⁴ He contends that the central distinction of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* between the "group-in-fusion" and the "serial group" collapses in the face of historical experience. While Sartre himself could clearly distinguish between them, his theory of practical ensembles is not able to adequately determine the differences between the *san-culottes* and the *Camelots du roi* or between a pogrom and a group-in-fusion. Furthermore, Jewish experience as the victims of these collectivities makes Jews suspicious of this revolutionary politics.

Lévy's alternate politics stems from the Talmudic story of Yochanan ben Zakkai, which he interprets as a specifically Jewish critique of power politics and the eternal return of the same problem that revolutionary politics inevitably faces, which is how to institutionalize proposed differences without creating new forms of oppression (149). Inspired by Yochanan ben Zakkai's request in the face of the Roman destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem for an academy of study at Yavneh, in the 1980s Lévy lived and studied at the *Yéchiva des étudiants* in Strasbourg, "returning" as a *balei teshuvah* to ultra-Orthodox observance. Led by Eliahou Abitbol, the *Yéshiva des étudiants* continues the scholarly approach of Vilna's Jews and has attracted many former *soixante-huitard* radicals.¹²⁵ He embodies those *soixante-huitard* Jews who are critical of French political traditions in reclaiming Jewish Orthodoxy.

Shmuel Trigano and the Revivification of Judaism in France

Like Lévy, Shmuel Trigano is part of the mass exodus of North African immigrants who have so fundamentally altered the French-Jewish community.¹²⁶ He is among the most innovative of the *soixante-huitard* intellectuals because of his effort to radically reevaluate the relations between Jewishness, Judaism, antisemitism, and the political implications of the Jewish Question outside of the strictures of both the Enlightenment tradition and Sartre's existential phenomenology. Trigano clearly and unequivocally rejects the terms that structure

Sartre's analysis of Jewish difference. Explicitly citing Sartre and paraphrasing his position, in *La nouvelle question juive* he states that "Jewish alterity . . . is thought in a relation of dependence and rotten servility to the Occident. It is necessary from this perspective that the Jews . . . become like the 'others' to be admitted among them, to be normalized. Jews are thus nothing but what 'the others' make them. All of our epoch lives under this (false) vision."¹²⁷ He argues in "From Individual to Collectivity: The Rebirth of the 'Jewish Nation' in France," which is a condensed version of his 1982 work, *La république et les juifs après Copernic*, for an approach that is critical of "treating Jewish existence as the sediment of outsiders' perceptions" in favor of reintroducing "the Jewish view of things into sociological and historical analysis."¹²⁸ He thus patently rejects the Sartrean axiom that Jews are defined by the gaze of Others and decries the consequences that stem from this thesis.

Trigano is critical not only of Sartre's response to the Jewish Question but of the entire framework that has structured *la question juive* from its origins. He argues that the discourse of Jewish emancipation from the Enlightenment through the Revolution and beyond, by Jews and non-Jews, was fundamentally structured by bifurcating Jews and citizenship, creating a polarity between Jews and humanity, particularity and universality. The traps of these binaries have fundamentally shaped the terms of modern politics *tout court*: "The same principle (abstract and universal mankind) that allowed the founding fathers of the Republic to view the Jews as men led them . . . to cease to recognize the Jews among the men they were emancipating."¹²⁹ The Enlightenment and Revolution thus replaced the mythical Jew of the medieval period with the modern myth of the abstract man and citizen. Trigano's perceptive analysis suggests that this situation does not "imply that the Republic is antisemitic" but rather seeks to show that the very conditions of the French-Jewish social contract "can engender antisemitism."¹³⁰ This is because "the Jew" can symbolize "both France's absolute negative entity (the anti-Republic) and her absolute positive entity (the Republic par excellence)."¹³¹ The Jewish citizen is thus caught in the antinomies of the French-Jewish dyad.

Like that of Levinas, Trigano's project is to bring the French and Jewish traditions into dialogue in order to deconstruct these antinomies. He argues that

these dichotomies are the product of how the logos of the West has responded to (Jewish) difference, since effectively “the Occident only thinks positively in the negativity (negation) of Jewishness.”¹³² For Trigano, *la question juive* is thus the hidden face not only of France but of the West and specifically of its pathways through modernity.

Trigano seeks to oppose the tenacious and congenital objectification of Jews as a negation and to do so without falling into the parallel trap of normalization or assimilation. To achieve this he advocates a critical Judaism based on the biblical model of the exodus from Egypt that moves beyond the duality of universality and particularity, insisting that the “the way of Sinai . . . created a people but also opened a universal trail for humanity.”¹³³ He derides Western metaphysics, which is built on the closure of its polarizing logic, and seeks to construct a new politics through the creation of a revived Jerusalem that will be a city on a hill with multiple entrances into modernity.¹³⁴ This Jewish theory of politics should traverse and confront contemporary politics, not just adapt and reproduce it, which Trigano suggests has been the case with other approaches. He specifically critiques Diaspora emancipation, revolutionary anti-Judaism, culturally autonomous Diaspora Judaism, and political Zionism as all leading to self-alienation.¹³⁵ Instead he calls for a return to the Jewish community structured by its relation to Jewish law and the critical reading of Jewish texts while denouncing radical separation. He has thus discerned the distinguishing facets of a revived Judaism in France that can become a new model for France and elsewhere, beyond the limits of Jacobinism or liberal solutions to the Jewish Question.¹³⁶

What Trigano offers are new reflections on the Jewish Question precisely because he has historicized and destabilized the aporias that have structured *la question juive*. As such, his writing poses the questions that have come with “the rise of ethnicity and ‘differences’” in the wake of May ’68.¹³⁷ These questions constitute “a radical challenge to the democratic system by revealing its critical impasse: the difficulty of finding conceptual space for the particular with the reputedly rational and universal modern state—and thus, conversely, the failure of the system’s philosophy of the universal.”¹³⁸ Consequently, Trigano, along with the group of academics and journalists closest to his approach, including

Gilles Bernheim, Raphaël Draï, Charles Mopsik, Josy Eisenberg, Gérard Haddad, Maurice-Reuben Hayoun, and others, thereby most profoundly leads “to a new configuration of Jewish existence in the modern or ‘postmodern’ world” and as such offers “lessons of universal import, which shed light on the structure of the crisis of modern citizenship.”¹³⁹

In following the trace of “the Jew” in Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive* in these four French-Jewish thinkers of the *soixante-huitard* generation, we have mapped four of the major positions that define their generation’s response to the Jewish Question: (1) Jewish radicals, or *gauchiste* Jews, defined more by their radicalism than their Judaism; (2) Jews disillusioned with *gauchisme*, skeptical of claims of Jewish authenticity, who are critically reaffirming the French-Jewish social contract, albeit with an awareness of its limits; (3) radical Jews who have critiqued French political traditions in reclaiming Jewish Orthodoxy; (4) Jews engaged in reconnecting to Jewish tradition through its texts, which serve as a resource for reexamining *la question juive*, conceptions of Frenchness, and the politics of modernity. In so doing they have reevaluated the significance of Judaism and Jewishness in the postmodern age.

Bernard-Henri Lévy and *Le siècle de Sartre*

Among the *soixante-huitard* Jewish writers, none has been as responsible as Bernard-Henri Lévy (BHL) for the “retour de Sartre.”¹⁴⁰ This is not only because as the darling of the French media his text *Le siècle de Sartre* (*Sartre: The Philosopher of the Twentieth Century*) received incredibly widespread coverage.¹⁴¹ It is also because the book is structured around the cardinal debates about Sartre’s legacy—literary, philosophical, and political—and for the most part he takes a judicious and informed stance on each. It merits discussion here as a recapitulation of why so many in the *soixante-huitard* generation were inspired by Sartre’s writing.

BHL suggests that there are two Sartres in his corpus, not divided by a *Kehre* (turn) between the young existentialist Sartre and the mature Marxist Sartre.¹⁴² Rather, there are two souls who share the same body: the antihumanist, libertarian, individualist, anarchist, antimetaphysical, dystopian pessimistic Sartre and the humanist, socialist, communitarian, metaphysical, utopian,

optimistic Sartre. Moreover, BHL insists that Sartre's legacy was not only as a writer and political activist but also as an extraordinary witness to the profound conflicts of the century that he embodied. The result is that there is always more than one way to interpret his acts, and in so doing BHL reveals Sartre's ongoing relevance.

This relevance is nowhere more apparent than in BHL's conclusion of *Le siècle de Sartre*, which is a reading of *Hope Now*, arguing that this was not the last words of a dying Sartre but a new beginning on the basis of Levinasian axioms. He maintains that there are four intuitions advanced in Sartre's dialogue with Benny Lévy about being Jewish that have profound implications. First, "revolution" is rethought in terms of messianism, with several major theoretical advantages. The telos of thought is no longer economic or political but ethical. The result is the end of Sartre's emphasis on violence, eschatology, apocalypse, the myth of progress, and with it Marxism as the philosophy of our time. Second, the aporias of Sartre's rejection or occultation of community are reassessed in light of the Jewish experience of Diaspora. Here community is not founded on race, blood, soil, or the idea of a fatherland but on cosmopolitanism, where individuality and difference remain dominant chords within community. Third, it results in a new philosophy of history. Finally, *Hope Now* also offers the possibility of a moral system that Sartre could never found on a consciousness without reciprocity or without obligation for the Other.

BHL's epilogue to Sartre therefore takes up the scandal of *Hope Now* and insists upon reading it with a generous spirit, seeking what it offers that is new. This same magnanimity characterizes his interpretation of Sartre's *Réflexions*. While aware that there were many stereotypes reiterated in Sartre's work, BHL salutes Sartre's willingness to speak about the deportation of the Jews when the vast majority wanted to silence it. For those who lived through Vichy, "for Claude Lanzmann, Jean Daniel, Robert Misrahi, Bernard Frank, it was [thus] a liberation" (402). He continues: "For me, [and] for the Jews that like me were born after the Shoah and after this book," he adds, "there were three merits" (403). First, the portrait of the antisemite, where antisemitism is treated as a "passion," as a faith or religion whose adherents remain committed to it despite its irrationality and the evidence contradicting their diverse conspirato-

rial theories; second, Sartre's distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic Jew remains an existential choice for many modern Jews; and finally, Sartre's opposition to the "Republican model of assimilation-dissolution" and his resistance to an abstract universalism is still an important critique. George Steiner says of BHL's work that "*Le Siècle de Sartre* is, at its core, an autobiography, a chronicle of Sartre via Lévy's lifelong encounters with his works, with the inspiring shadow he has cast over Lévy's own existentiality."¹⁴³ Sartre was, therefore, a mirror for BHL's own reflections, as he was for the two generations of Jewish thinkers in the wake of the Shoah.¹⁴⁴

Postmodern and Deconstructive Interrogations of the Jewish Question

As in the work of these Jewish thinkers, the Jewish Question runs like Theseus's golden thread through the labyrinth of much postmodern theory. Postmodernists have rethought the Western tradition from the margins, including from the perspective of Jews and Judaism.¹⁴⁵ Some postmodernists are Jews and have reflected on their Jewish identities, like Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous. Several, including Maurice Blanchot, Jean-François Lyotard, and Julia Kristeva, have developed as well as criticized parts of Sartre's analysis of the relation between Self and Other, identity and difference, antisemite and Jew. While few of the poststructuralists have written directly about Sartre's *Réflexions* in their work, there are reverberations of his antifoundationalist and antiessentialist thesis as well as his emphasis on how Jews and Judaism have been excluded from the Western tradition in their work.

Going beyond Sartre's diasporic conception of identity defined in relation to others by reconceptualizing human subjectivity as multiple and decentered, postmodernists have drawn upon the thematics so eloquently expressed in the poetry of Edmond Jabès. An Egyptian Jew educated in Paris, his work weaves images of nomadism and exile, resulting in the postmodern celebration of that peripatetic figure, the Wandering Jew—perhaps the archetype of postmodern subjectivity—as the rootless outsider without a national home whose destiny is to bear witness to a future messianic moment.

Elizabeth Bellamy has argued, "French postmodernism's preoccupation with the figure of the Jew has its postwar origins not so much in Sartre as in Blan-

chot.”¹⁴⁶ But the text by Blanchot that has served as their inspiration is a critique of Sartre’s *Réflexions*. Included in *L’entretien infini* (*The Infinite Conversation*), a series of essays written between 1953 and 1965, is an essay entitled “Being Jewish” in which Blanchot reproves the negative ontology of “the Jew”: the Jew as the object of the specular gaze defined by the thesis of Sartre’s *Réflexions*.

*Sartre described antisemitism rigorously. He showed that the portrait-accusation drawn up against the Jew reveals nothing about the Jew but everything about the antisemite, inasmuch as the antisemite projects the force of his injustice, his stupidity, his base meanness, and his fear onto his enemy. But in affirming that the Jew is no more than a product of the others’ gaze, and is only Jewish by the fact of being seen as such by the other (which thereby obliges him either to deny or to claim his identity), Sartre tends to recognize Jewish difference, but merely as the negative of antisemitism.*¹⁴⁷

Like Sartre, Blanchot assails the republican social contract and the liberal defense of Jews that demands that they “disappear in an unreal human abstraction” (124). He generalizes Sartre’s reflections on the marginalization of Jews to forge what becomes a theme of postmodern critiques of the West: “Every society, and in particular Christian society, has had its Jew in order to affirm itself against him through relations of general oppression” (123). The form of oppression visited upon the body of the Jew within the body politic thus entails, Blanchot insists, “a particular relation of responsibility (a relation not yet elucidated) with this ‘Other’ that is the Jew” (124).

However, unlike Sartre, Blanchot maintains that Judaism is more than just a rich cultural heritage, asserting via Memmi, Neher, and Levinas that Judaism offers positive truths that are still significant today. In particular, “being Jewish” signifies that “the idea of exodus and the idea of exile can exist as a legitimate movement” (125). On the basis of this affirmation of “uprooting,” “strangeness,” and “foreignness” Blanchot develops the kernels of a number of postmodern themes: “To be pagan is to be fixed, to plant oneself in the earth,” while Judaism teaches the value of the sojourn of “a people without a land and bound by a word” (125). The Jewish Diaspora “forbids the temptation of Unity-Identity” and “has nothing of the mythical about it” (126). Jewish dispersion

is not only spatial and temporal but also epistemological, because the exile of Abraham was also a paradigm of man's exclusion "from the truth" (127). Jewish monotheism inscribes the preservation of alterity that comes from dialogue with the unknown and unknowable, the strange and distant, and bears witness, "as Levinas says, to this relation with difference that the human face . . . reveals to us and entrusts to our responsibility" (129). Antisemitism is precisely "the repulsion inspired by the Other," which takes different forms in its effort to suppress the significance of being Jewish.

The echo of Sartre via Blanchot is apparent also in Jean-François Lyotard's reflections on the Jewish Question, which became a more prevalent topic as his oeuvre developed. Themes related to the Jewish Question have a long history in Lyotard's work, starting with his first published text, a review of Karl Jaspers's *Die Schuldfrage* (*The Question of German Guilt*) just after World War II, through his essays in the 1960s and 1970s on psychoanalysis in general and *Moses and Monotheism* in particular. *Le différend* (1983) threads its questions around the meaning of the Shoah, which he took up again in a different context in *Heidegger and "the jews,"* published in 1988.¹⁴⁸

As was the case in Blanchot and in Sartre (who declared that "the Jewish blood that the Nazis shed falls on all our heads"), in Lyotard's work Jews and Judaism figure as a structure of obligation and responsibility—the debt of the West to its ("Jewish") other.¹⁴⁹ Lyotard systematically correlates "the jews" as an unconscious affect, an unrepresentable alterity, and an ethical category signifying debt and obligation. This is due primarily to the priority accorded to the Jewish relationship to text. The image of the Jews as "People of the Book" condenses a hypothesized, historically abstracted, aestheticized, and allegorical depiction of "the Jews" in Lyotard's texts.

Despite his insistence that what characterizes postmodernity is the incredulity toward metanarratives, Lyotard offers a lachrymose metanarrative about Jewish history in the West.¹⁵⁰ It is a story about the West's continual dismissals, rejections, and introjections of Jewish difference, which confronts its own limits at the gates of Auschwitz. The Shoah is a reminder of the ultimate unassimilability of "the Jew." Lyotard mimics the Sartrean thesis in the *Réflexions* that the gaze of Gentile society will always serve as a barrier to Jewish integration.

For Sartre, in forgetting the gaze of Gentile society “the Jew” risks his own inauthenticity. In Lyotardian terms the assimilated Jew is “the Jew” who forgets that he is the forgotten of the West.

Like that of Blanchot, Lyotard’s valorization of “the Jew” as nomadic, rootless, and diasporatic repeats images of “the Jew” that were so pivotal to their exclusion. Max Silverman points out that “employing an ethnic allegory to characterize the tension between order and disorder, reason and resistance to reason, the self-constituted self and the heterogeneous self, Europe and its other(s), this postmodern theory would appear to overlap uncomfortably with the ethnic allegory employed frequently in the age of modernity.”¹⁵¹ The problem with this postmodern anti-antisemitism is that it affirms Jews and Judaism in precisely the terms that characterized their negativity, now simply inverting the axiology.

Like Lyotard, for the followers of Jacques Lacan, specifically Julia Kristeva, “the Jew” is a figure of the repressed, abject other who is a symptom of the West’s desire to master or foreclose alterity. Her analysis of antisemitism in *Pouvoirs de l’horreur: Essai sur l’abjection* (*Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, 1980) focuses on an interpretation of Céline’s antisemitism. There are two overlapping elements that define Céline’s abject repulsion of “the Jew”: “The first is *rage* against the Symbolic, which is represented here [in Céline’s writing] by religious, para-religious, and moral establishments (Church, Freemasonry, School, intellectual Elite, communist Ideology, etc.); it culminates in what Céline hallucinates and knows to be their foundation and forebear—Jewish monotheism.”¹⁵² The second element is Céline’s attempt to substitute “another law,” one of “material positivity . . . embodied in the Family, the Nation, the Race, and the Body.” In opposition to the transcendence of Judaism, Céline’s phantasm is for a law without heterogeneity or difference, thus replicating “primary narcissism” in his wish for the immanence of the “natural/racial/familial[,] . . . [in short,] a glorification of the Phallus.” Kristeva thus reads in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms the relation of projection between Self and Other, antisemite and Jew that Sartre had postulated. The conclusions of their differing analyses of the ambivalent status of “the Jew” reveal many similarities: “The Jew becomes the feminine exalted to the point of mastery, the impaired master, the ambivalent,

the border where exact limits between same and other, subject and object . . . inside and outside [disappear. The Jew is] hence an Object of fear and fascination. Abjection itself" (180).

Among the deconstructive thinkers who have attempted to mobilize the abject status of Jews and Judaism to dismantle the oppressive structures of inclusion and exclusion that constitute the West, Jacques Derrida has been particularly successful because, like Memmi, his effort has taken the form of a self-interrogation.¹⁵³ His biography, Gideon Ofrat suggests, can be told as a story of "cultural estrangement, lingual estrangement, divorce from tradition, a grueling peregrination between texts and countries," and within these contexts Judaism and Jewishness are "an essence from which Derrida was exiled."¹⁵⁴ Like Sartre, Derrida relentlessly demands that we examine our alienation and exile from all essences: epistemologically from Truth, existentially from Identity, ethically in relation to our responsibility for the Other, even as we seek to make meaning, to realize ourselves, to pursue truth, and to strive individually and collectively for liberty. These paradoxes or "double binds" are the connecting threads of his expansive corpus and the axis of the deconstructive methodology by which his work unfolds.

Derrida's methodology is Talmudic: he writes as a commentator on the texts of others. He has only rarely commented directly on the work of Sartre, but at a recent conference, "Judéités: Questions pour Jacques Derrida," he wove his exploration of his Jewish identity from *Circonfession*, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, and *Voiles*, along with many of the key motifs of his work, around a reading of Sartre's *Réflexions*.¹⁵⁵ He invokes Sartre's text, he says, not to critique it but to render homage to a book that meant a great deal to him in the 1950s, as it did to many "young French Jews of the following generation" (27), even as he addresses its shortcomings.

Derrida's reading serves to deconstruct three sets of distinctions upon which much of the debate on the Jewish Question and the matter of Jewish identity have hinged: "Juif/juif, authentique/inauthentique, judéité/judaïsme" (26). In a quintessentially Sartrean gesture he contends he first heard the word "Jew" as "an insult, an injury and injustice, a denial of rights more than the right to belong to a legitimate group" when he was accused of being a "Jew" at school

in Algeria (19). Derrida's point in exploring this and other situations is to show the inherently untenable status of anyone laying claim unproblematically to the category "Jew." Exploring the meaning of the notion grammatically, philosophically, and in the context of his own life, he argues that any essence or stability to it is ephemeral. Under interrogation these "distinctions or oppositions" become "impossible and illegitimate" (25). If Sartre insisted that one must choose and accept the responsibility for a choice around these oppositions, Derrida deconstructs these terms in order to reveal the paradoxical necessity but "undecidability" of the choices between Jewishness and Judaism and between authenticity and inauthenticity. In deconstructing these distinctions he claims that the experience of being Jewish reveals itself as the "strategic lever or methodology of a general deconstruction" (37).

Derrida's deconstruction seeks to undo the closure of Western metaphysics, to open ethics to the face of the Other, to destabilize the politics of power by valorizing the messianic hope of democracy, to reinfuse play into the struggles of human existence, to expand the possibilities of identity beyond identification, including the very terms "Jew" and "Jewish." As such, his work is exemplary of how postmodern thinkers have drawn upon the Jewish Question in order to deconstruct the very categories that have defined it: citizenship, civic duty, education, (national) identity, civilization, and the meaning of modernity itself.

Concluding Unscientific Postscript

So Sartre's *Réflexions* influenced much of the discussion of the Jewish Question not only by posing the pivotal issues of the postwar debates but also by defining the terms of subsequent responses. The problems in Sartre's analysis are consequently often reduplicated in subsequent efforts to pose *la question juive*. Postwar reflections are haunted by the originary problems of the Jewish Question such that Jews and Judaism are often caught between the aporias of assimilation and difference, trapped in the dilemmas of Jewish identity, and enmeshed in the double binds of the French-Jewish synthesis. What is different about the postwar reflections on the Jewish Question, however, is a wary or at times strongly critical view of the Enlightenment and the politics of emancipa-

tion. Sartre's *Réflexions* points to this difference, and many of his commentators have indicated why this difference makes all the difference.

From its origins, there was a gap between “Jewish” and “emancipation.” In the aftermath of the annihilation of more than seventy-six thousand French Jews among the six million, Sartre's *Réflexions* figured “the Jew” in terms of the gap—the negation, nihilation, and nothingness of his *Being and Nothingness*. “The Jew” was the instantiation par excellence of Sartre's neologism *négativité*, a word he uses to name the types of human activity that contain negativity as a part of their structure—experiences involving absence, change, interrogation, and destruction.¹⁵⁶ Sartre's *Réflexions* voiced the silence separating Jewish and emancipation while simultaneously seeking to suture that wounded space. His attempt reinforced the double binds limiting Jews and Judaism in France even as he sought to liberate them from the strictures of Jewish emancipation. The effort to “work through” these double binds—often by critiquing Sartre's negative ontology of “the Jew,” by representing the realities of Jewish history and Jewish life and by reimagining and revitalizing Jewish tradition—constitutes the most significant trajectories in postwar reflections on the Jewish Question. Thinkers eternally returned to Sartre's *Réflexions* not only because he reframed the terms of the interrogation but because his struggle to reexamine the legacy of the Enlightenment, to reassess modernity in light of Jewish experience, and to reformulate the forms of Jewish identity beyond an essence was constitutive of the ongoing problematic of reflections on the Jewish Question in postwar France and around the world.

Notes

When English translations of Sartre's texts have been available I have cited them, altering the translations where necessary and indicating that I have done so. Otherwise, all translations from French texts are my own.

Introduction

1. This quotation, along with all the others cited in this paragraph, are from Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life*, trans. Anna Cancogni (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 520–22.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre and Benny Lévy, *Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews*, trans. Adrian van den Hoven (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 103, 105–6, 107.

3. Permit me to explain the nomenclature of several significant recurring concepts throughout this work. I write the phrase “the Jewish Question” with capital letters and I put “the Jew” in quotes to indicate that they are constructed categories and that to describe “the Jew” also inscribes that category as a marker of difference whether based on language, belief system, artistic tradition, or gene pool. I trace the history of the construct of the Jewish Question in some detail in this introduction. On this point in relation to “race” see Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Introduction: Writing ‘Race’ and the Difference It Makes,” in *“Race,” Writing and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 5. Following Shmuel Almog, I do not hyphenate antisemitism:

If you use the hyphenated form you consider the words “Semitism,” “Semite,” “Semitic” as meaningful. They supposedly convey an image of a real substance, of a real group of people, “Semites,” who are said to be a race. This is a misnomer: firstly, because “semitic” or “aryan” were originally language groups, not people; but mainly because in antisemitic parlance, “Semites” really stands for Jews, simply that. . . . So the hyphen, or rather its omission, conveys a message: if you hyphenate your “anti-Semitism” you attach some credence to the very foundation on which the whole thing rests. Strike out the hyphen and you will treat antisemitism for what it really is—a generic name for modern Jew-hatred.

See Shmuel Almog, “What’s in a Hyphen,” *SICSA Report: The Newsletter of the Vidal Sassoon International Study of Antisemitism* (Summer 1989): 1–2 n. 2. To attain uniformity, I have altered the spelling of titles of works to accommodate this spelling as well.

4. The intellectual as a subject position within French culture has been studied from a number of intersecting and overlapping approaches. These include (1) the institutional history of the intellectual, which examines the role of educational institutions in the construction of intellectuals in France, such as Jean-François Sirinelli, *Génération intellectuelle: Khâgneux et normaliens dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (Paris: Fayard, 1988); Diane Rubenstein, *What's Left?: The Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Right* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Ezra N. Suleiman, *Elites in French Society: The Politics of Survival* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); (2) sociological analyses, including Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1984) and "The Intellectual Field: A World Apart," in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels": 1880–1900* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990); Niilo Kauppi, *French Intellectual Nobility: Institutional and Symbolic Transformations in the Post-Sartrean Era* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); (3) studies of intellectuals and the media, especially journals, including Régis Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*, trans. David Macey (Manchester: New Left Books, 1979); Michael Scriven, *Sartre and the Media* (London: Macmillan, 1993); Martyn Cornick, *The "Nouvelle Revue Française" under Jean Paulhan, 1925–1940* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 1995); Anna Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise: Sartre and "Les Temps modernes,"* trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988); (4) the politics of the intellectual, which examines the relationship between political ideologies, political parties, and political events, including Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France: De l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1986); Jean-François Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises: Manifestes et pétitions au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Jean-François Sirinelli, *Deux intellectuels dans le siècle: Sartre et Aron* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Chebel d'Appollonia, *Histoire politique des intellectuels en France 1944–1954*, vols. 1 and 2 (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1991); Paul Clay Sorum, *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977); M. A. Burnier, *Les existentialistes et la politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996); Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock, eds., *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996); Michel Leymarie, *Les intellectuels et la politique en France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001); Rémy Rieffel, *La tribu des clercs: Les intellectuels sous la V^e République* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1993); Michel Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997, 1999); Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals and the French Communist Party: Disillusion and Decline* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Arthur Hirsch, *The French Left: A History and Overview* (Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1982); David Schalk, *The Spectrum of Political Engagement: Mounier, Benda, Nizan, Brasillach, Sartre* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals 1944–1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (New York: Macmillan, 1964); George Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France* (New York: Columbia

University Press, 1966); Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); David Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics in Post-War France* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); and (5) studies of literary history, such as Victor Brombert, *The Intellectual Hero: Studies in the French Novel, 1880–1955* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960); Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, & the Performative in the 20th-Century French Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); and David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). There are several recent studies that cross these genre lines, including Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999); and Paul Cohen, *Freedom's Moment: An Essay on the French Idea of Liberty from Rousseau to Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

5. Louis Bodin, *Les intellectuels* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962); Brombert, *The Intellectual Hero*; René Remond, “Les intellectuels et la politique,” *Revue Française de Science Politique* 9 (1959); Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels*, 5–6; Charle, *Naissance*, 7–8; Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*; Michel Winock, “Les intellectuels dans le siècle,” *Vingtième Siècle* 2 (April–June 1984); Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock, “Introduction,” in *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français*; Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities*. There is a group of scholars who continue to trace the birth of the intellectual to the Enlightenment. See Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Paul Benichou, *Le sacre de l'écrivain 1750–1830* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1973); Priscilla Clark, *Literary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); John Lough, *Writer and Public in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Robert Darnton, “The Facts of Life in Eighteenth-Century France,” in *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, vol. 1 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of the Modern Political Culture*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), 261–88; Cohen, *Freedom's Moment*.

6. Jeremy Jennings, “Of Treason, Blindness and Silence: Dilemmas of the Intellectual in Modern France,” *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie* (London: Routledge, 1997), 65–88, 69.

7. Genevieve Idt, “‘L'intellectuel’ avant l'affaire Dreyfus,” *Cahiers de Lexicologie* 15, no. 2 (1969): 35–46, 35; Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*; William M. Johnston, “The Origin of the Term ‘Intellectuals’ in French Novels and Essays of the 1890s,” *Journal of European Studies* 4 (1974): 43–56; and Trevor Field, “Vers une nouvelle datation du substantif ‘intellectuel,’” *Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature*, no. 14 (1976): 159–67.

8. On the theme of the Judaization of France the most important source is Henri Gougenot des Mousseaux's *Le juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* (The Jew, Judaism, and the Judaization of Christian Peoples, 1869), which argued that Jews

manipulated the ideas of the Enlightenment and exploited the secret society of Freemasonry to advance the French Revolution, depose Christianity, and dominate the world. This theme would be developed by Édouard Drumont and other French antisemitic thinkers.

9. Cited in Idt, “L’intellectuel,” 35.

10. On these connections in Barrès see Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 27–30. See also Richard Griffiths, “Maurice Barrès, Intelligence and ‘the Intellectuals,’” in *Les intellectuels face à l’affaire Dreyfus alors et aujourd’hui*, ed. Roselyn Koren and Dan Michman (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998), 209–21.

11. Lucien Herr, the librarian of the École normale supérieure, would soon respond to Barrès, proudly reclaiming the term *intellectuel*. See “À M. Maurice Barrès,” *La Revue Blanche*, no. 15 (February 15, 1898).

12. Charle, *Naissance*, 20–38.

13. Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, 1.

14. Cohen, *Freedom’s Moment*. The term “consecrated heretic” is borrowed from Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*.

15. On the social structure of the intellectual see Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels*, chap. 1.

16. On the Jewish Question see Jacob Toury, “‘The Jewish Question’: A Semantic Approach,” in *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, vol. 2 (London: Howvitz Publishing, 1996), 85–106; Alex Bein, *The Jewish Question: Biography of a World Problem*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Associated University Presses, 1990); Enzo Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question: The History of a Debate, 1843–1943*, trans. Bernard Gibbons (Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press, 1990); Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996); Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed., *Auschwitz and After: Race, Culture, and “the Jewish Question” in France* (London: Routledge, 1995). Jacob Toury has carefully traced the origins of the catch phrase “the Jewish Question” to 1838. He argues that the meaning of the Jewish Question was fundamentally different from earlier questions posed about Jews: “the emerging ‘Jewish Question’ was not the question of individual rights and of equality between private citizens, but rather the question of the corporate status of Jewry as a whole” (“‘The Jewish Question’: A Semantic Approach,” 95). The new construct corresponded to the new situation in the middle of the nineteenth century of Jews who were integrating into every domain of modern life, and the question became how to distinguish this seemingly indistinguishable Other. The ultimate solution to that riddle was the development of scientific racism. Thus, “the ‘Jewish Question’ as a slogan did not take roots until it had established itself as an anti-Jewish battle-cry” (“‘The Jewish Question’: A Semantic Approach,” 92). Nevertheless, a counterdiscourse emerged by both Jewish and non-Jewish writers that continued to wrestle with the questions about Jews and Judaism first posed during the Enlightenment. I contend, therefore, that especially in the arguments of anti-antisemites the

debate about the emancipation of the Jews was as determinative for the category of the Jewish Question as was its antisemitic axis.

17. These connections are made by Jay Berkovitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), chap. 1. See also Paula Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 18. Regeneration was significant to the debate because the philosophes argued that society was decaying as a result of superstitious religious practices and barriers of rank and needed reform to restore its natural order.

18. Toury, “‘The Jewish Question’: A Semantic Approach,” 85.

19. On the Lavater-Mendelssohn exchange see Klaus Berghahn, “Lavater’s Attempt to Compel the Conversion of Moses Mendelssohn,” in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096–1996*, ed. Sander Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 61–67. On the epistolary exchange between Pinto and Voltaire see Adam Sutcliffe, “Can a Jew Be a Philosophe? Isaac de Pinto, Voltaire and Jewish Participation in the European Enlightenment,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (Spring–Summer 2000): 31–51.

20. The debate about the Enlightened philosophes’ views about Jews and Judaism continues to rage. The classic reference for discussions of the French Enlightenment and the Jews in English is Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). Hertzberg argues that Voltaire’s antipathy toward the Jews was symptomatic of the Enlightenment and marked the origins of modern racial antisemitism. For Lynn Hunt’s very sharp critique of Hertzberg, see *The French Revolution and Human Rights* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 31 n. 9. Hertzberg sought to overturn Peter Gay’s argument that, like Nietzsche’s anti-Jewish diatribes, Voltaire’s real target was not Jews and Judaism but Christianity, with Jews derided as the source of his real object of contempt. See Peter Gay, “Voltaire’s Antisemitism,” in *The Party of Humanity* (New York: Knopf, 1964), 97–108. Hugh Trevor-Roper defended the Enlightenment and disputed Hertzberg’s account in his “Some of My Best Friends Are Philosophes,” *New York Review of Books*, August 22, 1968, 11–14. While less unequivocal than Hertzberg, Jacob Katz also sees Voltaire as a prominent figure in the history of modern antisemitism in his *From Prejudice to Destruction* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). For other critical readings of the Enlightenment’s relation to the Jews see Léon Poliakov, *From Voltaire to Wagner*, vol. 3 of *The History of Antisemitism*, trans. Miriam Kochan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975); George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and Berel Lang, “Genocide and Kant’s Enlightenment,” in *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). See also Adam Sutcliffe’s assessment of the duality of Enlightenment discourse: “Myth, Origins, Identity: Voltaire, the Jews, and the Enlightenment Notion of Toleration,” *Eighteenth Century* 39 (1998): 107–26, and “Can a Jew Be a Philosophe?” The best overarching treatments of the status of Judaism

and of Jews in the Enlightenment as “a key site of intellectual contestation, confusion and debate” are Adam Sutcliffe’s *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5, and Ronald Schechter’s *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715–1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For their differences see Schechter’s review of Sutcliffe on H-France, <http://www3uakron.edu/hfrance/reviews/schechter3.html>. For outstanding recent contributions to the discussion of the period see Jay R. Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) and Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *The Abbé Gregoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

21. On this point see Berkovitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity*, 35–36.

22. My argument here is similar to what Lynn Hunt has suggested about the female figure of Liberty and other symbolic forms providing a mirroring center that replaces the sacred center of the king during the French Revolution in a strongly Catholic country whose national values were undergoing secularization as part of the modernization process. See Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chap. 2, “Symbolic Forms of Political Practice,” and *passim*.

23. On the centrality of “regeneration” to the discourse of the Revolution see Mona Ozouf, “Regeneration,” in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, ed. François Furet and Mona Ozouf, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 781–90. On the pivotal role played by the discourse of regeneration in dealing with Jews in France see Berkovitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity*.

24. Gary Kates, “Jews into Frenchmen: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France,” *Social Research* 56, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 213–32, 223.

25. Shulamit Volkov, “The Written Matter and the Spoken Word,” in *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, ed. François Furet (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), argues against simple continuity arguments in our efforts to understand antisemitism, whether by suggesting that antisemitism is a permanent prejudice or a cyclical phenomenon or has a uniform development and growth that culminates in Nazism. Instead, she insists that it is best understood in its specific discursive context. Moreover, Volkov insists that late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century antisemitism in Germany was more like antisemitism in France in the same period and significantly different from Nazi antisemitism, since it was ideology not oratory intended to mobilize action, ideas not propaganda. In making this argument she suggests that one facet of Wilhelminean antisemitism was that “it had gradually become a *code* for the overall *Weltanschauung* and style of the right” and likewise that opposition to antisemitism “identified individuals and groups in the camp of democratization, parliamentarianism, and often also with cultural and economic modernism” (43).

26. Grégoire is often treated as the “icon of Jewish emancipation.” See Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, “Strategic Friendships: Jewish Intellectuals, the Abbé Grégoire and the

French Revolution,” in *Renewing the Past, Reconfiguring Jewish Culture*, ed. Adam Sutcliffe and Ross Brann (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 2. See also Pierre Birnbaum’s “A Jacobin Regenerator: Abbé Grégoire,” in *Jewish Destinies: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 11–30.

27. Cited in Kates, “Jews into Frenchmen,” 225.

28. On the emancipation of the Jews of France see Robert Badinter, *Libres et égaux . . . : L’émancipation des juifs, 1789–1791* (Paris: Fayard, 1989); David Feuerwerker, *L’émancipation des juifs en France: De l’Ancien Régime à la fin du Second Empire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976); Bernard Blumenkranz and Albert Soboul, eds., *Les juifs et la révolution française* (Toulouse: Privat, 1976); Annie Kriegel, *Les juifs et le monde moderne: Essai sur les logiques d’émancipation* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976). See also Shmuel Trigano, Stanley Hoffman, and David Landes, “Emancipation Reexamined,” in *The Jews in Modern France*, ed. Francis Malino and Bernard Wasserstein (Hanover NH: Brandeis University Press, 1985), 245–309. For a general discussion of the problem of Jewish emancipation in modern Jewish historiography see David Weinberg, “Jewish Emancipation,” in *The Modern Jewish Experience*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 95–101. Of interest also is Hannah Arendt, “The Equivocalities of Emancipation and the Jewish State Banker,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).

29. The Jews of southwestern and southeastern France were granted citizenship on January 28, 1790.

30. “The French National Assembly: Debate on the Eligibility of Jews for Citizenship (December 23, 1789),” in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 114.

31. This argument is acutely developed by Hyman in the chapter “The Napoleonic Synthesis” in her magisterial social history *The Jews of Modern France*. The classic study of Napoleonic attitudes to the Jews is Robert Anchel, *Napoléon et les juifs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1928). See also Simon Schwarzfuchs, *Napoleon, the Jews and the Sanhedrin* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), and Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews*, 194–235.

32. On the acculturation of Jews in the nineteenth century see, in addition to Berkovitz, Hyman, and Birnbaum, Michael Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), and Phyllis Cohen Albert, *The Modernization of French Jewry: Consistory and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Hanover NH: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1977).

33. On the following points see Michel Winock, “The Left and the Jews,” in *Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 131–57.

34. On the history of the Right in France the classic work is René Rémond, *The Right Wing in France: From 1815 to De Gaulle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). For an overview of the extreme Right see Michel Winock, ed., *Histoire de l’extrême droite en*

France (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), and Peter Davies, *The Extreme Right in France, 1789 to the Present: From de Maistre to Le Pen* (London: Routledge, 2002).

35. The best overview on socialism and the Jewish Question is George Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," *Dissent* (July–August 1968): 314–42. On the image of "the Jew" in the French utopian socialists see Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 119–28; Robert F. Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France: The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950), 114–25; Edmund Silberner, "Charles Fourier on the Jewish Question," *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 4 (October 1946): 245–66; J. Salwyn Schapiro, "Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Harbinger of Fascism," *American Historical Review* (1945): 714–37. On Marxism and the Jewish Question see Robert Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Jack Jacobs, *On Socialists and "the Jewish Question" after Marx* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question*.

36. On the analogy in socialist discourse between the critique of the aristocracy in the Revolution to the new aristocracy of money see William Sewell, "Artisans, Factory Workers and the Formation of the French Working Class, 1789–1848," in *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 45–66.

37. From *Césarisme et Christianisme*, cited in Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," 322.

38. From Proudhon's private notebook, cited in Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," 322.

39. Cited in Lichtheim, "Socialism and the Jews," 319.

40. On Édouard Drumont see Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Édouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1986); Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, 137–55; Winock, *Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, 85–102.

41. Jeannine Verdes-Leroux, *Scandale financier et antisémitisme catholique: Le krach de l'union générale* (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1969).

42. Pierre Sorlin, "La croix" et les juifs (1880–1889): Contribution à l'histoire de l'antisémitisme contemporain (Paris: Grasset, 1967).

43. On Drumont's assault on degeneracy see Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies*, 101–15.

44. On the "The era of Leagues" see Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies*, 116–40.

45. This argument is made by Zeev Sternhell, "The Roots of Popular Antisemitism in the Third Republic," in Malino and Wasserstein, *The Jews in Modern France*, 103–34.

46. On Barrès see Robert Soucy, *Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* (Paris: A. Colin, 1972); David Carroll, "The Use and Abuse of Culture: Maurice Barrès and the Ideology of the Collective Subject," in *French Literary Fascism*; C. Stewart Doty, *From Cultural Rebellion to Counterrevolution: The Politics of Maurice Barrès* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).

47. The literature on the Dreyfus affair is voluminous. The best synthetic overview is Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: George Braziller, 1986), which also has a detailed bibliography.

48. On the Action française see Eugen Weber, *The Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1962); Michel Winock, “L’Action française,” in Winock, *Histoire de l’extrême droite*, 125–56; and Paul Mazgaj, *The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979). In addition to previous references on Maurras see David Carroll, “The Nation as Artwork: Charles Maurras and the Classical Origins of French Literary Fascism,” in *French Literary Fascism*.

49. The membership oath sworn by all Action française loyalists after 1905, including the Camelots du roi (Hawkers of the King), who sold the paper and served as the group’s shock troops, summarizes the principles of the movement:

French by birth, heart, reason and will, I shall fulfill the duties of a conscious patriot. I pledge myself to fight against every republican regime. The republican spirit disorganizes national defense and favors religious influences directly hostile to traditional Catholicism. A regime that is French must be restored to France. Our only future lies, therefore, in the Monarch, as it is personified in the heir of the forty kings who, for a thousand years, made France. Only the Monarchy ensures public safety and, in its responsibility for order, prevents the public evils that antisemitism and nationalism denounce. The necessary organ of all general interests, the Monarchy revives authority, liberty, prosperity and honor. I associate myself with the work for the restoration of the Monarchy. I pledge myself to serve it by the means in my power. (Cited in Davies, *The Extreme Right*, 83)

50. The phrase “integral xenophobia” is from Winock, “L’Action française,” 126. The translation of a term used by ancient Greeks to designate aliens with no citizenship or other rights, *metèques* was used by the Action française as a derisive term for aliens living in France. See Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), chap. 4.

51. Davies, *The Extreme Right*, 86.

52. The legend of the role of the Dreyfus affair as the originating moment in political Zionism is nicely debunked by Jacques Kornberg, “Herzl, the Zionist Movement, and the Dreyfus Affair,” in Koren and Michman, *Les intellectuels face à l’affaire Dreyfus*, 107–19.

53. On Bernard Lazare see Nelly Wilson, *Bernard-Lazare: Antisemitism and the Problem of Jewish Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), and Michael Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: The French-Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 164–95.

54. Bernard Lazare, *Antisemitism: Its History and Causes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). The “Introduction” by Robert Wistrich is excellent.

55. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, 181.

56. David H. Weinberg, *A Community on Trial: The Jews of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), viii.

57. On these points see Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, 115–35. See also Paula Hyman, *From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

58. For the influence of Zionism on French Jewry see Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, 132–43, and Esther Benbassa's excellent synoptic history, *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 156–61.

59. On the evolution of Zola's response to the Jewish Question see the essay by Alain Pagès, "Émile Zola contre l'antisémitisme: Réflexions sur la question juive," in Koren and Michman, *Les intellectuels face à l'affaire Dreyfus*, 63–74. While Pagès does an outstanding job in delineating the five stages in Zola's evolution on the question, he is still somewhat uncritical about the republican and Enlightenment values that underpin Zola's interventions and too easily dismisses the earlier antisemitic images of Jews and Judaism in his novels, especially in *L'argent*.

60. In Robert Wistrich's words, "Dreyfus becomes the buried, painful, tragic image of Jesus himself—purified and secularized—reborn as a hero for the new Religion of Truth and Justice." See "Three Dreyfusard Heroes: Lazare, Zola, Clémenceau," in Koren and Michman, *Les intellectuels face à l'affaire Dreyfus*, 13–41, 29.

61. Datta, *Birth of a National Icon*, passim, 103 and 116.

62. Dominick LaCapra in *A Preface to Sartre: A Critical Introduction to Sartre's Literary and Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 9; Judt, *Past Imperfect*, 11; Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise*, 1. Winock in *Le siècle des intellectuels* entitles the section on the postwar period "The Sartre Years." Benoît Denis in his history of committed literature, *Littérature et engagement* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000), states it most succinctly: "Sartre was, without doubt, the century's most important intellectual and the one to whom most attention was paid" (259). Others could multiply these examples. David Drake in *Intellectuals and Politics* acutely distills the "reasons for Sartre's extraordinary pre-eminence" (3–5).

63. On "the linguistic turn" in intellectual history see Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan, eds., *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals & New Perspectives* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1982). See also John E. Toews, "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn," *American Historical Review* (October 1987): 879–907.

64. These comments on the centrality of "the Jew" as mirror image of the Other are significantly indebted to Elaine Marks, from whom the quotes are taken. See Marrano as Metaphor: *The Jewish Presence in French Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 75. On cultural studies she cites Tim O'Sullivan et al., *Key Concepts in Communication* (London: Methuen, 1983), 60. I refer here to both the Lacanian tradition, beginning with Jacques Lacan's "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," which conceptualizes the unconscious imaginary rela-

tion in identity formation in terms of the mirror image, as well as Rodolphe Gasché's elucidation of Derrida's deconstruction via the trope of the tain of the mirror. See Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

65. My analysis of Sartre's politics contributes two points to the critical evaluation of his work. The first concerns the alleged discontinuities within the evolution of his politics; the second critically assesses the unity of Sartre's early and later work. Sartre's political development is generally divided by scholars into five distinct periods that differ somewhat from my own periodization, as will become apparent: (1) Sartre's early phase, ending with World War II, which is considered antibourgeois, but generally apolitical, (2) the period from the liberation to the early 1950s, dominated by the development of Sartre's theory of *engagement*, (3) the period between 1952 and 1956, when Sartre had close connections to the Communist Party, ending with the Soviet invasion of Hungary, (4) the period between 1956 and the early 1960s, when Sartre worked to formulate a revolutionary existential Marxism that avoided dogmatic Stalinism, and finally (5) the years after 1968, when Sartre began to reevaluate his conception of the political role of the intellectual. See, for example, Mark Poster, *Sartre's Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 9–16, and Sunil Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 51.

This schematic classification of the history of Sartre's politics is also overlaid by the debate between scholars concerning the unity of his work, especially between his early work, whose apotheosis is considered to be *Being and Nothingness*, and his later work, beginning with the development of his theory of *engagement* and culminating with his *Critique de la raison dialectique* (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*). Some Sartre scholars, including Mary Warnock, George Kline, and, most pointedly, James Sheridan have argued that there is a "radical conversion" in the shift from Sartre's early work to the later Sartre. On the other hand, Marjorie Grene and Ronald Aronson suggest that Sartre never moved decisively beyond the axioms of his earlier philosophy. My approach concurs with Hazel Barnes, Frederic Jameson, and others who emphasize what István Mészáros calls "change inside permanence." See Mary Warnock, *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1965); George Kline, "The Existentialist Rediscovery of Hegel and Marx," in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. Edward N. Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967); James Sheridan, *Sartre: The Radical Conversion* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1973); Marjorie Grene, *Sartre* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1973); Ronald Aronson, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosophy in the World* (London: New Left Books, Verso Editions, 1980), 11; István Mészáros, *Search for Freedom*, vol. 1 of *The Work of Sartre* (Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press, 1979), 14, 77; Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 209; Hazel Barnes, *Sartre* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1973), 105; LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*.

By focusing on Sartre's representations of Jews and Judaism, following Dominick

LaCapra, I explore a series of displaced repetitions or “continuities within diachronic discontinuities and discontinuities in synchronic continuities” in Sartre’s thought (LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 119). I suggest the ways in which Sartre transforms his initial reflections on political commitment after the war in the course of developing his theory of *engagement*, disclosing continuities between the themes and concepts of his early and his later work. Nevertheless, I locate a shift in Sartre’s work from his early existentialism to his existential humanism after the war. I do so by emphasizing how his reflections on the Jewish Question shaped his ensuing antiracism and anticolonialism in the postwar period.

1. The Mirror Image and the Politics of Writing

1. Paul Valéry, “Discours de l’histoire . . . lycée Janson-de-Sailly, 13 Juillet, 1932,” *Variété* 4 (1938): 140, quoted in Weber, *The Hollow Years*, 9.

2. Paul Valéry, “La crise de l’esprit,” *Nouvelle Revue Française*, no. 71 (August 1919). See the discussion of Valéry in Bud Burkhard, “La crise de l’esprit,” in *French Marxism between the Wars: Henri Lefebvre and the “Philosophies”* (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), 19–20.

3. Weber, *The Hollow Years*, 7.

4. Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 213.

5. Vicki Caron, “The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered,” *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 24–73, has carefully and cogently argued that the antisemitic revival in France in the 1930s was “more than a symbolic protest against something else, whether the Republic, communism, or the socioeconomic woes arising from capitalism. . . . [While] antisemitism was in part a symbolic protest it also reflected very real socioeconomic differences between Jews and non-Jews, differences rooted in the very process of Jewish emancipation” (28). She convincingly shows how “the backbone of the anti-refugee campaign was a coalition of middle-class groups—merchants, artisans and liberal professionals, especially lawyers and doctors. These groups had one concern during the Depression: to protect their existing socioeconomic status against any competitive threat” (33).

My own approach is to focus on the ways in which the socioeconomic, political, and cultural climate were discursively expressed and to examine how Jews and Judaism were implicated in this discourse. I thus examine antisemitic discourse as opposed to antisemitism. This approach questions the set of binaries about whether the discourse is merely symbolic of other issues or had real, concrete causes, whether it was rational or irrational, functional or dysfunctional, based in reality or fantasy, fact or fiction. These binaries all form a metonymic series in terms of thinking about demonology and typologies and are not a constructive way to proceed if what you are interested in is the specifically embedded cultural system of signification (i.e., how these specific historical actors gave meaning to their experience and what structured this). It is at the level of meaning, which cannot be reduced merely to the facts even when it is crucially

delimited by the facts, that I think the examination of discourse is more productive as an approach to examining representations of Jews and Judaism.

6. For Sartre's declarations see, for example, Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Itinerary of a Thought," in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, trans. John Matthews (London: New Left Books, 1974), 33; Jean-Paul Sartre with Philippe Gavi and Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 24; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Sartre par Sartre," in *Situation IX* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 99; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre par lui-même: Texte intégral* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977). Sartre also suggests this dichotomy in Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), 156. For Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs see *The Prime of Life: 1929–1944*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Paragon, 1992). For the views of intellectual historians and critics see, for example, Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 77; LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 65; Schalk, *The Spectrum of Political Engagement*, 117; Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 334–35; Maxwell Adereth, *Commitment in Modern French Literature: Politics and Society in Péguy, Aragon, and Sartre* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 131; Hirsch, *The French Left*, 24; Maurice Cranston, *Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 3.

7. See, for example, Adereth, *Commitment in Modern French Literature*, 131: "It was the war and the Occupation which brought about a deep change in his outlook"; and Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, 334–35: "The experience that seems to have moved Sartre out of the cul-de-sac of Being and Nothingness was the solidarity he felt as a member of the Resistance, when it was possible for the first time to be politically committed."

8. The argument for this chapter was first suggested by Contat and Rybalka's provocative question, "Is not Lucien Fleurier up to a certain point an anti-Roquentin?" See Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, vol. 1 of *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 64.

9. For an account of the origins of *Nausea* see Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 53. See also Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 87–90, and Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, pt. 1.

10. See Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, 336: "In Berlin and then Freiburg during 1933 and 1934, he studied Husserl's *Ideas* very closely and attended a few of Heidegger's lectures. Even though this was the year Heidegger served as Nazi-appointed rector of the University of Freiburg and delivered his notorious address on 'The Self-Assertion of the German University,' Sartre, then vaguely leftist, seems to have ignored his politics and focused only on his philosophy."

11. For a reading of *Nausea* as a translation of the themes of *Melencolia I* see George Howard Bauer, *Sartre and the Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 13–44.

12. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 53.

13. For a critical reading of Sartre's reading of the novel contained in this insert see LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 100.

14. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 52–53, contains a complete copy of the *prière d'insérer* written by Sartre for the first edition of *La nausée*.

15. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 63, contains a complete copy of the *prière d'insérer* written by Sartre for *Le Mur*.

16. Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 244–45.

17. Betty Rahv makes this point for Lucien alone. See *From Sartre to the New Novel* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1974), 38.

18. For a reading of *Nausea* that connects the identity of the diary and the novel to the question of identity tout court, see LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 107.

19. Robert Denoon Cumming, "Introduction," in Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Robert Denoon Cumming (New York: Random House, 1965), 15:

The structure of the story *Nausea* reproduces the reflexive aspiration of consciousness in Sartre's philosophy: *Nausea* is a novel (at the higher reflexive level) about the pre-reflective experiences that led up to the writing of the novel. Proust's novel has a comparable structure. But in Proust (as in Husserl) experience is recaptured in its necessary structure by the reflective movement which transcends experience. Thus Proust's *recherche* is successfully completed in his terminal volume, *Le temps retrouvé*. But Sartre has his ostensible protagonist in *Nausea*, Roquentin, tell the story to show that one cannot in fact "catch time by the tail." Furthermore, the true protagonist, *nausea* itself, is (in one of its manifestations) the reflexive experience of the discrepancy between the necessary structure of the story as told (as a work of art) and the sense of contingency—of the indeterminacy of the future—which is the experience of the sloppiness of living one's life that one seeks to alleviate by telling the story about it. This discrepancy, which self-consciousness (as well as Proust and the literary tradition) obscures by its loquacity, is preserved in *Nausea*. The novel is not completed with the novel, which ends with Roquentin's aspiration to regain his past experience by writing the novel, but his actual future left dangling.

20. Philip Thody, *Sartre: A Biographical Introduction* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 55, contends that "*L'Enfance d'un Chef* is, in this respect, the most openly political of all Sartre's pre-war writings." Sirinelli, *Deux intellectuels*, 146–47, argues that Sartre became concerned with historical events and politics in the course of writing *Le Mur* and dates his turn to 1937.

21. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Childhood of a Leader," in *The Wall*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1948), 93. All references to this edition are noted hereafter parenthetically in the text.

22. Jeremy Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001), 202.

23. See Marjorie Beale, *The Modernist Enterprise: French Elites and the Threat of Modernity* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

24. See Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (Oxford: Berg, 1985).

25. The best work on French refugee policy in the 1930s and on the rising tide of antisemitism that developed in relation to these immigrants is Vicki Caron's *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933–1942* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

26. Michel Winock, "Joan of Arc and the Jews," in *Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, 107–10, 106.

27. Paul F. Jankowski, *Stavisky: A Confidence Man in the Republic of Virtue* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 256.

28. Robert Brasillach, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Au Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1955–64), 5:94–95, cited in Robert Soucy, "Functional Hating: French Fascist Demonology between the Wars," *Contemporary French Civilization* 23, no. 2 (Summer–Fall 1999): 158–76, 161.

29. Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave 1933–1939* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 27, and *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924–1933* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 187–90.

30. On the Popular Front see Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934–38* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

31. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, 148.

32. Pierre Birnbaum, *Antisemitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 243. Birnbaum reproduces the complete exchange in the *Journal Officiel* of June 7 to illustrate his point.

33. On these motifs as central to the antisemitism of the 1930s see Ralph Schor, *L'antisémitisme en France pendant les années trente: Prélude à Vichy* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1992), 71–142.

34. Soucy, "Functional Hating," 158.

35. See Boschetti, *The Intellectual Enterprise*, 72, for a discussion of *L'enfance d'un chef* as "counterpsychoanalysis." For a general discussion of intellectual currents in France in the 1930s see Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels*; Herbert R. Lottman, *The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (San Francisco: Halo Books, 1991), 47–140; Carolyn Dean, "Law and Sacrifice: Bataille, Lacan, and the Critique of the Subject," *Representations* 13 (Winter 1986): 42–62.

36. See Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (London: Grafton, 1964); William Wiser, *The Twilight Years: Paris in the 1930s* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2000); and Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

37. Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900–1930* (University Park PA: Penn State University Press, 1999). See also Tylar Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

38. Jacques Robichez, ed., *Précis de littérature française du XX^e siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 190, cited in Popkin, *A History of Modern France*, 214. The classic work on the history of surrealism remains Maurice Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Howard (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1989).

39. For an analysis of the mirror image in Sartre's work see Alain Buisine, *Laideurs de Sartre* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1986), 95–104.

40. Cumming, "Introduction," 8–9.

41. Buisine, *Laideurs*, 97.

42. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions, 1964), 16. All references to this edition are noted hereafter parenthetically in the text.

43. For a discussion of the translation of *mauvaise foi* see Walter Kaufmann, ed., *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Library, 1956), 280. For Sartre's conception of *mauvaise foi* see *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 86–112.

44. For a discussion that connects Sartre's conception of bad faith with the mirror image see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 280. For a general discussion of Sartre's conception of bad faith see Ronald E. Santoni, *Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity in Sartre's Early Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Robert Stone, "Sartre on Bad Faith and Authenticity," in *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, *Library of Living Philosophers* 16 (La Salle IL: Open Court, 1981), 246–56.

45. On the Camelots du roi see Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), and Weber, *The Action Française*. For "shock troops" see Eugen Weber, "France," in *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 105.

46. For an extended discussion of the construction of "True France" see Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900–1945* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

47. Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 30.

48. The quotes are from Dennis Fletcher, "Sartre and Barrès: Some Notes on *La Nausée*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 4, no. 4 (October 1968): 330–34, 330, 330–31, 331.

49. Jean-Paul Sartre, "John Dos Passos and '1919,'" in *Literary Essays*, trans. Annette Michelson (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), 88–96. All references are to this edition, noted hereafter parenthetically.

50. For a sustained discussion of the significance of Sartre's literary criticism to his philosophical project as a whole see Benjamin Suhl, *Jean-Paul Sartre: The Philosopher as a Literary Critic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

51. On the parallels in modern art and existentialism see William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962), chap. 3, "The Testimony of Modern Art."

52. It is on these grounds that Sartre critiques François Mauriac's work, focusing on *La fin de la nuit* in "François Mauriac and Freedom" in Sartre, *Literary Essays*.

53. Michel Winock makes clear that the New York skyscraper was an icon of "America" in interwar France and stood in sharp contrast to the architectural icons of Frenchness:

“The image of America was now well rooted in people’s minds. In that Malthusian France . . . the New York skyscraper represented the threatening erection of modernism, contrasted to the agreeable medieval bell towers” (*Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, 40). Eugen Weber in *The Hollow Years* has shown how the image of America was associated with modern techniques of production and exploitation, financial capitalism, materialism, movies, advertising, control of the press, conformism, and uniformity, all of which were synonymous with images of Jews. “*L’Ami du Peuple* revealed the shenanigans of ‘Judeo-German-American finance,’ opening the way to endless speculation, threatening the stability of the franc. . . . By 1938, when Louis-Ferdinand Céline published his *Ecole des cadavres*, talk of ‘American Judeo-Gangsterism’ led naturally to more specific references to ‘Judeo-Americans (that is, in short, all Americans . . .)’” (102). On the links between anti-Americanism and antisemitism in France see also Tony Judt, “America Has Gone Mad: Anti-Americanism in Historical Perspective,” in *Past Imperfect*.

54. Sophie Tucker, *Some of These Days: The Autobiography of Sophie Tucker* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1945), chap. 23.

55. This is pointed out by LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 115, which first suggested my reading of the allusion in these two texts. He argues that *Nausea* should be read as an “antinovel or a deconstructed novel” (97) that enacts a “praxis of deconstruction and double inscription—a praxis that cannot be reduced to one or the other of the ‘opposites’ involved but must be seen in terms of their sedimented, overlapping interplay. Aside from the linear/nonlinear plot, one may mention setting, characterization, and point of view.” I have not only followed a similar interpretative reading to that of LaCapra in his book, but I have worked out here the suggestions he made to me based on his reading of an earlier published version of this chapter.

56. Tucker, *Some of These Days*, chap. 5.

57. For an analysis of the significance of the manifesto in French intellectual politics see Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises*.

58. Winock defines “closed nationalism” as nationalism “based on a pessimistic vision of historical evolution, the prevailing idea of decadence, and an obsession with protecting, strengthening, and immunizing collective identity against all agents of corruption, true or supposed, that threaten it. Second, I have attempted to delve into that closed nationalism by means of the imaginary order it has constructed for itself. Politics is constructed less on reason than on myths and mythologies” (*Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, 1; see also “Open Nationalism and Closed Nationalism,” 5–33).

2. Sartre’s Useless Passion

1. On the *Statut des juifs* see Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 3–5. See also Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 56–60.

2. The law defined as a Jew “any person descended from three grandparents of the Jewish race or from two grandparents of the same race if his spouse is also a Jew.”

3. Galster is a German Sartre scholar whose work has primarily focused on Sartre’s plays written and performed during the Second World War. See Ingrid Galster, *Le théâtre de Jean-Paul Sartre devant ses premiers critiques. T. 1: Les pièces créées sous l’occupation allemande, “Les Mouches” et “Huis clos”* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1986); see also Ingrid Galster, ed., *La naissance du “phénomène Sartre”: Raisons d’un succès, 1939–1945* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001). For additional discussion of the Condorcet affair see Ingrid Galster, ed., *Sartre et les juifs* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), 20–160. For her theory that Sartre benefited from the Vichy persecution of the Jews see Ingrid Galster, “Sartre et la ‘question juive’: Réflexions au-delà d’une controverse,” *Commentaire*, no. 89 (Spring 2000): 141–47, reprinted with modifications in Ingrid Galster, *Sartre, Vichy et les intellectuels* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2001), 79–94. The general frame for Galster’s article was the conference held in New York to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the English translation of Sartre’s *Antisemitism and Jew* and thereby addressed the memory of Sartre’s position vis-à-vis anti-semitism. Galster is not wrong to suggest that the conference was convened as much to commemorate Sartre’s text as to vilify the reading of it, especially by American Jewish critics, most recently by Susan Suleiman. Suleiman provoked ire by suggesting that Sartre’s *Réflexions* produced an “antisemitic effect” in the sense of Barthes’s “reality effect.” See Susan Suleiman, “The Jew in Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Réflexions sur la question juive: An Exercise in Historical Reading*,” in *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995). The papers delivered at the conference were edited by Denis Hollier and published in October 87 (Winter 1999).

4. Galster, “Sartre et la ‘question juive,’” 90–91. See *Les conférences de l’U.N.E.S.C.O.* (Paris: Fontaine, 1948), 57, 58. The conference was reedited and published as *La responsabilité de l’écrivain* (Paris: Verdier, 1998). Galster insists that she is not contributing to the recent fashionable assault on Sartre by contending that his choices were determined by his *arrivisme* (i.e., that his overriding priority during the war was the advancement of his career) and reminds her readers that she has written a great deal to show how Sartre’s work during the war was a resistance to the Vichy *bourrage de crâne* (propaganda). Galster clarified her views in a follow-up article written in response to the critique of her argument called “Retour sur Sartre pendant l’Occupation,” *Commentaire*, no. 92 (Winter 2000–2001): 875–87, reprinted with emendation as “Historiographie ou hagiographie? Réponse aux ‘Temps modernes’ à-propos de l’affaire du lycée Condorcet,” in Galster, *Sartre, Vichy et les intellectuels*.

5. Jean Daniel, the Jewish editor and cofounder of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, one of France’s major weeklies with regular contributions from intellectuals and that originally had the double patronage of Pierre Mendès France and Sartre, would broach the matter of the Lycée Condorcet in the midst of his editorial on October 16–22, 1997. The central point of the article was the sensational trial of Maurice Papon for complicity in crimes against

humanity because as secretary-general of the Gironde from 1942 to 1944 he had signed documents recording the arrest, assembly, and deportation of 1,500 Jews, including 220 children. Daniel's bold headline indicated that with the Papon trial "all of life under the occupation will be relived in front of our eyes." In the midst of commenting on several of the French institutions that used the trial as an occasion to express their contrition for their behavior under the Nazi occupation, including the Catholic Church, the police, and the Order of Doctors, Daniel mentioned that a friend had recalled that while he was at the Lycée Condorcet he had studied under a young, brilliant *khâgne* professor who was the great-nephew of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus and who subsequently was replaced by Jean-Paul Sartre. The symbolic associations of the brewing Lycée Condorcet affair with the Dreyfus trial in the middle of the Papon case would not be lost on Daniel's readers. Jean Daniel, "Condamné à se défendre," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, October 16–22, 1997.

6. "Jankélévitch, le mal de la bivalence," *Libération*, June 10, 1985, 34–35. The Jankélévitch interview constituted an important turning point in the historiography of Sartre's experience under the German occupation. It appeared at a moment just after Sartre's death in 1980 when his reputation entered a period of purgatory. He became a foil against which many intellectuals articulated a new post-Sartrean agenda, either in the vein of postmodernism or as a defense of morality before politics, and an advocacy of liberalism, especially the defense of human rights, often indebted to the intellectual legacies of Camus and Aron (some of Sartre's key intellectual rivals). From the middle of the 1970s, when Sartre had suffered a stroke that blinded him, his light in French intellectual circles dimmed to its lowest point, and he was often used as the scapegoat for the political positions shared by many who had followed his lead and were now undertaking an auto-critique. Until that point, Sartre's reputation was solidly defined as a key figure of the intellectual resistance to the Nazis, a distinction that helped to underpin his intellectual and cultural capital in the postwar period. On the shifts in the reception of Sartre in the early 1980s see the fine chapter by Ingrid Galster, "Images actuelles de Sartre," in *Sartre, Vichy et les intellectuels*.

7. The phrase "cultural capital" is taken from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who distinguishes between economic capital (monetary and property assets) and symbolic capital (the capital of individuals and institutions that is not economic but that enables them to reproduce their position within a field through time). Cultural capital is an aspect of symbolic capital that defines the legitimacy of an individual conferred by educational and artistic institutions. While not as polemical as Joseph, Francine de Martinoir alleges that Sartre "only cared about his career" and questions why he "pretended to be someone who resisted." See *La littérature occupée: Les années de guerre, 1939–1945* (Paris: Hatier, 1995), 143. Likewise, Tony Judt, whose *Past Imperfect* was published first in French, takes Jankélévitch's line when he questions whether Sartre was "making up for lost time? Feelings of guilt assuaged through a commitment they had been unable to make when it mattered?" (56). Jean-François Sirinelli attempts to take a more balanced approach, arguing that while Sartre certainly was no great resister he did not deserve

the opprobrium cast upon him by Joseph. He uses Philippe Burrin's notion of a "constrained accommodation" to define his judgment about Sartre's choices. See Sirinelli, *Deux intellectuels*, 188. Nonetheless, for Sirinelli's version of Jankélévitch's argument see 198: "After the war, [Sartre] . . . began to advocate the 'necessity of engagement.'"

8. Jacques Lecarme, "Jean-Paul Sartre, Dreyfus, Le Foyer et Condorcet," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, April 30–May 6, 1998, 46–47. Ferdinand Alquié was a temporary replacement for Dreyfus–Le Foyer. He had another position at Lycée Rollin and took the position at Lycée Condorcet on a provisional basis. As Galster is adamant to point out, administratively, Sartre therefore directly inherited Dreyfus–Le Foyer's place, but this is a technical point that casts little light on the larger matter, as Juliette Simont points out in her response to the Condorcet affair, "Sartre et la question de l'historicité: Réflexions au-delà d'un procès," *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 613 (March–April–May 2001): 109–30, 110. It is, however, important to note that there were only four *khâgnes* in Paris and that knowledge about whom one was replacing and why was therefore quite possible. On this point see Michel Winock, "Jean-Paul Sartre en 1941: Une controverse," in Galster, *Sartre et les juifs*, 121–28, 122. Daniel would later retract his statement publicly. See Jean Daniel, *Avec le temps: Carnets 1970–1998* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1998), 704.

9. "The Heidegger affair" is the most heated wave of the postwar discussion concerning the relationship between Heidegger's politics, specifically his turn toward National Socialism, and his thought. The issue was debated in France in 1946 and 1947 in *Les Temps Modernes* and more diffusely from 1948 to 1987. It became an affair in France in the immediate aftermath of the publication of Victor Fariás's dossier *Heidegger et le nazisme* in 1987. Fariás's text was responded to between October 1987 and May 1988 with the publication of books on the topic by Jean-François Lyotard, Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, François Fédier, Jacques Derrida, and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and in a flurry of subsequent radio and television programs and magazine and journal articles in France and internationally. Among the many discussions see David Carroll, "Forward: The Memory of Devastation and the Responsibilities of Thought: 'And let's not talk about that,'" in Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the jews,"* trans. Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 137–68; Richard Wolin, "The French Heidegger Debate," *New German Critique*, no. 45 (Fall 1988): 135–61; Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger and the Nazis," *New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1988; Tom Rockmore, "On Heidegger and Contemporary French Philosophy," in Tom Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy: Humanism, Antihumanism and Being* (London: Routledge, 1995).

10. Jacques Lecarme, "Sartre et la question antisémite," *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 609 (June–July–August 2000): 23–40.

11. See Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, 381.

12. Lecarme, "Sartre et la question antisémite," 28.

13. Lecarme, "Sartre et la question antisémite," 33.

14. I am here applying the notion of “the gray zone” developed by Primo Levi in discussing the complexity of life in the concentration and extermination camps to the situation of life under the German occupation. See Primo Levi, “The Gray Zone,” in *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 36–69.

15. On the widespread discussion about Sarah Bernhardt’s Jewishness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see Mary Louise Roberts, “The Fantastic Sarah Bernhardt,” in *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 165–219; Sander Gilman, “Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess,” and Carol Ockman, “When Is a Jewish Star Just a Star?: Interpreting Images of Sarah Bernhardt,” both in Nochlin and Garb, *The Jew in the Text*.

16. See Galster, *La naissance*.

17. It is important to place the problems that animate this chapter within the particular circumstances of the period. What I insist upon is a contextually specific understanding of each of Sartre’s texts, locating them within the shifting circumstances of the war years. In order to have a complex appreciation of Sartre’s choices under the German occupation it is therefore necessary to shatter any monolithic conception of *les années noires* by differentiating the period into a series of chronologically distinct processes, that each need to be understood discretely: the *drôle de guerre*, defeat, occupation, collaboration, the Shoah, resistance, and liberation. It is also important to emphasize that where one was during the war greatly affected one’s experience: there were significant differences between Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Clermont-Ferrand, and Alsace-Lorraine. In addition, it is imperative to show that not only when and where but who one was fundamentally altered one’s experience of the occupation. The Vichy years were radically different for Jews, for Protestants, for Freemasons, for communists, for the bourgeoisie, for aristocrats. This general demarcation chronologically, regionally, and socially is crucial to appreciate, since the choices made within the cultural field under the Nazi occupation were dynamic and depended upon the specific constraints facing the collectivity, different groups, and individuals.

Moreover, while historians are now drawing a more nuanced portrait of the gray zones that characterized French responses to the dark years of Vichy, the historiography is still searching for a set of concepts that can help to distinguish the significance of different types of actions under Vichy. Historians have moved beyond the narrowly dichotomous opposition of resistance and collaboration toward Philippe Burrin’s notion of degrees of accommodation. In order to name some of the diverse kinds of accommodation I propose to think of Sartre’s experience of the German occupation in terms of a broad spectrum that I will call *choices on the C-curve*. The range includes commitment (in the sense of organized resistance but also of active opposition), connivance against the enemy, circumspection of the Germans and their institutions, cohabitation, concessions, compromise, compliance, complicity, conviction, collaboration, and collaborationism. Sartre was situated close to connivance within this spectrum during most

of the war. However, the different choices he made, like all intellectuals and everyone else, depended upon the turning points in the war and the particularities of different options in different situations.

For Burrin's notion of degrees of accommodation see *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 1996). He argues:

There can be no question of dissolving the notion of collaboration within the general category of accommodation, for it represented its most obvious manifestation; it was, so to speak, accommodation raised to the level of politics. Rather, my intention is to cover all forms of adaptation, with a view to grading them and distinguishing their specific characteristics, seizing upon all kinds of different behavior and complex motives so as to reconstitute the vast gray area that produces the dominant shade in any picture of the dark years. (2–3)

The distinction between organized resistance and active opposition is urged by John Sweets in "Hold that Pendulum!: Redefining Fascism, Collaborationism and Resistance in France," *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 731–58, 754.

18. Unless specifically cited, the biographical information for Sartre's life during the war years was taken from Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*; Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*; Ronald Hayman, *Sartre: A Biography* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1987); Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*; and Jeanie Francis Cooper, "Jean-Paul Sartre: A Study of His Experiences during World War II and Their Effect upon Certain of His Life Attitudes and Ideas," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1968.

19. Hayman, *Sartre*, 149.

20. On Sartre's discussion of how much time he was working see Jean-Paul Sartre, *The War Diaries of Jean-Paul Sartre: November 1939/March 1940*, trans. Quintin Hoare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 67. Hereafter cited in the text.

21. On the analogy between modern war and modern art see Martinot, *La littérature occupée*, 135.

22. The Maginot Line, built in 1936 and based on a strategy derived from World War I, was a system of defensive underground forts stretching from Metz to the Rhine along France's border with Germany and named after Minister of War André Maginot. The Germans were able to easily outflank it, unfortunately. On the *drôle de guerre* see Guy Rossi-Landi, *La drôle de guerre: La vie politique en France, 2 septembre 1939–10 mai 1940*, preface by René-Rémond (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971), 1. See also François Bédarida's essay "Huit mois d'attente" in vol. 1 of *La France des années noires* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000). I am grateful to Sarah Fishman for this reference. Julian Jackson has suggested that the phrase was already in use by the end of September 1939, as witnessed by the following entry (September 30, 1939) from Georges Sadoul's *Journal de Guerre*: "Ces paroles sont-elles la clef de cette 'drôle de guerre' comme dit chacun maintenant?" I am also grateful to Bertram Gordon, Pierre Audet, and Michael L. Berkvam for their responses to my query on H-France about this appellation for the period.

23. Jacques Maritain, *À travers le désastre* (Paris: Ed. des Deux Rives, 1946), 46–47, cited in Rossi-Landi, *La drôle de guerre*, 102.

24. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 140.

25. Quintin Hoare, “Translator’s Introduction,” in Sartre, *The War Diaries*, xiii.

26. Sartre hoped that his journal would be considered exemplary of this period in French history or that the historical specificity of this period made everything that he said in his diaries of historical importance: “I’m at an artillery staff headquarters twenty kilometers from the front, surrounded by petty and middling bourgeois. But, precisely because of all that, my journal is testimony that’s valid for millions of men. It is a mediocre, and for that very reason *general*, testimony” (*The War Diaries*, 68–69). He envisioned the diaries as an important document for historians and others who wanted to understand the experience of the French soldiers waiting to fight Germany. While they do provide an intimate understanding of the experience of some soldiers’ lives, the very fact that it was Sartre who wrote the diaries means they are a rather unordinary account. This is especially the case because he spent far more time working out the details of his novels and the sketches for *Being and Nothingness*, which is certainly not how the majority of French soldiers spent this period. On Sartre’s sensitivity to the fact that he was not on the front itself and therefore on the frontline of history see page 68, where he compares the historical value of his journal to the journals kept by André Gide, Jean Giraudoux, the famous novelist and playwright of the interwar period, and André Chamson, among others.

27. See Quintin Hoare’s taxonomy of the topics covered in all of the notebooks (Sartre, *The War Diaries*, xvi–xvii).

28. Simone de Beauvoir, ed., *Quiet Moments in a War: The Letters of Jean-Paul Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir, 1940–1963*, trans. Lee Fahnestock and Norman MacAfee (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 13–14. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

29. Sartre, *The War Diaries*, 120. It is worth noting that when Sartre reports this fact he prefaces it by saying, “In the beginning, when people believed the war was for real, Pieter careful as ever used to say: ‘My name is Pieterkowski, but I prefer to be called Pieter, because if the Germans took me prisoner and saw I had a Polish name, they’d kill me at once.’”

30. For Sartre’s description of the differences see Sartre, *The War Diaries*, 104.

31. The term *typology* comes from Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), who uses it in his discussion of the power and function of myth in Nazi ideology: “[The power] is that of the dream, as the projection of an image with which one identifies through a total and immediate commitment. Such an image is in no way a product of ‘fabulation,’ to which myth is ordinarily reduced; it is the figuration of a type conceived both as a model of identity and as that identity formed and realized” (93–94).

32. On the concept of imagined community see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, 1991).

33. Bianca Lamblin née Bienenfeld recounts her affairs with Sartre and Beauvoir in *Mémoire d'une jeune fille dérangée*, trans. Julie Plovnick as *A Disgraceful Affair* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996). Abandoned by the couple to her fate during the war, she rekindled her friendship with Beauvoir after the war but was extremely hurt by the discussion of her in the publication of *Lettres au Sartre* and *Journal de guerre* in 1990 where she learned what the couple wrote to one another about her. She indicts Beauvoir for describing her in very similar ways to how I have discussed Sartre's depiction of Pieterkowski: "Beaver [Beauvoir] elaborates on my Jewishness, painting my portrait using muddled psychology with references drawn from the most hackneyed clichés peddled by the European antisemitic tradition" (69). Beauvoir remarks on her "devout Jewishness," even though she did not believe in God, and she is portrayed as overly rational, all in the specific context of attacking her authenticity. She is also accused of always wanting to take a profit in a relationship, to make a good investment, and to climb the social ladder. See also Bianca Lamblin's letter to Ingrid Galster, "Sartre avant, pendant et après la guerre," in *La naissance*.

34. Susanne Zantop, "1844: After a Self-imposed Exile in Paris, Heinrich Heine Writes *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* (Germany: A Winter's Tale)," in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096–1996*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 178. See also Amos Elon's chapter "Heine and Börne" in *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743–1933* (New York: Picador, 2002).

35. Beauvoir, *Quiet Moments*, 10.

36. André Neher, *They Made Their Souls Anew*, trans. David Maisel (New York: SUNY Press, 1990), 5.

37. In *The Prime of Life* Beauvoir dates the "official" turn of Sartre toward politics in February 1940 and argues that in March and April Sartre began to develop the conceptual ensemble of his theory of *engagement* (342, 346). Of course, I have attempted to problematize this dating in both the prior chapter and by showing that Sartre was reflecting on these issues in his ruminations on Pieter and Heine.

38. Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence Written in 1940*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968, 1999), 53.

39. Bloch, *Strange Defeat*, 36, 45, 80–108, 47, 60, 64, 134, 140, 143–45, 151, 148, 150, 153, 156. According to Bloch, the military hierarchy failed to appreciate the role of speed and technology, the part tanks and airplanes now played in military tactics, the importance of military intelligence and communications, and preparation for combat that emphasized flexibility rather than a bureaucratic *modus operandi*. The military debacle was itself created by the traditionalism in education and the administrative inefficiency of the Third Republic and was exacerbated by the Popular Front and Communism, the polemical press, trade unionism and class struggles, the middle classes too interested in keeping the masses ignorant and themselves entertained, and the pacifism of both the Left and Right that intensified the lack of munitions development.

Bloch's statement about his Jewish identity is worth noting:

I am prepared, therefore, if necessary, to affirm here, in the face of death, that I was born a Jew: that I have never denied it, nor ever been tempted to do so. . . . [However] a stranger to all creedal dogmas, as to all pretended community of life and spirit based on race, I have, through life, felt that I was above all, and quite simply, a Frenchman. . . . I have found nourishment in her spiritual heritage and in her history. . . . I have never found that the fact of being a Jew has at all hindered these sentiments. (177–78)

40. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Sick at Heart," in Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, vol. 2 of *The Writings of Jean-Paul Sartre*, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 141–51, 143, cited hereafter parenthetically in the text.

41. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Age of Reason*, trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Bantam Books, 1959), 49, 51, 66. As Vicki Caron makes clear in "The Antisemitic Revival," the xenophobic, anti-immigration discourse propagated by doctors in the years leading up to the Second World War widely disseminated the notion that "East European Jewish doctors were especially prone to illegal practices—quackery, abusive use of drugs, and above all abortion" (44). Sartre obviously picked up on this discourse.

42. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Reprieve*, trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Vintage International, 1947).

43. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Troubled Sleep*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: Vintage International, 1950), 21, 20–21. Hereafter cited in the text.

44. On the legend of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, see *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Hyam Maccoby, "The Legend of the 'Wandering Jew': A New Interpretation," *Jewish Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1972): 3–8; George K. Andersen, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence RI: Brown University Press, 1965); Bein, *The Jewish Question*, 154–56.

45. Gilbert Joseph, *Une si douce occupation: Simone de Beauvoir et Jean-Paul Sartre 1940–1944* (Paris: Aubin Michel, 1991), 30.

46. Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 9.

47. See Denis Peschanski, "A Leader, a Myth," in *Collaboration and Resistance: Images of Life in Vichy France, 1940–1944*, trans. Lory Frankel (New York: Harry Abrams, 2000).

48. Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 10.

49. The assault on "decadence" is one of the continuous threads that characterizes the extreme Right from the 1880s through Vichy and beyond. In "Eternal Decadence," in *Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, Michel Winock has insightfully gathered the set of connotations that "decadence" encapsulates: hatred of the present, nostalgia for a golden age, praise of immobility, anti-individualism, apologia for a society of elites, nostalgia for the sacred, the fear of genetic degradation and demographic collapse, the

censure of moral values, and anti-intellectualism. The quote is from H. R. Kedward, *Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 3.

50. On the general experience of the French POWs see Yves Durand's excellent *La captivité: Histoire des prisonniers de guerre français, 1939–1945* (Paris: Fédération nationale des combattants prisonniers de guerre et combattants d'Algérie, Tunisie, Maroc, 1982). See also Sarah Fishman, *We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991). For a more global account of POWs see Bob Moore and Kent Fedorowich, *Prisoners of War and Their Captors in World War II* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1996).

51. Archives nationales (hereafter AN) F9-2880.

52. Joseph, *Occupation*, 65.

53. AN F9-2717. The report by the Services diplomatiques des prisonniers de guerre on August 21, 1941 (a short while after Sartre returned to Paris), indicates the intellectual and cultural conditions in the camp and the privileges of living in the artists' barracks.

54. René Andrei, one of the sculptors, is reported to have offered as a gift to Pétain "a Christ on the Cross sculpted in a bone."

55. Perrin was born in Montbrison in the Loire in 1911 and became a priest in 1934. He completed his *docteur ès lettres* (doctorate). Then, like Sartre, he was imprisoned in 1940. He escaped in March 1941 and later became a member of the Facultés catholiques de Lyon. His testimony, *Avec Sartre au Stalag 12D*, was based on notes left in a drawer for forty years. Perrin met Sartre through Père Boisselot, a Dominican priest and creator of the publishing house Éditions du Cerf and the journals *Vie Spirituelle* and *Vie Intellectuelle* whom Sartre had encountered in the infirmary. They had previously met in the home of Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), a major Catholic philosopher and dramatist who preferred the label neo-Socratic to existentialist. Marcel was one of the first to call Sartre an existentialist. Close to François Mauriac before the war and a regular at the salon of the Maritains, he was initially a supporter of Pétain who by the end of the war was a member of the Comité national des écrivains (CNE). He nevertheless intervened in favor of Maurras and Brasillach and denounced the blacklisting of collaborationist intellectuals after the war. On Perrin's relationship with Sartre and life in the POW camp see Marius Perrin, *Avec Sartre au Stalag 12D* (Paris: Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1980). Hereafter cited in the text.

56. Quoted in Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 307. See also Claude Singer, *Vichy, l'université et les juifs: Les silences et la mémoire* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1992).

57. When Sartre finally approved the play for publication in 1962 he included a disclaimer that categorically rejected the notion that the "mystery play" was the expression of a spiritual crisis or in any way expressed religious convictions held by him. He insisted that the "subject from Christian mythology" that was used was done so in order that it "could bring about, on that Christmas Eve, the broadest possible union of Christians and unbelievers. (October 31, 1962)" (Contat and Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, 72). See Contat

and Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, where the Bariona script is reproduced in its entirety. All citations to the play refer to this edition and will be hereafter cited parenthetically.

58. The fact that villagers are Jews is mentioned some twenty times in the play.

59. “Le théâtre de A jusqu’à Z: Jean-Paul Sartre,” interview by Paul-Louis Mignon in *L’Avant-Scène Théâtre* (special issue on Sartre), May 1–15, 1968, 33–34, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 412.

60. “Forgers of Myths: The Young Playwrights of France,” in *Theatre Arts* (New York) 30, no. 6 (June 1946): 324–35, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 412. Galster’s excellent study of Sartre’s theater under the German occupation argues that Sartre had two conceptions of engaged theater that corresponded to the philosophical theories developed first in *Being and Nothingness* and then transformed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Sartre’s early theater put people into a situation in which they must choose how to act and thereby determine the meaning of their situation. The main concepts are “liberty” and “situation,” which demand reflection on place, past, death, and the existence of others. Sartre’s “theater of situations” thus staged not the conflict of people but of rights, the struggle over moral systems and conceptions of humanity where the protagonists must choose a system of values. Theater thus stages the conflict of myths. Sartre’s second conception of theater emphasized that human beings are socially conditioned without being reduced to this social conditioning. Theater thus dramatizes the dialectic between individuals and what conditions them, the dialectic between humanity and the structures of the world. See Galster, *Le théâtre de Jean-Paul Sartre*, chap. 2.

61. On the Francistes see Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave*, 38–40; Pascal Ory, *Les collaborateurs: 1940–1945* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976), 95.

62. On the film see Rosemarie Scullion, “Family Fictions and Reproductive Realities in Occupied France: Claude Chabrol’s *Une affaire de femmes*,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 85–103.

63. Miranda Pollard, “Women and the National Revolution,” in *Vichy France and the Resistance: Culture and Ideology*, ed. Roderick Kedward and Roger Austin (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 36–47.

64. In addition to Pollard’s previously cited article see her *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). See also Francine Muel-Dreyfus, *Vichy and the Eternal Feminine: A Contribution to the Political Sociology of Gender*, trans. Kathleen Johnson (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2001), and *Gendering the Occupation of France*, ed. Hanna Diamond and Claire Gorrara, *Modern and Contemporary France* 7, no. 1 (February 1999).

65. Galster, *Le théâtre de Jean-Paul Sartre*, 42.

66. Cited by Galster, *Le théâtre de Jean-Paul Sartre*, 44.

67. For a description of his escape see Hayman, *Sartre*, 177–78.

68. On the bureaucratic organizations responsible for cultural supervision see Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 159.

69. See Denis Peschanski, “Une politique de la censure?” in *La vie culturelle sous Vichy*, ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1990), 63–80, 64–65.

70. Key works on collaborationism include Jean-Pierre Azéma, *La collaboration, 1940–1944* (Paris: PUF, 1975); Bertram Gordon, *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); and Ory, *Les collaborateurs*. See also Paul J. Kington, “The Ideologists: Vichy France, 1940–1944,” in *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture during the Nazi Occupation, 1940–1944*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh (New York: Berg Publishers, 1989), 47–71.

71. See Kedward, *Occupied France*, 40–41.

72. Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 139.

73. Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 7.

74. Quoted in Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 3.

75. See Robert Zaretsky, *Nîmes at War: Religion, Politics and Public Opinion in the Gard, 1938–1944* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1995). See also the more comprehensive work of W. D. Halls cited below.

76. Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon, who would remain staunchly Pétainist throughout the war, for example, said, “Today France is Pétain and Pétain is France.” See W. D. Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in France* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995), 45.

77. These included dramatic gestures like the bishop of Beauvais, Monsignor Roeder, registering for the Jewish census in full pontifical because one of his ancestors was Jewish or the active intellectual resistance beginning in 1943 centered at the library of the Institut catholique of Toulouse, on the one hand, to Cardinal Suhard of Paris, on the other hand, who supported the German war effort and gave his sanction to Monsignor Jean de Mayol de Lupé to become the chaplain general of the Legion de volontaires français contre le bolchévisme and who fought on the Eastern Front with both the pectoral cross and the swastika around his neck proclaiming his dual allegiance. In addition to W. D. Halls’s book see also his articles “French Christians and the German Occupation,” in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*, and “Catholicism under Vichy: A Study in Diversity and Ambiguity,” in Kedward and Austin, *Vichy France*.

78. Otto Abetz called these groups “our most dangerous enemies” (cited by Halls, “French Christians,” 76). See Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

79. Halls, “French Christians,” 80.

80. Michael Kelly, “French Catholic Intellectuals during the Occupation,” *Journal of European Studies* 23, nos. 89–90 (March–June 1993): 179–91, 185. These included ultra-collaborationists like Philippe Henriot, who broadcast on Vichy radio twice daily and eventually became minister of information and was later assassinated by the Resistance, but also intellectuals like Henri Massis and Henri Bourdeaux who represented the old *intégriste* Right, younger writers who represented the new Catholic Right like

Thierry Maulnier, as well as traditional moderate Catholics like Jacques Chevalier. On Philippe Henriot see the article by H. R. Kedward, “The Vichy of the Other Philippe,” in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*.

81. Kelly, “French Catholic Intellectuals,” 188–89.

82. In no small measure because of John Hellman’s arguments that Mounier’s personalism converges with the views of fascists at the time, his case has aroused hot debate about the ambiguities of the occupation. Hellman makes this argument in both *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) and *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940–1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). Mounier was involved with several Vichy youth programs that he sought to influence with his personalist ideas, including Jeune France, which sought to foster cultural and artistic activities among youth, Compagnons de France, which was a government-sponsored boy scout movement, Chantiers de la jeunesse, a work camp movement, and, most significantly, the École des cadres at Uriage, an elite leadership training program. By the spring and summer of 1941 Mounier had been barred from involvement in each movement, and *Esprit* was banned by the Vichy government in August 1941. Subsequently, several members of the teaching staff at the École des cadres and a number of students of Mounier became active in the Resistance. On the Vichy youth movements see W. D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). See also Brian Darling, “Uriage: The Assault on a Reputation,” and Derek Robbins, “Uriage: The Influence of Context on Content,” in Kedward and Austin, *Vichy France*.

83. Anticipating what hovered on the horizon, as early as 1936 museum administrations were already making preparations to save their treasures in the event of war. The Paris World’s Fair in 1937 was a cultural expression of geopolitics on the eve of war. There were pavilions that included Soviet Socialist Realism with Nazi art displayed in Albert Speer’s German pavilion nearby and Picasso’s *Guernica* depicting the savagery of fascism around the corner. See Sarah Wilson, “Collaboration in the Fine Arts,” 105, in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*.

84. See the wonderful catalog edited by Stephanie Barron with Sabine Eckmann, *Exiles and Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997).

85. See Romy Golan, “From Fin de Siècle to Vichy: The Cultural Hygienics of Camille (Faust) Mauclair,” in Nochlin and Garb, *The Jew in the Text*, 156–73, 164.

86. Michèle Cone, *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 181.

87. Wilson, “Fine Arts,” 112. On the exhibit *Le juif et la France* see Michèle Cone, “Vampires, Viruses, and Lucien Rebatet: Antisemitic Art Criticism during Vichy,” in Nochlin and Garb, *The Jew in the Text*, 174–86, esp. 176–80.

88. On the IEQJ see Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 211, and on the exhibition, 211–12.

89. *Catalogue de l'exposition Le juif et la France*, organized in Paris at the Palais Berlitz under the aegis of the Institut d'études des questions juives in Septembre 1941, document 82, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine.

90. Cone, "Vampires, Viruses, and Lucien Rebatet," 178.

91. On Marianne as a symbol of the Republic see Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789–1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

92. On the C curve see note 17. Visual art and its contestation were not merely confined to exhibitions and the walls of museums and galleries or cinema halls, however. The walls of Paris were littered with hundreds of posters of Pétain and supporting the Vichy government that were often placed next to the notices of the occupying authorities. As Beauvoir reports in *The Prime of Life*, graffiti or otherwise defacing propaganda or inscribing the British V for Victory, which was widespread, was an act of resistance that soon became an official offense punishable by fines (384). An organized Resistance movement among artists only arose in response to the trips to Germany by French artists organized by the German Institute. The Front national des arts began with five painters who were later joined by others. Their main undertaking was a newsletter called *L'Art Français*, which came out five times between 1942 and the liberation. Resistance could also come in the form of donating money or artworks to resistance causes (Picasso donated a couple) or using studios as places to hide those in need or as sites to organize resistance, like Jacques Lipchitz's house, which was taken over by Pignon to save it from Aryanization and which was used to organize the Musée de l'homme resistance. On these points see Wilson, "Fine Arts," 116; Cone, *Artists under Vichy*, 170.

93. For a short but acute analysis of censorship and control of French publishing during the German occupation see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Preface," in *Liste Otto: The Official List of French Books Banned under the German Occupation, 1940* (Cambridge MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1992), iii. The best work on the topic is by Pascal Fouché, *L'édition française sous l'Occupation, 1940–1944* (Paris: Bibliothèque de littérature française contemporaine de l'Université Paris 7, 1987).

94. Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 326. This business logic "was characterized by a desire to maintain acquired positions, by concern over competition, and by discomfort over transferring business to the free zone owing to Vichy's censorship and because the fixed assets and most of its public were situated in the occupied zone."

95. Davis, "Preface," iv.

96. See Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 326–29, and Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 160–62.

97. See Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 153, for the number of yearly sales.

98. Politzer is quoted in Robert Pickering, "The Implications of Legalised Publication," in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*, 165.

99. Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 334.

100. Michel Trebitsch, “Nécrologie: Les revues qui s’arrêtent en 1939–1940,” *La Revue des Revues*, no. 24 (1997): 19–34.

101. For an overview and typology of authorized French literary journals published during the occupation see Olivier Cariguel, “Panorama et typologie des revues littéraires légales françaises sous l’Occupation,” in “Des revues sous l’occupation,” *La Revue des Revues*, no. 24 (1997): 7–18.

102. On *La Gerbe* see Richard Golsan, “Ideology, Cultural Politics and Literary Collaboration at *La Gerbe*,” in *The Invasion and Occupation of France 1940–1944: Intellectual and Cultural Responses*, ed. Christopher Flood and Richard Golsan, *Journal of European Studies* 23 (1993): 27–47. On *Les Nouveaux Temps* see Claude Levy, *Les Nouveaux Temps et l’idéologie de la collaboration* (Paris: Armand Colin and Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1974). On *Je Suis Partout* see Ory, *Les collaborateurs*, and Joan Tumblety, “Revenge of the Fascist Knights: Masculine Identities in *Je suis partout*, 1940–1944,” in Diamond and Gorrara, *Gendering the Occupation of France*, 11–20.

103. On the NRF during the occupation see Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 142–45, and Burrin, *France under the Germans*, 330–33.

104. See Nicholas Hewitt, “Independent Publishing in Vichy France: The Case of Pierre Seghers’s *Poésie*,” in Flood and Golsan, *The Invasion and Occupation*, 193–206.

105. Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, 385; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Comoedia*, February 5, 1944, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, 92–93.

106. “Questionnaire bilingue non daté lu et approuvé par René Delange,” AN F/41/1748, cited in Olivier Fouranton, “*Comoedia*, une publication sous influences,” *Des Revues sous l’occupation*, *La Revue des Revues*, no. 24 (1997): 112.

107. Letter of Doctor Artz of Pressegrappe, AN F/41/1748, cited in Fouranton, “*Comoedia*,” 112.

108. See, for example, *Je Suis Partout*, October 22, 1943, 6, cited in Fouranton, “*Comoedia*,” 113.

109. Fouranton examined all 3,396 articles that appeared between June 21, 1941, and August 5, 1944, determining that only 165 had an overt political character, evidence of the journal’s largely apolitical stance, and of them 13 had a “resistance tone,” including a brief note about the death of Max Jacob, who was sent to Drancy on March 5, 1944. There were also 76 articles with a pro-German stance: they celebrated Hitler’s Germany as eternal Germany, accentuated the power of the German occupier, or expressed their support of a Franco-German rapprochement. There were also several articles that advocated the themes of Pétainist collaboration, promoting antisemitism (11 articles) and expressing anti-Bolshevism (5 articles) anti-English, and anti-American sentiments (8 articles). See Fouranton, “*Comoedia*.”

110. Cited in Joseph, *Une si douce occupation*, 172.

111. Jean-Paul Sartre, “*Moby Dick* d’Herman Melville: Plus qu’un chef-d’oeuvre, un formidable monument,” *Comoedia*, June 21, 1941. Hereafter cited in the text.

112. Jean Giraudoux, *Pleins pouvoirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), 65–66, cited in Caron, “The Antisemitic Revival,” 56–57.

113. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Comoedia*, February 5, 1944, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 92–93.

114. Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life*, 381.

115. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61) was, along with Sartre, one of the most important phenomenologists of the twentieth century. The two were close collaborators from the war until 1952, during which time Merleau-Ponty was one of the founding editors of *Les Temps Modernes* and during which he published his most important work, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). They split over differences concerning what Merleau-Ponty defined in his work *Adventures of the Dialectic* as Sartre’s “ultra-Bolshevism.” After his break with Sartre and his nomination to the Collège de France in 1953 he maintained a lower public profile, focusing on the development of his philosophical work on language, perception, and the body, which reached fruition in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964).

116. Most of the information on *Socialisme et liberté* comes from Dominique Desanti’s testimony “Première rencontre avec Sartre,” in Galster, *La naissance*, 338–48. See also her “Le Sartre que je connais,” *Jeune Afrique*, November 8, 1964, 27–29.

117. Jean-Toussaint Desanti, “Premier contact avec Sartre,” in Galster, *La naissance*, 335–37.

118. See Cohen-Solal, Sartre, 159–78.

119. See the dialogue between Beauvoir and Sartre in Simone de Beauvoir, *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*, trans. Patrick O’Brian (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 392–33.

120. These include Gilbert Joseph, Bianca Lamblin, and Jean-François Sirinelli.

121. Maurice Nadeau, *Grâces leur soient rendues* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), 55–66, 58.

122. Claude Bourdet, one of the founders of *Combat*, distinguished between movements and networks as follows: “A network is an organization created for specific tasks, essentially, information, sabotage, escape of prisoners of war and pilots fallen behind enemy lines. . . . A movement, on the contrary, has as its primary goal to build public awareness and organize the population in the greatest numbers possible.” Bourdet, *L’aventure incertaine* (Paris: Stock, 1975), 95–96.

123. In the spring of 1942 the French were informed that French labor would be required in Germany, and an agreement was made known as the *Relève* between Pierre Laval and Fritz Sauckel, the Nazi minister for labor, that would send French volunteers to labor in Germany in return for prisoners of war to be sent back from Germany. In February 1943 the *Relève* was replaced by the *STO*, which mandated the registration and deportation of workers, which many sought to resist.

124. Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, trans. Rosette C. Lamont (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1995). On Delbo see Lea Wernick Fridman, *Words and Witness: Narrative and Aesthetic Strategies in the Representation of the Holocaust* (New York: SUNY Press,

2000), 109–26, and Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991), chap. 1.

125. On Resistance literature see Margaret Attack, *Literature and the French Resistance: Cultural Politics and Narrative Forms, 1940–1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), and Lottman's chapter "Midnight Presses," in *The Left Bank*.

126. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 178.

127. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Drieu la Rochelle ou la haine de soi," *Les Lettres Françaises* (April 1943).

128. Sartre, "La littérature, cette liberté," *Les Lettres Françaises* (clandestine), no. 15 (April 1944): 8, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 94.

129. The title of Evelyn Ehrlich's study, *The Cinema of Paradox* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), best encapsulates filmmaking during the occupation. Despite declining numbers of productions, the closing of many theaters in 1940, and what François Garçon calls the "triple censure" instituted under Vichy that affected production, domestic distribution, and film exports, Garçon nevertheless characterizes the Vichy years as "this curious golden age of French cinema." The luster of this "golden age" was made possible primarily by the elimination of the competition that hampered autochthonous filmmakers, best symbolized by the new requirements for professional accreditation, supervised by the Comité d'organisation d'industrie cinématographique (COIC). This was indicative of the new corporatism of the French economy that was a key element of Vichy ideology and practice. Accreditation was attainable only for those who could present a certificate of French national identity, which eliminated Jews and foreigners from working. Hollywood films, which had accounted for 48 percent of the gross tickets sold in the 1930s, were no longer shown. With significant German finance that had already begun in the 1930s, by the spring of 1941 French production had significantly increased, and by 1942, when it was clear that French audiences were not very interested in the German productions that initially flooded the market, the French were steadily producing more films than Germany. Film attendance tripled during the war, a new generation of actors and directors came to the fore, and with the reorganization of the film industry under Vichy initiatives were undertaken that would have a lasting effect on postwar French cinema. Thus, parallel to political structures, there were continuities between the old guard and the new order from the 1930s to the postwar period. Roy Armes and François Garçon have argued this was even the case with the ideological elements of film, since the positive aspects of the National Revolution were already apparent in the 1930s, while antisemitism and Germanophilia remained largely absent from the film productions of the Vichy years. Thematically, films mythically bracketed the present, often by retreating into an allegorical past, and, like much literature published under Vichy, narratives were "extremely ambiguous in meaning." See François Garçon, "Ce cureux âge d'or des cinéastes français," in Rioux, *La vie culturelle sous Vichy*, 295. See also Roy Armes's discussion of the relations between French and German filmmakers in his "Cinema of Paradox," in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*. For a specific discussion

of the ambiguities of film see Jeanie Semple, “Ambiguities in the film *Le ciel est à vous*,” in Kedward and Austin, *Vichy France*, 123–32.

130. Patrick Marsh, “The Theatre: Compromise or Collaboration,” in Hirschfeld and Marsh, *Collaboration*, 142–61. On theater under the German occupation see also Serge Added, “L’euphorie théâtrale dans Paris occupé,” and Isabelle Bogen, “Le pari culturel nazi à Strasbourg: L’exemple du théâtre,” in Rioux, *La vie culturelle sous Vichy*; and Raymond Bach, “Cocteau and Vichy: Family Disconnections,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 29–37.

131. The COES included professional organizations of authors, composers, and editors of music as well as cinematographers. As Rocher put it, “The organized profession will be the foundation stone of the new order,” and their slogan paralleled that of the National Revolution: “Responsabilité, autorité, discipline.” See Marsh, “The Theatre,” 146.

132. Marsh, “The Theatre,” 149–51.

133. It is interesting to note that in an interview in *Le Figaro* in 1951 that discussed the staging of *Les mouches* in 1943 Sartre referred to the original name of the theater: “The collaborators were not deceived by the play. Violent Press campaigns quickly obliged the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt to remove the play from the playbill.” See “Ce que fut la création des ‘Mouches,’” *Le Figaro*, January 11, 1951, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 88.

134. AN AJ 40 1003, AJ 40 1004, cited in Galster, *Sartre, Vichy et les intellectuels*, 14.

135. “Ce que nous dit Jean-Paul Sartre de sa première pièce,” *Comoedia*, April 24, 1943. Hereafter cited in the text. There was a vogue of staging ancient dramas or reworking them under the occupation: Jean Anouilh staged *Eurydice*, Giraudoux’s *Electra* was re-primed, and Népomucène Jonquille did Aeschylus’s *Les suppliantes*.

136. Philip Watts, *Allegories of the Purge: How Literature Responded to the Postwar Trials of Writers and Intellectuals in France* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 11.

137. There are many examples of the brutality of German reprisals for acts of resistance. For perhaps the most famous example see Sarah Farmer’s *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). See also Tzvetan Todorov, *A French Tragedy: Scenes of Civil War, Summer 1944* (Hanover MA: University Press of New England, 1996).

138. The moral compromises involved in this situation are addressed by Todorov, *A French Tragedy*.

139. See Galster, *Le théâtre de Jean-Paul Sartre*, and “*Les Mouches* sous l’occupation: À-propos de quelques idées reçues,” in Sartre, *Vichy et les intellectuels*.

140. Galster, “*Les Mouches* sous l’occupation,” 19 and passim.

141. Cited in Joseph, *Occupation*, 271.

142. Ingrid Galster, “L’actualité de *Huis clos* en 1944 ou la revanche de l’anti-France,” in Sartre, *Vichy et les intellectuels*, 25–33.

143. Cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 98.

144. On the charges brought against Beauvoir see Joseph, “L’affaire Simone de Beauvoir,” in *Une si douce occupation*, 197–222.

145. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956). All citations are to this edition and cited parenthetically hereafter.

146. Pickering, “The Implications,” 179–89. The quotations are from 187 and 185.

147. Cranston, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, 43.

148. The hinge that connects masochism to sadism is Sartre’s conception of desire. Sexual desire, for Sartre, is not just the desire for the body of the other or the desire for sexual satisfaction (*Being and Nothingness*, 500) but rather “the original attempt to get hold of the Other’s free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-me” (497). Desire is consciousness making itself body: it is not just desire for a body, it is desire for the consciousness which gives meaning and unity to that body. For Sartre, “desire is expressed by the caress as thought is by language” (507). By caressing the Other’s body one touches the Other’s free subjectivity, which Sartre calls “possession” (508). Desire, like indifference, love, seduction, and masochism, is doomed to failure, however, for the satisfaction of desire “is the death and the failure of desire. It is the death of desire because it is not only its fulfillment but its limit and its end” (515). Thus, for Sartre, “desire is naturally continued not by caresses but by acts of taking and of penetration” (516). The other is inevitably seized as an instrument, an object, and thus desire is turned from a form of masochism into a form of sadism.

149. Each of the italicized terms is developed as a technical term Sartre uses to elaborate the conception of existential freedom he develops in this section. See part 4, “Having, Doing, and Being,” section 2, “Freedom and Facticity: The Situation.”

150. Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 287.

151. Zuccotti, *The Holocaust*, 145.

152. There are several aspects of the cultural field that I did not elaborate upon. On the role of general schooling see Roger Austin, “Political Surveillance and Ideological Control in Vichy France: A Study of Teachers in the Midi, 1940–1944,” in Kedward and Austin, *Vichy France*; on some of the interesting methods for the indoctrination of children (e.g., the use of comics like *Le Téméraire*) see Pascal Ory, *Le petit nazi illustré: Une pédagogie hitlérienne en culture française: “Le Téméraire” (1943–1944)* (Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1979); on the role of the legal profession see Richard Weiseberg, *The Law and the Holocaust in France* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996); on sports and the radio see Hélène Eck, “À la recherche d’un art radiophonique,” and Jean-Louis Gay-Lescot, “La politique sportive de Vichy,” in Rioux, *La vie culturelle sous Vichy*, among other aspects of cultural life in the Vichy years.

153. Henry Rousso, “Vichy: Politique, idéologie et culture,” in Rioux, *La vie culturelle sous Vichy*, 1.

3. Sartre’s Postwar *Témoignage*

1. Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 16.

2. Kedward, *Occupied France*, 78.
3. During the ceremony an assassination attempt on de Gaulle's life was thwarted.
4. The left portal is the door of the Virgin, to the right is Saint Anne, and at the center is the Last Judgment.
5. Shelley Hornstein, "Invisible Topographies: Looking for the *Mémorial de la déportation* in Paris," in *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 305–23, 312.
6. *Memorial to the Martyrs of Deportation*, brochure published by Le réseau du souvenir, n.d., cited in Hornstein, "Invisible Topographies," 312.
7. The topic of being-toward-death is one of the central themes of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). To briefly restate Heidegger's argument, it is in being-toward-death that the radical contingency of Dasein (human being) as a cultural and historical being is revealed, and this opens up the "potentiality-for-Being" (354), the possibility for Dasein to act authentically. The anticipation of death reveals for Dasein the degree to which one has become lost in *das Man* (the crowd) and opens up the possibility for Dasein's own assertion in the projects one undertakes, Dasein's affirmation of its own will and responsibility in its actions: "We may now summarize our characterization of authentic Being-towards-Death as we have projected it existentially: anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility of being itself, primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude, but of being itself, rather, in an impassioned FREEDOM TOWARDS DEATH—a freedom which has been released from the illusions of the 'they'" (311). Dasein's projection toward its own death enables a transformative moment in which Dasein seizes the reality of its individuality, its ungroundedness, its radical contingency, and thus its possibility to act freely in the world. The actions themselves are intensified by this transformative moment; each project is taken on with a real significance for the individual. This calling back to the individual Will in action is what Heidegger calls "anticipatory resoluteness," and it is the fundamental ground for authenticity.
8. Hornstein, "Invisible Topographies," 318.
9. *Résistancialisme* was a term coined after the liberation by the adversaries of the purge. Rouso uses it to identify a process of memorialization that itself has three elements:

First, a process that sought to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime and its impact on French society[. . .] second, the construction of an object of memory, the "Resistance," whose significance transcended the sum of its active parts (the small groups of guerrilla partisans who did the actual fighting) 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 "Resis-

tance” with the nation as a whole, a characteristic feature of the Gaullist version of the myth. (*The Vichy Syndrome*, 10)

10. I have used the French term because it emerges as an important concept in Sartre’s theory of engagement. For the links between *témoignage* and *engagement* see David Schalk, *The Spectrum of Political Engagement*: Mounier, Benda, Nizan, Brasillach, Sartre (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 18–20.

11. Susan Rubin Suleiman, “Choosing Your Past: Jean-Paul Sartre and the Liberation,” *Contemporary French Civilization*, Special Issue: Culture and Daily Life in Occupied France 23, no. 2 (Summer–Fall 1999): 392–408. See also the longer French version, “Choisir son passé: Sartre mémorialiste de la France occupée,” in Galster, *La naissance*, 213–37. As far as I am aware, Suleiman is the only other scholar to have examined Sartre’s *témoignage* on the occupation in detail and I was gratified and reassured that her interpretation and conclusions were so close to my own, first published in chapter 2 of my dissertation, “Jean-Paul Sartre and ‘the Jewish Question’: The Politics of Engagement and the Image of ‘the Jew’ in Sartre’s Thought, 1930–1980,” University of California, Irvine, 1997. See also Jonathan Judaken, “The Queer Jew: Gender, Sexuality and Jean-Paul Sartre’s Anti-Antisemitism,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 33, no. 3 (1999): 45–63, 51. I have supplemented my reading of Sartre’s texts here with Suleiman’s insightful scholarship.

12. The intellectual purge was part of the wider *épuration* that reached its zenith leading up to and following the liberation and very slowly waning after the Nazi capitulation in May 1945. The purge was still ongoing into the 1950s and remains incomplete, as evidenced by the trials of Klaus Barbie, Paul Touvier, and Maurice Papon. In addition to the intellectual purge the *épuration* involved the public shaming of women, extrajudicial executions, a series of trials, and political, military, and economic purges. On the *épuration* see Henry Rousso, “L’*épuration* en France: Une histoire inachevée,” *Vingtième Siècle* 33 (January–March 1992): 78–105, and Robert Aron and Yvette Garnier-Rizet, *Histoire de l’*épuration** (Paris: Fayard, 1967–75). On the *femmes tondues* see Alain Brossat, *Les tondues: Un carnaval moche* (Levallois-Perret: Éditions Many, 1992); Corran Laurens, “‘La Femme au Turban’: Les Femmes tondues,” in *The Liberation of France: Image and Event*, ed. H. R. Kedward and Nancy Wood (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995), 143–54. On the intellectual purge see Pierre Assouline, *L’*épuration* des intellectuels: 1944–1945* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1985); Herbert Lottman, *The Purge* (New York: Morrow, 1986); Peter Novick, *The Resistance versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 126–30; James D. Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 65–70.

13. “Manifeste des Écrivains français,” *Les Lettres Françaises*, September 9, 1944, 1, cited in Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics*, 13.

14. On the trial of Robert Brasillach see Alice Kaplan, *The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Kaplan succinctly states the significance of the trial in her “Literature and Collaboration,” in A

New History of French Literature, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 966–71: Brasillach's death by firing squad "served as a sanction for this whole new intellectual universe. It drew a line between the prewar aesthetes—Valéry, Jean Giraudoux, André Gide—and committed intellectuals who conceived their literary and social activities as ethical stands. Their existentialism was in large part a response to the 1944–1947 purge, and as much a part of the postwar recovery as the Marshall Plan" (971). On the link between the debate about the purge and postwar literature see Watts, *Allegories of the Purge*.

15. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Paris sous l'occupation," reprinted in *Situations III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949). All references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically hereafter.

16. Kedward in *Occupied France* is clear, however, that "the German archives amply document the success of the Resistance in delaying and diverting the German troops which were heading northwards, and at the end of June General Eisenhower stated that the help of the Resistance in the D-Day operations had been worth a full 15 divisions" (75).

17. Jean-Paul Sartre, "La république du silence," *Les Lettres Françaises* (first legal issue), September 9, 1944, reprinted in *Situations III*. All references are to this text and cited hereafter parenthetically. See Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 105: "This fine piece of writing has been widely distributed and often quoted and translated."

18. Jean-Paul Sartre, "La délivrance est à nos portes," *Combat*, September 2, 1944. The citation is from Suleiman, "Choosing Your Past," 394–95, who emphasizes the extent to which Sartre rhetorically stresses the unanimity of the French population in these pieces.

19. Suleiman, "Choosing Your Past," 395.

20. Suleiman, "Choosing Your Past," 395.

21. Rouso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 24, makes clear that the people who actually underwent these different experiences formed hundreds of associations, each of which insisted on the differences in the causes and types of suffering they experienced and how they wanted it remembered.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Liberation of Paris: An Apocalyptic Week," in Contat and Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, 161. All citations are to this version and hereafter are cited parenthetically.

23. Jean-Paul Sartre, "La fin de la guerre," reprinted in *Situations III*, 68. All references are to this text and cited parenthetically hereafter.

24. Jean-Paul Sartre, "L'insurrection," *Combat*, August 28, 1944, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 101: "The F.F.I. men go into the hotel and soon come down again with a dozen little yellow guys with anxious but inscrutable faces and hands up. Japanese. So these are the men who make up Vichy's 'real French' militia." The stress here is that the collaborators arrested by the Resistance are foreigners.

25. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?" reprinted in *Situation III*, 46. All references are to this text and cited parenthetically hereafter.

26. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Colère d’une ville,” *Combat*, August 30, 1944, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 102.

27. In the opening line of the article Sartre says that the population of collaborators in Norway is about 2 percent, which he suggests is the norm for any society and is therefore the same in France (“Colère d’une ville,” 43).

28. Suleiman, “Choosing Your Past,” 400–401.

29. On this point in relation to fascism more generally see Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 149–52.

30. Sartre continually misspells Brasillach’s name as “Brazillade” in order to emphasize a non-French spelling and that he was close to the Nazis. On this point see Russell Berman’s preface to Alice Kaplan’s study of French literary fascism, *Reproductions of Banality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xiv: “Sartre’s z marks the French fascist as Nazi and an outsider and consequently obviates any further investigation into the native origins of fascism.” See also page 14.

31. Here Sartre picks up on a theme that was continuous with his castigation of collaboration during the war. See Jean-Paul Sartre, “Drieu la Rochelle, or Self-Hatred,” in Contat and Rybalka, *Selected Prose*, 152–54. All references are to this text and cited parenthetically hereafter.

4. Bearing Witness to the Victims of History

1. Maud Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth-Century France* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 52–85.

2. Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide*, 61.

3. Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide*, 58.

4. Anne Grynberg, “Les juifs et la ‘question juive’ en France, 1944–1947,” in Galster, *Sartre et les juifs*, 35–47, 40.

5. The following summation of the Jewish Question in the immediate wake of the war is thoroughly indebted to Grynberg’s excellent overview, “Les juifs et la ‘question juive’ en France.”

6. William B. Cohen and Irwin M. Wall, “French Communism and the Jews,” in Malino and Wasserstein, *The Jews in Modern France*, 81–102, 88–89.

7. On the apology movement see Julie Fette, “Apologizing for Vichy in Contemporary France,” in *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Alexander Karn (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

8. For a bibliography of the first accounts of the Shoah see Annette Wieviorka, *Déportation et génocide: Entre la mémoire et l’oubli* (Paris: Plon, 1992). For her analysis of these accounts see Annette Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity in the First Accounts by Extermination Camp Survivors from France,” in *Discourses of Jewish Identity in Twentieth Century France*, ed. Alan Astro, *Yale French Studies* 85 (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 135–51.

9. Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity,” 144.

10. Julie Crémieux-Dunand, *Le relais des errants* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1945), 169–70, cited in Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity,” 140.
11. Louise Alcan, *Sans armes et sans bagages* (Limoges: Editions d’Art, 1947), 74, cited in Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity,” 140.
12. Julien Unger, *Le sang et l’or: Souvenirs de camps allemands* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), 234, cited in Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity,” 143.
13. Wieviorka, “Jewish Identity,” 145.
14. Raymond Aron, *The Committed Observer: Interviews with Jean-Louis Mussika and Dominique Walton*, trans. James and Marie McIntosh (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1983), 95–96, translation altered.
15. The other important theoretical treatises of the time were developed by the Frankfurt school, especially “Elements of Antisemitism,” in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1972), first published in 1949, and Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), first published in 1951.
16. Emmanuel Mounier, “Les juifs parlent aux nations,” *Esprit* 13, no. 114 (September 1945): 457–59, 458. This was a special issue of *Esprit* devoted to the Jewish Question with all the articles contributed by Jews.
17. Rhiannon Goldthorpe has argued that this convergence occurs in “Orphée noir.” See Goldthorpe, “Understanding the Committed Writer,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, ed. Christina Howells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 140–77.
18. “Portrait de l’anti-Semite,” *Les Temps Modernes*, December 1, 1945.
19. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 7–8. All citations are to this edition and are cited parenthetically hereafter.
20. On the Christian origins of antisemitism see John Gager, *The Origins of Antisemitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Jules Isaac, *Genèse de l’antisémitisme: Essai historique* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1956); Marcel Simon, *Verus Israël: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l’empire romain* (Paris: Editions de Boccard, 1964); Alan T. Davies, ed., *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979); Malcolm Vivian Hay, *Thy Brother’s Blood: The Roots of Christian Antisemitism* (New York: Hart Publishing, 1975).
21. Berel Lang makes the useful distinction between biological/scientific, cultural/social, and metaphysical racism. Metaphysical racism, he argues, is the foundation upon which cultural racism and biological racism rest. He maintains that metaphysical racism stands upon three basic presuppositions: (1) “human identity and activity are the function first of a group and only then of an individual—that is, the group is prior to the individual,” (2) “human group identities (and then the identities of individuals within the groups) vary not only accidentally (as in customs of dress), but essentially,” and (3) “the group identities so realized are ‘naturally’ ordered hierarchically and evaluatively—with their various capacities corresponding to differentiated and essential

values” (24). See Lang, “Metaphysical Racism,” in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, ed. Naomi Zack (London: Routledge, 1997), 17–27.

22. For the conception of master thinkers see Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy*, 18–39.

23. For an excellent treatment of economic antisemitism and its impact on the development of modern Jewish identity see Derek Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

24. For an analysis of Marxism and the Jewish Question see Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question*; Jacobs, *On Socialists*; and Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*.

25. On the theory of the scapegoat see Yves Chevalier, *L'antisémitisme: Le juif comme bouc émissaire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988).

26. The conception of an “original choice” is discussed in *Being and Nothingness* and developed in Sartre's biographies of Baudelaire, Genet, and Flaubert. The “original choice” of the antisemite is determined by his response to the Jewish Other. This response is the basis of a totalizing view of the world determined by the fundamental end that he pursues—the eradication of “the Jew.”

27. On the differences between the stereotypes of “the Jew,” “always defined as masculine” (98), and “the Jewess” see Sander Gilman, “Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess,” in Nochlin and Garb, *The Jew in the Text*, 97–120.

28. Sander Gilman has done the best work on the associative logic of stereotyping and why certain characteristics are stressed in typologies of the Other. Among his many works see in particular “What Are Stereotypes and Why Use Texts to Study Them?” in *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

29. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 798.

30. Sartre thus articulates the “banality of evil” thesis that Hannah Arendt elaborated as such in her analysis of Adolf Eichmann, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994).

31. Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew*, 60. On Sartre's representation of *la race juive* see Susan Rubin Suleiman, “The Jew in Jean-Paul Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive*: An Exercise in Historical Reading,” in Nochlin and Garb, *The Jew in the Text*, 208–15.

32. I borrow the notion of the “double bind” from Derrida, whose work is centrally concerned with analyzing the mutual interdependence of contradictions. Using the image of a duality of two knots entangled one within the other, he explores how concepts can be thus be enmeshed such that one cannot untie one of the knots without tightening the other. On this point in Derrida see Gideon Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, trans. Peretz Kidron (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 106.

33. Lawrence Kritzman, “Critical Reflections: Self-Portraiture and the Representation of Jewish Identity in French,” in Kritzman, *Auschwitz and After*, 103.

34. For a sense of the historical continuity of the problem see Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*: “Assimilation, we have found, lies at the heart of our problem. Any effort

to describe the Jewish community in France at the end of the nineteenth century faces the fact that the Jews of France were highly assimilated into French life and that, at the same time, their assimilation was never complete and was thus a continuing problem.” Sartre shifts the historical problems with the “politics of assimilation” to a philosophical and conceptual level.

35. On the ambivalence of the Enlightenment’s view of Jews and Judaism see note 20 in the introduction above. On Hegel’s views on the Jews see Nathan Rosenstreich, “Hegel’s Image of Judaism,” *Jewish Social Studies* 15 (1953): 33–52; Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 68–72; Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews*, 16–17. See also Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998).

36. On the legend of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, see Bein, *The Jewish Question*, 154–56; *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Hyam MacCoby, “The Legend of the ‘the Wandering Jew’: A New Interpretation,” *Jewish Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1972): 3–8; George K. Andersen, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence RI: Brown University Press, 1965).

37. On the image of “the smart Jew” see Sander Gilman, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

38. See Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*; Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*; Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991).

39. Enzo Traverso, “The Blindness of the Intellectuals: Historicizing Sartre’s Antisemite and Jew,” *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 73–88 argues that when Sartre’s text was published in 1946, one and a half years after the liberation of the death camps, what is shocking is that he does not place “the genocide at the center of his reflections” (73) about the Jewish Question: “Hitler, Goebbels, or Rosenberg do not enter his purview any more than do Xavier Vallat or Louis Darquier de Pellepoix or the architects of the Jewish statute of October 1940 or the organizers of the roundup in the following year” (79). I concur with Traverso’s conclusion that if the *Réflexions* is properly explained, contextualized, and historicized, then Sartre’s “essay seems emblematic of the silence about the Shoah in postwar culture” (73), but there are some modifications to his interpretation that are warranted. First, while Sartre only explicitly refers to the gas chambers once in the *Réflexions*, referring to Majdanek, which had recently been liberated at the time Sartre wrote his piece and was much publicized by the Soviets, there are many allusions to the systematic killing of Jews throughout the book, even if he does not explicitly discuss extermination as a system as it existed at Auschwitz. In the first line of the work, for example, he speaks of antisemitic opinions that suggest as a solution to the Jewish Question “exterminating them [the Jews]” (7). Since the events were so fresh in his readers’ minds, it may well have been unnecessary to speak explicitly in order to point to the events of the destruction of European Jewry. Second, while we might fault Sartre for not having reworked his *Réflexions* later, I insist that it is read and understood as an *écrit de circonstance*, an intervention written as an essay (not an academic study with full

documentation) in a specific situation, the kind of text that he rarely corrected. There was, quite simply, less known about the systematic murder of Jews when the text was composed. Third, and most important, Sartre is explicit that he is addressing antisemitism in France as his topic; therefore, condemning him for not placing the genocide of the Jews at the heart of his work is simply to misinterpret his intentions. While the German existentialists Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers reflected on the radical novelty of the Nazi extermination and the general question of German guilt, and members of the Frankfurt school, especially Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, explored the links between Western instrumental rationality and culture and the Holocaust, the Shoah was not directly discussed by Sartre because it was not his focus. My point is to foreground the equivocations of Sartre's text, which, on the one hand, clearly condemns the role of French collaboration in the Shoah but, on the other, subtly but surely places the blame for this outside of French culture. In this sense, the proper context for reading Sartre's *Réflexions* is as part of the Vichy syndrome and his own contribution to it through his double strategy of forgetting.

5. Sartre's *Passion*

1. Quoted in Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 9–10.
2. Cited in Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 233.
3. On the exporting of French culture in the postwar period see Herbert Lüthy, "The French Intellectuals," in *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait*, ed. George B. De Huszar (Glencoe IL: Free Press, 1960), 444–58. See also Nicholas Hewitt, "The Selling of Sartre: Existentialism and Public Opinion, 1944–1947," *Journal of Romance Studies* 6, no. 1.
4. Simone de Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 46.
5. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," in *Essays in Existentialism* (New York: Citadel Press, 1967), 31–62, 34, 47, 41.
6. The citations are from Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 233.
7. Cited in Lottman, *The Left Bank*, 239.
8. Jean-Paul Sartre, "New Writing in France: The Resistance 'taught that literature is no fancy activity independent of politics'" *Vogue* (July 1945): 84–85, 84. Cited parenthetically hereafter.
9. This article is only available in English; therefore, the French term that Sartre used, which may have been *engagement*, is unclear.
10. Located in Thüringen near Weimar, Buchenwald was one of the largest concentration camps on German soil. While the first prisoners were political detainees and criminals, after Kristallnacht the majority of victims from thirty different countries were Jewish, and this was overwhelmingly the case when it was liberated by the Americans in 1945.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Présentation des Temps Modernes," in *Situations II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948). Cited parenthetically hereafter.

12. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966). All citations are to this edition and hereafter cited parenthetically.

13. See Aronson, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, 128.

14. See Goldthorpe, “Understanding the Committed Writer,” 159.

15. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism,” in *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (New York: Wisdom Library, 1957), 16.

16. Sartre, *Antisemitism and Jew*, 153.

17. Cited in M. Watteau, “Situation raciales et condition de l’homme dans l’oeuvre de Jean-Paul Sartre,” *Présence Africaine*, no. 2 (January 1948): 228.

18. Robert J. C. Young, “Preface,” suggests this point in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001), xi.

19. Sartre, *What Is Literature?* 51.

20. I will use the term *blacks* throughout this discussion because this is the term that Sartre employed in his writings. See Jean-Paul Sartre, “Appendix 2: The Oppression of Blacks in the United States,” in *Notebooks for an Ethics*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and *The Respectful Prostitute*, in *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (New York: Vintage, 1955). In the latter Sartre indicates the slippage in racial scapegoating by the “hundred-per-cent American, [who] comes from one of our oldest families, has studied at Harvard[,] . . . employs two thousand workers in his factory,” and as such serves as “a firm bulwark against the Communists, labor unions, and the Jews” (270).

21. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Présence noire,” *Présence Africaine* 1, no. 1 (November–December 1947): 28–29, 28. Cited parenthetically hereafter. The key ideological construct for the cultural history of French colonization was the *mission civilisatrice*: the contention that France would raise the colonies to the level of French civilization by making colonial subjects suitable for assimilation into the French nation. In 1903 the policy of assimilation was abandoned in favor of *association*, which recognized local culture and tradition to a greater extent, but assimilation of French culture remained the ideal for cultural elites, and language and literature were the keys to this cultural empire.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Black Orpheus,” trans. John MacCombie, *Massachusetts Review* (Autumn–Winter 1964–65): 13–52, 20. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

23. Robert Bernasconi made me aware of how much Sartre echoes the poets themselves. See his translation of “Black Orpheus” in Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott, *The Idea of Race* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000).

24. W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1997) argues that African Americans were “born with a veil, and gifted with a second-sight in this American World.” Second sight, however, “yields him [the African American] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness.” Du Bois describes “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring

one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (38).

25. Stuart Zane Charmé, *Vulgarity and Authenticity: Dimensions of Otherness in the World of Jean-Paul Sartre* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 202.

26. Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Man Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 135.

27. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Introduction," in Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), xxi, xxii. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

28. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface," in Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 7. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

29. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 15.

30. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 208, 209.

31. On the experience of the RDR see Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 290–311, and Aronson, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, 160–67.

32. There were philosophical and more mundane reasons that divided Sartre from the communists in the immediate postwar period. Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics*, 23–33, neatly summarizes them. There were four main criticisms leveled against Sartre by Marxists fighting for his accrued cultural capital: (1) in a case of guilt by association, Sartre's existentialism was tainted by its German origins and Heidegger's National Socialism; (2) as part of the moribund ideology of the bourgeoisie, existentialism was tarred with the brush of decadence and decay; (3) as such it was pathologized as an "illness" focused on debauchery and depicting degenerates that was an impotent and disempowering philosophy; (4) more profoundly, Sartre's view of the individual and his conception of human freedom were considered apolitical, ahistorical, and asocial, and therefore he was accused of idealism. See also Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 109–12.

33. Aronson, *Jean-Paul Sartre*, 170.

34. Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics*, 102–3.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Le colonialisme est un système," *Les Temps Modernes* (March–April 1956): 1371–86, reproduced in Sartre, *Situations V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 25–48, translated as *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001). On the Comité d'action see James Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 31–54.

36. Raymond Aron, *La tragédie algérienne* (Paris: Plon, 1957).

37. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 30, 4. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

38. On this point and the basic premises of the *Méthode* see Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 272, 264–74.

39. Goldthorpe, "Understanding the Committed Writer," 148.
40. The quotes are from Goldthorpe, "Understanding the Committed Writer," 151.
41. Annette Lavers, "Sartre and Freud," *French Studies* 41, no. 3 (July 1987): 298–317, 303.
42. Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, 254.
43. Sartre, *Lettres au Castor*, 358, cited in Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 386; John Huston, *An Open Book* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 295, cited in Jonathan Rée, "Sartre's Freud," *New Left Review*, no. 157 (May–June 1986): 82–89, 83.
44. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Freud Scenario*, trans. Quintin Hoare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). All citations are to this edition and cited parenthetically hereafter.
45. Lavers, "Sartre and Freud," 305.
46. Here I argue against Hazel Barnes that Sartre violates his approach to interpretative biographies evident in his studies of Baudelaire, Genet, and Flaubert by only recounting disparate traits and moments in Freud's early life. See Barnes, "Sartre's Scenario for Freud," *L'Esprit Créateur* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 52–64, 54.
47. J.-B. Pontalis, "Editor's Preface: Freud Scenario, Sartre Scenario," in Sartre, *The Freud Scenario*, xiv.
48. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre on Theater*, ed., introduced, and annotated by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, trans. Frank Jellinek (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 131.
49. David James Fisher, "Jews, Patients, and Fathers in Sartre's *Freud Scenario*," *Sartre Studies International* 2, no. 1 (1996): 1–26, 8. I found Fisher's article extremely helpful in making my own argument, as is evident from my citations and from my strong endorsement of his conclusions.
50. Lacan's notion of the master signifier as *point de capiton*, or "quilting point," is developed in his seminar on Schreber's text: "Everything radiates out from and is organized around this signifier, similar to these little lines of force that an upholstery button forms on the surface of material. It's the point of convergence that enables everything that happens in this discourse to be situated retroactively and prospectively." Cited in Eric L. Santner, "My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity," in *Modernity, Culture and "the Jew,"* ed. Bryan Cheyete and Laura Marcus (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 40–63, 59 n. 18.
51. The literature on Freud's Jewishness is fairly extensive. It is beyond the purview of this reading to consider Sartre's interpretation within this whole tradition. It includes the racial interpretation of Charles Maylan, *Freuds tragischer Komplex: Eine Analyse der Psychoanalyse* (Munich: E. Reinhardt, 1929); David Bakan's interpretation of a hidden Jewish essence to Freud that connects him to the Jewish mystical tradition, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (Princeton NJ: Van Nostrand, 1958); the argument for Freud's cultural Jewishness in John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); following Freud's first biographer, Ernest Jones, the interpretation

of Peter Gay that Freud was a “godless Jew” in *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven CT: Yale and Hebrew Union College, 1987); a more nuanced interpretation of the religious influences on Freud in Emanuel Rice, *Freud and Moses: The Long Journey Home* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990). The most important recent interpretations of Freud’s Jewishness, with conclusions actually similar to some of those of Sartre, are Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud’s Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1991); and among Sander Gilman’s many publications on the topic see *Freud, Race and Gender* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) and *The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity in the Fin-de-Siècle* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). For a totally different recent interpretation see Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

52. Hazel Barnes acutely draws the connections between the biographical accounts of Ernest Jones and Sartre’s representation of Freud as Hannibal:

By his own account he saw himself as another Hannibal oppressed by Rome, a Jew subject to antisemitism represented by the Catholic Church. He recalls his painful response to a story his father told him of an occasion when a Gentile had knocked Jakob’s new fur cap into the gutter and told him to walk there. The father picked up his hat and obeyed. Sigmund Freud, wishing that his father had shown more courage, longed in vain for him to adopt the role of Hannibal’s father, swearing his sons to avenge their people (Jones, I, 25). Sartre presents the insulting scene and represents it as happening when the son is present. He also invents a sequel. At the time of Freud’s second lecture to the Medical Society we see him encountering an angry anti-semitic mob outside the building. Freud knocks off the hat of one of them and scornfully tells the man to pick it up. (“Sartre’s Scenario for Freud,” 55)

53. Fisher, “Jews, Patients, and Fathers,” 22. Arguing against Pontalis’s assertion that Sartre’s Freud was an unoriginal interpretation, Fisher adds two other original contributions of Sartre’s *Freud Scenario*: Sartre’s emphasis on aggression rather than libidinal identification and the multiple perspectives from which he investigates the Oedipus complex, including gender, generation, and development, as well as the viewpoint of sons, fathers, mothers, wives, and children.

54. Arguing against the predominant Marxist rejection of psychoanalysis, Sartre says in *Search for a Method*, 61: “The fact is that dialectical materialism cannot deprive itself much longer of the one privileged mediation which permits it to pass from general and abstract determination to particular traits of the single individual.” Here I would dispute Hazel Barnes’s claim made in her footnote to her translation (60) that when Sartre refers to psychoanalysis in *Search for a Method* he is not discussing Freudian psychoanalysis but his own existential psychoanalysis developed in *Being and Nothingness*. This does not entail that Sartre’s *Freud Scenario* marks a wholesale acceptance of Freudian psychoanalysis, as A. C. Danto has suggested. Barnes’s acute interpretation makes

clear that Sartre does not overtly challenge Freud but avoids all aspects that he found objectionable (“biological determinism, the role of sex differentiation in personality formation, the standardization of symbolic meanings, and far-fetched interpretations of dreams”), and he represented neurosis as accountable by either repression or bad faith (Barnes, “Sartre’s Scenario for Freud,” 62). For the best discussion of Sartre’s relationship to Freudian psychoanalysis before the publication of the *Le scénario Freud* see Christina Howells, “Sartre and Freud,” *French Studies* 33, no. 2 (April 1979): 157–76.

55. “Les séquestrés d’Altona nous concernent tous,” conversation with Bernard Dort, *Théâtre Populaire*, no. 36 (4th trimester, 1959): 1–13, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 362.

56. See Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954–1962)* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997). Drake also cites many examples of intellectuals making this analogy in *Intellectuals and Politics*, 113.

57. This, of course, connects the thematic of Sartre’s *Freud Scenario* to *The Condemned of Altona*.

58. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Condemned of Altona*, trans. Sylvia and George Leeson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 172. All citations are to this edition and cited parenthetically hereafter.

59. Michel Contat cogently makes this argument in his *Explication des “Séquestrés d’Altona” de Jean-Paul Sartre* (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1968). I follow his analysis in elucidating *Séquestrés* in light of the *Critique*.

60. Sartre calls this social relation in the *Critique* the third (*tiers*). The third unifies the group by commanding or observing its totalization. See Poster’s discussion of the way that the third complicates the Hegelian dialectic of master-slave or the dialectic of hostile monads in *Being and Nothingness* (*Existential Marxism*, 278).

61. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume One*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: Verso, 1991), 79–342.

62. See Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” in *Capital* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 31–37.

63. The religious symbolism of *The Condemned of Altona* is briefly discussed by Charles G. Hill, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Freedom and Commitment* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 218, 220.

64. On the car as a key symbol in 1958 France of industrial modernization and its links to decolonization see Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Boston: MIT Press, 1995).

65. Citation from Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 359.

66. Citation from Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 361.

6. On Ambivalent Commitments

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Je suis depuis longtemps l’ami d’Israël,” *La Terre Retrouvée* 49, no. 4 (November 1976).

2. On January 7, 1971, Sartre gave a short speech at the Mutualité on behalf of the

rights of Jews in the USSR who wanted to leave, demanding the release of Kuznetsov and ten others who had tried to escape by hijacking a plane and who were given a harsh sentence in December. Along with Simone de Beauvoir, Beate Klarsfeld, Arthur London, Daniel Mayer, and Jean Rostand, among others, he signed the “Appeal from the Left for the Russian Jews,” which protested the proceedings against Jews wanting to leave the USSR. He contended that not only Jews but all those who so desired should be granted exit visas. He also signed an appeal made by a group of forty-five intellectuals and published in *Le Monde* on October 28 calling for the granting of emigration rights to Soviet Jews. On his stance on behalf of Russian Jewry see Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 573, 583.

3. There were two main reasons that Sartre refused the prize: first, because he did not want to be turned into an institution, to have his independence as a writer and political actor co-opted by the perennial association with the Nobel Prize; second, Sartre objected to the fact that no nondissident Soviet writer and no Western Communist had ever been awarded the prize.

4. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Discours de Sartre à l’ambassade d’Israël pour l’acceptation de son diplôme de docteur *honoris causa* de l’Université hébraïque de Jérusalem 7 novembre 1976,” in Ely Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre: Un hébreu à Paris, 1967–1980* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), 313–14, 313.

5. Sartre, “Discours,” 313. On November 10, 1975, the United Nations infamously ratified the UN General Resolution 3379, which concluded, “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.”

6. Sartre, “Je suis depuis longtemps l’ami.”

7. The capital letter J indicates that Sartre refers to the Jewish people by this term, since using a small letter in French indicates a religion.

8. Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew*, 139. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

9. On the image of the Jews as a “nation within a nation” see Jacob Katz, “A State within a State, the History of an Antisemitic Slogan,” *Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Proceedings* 4 (1971): 29–58, reprinted in *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough: Gregg, 1972), 47–76.

10. *Golah* is the Hebrew word for Jews who live outside of the land of Israel, while *geulah* means redemption.

11. Sartre, *What Is Literature?* 197–98.

12. Sartre, *What Is Literature?* 198.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Un émouvant appel de J.-P. Sartre en faveur de la Palestine libre,” *L’Ordre de Paris*, April 7, 1948, reprinted as “C’est pour nous tous que sonne le glas,” *Caliban*, no. 16 (May 1948): 13–16, 15. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

14. The *Stern* gang was a British name for *Lehi* (Hebrew *Lehi*, *Lohamei Herut Israel*, *Fighters for the Freedom of Israel*). Started by Avraham Stern, a member of the Revisionist wing of Zionism led by Ze’ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, Stern rejected any compromises with the British and demanded the creation of a Greater Israel that would occupy all the

Jewish territories of the Bible. Lehi advocated terror and sabotage to achieve its ends. It was active during the British Mandate of Palestine prior to the founding of the state of Israel and during the first part of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

15. Cariel Gardosh (Dosh), "Mon maître, Jean-Paul Sartre," in *Sillages*, no. 3 (October 1980): 89–92, 90.

16. Gardosh, "Mon maître," 89.

17. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Le problème juif? Un problème international, déclare Jean-Paul Sartre au procès des amis du Stern," an observer's report by Madeleine Jacob, *Franc-Tireur*, February 14, 1948, cited in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 216.

18. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Hillel*, deuxième série, no. 7 (June 1949): 6.

19. On this point see Menachem Brinker, "Sartre et Israël (1939–1980): 'Drôle de position,'" *Sillages*, no. 3 (October 1980): 83–87, 84.

20. Brinker, "Sartre et Israël," 85.

21. The phrase "classical intellectual" appears in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations VIII* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 373.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels," *Situations VIII*, 375–455, 422; Jean-Paul Sartre, "L'ami du peuple," *Situations VIII*, 456–76.

23. Sartre, "Plaidoyer," 454, 424.

24. "Jean-Paul Sartre et les problèmes de notre temps: Interview recueillie par Simha Flapan," *Cahiers Bernard Lazare*, no. 4 (April 1966): 4–9, 4.

25. Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Les intellectuels et le pouvoir," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, May 8, 1972, 68–70. See also Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 128.

26. Sartre, "Jean-Paul Sartre et les problèmes," 5.

27. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), xiii. References are to this edition and cited hereafter parenthetically. For Lyotard's conception of the postmodern intellectual as one who bears witness to the differend see my "Bearing Witness to the Differend: Jean-François Lyotard, the Postmodern Intellectual and 'the Jews,'" *Jews and Gender: The Challenge to Hierarchy*, ed. Jonathan Frankel, vol. 16 of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 245–64.

28. See Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 497.

29. Interview with Ali El Samman, *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), December 25, 1965, translated by Amnon Kapeliuk and reprinted as "An Interview with Sartre," *New Outlook* (Tel Aviv) 9, no. 2 (February 1966): 58–62, 62.

30. Sartre, "An Interview with Sartre," 62.

31. Sartre, "Jean-Paul Sartre et les problèmes," 4. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

32. For the specific individuals see "Jean-Paul Sartre et Simone de Beauvoir en Israël," *Cahiers Bernard Lazare*, no. 10 (May 1967): 4–20, 4, and Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 409.

33. See Hayman, *Sartre*, 419.

34. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 409.
35. Amnon Kapeliuk, "Sartre in the Arab Press," *New Outlook* 10, no. 4 (May 1967): 29–33, 30.
36. Kapeliuk, "Sartre in the Arab Press," 30.
37. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 410.
38. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 410.
39. Founded in December 1920 at the Haifa Technion, the Histadrut was created as a trade union that would organize the economic activities of Jewish workers. Realizing that rival trade unions would be counterproductive, Histadrut made efforts to establish a nonpartisan, nonpolitical organization that would run activities such as the consumers union, the sick fund, and the employment exchange based on the ideas of the Russian-Jewish socialist tradition characteristic of the second wave of immigration to Israel (1904–14).
40. For the specific individuals see *Cahiers Bernard Lazare*, no. 10 (May 1967): 4, and Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 411. The most detailed account is given in Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*.
41. Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 70–73.
42. "Jean-Paul Sartre et Simone de Beauvoir en Israël," *Cahiers Bernard Lazare*, no. 10 (May 1967): 4–20, 8. Cited parenthetically hereafter.
43. See Jean-Paul Sartre, "Pour la vérité," *Les Temps Modernes* 22, no. 253 bis (June 1967): 5–11.
44. Reprinted in Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 502–3.
45. Josie Fanon, "À-propos de Franz Fanon, Sartre, le racisme et les Arabes," *El Moudjahid*, June 10, 1967: 6, cited in Nouredine Lamouchi, *Jean-Paul Sartre et le tiers monde* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), 157–58.
46. Robert Wistrich, "Preface," in Henry Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew in France*, 1967–1982 (Oakville ON: Mosaic Press, 1987), ix.
47. Raymond Aron, *De Gaulle, Israël et les juifs* (Paris: Plon, 1968), 18.
48. Quoted in *Le Monde*, November 29, 1967, and cited in Weinberg, *The Myth of the Jew*, 36. For the widespread reactions in the French and Israeli press and amongst intellectuals see Weinberg's full discussion, "The General and the Domineering People."
49. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Un juif d'Israël a le droit de rester dans sa patrie. En vertu du même principe, un Palestinien a le droit d'y rentrer," *Le Fait Public*, no. 3 (February 1969): 12–17, reprinted as "Interview," in *Situations VIII*, 335–46, 336, 337.
50. Sartre, "Interview," 343.
51. Here I have summarized the argument of François Furet, "Entre Israël et la gauche française: Trente ans de malentendus," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 705 (May 1978): 88–89.
52. Winock, *Nationalism, Antisemitism and Fascism in France*, 150–51. The citations from the extreme Left newspapers are also from Winock. Winock is careful to point out that "one should not confuse the anti-Zionism of the members of the Diaspora who refuse to recognize Israel as the center of the Jewish world, the religious anti-Zionism

of ultraorthodox Jews, the anti-Zionism of Communists, which does not officially call into question Israel's right to exist, and the anti-Zionism of the PLO, which fixes as its objective the disappearance of the Jewish state, etc." (334 n. 27). See also Jacques Givet, *La gauche contre Israël* (Paris: Pauvert, 1968), and Léon Poliakov, *De l'antisémitisme à l'antisionisme* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1969).

53. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Israël, la gauche et les Arabes," in *Situations VIII*, 347–70. All references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically hereafter.

54. All citations are from "Une conférence a réuni les 'Comités Israël-Palestine' de dix pays Européens," *Le Monde*, March 25, 1970, 4.

55. *Le Monde*, April 15, 1970.

56. Jean-Paul Sartre, "À-propos de Munich," *La Cause du Peuple*—*J'Accuse*, October 15, 1972, reprinted in Yaïr Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche en Mai 68: Une génération révolutionnaire marquée par la Shoah*, trans. Katherine Werchowski (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), 236–38.

57. The declaration of the NRP is also reprinted in Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 228–32; my quotations are from 230. For Auron's complete analysis of the reaction by the extreme Left to the Munich massacre see 227–44; for Lévy's response see 240. See also Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération volume 2: Les années de poudre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988), 458–59, 665–66. Finally, see the excellent article by David Drake, "Sartre, le gauchisme et le conflit israélo-arabe" in Galster, *Sartre et les juifs*, 225–33.

58. Published in *Al-Hamishmar* on October 26, 1973, it was reprinted in Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 309–12, 309.

59. On these points see Brinker, "Sartre et Israël," 87.

60. *Le Monde*, November 17–18, 1974.

61. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 17–22, 1975.

62. Jean-Paul Sartre, "À mes amis israéliens," *Le Monde*, November 19, 1977.

63. Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 214.

64. "Entretiens Jean-Paul Sartre—Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre—Benny Lévy (Pierre Victor): Texte refusé par *Le Nouvel Observateur*, mars 1978," in Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 315–21, 315.

65. Jean-Paul Sartre and Benny Lévy, "Déclaration commune Jean-Paul Sartre—Benny Lévy refusée par *Le Nouvel Observateur* mars 1978," in Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 322–27. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

66. See "Peace Today," *Les Temps Modernes* (October 1979).

67. Said cited in Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 513. See also Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, 224. For an interesting retrospective account of the colloquium but one that clearly misunderstands Sartre on a number of points see Edward Said, "My Encounter with Sartre," *London Review of Books*, June 1, 2000.

7. Sartre's Final Reflections

1. The nine volumes of *Situations* are the written record of Sartre's critical interventions into literature, philosophy, art, and politics over the course of his life. Philippe

Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974). This was a series of interviews that parsed Sartre's oeuvre and his current political thought in order to raise money for the New Left newspaper they wanted to start; it became *Libération*.

2. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 427–30.

3. This theme is developed by LaCapra in *A Preface to Sartre*, 184–94. The critical literature on *Words* is fairly extensive. For an overview not only of the work but of its critical reception see Genevieve Idt, *Les mots: Une autocritique en bel écrit* (Paris: Belin, 2001). See also Michel Contat, *Pourquoi et comment Sartre a écrit "Les mots": Genèse d'une autobiographie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), and Jeffrey Mehlman, *A Structural Study of Autobiography: Proust, Leiris, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).

4. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Words*, trans. Irene Clephane (London: Penguin Books, 1964), 38. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

5. Says Sartre, "I was unquestionably dedicated: not to their always rather shocking martyrdoms but to some priesthood. I would be a guardian of culture, like Charles Schweitzer" (*Words*, 44).

6. Jean-Paul Sartre, "A Plea for Intellectuals," in Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*. All references are to this edition and cited parenthetically hereafter.

7. See the interview with Sartre, "L'ami du peuple," in *L'Idiot International* (October 1970), reprinted in *Situations VIII* and translated as "A Friend of the People," in Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, 286–98. Sartre here summarizes the transitions in his conception of the role of the intellectual from the role of the "classical intellectual" as a spokesperson for the universal to the "militant intellectual" who enables his knowledge "to be used for the benefit of everyone" (288).

8. For a different take on this see Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (London: Blackwell, 1993).

9. Paul Nizan, *The Watchdogs: Philosophers of the Established Order*, trans. Paul Fittingoff (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

10. See Aronson, Jean-Paul Sartre, 311.

11. On the demographics of the Jewish community see Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, 194.

12. Patrick Girard, *Les juifs de France* (Paris: Éditions Bruno Huisman, 1983); Michel Abitbol, "The Integration of North African Jews in France," in Astro, *Discourses of Jewish Identity*, 248–61.

13. Dominique Schnapper, "Israélites and Juifs: New Jewish Identities in France," trans. Penelope Johnstone, *European Judaism* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 40–45.

14. Simone de Beauvoir, *All Said and Done*, trans. Patrick O'Brian (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 425.

15. For its effects on the Gauche prolétarienne see David Drake, "Sartre, le gauchisme et le conflit israélo-arabe," in Galster, *Sartre et les juifs*, 225–33.

16. To point out the widespread level of Jewish activism does not contradict what Kristin Ross argues about May '68, which was that it was about subverting the notion that students should study, workers work, and teachers teach, and therefore also that Jews should be Jewish and France should be French. See *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 57, 60, and *passim*. Her point about the links between politicization and disidentification are based on the work of Jacques Rancière, "La cause de l'autre," in *Aux bords du politique*, 148–64, trans. David Macey as "The Cause of the Other," *Parallax* 7 (April–June 1998): 25–34.

17. Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 23.

18. Auron offers five reasons for the overrepresentation of Jews in the revolutionary movements: (1) the messianic impulse for justice and equality; (2) a confluence of Jewish and French humanism; (3) Jews were a marginalized minority and thus identified with workers, oppressed ethnic groups, and other minorities; (4) the red diaper thesis, or a revolt against the traditional Left or mainstream ideas held by their parents; (5) the desire to embrace universals that would permit them to escape their minority status.

19. The epigraph to Raymond Aron's *La révolution introuvable* (*The Elusive Revolution*), which summarizes his view of the events, is a quote from Proudhon that acutely highlights the importance of memories in May '68: "All that is sham; a revolution made up of memories. The French Nation is a nation of actors." See *The Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*, trans. Gordon Clough (New York: Praeger, 1969).

20. Rouso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 99.

21. Patrick Seale and Maureen McConcille, *Red Flag! Black Flag: French Revolution 1968* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 29.

22. For a description of these events see Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman, *When Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 11–13.

23. Keith A. Reader, *The May 1968 Events in France: Reproductions and Interpretations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

24. See Auron's analysis of the slogan "CRS-SS" in *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 252.

25. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 525.

26. Sartre, "A Friend of the People," 289.

27. Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal Naquet, "Document 93: Student Struggles and Workers' Struggles," in *The French Student Uprising, November 1967–June 1968: An Analytical Record*, ed. Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal Naquet, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 244.

28. Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal Naquet, "Document 98: How Was the Young Communist Union (Marxist-Leninist) Started?" in Schnapp and Naquet, *The French Student Uprising*, 266.

29. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 526.

30. Reader, *The May 1968 Events*, 13.

31. Reader, *The May 1968 Events*, 63, and Denis Hollier, "1968, May: Actions, No! Words, Yes!" in Hollier, *A New History of French Literature*, 1040.

32. Hollier, "1968, May," 1040.
33. Reader, *The May 1968 Events*, 63.
34. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 462.
35. Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 527.
36. On the action committees during May '68 see Poster, *Existential Marxism*, 374–76.
37. Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 138.
38. Birnbaum, *Antisemitism in France*, 103.
39. Reader, *The May 1968 Events*, 17–18.
40. Ross, *May '68*, 59.
41. On the links between intellectuals and the Jewish Question after May '68 see Jonathan Judaken, "Alain Finkielkraut and the Nouveaux Philosophes: French-Jewish Intellectuals, the Afterlives of May '68 and the Re-birth of the National Icon," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 32, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 193–223.
42. Christophe Bourseiller, *Les maoïstes: La folle histoire des gardes rouges français* (Paris: Plon, 1996), 105.
43. "Gauche prolétarienne. M. Marcellin: 'Le mouvement le plus dangereux,'" *Le Figaro*, May 28, 1970, 15.
44. Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman, *Génération volume 1: Les années de rêve* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), 585.
45. Judith Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine: Jewish Intellectuals in France since 1968* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 128.
46. Patrick Kessel, *Le mouvement maoïste en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: 10/18, 1972), 272, cited in Julian Bourg, "The Red Guards of Paris: French Student Maoism in the 1960s," unpublished paper presented at the European History Conference, University of Memphis. Bourg's work shows the importance of the "investigation" (*enquête*) to French Maoist praxis and examines the links between Mao's own ideas and those of the UJC(ML).
47. Mao Tse-tung, "Oppose Book Worship" (May 1930), in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1971), 40–50.
48. Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 129.
49. See Peter Dews, "The Nouvelle Philosophie and Foucault," *Economy and Society* 8, no. 2 (May 1979): 127–70, 131, and Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: A History and Overview* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982), 194.
50. Dews, "The Nouvelle Philosophie," 131.
51. See Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left*, 57–64, 60.
52. The biographical information on Benny Lévy is largely taken from Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*. See also Hamon and Rotman, *Génération volume 1* and *Génération volume 2*, and Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*.
53. Hayman, *Sartre*, 425.
54. The paper was named after the paper that Marat founded during the French Revolution.

55. For the cooperation of prominent intellectuals with the GP see Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left*, 198–207, 211–21.

56. Hayman, *Sartre*, 439.

57. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Sartre parle des maos,” *Actuel*, no. 28 (February 1973): 74, cited in Drake, “Sartre, le gauchisme,” 225.

58. See the manifesto of *Libération*, written by Philippe Gavi and Benny Lévy, revised by Sartre with input from Michel Foucault and reprinted in François-Marie Samuelson, *Il était une fois libération: Reportage historique* (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 1979), cited in Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left*, 72; see also Yves-Alain Bois, “1973: The Daily *Libération* Gives the 1968 Generation a Voice in the Press,” in Hollier, *A New History of French Literature*, 1043.

59. *Vive la Révolution!* emerged in 1969 out of the Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France (PCMLF) to form a nonhierarchical and countercultural Maoist-inspired groupuscule.

60. Dews, “The Nouvelle Philosophie,” 132.

61. On the breakup of the GP see Hamon and Rotman, *Génération* volume 2, 428–39.

62. Beauvoir, *Adieux*, 110.

63. The list of these themes is taken from Ronald Santoni’s excellent article “In Defense of Lévy and Hope Now: A Minority View,” *Sartre Studies International* 4, no. 2 (1998): 61–68, 62–64.

64. Beauvoir, *Adieux*, 119. The phrase is a twist on the notion of the “détournement de mineur” (corruption of a minor).

65. See the interview with Sartre by Michel Sicard in the special issue *Obliques*, nos. 18–19 (1978): 9–29.

66. Beauvoir, *Adieux*, 118–19.

67. On the relation between mesmerism and the threat of “the Jew” see Daniel Pick, “Powers of Suggestion: Svengali and the Fin-de-Siècle,” in *Modernity, Culture and “the Jew,”* ed. Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (Cambridge MA: Polity Press, 1998), 105–25.

68. Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, 498–99, my translation, and John Gerassi, *Protestant or Protester?* vol. 1 of *Jean-Paul Sartre: Hated Conscience of His Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 20, 26–27, 158. Having attended Lévy’s class on Sartre over the course of a year at the Alliance française in Jerusalem and having interviewed him in his home, I found him to be an electric, enigmatic, and intimidating personality, at once rigorous and charming, who could turn on you or embrace you at a whim.

69. Raymond Aron, *Memoirs* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), 452–57; and Liliane Siegel, *In the Shadow of Sartre* (London: Collins, 1990), 107.

70. Beauvoir, *Adieux*, 131.

71. For an extended analysis see Genevieve Idt, “Simone de Beauvoir’s *Adieux*: A Funeral Rite and a Literary Challenge,” in *Sartre Alive*, ed. Ronald Aronson and Adrian van den Hoven (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 363–85.

72. “Polemique: La cérémonie des adieux,” open letter to Simone de Beauvoir from Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, *Liberation*, December 3, 1981.

73. As Santoni puts it, “The developing break poisoned Sartre’s last years, and the break itself has poisoned Sartrean scholarship” (“In Defense of Lévy,” 62). His insightful plea to end the acrimony, however, comes in the form of a defense of Lévy, evident in his title. Or, as Rybalka put it, “this is more than a family quarrel, as it brings into question the validity of Sartre’s intellectual evolution during the last years of his life.” Adrian van den Hoven thus defends Beauvoir’s interpretation, evident in the subtitle of his paper, “The Appropriation of Another Man’s Thoughts.” See the symposium in *Sartre Studies International* 4, no. 2 (1998): 43–68, which also includes the positions of Jean-Pierre Boulé and Ronald Aronson, which I treat separately.

Another example is the powerful article by Vincent de Coorebyter, “L’espérance maintenant, ou le mythe d’une rupture,” *Les Temps Modernes* (April–May–June 2004): 204–27. Coorebyter acknowledges that there are two major interpretations of *Hope Now*: what we might call Beauvoir’s seduction theory and the argument that the Lévy interviews constitute a profound rupture in Sartre’s oeuvre. While he does not reiterate the seduction theory, his argument is a full-scale demolition of the myth of a rupture in Sartre’s thought, which he contends has four elements: (1) the abandonment of politics for ethics, (2) the rupture introduced within ethics itself, (3) the revolution in Sartre’s ontology, and (4) the influence of Judaism on the last thoughts of Sartre. The logic of the argument is akin to the seduction theory, however. What he maintains is that throughout the dialogue what is new comes from Lévy and that Sartre rejects it or resists it, but that most of what the dialogues contain is not new in Sartre’s thought.

All these readings of Sartre share a *hermeneutics of intention* that is focused on pulling Sartre and Lévy apart to define what belongs to whom. It is precisely such an approach that I seek to problematize.

74. Ronald Aronson, “Sartre’s Last Words,” in Sartre and Lévy, *Hope Now*, 16. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

75. As Aronson puts it in his introduction to the *Sartre Studies International* symposium, “I rejected Beauvoir’s interpretation of the dialogues no less than Lévy’s—and Boulé’s—as well as Cohen-Solal’s” (43), ultimately seeking a synthetic account that drew upon the insights of each approach.

76. See Stuart Zane Charmé, *Vulgarity and Authenticity: Dimensions of Otherness in the World of Jean-Paul Sartre* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 233.

77. Stuart Charmé, “From Maoism to the Talmud (with Sartre along the Way): An Interview with Benny Lévy,” *Commentary* 78 (July–December 1984): 51.

78. The original byline in *Le Nouvel Observateur* for the last installment of *L’espérance maintenant* read: “Le dernier en date des textes de l’auteur de *La nausée* pourrait être intitulé: ‘Nouvelle réflexion sur la question juive et la révolution.’”

79. See Jean-Pierre Boulé, *Sartre médiatique: La place de l’interview dans son oeuvre* (Paris: Minard, 1992), 219, where he poses the question, “Did Sartre commit himself to dialogue because he was almost blind or because his commitment was the end result of a continuous reflection on the role of the writer since 1968?” Boulé succinctly restates his

argument (while accommodating aspects of Aronson's critique) in "Revisiting the Sartre/Lévy Relationship," *Sartre Studies International* 4, no. 2 (1998): 54–60. My own position concurs with Boulé's view: "Sartre had intentionally committed himself to what he was to call 'plural thought,' first with one or two interviewers who were specialists in his work, and later and most significantly with Benny Lévy, a positive choice rather than a necessary substitute" (54). For Boulé's most recent take on *Hope Now* see Sartre, *Self-Formation and Masculinities* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 176–201. He focuses on "three interlinked themes [that] come out of this potted history of the last seven years of Sartre's life. Masculinity, dependency and the dichotomy between a compromised sense of self and a more inclusive sense of self" (186).

80. Sartre and Lévy, *Hope Now*, 72–73. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

81. Jean-Paul Sartre, "L'écriture et la publication" (interview with Michel Sicard), *Obliques*, nos. 18–19 (1979): 9–29, 14, 15.

82. For an analysis of *Hope Now* and the development of Sartre's final ethics see Herbert Spiegelberg, "Sartre's Last Word on Ethics in Phenomenological Perspective," in *Sartre: An Investigation of Some Major Themes*, ed. Simon Glynn (London: Atheneum Press, 1987); see also Thomas Anderson, *Sartre's Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 169–72.

83. Spiegelberg, "Sartre's Last Words," 44.

84. I fully concur here with the point made by Coorebyter in the first part of his article where he shows that *Hope Now* does not replace politics with ethics. Rather, Sartre always thought politics, and indeed revolutionary politics, from the perspective of ethics, not economics. See Coorebyter, "L'espoir maintenant," 213.

85. See Boulé, *Sartre médiatique*, 219.

86. William McBride, "Community: The Dialectic of Abandonment and Hope in Light of Sartre's Last Words," in *Sartre's Life, Times, and "Vision du Monde"*, ed. William L. McBride (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 320–33, 331. See also William L. McBride, *Sartre's Political Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 206–8.

87. Steven S. Schwartzschild, "J.-P. Sartre as Jew," in McBride, *Sartre's Life, Times*, 335–69, 336.

88. Coorebyter, "L'espoir maintenant."

89. François Noudelmann, "Sartre underground," *La Règle du Jeu*, no. 27 (January 2005): 136–47, 137; LaCapra, *A Preface to Sartre*, 119. See also Dominick LaCapra, "Sartre and the Question of Biography," *French Review* 55, no. 7, special issue (Summer 1982), reprinted in McBride, *Sartre's Life, Times*, 170–204.

90. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism," in *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (New York: Wisdom Library, 1957), 16, emphasis added.

91. Sartre, *Antisemitism and Jew*, 153.

92. It goes without saying that Sartre was not consigning Marxism to the dustbin of history. Rather, he seems to suggest a post-Marxist perspective that entailed drawing from multiple critical theoretical orientations. Marxism was, therefore, no longer

the horizon of all thinking that subsumed other approaches but was one approach that needed to be supplemented by others.

8. The Eternal Return of Sartre

1. Jean Daniel, “Le retour de Sartre,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 13–19, 2000, 4–6.

2. Daniel, “Le retour de Sartre,” 6.

3. The term *lieu de mémoire* refers to people, places, and events that have been incorporated into collective memory. See Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–92).

4. This chapter focuses squarely on the French reception of Sartre’s *Réflexions*. For the American response see Susan Suleiman, “Réflexions sur la question américaine,” in Galster, *Sartre et les juifs*, 101–10. See also Richard King’s interesting discussion in *Race, Culture, and the Intellectuals, 1940–1970* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 63–69.

5. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Une lettre de Jean-Paul Sartre,” *Hillel* (organ of the World Union of Jewish Students) 3 (December 1946–January 1947): 29.

6. The only trace of the lecture is the review by Françoise Derins originally published in *La Nef* and translated by Denis Hollier and Rosalind Krauss, “A Lecture by Jean-Paul Sartre,” *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 24–26.

7. Cited in André Chouraqui, *Cent ans d’histoire: L’Alliance israélite universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine (1860–1960)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 38–39. On the Alliance israélite universelle, in addition to Chouraqui, see Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Michael Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); Michael Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862–1962* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983); and Paula Hyman, “French Jews and World Jewry,” in *The Jews of Modern France*.

8. Jean-Paul Sartre, “Reflections on the Jewish Question, a Lecture” *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 33–46, 34.

9. François Mauriac, “Sartre et la question juive,” *Le Figaro*, March 17, 1953, reprinted in Mauriac, *Mémoires politiques* (Paris: Grasset, 1967), 303–6. The compromising context to which Mauriac alludes is made clear in Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Le siècle de Sartre* (Paris: Grasset, 2000), 427. The Slánsky trial was the first of a series of antisemitic show trials in Czechoslovakia in the early 1950s. The chief defendant was Rudolf Slánsky, secretary-general of the Czechoslovak Communist Party after World War II. Out of the fourteen leading party members prosecuted for conspiracy against the state, eleven were Jews; eight were found guilty and executed, and the remaining three were sentenced to life in prison. The purported focus of the trial was Slánsky’s “bourgeois nationalism” and support of the Titoist heresy, but an important slant of the trial was anti-Zionist, anti-

Israel, and antisemitic. The trial was thus linked to the alleged “doctors plot” in the Soviet Union and the wave of antisemitism in the Eastern Bloc in the last years of Stalin’s life, set off by the accusation that a number of prominent Moscow doctors, mostly Jews, conspired to kill Soviet leaders.

10. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’Observateur*, March 19, 1953. See Contat and Rybalka, *A Biographical Life*, 283.

11. Sartre, “Jean-Paul Sartre et les problèmes,” 4–9, 7.

12. Ben-Gal, *Mardi chez Sartre*, includes an annex with a number of unpublished texts dealing with Sartre’s interventions on the Jewish Question and includes the conversations with Arlette and Ben-Gal. Citations are to this text and parenthetical hereafter.

13. Apropos of this point, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik argued in the 1950s that Jews are bound by two covenants, the “covenant of fate,” which includes shared historical events, shared suffering, shared responsibility for others, and shared actions, and a “covenant of destiny” from the revelation at Mount Sinai, which demands that all Jews actualize Jewish values, goals, and dreams in history. On this distinction see Elliot Dorff, *To Do the Right and the Good: A Jewish Approach to Modern Social Ethics* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 48.

14. For an argument that disputes this position see David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

15. Beauvoir, *Force of Circumstance*, 52.

16. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 128. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

17. This postulate is what differentiates Beauvoir’s feminism from that of the liberal tradition of feminists from Olympe de Gouges and Mary Wollstonecraft to John Stuart Mill and Emmeline Pankhurst. Despite their differences, liberals were united in demanding equal opportunities for women by granting them access to education and jobs and ending their legal discrimination, including the denial of their political rights. Beauvoir, however, argues that while equality is the sine qua non of parity, patriarchy is more subtle than mere inequality, since it is a form of oppression without a concrete cause (*The Second Sex*, 725). It works through the codification and predetermination of women’s social roles, which are defined in relation to the dominant masculine order. In short, women’s subordination works by fixing women’s nature, limiting her role (economically, legally, politically) and colonizing her unconscious so that she takes on the part of the second-class citizen, becoming the personification of what Beauvoir calls “the eternal feminine.”

18. It should be noted that this prayer, within a traditional Jewish self-understanding, is not merely an expression of chauvinism. Its intention, along with the two other morning blessings (thanking God for not making one a slave or a non-Jew), is for the free Jewish man to thank God that he is responsible for fulfilling all of the commandments rather than only some of them, as is the case with the other two categories of people.

19. Francis Jeanson's *Sartre dans sa vie*, the biography by Sartre's close collaborator at *Les Temps Modernes* whose stinging critique of Camus's *L'homme révolté* (*The Rebel*) precipitated the break between Camus and Sartre in 1952, whose *Jeune résistance* (Young Resistance), an illegal support network for the FLN was defended by Sartre, and whose *Le problème moral et la pensée de Sartre* (1966) elaborated Sartre's early ethics, never included any discussion of the *Réflexions* in his account of Sartre's life. See Francis Jeanson, *Sartre dans sa vie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974); see also his *Sartre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1955) and his *Le problème moral et la pensée de Sartre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965).

Volume I, *Protestant or Protester?* of John Gerassi's aptly subtitled official biography of Sartre, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Hated Conscience of His Century*, covers Sartre's life until 1945 and lashes him throughout for his *mauvaise foi* and failure to act politically in accord with Sartre's own later Marxist view of himself. Gerassi does not mention the *Réflexions* or delve much into Sartre's views on antisemitism. For an excellent evaluation of both Gerassi's and Cohen-Solal's biographies see Patrick Henry, "Critical Discussions," *Philosophy and Literature* (April 1990): 117–41.

Unlike these earlier biographical works, Cohen-Solal's *Sartre*, magisterial effort to cover Sartre's life in totality, does accord some importance to his *Réflexions*. Her biography is written in a staccato style that invariably cites the most apt Sartrean phrases, thereby using Sartre to summarize himself. She situates the *Réflexions* in the circumstances of its publication in a France "still numbed by the weight of Nazi persecutions, of denunciations, compromises . . . when people still couldn't or wouldn't speak of the Jewish martyrdom." In this context "Sartre took the initiative" (286–87). She understands the *Réflexions* as a development of Sartre's sketch of the antisemite in "The Childhood of a Leader" and as foreshadowing the fuller development of his ethical and political ideas that evolved after the war in his *Cahiers pour une morale*. She also insinuates that the *Réflexions* served as a model for his commitment on behalf of the wretched of the earth without developing this position (287, 364, 410–11, 432).

The assessment in Hayman's *Sartre* is more critical. While "well intentioned," Hayman draws attention to the fact that "his premises are more antisemitic than he realizes" (221), offering as evidence Sartre's failure to dissociate himself "from the racialism implicit in this Nazi word [Aryan]" (221), which he uses seventeen times and only five in quotation marks. Hayman bases his comments on Werner Cohn, "The 'Aryans' of Jean-Paul Sartre," *Encounter* (December 1981).

Jeannette Colombel in *Jean-Paul Sartre: Un homme en situations* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française/Livre de Poche, 1985), 192–96, offers a far more generous reading. Her book is not a biographical account of Sartre's life but rather an effort to put the man back into the "situations" that defined his existence by locating his texts within the debates they have engendered. She sides with Claude Lanzmann's strong praise of the book.

Certainly the most expansive memoir that interprets Sartre's reflections on Jews and Judaism is Ely Ben-Gal's memoir, *Mardi chez Sartre*, which chronicles his relationship with Sartre from his role as Israeli guide on Sartre's trip in 1967 to his intimate associ-

ation with Arlette and Sartre that resulted in his long lunches with them on Tuesdays, which give the book its title. Both in his book and in a short article that appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* Ben-Gal argues that Sartre's understanding of the Jewish Question should be broken down into three chronological phases that each correspond to individual Jews who were close to him: Sartre and the Jews (Aron), Sartre and Israel (Ben-Gal), and Sartre and Judaism (Benny Lévy), with Claude Lanzmann serving as a transitional figure between these phases. In addition to *Mardi chez Sartre* see Ely Ben-Gal, "Les juifs de Sartre," *Les Temps Modernes*, nos. 531–33 (October–December 1990): 1282–90.

20. For his fictional account of this period see Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *D'un château l'autre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957). On the biographical details of Céline see Patrick McCarthy, *Céline* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 170–217, and Nicholas Hewitt, *Céline: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1999). For compelling discussions of Céline's antisemitism see Allen Thiher, *Céline: The Novel as Delirium* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 118–37; George Steiner, "Cry Havoc," in *Critical Essays on Louis-Ferdinand Céline*, ed. William K. Buckley (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1989), 198–204; Alice Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 107–21. Most important, not only because of his discussion of the previous literature on the topic but also because of his own contribution to the debate, see Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 180–95.

21. Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew*, 41.

22. Louis Ferdinand Céline, "À l'agité du bocal," in *À l'agité du bocal suivi d'autres textes* (Paris: L'Herne, 1995). Cited parenthetically hereafter.

23. The image of Sartre as an asshole, as invading Céline's ass, and thus as a potential threat to the virginal purity of Céline's manhood are important elements of Céline's "À l'agité."

24. There are a number of places where Céline explicitly suggests that Sartre is the true assassin (see page 11 in particular). Céline thus reverses precisely Sartre's depiction of the collaborator as effeminate and homosexual in "Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?"

25. On the significance of Judaization in German discourse see Steven Aschheim, "The Jew Within: The Myth of 'Judaization' in Germany," in *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: NYU Press, 1996), 45–68.

26. On the purge of collaborators in France see note 12, chapter 3.

27. On these themes in Céline see Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 180–95.

28. Carroll, *French Literary Fascism*, 193.

29. Sartre, *Antisemite and Jew*, 153.

30. Cited by Sophie Grandjean, "Table Ronde (Éditions de La)," in Julliard and Winock, *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français*, 1089.

31. See Nicholas Hewitt, *Literature and the Right in Post-war France: The Story of the "Hussards"* (Oxford: Berg, 1996).

32. Jean Cocteau, "Maurice Barrès," *La Table Ronde* 11 (November 1948): 1883–84;

Aimé Patri, “Sur la question juive,” *La Table Ronde* 11 (November 1948): 1894–1902. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

33. Jean Marsay, “Une lourde responsabilité de l’antisémite: Il aurait créé le juif selon Jean-Paul Sartre,” *Aspects de la France*, April 30, 1954. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

34. Led by Pierre Poujade, the Poujadist movement was a right-wing protest movement reminiscent of the Fascist leagues of the 1930s.

35. Xavier Vallat’s article in the same issue of *Aspects de la France* is subtitled with a quote from Maurras: “Out of all the human liberties, the most precious is the independence of the homeland.”

36. Georges Bataille, review, *Critique* 12 (May 1947): 471–73, 471. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

37. For important critical work on Bataille see Carolyn Gill, ed., *Georges Bataille: Writing and the Sacred* (London: Routledge, 1994); Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1989); Nick Land, *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism: An Essay in Atheistic Religion* (London: Routledge, 1982); Julian Pefanis, *Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991); Michèle Richman, *Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); and Jacques Derrida, “From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

38. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 1:55. In the section on “Sacrifice or Consumption,” part of Bataille’s account of the “sacrifices and wars of the Aztecs,” he continues by explaining, “Servile use has made a thing (an object) of that which, in a deep sense, is of the same nature as the subject.” He continues on the following page to explain that “destruction is the best means of negating a utilitarian relationship between man and the animal or plant. But it rarely goes to the point of holocaust. It is enough that the consumption of the offerings, or the communion, has a meaning that is not reducible to the shared ingestion of food. . . . What the ritual has the virtue of rediscovering is the intimate participation of the sacrificer and the victim, to which a servile use had put an end” (1:56). He continues in the section “The Victim, Sacred and Cursed” to explain, “The victim is surplus taken from the mass of useful wealth. . . . Once chosen, he is the *accursed share*, destined for violent consumption. But the curse tears him away from the *order of things*; it gives him a recognizable figure, which radiates intimacy, anguish, the profundity of living beings” (1:59). He concludes this section of his discussion of human sacrifice by explaining “the meaning of the ritual. The only valid excess was one that went beyond the bounds, and one whose consumption appeared worthy of the gods. This was the price men paid to escape their downfall and remove the weight introduced in them by the avarice and cold calculation of the real order” (1:61).

39. Georges Bataille, “The Sacred,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 242. On the image of the smart Jew see Gilman, *Smart Jews*.

40. Roger Payet-Burin, “La question juive vue par J.-P. Sartre,” *La Revue Internationale* 3, no. 16 (June 1947): 452–58, 458.

41. Payet-Burin, “La question juive,” 456.

42. *L'Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne* 1, no. 1 (September 1948): 1, 3. The citation is from an article by R. P. Demann, “Antisémitisme et conscience chrétienne,” which followed an article entitled “Réflexions sur la condition juive.” The journal was primarily taken up with the widely discussed debates about the recently published work of Jules Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*, that examined the Christian origins of antisemitism. By the second number Isaac was the vice president of the organization.

43. Yefime, review, *Esprit*, no. 135 (July 1947): 168–70. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

44. Charles Westphal, “Père, pardonne-nous,” *Foi et Vie* 45, no. 3 (April 1947): 211.

45. André Dumas, “Marx et Sartre devant les juifs,” *Foi et Vie* 45, no. 3 (April 1947): 243–57. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

46. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 122. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

47. *Présence Africaine* first appeared at the end of 1947, founded by Alioune Diop in the spirit of the negritude movement, with Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire as associates in the enterprise of promoting the originality of African culture. Sartre, along with Richard Wright, Camus, Gide, Mounier, and others, comprised the diverse editorial board of a journal that relentlessly explored the cultural underpinnings of colonization and in rejecting them promoted an authentic African cultural aesthetic and sought to rehabilitate the precolonial African past. See V. Y. Mudimbe, ed., *The Surreptitious Speech: “Présence africaine” and the Politics of Otherness (1947–1987)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

48. Maurice Watteau, “Situations raciales et condition de l’homme dans l’oeuvre de J.-P. Sartre,” *Présence Africaine* 2, nos. 2 and 3 (1948): 209–29, 405–17. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

49. The problems with this position are explored in chapter 5.

50. *Le Monde Juif* is the organ of the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine, which began collecting evidence during the war on the history of antisemitism, the Resistance, and collaboration and afterward became the first research institute and periodical to document the Shoah in the world. Jean-Albert Hess, review, *Le Monde Juif* (May–June 1947): 33.

51. Émile Biollay, “Jean-Paul Sartre, escamoteur d’Israël?” *La Revue Juive de Genève* 10, nos. 6–7 (June–July 1947): 213–17. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

52. Levinas’s response was recently translated by Denis Hollier and Rosalind Krauss as “Existentialism and Antisemitism” in *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 27–31. It was also collected in Emmanuel Levinas, *Les imprévus de l’histoire* (Paris: Fata Morgana, 1994), 103–6. Citations are to the English translation and parenthetical hereafter.

53. See Levinas’s “Ethics as First Philosophy,” in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 76–87. On Levinas’s thought see Richard Cohen, *Ele-*

ventions: *The Height of the Good* in Rosenzweig and Levinas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Catherine Chaliel, *Pour une morale au-delà du savoir: Kant et Levinas* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998); Alain Finkielkraut, *The Wisdom of Love*, trans. Kevin O'Neill and David Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, eds., *Re-Reading Levinas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992); and Jacques Derrida's commentaries on Levinas, especially "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference* and *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1997).

54. Emmanuel Levinas, "Être juif," *Confluences* 7, nos. 15–17 (1947): 253–64. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

55. For an appreciation of "Être juif" as the culmination of Levinas's crisis concerning the Heideggerian axioms of his thought see Samuel Moyn, "Judaism against Paganism: Emmanuel Levinas's Response to Heidegger and Nazism in the 1930s," *History and Memory* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 25–58.

56. Emmanuel Levinas, "Un langage pour nous familier," *Le Matin* (1980), special number on Sartre, reprinted in Levinas, *Les imprévus*, 128–33, 130, 128.

57. Emmanuel Levinas, "Quand Sartre découvre l'histoire sainte," *Journal des Communautés*, no. 620 (May 1980): 16–17, reprinted in Levinas, *Les imprévus*, 134–37, 136. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

58. It is interesting to compare my mapping of Jewish thinkers in postwar France with that of Rabi, which I discovered retrospectively. See his "La pensée juive en France," in *Les juifs et la communauté française: Premier cahier du Cercle juif de langue française*, ed. Naïm Kattan (Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1965). Born in Smorgod, a small shtetl near Vilna, Rabi's parents immigrated in 1910 to Paris, where his father worked as a furrier in a sweatshop, later opening a restaurant in their home that was a milieu of leftist activism. Like Sartre, Rabi attended Lycée Henri IV and afterward completed his law degree in 1930. He married his non-Jewish wife, Germaine, in 1939 and survived the war with the help of false papers and friendly neighbors in the south. His often-heretical positions led to his marginalization in the Jewish community by the time of his death. The biographical information on Rabi as well as the larger themes in his work are discussed in Izio Rosenman, "Rabi: De l'interrogation à la dissidence ou l'éthique aux prises avec le politique," *Pardès: Revue Européenne d'Études et de Culture Juives*, no. 23 (1997): 281–90. See also Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 56–58.

59. The best work to gauge Rabi's perspective is *Anatomie du judaïsme français* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1962). He was the author of numerous plays, two of which dealt with the destruction of the ghettos during World War II: *Varsovie* (1955) and *L'affaire Wittenberg* (1957). His interventions in the Finaly and Pierre Goldman affairs were important accounts: *L'affaire Finaly, des faits, des textes, des dates* (1953) and *L'homme qui est entré dans la loi* (1976). Rabi is also author of *Histoire des juifs de France* (1972) and *Un peuple de trop sur la terre?* (1979).

60. Rosenman, “Rabi,” 282.

61. Rabi, “Sartre, portrait d’un philosémite,” *Esprit* (October 1947): 532–46. Cited parenthetically hereafter. Rabi quoted Sartre’s *Réflexions* positively on at least two other occasions: in “Le dialogue ininterrompu,” in *Aspects du génie d’Israël* (Paris: Cahiers du Sud, 1950), where he admired Sartre’s description of inauthentic Jews, and in *Anatomie du judaïsme français*, where he appreciated Sartre’s depiction of antisemitism not only as a demonization of Jews but as a total choice of the human condition (206).

62. Rosenman, “Rabi,” 287.

63. Lanzmann was born into an acculturated Jewish family in Paris. During World War II he organized a resistance group among his fellow high school students. After the war he became an investigative reporter who sent back some of the first reports from East Germany to France. By 1972 he was a contributor to *Les Temps Modernes*. He became famous as a documentary filmmaker, first for his *Pourquoi Israël?* (Why Israel? 1973) and then most significantly for his nine-hour classic film, *Shoah* (1985). Lanzmann has also made the films *Tsahal* about the Israeli army and *Un vivant qui passe*. Today he continues the *Les Temps Modernes* legacy as its director (since the death of Simone de Beauvoir in 1986) and as a director of films. This biographical information is taken in part from Shoshana Felman’s introduction to Claude Lanzmann, “The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann,” *American Imago*, special issue, “Psychoanalysis, Culture and Trauma: 11,” 48, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 473–95, 474.

64. Mitterrand visited Israel March 3–5 and in his speech to the Knesset declared that he favored the creation of a Palestinian state, which is ironic, given Lanzmann’s emphasis on the significance of the visit. Claude Lanzmann, “La reconnaissance,” *Les Temps Modernes* 38, no. 429 (April 1982): 1709–15, 1709. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

65. The point is ironic because of the sensational revelations in Pierre Péan’s 1994 biography of Mitterrand, which revealed information about the socialist’s flirtation with an extreme Right league while he was a law student in the 1930s, his decoration by Vichy authorities in 1943, and his postwar friendship with René Bousquet, who infamously served as head of the police under the Vichy regime. See Pierre Péan, *Une jeunesse française: François Mitterrand, 1934–1947* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

66. Claude Lanzmann, “Je demande à réfléchir,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, December 7–13, 2000, 12.

67. Claude Lanzmann, “Holocaust, la représentation impossible,” *Le Monde*, April 3, 1994. For criticisms see Gillian Rose’s chastisement of what she calls “Holocaust piety” in “Beginnings of the Day: Fascism and Representation,” in Cheyette and Marcus, *Modernity*, 242–56, and Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer’s reading of Lanzmann’s effacing of gender difference in *Shoah* in “Gendered Translations: Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*,” in *Gendering War Talk*, ed. Miriam Cook and Angela Woollacott (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3–19.

68. Claude Lanzmann, “L’héritage des ‘Temps modernes’: Éloge de l’engagement,” *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 13–19, 2000, 14.

69. The phrase “a torn fabric” is Vidal-Naquet’s, used to describe his three volumes of work on Jewish subjects, *Les juifs, la mémoire et le présent* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1981, 1991, 1995), which are torn between past and present, between memory and history. Many of the essays were translated in *The Jews: History, Memory and the Present*, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis, with a foreword by Paul Berman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “Remembrances of a 1946 Reader,” October 87 (Winter 1999): 7–23. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

70. See Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “Relecture d’un numéro spécial: ‘Le conflit israélo-arabe,’” *Les Temps Modernes* 51, no. 587 (March–April–May 1996): 175–94, 175.

71. According to Vidal-Naquet, “Remembrances,” he was born in 1930 into “a family that was completely French and that identified itself totally with France” (8). He is a “Republican, democrat, socialist from the left[,] . . . Dreyfusard by family tradition” (12). He attended synagogue only once, in July 1940, for the memorial of the war dead (16). His father refused the exemption from the military open to him with four children and was therefore “stung by the defeat and the Vichy laws concerning the status of Jews” (17), but he refused to leave France throughout the German occupation, instead joining the Resistance, like Marc Bloch. At his lycée in Marseilles after the exodus Vidal-Naquet would be sheltered by some of his classmates and by his discovery of French and classical literature. He would also experience violent antisemitism. On May 15, 1944, his parents were arrested by the Gestapo and deported, first to Drancy and then to Auschwitz (8). In 1957 he became engaged in the Franco-Algerian War, forming the Comité Audin with mathematician Laurent Schwartz and other university professors to combat the use of torture by the French army, gaining notoriety for publishing *L’Affaire Audin*, which exposed the disappearance of a young mathematician taken by the French parachutists and drew attention to other atrocities in the war. After Algerian independence he returned to his “scientific” work on Hellenic civilization. With Sartre, Schwartz, and several Trotskyists he helped form the Comité Viêt-nam national, which participated in the intellectual mobilization against the American war in former Indochina. He reviewed the special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* on the Arab-Israeli conflict for *Le Monde*, saying almost thirty years later that no journal or publishing house had produced such a remarkable document before or since: almost a thousand pages that in Sartre’s words take the reader “‘directly into the rigorous and passionate violence of the people who created this conflict and were created by it’” (183). Along with Sartre, Robert Misrahi, Picasso, and Marguerite Duras, among others, Vidal-Naquet signed a petition expressing his sympathy for Israel at the time of the Six-Day War, although he had never been there (until 1970) and “was remote from Zionism” (12), and then helped organize and speak at a public gathering along with Misrahi, Lanzmann, and Olivier Revault d’Allonnes. Vidal-Naquet experienced the Israeli victory not in enthusiasm, however, but in anxiousness for what would follow and formed the Comité des intellectuels pour une solution négociée du conflit israélo-arab with Lanzmann, Richard

Marienstrass, and Revault d'Allonnes. It called for the creation of an independent Palestinian state or a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. From May to June 1967 he remained engaged in this “tragic debate,” hoping like Sartre for the day “when mutual recognition would take place between two nationalist movements” but recognizing like him the differends between the two sides and that they “could not have avoided a mutual confrontation” (Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews*, xxi). He came to Jewish history only in 1976 by writing a long introduction to the French translation of Flavius Josephus's *The Jewish War*. His writing on Jewish matters stretches from the ancient period to the present, most famously in his scathing analysis of the Holocaust deniers and Robert Faurisson, whom he termed a “paper Eichmann.” See *Les assassins de la mémoire* (Paris: La Découverte, 1987), trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, *The Assassins of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). Most of his writings on Jewish subjects are collected in Vidal-Naquet, *Les juifs, la mémoire et le présent*.

72. Paul Berman, “Foreword,” in Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews*, xvii–xviii.

73. On the French deniers, in addition to Vidal-Naquet, see Alain Finkielkraut, *The Future of a Negation: Reflections on the Question of Genocide*, trans. Mary Byrd Kelly (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

74. French historians of antisemitism (i.e., those whose histories are written in French) have generally been quite hostile to Sartre's text. For example, Josué Jéhouda's *L'antisémitisme: Miroir du monde* (Geneva: Éditions Synthesis, 1958) argues that Sartre is an example of the many authors who, Jéhouda contends, publish books on antisemitism “without having the slightest notion of the facts about Jews” (261).

Like Jéhouda, Christian Delacampagne in his *L'invention du racisme: Antiquité et Moyen-Âge* (Paris: Fayard, 1983) critiques Sartre's *Réflexions* as an example of the depth of race thinking within the Western philosophical tradition, showing that even those like Sartre who “never missed an occasion to defend the Jews and to stigmatize antisemitism” repeat the reduction of the cultural to the biological, which Delacampagne identifies as the basis of racism (24). According to Pierre Birnbaum, the traces of antisemitism run rife through the *Réflexions*. He rails viciously against the text as he ferrets out every antisemitic echo that Sartre fails to critique or that he unconsciously reiterates. In contradistinction to many of Sartre's readers in 1946 like Lanzmann and Vidal-Naquet, for Birnbaum “Antisemite and Jew can only wound, despite the praiseworthy intention of liberating Jews from antisemitism.” See “Sorry Afterthoughts on Antisemite and Jew,” *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 89–106, 94. While he is clearly aware of what he calls the “powerfully liberating effect” that Sartre's text had in the context of its publication, he indicates that its analysis is “today considered to be outmoded.” See Birnbaum, “Grégoire, Dreyfus, Drancy, and the Rue Copernic: Jews at the Heart of French History,” in *Conflicts and Divisions*, vol. 1 of *Realms of Memory*, trans. Arthur Goldhamer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 379–423, 419.

Unlike the other scholars of antisemitism and racism who critique Sartre, Léon Poliakov, whose epic four-volume history of antisemitism still constitutes the standard

work in the field, finds fecund insights in Sartre's approach. In volume 3, for example, in arguing that "France is a particularly favorable land for grasping 'homo antisemiticus,'" he maintains that Sartre's portrait of the antisemite describes the antisemitic authoritarian personality "with the force and economy of means only found with a great literary talent." In volume 4, in accounting for the novelty of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" threat around 1920, he quotes Sartre's *Réflexions* in order to argue that the persistent linking of Jews and Judaism throughout the history of the West with whatever is perceived as an impending destructive threat is the result of the perception of "the Jew" as "free to do evil, not good," rendering "the Jew" as "consequently irredeemable." Poliakov, like Delacampagne, does argue that Sartre's *Réflexions*, at points, was influenced by the increasingly widespread mythologization and demonization of "the Jew," who was everywhere and nowhere in the interwar period. But while sensitive to some of the shortcomings of Sartre's *Réflexions*, for Poliakov it was a fruitful site for thinking through some of the underlying causes of antisemitism. See Poliakov, *From Voltaire to Wagner*, 379, and Léon Poliakov, *Suicidal Europe: 1870–1933*, vol. 4 of *The History of Antisemitism*, trans. George Klim (New York: Vanguard Press, 1985), 298.

75. Neher was born in Obernai (Alsace), was a professor of German in a lycée before World War II, and spent the war years totally immersing himself in Jewish studies. He emerged after the war as one of the leading lights of the *Colloques des intellectuels juifs de langue française* (Colloquia of French-speaking Jewish Intellectuals) and became the chair of Jewish studies at the University of Strasbourg. He and his wife, Renée Neher-Bernheim (1922–), a historian, moved to Israel after the Six-Day War, along with a group of other French-Jewish intellectual luminaries. André Neher, *Clefs pour le judaïsme* (Paris: Seghers, 1977), 32.

76. Neher, *They Made Their Souls Anew*.

77. Born in Tunis, Tunisia, in the Jewish ghetto in 1920, Memmi's father was a harness maker, and the family was pious. He grew up with the full life cycle of Jewish Sephardi customs and rituals. He attended yeshiva (talmudic academy) and then the Alliance israélite and became associated with various Jewish youth movements. With his immersion into French culture in his staunchly secular lycée he began to have doubts about Judaism, but he was always strongly associated with Jewry. During World War II he fought with the Free French forces. After the war he completed his studies, returning for a period to Tunis. Then in 1959 he became associated with the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris and later became a teacher at the École pratique des hautes études, where he became a professor in 1966, specializing in the social effects of colonization, with much of his work exploring the parallels between the situation of "the Jew" and that of colonized peoples. Memmi was one of the original participants in the *Colloque des intellectuels juifs de langue française* and a regular contributor on Jewish subjects to *L'Arche*, *Evidences*, and *Commentaire*. Albert Memmi, *Portrait of a Jew*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott (New York: Orion Press, 1962). Cited parenthetically hereafter.

78. The middle section of *La statue de sel* is simply titled "Alexandre Mordekhai Benil-

louche,” and the novel fictionalizes all of the relations that Memmi would later work out in his sociological investigations. See *Pillar of Salt*, trans. Édouard Roditi (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

79. On this point see Brigitte Weltman-Aron, “The Figure of the Jew in French Algeria,” paper presented at “Transnational Cultures: Diasporas and Immigrant Identities in France and the Francophone World,” the Texas Tech University Comparative Literature Symposium, March 2002. She argues that there is a teleological pattern in Memmi’s analyses, which examine “oppression followed by liberation” (3).

80. This point is made by Judith Morganroth Schneider for both Memmi and Finkelkraut. As is evident from my discussion, this argument should be expanded to a vast swath of the discourse on the Jewish Question in the postwar period. See Schneider, “Albert Memmi and Alain Finkelkraut: Two Discourses on French Jewish Identity,” *Romantic Review* 81, no. 1 (January 1990): 130–36, 130.

81. See Schneider, “Albert Memmi and Alain Finkelkraut,” 132, who also makes this point but in somewhat different terms.

82. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991). Cited parenthetically hereafter.

83. Memmi’s title of this part is taken from a quotation by Heinrich Heine.

84. Albert Memmi, “Racisme et hétérophobie,” *Différences* (December 1981), reprinted in Memmi, *Le racisme: Description, définitions, traitement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 229–34.

85. Albert Memmi, “Essai de définition commentée,” *Le nef* 19–20 (Paris, 1964), trans. Eleanor Levieux in *Dominated Man* and reprinted in Memmi, *Racism*, trans. Steve Martinot (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 181.

86. Albert Memmi, *The Liberation of the Jew*, trans. Judy Hyun (New York: Orion Press, 1966), 278.

87. Robert Misrahi, *Philosophie politique et l’état d’Israël* (Paris: Mouton, 1975); Robert Misrahi, *Marx et la question juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972).

88. Robert Misrahi, “Sartre et les juifs: Une histoire très étonnante,” *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* 16, no. 61 (Summer 1980): 2–12. Cited parenthetically hereafter. In the same issue of *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, the journal of the Alliance israélite universelle, Rachel Israël contributed a counterpoint to Misrahi’s interpretation. She balances Misrahi’s critical reading by an homage to Sartre that offers a Levinasian reading of Sartre’s conception of the *pour-soi juif* where Jewishness is not figured as “imago,” “identification,” or essence. Jewishness is “neither an introjection nor fusion” but an alter ego, free and absolutely Other inside the self and thus a reflexive opening to alterity. See Rachel Israël, “Au-delà de ‘Réflexions sur la question juive,’” *Les Nouveaux Cahiers* 16, no. 61 (Summer 1980): 12–14, 14.

The first major scholarly critiques of Sartre’s book in French were by Nicholas Hewitt, “Portrait de l’antisémite’ dans son contexte,” and Henri Meschonnic, “Sartre et la question juive,” both in *Études Sartriennes* 1, published as *Cahiers de Sémiotique Textuelle* 2 (1984): 111–22, 123–54. The latter was reprinted in Meschonnic’s *L’utopie du juif* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001), 355–98, along with a number of his other writings on Jewish topics.

89. These facts come from Misrahi's "Sartre and the Jews: A Felicitous Misunderstanding," *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 63–72, 63. This article largely rehashes Misrahi's earlier "Sartre et les juifs" in somewhat less pointed terms.

90. Misrahi, "Sartre and the Jews," 65.

91. Misrahi, "Sartre and the Jews," 65.

92. Robert Misrahi, *La condition réflexive de l'homme juif* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 251–52.

93. Rabi, "La pensée juive en France," 31.

94. Mandel (1913–87) was a prolific author and journalist born to Polish immigrant parents in Strasbourg. His early radical libertarian political position changed as a result of World War II, during which he rediscovered his Jewish identity. During the war he fled to Switzerland, where he was interned until 1944, returning to France in 1944 to fight in the Maquis.

95. Beauvoir, *Adieux*, 393.

96. "Interview on the Jewish Question," *La Revue Juive de Genève* 19, nos. 6–7 (June–July 1947): 212–13. The journal stopped publishing during the war and was thus only printed after the publication of Sartre's *Réflexions*.

97. The quotation is from Jacques Lazarus's introduction to the collection of some of Arnold Mandel's columns, *Une mélodie sans paroles ni fin: Chroniques juives* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), 13.

98. Arnold Mandel, "Les livres par Arnold Mandel," *L'Arche*, no. 61 (February 1962):

48. See also Arnold Mandel, "Sartre et les juifs," *Information Juive*, no. 303 (June 1980).

99. Arnold Mandel, "Sartre et nous," *L'Arche*, no. 334 (January 1985), reprinted in Mandel, *Une mélodie*, 317–19, 318.

100. Mandel, "Sartre et les juifs."

101. Born June 22, 1944, in Lyon, Goldman's parents were both immigrants from Poland and during World War II were both part of the Jewish Resistance allied with the Communist Party. Goldman was kicked out of one school after another for minor acts of rebellion, joined the Communist Youth, and passed his *baccalauréat* in 1963, studying by himself. He then began his university studies at the Sorbonne, where he was elected to the National Committee of the Union des étudiants communistes. Determined not just to engage in abstract ruminations about revolution, like Régis Débray, Goldman left France to participate in guerrilla activity in Latin America, returning just before the Six-Day War in June 1967 and again before the student revolts in 1968. When he returned to France more permanently in 1969 he was involved in a series of armed robberies and was finally arrested and accused of a double murder that had taken place during an armed robbery. He always maintained his innocence about the murders, but he was condemned to life in prison. His case became a cause célèbre primarily because while in prison he wrote his memoir, entitled *Souvenirs obscurs d'un juif polonais né en France*, which led to a retrial, during which he was found innocent. The case garnered widespread coverage and public attention, and Goldman's trial was compared to K.'s in Kafka's novel and to

the Dreyfus affair. Supporters insisted, “nous sommes tous comme Pierre Goldman” and “nous sommes tous des juifs polonais nés en France,” echoing the cries heard in the protests of May 24, 1968, in support of Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Goldman was eventually released from prison in 1976. He served on the editorial board of *Les Temps Modernes* and wrote articles for *Libération* and other journals, published a novel, and was working on a philosophical manuscript when he was murdered by a neo-Nazi group called Honneur de la police on September 20, 1979. The biographical information on Goldman comes from *Dim Memories of a Polish Jew Born in France*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Viking Press, 1977). See also Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 80–87.

102. Catherine Chaine, “Une interview inédite: Goldman l'étranger,” *Le Monde*, September 30, 1979, cited by Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 36.

103. Cited in Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 37. Alain Krivine, leader of the largest Trotskyite group, Ligue communiste révolutionnaire, said in a later interview, “He symbolized this generation in a particularly moving way; he incarnated our generation.” See Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*, 313.

104. Goldman, *Dim Memories*, 15. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

105. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 799: “A freedom which wills itself freedom is in fact a being-which-is-not-what-it-is and which-is-what-it-is-not, and which chooses as the ideal of being, being-what-it-is-not and not-being-what-it-is.”

106. Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 182.

107. Hélène Cixous, *Un K. incompréhensible Pierre Goldman* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1979).

108. For a discussion of these figures see Auron, *Les juifs d'extrême gauche*.

109. Finkielkraut's father arrived from Warsaw in the thirties but was subsequently deported and spent three years in Auschwitz. His mother left Lwów for Germany in the thirties and then escaped to Belgium, where she survived the war with false papers before moving in 1948 to France, where she married, giving birth to Alain one year later. He grew up with a strong sense of his Jewish identity that nevertheless had little Jewish content. When the May events erupted Finkielkraut was an active albeit unknown foot soldier among the militants. This deferred the completion of his *hypokhâgne* and *khâgne* at Lycée Henri IV; these prepared him to enter the École normale supérieure de Saint Cloud to study French literature.

110. See Judaken, “Alain Finkielkraut and the Nouveaux Philosophes.”

111. Among several others, these include Alain Finkielkraut, *L'avenir d'un négation: Réflexion sur la question du génocide* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982), *La réprobation d'Israël* (Paris: Denoel, 1983), *La sagesse de l'amour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), *La défaite de la pensée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), *L'humanité perdue: Essai sur le XX^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996), *Une voix vient de l'autre rive* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), and, most recently, *Au nom de l'autre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003).

112. On this point see Mitchell Cohen, “Imaginary Jews and Jewish Imagination,” in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry XII: Literary Strategies: Jewish Texts and Contexts*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 251–57, 252.

113. This point about the text’s own self-critical relation to itself is made in the introduction by David Suchoff to Alain Finkelkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, trans. Kevin O’Neill and David Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), xv.

114. Finkelkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, 5.

115. He makes this clear later in the text when he cites Sartre’s study of Genet: “‘Name is destiny.’ Having been called ‘thief’ in his youth, nothing remained for Genet except ‘the task of carrying the adventure signified in his name to its logical end’” (Finkelkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, 27).

116. In both Sartre’s sense articulated in *Réflexions* and in the more conventional sense of an “essential authenticity.” This is a reading of Finkelkraut different from that suggested by Stuart Charmé, who develops the distinction between “existential authenticity” and “essentialistic authenticity” in “Varieties of Authenticity in Contemporary Jewish Identity,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 133–55.

117. Finkelkraut, *Imaginary Jew*, 32: “We are not all Pierre Goldmans. . . . A symbolic death? Assassination of a generation? No, Goldman died for none of us, stood in for none of us (that is, the ‘us’ constituted by former protesters, the marginal, the Jews), but paid for his radical otherness.”

118. Alain Finkelkraut, *The Defeat of the Mind*, trans. Judith Friedlander (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); see Alain Finkelkraut, *La mémoire vaine: Du crime contre l’humanité* (Paris: Gallimard Folio, 1989).

119. See Alain Finkelkraut, *L’humanité perdue* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996).

120. Suchoff, “Introduction,” 20.

121. Benny Lévy, *Le nom de l’homme: Dialogue avec Sartre* (Paris: Verdier, 1984). He followed up his book on Sartre with *Le logos et la lettre: Philon d’Alexandrie en regard des pharisiens* (Paris: Verdier, 1988), which examined the Jewish Hellenist philosopher Philo, whose work sought to reconcile Platonic philosophy with biblical religion. Lévy then turned to focus on the third major influence on his thinking (after Sartre and Plato), examining the notion of “Return” in Levinas’s thought in *Visage continu: La pensée du retour chez Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: Verdier, 1998). With the assistance of Alain Finkelkraut he started the Levinas Institute in Jerusalem. He then published his most ambitious work, bringing full circle his various concerns by marshaling Jewish thought and biblical imagery as a lever of a moral critique of the Western political tradition in *Le meurtre du pasteur: Critique de la vision politique du monde* (Paris: Verdier, 2002). On the eve of his sudden and tragic death from a heart attack he published *Être juif: Étude lévinassienne* (Paris: Verdier, 2003).

122. Benny Lévy, “Sartre et la judéité,” in *Études Sartriennes* 2–3 (1986): 139–49. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

123. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situation V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 172.

124. See Lévy, “Sartre et la judéité,” 146–48.

125. See Alain Garric, “Une génération de Mao à Moïse,” *Libération*, December 22–23, 1984, 29; “From Mao to Moses (Via Lithuania),” in Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 124–61.

126. Born in a small town (Blida) near Algiers, Trigano grew up with little Jewish education because it was too dangerous during the Algerian War. Leaving Algeria in 1962, his family eventually settled in Paris. Feeling “deeply alienated and uprooted” in the mid-1960s, Trigano would describe this as his “Camus period.” Seeking like-minded souls, he began to frequent French-Jewish intellectual circles and intended to move to Israel when he graduated in 1967. However, the intensity of the Six-Day War distracted him from his studies, and he was still in France for the uprisings in May ’68. Unlike the other figures I have discussed, Trigano found the student revolutionaries morally and ethically bankrupt. He rejected “the West’s revolutionary tradition.” In 1969 he went to study at Hebrew University, where he spent four years, returning to France “in order not to grow cynical and lose faith in Zionism.” He became the administrative secretary for the socialist Zionist group *Le cercle Bernard Lazare* in 1974. His first publication, *Le récit de la disparue*, appeared in 1977 and was followed by *La nouvelle question juive*, both manifestos hoping to rethink Jewish identity and transform the Jewish community and French society on the basis of a reexamination of Jewish values. He has continued this project in his ever-growing list of publications. He has also furthered the discussion of these matters as a founding editor of *Traces* in 1980 and, along with his teacher, the historian and sociologist Annie Kriegel, as one of the founders of the ongoing journal *Pardès* and in his many contributions to *L’Arche*. On Trigano’s biography see Friedlander, *Vilna on the Seine*, 139–42.

127. Shmuel Trigano, *La nouvelle question juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 47, emphasis added.

128. Shmuel Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity: The Rebirth of the ‘Jewish Nation’ in France,” in Malino and Wasserstein, *The Jews in Modern France*, 281.

129. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 248.

130. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 272.

131. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 250.

132. Trigano, *La nouvelle question juive*, 80 n. 1.

133. Shmuel Trigano, *La république et les juifs après Copernic* (Paris: Les Presses d’Aujourd’hui, 1982), 196.

134. Trigano, *La nouvelle question juive*, 18.

135. Trigano, *La nouvelle question juive*, 19.

136. See Shmuel Trigano, “Le modèle du judaïsme français,” *L’Arche* (June 1992): 34–35.

137. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 279. See also 254:

Changes in sociocultural categories, particularly after May ’68, have gradually conferred a *de facto* “republican” legitimacy on “groups” (described two centuries ago as “factions”), lobbies, “differences,” sectional claims, and so on. Ecological organizations, women’s groups, socioprofessional categories, regional and minority cultures,

sexual “minorities” (such as homosexuals)—have all become social, political, and cultural actors (at times aggressive ones), so much so that the old, authorized actors—essentially the political parties—have come to be regarded as obsolete in the collective consciousness. The impact of May ’68 has in effect pulverized the dogma of the abstract universality of politics and brought about the triumph of the particular.

138. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 279, and *La république*, “La démocratie: Par delà 1789.”

139. Trigano, “From Individual to Collectivity,” 279.

140. Bernard-Henri Lévy is an Algerian-born Jew who was twenty in May ’68, when he “followed the action not in the streets but in his room, by television and radio, with a map of Paris across his lap.” He is a graduate of the *École normale supérieure*, where he studied with Louis Althusser. There are contrasting stories about whether Lévy was briefly aligned with the Maoists after 1968. He then moved to Bangladesh for a short while as a reporter; there he discovered that “there was no difference between ‘progressive’ and ‘reactionary’ corpses.” He returned to France and by the mid-1970s was orchestrating the phenomenal rise of the *Nouveaux philosophes*, a group of mostly former militants who erupted onto the intellectual stage with a series of antitotalitarian statements that were widely disseminated on radio, in public lectures, in newspaper articles, and on television, which BHL helped to create as the new medium for intellectuals to address the public. Through a slew of books, films, plays, and his constant appearance on television and the culture pages of newspapers, BHL has become familiar enough to French audiences to be known only by his initials. An important editor at the publisher Grasset, the founder of the journal *La Règle du Jeu*, cocreator of *SOS-Racisme*, and perennial activist against exclusionary nationalism and racism in the name of the universal rights of man, BHL is one of the most visible intellectuals in France today. The quotations are from Thomas Sheehan, “Paris: Moses and Polytheism,” *New York Review of Books*, January 24, 1980. I am indebted to Michael Christofferson for the following citations, which deny that Lévy was ever a Maoist: François Dufay and Pierre-Bertrand Dufont, *Les normaliens de Charles Péguy à Bernard-Henri Lévy, un siècle d’histoire* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1993), 307–9; Jean-Louis Ezine, “B.-H. L., archange, comédien et martyr,” *L’Express*, June 29, 1984, 54–55. On the *Nouveaux philosophes* see Michael Christofferson, “Antitotalitarianism Triumphant: The New Philosophers and Their Interlocutors,” in Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left*, and Judaken, “Alain Finkielkraut and the *Nouveaux Philosophes*.”

141. Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Le siècle de Sartre* (Paris: Grasset, 2000). Hereafter cited parenthetically in text. See Michel Rybalka’s massive list of media responses to the text in just the first few months after its appearance in *Bulletin d’Information du Groupe d’Études Sartriennes*, no. 14 (June 2000): 79–127.

142. While this is how many critics have read Lévy’s text, he makes evident at several points that this is a clear misunderstanding:

We are forced to conclude, yet again, that there was a double Sartre. Yes, we are forced to conclude that there were two Sartres, one debating with the other, almost at war. . . . [T]hese different aspects are mingled together. All tangled up. There wasn't the "good," faultless Sartre on one side—and, separated from him by the chronology of a frontier of bronze, the bad Sartre, the lost and damned Sartre, an entirely wretched Sartre who continually made mistakes and dragged his period along with him as he pursued his erroneous course. Or more exactly, there were indeed two Sartres . . . a fragile, mobile, perpetually shifting line that divided his life and also his work into two, call them the "first" and the "second" Sartre. . . . But the two periods overlapped. They constantly intruded on one another. It's as if the two Sartres endlessly corrupted each other, contaminated each other, to rage against and within each other. (Lévy, *Le siècle de Sartre*, 451–52, 459–60)

143. George Steiner, "The Last Philosopher," *Times Literary Supplement*, May 19, 2000, 3, 43.

144. BHL himself maintains that Sartre's writing inspired his own reflections on the Jewish Question in *Le testament de Dieu* (God's Testimony), where under the influence of Levinas he attempted to articulate a philosophy of resistance and morality based upon the Bible and in *L'idéologie française*, which condemns the exclusionary, fascist, and antisemitic strand that runs through French culture, which he locates not only in Maurras, Barrès, and Drieu but also in Renan, the later Péguy, and Mounier. See Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Le testament de Dieu* (Paris: Grasset, 1979); Bernard-Henri Lévy, *L'idéologie française* (Paris: Grasset, 1981). In *Le siècle de Sartre* Lévy self-consciously depicts his own work as a continuation of the role of the intellectual that began with the Dreyfus affair, continued with Sartre's antifascism and anticolonialism, and goes on today focused on antiracism.

145. In no way do I wish to suggest that all thinkers identified with postmodernism are "the same": sameness, homogeneity, and normalization are vigorously critiqued by postmodern writers, and there are important differences between the various positions of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and other French poststructuralists often monolithically grouped together under the label postmodernism.

146. The best overarching treatment of the Jewish Question in postmodern theory is Elizabeth Bellamy, *Affective Genealogies: Psychoanalysis, Postmodernism, and the "Jewish Question" after Auschwitz* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 29. For a treatment of the links between postmodernism and the new Jewish cultural studies, including my critique of Bellamy, see Jonathan Judaken, "Mapping 'The New Jewish Cultural Studies,'" *History Workshop Journal* 51 (Spring 2001): 269–77.

147. Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 124. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

148. Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the jews."* The first lines of Heidegger and "the jews" indi-

cate that, by using a lowercase and plural formulation bracketed by quotation marks, Lyotard's "jews" are a structural, figurative construct. See Geoffrey Bennington, "Lyotard and 'the Jews'" in Cheyette and Marcus, *Modernity*, 188–96, 189. On the link between Lyotard's writings on Jews and Judaism and the postmodern intellectual see my "Bearing Witness to the Différend."

149. Jean-François Lyotard, "Heidegger and 'the jews': A Conference," in Jean-François Lyotard, *Political Writings*, trans. Bill Readings and Kevin Paul (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 143.

150. Jean-François Lyotard, "Europe, the Jews, and the Book," in Lyotard, *Political Writings*, 161.

151. Max Silverman, "Re-Figuring 'the Jew' in France," in Cheyette and Marcus, *Modernity*, 197–207, 199.

152. Julia Kristeva, "Ours to Jew or Die," reprinted from *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 171–82, 174. Cited parenthetically hereafter.

153. For other examples of deconstructive efforts to think the Jewish Question see the gloss in Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor and trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 162 n. 40. For the connections between this note and the effort to construct a noncoercive community that interrupts myth (and its complicity in allegorizing "the Jew") see Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Summer 1993): 693–725. See also Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Nazi Myth," trans. Brian Holmes, *Critical Inquiry* 16 (Winter 1990): 291–312, as well as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1990). A French-Algerian Jew born in 1930, Derrida was raised in a family that was never Orthodox but observed Jewish customs. Derrida was never steeped in the texts of the Jewish tradition nor the Hebrew language and at five was sent to a secular elementary school, where he began his life-long immersion into French and European culture. He was stripped of his French citizenship in 1940 and expelled in 1942 due to Vichy's *numerus clausus*. He immigrated to France just after World War II, attending the Lycée Louis-le-Grand before his admittance in 1952 to the training ground for France's intellectual elite, the *École normale supérieure*, where he would teach from 1964 to 1984 as one locale among a series of international posts.

154. Gideon Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, trans. Peretz Kidron (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 3.

155. Derrida's only close reading of Sartre written for the fiftieth anniversary of the journal deals with the conception of *engagement* that Sartre articulated in his "Présentation des Temps modernes," "'I courait mort': Salut, salut. Notes pour un courrier aux Temps Modernes" *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 587 (March–April–May 1996): 7–54. While

clearly expressing his reservations and critique, both in the form and content of his piece, which was written as a “draft” of what he would say if he had time to complete a “real” article, Derrida nonetheless embraces and calls for a “reactivation” of a politics of commitment. The other piece in which he explicitly takes issue with Sartre is the essay “The Ends of Man,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Jacques Derrida, *Circonfession: Jacques Derrida par Geoffrey Bennington* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991); Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996); Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous, *Voiles* (Paris: Galilée, 1998); Jacques Derrida, “Abraham, l'autre,” in *Judéités: Questions pour Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 11–42. All references are to this text and cited parenthetically hereafter.

156. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, see the “Key to Special Terminology,” 804.

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